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EDUCATION ECONOMICUS?

ISSUES OF

NATION, KNOWLEDGE AND IDENTITY

IN CONTEMPORARY JAPAN

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

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ABSTRACT

The apparently close relationship between education and national strength in Japan has long captured the envy and attention of the world. But is Japan's educational system an instrument of economic nationalism, as many outsiders imply? Perhaps Japan's education is linked with an "economic nationalism" in some respects, but today, the signs of consciousness of education as a state economic resource in Japan are historically rooted, socially diffuse, subtle and often silent.

The intention of this thesis is to gain an understanding of the Japanese precedent of what has become a newly relevant issue in the United States and other advanced societies: merging the goals of education with the discourse of state economic security, abbreviated as "education economicus" – an educational system that maximizes utility as in the imagery of *homo economicus* (economic man). However, education has a profound impact on personal, social and national identity: these issues should be questioned in tandem with making schools into defensive armaments of economic nationalisms.

This thesis presents political images and ideas, namely, those that support economic nationalism, that are made intelligible to ordinary citizens. It discusses how such ideas are "refracted" in various social media, including policy documents, mass media, popular culture and personal discourse. After reviewing the construction of educational knowledge from the prewar period of empire-building to the "economic superpower" and proposed new "lifestyle superpower," I focus on
three areas of conflict. First, Japanese people have grown accustomed to
nonformal educational practices, such as companies that market a convenient
numerical evaluation (hensachi). Many people are reluctant to give up their
"empowerment" gained from the evaluation which the government now wants to
abolish. Second, the political economy that supports and is supported by
education continues to exacerbate gender inequalities such as those that produce
the phenomenon of "education mamas." The third issue demonstrates how the
legacy of bureaucratic superiority, diffused at the local level, maintains power over
students with its kōsoku, school regulations, that are often enforced to militaristic
precision. By highlighting one individual's struggle against school regulations, this
chapter also acknowledges the power of human agency in social discourse.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** ................................................................. iv  
**ABSTRACT** ...................................................................................... v  
**CHAPTER I: Introduction**  
The Launching of the Japanese "Sputnik"  
and Changing Currents of Education _Economicus_  
Education as a National Resource .............................................. 1  
Concepts ......................................................................................... 5  
The Misnomer of "Economic/Educational Nationalism" ............. 19  
"Naming" Economic Nationalism ................................................... 29  
Language and National Identity .................................................... 36  
Research Methods ......................................................................... 47  

**CHAPTER II**  
Ironies of the "Japan Shock"  
and Education from Empire to Economic Superpower ............ 51  
Ironies of Japan as Model .............................................................. 52  
Historical Development: Japan as a Military Power ................. 59  
Post-Occupation Japan and Genesis of the "Economic Superpower" ................................................................. 65  
Disenchantment with Economic Priorities ................................. 86  

**CHAPTER III**  
The New Japanese "Lifestyle Superpower" –  
or, How to Mythologize the Death Knell of the Economic Superpower .... 103  
Pre-figuring the _Seikatsu Taikoku_:  
The "Lifestyle Superpower" and its Antecedents ....................... 110  
Conceptual Antecedents ............................................................. 112  
Economic Conditions ................................................................... 115  
Demographic Changes ............................................................... 115  
Social Trends ............................................................................... 116  
The Lifestyle Superpower and its Layers ..................................... 118  
Growing Pains ............................................................................. 125  

**CHAPTER IV**  
Issue One: The Calculations of Examination and Nation:  
Introduction .................................................................................. 131  

**CHAPTER V**  
The Calculations of Examinations:  
The _Hensachi_ as a Micro-Japan, Inc. ......................................... 145  
The _Hensachi_ and the Transformation of Formal Education .... 150  
The Entrance Exam Industry ...................................................... 156  
The _Hensachi_ as a Micro-Japan, Inc. ......................................... 161  
Public End, Private Means ......................................................... 161  
The Government as "Big Follower" ............................................. 173  
The _Hensachi_ and Efficiency ...................................................... 177  
Education and the Lifestyle Superpower .................................... 180  

**CHAPTER VI**  
The Taming of Choice: "The Way of the Empirical" _Hensachi_ ........ 194  
Numerical Identity: The Gaze of the _Hensachi_ ......................... 199  
Gaze of the _Naishinshō_ .............................................................. 205  

vii
CHAPTER VII
The Expulsion of the Hensachi ........................................ 208
The Expulsion of the Hensachi and New Language of "Choice" ...... 209
Only My Own Child .................................................. 212
Realignment of Educational Politics ................................ 215

CHAPTER VIII
Numerical Identities and Questions of National Identity .......... 221
Social and Cultural Implications of the Hensachi ................. 221
Numerical Identity, National Identity ................................ 224

CHAPTER IX
Issue Two: Education Mama-dzillas and
the "Domestic Politics" of Postwar Japan ............................ 233
Introduction .......................................................... 233
Image of the Education Mama-dzilla ................................. 238
Theoretical Approach ................................................ 242
The Education Mama: Pre-existing Knowledge .................... 246
Clearing Time for the Education Mama-dzilla: Woman, School,
Work ......................................................................... 255
Women and Education ................................................ 258
Women and Labor ....................................................... 263

CHAPTER X
Second Schools and the Second Sex: The More Things Change .... 273
Public and Private ...................................................... 275
Madly-Proliferating Juku and the Creation of Education Mamas .. 282
How to be a Kyôiku Mama: Second Schools and the Second Sex 286
How Not to be a Kyôiku Mama: The Tatema of Home Education .. 295
The More Things Stay the Same: The Academic-Record Society .. 297

CHAPTER XI
Madness and the Madly-Proliferating Education Mamas:
Momism at the Juncture ................................................. 303
The Education Mama in Popular Culture ............................ 308
Labor and Lifestyle Issues ............................................. 318
Changing Values ....................................................... 321
Demographic Changes ................................................ 323
Japan as World Leader and Role Model of Asian Countries ..... 326

CHAPTER XII
Issue Three: The Nail That Came Out All The Way:
Hayashi Takeshi's Case Against the Regulation of the Student Body 329
Introduction to Student Regulations and Hayashi's Case Against Them 333
Unconstitutionality of Kôsoku ........................................ 338
Illegitimacy of Kôsoku ............................................... 339
Inhumanity of Kôsoku ............................................... 340
Human Rights and the Student Body ................................ 342
Beyond "East" and "West" .............................................. 346
The Kôsoku as a Reminder of Militarism ............................ 348
Hayashi as a Mediator ............................................... 356
Westernized language, Japanized syntax .......................... 358
Xenophilia as "Ordinarily Japanese" ................................ 359
Mutability of Boundaries East and West ......................... 360
"Americanizations" ................................................... 362
CHAPTER XIII : Conclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eight Corners of the World under Many Roofs</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective Consciousness of Education <em>Economicus</em>?</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education <em>Economicus</em>? Raising Questions</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-contextualizing the Discourse of Economic Nationalism</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BIBLIOGRAPHY                                                               393
LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1
Births, Deaths and Natural Increase in Population Growth ........... 70

TABLE 2
Historical Trends in Proportion of the Age Group Enrolled in
Educational Institutions ........................................... 71

TABLE 3
Number and Proportion of Applicants Entering Universities and Junior
Colleges ............................................................ 91

TABLE 4
Percentages of Population in Three Age Groups ...................... 94
CHAPTER I: Introduction

The Launching of the Japanese "Sputnik"

and Changing Currents of Education Economicus

Knowledge...is already, and will continue to be, a major—perhaps the major—stake in the worldwide competition for power. It is conceivable that the nation-states will one day fight for control of information, just as they battled in the past for control over territory, and afterwards for control of access to and exploitation of raw materials and cheap labor.

Jean François Lyotard, 1979

America will fail to meet the competitive challenge if high standards [in education] are not set and met... As we move into the 21st century, we need to break the education four-minute mile, hit 60 home runs in one season, rush a hundred yards a game.

David D. Kearns and Denis P. Doyle, Winning The Brain Race: A Bold Plan to Make Our Schools Competitive, 1988

In 1957, the launching of the Soviet Sputnik prompted the United States to cultivate math and science projects in education under the banner of "national defense." Less than three decades later, a different shock again raised the clarion call for significant changes in American education. This time, the "launching" was the new elevation in world politics of the "miracle" economy of Japan. The new banner to promote educational change was now "national economic competitiveness."

Economists, politicians, educators, businesspeople, journalists, and average parents "discovered" the attributes of Japanese education in the mid-1980s, the height of U.S.-Japan competitiveness. Most, however, were probably less inspired by a desire
to learn about Japan's pedagogy than to promote the idea that education is the cornerstone of national economic strength.

By 1991, Lee Iacocca, then-Chairman of the Chrysler Corporation and outspoken critic of America's declining competitiveness, pleaded with Americans: "It's calculated that it costs $200 to train an American worker in statistical process control. It's considered basic stuff. Teaching it to a Japanese worker costs 47 cents. Genetics? We think not. Education? We know so... Our Japanese and Western European competition are not going to wait for us to catch up. We have to correct this tragic situation for ourselves."¹ That statement was made in Iacocca's capacity not only as a corporate leader, but as Honorary Chairman of the National PTA (Parent-Teacher Association).

In the United States, education had commuted from an institution enabling Americans to "catch up" with Soviet space technology in the 1950s and 1960s, when education legislation was enacted under the title of "National Defense"; to a domestic welfare issue in the 1970s, when education was sheltered under the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and back to a foreign policy concern in the 1980s and 1990s, with the rallying cry of government secondary to that of corporate America. And the object toward which "catch up" was directed was no longer the Soviet Union, but that of Japan. Hardly an economic tract written to urge American economic competitiveness during the late 1980s to early 1990s failed to include a

¹ Newsweek, Inc., Chrysler Corporation and the National PTA, Education in America: Getting the Nation Involved (brochure), 1991, p. 2.
section on education, admonishing that Japanese parents care more, their kids study harder, their school days are longer, and that's why they're beating us.²

But what about Japan? Did its education live up to the implied image of a system geared toward competitive economic nationalism? In exploring this question, this dissertation acknowledges answers of "no" as well as a cautiously qualified "yes": Japan's education is linked with an "economic nationalism" in some respects, but you will not find such a symbolic public display as the president of Toyota speaking out to the national PTA (which is very strong in Japan). Nor have teachers and parents needed to tell their students that they are competing not only for test scores but against America, Europe or China. One may have to go back thirty years or more to find national leaders rallying average citizens around the institution of education in the manner of Iacocca. Today, the signs of consciousness of education as a state economic resource in Japan are historically rooted, socially diffuse, subtle and often silent.

The intention of this thesis is to gain an understanding of the Japanese precedent of what has become a newly relevant issue in the United States and other advanced societies: merging the goals of education with the discourse of state economic security, abbreviated as "education economicus" — an educational system

that maximizes utility as in the imagery of *homo economicus* (economic man).³

However, I stated that it is "cautious" in its depiction of education *economicus* or "educational nationalism" because I do not intend to write in a zero-sum competitive spirit, i.e., the more knowledge "they" have, the less "we" have. Nor do I attempt to define how education contributes to economic growth; instead I am writing about how governments which focus on economic strength establish collective identities. The analysis is therefore written toward the assumption that we should assume a critical posture toward the relationship of education to economic nationalism, and in so doing, question where our educational systems are leading us, other than toward economic competition.

Such a question posed by education *economicus*, then, is more compelling than knee-jerk solutions for how best to maximize the collective utility of education. Perhaps much can be gained from merging the merits of several educational systems toward mutual economic advancement, and incorporating private enterprise in educational planning, the tendencies of linking education to economic nationalism. But education also has a profound impact on personal, social and national identity: these issues should be questioned in tandem with making schools into defensive armaments of economic nationalisms. The present writing thus attempts to attain a better understanding of education and identity in changing global conditions, and is less concerned with specific comparisons of pedagogical or administrative styles. The focus is on Japan, a nation in which the close relationship between the variables of education and national strength has long captured the envy and attention of the world.

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**Education as a National Resource**

Increasingly, national leaders have come to understand the institution of education in the same terms as other national assets, whether resources of capital, territory, armaments or fuel. At one time, as explained in the first epigraph above, scholars recognized this elevated approach to knowledge as *postmodernism*, the point in our history when the strategic importance of territory diminished, and the strategic importance of knowledge became enhanced.¹ Now, variations of the concept of knowledge as a national resource have been voiced by national leaders and resounded in newspaper advertisements and television commercials. It is no longer an ivory tower theory to say that knowledge in its broadest capacity has achieved enhanced status as the basis of national as well as personal power. Education, the foundation of every society’s construction of knowledge, is integral to this scenario.

Japan’s experience of this phenomenon is well-rooted in its history. Resource-poor, territorially isolated, yet with an insatiable craving for knowledge, the foundational document of the modern Japanese nation emblematizing its commitment to knowledge was titled “The Imperial Rescript on Education.” (See Chapter II.) The highly transparent patriotism imbued in the educational system began in the late nineteenth century and reached a fever pitch in the 1930s and 1940s. “Except for the totalitarian states, no modern nation has used the schools so systematically for purposes of political indoctrination as Japan,” wrote sociologist

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Herbert Passin in 1965 in reference to the wartime educational system. Today what has intrigued American policymakers is the end-result of Japanese postwar education: its economic success. Yet if there is patriotism in economic progress, it is opaque, integrated as "culture" rather than "indoctrination."

Yet surely culture can be manufactured and appropriated for national purposes. A business leader and an educator who put their own "brains" together to become front running champions of education reform in the United States were David D. Kearns, CEO of the Xerox Corporation (and former deputy secretary of education under the Bush administration), and Denis P. Doyle, an educational writer and consultant. In their sportswriting (sampled in the epigraph) titled, Winning the Brain Race: A Bold Plan to Make Our Schools Competitive, they charge that "[The Japanese] are convinced - as we[Americans] should be - that without first-rate schools, they cannot have a first-rate economy. The Japanese secret was to design a school system consistent with their history, traditions, and culture. We can do the same. . . As we have seen with the Japanese, education can be an instrument of national economic policy." Thus, the "secret" of economic success is the proper design of a school system consistent with the history, traditions, and culture of one's nation, according to Kearns and Doyle, who deny that we should fully "copy" Japan's system.

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But who decides what our history, traditions and culture shall be? In our fascination with Japanese education, we should look less toward the economic "end" and more toward the political – or apolitical – "means." For example, Japan may represent the first nation to have become dependent on a private, nonformal educational sector in its educational practices, even though this involvement was never planned from "above." Perhaps we should ask, "Of what consequence is this market imperative to the much-ballyhooed idea of a "national culture"? The government may have standardized the curriculum, but it was the market that simulated the curriculum in myriad mock exams, proliferating, homogenizing and speeding up the encyclopedia-ization of knowledge. In this situation, one should ask, "How much does a national culture matter?" When each school lesson is diluted, dissected and distributed at accelerated rates, the reflection time to absorb nationally-defined values disappears – a point I will return to shortly.

Thus I will introduce three issues in subsequent chapters to help explore this question of education *economicus*, the practice of framing the discourse of education as a state resource integral to national economic success. One can point to reasons for Japan's influential precedent of educational nationalism that are cultural, historical, and economic. The present study focuses on "national identity," or the means of shaping national identities. Yet what I mean by "national identity" is not a prescribed set of values created by national elites, but rather *a contested space in which pervasive images of "nation" vie for attention*. From the international perspective, perhaps the dominant mode of national imagery is a concern with how the competitiveness of a given nation stands up to those of other nations. Education is understood in such terms: can we compete with other nations economically if our future workers, i.e., students, do not have proper training, skills.
insight, creativity, adaptability? Education is to economic nationalism what arsenals are to military nationalisms, in the logic of the prevailing rhetoric on economic competitiveness.

I also state that this study of "educational nationalism" is "qualified" because it does not assume the presence of clearly promulgated state priorities. The national priorities of education are historically entrenched in Japan, and indeed, the signs of social coalescence around education are often located outside formal public discourse and in cultural signs and practices. Yet, as we shall see, this indirectness also has to do with the general tendency of economic nationalism to straddle public and private sectors in its discourse; the elusiveness of politics in the media age, and the characteristic nature of diffusive power in Japan. Despite the impression of highly centralized government, lines of authority in Japan are not always clearly visible, as they typically are (or seem to be) in a military organization.7

Nor does education economicus assume an automatic reception from the public. On the contrary, the Japanese are likely to respond to the notion that their country uses education for economic purposes in the same way that they respond to the image that their nation is "rich." They point out the contradictions. "If Japan is so rich, why are my living quarters so small?" Or, "If Japan's education is so great for the economy, why can't I use the English that I learn in school when I go abroad?"

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7 For example, see Karel Van Wolferen, *People and Politics in a Stateless Nation* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), pp. 42; 121-122; and Chapter Five of this dissertation. In the late twentieth century "video age," however, even the lines of military authority have become fuzzier; see Michael Shapiro, "Strategic Discourse/Discursive Strategy: The Representation of 'Security Policy' in the Video Age," *International Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (December 1990), pp. 327-340.
These are two of the most prevalent comments one might hear in response to the image of Japan as an "economic superpower."

Instead of thinking of education economicus "as" a national identity, it will become more clear as this thesis progresses that education has in a sense inverted national or collected identity: the school, rather than the nation, has become the reference of identity. The same can be said of the image of Japan as a corporation, exemplified by "Japan, Inc.": it is likewise true that the corporation possesses the image of a nation, a point I will come to again in this work. Ishikawa Shogo, of Japan's National Institute for Educational Research, confirms this inversion of identity:8


[Schools or companies have come to play a more important role as reference groups in postwar Japan. People used to feel happier to identify themselves with the family, the community and the nation than they are today. As a result of the rejection of nationalism, the dissolution of the community and the increase in nuclear families, children and students are seeking stronger identification with their schools in the same manner as adults are with their companies.

Thus, despite the healthy skepticism expressed in negative attitudes toward their educational system, there has been more evidence of people willing to join the "system" rather than beat it, underscoring the salience of the school (and future company) itself as an identity referent. There is still a strong social prejudice against almost all forms of "alternative" education, including education abroad (except in highly structured foreign exchange programs). Graduates from such schools are
sometimes considered "un-Japanese" and less suitable for conformity to industrial and social life.

Furthermore, the incentive for many (but not all) parents to send children up the so-called "escalator" to elite corporate or bureaucratic positions has not waned much. Leaders point their fingers at parents for the side effects of competitive education more conspicuously than vice versa. Governments display the high levels of their citizens' educations as trophies of the quality of life in their nations; yet when the people's educational desires exceed industrial demands, governments also attempt to stratify educational output to better match supplies and demand for labor.

Some outside observers, rather than praising the attributes of Japanese education, have noted a paradox: if Japanese education is so "bad," i.e., lacking in innovation, centrally controlled etc., then why has the economic situation [before the 1991 downturn] been so "good"?9 While the scope of this thesis highlights issues of identity and knowledge rather than the strictly economic reasons for how education translates into economic growth, it should be understood that one of the characteristics of "education economicus" is that indeed, conscientious pedagogical methods are not necessarily the ingredients for standards of economic progress in the

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global marketplace. 10 When employers demand obedient, productive, efficient labor forces, such cumbersome pedagogical concerns as equity, fairness and innovation are likely to stand in the way. It is only recently, as new technologies have created new demand for creativity - but not necessarily independent creativity - that leaders openly acknowledge that mass production methods of education (the typical impression of "bad" education) have lost their utility in yielding "good" productivity.

Moreover, economic nationalism, and its counterpart of educational nationalism, may represent contradictions in terms. We cannot easily contain and objectify either trade or knowledge in the same way that we once could our missiles, forests, or oil. In the global market economy, economics increasingly fuses toward the centripetal; it expands domains of circulation, eliminates borders, diffuses identity. But nationalism is essentially centrifugal; it "protects" domains of circulation, closes in on borders and defines identity. 11

The centripetal pull of economics means that increasingly, the products of many countries have become alike and lost their "nationalities." Can this "Coca-colization" happen to education? At this point, we see America and Japan aping each other's educational methods, signalling a possible convergence of knowledge resources. The U.S. is beginning to standardize its curriculum, structure


nationalized exams, increase parental involvement, introduce "privatism" (such as for-profit schools) and consider a longer school year. All are changes which resemble the Japanese system. In contrast, the Japanese government has considered more flexible standards of curriculum and exams; it constantly warns parents not to become overly involved in their children's educations; it is slapping the wrists of private education (in the form of nonformal cram schools), and has already shortened the school year by offering at least one free Saturday per month. The centripetal force apparently pulling the two culturally divergent systems together is that of an international system that rewards power and benefits to the most productive economies. Thus national governments have it in their best interests to cultivate supplies of educated students that will meet the labor demands of national economies.

If economic/educational nationalism is now about making an impression of well-trained workers in the global marketplace to invite capital, it also challenges the nation's cultural identity at home. We may have little reason to expect a globalization of schooling methods in the near future, but what we can be alerted to is the extent to which the centripetal pull of knowledge and capital challenges the national identity defined by education. National governments need to define, cultivate and maintain stable cultural identities within their own borders; education is traditionally a key socializing institution through which identity is produced and maintained. Thus, the growing reality of borderless economics and prospect of "borderless education" can be recognized as contentious and challenging of national and cultural identities within borders.

For example, this conflict is inherent in foreign language teaching and cross-cultural education. Government and business leaders in the U.S. enthusiastically
established hundreds of educational exchanges with Japan in the late 1980s and early 1990s, at the height of tense economic relations. Their logic, embraced by liberals and conservatives alike, was, "If we're going to trade with them, we need to know their language and culture." One project to establish economic and educational partnerships between Japan and the U.S. to increase Americans' "globability" stated accordingly:  

American performance can match that of our major competitors from Asia, Europe and Latin America. We can do better in the global competition. To succeed, we need to learn from those with international experience and know-how, make contact with potential business partners abroad, and prepare the next generation for an international future.

By 1995, however, the conservative wave of U.S. government has retreated from the bipartisan enthusiasm of five years ago, even if the alleged purpose of cultural exchange programs is akin to "knowing the enemy [trading partners]." Funds for cultural exchange programs have been deeply slashed: the pendulum has turned against foreign language learning in trepidation that English within our borders will be threatened, and the "global standards" aspired to by the previously bipartisan AMERICA 2000 (later, Goals 2000) have been derided as further signs of government waste.

English teaching in Japan also resonates with this conflict between the internationally-defined "national" identity vs. the domestically-defined "national" identity. At the start of Japan's entry to modernity in the nineteenth century, the popular slogan "Western knowledge, Japanese spirit" aimed to keep knowledge of Self and Other distinct. A legacy of maintaining this separation can be found in

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classroom methods of English teaching, methods geared toward examination preparation. It is well-known that the curriculum to teach and test English language is constructed like a mathematical curriculum. Students spend hours and hours memorizing words, formulas and grammars that native speakers of English may have never heard of. The student who can master these formulas in the entrance exam is praised: the student who comes home from America knowing too much spoken English is ostracized and often tries to hide his or her skills. Every year, thousands of Americans, Britons, and Canadians are invited to Japan to teach English, for the purposes of "internationalization." But most of their efforts are directed toward reversing the "mathematical" English still tested for by entrance exams. Thus the vulnerability of national culture to corruption by another language is comparatively unscathed.13

The myriad economic analyses urging the U.S. to catch up with Japan by revamping education failed to capture this conflict between the international identity and domestic identity, or the volatility of all identities. Japan was catapulted as a stable yardstick to discuss America's change toward economic competitiveness. However, yardsticks cannot change, but societies do and their nationalisms must. While Japan's education-economic symbiosis was put on the pedestal in America

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13 Loanwords, especially from America, abound in popular culture; and increased use of third-person pronouns, referring to others directly as "he" or "she" rather than indirectly, has become more common in Japanese language as a result of continuous translating of English. Some of the old guard may complain about these tendencies, but in general, linguistic "cleansing" has not become an issue in Japan, as it is in France and other countries.
and several other nations, the ground underneath the very economic nationalism it was said to exemplify had already rumbled. 14

Some changes were the same global conditions affecting the U.S. Major national corporations were becoming globalized, employing cheaper foreign labor in their lower-skilled (low "value-adding") positions, and demanding more flexible skilled labor on the homefront. Robots were also replacing simple-task labor. The mass production models of uniform manufacturing were becoming outmoded, as demands for diverse, creative and innovative products increased. At the same time, a worldwide recession challenged even the most stable of employers, and environmental concerns could no longer be shoved under the table in the name of profits. Compelled to globalize, empathize and downsize their costs, business leaders from all advanced nations have gone to the drawing boards to figure out new ways to match education with changing labor requirements.

Other circumstances were more specific to Japan. Consumers complained they were left out of the economic miracle: death from overwork (karoshi) gained medical and legal status; populations of school-age children declined while elderly cohorts increased; political corruption interrupted the Liberal-Democratic Party's (LDP) 38-year reign of stability, and increased immigrant labor as well as sexual harassment suits threatened the insularity of old boy networks. Mired in its worst recession since the end of the second world war. Japan was compelled to re-define entrenched patterns of schooling and labor to appeal to an aging, less patient, more contentious society. At the same time, the nation was compelled to re-define its image in the global community, from that of a corporate bureaucracy stereotyped as pursuing

14 The earthquake metaphor is unintentional and was written prior to the tragic 1995 Hanshin earthquake.
world economic domination at the expense of its own citizens, to a nation whose social and ethical contributions were commensurate with its world economic status.

Policy analysts in the U.S. and Japan, as well as in Europe and Asia's newly developing "tiger" economies, have expressed the current tides of the new economic (inter)nationalism in two different ways. One way is to see the trend of greater consumer empowerment against the decline in power of the central governments of nation-states. Japanese economist Ohmae Kenichi, credited for coining the new global marketplace a "borderless world," charged that Japan still has the attitude of a "developing nation." Despite its obvious transformation into a "developed nation," the Japanese government "still wants to sit in the driver's seat, step on the gas, apply the brakes and steer, with 120 million people in the backseat." Weary of having the government dictate their choices, the people instead desire "a good life, a life in harmony with our own values, values themselves shaped by individual choice."15

As Sakaiya Taichi, a former official of Japan's powerful MITI (Ministry of International Trade and Industry), the country's "Pentagon" of economic nationalism, makes clear, the world can no longer be conceived as bifurcated between those who own capital and those who sell nothing but their labor. Nowadays the average worker can go out and purchase the means of production, such as computers, desks and simple tools, and put them to use directly in his or her own home.16 This empowerment of the otherwise average laborer or consumer is


leading us toward a society in which "the owner's conspicuous consumption of wisdom (in the broadest sense) is displayed," continues Sakaiya, in his "prophesy of the future." Much of the new means of production boils down to the intangible qualities of "knowledge, experience and sensitivity." Such intangibles cannot be bought or sold, so instead, individuals will display their "knowledge value" in the products they produce or the things which they purchase. Thus a new social identity will emerge not from the possession of material objects or physical resources, but by values derived from supplies of knowledge. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, Sakaiya's thinking corresponds with a new mood in Japan to make education less oriented toward the mass production of goods, and better structured to foster creativity and diversity in individuals.

Robert Reich's thinking resonates with that of Ohmae in that he sees the "borderless world" as the juggernaut of the present, but Reich pays more attention to the role of education in shaping a "new" economic nationalism. Presently U.S. secretary of Labor, Reich tunes in with Sakaiya in lamenting the outmoded, militaristic bureaucratic structure of schools that are nothing but factories for mass production. In Reich's view, such schools were the product of the "vestigial" economic nationalism in which profits and production were valued over an education that would cultivate the full creative potentials of people. The "new logic of economic nationalism" thus does not weigh the nation's worth by its corporate brands or

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factory production, but by the quality of workers' skills, experience and training. hence, education:

The skills of a nation's work force and the quality of its infrastructure are what makes it unique, and uniquely attractive, in the world economy... Well-trained workers and modern infrastructure attract global webs of enterprise, which invest and give workers relatively good jobs; these jobs, in turn, generate additional on-the-job training and experience, thus creating a powerful lure to other global webs. As skills increase and experience accumulates, a nation's citizens add greater and greater value to the world economy—commanding ever-higher compensation and improving their standard of living.

Reich's thinking corresponds with current policies in America to elevate the importance of education and training. In Japan, the importance of education has never been in doubt, but its education was appropriately structured to the old economic nationalism in which tangible material gains counted more than "soft" knowledge-value, as Sakaiya puts it.

Yet another way to express the current tendency of economic nationalism is to omit the position of the consumer, or student, and focus strictly on the demands of corporations and nations for labor. Since the most important demand of corporations is for well-educated labor, and the most important demand of nations is for prosperous corporations and economies, the individual as a worker or future worker is fused with the market metaphor, "resource." Discussions of education using language such as "human resource capitalism," authored by economists, businesspeople, and policymakers, have become increasingly prominent. Such


writings address the kind of future work forces, or human resources, that schools and nations "churn out," and whether those resources are reliable investments, appropriately matched to the market economy.

If Sakaiya's and Reich's ways of expressing the new tendency of education are accepted, we should expect the educational systems of advanced economies to fully cultivate the needs of each individual. We should expect economies to fully utilize those diverse needs. But surely this blissful scenario is too good to be true. Supply may match demand, but we are not sure if the supplies of individual students will create the demands of labor, or whether the demands of labor will create "individualized" students. And what is missing in the expression of education as "human resource capitalism" is any discussion whatsoever of how individuals are empowered by education. We only know that nations and corporations are empowered. All such writings agree, however, that knowledge has been re-invigorated as a resource of national economic power in the international scene. At the same time, domestic governments have had to reconcile their respective educational concerns with changing global conditions.

**Concepts**

The Misnomer of "Economic/Educational Nationalism": As presented at the outset, education economicus, like its broader category of economic nationalism, represents an irony. We see nations making their educational systems more convergent rather than harnessed as "divergent" nationalisms. Economic

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20 For example, Adrian Wooldridge, "Education: Trying Harder," *Economist* 325, no. 7786 (November 21, 1992), pp. 3-18. Special section.
nationalism is a misnomer to a large extent, if by "nationalism" we imply a *shared devotion to a clearly defined national strategy, in this case, economic competitiveness, measured by the capacity of its "human resources," or education*. Some of the reasons I describe below. However, as I will state later, I believe such a definition, or what we might call the conventional view of nationalism, assumes that nationalisms are more imprinted than "imagined," predating the decisive impact of imagery in the media age and the rising challenge of centralized governments to harness narratives of identity.

First, economic nationalism is a misnomer of sorts because *the practices of economics/education often detract from the borders of nation*. To think otherwise would be to fall into what Robert Reich calls a "vestigial trap." In the 1950s, the prosperity of the United States as a nation seemed "inextricably linked" to the well-being of its corporations, according to Reich: the same was also true for Japan during this era of optimism. Patriotism and purchasing power went hand in hand. By the 1980s and 1990s, however, it became more difficult to ignore the "borderless world" with its "weblike relationships" shaping the new economy, relationships that ignore corporate size, territory and national borders. Consumers make international transactions to these complex webs when they purchase goods. In the example that Reich offers, $10,000 toward a GM LeMans will cover $3000 of routine labor from South Korea, $1750 worth of Japan-made advance components, $750 of West German designing, and so on.

Likewise, exchanges of knowledge have taken place at the levels of school education as well as worker training. Academic exchanges across borders have been

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steadily increasing, as have joint worker-training programs. Those who inhibit flows of money or knowledge across borders may think themselves economic nationalists, but their thinking, and their methods, are “vestigial,” according to Reich and other analysts of the changing tide of economic nationalism.

Second, in general, the strategy of economic nationalism promotes the prosperity of the individual, often to the exclusion from consciousness of “nation.” In the 1950s, citizens of either the United States or Japan became conscious of the number of cars in their garages or appliances in their homes. In purchasing such items, however, the prosperity of the household is usually more important than national allegiance. A 1953 advertisement for Gimbels, the New York department store, declared: "Economic salvation, both national and personal, has nothing to do with pinching pennies. . . . Economic survival depends upon consumption. If you want to have more cake tomorrow, you have to eat more cake today. The more you consume, the more you’ll have, quicker." Yet unless a trade war is heating up, it is difficult to imagine citizens eating cake for the survival of the nation rather than the hunger in their bellies.

This issue of basic survival is the key to understanding why economic nationalism is profoundly more inarticulate in Japan rather than in the United States. The striking irony is that despite all the fanfare over Japan’s economic miracle, economic imperialism, trade unfairness and so on – the general populace in Japan has extremely little popular consciousness of “nation” in terms of its political entity as a “state.” Throughout the postwar period until the contemporary flux of the mid-1990s, the political state has been amorphous. Understood as an entity lost in

Japan's defeat in World War II, the "state" today "barely exists in Japanese consciousness," according to the lucid and timely thesis of international relations scholar Tamamoto Masaru. At the start of the Occupation period, Japan nominally changed from a militaristic, familistic state to a democratic and pacifist state, yet the people understood this transition mostly in terms of "liberation from death" and freedom from the ravages of war. The Occupation authorities were hailed as "liberators," saving the people from starvation and utter annihilation. Accordingly, the imported concept of democracy failed to ripen beyond the meaning of absence of war and protection under America's security umbrella. People's allegiances were directed to the household, school and company, and rarely toward an abstract entity of the nation-state. Instead, "Japan" was subtly maintained as a "natural community," a timeless, historical "race" rather than an artificial geopolitical construction.24

Thus the public memory of national symbols used to promote economic consumption is weak. Although leaders promoting economic prosperity appealed to the image of "nation" in the 1960s, just as they did in America, overt symbols of "nation," "state" or "nationalism" were generally anathema to the general populace still mired in the consciousness of defeat. Economic nationalism faded as a social narrative, as did many expressions of nationalism. It was not until 1988, when the fatal illness of the Shōwa emperor was announced, that the taboo on public discussion of the emperor was informally lifted, and national flags became more acceptable.

In 1990, the national anthem and flag were re-introduced in the school curriculum for the first time since the war. By that time, however, the aims of nationalistic economic policies and practices of the 1960s had already become diffused in society. Despite much of the economic rhetoric of the 1960s (presented in the next chapter), the general public's impression of nationalism remains as a byproduct of war memory, associated with the typical symbols of emperor, flag and anthem.

If such semiotics of nationalism gradually became more acceptable, it was partly owing to the discourse of "internationalization": Japan should have a flag or anthem to be on equal footing with other nations. Thus my discussion of economic nationalism in this dissertation partially engages in an academic bias; to the average person in Japan, "nationalism" acquires meaning mainly in a military context. And as we shall see shortly, this sometimes pertains to America as well.

Appeals to collective society do not necessarily need geopolitical words such as "nation," and thus it is more common in Japan to hear references to "society" and "We Japanese" (wareware nihonjin). Other scholars have identified as cultural nationalism the social tendency to regard certain cultural characteristics as uniquely Japanese. Such characteristics have included the quality of blood, taste for rice, and or the ability to understand Japanese thought patterns and language. Sometimes this myth of uniqueness (nihonjinron, the theory of being Japanese) pertaining to the cultural definition of "nation" has supported economic nationalism and has stood in place for direct appeals to the geopolitical nation-state. The issue of rice has presented the most conspicuously recent example in the mizuho no kuni, "Land of the Vigorous Rice Plants," as the Japanese fondly nickname their country. The spiritual connection with rice has often translated into a conviction that Japan's rice is
superior in taste to all other rice, and that no other nation’s rice can appeal to the Japanese people’s “unique” sense of taste for rice. This is one of the ways in which Japan’s economic nationalism is subtly interfaced with its cultural nationalism, rather than overtly displayed through such images as having a corporate mogul chair the national PTA.25

As we move into the discussion of education, however, it will become more apparent that even if governments enact certain educational policies for the purposes of national economic strategy, the people are often skeptical of or oblivious to the way in which their schooling or training benefits society or the nation as a whole. Education economicus, like homo economicus, implies self-interested economics, even if nations channel their self-interests for collective benefits. I speak in general on this point, but emphasize that it is especially true of Japan. Despite the glamorizing of Japanese education abroad (as well as by nationalistic, aging leaders), Japanese people—however hard they may try to improve their individual lives through education—hesitate to mention the positive attributes of their educational system for the collective good. In contrast to the way Germans and Danes reportedly carry on about the merits of their schools,26 the Japanese allude to the negative. Their litanies are well-practiced, and one might even sense some ironic pride when they lament how poor the English courses are; how it is difficult to pass through high

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26 Wooldridge, “Education: Trying Harder,” p. 11.

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school though the universities are "leisurelands," or how the standardized curriculum turns students into "robots."

Third, the locus of power in economic nationalism, rather than being "clearly defined," has become increasingly diffuse. In this thesis I will discuss how Japan's postwar polity has been characterized by diffusive power. This might also be considered a general condition of economic nationalism, as economic power, and along with it, educational power, continues to surpass military power as the defining influence of geopolitical entities, whether nation-states, regions or cities. In economic nationalism, we rarely encounter instances of citizens being beckoned by their political leaders to sacrifice themselves for the good of the nation. U.S. President Bill Clinton, who ran his campaign on a platform of "re-inventing" government to revitalize economic competitiveness, discovered this lesson in his first televised address. Economic strategy may follow the same logic as military strategy and handily borrow its metaphors, but economic nationalism will not inspire the sacrifices of war: the corporate warrior can only be mercenary. Announcing the unpopular message that the middle class would face tax increases, Clinton closed by supplicating:  

    If you will join with me, we can create an economy in which all Americans work hard and prosper. This is nothing less than a call to arms to restore the vitality of the American dream.

    When I was a boy, we had a name for the belief that we should all pull together to build a better, stronger nation. We called it patriotism and we still do.

    Good night and God bless America.

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Americans were unconvinced of the need to pay taxes for the good of the nation, not having the gratification of tangible consumer benefits within range. The concept of the "peace dividend" – transferring military expenditures to social ones – was in vogue at the time, but the notion that "patriotism" represented a military duty remained sacredly guarded. Thus, as Representative Jim Leach (R-Iowa) responded to Clinton's speech, "Patriotism and economics form strange bedfellows... one can make a national interest case for sacrifice, one can make a common sense case for sacrifice, but patriotism is when you risk your life, not when you risk your wallet." Because Clinton was a known draft evader of the unpopular Vietnam war, one commentator speculated, "[H]ow many will answer Mr. Clinton's patriotic call, and how many will dodge his draft?"  

The devastated Japanese political economy following the second world war may represent the world's closest thing to a "peace dividend," though labeled simply as "peace." Military operations were converted into domestic "Self-Defense Forces," and economic reconstruction often sufficed as the conceptual equivalent of peace. Economic nationalism conducted its work elusively throughout the social layers, convincing people to rebuild their homes, schools and factories, to purchase the latest appliances, to push their children through the highest possible ranks of school. As will be presented in Chapter Two, national policies made a strong attempt to draw an analogy between the growth of the individual through education and the growth of the nation. Tremendous sacrifices were incurred, and benefits reaped, by

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ordinary citizens working toward the economic good of the nation, but rarely as a
direct consequence of what citizens would call patriotism.

Calls for economic nationalism from "above" quickly fused into the habits of a
populace already inured to hard work. An appreciation for education among all
sectors of society was centuries old; thus, to inspire students to gain knowledge as
the prime goal of the new economic reconstruction of the nation (quite in the
manner of what Reich has called the "new logic" of economic nationalism) needed
relatively little persuasion. Leaders spoke of reconstructing their wartime economy
and "catching up" to the nations of the West (just as Iacocca now urges Americans
to "catch up" with Japan and Europe). Yet from my conversations with people of this
era, what people remember are their individual concerns of catching up with the
material acquisitions of their neighbors, not of Japan catching up with the West.

A fourth reason to potentially disqualify economic nationalism as a
"nationalism" in the conventional impression is that it simply resists naming. At the
level of the household as in the nation, economic motives are often silenced. The
Japanese consider their personal economic ambitions, especially manifested as
educational ambitions, a very private matter: thus parents simply often hesitate to
talk to their neighbors about what kind of school they hope their child will enter,
what kind of position they hope he or she will receive, or how much money they
expect him or her to earn or to marry.

National economic security is taught in textbooks (and presented in the media)
as national economic insecurity. The position of Japan in international economics is
a salient topic even to high school students. Almost any student can recite the daily
yen-dollar exchange rate within a reasonable range, a sign of their alertness to
economic news in the media. At least one semester of economics is a required
subject, and concrete data explaining Japan's position in the world are highlighted. Although the hard work of all sectors of society is credited for creating the prosperity of postwar Japan, in general, the vulnerability of Japan is the main emphasis. The historically propitious circumstances of the Korean war that fueled the Japanese economy, along with the security "umbrella" of the United States are acknowledged. The hard lessons of the "oil shocks" of the 1970s are driven home as reminders of Japan's fragile dependence on outside nations.

Perhaps the vulnerability theme indeed resonates with the general reluctance of Japan to shed its image as a victim of war still rising from the ashes. It also came in handy, however, when Japan plunged into its recession at the start of this decade. One informant told me that the recession took few people by surprise, since they were already inured to their collective image of economic fragility. The "bubble" that collapsed may have been the bubble of Western expectations.

In their memory of the high speed growth period of the sixties, people recall the struggle to improve their daily lives. They remember refrigerators, rice cookers, school cafeteria food, televisions and the new aura of "good schools." Political conflict heated up over such issues as military security and U.S.-Japan security relations, but most people continued to cast their votes for "stability" – the badge of the Liberal-Democratic Party (LDP) that recently ended its 38-year hold on Japanese politics. Politics had little time to grow during the era of LDP dominance in domestic affairs and the false security of the Cold War in the international scene: perhaps that is why so much is boiling over now in Japanese politics. (Already four prime ministers have

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represented Japan during Clinton’s term of presidency in the U.S., and the list is still growing.)

Yet despite the immediate attraction of economic nationalism as ersatz peace and democracy, the economic metaphor often would not win popular support. Gradually, it became an understandably unpleasant sensation, and one that many in Japan today feel, to be stereotyped as homo economicus, or even more negatively, "economic animal."

"Naming" Economic Nationalism: If a misnomer in some regards, why then use the term "economic nationalism" in reference to education? First, the government of Japan implemented specific plans to speed up the growth of the Japanese economy in the post-Occupation period, and it structured education to meet that goal. As will be further explained in the next chapter, policies and ideas such as Prime Minister Ikeda’s "Income Doubling Plan" made education the prime motor of economic advancement and defined the shape of society in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Many political tensions were fused into a common energy to create economic vitality: the success of the 1964 Olympics hosted in Tokyo became a gold medal to celebrate Japan’s economic feats. Education, we will see in Chapter Two, was an integral component of that energy.

But if such overt display of economic nationalism soon faded from public discourse, the second reason follows up the first: starting in the mid-1980s and continuing up until the present, both private and public sectors have issued several directives to "end" the era of economic focusing. The period of "catching up" to advanced nations has ended. according to the rhetoric, and the period of cultivating a new quality of life has begun. Such declarations as the Economic
Planning Agency's "Five Year Plan for a Lifestyle Superpower" therefore imply that economic nationalism has continued on its course until the present, and it is now time for the energy that brought about the economic superpower to be re-channeled.

The third reason relates to the beginning of this chapter and the start of the next: that the fervor over Japan's educational nationalism has spread to other countries. Most Japanese are aware of how much their educational system has impressed Americans, Koreans, Chinese and many other nations. Transferring the picture of education from the lens of the household to that of the globe renews a sense of "nation" in discourse of education. Many Japanese have traveled or lived abroad and develop pride in their education by comparison. It is astonishing to the Japanese – to name but one example – that American cashiers have to verbalize their change counts, and even then, they make mistakes that no sixth-grader in Japan would make.

And as Japan of the 1990s now fidgets and flirts with invitations to become Asia's new role model of successful economic advancement, educational modeling (as well as competitiveness) could re-situate the prominence of an educational outlook geared toward economic nationalism. Economics professor Nakakita Toru believes that Asia's newly industrialized countries (NICs) are in the midst of an "educational revolution" with Japan serving as a role model. He states that the high standards of education in East Asia (Japan, South Korea and Taiwan and Singapore) are spreading to Southeast Asia, and the pattern of education growing in tandem with economic development in Asia's NICs resembles that of Japan. At the same time, high educational standards in other East Asian countries keep

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educational administrators in Japan from resting on their laurels of educational success. An official from the Ministry of Education whom I spoke with expressed his concern for the heating up of "mathematical Olympics" with students of China and Korea, although most students and teachers are unaware of or unconcerned with international competitiveness when they take exams.

A fourth reason to acknowledge the presence of economic nationalism in the context of education is perhaps the most conspicuous concerning the topic of education and nation. National elites have power to monopolize definitions of curricula, the blueprints of state-inscribed definitions of "culture." Although recent scholars distinguish cultural nationalism from economic nationalism, I am not convinced that the topics should be divorced. My study de-emphasizes cultural nationalism mostly as a matter of scope, but also to suggest a broader context in which to evaluate national myths and state-prescribed ideology. Accordingly, I suggest two interfaces between cultural nationalism and economic nationalism that are relevant to this study.

For one thing, because the significance of national strength based on knowledge and trade is closely linked with technological developments, the creation of state-defined pictures or "sites" of memory should take into consideration the technology of the lens that frames the picture.31 For example, much has been made of the Japanese Ministry of Education's highly-publicized efforts to re-

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31 Takashi Fujitani adapts Pierre Nora's idea of lieux de mémoire as sites that "codify, condense [and] anchor" national memory. See Takashi Fujitani, "Inventing, Forgetting, Remembering: Toward a Historical ethnography of the Nation-State," in Harumi Befu, ed., Cultural Nationalism in East Asia: Representation and Identity (Berkeley: University of California Institute of East Asian Studies, 1993), p. 89.
introduce "patriotism" by such means as officially naming the prewar flag and anthem - symbols of war to many Japanese - as the "national flag" and "national anthem"; requiring use of the flag and anthem in schools, and controlling textbook content by careful scrutiny over references to the second world war. In the context of today's highly comprehensive and accelerated teaching methods, however, perhaps we should consider that these sites of national pride may be pictured like the view of Mt. Fuji from the newest shinkansen ("bullet" train), i.e., all in a blur. Thus, this study invites the possibility that the process of teaching dissipates memory as much as specific selection of content.

To explain further, Paul Virilio introduced the idea of speed in politics. With the importance of territory diminished, politics has become chronopolitical, depending on time, and transpolitical, depending on transportation or movement. In a continuous quest for faster methods of movement, we have reached "[the] end of a concept of politics based on dialogue, dialectic, time for reflection." Reflection time is very minimal in Japanese schooling methods. Teachers are highly pressed for time in moving from one lesson plan to the next. Students' schedules are filled with time-consuming tutorial services. Lessons are scraped down to their core factual data, especially in preparation for mock exams (tautology intended).


enabling the fastest possible transmission. Chronopolitics is thus inherent in educational politics. For this reason, despite the immediate impression that a concept such as "educational nationalism" might lend (as curricular control), the scope of the present study is more limited to the process of educating using methods such as exam-centered learning, rather than the qualitative substance of particular curricula.

The end-object of exam-centered learning, to stratify individuals according to merit and thus create a labor structure, is also intrinsic to the recognition of a society's socio-economic structure and the will to reproduce that structure as an issue of identity. This is the second consideration of interface between cultural nationalism and economic nationalism, and it brings us back to the need to re-position "national identity" in this discussion. Because "identity" in the context of the nation-state can be thought of as a conceptual, contested space in which nationalisms and images of nation permutate in response to political occurrences, the goal of an identity, imagery or ideology is to structure a "story" that can reproduce the identity of nation. Enloe's discussion of a "palindrome" is applicable here: the nation constitutes education (i.e., "culture") as a metaphor of itself, so that students will in turn reproduce the nation (i.e., "economy"). The two entities of nation and education can thus be read backwards or forwards, a palindrome such as the slogan, "The personal is political." In this case, "the student is the nation." 34

Let us examine one side of this palindromic reading: the nation-state constitutes education. Louis Althusser critically examined the idea of a nation-

state reproducing its socio-economic structure through education. Because the reproduction of labor takes place outside the firm, especially in education, he believed that education was more important than any other governmental structure for its capacity to reproduce the material conditions of production. Of particular interest is the state's necessity to "diversify" or stratify social classes according to its own economic necessity. Throughout this dissertation, we will see how Japanese elites have touted "diversity" in favorable terms to imply a freedom of existence for diverse individuals. Critics within Japan believe, however, that Japanese education aims to achieve "diversity" according to the sense used by Althusser: laborers with "diverse" skills must be cultivated to "submit" to the domination of the ruling class.35

The manifest, de jure "ideology" of a state, whether Capitalism, Communism, or emperor worship, is thus only part of the overall function of education to produce a labor economy; for this reason Althusser calls education a "state ideological apparatus," part of a superstructure acting both autonomously and in reciprocity with the socio-economic infrastructure.36 The "process" emphasized in this dissertation is thus the process of constructing society as a stratified labor market, creating education an isomorph of the nation itself. The child, not yet having an independent individual consciousness, is "socialized" in the cultural traditions of her community (including its cultural nationalism) and the established political goals of the nation (including its economic nationalism).


36 Althusser, Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays, p. 134.
This does not imply that the human is an instrument of simple passivity, however; the schoolchildren's actions are reciprocal with the state, and change occurs as communities and states adjust to changing political circumstances. Antonio Gramsci (whom Althusser echoed) beckoned an understanding of the other, elusive side of this palindrome: that schoolchildren reproduce the state. In his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci stressed the need to understand education, along with religion, folklore and other such public institutions as locations that produce consent—acquiescence through steady cultural conditioning to the socio-economic orders that facilitate the "hegemony" of the ruling class. Gramsci's work is a reminder that it is difficult to truly change hegemonic social orders even with nominally superficial changes in "identity." In this current watershed period of Japanese politics, we should thus be alert to voices that express *counter-hegemonic ideas*: accordingly, in Chapters Twelve and Thirteen, I will present examples of discourse that challenge entrenched social orders in Japan.

In the post-Communist global village, it has become commonly recognized that "economic security" as a narrative rivals in importance with "military security." The nation as a labor market in some ways mimics an "ideology," as leaders such as Iacocca continue to tout the importance of education as a strategic weapon in international trade wars. From the late 1980s in America, the value of images supporting "economic security" became enhanced, as literacy, numeracy and health became more than just measurements of basic development for less developed countries, but quasi-leading economic indicators for advanced nations as well.

We will see in the following chapter that Japan has emphasized the strategic importance of education to national security for over a century, and drew from this precedent in its rapid recovery from defeat in World War II. Today the Japanese readily acknowledge the function of education to create socio-economic stratifications, a so-called "academic-record society." Class gradations are less divided by income than in most societies, yet status differences according to level of education are meticulous and far-reaching. The way that "consent" to such social ordering can be maintained even with weak consciousness of allegiance to the "state" can be facilitated by theories of language and politics, presented henceforth.

**Language and National Identity**

Reference is made in this thesis to "national economic strategy," but it is important to see that packaging economic change occurs in strategies of language, or discourse. To change economics, people's ideas of education become linked to the needs of the nation to stratify its work force and thereby producing "consent." Micro strategies of discourse support the manifest, macro strategies of nations. In fact, Japan's official "economic strategy" was not as "strategic" as it seems to have been from popular imagery. As Laura Hein discovered in her study of Japan's growth period: "The Japanese by no means had a clear blueprint for their economic future, nor did all of their efforts succeed. . . . Like economic policymakers everywhere, they were reduced to trial and error."38 This thesis accordingly emphasizes micro strategies of "discourse" to understand how macro-economic

policy created its useful citizens. Discourse in this rendition is "a strategy of naming that selects certain rules, roles, and events for attention while throwing others into shadow."39 Through a variety of media, as presented in this thesis, Japan's (and America's) discourse of economic nationalism "named" education as important; it highlighted the "rules, roles and events" pertaining to education that became important in the postwar period.

The assumptions in this rendering of national identity and nationalisms are thus that the use of language relates to nationalism in a broad capacity (not just as throwaway slogans); that authorship of "discursive economies" has become more obscure – consisting of several actors within and without the state structure; that the conduits of national identity have proliferated, and that individuals are not passive receptors of ideology but active participants of discourse.

To break that down slowly, I make the following points:

First, language can be considered integral to cultural identity. In linguistic analysis, the idea that our language shapes our identity is indebted to the work linguists such as Benjamin Lee Whorf, whose analysis demonstrated that the segmentation of grammar in all languages is arbitrary, varying considerably from culture to culture, dialect to dialect. Thus, it is entirely possible, according to what became known as the "Whorf hypothesis," that one sees the world differently through different sets of grammars. Words that objectify the "elusive aspect of nature's endless variety" not only define "things" in culture, but in so doing, create

culture: "For as goes our segmentation in the face of nature, so goes our physics of the cosmos."\textsuperscript{40} An important foundation of culture is therefore its language.

Second, to qualify the Whorf hypothesis, language may shape culture but it does not literally "control" free human beings. Michel Foucault teaches that discourse creates arbitrary "orders" of knowledge.\textsuperscript{41} Therefore the idea that discourse defines socio-economic orders such as what we might come to know as "culture" is greatly refined by an understanding that words may be arbitrary but discourse has purpose and power. Any discourse enhances certain features of culture while inhibiting others, and cultures are volatile because of the presence of power.

For example, as stated, one might easily attribute the connection between economics and education in Japan as timelessly, apolitically, cultural. A great deal of educational fervor is cultural indeed: in Japan as well as the other Asian states with a Confucian heritage, meritocratic governments have been built on the foundations of highly competitive educational systems. But to over-emphasize culture is to overlook the historically constructed past, and to underestimate the capacity for change in the present and future. In this dissertation, I will be concerned with an economic nationalism "authored" from "above" by nations and corporations, indirectly diffused and reproduced at the level of households. The analysis necessarily involves the politics of culture, the vulnerability of culture to configurations of power, whether power in government, industry, media or society.

\textsuperscript{40} Benjamin Lee Whorf, "Languages and Logic," \textit{Technology Review} (April 1941).

"Power" in this regard is analyzed not as (strictly) juridical power operating from "above" society, but as power circulating within the social nexus. Power consists of "actions which modify actions," structuring the field of possibilities over free individuals. Social discourse forms the arteries of power: we reproduce power through our writing, speech and imagery – our discourse.

The depiction of the metaphor by Lakoff and Johnson helps to illustrate Foucault's basic definition of power as "actions that modify actions":

What is at issue is not the truth or falsity of a metaphor but the perceptions and inferences that follow from it and the actions that are sanctioned by it. In all aspects of life, not just in politics or in love, we define our reality in terms of metaphors and then proceed to act on the basis of the metaphors. We draw inferences, set goals, make commitments, and execute plans, all on the basis of how we in part structure our experience, consciously and unconsciously, by means of metaphor.

The dominant metaphors of economic nationalism include market, military and quantitative metaphors. We speak of *buying* and *selling* items and creating new *markets* for goods. We *fight* to gain access to markets, and when our efforts are in vain, we launch trade *wars*. We compare our progress through quantified tallies of leading economic indicators.

In this thesis, my point that education has merged with the discourse of economic nationalism hardly depicts a new phenomenon, but, in the United States, it is a newly significant phenomenon because of the invigorated importance of national economic strategies in the post-Cold War world. Hence, Americans have

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recently seen an escalation in the deployment of market, military and quantitative metaphors in educational discourse. Our thinking about education has thus become structured in the manner of economics. We highlight the productive aspects of education, e.g., the immediate economic measurable gains, while marginalizing the humanitarian aspects, e.g., the intangible qualitative long-term gains. Students have become "human resources" or educational "consumers." Military metaphors are pervasive, coinciding with American pride in military strategy. Immediately following the Gulf War, then-President George Bush introduced his "national strategy" for education, "The AMERICA 2000 Education Strategy," by trying to galvanize the public: "Operation Desert Storm was a triumph of American character, ability and technology - a victory for America and all it stands for. It helped show that our nation can do whatever it decides to do – and that our people can learn anything they need to learn."\(^{44}\)

Referring again to the significance of discursive strategies in economic or educational strategies, then-Education Secretary Lamar Alexander's preface to Bush's program befittingly states at the preface: "The AMERICA 2000 Education Strategy has a language of its own. One good way to begin reading this booklet is to turn first to the Glossary of Key Terms. In time, these terms will become familiar to the millions of people who are needed to make America all that it should be."\(^{45}\) With programs such as AMERICA 2000, quantitative criteria such as number of school days per year, international exam scores, number of television hours per week and so

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on also gained heightened significance – similar to the way the media used to present
the necessary facts and figures on weaponry in the United States and the former
Soviet Union.

In Japan, these metaphors are more entrenched in social discourse. Public
leaders do not use them to galvanize support; rather, everyday citizens and the mass
media circulate them to create the feeling that everyone is suffering together.

Students who gain early acceptance to schools are likened to rice "sold" before the
harvest (aotaga). To speak of the entrance exam system as "examination warfare,"
(jukensenso) of students as "soldiers," (senshitachi) of major exams as "decisive
battles," (kessen) is everyday parlance which one hears on the street, in the home, on
the television. As we will see in Chapter Six, the numerical testing system became so
pervasive that students themselves felt like representations of numbers.

Third, discourse shapes not only individual and social consciousness, but
often the very horizontal ties that create an imagination of "nation." Benedict
Anderson introduced the concept of understanding nationalism as an "imagined
community." Over the course of history, and especially during the eighteenth and
nineteenth centuries, loyalty to the state, in several areas of the world, ceased to be
merely "vertically" inscribed between ruler and ruled; the necessity of securing
"horizontal" ties of a common language, culture and national purpose also became a
cornerstone of national identity. The role of language is consequential in this regard
– not just the commonality of the language, assuring that all members of a group
understand the same set of concepts – but of the dissemination of commonly
understood language, allowing groups, sub-cultures and cultures who might have no
other reason to communicate to become unexpected members of the same readership
or audience – hence, members of "imagined communities." Anderson's succinct
thesis highlights the growth of "print capitalism," especially, the modern newspaper, as a major "origin" of modern nationalism. His point is that the first publications of newspapers, books and textbooks of that era generated the modern consciousness of "nation" — a limited comradeship decreed not centrally by a "sovereign" (viz., an emperor) — but consolidated from more decentralized locations as a "sovereign" entity, first through the "visible invisibility" of newly created fields of communication exchange, second by the standardization, temporally and spatially, of language, and third by the separation of languages of power from those of weakness.46

These criteria of the "imagined community" help us to re-consider disqualifying educational nationalism as a misnomer because people are more conscious of their household economic strategy than national economic strategy. A "limited comradeship" is formed in the educational rite of passage. The ubiquitous education guides standardized into numerical criteria have created new forums where students can "imagine" the performances of students all over the prefecture and nation. Students from Hokkaido to Kyushu are profoundly aware of the status differences of various forms of schooling throughout the nation and where they fit in, according to their test scores. Loyalty to cohorts is essential; Japanese parents are extremely reluctant to allow their students to transfer schools once they are securely enrolled. When husbands are transferred, the mother often stays in the original location with the children even if the separation span lasts for several years. Parents and teachers have regarded transferring schools within Japan, and more importantly, outside the nation, as potentially dangerous to the educational developments of children, who might lose their places in the entrance exam maze or be teased or bullied by new

classmates. The limited comradeship of "nation" reproduced in educational methods thus involves strong loyalties to ordering and educational "place." Such a loyalty illustrates how "consent" to socio-economic orders is maintained even without an overt or over-arching cultural narrative.

Fourth, because the state has become more obscure as media have proliferated, the strategy of national governments has become that of containing, manipulating and legitimating their own representations. Strategies of political economy necessarily become strategies of "linguistic economy." My inclusion of state-authored identity focuses on national plans such as "Education to Cope with the New Age," introduced by the Ministry of Education in 1991, and a "Outline of the Five-Year Plan for a Better Quality of Life," introduced by the Economic Planning Agency in 1992. Not all national images are inscribed by national governments, however, and the proliferation of state-sponsored idioms must also rely on media conduits which lay outside the state's bureaucratic purview. The image of "Japan, Inc.," for example, invites a more indirect approach to national identity, for surely this pervasive representation of a nation/corporation did not emanate from the central bureaucracy or even inside the nation of Japan; it was more likely an epithet which began outside Japan (viz., the U.S.) and gained circulation through the Japanese press. To some extent, this may also be true of "economic superpower." I do not know if the Japanese government touted the expression in official discourse as a national priority; if so, it was likely minimal. In the government documents which I present in this paper, however, the topic of Japan's postwar economic nationalism is addressed retroactively, referring to the era when Japan endeavored to

"catch up" with the advanced nations of the West, implying that such an era has already passed.

Thus, if a nation's "identities" and images do not necessarily emanate from "above," in today's world of vast and rapid communication, they may come from outside governments, from foreign countries, private companies, the mass media—and all of the above. Yet bureaucracies, both governmental and non-governmental, may find it in their interest to seize images and shape their own narratives in order to maintain legitimacy and power. This may be called the politics of national "mythmaking." "Mythical speech," explains Roland Barthes, "presupposes a signifying consciousness," which "[imposes] meaning at one stroke." The function of the myth is not to deny images but to talk about them: "[Myth] purifies [images], it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact." Myths represent simplified, "depoliticized speech."48

Therefore, as Harumi Befu expresses it, "National identity is not a fixed, objectified, and eternally defined entity; instead, it is continually in the remaking to fit the needs of the creators and consumers. As national needs change, as historical circumstances alter, as new groups with new political agendas emerge, differing definitions of the nation are packaged to meet the new needs and offered to the populace."49 We sense from this passage not only the continuous flux of nationalisms, but also the diversity in the number of contenders to the mythmaking.


It is appropriate, therefore, to speak of narratives of national identity. Publicly recognized discourses that merge individuals with a collective national image. The same happens in reverse: the "nation" becomes a metaphor of an imagined individual identity. In the case of "Japan, Inc.," the corporation - "Inc." - has become the metaphor of nation, to underscore the significance of the symbiotic relationship between the Japanese government and economic priorities. Nations likewise conduct relations with each other as though they were individual entities with personal characteristics, rather than governments presiding over multitudes of individual beings.

Therefore, many of the objectives of economic nationalism, including its construction of social consent, have been achieved through the conduits of discourse, stratified across various public and private conversations. It is useful at this point to also borrow here M.M. Bakhtin's conceptualization to understand these simultaneously stratifying and unifying tendencies of discourse: heteroglossia. "For any individual consciousness living in it, language is not an abstract system of normative forms but rather a concrete heteroglot conception of the world." Language is both one's own and someone else's, expressed in various ways according to various conceptions of the world. In the novel, Bakhtin's exemplary genre, heteroglossia is "double-voiced discourse," expressing "the direct intention of the character who is speaking, and the refracted intention of the author."

What Bakhtin is emphasizing is that, in the example of this research, parents who stress education may do so with the direct intention of helping their own

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children and not the nation, but they also "refract" the intention of the "author," i.e.,
national policymakers. The process of carrying ideas through many layers of social
intercourse is naturally very complex; yet the point is that educators or parents,
however apolitical they may think themselves, do not represent merely the
disengaged "means" of policy transmission, but active, participating subjects of such
policy. Teachers, students and parents necessarily adapt someone else's policy –
whether that of the Ministry of Education or the cram school industry – to their
specific, original intentions.

Yet such an economic or educational nationalism was not a nationalism
which required – as Benedict Anderson puts it, "colossal sacrifices" of citizens,
alluding to the sacrifices of war.51 Without a doubt, Japanese people have borne
tremendous sacrifices during the period of high growth, as we shall see in Chapter
Two. But there is little evidence that such sacrifices were the result of a
consciousness of nation, or that they were directed toward the abstract entity of
"nation." In education, people basically want what is best for their children; in the
workplace, they want what is best for their firms. In comparison with the nationalist
language of American policymakers in the 1980s, who vociferously sought to link
education with national economic competitiveness, one is struck by the relative
absence of such discourse on the Japan side. Instead, in recent years, the notion of
schools becoming linked to national economic strategy is more apt to elicit negative
impressions. Though one can find evidence of such official discourse from the mid-
1960s to the early 1970s, it all but disappeared by the 1980s, when educational
problems became associated with social fervor rather than deliberate public policies.

\[51\text{Anderson, }\text{Imagined Communities, }\text{p. 16.}\]
Research Methods

This thesis is a presentation of how political images and ideas are made intelligible to ordinary citizens, and how such ideas are refracted in various social media, including policy documents, mass media, popular culture and personal discourse. Some of my informal participant observation that became the background of this topic occurred before beginning graduate studies, when I was employed as a juku instructor in Japan during the mid-1980s. During my six years in Japan, I also was a research student on a scholarship from the Ministry of Education, and I worked as a counselor for Japanese students in a branch campus of the University of West Florida. All of these experiences contributed to my knowledge of Japanese education and society.

From 1988 to 1989, I gathered interviews from ten mothers in the Hiroshima area while I was a research student at Hiroshima University. Those interviews were "intensive interviews," in which mothers were questioned on three occasions for one hour each time. Lofland and Lofland describe "focused" or "intensive" interviews as a method of research in which a small sample of subjects are interviewed for a prolonged period in order to tap into the subjects' special knowledge of their own situations. The intensive interview therefore helps to "gather the richest possible data," and "to discover the informant's experience of a particular topic or situation."52

In 1993, I again returned to Japan for six weeks through a scholarship travel grant from the East-West Center. My interest at that time was to collect recent

documents on educational policies and change, and to consult government leaders and other informed citizens regarding recent educational problems. I was especially interested in understanding how the Japanese viewed their educational system in an international context, because it was during the late 1980s and early 1990s that several articles appeared in the American press (as well as elsewhere) depicting Japan's education as the new model of economic achievement for advanced societies.

This introductory chapter has been comparative, in order to situate the salience of Japanese education in bilateral U.S.-Japan relations as well as in the "global" picture of education changing to meet new political and economic circumstances. The comparative notes on policy and business statements made by American leaders, such as those introduced at the outset of this chapter and the following, present for me a set of identity issues not necessarily confined to "America" and "Japan." It may be that I had to approach my analysis as an "American," but I surely did not feel that my perspective was the same as that of Kearns and Doyle, promoting education as the new Olympic sport. I did not believe I was writing about comparative education, for as much as I appreciate that field, I wanted to step back and look at educational crises as identity issues instead of come to quick solutions as to which system "works best." Likewise, I defer the question of "how" to match economics and education to economists; with the background established that the fruits of education are long-term and difficult to measure as economic indicators, I chose to proceed with the question of how education is related to a collective identity that has become increasingly "economic" in the post-Cold War world. Since many of the issues discussed in this thesis are gender-related, the borders of gender also intersected with those of nationality and discipline. Finally, I must acknowledge again the academic bias of this research. Historians and social
scientists write about nationalism, distinguishing between cultural and economic nationalism, and situating nationalisms in holistic surroundings. Yet often the average person, in America but especially in Japan, does not situate events and discourses in her or his environment in a framework of nationalism. Thus the challenge of this work is to sensitive to all of these border issues – of nationality, discipline, gender and intellectualization.

In the body of this dissertation, I will turn from this panoramic view of education *economicus*, to addressing specific issues in contemporary Japan. Today, Japan's interface with education and nation is currently in a stage of transition, from an education which supported a mercantalist national identity which brought about the "economic superpower," to a new formulation of education, or "knowledge-value" in what the Japanese government now calls a "lifestyle superpower." Japan's new plans for education are designed to better serve the needs of individual students. The "lifestyle superpower" embraces publicly-announced policies designed to improve the quality of life for individual consumers, and make the country more compatible with its regional neighbors and economic cohorts. Both recent educational plans as well as the lifestyle superpower therefore challenge the image and identity of Japan as group-oriented, materialistic and expansionist. They intend to make Japan into a country that respects the individual, cultivates the quality of life, and honors its responsibility in the world of nations.

Because this new construction of imagery is directed toward the identification of Japan in the world of nations, conflict with ingrained domestic identities is to be expected. After reviewing the construction of educational knowledge from the prewar period of empire-building to the "economic superpower" and proposed new
"lifestyle superpower," I focus on three areas of conflict. First, Japanese people have grown accustomed to nonformal educational practices, such as companies that market a convenient numerical evaluation (hensachi). Many people are reluctant to give up their "empowerment" gained from the evaluation which the government now wants to abolish. Second, the political economy that supports and is supported by education continues to exacerbate gender inequalities such as those that produce the phenomenon of "education mamas." The first two issues are integrally connected with Japan's second stratum of schools, its private nonformal "exam industry." The third issue demonstrates how the legacy of bureaucratic superiority, diffused at the local level, maintains power over students with its kōsoku, school regulations, that are often enforced to militaristic precision. By highlighting one individual's struggle against school regulations, this chapter also acknowledges the power of human agency in social discourse. A concluding chapter will then wrap up some of the common features of education economicus.
CHAPTER II

Ironies of the "Japan Shock"
and Education from Empire to Economic Superpower

Seek knowledge throughout the world and greatly add to the life of the foundation of the Imperial regime.

Emperor Meiji, 1868

Ought we not to recall that what brought forth the progress of our nation today, despite the fact that defeat in war caused us to lose territory and left us surrounded by destruction, is the education which our forerunners bequeathed to us? . . . If we are to build the nation of Japan, we must build human beings.

Prime Minister Ikeda Hayato, 1962

Japanese education works. It is not perfect, but it has been demonstrably successful in providing modern Japan with a powerfully competitive economy. . . . We Americans, being a pragmatic people, would therefore be well-advised to learn what we can from Japanese education if only because of its manifest success.

William Bennett, U.S. Secretary of Education, 1987

America's enchantment with Japanese education is significant – indeed, ironic – for several reasons. For one thing, Americans of the 1980s who looked to Japan as their model were actually enamored of Japanese policies of the 1960s, for that was when policies joining education to state economic priorities were vigorously pursued in Japan. Those policies, moreover, borrowed from precedents established when Japan became a modern nation in the late nineteenth century. Second, it was
largely an American contingency that tried to reform Japanese education along
American lines during the Allied Occupation of Japan. Third, during the 1980s, just
as American leaders – now in the reverse position as students rather than mentors –
began using Japan as a reference point to inspire greater economic and educational
efficacy, many people in Japan were entering a period of disenchantment with the
marriage of economics and education. Leaders and rank-and-file citizens alike had
come to regret social customs and public policies which put too much emphasis on
economics, and on education as a handmaiden of economic strength.

These ironies will be kept in mind in the course of this chapter, which
discusses two important periods when Japan harnessed education to achieve
national public priorities: those which led to the militarism of the early twentieth
century and the “economic superpower” of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

Introducing the American fascination with Japanese education at the outset of this
chapter, then proceeding to Japan’s educational practices under the eras of
militarism and high economic growth, we can also note that educational policies
develop not merely as domestic policies, but also as quasi-foreign policies addressing
the need for Japan – or the U.S. – to establish its identity in an international
context.

Ironies of Japan as Model

Economists have long studied the relationship of education to economic
development, especially in less developed areas. The concerns here are for a literate
populace that understands and implements basic health measures, family planning,
environmental respect and other requirements of social well-being.
The Sputnik challenge of 1957 reinvigorated national educational policies, in
challenging Americans and other competitors to revamp science, mathematics and
foreign language requirements. Not all students, however, would be called on to
build missiles or spy on foreign countries; therefore, the educational changes
effected by the Sputnik shock, in America at least, are likely to be surpassed by the
"Japan shock." The incentive to develop knowledge for the sake of the nation,
defined now by economic strength, may compel more comprehensive changes in the
way average citizens view education. It is not just the scientists and spies but all
students, as future workers, who contribute to the overall economic productivity of
the nation.

Thus, with the rise of Japan as an economic power, schooling as an indicator
of worker performance in a global context became a newly relevant topic of interest
among ordinary citizens as well as policy makers, in developed as well as less
developed areas. To many, "our" products versus "their" products translated into
"our" brains and skills versus "their" brains and skills. This highlighting of
education as perhaps the single most important long-term indicator of national
strength occurred, in large part, due to such factors as the rising importance of
"economic security" in the wake of the "peace dividend," the increased significance of
knowledge and information as sources of power, and the success story of Japan as a
"model" of both economic and educational performance.

The impetus for generating in the American public an alert awareness of the
connection between education and national economic competitiveness began as
early as 1979, when Harvard professor Ezra Vogel introduced his book on what
Americans should learn from Japan, which bore the foreboding title, Japan as
In 1983, the U.S. government followed up Vogel’s admonishment to compete with Japanese students with its study, *A Nation at Risk*, cataloguing American students’ performance in exams against the performance of students of other advanced nations, namely, Japan; the report led to the enactment of educational reforms in every state. More importantly, “educational competitiveness” then took on a double meaning for Americans. It did not refer merely to students competing against one another for high scores and scarce opportunities; it referred to nations competing against one another on the basis of knowledge: knowledge as the prerequisite of national power, strength, and stability.

At the same time, when America’s journalists, scholars, politicians and economists were proposing new ideas, especially economic ideas, they often made reference the major competitor of Japan. Many pundits and policymakers in the 1980s began to suggest that America develop an “industrial policy” to compete with that of Japan.

Likewise, as education, with its “human resources,” came to be assessed as the key ingredient for economic success, Japan’s educational system entered the American spotlight as never before. Merry White titled her anthropological overview of Japanese education, *The Japanese Educational Challenge,* implying a “challenge” for Americans to “compete” through schools as we do through trade. Her 1987 book

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was marketed to the general public and received with much interest and enthusiasm to an audience previously unfamiliar with Japanese culture. Similarly, *Japanese Education Today*, published the same year under the auspices of a joint U.S.-Japan commission, CULCON (United States-Japan Conference on Cultural and Educational Exchange), was distributed to American public schools and widely publicized by reporters and opinion writers. A frequently cited passage, designated as the "lesson" for America, was then-Secretary of Education William J. Bennett's quip that "Japanese education works [emphasis in original]." Proof that it "works" referenced the "ends" of educational achievement, namely economic competitiveness, as more important than the "means," to complete the passage cited as an epigraph:4

Japanese education works. It is not perfect, but it has been demonstrably successful in providing modern Japan with a powerfully competitive economy, a broadly literate population, a stable democratic government, a civilization in which there is relatively little crime or violence, and a functional society wherein the basic technological infrastructure is sound and reliable. One may not attribute these accomplishments entirely to the education system, but it would be folly to deny that the education system has strongly reinforced them.

We Americans, being a pragmatic people, would therefore be well-advised to learn what we can from Japanese education if only because of its manifest success.

Learning from Japanese education, "if only because of its manifest [economic] success" then became more noticeably audible as the rallying cry for Iacocca and many other business leaders. With as much verve or more than educators, they brandished the need to link education to the imperatives of economic and labor policies in America.

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International incidents often create narratives that amplify public discourse. Shortly before the release of *Japanese Education Today*, then-Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro made an off-hand statement to party members in which he associated Japan's "intelligence level" with its ethnic homogeneity. Praising Japan as "a high education society and a considerably intelligent society," he slipped in a note of racism with his adulation of educational nationalism:

> [At the close of the Tokugawa era [1868], merchant capital was well developed and a bourgeois revolution was able to take place. The literacy rate of 50 percent miraculously demonstrates the progress of Japanese education compared with the rest of the world. In Europe, it was only 20 to 30 percent, and in America today there are still many blacks who can't even read.

Another translation quoted Nakasone as continuing: "In America, there are many blacks, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, and so on, and the [intelligence] level is still very low on average." A flurry of commentaries flared through America's mass media, remarking on not only the "nature" issue of race and intelligence, but also on the comparative strengths of the "nurture" issue of educational systems in Japan and America.

The pleas for the U.S. to reconnect its educational system to economic imperatives again took a nastier tone in early 1992, shortly after then-President George Bush returned humiliated from an unsuccessful economic summit in Tokyo. The president had not only failed to obtain genuine commitments from his Japanese counterparts to purchase American auto parts, he also vomited at the table of an

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important dinner. Ten days later, a Japanese leader added fuel to the already-heated US-Japan relations, by publicly referring to Americans as "lazy" and "illiterate." Seventy-nine year-old Sakurauchi Yoshio, speaker of Japan's lower house of Parliament, was quoted as saying that nearly a third of the American workforce couldn't read well enough to follow written instructions. As a result, American products have "a high ratio of bad parts," and America might soon become "Japan's subcontractor." Moreover, "The source of the problem is the inferior quality of U.S. labor. . . . U.S. workers are too lazy. They want high pay without working."

A few days later, Prime Minister Miyazawa Kiichi also declared, in an apparent slip of tongue, that Americans lacked "a proper work ethic."

Caught off guard, Americans' reactions to the charges of illiteracy and laziness ranged from the sober statements of an official from the U.S. Department of Education, who stated that while there are many ways to measure literacy, only five per cent of America's workforce could be said to be illiterate – to the silly sketches of TV comedy programs such as Cheers or Saturday Night Live that queried whether or not Japanese were indeed smarter than Americans. The ugliest retort came from Senator Ernest Hollings (D-S.C.). Praising American workers while on a tour of an industrial plant, the senator remarked, "You should draw a mushroom cloud and

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7 David E. Sanger, "A Top Japanese Politician Calls U.S. Work Force Lazy," New York Times, January 21, 1992, p. C1+. Sanger notes that the Japanese newspapers, Yomiuri Shimbun and Mainichi Shimbun, quoted Sakurauchi as having stated that 30% of Americans were illiterate, but other a political secretary from the leader's party later claimed that Sakurauchi did not cite a specific figure and that his speech was taken out of context.

put underneath it, 'Made in America by lazy and illiterate Americans and tested in Japan.' 9 Though the plant workers applauded, it is likely that Hollings' comments offended as many Americans as Japanese.

Meanwhile, educators and politicians continued to admonish that American students are competing not just with each other, but with their counterparts in Japan and Germany. Only a few days before the Sakurauchi remarks made world headlines, the prominent educator, Ernest Boyer, had told the U.S. Senate Labor Committee: 'It is my deep conviction that education and the economy are inextricably interlocked, and if we do not begin to invest more fully in our human resources—most especially in our youngest children—both the economic and civic vitality of the nation will decline.' 10

Yet, during the peak period of America's enchantment with Japanese education, from the publication of A Nation At Risk in 1983 to Sakurauchi's comments in 1992, there was no counterpart in Japan similar to the ideas being officially touted in the U.S., namely, the harnessing of education to national economic policy. The policies which brought about Japan's emphasis on education as economic policy were predominantly written in the 1960s. Furthermore, those policies of the 1960s are rooted in Meiji era Japan (1868-1912). Bennett, Kearns, Doyle and the other champions for education as national economic strategy were therefore suggesting the emulation of the Japan of twenty, thirty, or even one hundred years ago.


Ray Marshall and Marc Tucker, two other proponents of adopting Japanese-style education in America, have called this approach "human resource capitalism," in which the foundation of state power is "the new [to Americans] conception of the role of human resources in the economy." The state should no longer consider its key resources as natural resources. They should instead be "an adequate supply of high-quality human resources," along with "business strategies that emphasize quality and productivity, and a pattern of work organization that emphasizes both of these goals." Interestingly, what Marshall and Tucker try to promote as "human resource capitalism" is a belated acknowledgement not only of an idea which the Japanese have held for over one hundred years – in lieu of their known lack of natural resources – but also, as we have seen, of what Lyotard and other theorists have called a transition to postmodernism.

Historical Development: Japan as a Military Power

The Japanese nation, indeed, was literally founded on the commitment to education. This was manifest in three significant national policies and their accompanying documents stressing education as the foundation of national strength: the Charter Oath on Education of 1868; the Education Code of 1872, and most importantly, the Imperial Rescript on Education, issued in 1890. None was put into effect without considerable resistance necessitating increasingly harsh control, culminating in the gradual suppression of criticism and acceptance of the highly state-controlled, ideologically imbued education system which became linked to the ultranationalism of the Japanese military Empire.

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The arrival of Commodore Perry in 1853, followed up by the treaty signed with the United States the following year, marked the Japanese entry into the world of nations – largely, the Western world – propelling a consciousness of "catch up." To that end, when the new leaders took the reigns of government, it was necessary to not only consolidate a national identity through the so-called "restoration of Imperial will," but also to create a new foundation of knowledge, and both were accomplished through the school system. Japan would be unified by a newly constructed mythology of emperor worship, later taught in schools, and a new foundation of knowledge would be based on "Western knowledge, Japanese spirit" (wa-kon-yo-se). Hence the first document, the Charter Oath issued by the Emperor Meiji in 1868, the start of the "Meiji Restoration," declares, "Seek knowledge throughout the world and greatly add to the life of the Imperial regime."\(^\text{12}\) The so-called "Restoration of Imperial will" would unify the diverse regions of Japan under a mythology of emperor worship, while "knowledge sought throughout the world" would fortify that unity with a clear boundary between knowledge of Self and knowledge of Other.

Government officials indeed sought knowledge throughout the world, and the way to teach knowledge: education. Prior to Japan's official "opening," knowledge of the outside world had been steadily filtering in through highly controlled conditions from Korea, China and Holland (whose "Dutch learning" enabled selected scholars to study Western medicine, militarism and other disciplines). Now the government missions sent future leaders of the Japanese nation to Europe and America to study models of educational development and statesmanship, and

\[^{12}\text{Cited in Passin, Society and Education in Japan, p. 258.}\]
thousands of oyatoi gaikokujin (foreign employees) were brought to Japan as teachers and advisors to help construct schools and institutions to jump-start the motor of the new knowledge-craving nation.\textsuperscript{13}

Not surprisingly, the early results of their efforts to import Western education to Japanese soil yielded an uncomfortable eclecticism: "From the elementary school to the university, there were few significant elements in the early Meiji educational system that were devised and planned by the Japanese themselves. Foreign teachers were invited to Japan, and foreign systems, textbooks, and teacher-training methods were imported," remarks Nagai Michio, an education historian and former Minister of Education in the 1970s.\textsuperscript{14} Efforts on the part of ruling elites to keep "Japanese spirit" untainted by "Western knowledge" were no doubt considerable.

But the government was keenly aware of the fragility of its power base, and sought to strengthen the newly forged national identity through even further consolidation of education. Thus, the second policy was the 1872 Education Code (Gakusei), which unified all of Japan's pre-existing schools, and added more to conform with a the policy's intent to develop mass, compulsory education. At that time, Japan's schools consisted of an estimated 11,302 diverse independently-established elementary schools – called terakoya or temple schools – for lower-class commoners: 416 "local schools" (gōgaku) officially established for


commoners, and 277 clan schools (hankō) for children of upper classes. Teachers and students would now have to unify their language and their curriculum in order to forge a national identity. Leaders had great faith in the ability of commoners to become educated, nationalized and "enlightened."16

The nationalization of educational structure and curriculum occurred in tandem with the other goals of the Meiji restoration, industrial growth and the establishment of a modern, national military system. Leaders of both goals recognized the importance of education, but the military leaders in particular were adept at using education to service their ends. One member of the 1872 Iwakura Mission which sent influential leaders of the Meiji government abroad to "seek knowledge" was General Yamada Kengi. He stated that, "The foundation for a strong army is not simply a matter of giving arms to soldiers but rather to provide an education for the people as a whole, without distinction between town and country, and [without] discrimination of class or rank."17 Armed with one of the Meiji era's most prominent slogans, "rich country, strong army" (fukoku kyōheij), schools became structured to support the industrial needs of militarization. Some schools became training grounds for soldiers, and from 1937 to 1945, it was estimated that over half of the male students of the country were conscripted.18


16 Fujitani, "Inventing, Forgetting, Remembering," p. 100.

17 Cited in Passin, Society and Education in Japan, p. 65.

18 Cited in Passin, Society and Education in Japan, p. 139.
The third, and the most historically significant, document to consolidate the nation of Japan under the banner of education was created as an antidote to the Charter Oath's confusion wrought from the influx of foreign ideas. The Imperial Rescript on Education, promulgated in 1890, marked a turning point: Japan's construction of a national identity would no longer be geared toward catching up with the West, but with the establishment of "independence" from the West. Unfortunately, such an independence meant brutally annexing Asian countries to establish a broader fortress. The Rescript constructed a school curriculum based on the mythology of ancestor and emperor worship, appeasing those planners who wanted to reconstruct education to accord with "traditions" of the Japanese nation. It fused many simple precepts of Confucianism that many Japanese were already familiar with. It was also made compatible with the organismic German and Prussian models of institutional consolidation, which then became favored over the humanistic approaches debated at the time.

As with many symbols of ultranationalism in prewar Japan, the text of the document was embellished by its context. All students, including those in the colonized areas of Korea, Manchuria and Taiwan, were required to recite the Rescript daily while bowing before the Imperial Portrait. Thus, the Rescript's prosaic rendering of the Japanese Empire as bequeathed by Imperial Ancestors, and its conjoining of Empire with Education, no doubt still echoes in the minds of elderly Japanese who lived through that era19:

[Loyalty and piety to Imperial Ancestors] is the glory of the fundamental character of Our Empire, and herein also lies the source of Our education... Should emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the State: and

19 Cited in Passin, Society and Education in Japan, p. 151.
thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth. . . .

The most important political idea developed in this era and largely as a result of the Imperial Rescript was that of *seikyō itchi*. The general administrative meaning of this compound is "the unity of Church and State." In the Japanese context, however, the characters of *seikyō* were formed from *seijō* (政治), or "government," and *kyōiku* (教育) or "education," producing the meaning of "the unity of State and Education." The result was the development of an educational system which "lacked both the freedom to criticize and the autonomy to check political power," according to former Minister of Education Nagai Michio. The "government as family" idea inculcated through the Rescript also meant that those in power would have few chances of rebellion from "family members" from below. Thus, both education as an institution as well as citizens in general were prevented from putting the necessary "brakes" on the power of this unity of Education and State which would grow ever stronger until its "crash" – meaning the defeat of the Japan military superpower in World War II. The establishment of *seikyō itchi* was thus "a major turning point," according to Nagai. It became the "Achilles' heel of Meiji education," squelching all progressive developments and affirming a "bureaucratic supremacy" derived from the traditional Asian meritocratic principal that, "he who occupies the seat of power is capable of the highest virtue." Of course, the tragedy of prewar education was to allow the embrace of national identity and militarism that resulted in the second world war. Yet, implying the persistence of *seikyō itchi* in today's education, Nagai
(writing in the 1960s) asks, "Deep in our hearts, do we not embrace this faith today? And yet how often have historical events betrayed our expectations!"20

Post-Occupation Japan and Genesis of the "Economic Superpower"

When the U.S.-led Allied Occupation of Japan began at the close of the war in 1945, their well-prepared Education Commission, composed of 27 prominent educators, moved swiftly and efficaciously to democratize Japanese education. The goals which they accomplished were to revise the curriculum and teaching practices to eliminate militarism, Shinto religion, the course of "morals" associated with heavy political indoctrination, and any other practices and persons associated with ultranationalism. To encourage and mandate democratic educational concepts, the Occupation leaders replaced the Imperial Rescript with democratic documents, including a new Imperial Rescript in which the emperor denounced his divinity; the Fundamental Law of Education confirming a free and democratic educational system, and the School Education Law specifying the principles of the Fundamental Law. The Commission also decentralized the Ministry of Education and formed the 6-3-3-4 system21 in the pattern of the United States: allowed the independence of private schools; democratized teacher education, and mandated sexual equality in education.

As the Occupation ended, however, the Japanese public became extremely polarized politically, over the maintenance of Occupation reforms as well as over the

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21 Six years of elementary school, three years of junior high, three years of high school and four years of college or university.
international atmosphere surrounding the end of the Occupation, which ended with
the enactment on April 28, 1952 of the San Francisco Peace Treaty and U.S.-Japan
Security Treaty. The minority left wing, represented in government by the Japan
Socialist Party and in education by the Japan Teachers' Union, protested the
treaties and wanted to keep the Occupation reforms intact. Ironically, perhaps in
the impending Cold War atmosphere, their ideology to support those American-led
reforms was often inspired by Marxism.

Meanwhile the majority and increasingly conservative right wing, represented
by the Liberal Democratic Party and Ministry of Education, wanted to turn back
many of the reforms of the Occupation period, motivated by the need to reaffirm a
solid, stable Japanese identity. Such leaders were actually joined by some
Occupation authorities who were beginning to question their own liberalism as the
Cold War approached. It was one year before the end of the Occupation, in 1951,
that General MacArthur's successor, General Matthew Ridgway, invited the
Japanese government to form a "Committee for the Examination of Occupation
Reform Policy" to evaluate educational reforms. The committee recommended such
nationalistic priorities as returning to government publication of all textbooks,
changing elected boards of education to appointed boards, and restoring the
Ministry of Education's governance over most educational matters. At this time, the
Minister of Education, Amano Teiyū, made a plan titled, "An Outline for National
Moral Practice," calling for a renewal of national morality based on respect for the
emperor. The importance of the State was being lost, he claimed, in the
contemporary focus on the individual or on the international community. He
wished to call on individuals to "contribute to the well-being of the State," which he
called, "the womb of our existence, the ethical and cultural core of our collective

66
existence and activities."\textsuperscript{22} Amano was unable to pass the plan, yet echoes of pre-war patriotism continued to be heard.

Two years later, moreover, aiming perhaps at the crux of uncertainty over Japan's role in the Cold War, these trials of patriotic reassertion were joined by suggestions to remilitarize. The Vice President of the United States, Richard Nixon, declared that Japan's Peace Constitution – the cornerstone of Occupation reforms preventing Japan from once again becoming a military power – was a "mistake."\textsuperscript{23} Ikeda Hayato, the head of the Liberal Democratic Party's Policy Research Committee who became prime minister in 1960, issued a joint statement with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robertson advocating remilitarization and questioning the fate of "the youth who must now assume the responsibility of safeguarding the Japanese nation," when they were trained throughout the Occupation to never take up arms.\textsuperscript{24}

Ikeda's plans for remilitarization also failed, but Japan's peace constitution would remain until today (when it is more fragile than ever). Yet over the next decade, many of the other proposals to correct the "excesses of democratization" became law. In what became known appropriately as the "reverse course," the conservative dominated government began passing several rounds of legislation to undermine or undo many of the outcomes of the Occupation reforms, by


\textsuperscript{23} Cited in Horio, \textit{Educational Thought and Ideology}, p. 148.

\textsuperscript{24} Cited in Horio, \textit{Educational Thought and Ideology}, p. 148.
re-centralizing State control over labor disputes, police authority and education. Although the government could not reserve the right to monopolize textbooks, it nevertheless "achieved its purpose by developing effective control mechanisms that went a long way toward making a monopoly necessary."25

It was against this atmosphere of social and political volatility that Prime Minister Ikeda, taking office in 1960, announced his National Income Doubling Plan. If his plans to demolish the Peace Constitution failed, this plan — like a "peace dividend" — succeeded more than expected. Investment in infrastructure and heightened consumer activity quickly propelled the country into the high growth period which would last until the early 1970s. The plan was specifically geared to quiet demonstrations against foreign policy, and it also coopted critics on the right who demanded at least some assertion of nationhood. The Income Doubling Plan therefore represented a turning point in Japanese society, according to Laura Hein, by mediating tensions among social groups and political rivals, and consolidating everyone with the satisfaction of higher consumer welfare and commonly shared goals.26

Such commonly shared goals progressed from the "three treasures" of 1957 — a washing machine, vacuum cleaner and refrigerator — to the three C's of 1966 — a cooler (air conditioner), car and color TV, and then to the three V's of 1973 — a villa.


vacansu (overseas travel) and visit (guests for dinner). These definitive markers of consumer culture shaped public memory of this era of optimism and high growth.

Doubling incomes of ordinary citizens involved harnessing education to meet the "manpower" demands of society. Education planning constituted a major plank in the program; hence, this is the juncture when education conspicuously became a part of official national economic policy in postwar Japan. Investment in science and engineering expanded; high school and university enrollment increased dramatically, and new agricultural and technical senior high schools were established.28

To have education meet the demands of the expanding economic infrastructure, planners had to consider a number of circumstances. First, as with other countries at the end of wartime, the return of soldiers and improved living conditions resulted in a baby boom between 1947-1949. Table 1, presenting Japan's birth rate, death rate and natural increase rate (difference between births and deaths) shows the sharp rise in the population immediately following the war. The high birth rate of 34.5 births per 1000 people in 1947 represented an increase over previous years, but was not significant in comparison with figures from the 1920s. Yet because of increased birth rates and lower death rates, the rate of natural population increase was 11.9 per one thousand people in the latter 1930s, climbing to 19.9 in 1947, then to its highest point of 21.8 in 1948, and declining slightly to 21.6 in 1949.


TABLE 1

Births, Deaths and Natural Increase in Population Growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Population (1000)</th>
<th>Birth Rate (per 1000)</th>
<th>Death Rate (per 1000)</th>
<th>Natural Increase (per 1000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1935-39</td>
<td>69,254*</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>78,101</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>83,200</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>93,419</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>103,720</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Population for the year 1935.

During the high growth period of the 1960s and early 1970s, therefore, this baby boom cohort began entering high school, college and the work force. Because of the postwar educational changes, all students had received free compulsory education that would make them eligible to compete for high school and university. Moreover, improved economic conditions gave more families the incentive to send children to higher levels of education. (High school, not being compulsory education, required tuition.) In the era of consumer optimism, having one's children well-educated was becoming a new status marker replacing prewar class consciousness. Table 2 shows the increase of entrants to kindergarten, high school and university.
during the postwar period. (Throughout the entire period, elementary and secondary school attendance was over 99%.)

TABLE 2
Historical Trends in the Proportion of the Age Group Enrolled in Educational Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>% 5-yr. olds in kindergarten</th>
<th>% students going to sr. high</th>
<th>% students going to higher ed.*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>82.1</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>94.2</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>94.1</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* "Percentage calculated by dividing each year's number of entrants to universities (degree-granting courses only) and junior colleges (regular courses only) by the number of lower secondary school graduates of three years ago."


Policymakers therefore sought to match the growing educational incentives of households with the growing economic needs of the nation and the growing population, which I will describe more fully below. In addition to the income doubling plan, throughout the 1960s – much like America of the 1980s – politicians and economists alike issued several public statements and enacted several public policies to elevate the importance of education as a state resource in public consciousness. Such policies included:
First, Prime Minister Ikeda's "Income Doubling Plan," as mentioned, emphasized the role of education, recalling the impetus of the Meiji era to prioritize knowledge as a state resource. The plan stressed the alignment of labor to meet new scientific and technological demands, urging that Japan should strive to be technologically self-sufficient, rather than assimilating methods from overseas. To meet these ends, the "Government Public Sector Report," a section of the Income Doubling Plan, presciently admonished that "Human resource development and deployment will become increasingly significant in the future." The plan accordingly advocated the doubling of technological research, increased private sector involvement in research and vocational training and increased high school enrollment.29

The Economic Deliberation Council established by the Income Doubling Plan issued a report titled, "Tasks and Counterpolicies for Developing Human Abilities in Pursuit of Economic Expansion." This report was pivotal to subsequent economic and educational policymaking, according to Horio Teruhisa, a staunch critic of Japanese education and formerly a professor of Japan's prestigious Tokyo University (Faculty of Education). It directly specified the need to match educational training to meet, in the Council's words, "the quantity and quality of the labor power required by industry."30 The result of such planning created the multi-track


30 Cited in Horio, Educational Thought and Ideology, p. 345.

72
educational "sorting" system whereby students became "diversified" (stratified) at an early age.

Some of the slogans circulated by the Council included "Collaboration of Industry and Schooling," and "Triumph of Ability First (nōryokushugi, also translated as "meritocracy")."31 Horio cites the following passage to demonstrate that the Council viewed this need to match education with labor policy as what he called the "natural, necessary, and only genuine function of schools," and also to demonstrate what was meant by the "ideology" of "ability-first.";32

We must devote our efforts in the direction of reforming the nation's educational Weltanschauung as well as the People's consciousness of work. They must be led to accept the idea that they are only entitled to receive an education in conformity with their abilities and aptitudes and that it is only through the evaluations rendered by the school system that they are entitled to employ their recognized competencies in their roles as workers.

The Scholastic Achievement Test, the forerunner of today's entrance exams, was enacted by the Ministry of Education in 1960. Designed for junior high school students, the first purpose of the test was to test the loyalties of teachers and local administrators in implementing the national curriculum guide, the Course of Study, which had been introduced in 1958. The second, more explicit goal, in the words of the Ministry, was to "support the long-term economic planning which will lead to a doubling of the national income. To this end it is critically important to discover outstanding talent at an early age and cultivate it through an appropriate form of

31 Horio, Educational Thought and Ideology , p. 218.

32 Horio's words and citation from Horio, Educational Thought and Ideology, p. 347.
"Developing talent" was interpreted by liberal critics as a euphemism depicting the "sorting" function of exams to weed out underachievers.

It was in the spirit of the Income Doubling Plan that Prime Minister Ikeda roused members of the Diet in 1962 with his famous "human construction speech" ("Hitozukuri Enzetsu"), the flagship banner of postwar educational nationalism.34

... Upon what grounds are we to hope for the development of a nation? Surely they are the grounds of the dissemination of education. And surely it is education and the development of technology which will bring about world peace and the greater happiness of all humankind. Ladies and gentlemen, our precursors perceived this and, from the beginning of the Meiji period, they made special efforts on behalf of our nation's education. Ought we not to recall that what brought forth the progress of our nation today, despite the fact that defeat in war caused us to lose territory and left us surrounded by destruction, is the education which our forerunners bequeathed to us? ... If we are to build the nation of Japan, we must build human beings. Japan is restricted in territory and limited in resources, but the Japanese people themselves have an excellent constitution. Through education, the Japanese people can continue to cultivate this superb character and contribute not only to their own country but also show their fiber to the world through their efforts toward the peace of our nation and that of the world.

This passage emblematizes postmodernism's theme of knowledge replacing resources: humans, as resources, are to be "constructed" just as nations (and nationalisms) are constructed. The context also includes references to the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., making Japan's educational nationalism resonate with the impetus to develop science education in the wake of the Sputnik shock, although Japan's

33 Cited in Horio, Educational Thought and Ideology, pp. 215-216.

educational nationalism was clearly directed toward economic advancement and acceptance in the international marketplace, rather than the space race.

In 1962, the Ministry published *Japanese Growth and Education*, a White Paper urging substantial public investment in education to meet the "manpower" demands of the nation. Here we also see the coextension of nation and individual; in Horio's words, it was clear that "'growth' here did not mean the child's growth but economic growth."\(^{35}\) Crediting the Meiji era for the legacy of strong education, the report compared Japan with other countries that had used education for economic advancement, including Canada, West Germany, Israel, the USSR and the USA.\(^{36}\)

Gradually, this kind of overt expression of educational nationalism began to fade. In 1963, the Economic Investigation Council appointed to study "manpower" development implied in their report that it was time to stop gloating on historical legacy and international comparisons (though comparisons with Europe and the U.S.S.R. are nonetheless made). Instead, the Council's report urges emphasis on "enrichment of the lives of our people" – a phrase that would become the chorus of today's policies. However, the main thrust of the manpower report continued to stress the demands of industry to cultivate science and vocational education, stressing the concept of "meritocracy" or "ability-first" (*noryokushugō*). It urged reducing applicants to high schools and universities by increased screening tests, thereby "diversifying" students into areas needed most by industry. Most

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\(^{35}\) Horio, *Educational Thought and Ideology*, p. 216.

significantly, the Council saw the need to eliminate "redundant elements of
education" in favor of improved "efficiency" (a theme which is now being reversed, as
will be explained in subsequent chapters). What was implied by "redundant
elements of education" was most likely the Fundamental Law of Education
established during the Occupation of Japan. The law stressed democracy, which
conservatives believed was not only thwarting the aims of efficiency, but was also
threatening the historical and spiritual center of Japan.

By 1965, an entirely different approach to educational nationalism appeared
in print. Already the new competition for schools had taken a toll on Japanese
society, in such forms as burnt-out children, the proliferation of cram schooling,
and increased school-related violence and suicides. Doubling incomes meant
doubling commuting hours, work hours, and study hours. Conservatives worried
that the exam-focused curriculum took time away from traditional morals and
ethics. Liberals worried that the priorities of corporations to improve manpower
detracted from the purpose of education to inspire peace and democracy; moreover,
they felt that economic growth was only possible because of the security "umbrella"
of the United States. The Ministry of Education devised a new document which
attempted to consolidate much of the social fragmentation, rally the nation around
the institution of education, and consolidate centralized control. Entitled, "The
Image of the Desired Japanese," the report is a classic attempt to contain the field of

37 Economic Investigation Council, "Problems and Strategies in Manpower
Development during Economic Growth: Report of the Economic Investigation
Council (Keizai hatten ni okeru jinryoku kaihatsu no kaidai to taisaku) (Tokyo, 1
963), trans. James Vardaman, in Beauchamp and Vardaman, eds., Japanese
Education Since 1945, pp. 159-163.
meaning into an approach that would resonate with myriad issues of identity challenging Japan and the Japanese. 38

"The Image of the Desired Japanese" was announced in January of 1965, a year which marked the twentieth year since the end of the war, a new decade in the Japanese calendar (Showa 40), and the year following the successful 1964 Tokyo Olympics, when Japan demonstrated its economic recovery to the world. Considerations of renewed patriotism and Japan's role in the world, especially toward Asia, regularly appeared in the media. January is also a time—today even more so than then—when media coverage of the "exam season" was in full swing: from January through mid-March, students take critical exams to advance into the next level of schooling beginning in April. Thus, questions of nation and education were as prominent as ever in the social consciousness shaped by the media.

Part I of "Image" opens appropriately with problems facing the Japan of 1965. First, the age of science and technology threatens to "dehumanize" and "mechanize" individuals. Thus:

The economic prosperity which Japan has been enjoying has produced hedonistic tendencies and a spiritual vacuum. If this continues, the long-range prospects of sustained prosperity are threatened. The continued industrialization of Japan must cultivate man's creativeness. In this modern

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38 The full text of "Image of the Desired Japanese" (Kitai sareru ningen zo) was first published in Asahi Shimbun Yukan (eve. ed.), January 11, 1965, p. 3, although the draft had been completed by 1964. I borrow the translation of the title of this document from Stephen Platzer, translator of Horio, Educational Thought and Ideology, p. 152, because the passive verb kitai sareru is literally rendered as "desired." However, all translations of the text of "Image of the Desired Japanese" are borrowed from the translation of James Vardaman in Beauchamp and Vardaman, Japanese Education Since 1945, pp. 164-167. Vardaman translates kitai sareru into the adjective "ideal," and uses the Ministry of Education's 1966 edition of the document.
age, the "humanity" of man must be elevated. Otherwise man will merely be a means of production in an industrial society.

Second, concerning the international situation, "Image" points out that children are being taught that everything in their past is wrong: thus they are ignoring Japan's history and "national ethos." Because of new world conflicts, moreover, it is essential to maintain a "clear awareness of our international responsibilities [as being] truly Japanese." Third, tersely noting that Japanese democracy is "immature," the report states that "the Japanese people lost their traditional virtues of national solidarity and national consciousness," and "a firm sense of individual dignity has not been achieved."

Part II enumerates conditions of the "ideal Japanese." First, the goals of the individual Japanese are: to be free, to develop individuality, to respect oneself, to be strong-minded and to be reverent. Second, the ideal Japanese home is a place of love, rest and education. Third, as a member of society, the Japanese should respect work, contribute to social welfare, seek creativity and respect the social norm. Fourth, as a citizen, the ideal Japanese should cultivate "proper patriotism," respect for symbols and the development of Japanese character.

Thus, the opening tends to resonate with the concerns of all humankind that rapid technological and economic advancement reduces "quality" time for human fulfillment. The needs of the individual are emphasized, in correspondence with many of the concerns of educators of that era. The common refrain of "love" is echoed in reference to humankind, the home, family and nation. "Image" states that the "most conspicuous deficiency of Japanese society is social confusion."
explained as lack of sensitivity to social justice. Yet the potentially universal appeal of all of those themes culminate in the final section that urges patriotism:

It is through the state that we find the way to enjoy our happiness and contribute to human happiness throughout the world. To love our nation properly means to try to enhance the value of it. The man who is indifferent to his own nation is the enemy of his own country.

Yet the most controversial statement was, "We must give deep thought to the fact that loving and respecting the Emperor is synonymous with loving and respecting the Empire." Although prefaced with the passage from the postwar Constitution that the emperor is a "symbol" of the people, this statement proved that "Image" was in many ways a fast-forwarding of ideas from early Meiji Japan, when, as mentioned above, the institution of education and respect for the emperor became the focal points of national unification. Horio explains that authors of "Image" indeed wrote with these purposes in mind, to help recall the Charter Oath of 1868, the Imperial Rescript on Education, as well as the Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors (Gurin Chokugo) of 1882. Morito Tatsuo, chairman of the Central Council on Education, the authoring body of "Image of the Desired Japanese, argued: "[I]t is desirable to call to mind the very similar conditions that prevailed during the middle of the Meiji period when the new educational system was reformed. The three features of that reform – modernization: Japanese spirit, Western skills: rich country, strong army – were very appropriate for the national policy of that time. It is only natural then to see the strong demands for a recovery of Japan's national autonomy which informs our efforts to re-reform postwar education as essentially similar to the efforts exerted for the reform of education in
the middle period of Meiji, which sought to protect the spirit of the Japanese people from the temptations of the Civilization and Enlightenment Movement."

What is implied here is that the Japanese of the 1960s needed protection from "temptations" of twentieth century economic nationalism, just as the Japanese of the late nineteenth century needed protection the "civilization and enlightenment movement" of that era. Thus, as Horio stresses, it was not the case that patriotic documents such as "Image of the Desired Japanese" were intended to revive militarism and emperor worship as they existed before the war – although the ultra-conservative faction which supported such goals may have been placated to some extent. Rather, "Image" must be seen in the larger context of molding education to meet the demands of the economic world of the 1960s. The document "provided an ideologically charged series of representations which legitimized the values of the welfare state in the stage of monopolistic capitalism by appealing to the idea of "being uniquely Japanese."" In large part, the document was "an ideological camouflage in the plan for reforming senior high school education to meet the demands of the economic world." Although no such economic demands are explicitly listed in "Image," Horio corroborates with evidence such as this statement from Chairman Morito at the time the final report of "Image" was announced:

We now possess a dual, perhaps even three-levelled, economic structure, and in response to social demands for a diversified work force suited

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40 Horio, Educational Thought and Ideology, pp. 158-159.

41 Monbu Kōhō, cited in Horio, Educational Thought and Ideology, p. 158.
to these conditions, it is necessary to diversify the latter part of secondary education. The guiding ideals for the reform of educational content in response to this economic imperative is provided for us in "The Image of the Desired Japanese."

In other words, the economic rationale became legitimated by a cultural discourse. The semiotics of patriotism familiar to Japanese were appropriated toward the new goal of economic advancement. The opening statement of "Image" admonishing against the excesses of technological and economic advancement were never met by any policy to slow down the pace of everyday life, and in the meantime, patriotic discourse gradually became the motif of subsequent efforts by the Japanese government to consolidate control.42

Democracy, which "Image" properly acknowledged to be immature in Japan, failed to develop into the meaning of popular sovereignty except among scholarly critics such as Horio; instead, to the extent that "democracy" acquired meaning in the social body, it came to serve as a representation of "sameness and equality." In education this meant that every child had a right of equal access to schooling and that the school had the obligation to pass every student, regardless of her grades. The function of such a meaning was utilitarian and economic, rather than dynamic and political.43 Yet the people recognized economics less as a policy of national

42 The most conspicuous manifestations of government control in educational ideology have occurred in textbook revisionism, especially in the conflict between the Ministry of Education and historian Ienaga Saburo over references to Japan's role as aggressor in World War II. See Ienaga Saburo, "The Glorification of War in Japanese Education," *International Security* 18, no. 3 (Winter 1993/94), pp. 113-133.

43 Tamamoto, "Reflections," p. 11.
importance than as goal of personal survival, and as one informant expressed it to me, "all that was left" in the aftermath of war.

The striking difference between the ideology of "Image of the Desired Japanese" and that of prewar educational discourse is the absence of agency: "desired" by whom? Prewar educational ideology clarified the position of the "family-state," represented by the line of imperial ancestors, as the agent toward whom consolidation of the people was directed. But because the Japanese language often uses the passive construction, without the subject, as in "desired Japanese," it was convenient to make the subject elusive. Horio implies that the subject is indeed not state bureaucracy in the form of government but in the form of government in conjunction with industry - industrial policy – often referred to by the pejorative nickname, "Japan, Inc."

The point, then, that I have been emphasizing in the context of this dissertation, is that as Japan moved into the period in which high economic growth became its national priority, the visibility of the "state" in education planning gradually became more elusive. After this period, it became less and less possible to find any sort of document or public policy that explicitly referred to the conjoining of national economic strength and education. Educational fervor was recognized almost exclusively as a social phenomenon, occurring within the desires of each household to provide the best opportunities for its children. At the surface level of discourse, what Japan's economic nationalism accomplished was to transfer the idea of the construction of the nation into the idea of the construction of humans – as exemplified by Prime Minister Ikeda's speech – and similarly, to transfer the love of

44 I am grateful to Professor Mori Yuji for explaining this point to me.

82
nation into love of the household. As the Asahi Shimbun subtitled its report on "Image of the Desired Japanese," "the home is the place of love and education."45

To say that the state was "elusive," or that economic motives were fused into cultural discourse, does not preclude the presence of state power and economic incentives. Thus far I have argued that one reason for the "disappearance" of economic nationalism in educational discourse was its unpopularity with the people. Another was that the propulsion to study and succeed in school indeed became a personal issue and cultural phenomenon.

Yet another important reason for the diffusion of state priorities in education occurred as a policymaking transformation. In the late 1960s, ad hoc policymaking groups known as zoku ("clan") had grown significantly in stature and clout within the ruling Liberal Democratic party. The formation of the education zoku (bunkyouzoku) gradually took power away from the Ministry of Education. The zoku's prominent members, though young (schooled in postwar education) and having little background in education policy, utilized their budgetary connections effectively to enable such non-MOE policies as the partial financing and cultivation of private education. What is most significant, however, is that zoku and LDP in general were working "behind the scenes," allowing the MOE to orchestrate policy often as if it were a guest conductor. It was therefore difficult to produce what many would call a clearly articulated "national interest." Policymaking was pluralistic; the zoku itself often divided (especially during Nakasone's administration), and contacts between

45 Asahi Shimbun Yukan (even. ed.), January 11, 1965. p. 3.
party members and big business representatives took place outside formal administrative structures.46

Yet by 1970, Sumiya Mikio, a labor economist, could summarize the effects of this period of linking educational growth to economic growth as follows in his book, *The Economics of Education*:47

The bonds between education and industry have now become virtually indissoluble, and as the industrial world assumes the leading role in publicly enunciating society's manpower requirements, its demands upon education will continue to grow. In other words, economic demands have directly found their way into every corner of the educational world.

Rarely would these economic and educational interests be conjoined in official policy after the decade of the 1960s. The vagueness of educational policies reflected the diffusion of power in the "triangular" character of the Japanese state, straddled across the LDP, big business and the bureaucracy. If one expected these power centers to have a more *de jure* presence in educational planning, one might conclude, as does Yung H. Park, that the influence of business and economics upon education was not significant. In the United States (where Park writes from), we may be more accustomed to overt displays of national interests, evidenced in images such as Lee Iacocca chairing the national PTA, or in a more recent example, the Secretaries of Education and Labor jointly presenting Goals 2000. The fact that the LDP's connections with business leaders often took place informally - "from

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without," as Park puts it – should not lead to the conclusion that education was not amenable to the demands of business.48 Elusive power is formidable power.

Still, to the average citizen, the idea of "economic demands in every corner of the educational world" did not make an impression of education as a national economic strategy. It simply meant that competition for jobs was a buyer's market. White collar employers made clear specifications of the universities from which they would accept workers, and they continue to hire on the same date: April 1. Because universities rarely fail students, entrance to university nearly always guaranteed the type of job one would receive. Entrance to university was best predicted by exam scores, and thus, high exam scores became the goal students struggled to achieve above all else. Yet, as labor expert Kumazawa Makoto writes: "What has disappeared from the process is any choice given to the individual on what job he or she wishes to engage in. It has been replaced, in every region, with orders placed by companies on what sort of scholastic attainment they can demand." "Scholastic attainment" also assured employers that future employers would possess the qualities of competitiveness, ability and adaptability (which he also calls "pliability").49


Disenchantment with Economic Priorities

By the 1970s and 1980s, however, this period of economic fervor which Japan experienced in the 1960s was often regretted. Again, this was an irony of America's new curiosity for Japanese education: the U.S. was enamored of Japan for an economic nationalism which Japan at the same time was trying to change.

Thus, on one hand, this comprehensively pragmatic attention given to education that the Japanese have utilized effectively has been interpreted by admirers as elevating of the importance of education. To Japanese critics, however, education as a part of "national economic policy" meant not the elevation of education but rather the demise of "true" education – for the People and not for the State – in favor of a purely economic sorting system. In other words, as education became an economic decision to the extent that the quality of learning became surpassed by the pragmatic appeal of getting into a "good school" or "good job."

Just as the broad economic goals of the income doubling plan translated into the personal goals of owning a washing machine or color television, the broad policies merging schooling with industry also translated into the personal goals of entering one's child in socially appropriate good schools leading to good jobs. But, in a way that seems counter-intuitive to Americans, this new social fervor for education evolved into the negative image of the gakureki shakai ("academic record

50 It should be noted, however, that if "education" for the People was greatly diminished, as critics claim, it thrived, quite healthfully nonetheless, outside the formal school system, in hobby schools, study circles, bookstores and in some cases, international schools. Yet most of these forms of education, including international education to some extent, and "alternative" schools which do exist in Japan, are considered disconnected, irrelevant or unsuitable to the world of employment.
society". The term depicts education as a competitive "pressure cooker" because society places so much emphasis on a person's academic record as an indicator of social status. Americans take it for granted that a good school leading to a good job is a good thing, because the unit supply of labor, i.e., the student, is responsible for his or her own "marketing" into the labor world, rather than relying on established links between school and work (a situation with problems of its own). But people in Japan began to speak with irony and disdain for an educational system in which the name of the school mattered more than the actual education received: thus a "good school" did not necessarily imply a "good education." A host of social problems developed that were associated with competitive education, including increased health problems, such as education-related suicides among children and "school refusal syndrome," in which a child develops such a distaste for schooling that he or she can no longer attend school; "home violence" often associated with the demands of overzealous "education mamas," and "school violence," such as bullying among children, as well as violent acts between teachers and students. All of these tendencies exacerbated the negativity of the gakureki shakai.

These problems were not just the concerns of the "supply side" of students and parents. The immediate postwar adult population increase, resulting from decreased mortality and repatriation of soldiers, created an initial high unemployment period. These adults were also living longer: The life expectancy in 1947 was 50.1 for males and 54 for females. In 1960, it had risen to 65.3 for males and 70.2 for females. (By 1990, Japan life expectancy reached 75.9 for males and 81.9 for females, the world's highest.)\footnote{Ministry of Health and Welfare, in p. 9.}

In hindsight, we know that after the Korean
war that helped jump-start the high growth period, this population swell of adults, soon joined by the supply of baby boomers reaching employment age, proved propitious for the new economy with rapidly expanding jobs. But these favorable conditions had not been predicted at the war's end in 1945. With the economy in shambles, policymakers tried to avert a population boom that would create further hardships on the people. A committee of population experts was formed whose recommendations led to the "Eugenic Safeguard Law" of 1948 that popularized birth control, permitted abortion in limited instances and sanctioned "eugenic operations" in situations where hereditary diseases were present.52 The result of their recommendations, along with a fear among policymakers that baby boomers would be confronted with unemployment, was a precipitous decline in the birth rate after 1949. Ten years following the baby boom of 1947, the total fertility rate (number of children born to women over a given period) dropped by more than half. A woman in 1947 bore an average of 4.54 children, compared with 2.04 children in 1957.53

Once the economy began to boom, the Ministry of Education had to encourage, through policies such as those mentioned, meritocratic or "ability-first" competition in order to keep labor stratified to meet economic needs. Policymakers also began to worry about the inflation of expectations growing in youngsters who


would create an over-supply of workers in an economy that demanded more skills than scholarship. A popular joke from the 1960s helps to illustrate this tendency:\footnote{Cited in \textit{Asahi Shimbun} eve. ed., January 11, 1965, p. 1.}

A story was overheard in a Tokyo kindergarten. A kindergarten teacher asked one of her pupils, "After you're done with kindergarten, which elementary school will you attend?"

"I'm going to Banmachi Elementary School."

"After you're done there, where will you go?"

"xx Junior High School."

"After that, where?"

"Hibiya High School."

"After that?"

"I'm going to enter Tokyo University."

"After you graduate from Tokyo University, what will you do?"

"I'm going to become a bus driver."

The anecdote accompanies an editorial in the \textit{Asahi Shimbun} about a camera company that offers an exam to employees, which, if they pass, would guarantee them a monthly raise in salary. Of 434 new employees that entered one year, only 64 passed the test, 26 of whom were 4-year university graduates, 28 were high school graduates, 5 were junior high school graduates, and 1 was a graduate of the prewar junior high. Complaining that students had to take 50-60 tests per year, the editors thus warned against putting too much value on university education. More significantly, the front page editorial appeared with the new pronouncement of "The Image of the Desired Japanese" who practices "respect for the individual" in his or her daily life, a respect that paralleled respect for the home, society, nation and Emperor.\footnote{\textit{Asahi Shimbun} eve. ed., January 11, 1965, p. 1.} Though the ideological implications of "Image" were extremely controversial, and its plea for "respect for the individual" highly dubious, it is...
significant that from this point on (1966, when "Image" was officially published), the gakureki shakai was nearly always presented as a problem inherent in society itself, rather than having anything to do with deliberate policies that sustained the exam system to maintain political and economic stability. Leaders took as their challenge the task of discouraging parents from pushing children beyond their capabilities, reinforcing the image of prestigious education as the privilege of the elite.

But the symbolic importance of name-brand education hardly subsided; applicants for universities continued to far exceed those accepted. As Table 3 shows, 781,000 students applied for admission (chiefly by taking entrance exams) to 4-year universities in 1987, of whom only 465,503 were successful; therefore, about 40 percent of applicants to 4-year universities failed university exams in that year.

Of those who applied, 232,954, nearly 30 percent, had taken one or more years off as rōnin. Of those accepted, 163,921, or over 35 percent, had been rōnin.
TABLE 3

Number and Proportion of Applicants Entering Universities and Junior Colleges, 1987

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 18 year-olds</td>
<td>965,550</td>
<td>917,218</td>
<td>1,882,768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Applicants:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universities</td>
<td>(201,125)</td>
<td>(31,829)</td>
<td>(232,954)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17,956</td>
<td>225,202</td>
<td>243,158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Colleges</td>
<td>(2,888)</td>
<td>(9,515)</td>
<td>(12,403)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>626,737</td>
<td>397,943</td>
<td>1,024,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>(204,013)</td>
<td>(41,344)</td>
<td>(245,357)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Successful Entrants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universities</td>
<td>340,989</td>
<td>124,514</td>
<td>465,503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(139,302)</td>
<td>(24,619)</td>
<td>(163,921)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Proportion of the age group)</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Colleges</td>
<td>17,498</td>
<td>197,590</td>
<td>215,088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5,314)</td>
<td>(8,665)</td>
<td>(13,979)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Proportion of the age group)</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>358,487</td>
<td>322,104</td>
<td>680,591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(144,616)</td>
<td>(33,284)</td>
<td>(177,900)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Proportion of the age group)</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Let us for a moment reverse our analogies of supply and demand from "human resources," in which students are "supplies," and the labor system the "demand." – to the "market" analogy in which students are "consumers" creating "demands" for the purchasing of the "product" of education as "supply." It can then be said that this fervor for educational credentials was a demand on the part of household consumers. But the Japanese government did not allow, for the most part, the expansion of their own educational product to meet consumer demand. In a way that American policymakers have come to envy, the Japanese government has traditionally devoted the bulk of its outlays to compulsory, public education. In the meantime, it generously allowed for and encouraged the development of private education to complement or compensate for public education. Significantly, in 1970, however, the government allowed some financial assistance to formal private schools to help fill labor shortages: higher education specialist Kitamura Kazuyuki called this "perhaps the greatest reversal of educational policy in Japan's history."56

"Private education," as I have already introduced, ranges from elite private universities to nonformal cram schools and myriad forms of informal "social education" as well as the currently hot trend of "lifelong learning." The entire spectrum of education in Japan, should therefore be recognized as a "dual structure," according to Kitamura. The nonformal side of the dual structure has

become so pivotal in importance that the balance of the structure is "teetering," wrote Kitamura in 1986:\(^57\) I will address this topic in Chapter Five.

Yet many of the fears of policymakers of the coming labor shortage in non-white collar work were delayed until the late 1980s, in large part by "employment adjusters" – the labor of part-timers (mostly married women), younger single women and older men. Since two of the three groups were women, Mary Brinton establishes a veritable thesis in demonstrating that women's labor helped sustain Japan's lauded economic "miracle."\(^58\) Despite the decline in births, moreover, increased longevity and decreased mortality created a population structure (called "pyramid" though no longer shaped like a pyramid) that was favorable for industry until the 1990s. In Table 4, we can see that the "productive population," aged 15-64 was relatively large in 1950, while the dependent elderly cohort was small and young people aged 0-14 promised a steady entrance into the labor market. By 1990, the population of elderly had risen while the cohort of young people was slowly shrinking. The estimated population trends for the year 2025 show that over one quarter of the population will be elderly, and the small cohort of young people will no longer feed the labor market or the "educational market" propitiously. (In Chapter Five we will see that this is creating a problem for private formal schools, but privatized cram schools may actually be profiting from the situation.)


\(^{58}\) See Mary Brinton, Women and the Economic Miracle: Gender and Work in Postwar Japan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), especially p. 132.
TABLE 4
Percentages of Population in Three Age Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohorts</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2025 (estimated)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65-85</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-64</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>60.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Therefore, throughout the sixties, seventies, and much of the eighties, although social expectations for education may have exceeded employers' needs (a condition that also prevailed before the war, but to a far lesser extent), the resultant meritocratic "examination warfare" was nonetheless extremely useful to Japan's industrial world. Strictly from an economic view, Robert Evans cites four reasons: first, a highly-educated populace was readily available for whatever needs could present themselves; second, the basis for equal opportunity for all male citizens was established; third, the universal, standardized curriculum allowed transmission of social values to be easily transferred to younger generations, and fourth, the will of the people to educate themselves beyond industrial expectations showed a genuine commitment to education.59

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Moreover, intensively competitive education – the result of economic policies, historical circumstances, demographic changes and social desire – also imparted a social identity that was easily adapted to the needs of employers. Thus, Japan's economic growth benefitted from education, according to the idea that the entrance examination process is a rite of passage whereby the qualities of endurance, discipline, competitiveness, achievement and group morale translate into the desirable qualities of the company employee. Though it does not inculcate an "economic identity" in the manner we often associate with a "cultural identity," the entrance examination practices do impart qualities that served the economic image of the nation and contributed to its remarkable social and political stability. Explains Vogel:60

No single event, with the possible exception of marriage, determines the course of a young man's life as much as entrance examinations, and nothing, including marriage, requires as many years of planning and hard work.... These arduous preparations constitute a kind of rite de passage whereby a young man proves that he has the qualities of ability and endurance necessary for becoming a salary man.

Likewise, by the mid-1980s, both the national and international atmospheres were conducive to or even compelled a new policy that would downplay Japan's economic identity. The Japanese "miracle economy" became known as a collapsed "bubble economy" when it began to slide in the latter 1980s, fully succumbing, by 1991, to its longest recession since the end of the second

world war. Yet even with prospects for a gradual recovery in sight by 1993, there are few signs of returning to the energies of the bubble of the 1980s.61

Most of all, the prevalent mood in Japan is that of a sense of fatigue, at the hard work that produced rapid economic growth, the economic superpower and the bubble economy — and toward regret that average consumers have not been able to enjoy the fruits of the economic miracle. As Fukunaga Hiroshi expresses it, the "economic superpower" meant something to economists and politicians, but not to the everyday citizen. The rising yen and GNP may look impressive to the international community, but "[such] statistics have no effect on the price of a house or even a cup of coffee in Tokyo." Japan should instead be called, the "price superpower," because "Its citizens are forced to pay more for basic commodities and the necessities of life than any nation in the industrialized world. Only now are people beginning to ask why."62

The gulf between the corporate wealth of the economic superpower and the quality of life of the average citizen has been one of the most conspicuous features of the economic patterns of Japanese capital. It may be true, as the above

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61 In 1993, some conditions seemed to resemble those that created the increased borrowing of the 1980s, when an inflated money supply (like a "bubble") created by low interest rates exceeded the "real" economy. Yet although 1993's official discount rate reached a postwar low, while the yen continued to soar against the dollar with a widening trade deficit, these conditions were not enough to inflate another bubble. The missing conditions are a soaring stock market, stable real estate conditions, and most importantly, the lack of desire on the part of most executives and government to orchestrate any such bubble-conducive conditions. See "Bubble II – Is Japan in for Another Round of Asset Inflation?" Tokyo Business Today 61, no. 7 (July 1993).

commentator notes, that it is "only now" that rank-and-file citizens are beginning to ask "why." Yet the chasm between the success of Japanese capital and the benefits of that success enjoyed by its labor began several decades ago, at the start of Japan's postwar reconstruction.

The early stages of the Japanese government's economic recovery following the second world war were directed toward securing fuels and resources for processing in Japan. After the government was able to display its healthy path toward recovery at the Tokyo Olympics in 1964, it — meaning the central bureaucracy, represented most prominently by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) — then helped corporations facilitate further investment in North America for the purpose of establishing sales support. The government also forged close ties with the ruling Liberal Democratic party and business organizations such as the Keidanren (confederation of industries) to carefully "orchestrate" economic competition.

Regional space in Japan became significantly restructured as the three urban areas (Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya) became centers of export-oriented heavy and light industries, gathering through outmigration from rural areas up to 44% of the population by the 1970s. Agriculture thus declined from 50% of the labor force to 19% between 1950 and 1970. The major export-oriented oligopolies absorbed the new supplies of rural labor, even if it was mostly labor sent to the smaller producers.63 Despite the image of the well-taken care of white collar employee

during this peak of economic growth, the well-trained, lifetime-employed *sarariman* ("salaryman," or white collar worker) accounted for a mere 25% of the work force.  

The overall picture of spatial re-organization during this phase of Japanese development, from the 1950s to the 1970s, was thus one of corporations gaining in wealth and stature, while individuals lost much of their culturally-cherished sense of "place." Tokyo enjoyed a long history as "a city of small shops and petty commodity producers," yet by 1974, major corporations owned half of the land of Tokyo's three central wards, and one fifth of the land of the entire metropolis. As land prices soared, ordinary families were prevented from owning homes; neighborhoods were dislocated as more and more urban areas turned into office buildings, and long working and commuting hours separated husbands from wives, parents from children, neighbor from neighbor.

By the 1970s, the steady supply of rural labor had declined, and the large oligopolies began to look for labor markets outside Japan to sustain their levels of production. After springing back from two oil shocks, foreign investment began to increase at the start of the 1980s. In 1985, as a result of *endaka* (the rise of the yen), such foreign investment skyrocketed. The amount of investment, in US dollars, rose from approximately $5 billion in 1979 to $33 billion in 1987.

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Amid such transnationalization of Japanese capital, problems related to the quality of life were exacerbated in the 1980s. More and more commercial land in Tokyo was needed for financial and governmental headquartering, while at the same time, the swelling population brought increased demand for housing. Commercial property prices thus doubled in 1986, and in 1987 prices for certain places of Tokyo were 10 times that of New York and 20 times that of Los Angeles. Meanwhile, ordinary residents were often driven from their homes by gangsters who purchased their neighborhood public baths or harassed them with loud music, noisy construction or other such obnoxious tactics. Management looked to overseas labor markets and part-time workers in their own country, especially women and migrant workers, to sustain low wages. Union membership declined, and even salaried workers were persuaded to accept low wages and poor living conditions in order for their firms to stay competitive in the world economy. Products in Japan sold for much higher prices in Japan than in foreign countries, another way forcing the average Japanese consumer to bear the burden of keeping large corporations competitive overseas. Thus, if the stated aim of economic nationalism was to promote a parallel between the "growth" of individual and the "growth" of the nation, such a purpose was failing: the individual instead was compelled, however silently and indirectly, to make sacrifices for the economic health of the corporation and the nation.

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The reasons for the Japanese economic nationalism and self-sacrifice have therefore not been simply the result of economic policies but have been created in historical circumstances and cultural practices. The national drive to promote high economic growth in the 1950s occurred in the wake of the second world war, in a nation already inured to hard work and self-sacrifice. Because economic nationalism promised better conditions for the household, individuals and families were readily put on board the nation's energy drive to clean up, catch up and compete. Guaranteeing their own well-being may have been a far more important task than elevating the label, "Made in Japan" on the global stage, but that priority mattered little, since the two goals, personal livelihood, national livelihood, were supposed to go hand in hand.

Generally, however, Japanese citizens have not struggled to improve the inequities of the economic superpower in the workplace as much as on the homefront. This has to do not only with the historical weakness of lower classes in voicing political frustration, but also with the sociocultural ambience of "place," a sense of secure belongingness to home, family and community. Protest from broad segments of the population over the quality of life surrounding housing, land, community and "consumption" in general has thus loomed conspicuously larger in postwar Japan than shorter-term labor strikes or worker discontent.69

It was not only the Japanese consumer who was left out of the benefits accruing to large-scale corporations. Foreign countries, most notably, the United States, seemed to join sides with Japanese consumers in compelling the export-dependent economy of Japan to share its wealth more equitably. As the

government of Japan experienced *gaiatsu*, or foreign pressure, to open its markets to imports, reduce exports and reduce pressure on average workers and consumers – all toward the goal of reducing its trade deficit – this clarion call to "internationalize," which became the national buzzword in various contexts, competed with what many believed to be a national identity: the natural tendency of hard work and competition. Expressed by Higashi and Lauter in 1987, "[M]any Japanese believe that it was their uniqueness that made the economic success possible in the first place. In their view, foreign demands for change may endanger the economy's international competitiveness created through hard work."70

This chapter has shown that Japan has a strong historical precedent in harnessing national goals to education. The aims of using education to develop the prewar Empire or postwar economic superpower constituted a domestic policy and foreign policy in tandem: knowledge and human resources were the keys to international recognition and respect. With the rise of the economic superpower, however, the connection between nation and knowledge has become diffused throughout society, so that it became difficult to locate a single source of power in educational practices. The expression *gakureki shakai*, or academic record society, implied that the responsibility for highly competitive education lay with society itself. Moreover, that expression developed a negative connotation, just as other

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70 Higashi Chikara and G. Peter Lauter, *The Internationalization of the Japanese Economy* (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1987), p. 114. "Uniqueness" here refers to *nihonjinron*, literally, the "theory of being Japanese," the academic categorization of Japan's cultural expressions of uniqueness, considered a basic component of the nation's cultural nationalism. In this example, the cultural and the economic are clearly intertwined.
costs of rapid economic growth also became apparent across all levels of society. Ironically, this was precisely the time when America's leaders began to look toward the Japanese educational precedent as a model to reform their own.

By the early 1990s, however, the need to relax the motor of the economic superpower became so compelling that prominent businessmen as well as bureaucrats and politicians rallied around a common goal: improving the quality of life for Japanese citizens. The stage was thus set for the government's new plan to develop a "lifestyle superpower," the topic of the following chapter.
CHAPTER III

The New Japanese "Lifestyle Superpower" –
or, How to Mythologize the Death Knell of the Economic Superpower

The Japanese will find out that money isn’t everything, just as we found out armaments aren’t everything.

Anatoll Adamishin, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, 1989

Over the past decade, Japanese leaders have announced various policies signalling the need for their nation to become more responsible in a way deemed commensurate with its economic status in the world. Internationally, this means opening markets and assisting foreign countries, environmentally and economically. Japan is also seeking to improve the quality of life for its own citizens, by revamping its infrastructure and relaxing working conditions to stimulate domestic demand. Such a goal which would in turn benefit the international community, by making the country less focused on exporting and expansion.

These policy formulations signify a conceptual shift in explaining Japan’s role as a nation. According to the rhetoric of recent public policies, Japan is attempting to change from a hardline, economics-driven society which elevates the corporation over the individual – into a softer, more relaxed society, in which economics has become “people-oriented,” aiming to respect the individual and elevate the quality of life. American psychologists might call this a change from a “Type A” personality to
a "Type B" personality. Japan's leaders are calling it a change from an "economic superpower" to a "lifestyle superpower."¹

But the lifestyle superpower, to the extent that it heralds an era of "post-economic-focusing," seems, at first glance, to be the tail that wags the dog. Since 1991, the country has plunged into its longest and worst recession since the end of the second world war. It would seem that pre-existing economic conditions, demographic tendencies and social trends have necessitated the reformulation of national priorities, since the reputation of the economic superpower is in inevitable decline; thus, the economic superpower created the lifestyle superpower for economic purposes, rather than the lifestyle superpower itself ushering in a post-materialistic society. While not discounting the chicken-egg scenario, this chapter will emphasize that what is most significant about the "lifestyle" superpower is its "mythology" – the discourse it employs to restructure ideas and attitudes, thus forming a language which has become the background for educational policies and practices. Only time will tell if Japan's transitions will truly lead to a society that enjoys a more levitated affluence of life without the persistent compulsion of the economic motor – and likewise, to a nation more respected than reviled.

It should be emphasized again, however, that both the lifestyle superpower and the economic nationalism it intends to replace are considered "narratives" of national identity in this study. They contend for attention in a growing lacuna of identity issues that have recently come to surface at this critical moment of Japan's history. Professor of Peace Science Mori Yuji states that at the end of the second

¹ The translation of seikatsu taikoku, a relatively new slogan in Japan, is in conformity with that used by the Nikkei Weekly, an English language affiliate of the Nikkei Shimbun, Japan's leading daily economic newspaper. As this chapter will explain, seikatsu taikoku is often juxtaposed with keizai taikoku, emphasizing the transition from one identity to another. "Taikoku," literally, "great nation," implies "great nation" among all nations in the case of keizai taikoku, whereas seikatsu taikoku is clearly a domestic policy, aiming to develop the lifestyles of people in the nation of Japan, with considerably less, if any, emphasis on competitiveness with the lifestyles of other nations.
world war, the fragile nationalism of the Meiji era collapsed, "but in its place, a new national perception, national image or nationalism has never evolved even up until the decade of the 1990s. . . . The nationalism of the Meiji era still exists in a state of collapse created by the defeat of the war." National identity is thus a contentious space: indeed, Japan of the 1990s may be confronting its most challenging crisis to resolve these suspended identity issues since the Meiji era.

In 1989, the Showa emperor passed away and a new calendar era was promulgated as Heisei. (The current year, 1995, is "Heisei 7" in the Japanese calendar.) With the transition of emperors and eras, Japan was forced to confront its "politics of memory" of the second world war. This was occurring at the time Communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union collapsed, liberating much of the world from the boundaries of bipolar identity and igniting a global explosion of identity issues that ignore geopolitical boundaries.

Japan's dubious security under the nuclear umbrella of the West (viz., America) was challenged, just as regional consciousness of the Asia-Pacific rose to become the most formidable new identity in global politics. Japan has pivoted among identification with Asia, America and "none of the above." This ambivalence is to the consternation of not only the nation's citizens but also outsiders. Samuel Huntington, whose controversial essay appearing in Foreign Affairs in 1993 became one of the most prominent sounding boards for the discussion of new global identity issues, tried to pour cement into the Nihonyoron that "Japan is a society and civilization unique to itself": thus the civilizational identities shaping world politics in the future "will be shaped in large measure by the interactions among seven or eight major civilizations [including] Western, 

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2 Interview, August 1993.

3 Masters, "The Politics of Memory."
Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American and possibly African civilization."\(^4\)

Already, Japan is the (unwitting, to many) mentor of the up-and-coming Asia-Pacific bloc, as the leaders in NICs promoting their own agendas of economic advancement have discovered a new affinity with their erstwhile colonizer. Some want Japan to play an even greater political role in the region. Indonesian political analyst, Juwono Sudarsono, suggests, "In the context of Asia, Japan should take the initiative to guide Asia into the future because it is the model for the development of Asian countries." Former Malaysian Foreign Minister Ghazali Shafie concurs, admonishing. "Japan must refuse to play the role of little brother of the U.S." Ghazali and Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad have been trying to persuade Japan to join its exclusively Asian East Asian Economic Caucus. Jose Almonte, director general of the Philippines National Security Council, states that the economic generosity of Japan has caused Filipinos to forget the atrocities experienced during wartime.\(^5\)

But other Asians cringe at the suggestion of Almonte and others to put war memories behind them. Lacking faith that the psychic barrier of memory will crumble anytime soon, some refrain from assigning Japan more status as a political (or military) mentor in the region. Others are less equivocal, such as political commentator Toh Lam Seng, who tersely pleads, "[P]lease do not suggest an Asian community led by Japan." Toh believes the gap between Japan and Asia is widening, not narrowing, and that Japan's new "Asiaism" is in essence, no different

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\(^4\) Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3(Summer 1993), pp. 28, 25.

from Japanism. It is a nationalism that intends, as was the case fifty years ago, to secure for Japan a position of superiority in the Asian community, he claims.6

Issues surrounding this barrier dividing Japan from Asia have come to the fore in 1995, the year when many people are commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the war's end. Japan's leaders are sharply divided over issues such as the proposal to apologize formally for its role in the war, the demand for compensation to prisoners of war and victims of sexual slavery ("comfort women"), and the invitation to participate with America in ceremonies to commemorate the war's end.

In fact, it has only been since January of 1995 that many of the "join Asia" statements such as those cited above have been flooding the mass media. ("Asia, Asia! every newspaper in Japan is now making a big issue of it," worries Toh Lam Seng.) Both the Asahi Shimbun and the Nihon Keizai Shimbun, two of Japan's leading dailies, ran lengthy series at the start of the New Year to ponder, at long last, Japan's relationship with Asia. (I also noticed the same phenomenon in 1965, the twentieth anniversary of the war's end.) If there is one thing leaders (but not necessarily the masses) are decisive about, it is the need to join the United Nations Security Council. Settling the past memories of war and forging a new political direction are the two tasks that Japan must accomplish in its ongoing campaign to win a seat on the U. N. Security Council.

Many other problems have beset Heisei era Japan in addition to the crisis of fusing with East, West or none of the above. With the birth of several new political parties and coalitions, politics is at last blooming for the first time since the war's end. Meanwhile, the long recession; the highly-valued yen that has split financial circles; imported rice and the increase of foreign labor performing "3-D" (dirty, dangerous, difficult) jobs have all challenged persistent myths of cultural insularity. A new constitution has been drafted that will undermine the famous ninth article of

the postwar constitution stating that Japan would forever renounce war as a means of solving conflict. In January of 1995, a massive earthquake killed over 5000 people in the Hanshin region and exposed the entire world to the inefficiencies of Japan's central bureaucracy. Only two months later, a terrorist gas attack in Tokyo's subways - and the discovery that the religious sect accused of the action had the potential to wipe out the entire city of Tokyo - has closed the period of Japan's history when it could justifiably pride itself as a nation of safety and security.

There was no expectation that the narrative of the lifestyle superpower would give direction to all of these unprecedented happenings. It did, however, buy time in two respects - first in its stated purpose of opening more "quality" time for individuals, and second, by opening more "political" time for the nation, bridging a space between the former era when the priorities of economics swept politics under the rug, to a new, yet to be negotiated, political direction for Japan.

The lifestyle superpower can be understood according to Barthes's designation of "myth." The circulation of myth lends clarity to complex phenomena, in this case, the decline of the Japanese economic "miracle." Thus myth is "innocent speech," because intentions are not hidden as much as they are "naturalized." The "historical intention" of the Japanese economy becomes the "natural justification" of the lifestyle superpower. Yet the myth requires a "signifying consciousness": people who hear the myth will be able to make "connections" with it, or relate to its signification, because they have already heard its language somewhere before. "Mythical speech is made of a material which has already been worked on so as to make it suitable for communication." The first goal of this chapter will be to

7 Barthes, Mythologies, pp. 142-143.

8 Barthes, Mythologies, p. 110.
introduce some of the lifestyle superpower's "presignifying consciousness," or the antecedents for understanding which make the new slogan intelligible and acceptable to the Japanese people.

The myth is not a fairy tale or a clever slogan but an "ideographic system" - a lexicon of words and signs communicated at several levels. If a major function of an official policy is to implement its goals so that several levels of mediation adapt the ideographic system - thus "layering" the policy as its origin becomes obscure - then the "lifestyle superpower" is fulfilling such a function. Several representatives from both public and private sectors within Japan have mediated the basic premises of the "lifestyle" change, and we can also note a compatibility of the "lifestyle" idea of economic relaxation to the "kinder, gentler" rhetoric of the "new world order." A second purpose of this chapter will be to introduce six recent policy formulations, from both the private and the public sector, in which "lifestyle" signs are conspicuous.

Finally, it must be reminded that the "lifestyle superpower" is a myth in infancy. Not all attempts to naturalize certain phenomena using "lifestyle" rhetoric have been "successful." The third purpose of this chapter will thus be to introduce the credibility gap that naturally emerges from some of these seemingly radical attempts to transform Japanese society, and at least one highly contentious theme bidding for "naturalization" under the new conceptual umbrella: whether Japan should step up its military program in order to fulfill a perceived obligation of international cooperation.

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9 Barthes, Mythologies, p. 127.

Pre-figuring the Seikatsu Taikoku: The "Lifestyle Superpower" and its Antecedents

Part of the fascination of prewar education is the transparency of its ideology of emperor worship that in its world view cast Japan as the patriarch of the Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Such ideological transmission is not to be found after the war's end. There is nothing like a central "ideographic system" that motivated people to channel their energies to the needs of the economic superpower. There were few examples of a state-imposed economic ethos other than Prime Minister Yoshida's call to put "economics first," and Prime Minister Ikeda's "Income Doubling Plan."

But even in the Meiji era, informational and educational control of culture was not accomplished by negative commands of subjection but by positive images of "enlightenment." Re-education of commoners, for example, was expressed as "the advancement of the narrow and inflexible people into enlightenment." A tatemaef (façade) of images naturalized the intentions of elites to unify Japan, and later, prepare it for war.

Postwar school education has concentrated far less on ideology and more on controlling the time of students, as we shall see, their time spent not only in learning classroom material and preparing for exams, but also their time off schoolgrounds as well. To compensate for this rigid time control that many believe weakens students' willpower, other educational institutions have taken up the slack. The competitive advance-placement cram schools (shingaku juku), for example, offer promotional advice such as the following announcement made by a

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11 Cited in Fujitani, "Inventing, Forgetting, Remembering," p. 100.
cram school head at a national symposium held in 1985 to discuss the relationship between juku and schools:12

Naturally, the term "entrance examination war" imparts a severe meaning. The term "war" means "to live or to die," "to kill or to be killed." Our purpose is to make children experience this severity. Children nowadays have been raised without any hardships, and they have had everything come to them on a silver platter. We hope to give these children something spiritual, the power to accomplish, and the power to overcome in competition. We would like to affirmatively accept the entrance examination system, and to have parents understand this and allow their children to take part in it willingly. We would like to give children the joy of accomplishment through such means as the entrance examination system. Our juku regards this as a role to fulfill as part of our philosophy.

In addition to the role played by such elite competitive juku in "replacing" the "spiritual education" (group education, well-rooted in Japan's culture) supposedly lost in formal schools, company educational programs ("training" to Americans) – Japan's other famous educational system – instruct their new recruits that company education will be different from democratic but comparatively undisciplined school education. The president from the bank analyzed in Thomas Rohlen's ethnography, for example, also reminisced on the military model:13

It is very important to have a mental attitude which enables one to overcome any kind of circumstance. In the past the military and the public schools had a daily training period which served this purpose, but today's young people have no chance for this kind of education. When people enter a company these days it is common for them to spend their whole working lives serving that one company. therefore they have a right to be cared for by their company even late in life, and their company has this duty to them. At the same time that the company must care for its people, it must receive the utmost effort of its people. To achieve this training [probably, "education"] is necessary.

But such exhortations, however much they refract the intentions of state and corporate elites to rev the economic motor of Japan, are "de-centered," diffused


throughout the social fabric in specific private educational institutions and corporate educational programs. What we see in the lifestyle superpower is an attempt to recreate and re-centralize a new public image of Japan, and as we shall see later, of Japanese education as well.

**Conceptual Antecedents**

*Image of the Desired Japanese* (1965): In the previous chapter, we learned that this significant policy statement represented a turning point, when overt messages of economic nationalism were replaced by a cultural narrative and reminder of Meiji-era nationalism. At the same time, the government began to warn people of excesses of materialism, but apparently, little of what was said on this point was accepted at face value (*tatemae*). The teachers' union and left wing groups were extremely vociferous in their criticism of *Image* as a reminder of wartime patriotism – a possible attempt to re-militarize according to the demands of the United States.

*Material Affluence/Spiritual Affluence:* The Japanese government has been monitoring peoples' attitudes toward "wealth" since 1969. Each year, citizens are asked to agree with one of the following two statements, or else respond, "Don't know":

1. Because I have achieved a degree of material affluence, I now wish to place importance on such things as spiritual affluence and a comfortable lifestyle.
2. I still wish to place importance on material matters to achieve affluence in my lifestyle.

From 1969 to 1975, between 40 to 41% of the respondents agreed with the second statement, shortened as "material affluence" (*mono no yutakasa*). Slightly fewer, 35 to 39% agreed they were seeking "spiritual affluence" (*kokoro no yutakasa*). Between 1975 to 1979, the figures for material affluence and spiritual affluence were equal or about equal, at 41%. After 1979, the gap began to widen, with seekers of spiritual affluence gradually gaining points and seekers of material affluence
gradually losing points. By 1992, 57.2% agreed they were seeking spiritual affluence, and 27.3% said they were still seeking material affluence.\(^\text{14}\)

If such data can be called a measurement of one aspect of an economic nationalism, they demonstrate that the national goals of focusing on material wealth were meant to be promoted as temporary goals. It may also be the case that by 1969, nearly a decade after Prime Minister Yoshida announced his "economics first" policy inaugurating the high growth period, justifying social programs (\textit{viz.} education) as fulfilling the goals of "economics first" had become extremely unpopular. The narrative of the data would seem to alleviate anxiety by pointing to the "goal" of spiritual affluence as an attainable one, achieved in steady progress.

\textit{White Paper on Life in Japan (1985):} Subtitled, "Forty Years After the War: Toward an Age of Maturity," this comprehensive report named various trends in Japan including the aging of society and "softening" of industry (moving to a service economy). "Maturation" was not only chronological but emotional, as the spread of middle-class consciousness had created a new culture of "partitioned masses" who desired individual expression in their lives.

\textit{The Maekawa Report (1986):} In the fall of 1985, reacting to increasing criticism from abroad to ameliorate Japan's trade deficit, then-Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro convened 17 prominent individuals from business, government and academia to draft a policy which would help "harmonize" Japan's relations with the international community. Already, the nation's economy had been showing signs of instability: export markets had weakened, growth was slowing down, and the Plaza Accord had just delivered the yen's sudden and dramatic appreciation known as \textit{endaka}. By April of 1986, Nakasone was able to face then-U.S. President Ronald Reagan (and one month later, the economic summit of industrialized nations in

\(^{14}\) \text{Kokumin seikatsu ni kansuru seron chōsa (Public opinion research on national lifestyles) 1992, in Shōgai gakushū shinkōka (Bureau for the promotion of lifelong learning), "Shōgai gakushū shakai wo mezashubeki shūkaiteki haikei ni kansuru deeta" (Data concerning social background that should be directed toward a lifelong learning society), Kyōiku Inshū Geppo no. 115 (February 1993), p. 20.}
Tokyo) with a ratified, comprehensive "Maekawa Report" (named after former Bank of Japan Governor Haruo Maekawa, the chair of the "brain trust"). The report's general aim was to stimulate domestic demand to "transform the Japanese economic structure into one oriented toward international coordination."\(^{15}\)

Its six overall recommendations, summarized by Higashi and Lauter, included:\(^{16}\)

1. The government should strive for economic growth.
2. The government should promote basic transformations in the nation's trade and industrial structure.
3. The government must further promote the liberalization and internationalization of the nation's financial markets.
4. The government must further promote the liberalization and internationalization of the nation's financial markets.
5. Japan must actively contribute to the well-being of the world community through international cooperation.
6. The government should review the preferential tax treatment of savings.

Specifically, the report also advocated a number of "quality of life" changes to benefit consumers, including the reduction of working hours. Other proposed liberalizations included a call for improved housing, the increase of imports and official development assistance to developing countries, and the abolishment of cumbersome government regulations.

Given the magnitude of reform proposals in the tense international climate, it is probably not surprising that the report was not taken very seriously by the press or the public. It was nicknamed sakubun, a "literary composition," and omiyage, a souvenir for President Reagan and the other foreign heads of state. To Ohmae, the...
proposal offered Japan a chance to become "a consuming giant like the United States."\textsuperscript{17}

Thus the post-economic lexicon prefiguring the lifestyle superpower clearly developed from ideas which were already familiar. What has changed are the more definitive markers signalling the end of the economic superpower, including transitions of economic, demographic and social conditions.

\textbf{Economic Conditions}

The previous chapter discussed the disparity between the image of the rich Japanese, as depicting the wealth of Japanese corporations, and the actual living conditions of the Japanese workers, who often commute several hours per day, live away from their families, and accept housing standards far below those of other advanced nations. The recession has forced Japanese companies to realize that poor living conditions in a highly competitive society have created caused their workers to become increasingly stressed, burnt out, unproductive, and in the worst case, prone to "death by overwork," \textit{karoshi}. At the same time, the economic downturn has also compelled companies to try to streamline the costs of labor, thus challenging some of the most vaunted tenets of Japanese management, such as lifetime employment, in-house training, and the seniority-system wage scale. These contradictory realizations - that the quality of life for the average workers must be improved, yet the costs of employing workers must be reduced - have no doubt necessitated a drastic reconfiguration of how to cultivate a loyal, productive, satisfied worker.

\textbf{Demographic Changes}

It is not only the illusion of continued economic expansion which has given companies a reality check. We have already seen that demographic changes will also

\textsuperscript{17} Ohmae, \textit{The Borderless World}, p. 145.
deprive companies of a steady supply of young workers, and at the same time, increase the supply of elderly people who need to be taken care of. According to future estimates, by 2025, young children will decline to 14.6% of the population; the working-age people will decline to 60.1%, and Japan will have perhaps the largest population of elderly in advanced nations, over 25.4% of the population. (In 1950, Japan's elderly population was lowest among Sweden, West Germany, France, the U.S. and the U.K.)

Social Trends

A number of social trends also contributed to the receptiveness of the "lifestyle superpower." Examples of such trends include:

Disdain of the "Economic Animal": The call to improve the quality of life domestically and to improve relations internationally, the themes of the Maekawa Report, gradually became accepted among critics and ordinary citizens in Japan. Given the disparity of Japanese wealth between transnational corporations and the quality of life of citizens, it is not surprising that Japanese people began to disdain the stereotype of "economic animal" — the impression they believe to evoke, especially when travelling overseas. One entrepreneur, Miyagi Toshio, who wanted to prove that there was at least some grain of truth to the image sold identical handbags at a department store at noticeably different prices (¥4,800 and ¥9,800). Exposing the truth that the expensive bags sold better, Miyagi later became successful at a new

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phenomenon in Japanese retail: discount stores. Yet to many Japanese, comparing their exorbitantly priced "rabbit hutch" apartments to the expense accounts of the oligopolists, the stereotype was ironic. To counter this impression, many Japanese have begun to welcome opportunities to do volunteer service, to enjoy greater freedom with their families — dubbed "my home-ism" — and to invest more time in traveling and other leisure activities.

Disdain of "Checkbook Diplomat": In 1991, Japan earned the dubious reputation of a "checkbook diplomat." During the 1991 Persian Gulf War, the country was asked to match its expedient monetary contributions with more substantive contributions toward the environment, human justice, and regional and national security — contributions commensurate with the nation's status as a world power. In the same year, it plunged into its ongoing recession, the worst in its postwar history.

Decline in working hours: Statistics from the Ministry of Labor in 1991 demonstrate that the Japanese are working fewer hours than they did during the peak growth days of the 1960s. Monthly working hours peaked in 1960 at 202.7 hours (including 21.9 hours of overtime). They dropped to 172 in 1975 and remained near that level until 1991, when they dropped to 168 (14.6 overtime).

Moreover, nearly all firms of 30 employees or more offer at least one Saturday per month off. In 1970, only 4.5% of firms and 17.7% of employees could take at least one extra day off from a usual six-day work week. By 1991, only 1.3% of firms with 1000 employees or more continue to practice the full six-day work week; 10% of medium firms (100-999 employees) and 25.2% of firms with 30 employees or fewer continue the six-day week. In 1985, before the Maekawa Report proposed wider practice of the five-day work week, 49.1% of firms offered at least a partial five-day week, covering 76.5% of workers. In 1991, 78.2% of firms, covering 91.6% of workers.

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20 Fukunaga, "The Fraudulent Superpower," p. 3.
offered at least one five-day week during the month. The increase merely accelerated a trend which had been taking hold since 1970, however.

The Lifestyle Superpower and its Layers

Seikatsu has figured prominently in the social lexicon of postwar Japan. Gluck notes that in the 1950s, its meaning was conveyed as "standard of living," but evolved to "life-style" by the 1970s. Taikoku, literally meaning "great nation" has often been used in official policy discourse in Japanese history, yet keizai taikoku assumed a broadly understood connotation of "economic superpower," generating a number of casual or journalistic expressions as word-playing mini-commentaries addressing the economic superpower. This thesis has already mentioned "price superpower," and "fraudulent superpower," One also hears "company superpower," meaning the economic superpower is really geared toward companies, and so on. Seikatsu taikoku seems to blend these usages: on one hand it has been officially announced as national policy; on the other hand, it is a commentary on the economic superpower, signalling the need to garner the nation’s energies toward non-tangible, life-enhancing goals rather than materialistic wealth. It evokes a "kind" impression rather than a power-hungry one. This softer "life" juxtaposed with "superpower," however, makes the expression somewhat of a contradiction of terms: "Lifestyle" implies the empowering of individuals, but "superpower" implies a continuity of strong central power.

The five examples of "lifestyle" policies I present below all intend to spread the wealth of the nation from the corporation to the consumer, to bring about a softer phase of not only of government but of general socioeconomic conditions. With the

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Maekawa Report, written in the context of "internationalization," leaders called on Japan to take more responsibilities to harmonize with other nations. Quality of life issues are addressed, but the comprehensive report was not taken very seriously. The following five policy reports, announced when Japan plunged into its recession, recall the Maekawa Report's initiatives, and emphasize a more focused language of post-economics: Japan is seen as having fulfilled its purpose of "catching up" with the West, and consumers and employers alike are called upon to pay less attention to the nation or the corporation and more to the needs of the individual.


One year following the nation's tumble into the recession, Japan's Economic Council, an advisory group to then-Prime Minister Miyazawa, issued a report titled, "Outline of the Five Year Plan for a Lifestyle Superpower" in 1992. The report was directed at improving the quality of life for Japanese citizens across various sectors of society. By proving itself capable of reform to its citizens (as consumers), the Japanese government would thus prove itself capable of equal partnership in the world of nations. These are the twin goals of the "Lifestyle Superpower," echoing the themes of the Maekawa Report.

The official English translation of the "basic challenge" of the lifestyle superpower is as follows:23

With a view to establishing a new world order with emphasis on freedom and democracy, Japan should play an active role in solving global environmental and other problems as a member of the world community. It also should strive to make its people feel affluence and comfort in their daily life. In short, it should pursue providing "better quality of life (aim for a lifestyle superpower)"24 for its people who will live with others in the global community." To this end, we have to change our economy and society on the

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24 In this report, seikatsu taikoku is translated into English as "quality of life," omitting the word, "superpower" or "great power" (taikoku).
basis of respect to every individual by shifting our focus from the principles of esteeming mere efficiency to social justice and benefit of consuming public as well (sic).

The conceptual shift here is to introduce a much broader language of post-economics, or gentler economics, than that which was suggested in the Maekawa Report – even if the subject matter still remains economic policy. Some of the key catchwords, besides "lifestyle superpower," resonating in several levels of social discourse today (especially in reference to education), are captured in the phrase translated above as: "It [Japan] should strive to make its people feel affluence and comfort in their daily life." Those concepts include:

- **kokumin no hito hito,** literally, "people of the nation one by one," or "each and every person of the nation" (translated above as "people"). emphasizes the unique individualities of nation's people, reversing the stereotype of Japanese as group-oriented or monolithic;
- **yutaka,** "affluence," used to emphasize a non-material meaning of wealth;
- **yutori,** "comfort," often translated as "freedom," implying a simple connotation of freedom as basic "elbow room."


This conceptualization of gentler economics did not necessarily originate with the Economic Council, however. In the winter of 1991, some of Japan's top business leaders traveled through Europe on a trade mission and became disturbed by a distinctively mixed message. Their European counterparts commended Japan for being the "winner" of the global trade war. Yet, the Japanese leaders also felt the Europeans had given up on resolving trade problems in the usual way, such as improving market access, and instead were erecting their own protectionist barriers. After the mission, according to participant Ichikawa Hiroshi, director of industry for
Keidanren, the Japan Federation of Economic Organizations, an influential business organization, "kyōsei all of a sudden became a top-priority issue."25

*Kyōsei,* literally, "symbiosis," echoes the "harmonization" theme of the Maekawa Report. The noted champion of *kyōsei* has been Morita Akio, the founder and long-term head of Sony. Morita had long been stressing the need for harmony, stating that "It will be absolutely essential for Japanese companies to compete in line with rules that are compatible with those of the United States and Europe." He urged Japanese business and government leaders to match their wages, working hours and regulations with those of the West.26

The discussion of *kyōsei* led to Keidanren's gentler economic policy outline, "A Guide to Action for 1993: Toward a People-Oriented Economic Society and Global Kyōsei." The proposal echoed the themes of Maekawa and the lifestyle superpower, encouraging global cooperative efforts and promoting an improvement in the quality of life at home. It specifically called for *kyōsei,* or symbiosis between business and society," to realize such goals. This would be accomplished through such things as clarifying business roles through the mass media, promoting philanthropy and encouraging tax reform.27

3. The Hiraiwa Report (December 1993)

Nearly a year after the "kyōsei" report, another representative of Keidanren, then-Chairman Hiraiwa Gaishi, led a blue-ribbon panel to produce what has been regarded as a more updated version of the Maekawa Report. The differences are its

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"people-first orientation" and its focus on deregulation. Toward the aim of putting people first, the report uses another contemporary slogan, the *seikatsusha*. The literal impression of *seikatsusha*, "life person," according to economics professor Yashiro Naohiro, "refers to the ordinary person engaged in everyday life." In economic terms, the *seikatsusha* can be a producer, consumer, employee or local resident. The report's designation of *seikatsusha* aims to embellish the individual in the eyes of leaders and highlight the importance of such things as consumer information, product safety and security of employment.


In November of 1993, the Economic Planning Agency issued a White Paper titled, "National Life and Living Annual Report." The report departed from its typically conservative tone, using what some media translations have termed "socialistic" language, reflecting the attitude of Kubota Manae, a member of the socialist party who had assumed leadership in the agency that August. The report condemned corporations that hire workers to be mere "instruments" or "machineries." Since today's workers now seek to ways for "enriching their hearts and minds," corporations should encourage workers to work fewer hours and diversify their lives through such experiences as volunteer work.29


In June of 1994, an advisory committee for the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) announced a report titled, "The Industrial Structure Outline for the 21st Century." This report also highlights familiar themes such as the idea that

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Japan has filled its purpose of catching up to the West, and that it needs to boost domestic demand, pay more attention to the needs of the individual, and harmonize its plans with the international community. The specific aim of this policy to transform Japan's well-known practice of "industrial targeting," or the promotion of potentially high-growth industries, to a new policy in which industrial development is closely linked with consumer demand. The plan accordingly lists twelve "markets," including areas such as "living and culture," "information and telecommunications," "internationalization," "human resources" and "business support."30

Thus, these five policy reports are examples of a new framework for cultivating a new sort of national image, one which I will summarize under the heading of the "lifestyle superpower." Its softer lexicon of the "lifestyle superpower" resembles the "kinder, gentler" focus of American politics, as declared by then-U.S. president George Bush, following the collapse of the Soviet Union and dawn of the "New World Order" not divided by bipolar ideological rivalry. By 1994, economists such as Tanaka Naoki compared the Japanese economy to the demise of the Soviet empire. According to Tanaka, the "Japanese Empire" was a "phantom empire," collapsing because restrictive government regulations, like those of communist societies, prevented the globalization of its domestic market.31

In fact, when Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi delivered his first speech to the Diet on July 18, 1994, he also called for a "lifestyle superpower" which would be (according to one translation), "a kind and gentle nation rather than a strong or fierce one," and a nation that is "kind and gentle to the people and also

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environments [sic]." The derivative post cold war language seems to affirm the popular narrative that Japan's postwar economy is the analogue of its prewar military, conquering other nations with money, not guns. Thus the Soviet official cited in the epigraph heeds the fragility of Japan's economic armor.

Murayama's ascendance to the premiership also took place in an atmosphere heating up with disdain for the "economic animal." In 1993, an aptly named "New Party" took the reigns of government from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). The LDP had the reigning party for nearly 38 years, and fell in an atmosphere of widespread "dirty money" scandals. However, the much-heralded "New Party" fell in less than one year amid reports of financial improprieties by its leader, then-Prime Minister Hosokawa Morihiro. His premiership was substituted by the fragile leadership of Hata Tsutomu, who lasted a mere 58 days. Finally the LDP joined hands with its old arch-rival, the Socialists, in an oil-and-water coalition that stunned the world. The results of this odd coalition reflect not only the disintegration of the left wing in Japan, but also the compatibility of some tenets of the "lifestyle superpower" with ideas that previously belonged to the "welfare state" of the left-wing camp, e.g., the need to pay more attention to the average citizen, to respect the environment, as well as the need to make education more individualized, decentralized and less competitive — a topic of the next chapter.

Thus the "lifestyle superpower" and the new, gentler post-materialistic language has become pervasive, layered across various governmental bureaucracies, political parties and corporate organizations. To paraphrase Bill Clinton, Japan's bureaucratic slogan du jour might be, "It's not the economy, stupid." Likewise, the

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34 On December 10, 1994, the "New Party" (Shinseito) formed a new alignment as the "Shinshinto."
original author of the post-economic lexicon has become obscure. Did it originate with the Maekawa Report? From outside Japan? The business community? The bureaucracy? The people? Whatever the origin, it is certain that the central government has found such language to be politically popular in the 1990s.

**Growing Pains**

Despite the current vogue of the "lifestyle" theme, however, many of the ideas simply fail to make a connection. In the official discourse, for example, we hear that Japan has caught up with the West, but there is no urgency mentioned for Japan to restart its motor to compete with the up and coming Asian "dragon" economies, or to penetrate their markets. The situation evokes reminders in some respects to the situation one hundred years ago when a lexicon of "enlightenment" had pervaded public discourse. In the 1890s, the government declared that the period of "catching up" with the West had ended; soon, Japan would then turn its focus to Asia. The lifestyle lexicon of the 1990s is promoted as a domestic agenda, but to the extent that it can create for Japan a new image of a kinder nation, it will perhaps help make the bridge from West to East – if that should happen – more palatable and plausible to the many naysayers worried about Japan's new flirtation with "Asiaism." When a new fiscal economic plan was announced in January for the start of April 1995, one of the major issues cited on the agenda was to strengthen economic ties with Asian countries. A repeat of history may not be on the agenda, but with the government now calling on corporations and citizens to respect the individual, some critics nevertheless suspect a re-assertion of state control.

Yet none of these nominal changes occurs strictly as a result of the "lifestyle superpower"; they may have been already in motion without any "administrative guidance." What the lifestyle superpower does is name the tendencies, clarify them, naturalize them. The function of myth is thus to say, "If there will be change, acknowledge it, present it, and control as much as possible."
Credibility Gap: Such control is easily accomplished as long as the slogans remain, as one critic puts it, "phrases that no one can be against."35 Surely not every attempt to "naturalize" events under the conceptual umbrella of the post-economic lexicon has been smooth, however.

For example, Japanese corporate and governmental agencies seem eager to document evidence that certain "lifestyle" transitions are already underway, but often there is credibility gap in accepting the sincerity (honne, true feelings) of the stated intentions (tatemae, or acceptable façade). According to a study conducted in 1993 by the Keidanren's Committee on Quality of Life and Consumer Affairs, the vast majority of workers surveyed stated that they valued their personal lives over professional achievement.36 Yet 95% of the same respondents also agreed that "Japanese society is centered upon business enterprises."37 About half of the respondents acknowledged that their company "interferes too much with [their] private [lives]," while the other half apparently does not experience conflict between their desire to prioritize their personal lives, and the demands of the business-

35 Fieldwork notes, September 1993.

36 The Committee's results were from 496 surveys distributed to 756 employees from 36 companies, representing male and female (figures not stated), various ages and positions (executive, 2.7%; management, 43.5%; non-management, 53.8%). According to the results, approximately 80% of the total answered that they would clearly "have no intention of sacrificing personal life for professional advancement" (32.6%), or "if anything," they would "put greater emphasis on personal life" (46.8%). Comparing age cohorts demonstrated a greater tendency to place personal life above professional life among younger workers (89.1% of workers in their 20s, 74.4% of workers in their 40s). Tateisi Nobuo, "In Search of a Better Relationship Between Japanese Corporations and Employees," Keidanren Review no. 143 (February 1994), p. 5.

37 39.8% answered "yes" to the question "Do you think that Japanese society is centered upon business enterprises?" 55.2% answered "more or less." Tateisi, "In Search," p. 8.
oriented society. Considering the disparity between individuals and companies, the Committee advised companies to better define the individual roles of each employee, to take advantage of the diversity of their staffs, and to help cultivate their workers' personal interests and ambitions. It also called on employees to "develop themselves as whole individuals without being restricted by their companies."39

Not surprisingly, other critics believe these nominally good intentions documented on the part of corporate leaders do not represent the sentiments of the workers or the actual practices of managers. Economic writer Sataka Makoto intones that employees will hear plenty of rhetoric about respect for individuality and diversity when they first get on board, but things soon become clear. Instead of going home, workers are often expected to work overtime (usually without pay and often as "sociable overtime," tsukiai zangyō, which means keeping company with your coworkers even if there is no work for you to do), and to eat and drink with their coworkers and supervisors. Thus:

[P]hrases such as individuality and diversity] apply only to robotized 'company men' (who have few opinions to begin with) but not to individuals themselves. Real individuals, people who feel they have personal lives as well as functional identities within the corporation, are considered little more than parasites, and if they are lucky, are ignored by management. The unlucky worker who dares to go home to his family after a day's work becomes a 'marked man' – clearly an uncooperative, anti-social troublemaker. Managers make it a point to keep an eye on such employees, for they threaten the corporate robot system as much as any bomb-throwing anarchist ever could.

Conflict will surely arise when authors attempt to give a special "ride" to their pet ideas, sheltering them under the benign, protective umbrella of the new

38 5.9% stated that they think their company interferes with their personal lives; 45% said they "sometimes think so"; 48.3% said they "do not think so." Tateisi, "In Search," p. 6.

39 Tateisi, "In Search." p. 10.

"lifestyle" mythology. Perhaps no one has demonstrated this more than one of Japan's most controversial politicians, Ozawa Ichiro. In June of 1993, Ozawa, riding high on the success of his "New Party," published Nihon Kaizō Keikaku, published the following year in English as Blueprint for a New Japan. Although the English edition promotes the text in toto as "an unprecedented manifesto," "the political bombshell privately translated by the CIA," Blueprint is basically a rehashing and amplification of the current "lifestyle" themes: acceptance that the era of "catching up" with the West has ended, and the need for creating respect for the individual, decentralization, relaxed working conditions, increased foreign aid, and so on.

There is one notable exception, however, to Ozawa's otherwise derivative thesis: the role of the Japanese military. To preface his discussion, Ozawa reminds readers of the responsibilities of a "normal nation," whose characteristics are as follows:41

First, it is a nation that willingly shoulders those responsibilities regarded as natural in the international community. It does not refuse such burdens on account of domestic political difficulties. Nor does it take action unwillingly as a result of 'international pressure.'

Part of Japan's new commitment to shoulder responsibility in the international community, or to become "normal," must therefore include redefining its role in military security. Ozawa therefore proposes that Japan change its constitutional requirement of allowing only those military forces which contribute to the self-defense of the nation, to allowing full participation with United Nations "peace-building." This could be accomplished via an amendment to Japan's famous ninth or "peace" article of the Constitution which renounces war and the use of force, by adding a clause which permits the use of force under UN command.42

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42 Ozawa, Blueprint, p. 110.
The legacy of mistrust of the Japanese military is still so strong, that many critics of Ozawa do not associate his ideas with anything but remilitarization, fully ignoring the politician’s attempt to locate the security issue in the general lexicon of becoming more responsible or “normal” in the international community. As Mori expresses it, "It is strange that not a single thing is enlightened by the actual content of the phrase, 'international contribution.'" The phrase is merely an attempt on the part of the extreme right wing to ignore the majority of Japanese people who are against militarization. Thus, "[i]n reality, ‘international contribution’ is merely a phrase and has nothing to do with the people." Bookstores in Japan accordingly displayed Blueprint alongside books representing anti-Ozawa or anti-militarism viewpoints. Political critic Honzawa Jiro, for example, believes that Blueprint was likely ghost-written by Ozawa’s "brain trust" of military cronies, namely, members of the "Center for Strategic Studies," where Ozawa is a member. Ozawa’s Blueprint is nothing more than an attempt to revitalize nationalism, rewrite the constitution to allow a greater military role, and even develop an American-style CIA, he states.

This chapter has shown that the "lifestyle superpower" intends to improve the quality of life of Japan's citizens, and to improve Japan's relations with other nations. The lifestyle superpower, named (perhaps not originally) by the Economic Planning Agency's five-year plan announced in 1992, was announced one year after Japan's plunge into its current recession. Its basic premises, to improve the quality of life for citizens and make the nation more responsible in the international community, were already familiar in Japan, and respond to the need to genuinely reformulate the employment conditions in view of economic, demographic and social

43 Interview, August 1993.

trends. The need to change the meaning of "wealth" (yutaka) to refer to the affluence of life and humanity rather than the affluence of economics and material possessions was also a familiar theme. Along with the newly pronounced need to change the "economic superpower" to a "lifestyle superpower," the "affluence of life" and other such expressions signalled a new post-economic superpower lexicon which resonated in several other policy formulations, from other governmental agencies as well as the corporate Keidanren. Four prime ministers have led Japan since 1992, and the most recent, Murayama, alluded to the "lifestyle" superpower in his keynote address in the summer of 1994.

Yet there is a post-hoc nature to this new drive to de-compress the economic pressure cooker, and create a new image of Japan as benevolent rather than burnt-out. The "historical intention" of the decline of the Japanese economy becomes "naturally justified" under the public banner of changing from the economic superpower to the lifestyle superpower. The economic slowdown of Japan often is not expressed as an inevitable decline, yet the transition from hard economics to softer lifestyle policies is expressed as a conscious, long-awaited decision. This creates the impression of a new "lifestyle" orientation that will alone create a less materialistic society, having nothing to do with the fact that corporations are becoming "hollowed out" from a prolonged recession. The declaration of a "lifestyle superpower" intends to forge a break with the practices of making national economic growth a number one priority, but the prospects for such a break remains to be seen. Some critics fear that much of the "lifestyle" narrative represents a new direction toward the old themes of patriotism and remilitarization. One of the key issues will be the role of the education in this transition from the economic to lifestyle priorities, the topic of the following chapters.
CHAPTER IV

The Calculations of Examination and Nation:

Introduction

In 1993, the Japanese Ministry of Education (MOE) announced a significant change in educational procedures in Japan. It banned junior high school teachers from using commercially prepared tests (gyōsha tesuto) for counseling students on high school placement.

On the surface, this prohibition may seem isolated from the politics of national identity. What qualifies as "national identity" once implied a clear, authoritative, definition to which all loyal citizens adhered, a definition often propagated by the public sector through the educational system.

The commercial testing problem presented in this thesis, however, recognizes the importance of the private sector in educational practices in Japan, and the testing issue also raises questions concerning national identity. The central government wields tremendous authority in Japanese education, indeed, but the ban on commercial testing demonstrates that the state – if defined strictly as government – does not always represent the pulse of educational politics. Likewise, much of the politics of national mythmaking has become "privatized," outside the purview of government and formal education.1

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1 In this thesis what I include in the category of the "formal," "public" or "regular" school system consists of all public and private compulsory and state-sponsored forms of education. By "nonformal" education I refer to those private educational testing companies and juku that operate on a for-profit basis as...
The Ministry of Education claims that the commercial exams provided an overly expedient way to stratify students, which corresponded to the mood of the past three decades to rev the economic speed of Japan to its fullest capacity. In arguing for a more "whole life" approach to education, the Ministry's expulsion of commercial exams thus resonates with the transition from an "economic superpower" to a "lifestyle superpower."

Yet, if the commercial tests were a tool of the economic superpower, the impression of "privatism" occurs at two levels. First, in education, the commercial companies producing the tests represent one layer of private influence. Second, as it is well known, the nation as a whole has often seemed to be steered by its major corporations rather than the central government, thus earning the reputation – partially stereotyped, partially substantive – of "Japan, Inc." The concern in this section will mostly be with the former impression of the melding of public and private in education: the symbiosis between public schools and commercial exam companies (for-profit businesses), and to some extent, public schools and private schools in the formal educational system. However, I will also consider that such a relationship between public and private in education is analogous to the relationship between government and corporations at the national level, as well as the tension between "state" and "market" at a global level.

This section will thus explore the relationship between the recent issue of commercialized testing and national identity, through a perspective that de-centers the importance of the central government. It is an approach that

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businesses and generally receive no authorization from the central government.

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probes the position of education in an environment of economic nationalism – a nationalism which may begin from, but is not necessarily controlled by, the central bureaucracy.

In this introduction, I will briefly introduce the issue of the commercial testing and the conditions which led to its prohibition.

The competitiveness of "examination hell" is one of the better known features of the contemporary Japanese landscape. "Exam hell" (juken jigoku) or "exam warfare" (juken sensō) evokes a picture of a glut of students competing for entrance into a few excellent schools; but the situation is far more complex. Certainly, in Japan there is a broad range of schools, just as there is a broad range of student abilities. Competitiveness, therefore, is not limited to struggles over the difficult exams of the most famous schools: the trials of students are also those of passing the exams of the best "appropriate" schools matched according to their individual potentials. Because students can only attempt the exams of a small number of schools, the idealistic "best" schools must be weighed against their more realistic "personal best."

Following the aftermath of the second world war, when educational competitiveness became increasingly intense in Japan, the need thus developed for students to identify their "personal best" – to know which exams they should attempt based on their personal abilities and range of choices. This need was conveniently filled by the hensachi, a statistical number used to predict academic placement. Developed in 1965 by the privatized "entrance examination industry" (juken sangyō) rather than the formal educational system, the hensachi is considered a highly reliable, accurate and efficient way to
rank students and provide them with the necessary information to advance from one level of schooling to the next.

Originally a device used to measure the standard striking rates of weapons during the second world war, the *hensachi* was first used to measure academic ability in 1955. In 1965, computerization — which only the private companies of the exam industry, not public schools, could afford — enabled the testing procedure to spread across all of Japan. "Private companies" refers to the commercial education companies, often the parents or affiliates of Japan's ubiquitous cram schools. Such companies create the tests, calculate the scores, make statistical estimations of how these practice test scores compare with official test results acceptable to nearly all schools throughout Japan, provide computerized rankings of high schools and universities based on *hensachi* calculations, and distribute to each test-taker (or his or her teacher) a personalized list of which schools that student may qualify for.

The *hensachi* thus created the need for two sets of exams. The exam industry produced its mock exam (*mogi shiken*), which calculated the *hensachi*. High schools and universities provided the "real" exams. (In the case of public universities, another qualifying national exam is also needed.) The exam industry used the *hensachi* as information to help narrow the student's choices of high schools or universities. In the case of universities, moreover, students use the *hensachi* to select the particular department within their selected university, since different departments have different selection requirements.

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2 Higaki Tadashi, "Hensachi kyōso rettō wa nihonjin no jikazō de aru" (The archipelago of competitive test scores is the self-portrait of the Japanese people), *Ekonomisuto* 71, no. 8 (February 16, 1993), p. 35. Translations the author's unless otherwise noted.
The hensachi is calculated in the formula which follows, comparing the student's individual score to the mean score in order to gauge how far above or below the student was from the statistical definition of "middle":

\[
\text{hensachi} = \frac{\text{one's total points} - \text{average points} \times 10}{\text{standard deviation}} + 50
\]

Because of its importance, one might also say that the hensachi has marked the identities of many students of postwar Japan. Students passing from junior high to high school, or from high school into university, become necessarily preoccupied with the task of knowing one's number, improving one's number, comparing one's number to that of others, and monitoring schools and universities according to the rankings of this number, the hensachi.

It is not surprising, in such a context, that the single number of the hensachi became associated with single-mindedness in educational guidance: teachers and counselors gave more attention to the quantitative values of exam scores rather than the qualitative value of learning. Importantly, this pervasive test-scoring system was never an official part of education policy. It evolved as an educational practice without being planned as an official educational policy.

We know from the previous chapter that the LDP, working behind the scenes to influence policies of the Ministry of Education, favored policies to assist private formal schooling. However, to the extent of my knowledge garnered from this research, the "government," whether represented by the Ministry of
Education or political parties, expressed in its open discourse antagonism or reservations toward the entrance exam industry and its hensachi tests.

Eventually, however, teachers in formal schools became highly dependent on this service from the private sector exam industry. It is the responsibility of home room teachers in Japan to help students select the schools they wish to apply to: without the hensachi score, they had little idea of how to help their students. Many public junior high schools even permitted the private testing companies to conduct their tests on their own premises.

Moreover, private schools within the formal school system also benefited from the hensachi. Junior high school teachers cooperated with private high school admissions personnel in arranging for students to be accepted on the basis of the hensachi score alone, thus circumventing the need for the "real" test. Students often got themselves accepted through this procedure, known as aotagai, or "selling rice before the harvest," as an early insurance in case they failed their exams to public schools.

Against the background of such circumstances—favoring nonformal over formal education—in April of 1994, the hensachi was officially expelled from school. The so-called "hensachi expulsion" (hensachi tsuihō) prohibited junior high schools from using the hensachi as a guidance tool for placement into high school. Declaring the need to promote diversity, individualism and creativity in education, the Ministry of Education decried the placement tool for its "efficiency." It declared that the new guidance principle for junior high school students should be: "Do not aim for the school you can enter, but the school you want to enter." The old concept of "school choice" (gakkō sentaku) which gave birth to the hensachi should be discarded, according to the Ministry, and
the new guidance method should now be called, "Guidance for a Way of Life" (*ikikata no shidō*).³ (The *hensachi* remained intact for passing from high school to university, however.)

This purging of the *hensachi* for its expedient "efficiency" – as a sorting mechanism of students – thus echoes the lifestyle superpower's debunking of economic efficiency. This section thus considers the relationship between these two issues: the *hensachi* calculations of examinations, and the economic "calculation" of the nation. The objective is to depict the expulsion of the *hensachi* as emblematic of a larger transformation taking place in Japanese society: the need to replace the old consciousness of expediency and "economics first" with a new emphasis on cultivating the "quality of life" or an enriched "lifestyle" among ordinary citizens. The various plans which intend to declare an end to the image of Japan as an "economic superpower" and to develop a new "lifestyle superpower" have been directed from "above" – that is, by the central government. At present, however, an antagonism has been created between the market imperative of the exam industry, whose interest is to satisfy the needs of students to know their test scores, or numerical "identities," as efficiently as possible, and the bureaucratic imperative of the Ministry of Education, whose stated interest is to re-formulate a qualitative educational experience for all children.

Yet this antagonism raises questions of whether a true conversion of national identity is necessary to effect social changes, or whether the

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³ "Gakkō sentaku' kara 'ikikata' no shidō e" (From 'school choice' to guidance for 'a way of life'), *Naigai Kyōiku*, vol. 3 (May 25, 1993), p. 7.
government is merely erecting a new social discourse to accommodate changes already taking place. For the central government to announce a new vocabulary of "respect for the individual" may seem incongruent with the prevailing image of Japan as a group-oriented society, yet it is not likely that what the government has in mind is a Western-style individualism.

Throughout this dissertation, my reference to the "government" or "state" or "national bureaucracy," generally refers to bureaucratic organs such as the Ministries of Education (MOE) and International Trade and Industry (MITI); the Economic Planning Agency; and the political parties, especially the LDP, which sustain those bureaucratic organs. As I narrow the topic to discuss educational bureaucracy, I also include prefectural and municipal educational organs. My focus on "market" agents in education is mostly limited to the businesses which represent the exam industry: these ubiquitous test-cramming services provide a seemingly inescapable "privatism" to the character of Japanese education. Private schools within the formal school system overlap the categories of public and private: they perform a public service, yet they are relatively autonomous, and recently, private schools have also deviated from practices of public education, further complicating the contemporary rift in education.

The background of this section necessitates a holistic view of the relationship among education, labor, and society, to understand how these domains were consolidated to promote the national goals of economic productivity. Getting one's children enrolled in the good schools leading to good jobs became the social preoccupation of the new class which called itself
"middle" at the start of the high growth period of the 1960s. The hensachi made students' transitions through such academic tracking which facilitates labor diversification more efficient and convenient.

The foreground, however, is geared to a discussion of identity, especially concerning the use of language that structures the imagery of a nation, national identity. As I have stated, my use of the term "national identity," however, is not to assume the presence of the state, but to question it. During Japan's wartime period, the national government actively inculcated images such as the "family state" or "eight corners of the world under one roof" to create a cohesive national identity. However, during the period of Japan's economic nationalism, roughly occurring from the 1950s until the early 1990s - the era which circulated such phrases as "economic superpower," or "Japan, Inc." - the state's role in constructing an imagery of "economic identity" was minimal. The economic imagery of Japan often came from outside the nation or from "liberal" critics, opposing the heavy presence of the state and large corporations, and was basically negative.

Yet because prevalent metaphors are not passive descriptions of reality but active constructors of imagination, such economic imagery likely had a profound effect on national identity. Aside from the widely publicized offhand comments from aging, conservative politicians (see Chapter Two), one does not find conspicuous evidence of a national pride in Japan directed toward its economic accomplishments. Lately, Japan's economic nationalism, in a sense, has become an anti-nationalism, colored with negative reminders such as "economic animal" or "checkbook diplomat." Thus it is the transition from the defeatist imagery of Japan as the opportunistic "economic animal" to the more
levitated "quality of life" imagery which is the concern of this section, questioning through the issue of the hensachi expulsion whether such a transition can be possible.

In the relating of economic nationalism to national identity then, we move away from the concept of a unified state control: not all of the impetus to create the economic superpower was directed from "above," from the ranks of government bureaucrats. Likewise, we will see that at the level of education, the private exam industry which transformed the character of public education was never authorized to do so by the Ministry of Education. Returning to the concept on inverted nationalism introduced in Chapter One, the diffusion of power inverted identity from the large image of the nation to the personal affiliation with one's school and company.

This idea of Japan as a decentered state has been noted by several scholars. Anthropologist Thomas Rohlen, for example, explains that the cultural pattern for Japan has been to locate power in "social borders and informal processes of management" more than "public formal institutions or universal principles of reference." For Roland Barthes, the imperial palace in Tokyo is the emblem of decentered public life, perhaps an enigma to the "concentric" Western concept of urban planning. In that capital city, the center is indeed present, but it is empty. Instead: "The entire city turns around a site both forbidden and indifferent, a residence concealed beneath foliage, protected

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by moats, inhabited by an emperor who is never seen, which is to say, literally, by no one knows who.  

Maruyama Masao, Japan's preeminent political theorist of wartime ideology, stresses the historically constructed nature of this vacuous center. At the time of Japan's Meiji Restoration (1868), political power was removed from the sovereign military leader, the shōgun, and placed into the institution of the 'restored' spiritual leader, the emperor. The private matter of moral authority became vested in the public figure of the emperor rather than delegated to a separate clergy. After the war, however, the "old nationalism" of emperor veneration did not exactly die out or change, according to Maruyama. Instead, "[the old nationalism] vanished from the political surface only to be inlaid at the social base in an atomized form."

Economic nationalism and postwar education provided a conduit for many elements of such an "atomized" nationalism. Three qualities of an education economicus relevant to this section are first, that the configurations of identity are often elusively "imagined" rather than ideologically imprinted; second, that the strategy of economic nationalism in schools was also a


methodology rather than an overt ideology, and third, that economic nationalism itself is a paradox - since economics is an activity which tends to distract from the nation state. The trading of goods, unlike shellfire, opens markets and expands domains; the state cannot merely objectify trade for its own purposes, as with weapons, but must continuously harness an energy that it cannot fully control. We will find that this is also true for "educational nationalism," that the state cannot necessarily harness the energy of knowledge exchange.

Much of the policy surrounding the hensachi issue can thus be called elusive, since the Ministry of Education never approved the hensachi officially, and the LDP leader Nakasone Yasuhiro also cautioned against it. Yet as we shall see in this section, the government, the exam industry, the mass media and the teachers nevertheless facilitated the hensachi "system" smoothly and effectively.

The strategy of Japan's economic nationalism in education was to forge a symmetrical relationship between individual and nation: to construct the nation was to construct students. The student, a human resource, used the hensachi to be as efficient as possible in his or her personal strategy, and that personal strategy became analogous to an economic strategy which also made efficient use of its resources. The hensachi became a metaphor of the individual student, who came to see his or her or image represented by the efficient number. Likewise, images such as the "economic superpower" or "Japan, Inc." became metaphors of the efficient nation. Such representations may have implied the ideological underpinnings of such things as market
competitiveness. But again, there were very few broadly-circulated ideologies attaching education to collective economic goals.

It is more safe to say that the *hensachi* was a de facto *methodology* of the economic superpower. The individual made educational choices without the slightest regard to the image of the nation, but his or her efficient method in selecting schools and discovering the parameters of his or her knowledge quotient, as summed up by the *hensachi*—corresponded, ideally, to the needs of the nation to have a well-organized, efficient labor force. For example, as explained in Chapter Two, early education documents from the 1960s, which linked education policies with labor requirements, used the word "growth" (*seichō*) to create a double meaning between the "growth" of the individual and the "growth" of the nation. This is similar to the way US policymakers talk about students as being "at risk," and needing to become more "competitive." What they mean also is that the *nation* is "at risk" and needs to restore its "competitiveness" in a world economy. Likewise, the "economic security" which has supposedly replaced military security implies that guaranteeing the economic security of individuals should translate into the economic security of the nation.

Yet even if education is harnessed to serve the needs of an economic nationalism, we must consider that economics, along with education, to the extent that education is an information exchange, often represent, in the global view, a centripetal force. Economics and information pull the world closer together with expanded markets that are increasingly heedless of political borders. Because nationalism is an opposite centrifugal force, imposing borders upon global networks, the task of harnessing economics or knowledge is
difficult indeed. This section locates the *hensachi* issue in such a crosscurrent between the centripetal and centrifugal. Though its relationship to global circumstances is merely emblematic, the *hensachi* raises the question of whether unrestrained technology and commercialization is appropriate for education, an institution traditionally bounded, in most societies, by the domain of the "public" government.
CHAPTER V

The Calculations of Examinations:

The Hensachi as a Micro-Japan, Inc.

One assumption often made of the image of "Japan, Inc." is that the government and the private sector work together in unified partnership. Another assumption is that the two systems work together with exemplary efficiency. At the educational level, this impression of efficiency through public-private coordination, with its consistencies and contradictions to boot, is represented in the hensachi.

This chapter will consider the hensachi as a metaphor of "Japan, Inc.," a sobriquet – partially substantive, partially stereotyped – of that country's identity as an economic superpower, implying a highly efficient entity as a nation/corporation. Like Japan, Inc., the hensachi was education's tool of efficiency, developed in the nexus of public and private sectors, the former being public education, the latter the informal, commercialized "entrance examination industry" (juken sangyō). And just as Japan is now reconsidering its relationship with "Inc." in an effort to downplay its economic identity, it also reconsidering the hensachi in some of its public educational practices. Effective as of the school year beginning in April of 1994, the Japanese Ministry of Education announced a prohibition on the use of the hensachi (hensachi tsuhō), preventing commercial companies from testing in public junior high schools in order to provide detailed information to help teachers guide students
into senior high schools. The scoring procedure remains intact at the level of advancing from senior high to university, however.

The organization of this chapter will first be to introduce the mechanisms of the *hensachi* which have encouraged privatism in Japanese education, making education an analogue of Japan, Inc. In this situation, the coordination of public and private realms has been spontaneous, negotiated across many social layers, rather than strategically planned from "above." Second, this chapter will discuss how the *hensachi* purge is likewise analogous to the new plan for a "lifestyle superpower." The expulsion of the *hensachi* in education in order to cultivate creativity and respect for the individual resonates with the broad plans of the lifestyle superpower: both construct a myth for a new Japanese identity which would be less focused on economic competitiveness and more desirous of the affluence of life. In this situation, however, it is not clear whether the public sector has taken the initiative to assert itself over the influence of the private sector in the short run, or is simply forging a new symbiosis for public and private in the long run.

I use the term, "Japan, Inc." as a pervasive representation of the Japanese national identity, one which is closely associated with the identity of an "economic superpower."¹ I do not claim that its image is entirely "true," nor is it exclusively

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¹ In part, I use the term "Japan, Inc." with some suggestion of irony, because it is not as commonly heard today as it was in the 1970s and 1980s, and I believe that this is because Americans are beginning to see the representation as less negative and perhaps not even unique. Since America began putting its own emphasis on economic nationalism at the end of the cold war, policies embracing slogans such as "entrepreneurial government" have come into vogue. A U.S.A., Inc., may now be in the incubator, just as Japan is now accusing the U.S. of "managed trade."
positive or negative. The term suggests a melding of the nation and the corporation. As stated in the introduction of this thesis, the "nation" as "government" or "state" is represented mostly by the Ministry of Education and to some extent by the Economic Planning Agency and other branches of the bureaucracy cooperating with the plan to transform Japan into a lifestyle superpower. The corporation is mostly represented in the entrance exam industry (juken sangyō).

As an image, Japan, Inc. originally bore the impression of a "collusive" state. It conveyed the impression that the "illicit" (to Westerners) partners of government and the private sector worked together in harmoniously planned projects; that the people were passively obedient to this unwed union of Japan, Inc., and that such an arrangement was uniquely Japanese.

Moreover, it was "Japan" which held dominion over "Inc.," and not vice versa. Scholarly works tried to unpack the reality from the stereotype; until recently, the qualified concept of "soft authoritarianism" used by Chalmers Johnson, who focuses on the influential role of MITI in Japan's industrial policy, was perhaps the best known. In the mass media, however, the early impression rendered of Japan, Inc. was that of a decidedly strong state leading along its subservient corporations.

The impression of Japan, Inc. used in this thesis is more in concurrence with the study of Margaret A. McKean, who counts her study on state strength among the several new, more empirically rich, theses demonstrating that the Japanese "state" – if precisely defined as the national bureaucracy and the ruling party (still the Liberal Democrats at the time of her writing) – has become a weak entity. The state is not so much a leader as a "big follower," explains McKean; it "follows when it

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can, coordinates when it must, and deregulates when it cannot coordinate. It may be true that in recent years Japan, Inc. has become a more elusive entity: its power is strong, even if its central administrative power is weaker than its local power, and it is also complex, mysterious, and difficult to identify precisely.

In the context of international relations theory, the analogy between the hensachi and Japan, Inc. can thus be understood as tension between the "sovereignty impulse" and the "exchange impulse." Japan's "Inc." functions as an "exchange impulse," encouraging a flow of capital and information which relaxes the strict territorial boundaries of the state. Thus, a transnationalization process occurs which often ignores the specified geopolitical boundaries of the state, creating a "borderless world." The exchange impulse relaxes central control to expand its domains, while the sovereignty impulse, such as rallying for the kinder, gentler lifestyle superpower, "militates in the direction of drawing firm boundaries around the self," of specifying the boundaries of a new collective identity.

The hensachi likewise represented an "exchange" flow, relaxing the strict boundaries of formal education, expanding the domains of test-taking preparation.

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5 Expression attributed to Ohmae Ken'ichi, The Borderless World.

6 Shapiro, "Sovereignty and Exchange," p. 3.
to encourage a more "borderless education." As shall be explained in this chapter, two forms of privatism were thus facilitated, the first being the expansion of the exam industry with its centerpiece, the juku, and the second being the growth in prestige of private schools within the formal school system.

If the role of the state in harnessing the tension between Japan and Inc. ranged from collusive to elusive, a noticeable lack of central coordination from the Ministry of Education is also apparent with the issue of the hensachi. To the extent that the bureaucracy became involved with the issue of the placement criterion, it was largely local or prefectural governments: the official purge on the hensachi, as we shall see, also was propelled by the prefectural government of Saitama. This much is in conformity with the weak state noted by McKean.

In this chapter, I cannot insist on such a singular definition of state power as does McKean. As I mentioned in the introduction, the Ministry of Education still wields considerable power over what it does regulate, namely, the administration of textbooks and other components of curriculum. More germane to the topic of this paper, however, is the problem of how much the proliferation of hensachi guidance, along with the burgeoning of the entrance exam industry, has been apparently unplanned, coinciding with concurrent developments in communications, namely, computers and the mass media. The Ministry of Education's attitude toward the exam industry has been ambivalent, as one MOE official told me, because it was "undecided." On one hand, teachers' dependence on the hensachi for guidance, or students' dependence on cram schools for extra help with exams, undermined certain educational principles of respect for individual choice. On the other hand, these services did help make education more efficient, and efficient education
contributed to an efficient labor pool. It would be difficult for any government to crack down on such a convenient situation.

The Hensachi and the Transformation of Formal Education

The second chapter demonstrated that the policies of high growth under Prime Minister Ikeda (1960) resulted in the stratification of education to meet economic requirements, with exams used to track "supplies" of students according to the "demands" of labor. Technically speaking, students entering high school had freedom of choice to decide which schools they wished to enter; they only had to pass the necessary exams.

"Choice" can often be a euphemism for competitiveness: if everyone chooses the same thing, competition will ensue. Traditionally, the Japanese government did not intend for too much competitiveness to permeate the educational system. As a protector of equality, the government mitigated the possibility of over-competitiveness to some extent by making attendance in elementary and lower secondary (junior high) schools – compulsory attendance – limited to one's geographical district. One had to attend schools in the neighborhood. This shielding of elementary and junior high schools was consistent with Japanese government's tendency to stress the importance of compulsory education, while allowing the private sector to compensate for educational demand at other levels. Thus, according to figures offered by the National Institute for Educational Research in Japan, elementary and junior high schools are overwhelmingly public: the private sector accounts for a mere 0.7% of elementary and 4% of junior high schools. At 150
opposite ends of the ladder, the majority of kindergartens and colleges and universities is private, 79% of the former and 75% of the latter.  

High schools represent a special situation. Private schools represent 29% of Japan's senior highs, but strictly speaking, there are no completely "public" high schools, in that non-private high schools are classified as "municipal" or "prefectural," and tuition must be paid. In 1989, "public" (prefectural or municipal) high schools charged an average of ¥86,232 per year (about US $991 in 1995), compared with private tuition of ¥152,668 (US $1,755). By 1995, it was reported that 21 prefectures had raised high school tuitions to over ¥100,000 (US $1149). Public elementary and junior high schools, governed at the municipal level, yet designated as "public," do not charge tuition.

Relaxed governmental proprietorship over senior high schools also meant that geographical restrictions were lifted: students could apply to any school they could commute to. To enter high school from junior high school thus involved choosing the "best" school, wherein geographical convenience became less important than academic quality and prestige. It was also at this stage that schools ceased to be single track; instead, high schools are broadly classified as general or "normal," 73.6%; business, 10.6%; technical, 8.8%; agricultural and fisheries, 3.1%;

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homemaking 2.5% and "others," 1.4%. Only the "normal" schools are considered college preparatory while all others are vocational.

Moreover, considerable variation exists in the prestige of each school, creating, in informal social lore, a class hierarchical structure of "normal-merchant-artisan-farmer" to replace the old feudal structure of "samurai-farmer-artisan-merchant." Graduating from the "normal" schools is the only way to maintain membership in the most privileged social class, like the military or samurai class of feudal times. People will also divide schools informally as "placement schools" (shingakukō) or "bottom schools" (teihenkō), suggesting a wide gap exists between the high and low ends of the scale.

Following the Occupation the social pressure to enter high school grew and grew. In 1950, slightly less than half of all boys, and about one third of all girls in Japan were able to attend high school. Yet by 1991, nearly all students in Japan—95.6% of girls and 93.2% of boys—advanced to high school. As with the social demand for kindergarten and higher education, the private sector played a large role in facilitating this expansion. In recent years, however, the ratio of private to public high schools has remained about the same, because prefectures are also given latitude to fill social demand for new schools.

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Thus high school entrance was considered perfectly meritocratic: students could enter the school of their "choice" according to their abilities to pass the selected schools' entrance exams. Yet how could students, or their parents, make reasonably safe choices, especially given the expansion of various levels of education, the social pressure to enter the best schools, and the uncertainty of one's own capabilities? At the level of passing from junior high to senior high, the role of the junior high teacher as placement counselor to advise students and parents became crucial.

Traditional methods were not sufficient in alleviating this anxiety over which choices to make, or in assisting teachers in placement guidance. The other instrument of placement, besides the official entrance exam, is the "secret report card" or naishënshô. The hand-written naishënshô, which includes both quantitative as well as qualitative evaluations, is nearly always kept secret from students and parents. Intending to reinforce the ideals of egalitarianism, educators hoped to ensure through this report card that students would pursue their educational ambitions undeterred by self-consciousness of how their abilities compare with those of other students. Yet as Horio expresses it, "...because neither students nor their parents are allowed to see these reports, challenge their validity, or make appeals to have them altered, the system of naishënshô reporting has come to function as the 'invisible whip' used to keep Japanese students in line."12 The "whip" he refers to is the power for teachers to keep the information on the report card from the students and use that secret information to keep students in line by saying, "If you do such and such, I will report it on your naishënshô!" – implying that

12 Horio, Educational Thought and Ideology, pp. 279-280n.
the teacher will prevent misbehaving students from entering the schools of their choices. (This will be further explained in Chapters Six and Twelve.) This type of report card, then, is surely of little help in offering students fair and objective advice as to what school they might be qualified to enter.

Even if it were not secret, the fact that the naishinshō is hand-written (or was until the early 1990s when public schools began to integrate computers) would make it too cumbersome an instrument either for one teacher to use as guidance to help hundreds of students, or for the officials of the accepting schools to read when they must narrow down their own selections of applicants. The two placement guides, both also instruments of social control, illustrate the binarism between efficiency or competitiveness on one hand, and equality on the other. If the hensachi is a metaphor of the efficiency of the "Inc." in Japan, Inc., the naishinshō, as the supposed guarantor of equality of free choice, is the metaphor of a government bureaucracy without the streamlining check of private industry: it is slow, cumbersome, esoteric and often wasteful.

Such bureaucratic inefficiency, however, does not necessarily evoke a zeal to cut red tape among Japanese people as it does in America, however. On the contrary, Japan has had a long, though often denounced, tradition of elevating bureaucrats above the level of the average person, shielding them from criticism or reform. The expression kansorùminpi, literally, "respect for officials, contempt for people," has been widely used to depict such social attitudes which are deeply rooted in Japan's history. Having borrowed the bureaucratic examination system from China, Japan has been rewarding its most successful examination takers with the exalted status of the career bureaucrat for centuries. After the Meiji restoration opened Japan to the world in 1868, political reforms enhanced this tendency rather
than diminish it, by creating a strong oligarchy within the state bureaucracy. The reason lay with the distrust of politicians, whom reformers feared might create disruption and instability if allowed too much control of government.\footnote{Hane Mikiso, Modern Japan: A Historical Survey, 2d ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), pp. 127-128.}

Despite the democratizing measures of the Occupation, Japan's public school teachers and educational administrators, as civil servants, retain much of this guarded air of bureaucratic superiority in their "hidden curriculum." Thus, the pattern of keeping student's academic performance a mystery was also maintained when the National First Common examination was implemented in 1979. The national exam is used as a preliminary screening device for all students applying to national universities. After taking the test, students can then select the individual exam of the department of the institution they wish to apply to. However, the results of the first test are sent directly to the national universities without students ever knowing what those results were, or how they fared in comparison to other students.\footnote{Tsukada Mamoru, "The Yobiko: The Institutionalized Supplementary Educational Institution in Japan: A Study of the Social Stratification Process," (Ph.D. diss., University of Hawaii, 1988), p. 33.} Without such knowledge, the personal empowerment necessary to make informed decisions is lost, while educators are able, in effect, to maintain a distance from and control over students.

Moreover, as Tsukada Mamoru points out, Japanese universities (as well as high schools) do not advertise themselves to prospective students, as American schools do. Students had to rely on some sort of objective criterion to judge themselves as well as the ranking of the university. (An exception to the custom of
not advertising is now occurring with junior high schools, however, as will be noted shortly.15

The Entrance Exam Industry

A growing need was created for academic guidance, and into this void stepped the hensachi, the tidy product of the educational system with the clear technological and financial advantage – the non-formal commercial school system, or entrance examination industry (juken sangyō). This industry consists of various cram schools, study aids, and mock exams, and the key individuals employed in the industry not only instructors but consultants. Through marketing by the exam industry, the hensachi simply "evolved" to its position as an accidentally irresistible tool.

Cram schools include those specializing in exam preparation for those students who are keeping up well with their regular coursework but need extra help to prepare for exams, and "remedial" cram schools for those students who just need extra attention to catch up. In this thesis (which will not consider the remedial schools), I will often refer to them by their Japanese terms of juku for students up to twelfth grade and yobikō for students who have finished high school but failed their exams of choice and wait out for a year or two as rōnin. The traditional word for "masterless samurai," rōnin of the contemporary world refers to such students who have "lost" their schools. Sometimes the terms overlap. Juku is also a generic word for all preparatory schools: therefore the yobikō is a type of juku. Also, some yobikō now have special courses for high school students, but the general image of the yobikō is that of a cram school for rōnin.

To Americans, examples of exam prep schools such as Stanley Kaplan or Princeton Review, or testing services such as ETS (Educational Testing Service) will first come to mind as analogies of the exam industry. Differences abound; but the most important ones to bear in mind at this point to gain an understanding of the Japanese situation is that Japan's *juku* are far more ubiquitous; they are as important as disseminators of educational information as they are for preparing students for exams, and, as I will shortly explain, they transformed the culture of Japanese public education. Though Korea, Taiwan and the People's Republic of China (all of which share a Confucian heritage oriented toward exams) have begun witnessing the dotting of cram schools along their educational landscapes, no other nation has experienced the intensity of commercialized education to the extent of Japan.

To get an idea of the present importance of the basic *juku* in Japan, according to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Welfare, over half of all junior high school students in 1991 attended such kinds of preparatory or remedial *juku* which are related to school learning (*gakushū*). (Hobby or cultural schools such as piano schools or flower arrangement schools are also generically considered as *juku*.) The number increased to 58.2% for third year students for whom the *hensachi* is most important. Another survey conducted by Japan's public television station NHK found that over half of junior high school students attend *juku* for an average of three hours or more per week.¹⁶

The burgeoning of all such *juku* (though they had prewar precedents) started with educational and social changes generated from the period of high economic

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growth. For the emerging mass consumer society, entering children in "good
schools" was as important as owning a refrigerator or vacuum cleaner – certainly not
for the material value of such things, but for the social value of proving one's
membership in the new middle class. But good schools, of course, were not
manufactured for purchase in every household. Competition among many
youngsters for limited places generated a need for increased information which was
not available from regular schools. This information was both the knowledge of one's
potential to pass exams as indicated by the hensachi of the practice exam, and the
knowledge of which schools accept results from official exams comparable to one's
hensachi.

Early press coverage of the juku phenomenon treated the trend with much
negativity, as if it were a sudden and dangerous side effect of the entrance exam
tever. Recent governmental explanations, however, are more likely to naturalize the
"double school" phenomenon in a broad historical narrative which explains, first of
all, the historical precedent of juku education \(^{17}\); second, the relationship of exam
preparatory juku with all other after-school learning programs, and third, the
consistency of such "privatized" education with the government's original intention
of letting the private sector respond to the more specialized educational demands of
the public while it would take cover the bases of compulsory education. The broader
narrative is by no means a false one, yet it diminishes the phenomenon of those

\(^{17}\) From the late 18th to the early 19th century, Japanese adults attended
private schools known as shijuku which taught diverse subjects including Asian
classics, Western learning, classical arts and martial arts. Shijuku disappeared after
the enactment of the Education Ordinance (gakusei) in 1872. See Yuuki Makoto,
"Out-of-School Supplementary Education in Japan," *NIER Occasional Paper 01/86*
juku in particular – the exam preparatory juku and related large commercial operations which introduced the hensachi – which proliferated in the 1960s economic boom, coinciding with the expansion of educational and employment opportunities. Other remedial juku also increased at this time, serving the needs of less competitive students, in large part because students would feel left out if their friends attended juku and they didn't.

In filling the demand for students to understand their abilities, the hensachi rapidly facilitated change in the character of postwar education. First, the need for such concise information as contained in the hensachi became de rigueur. The number was like a technological advancement which no one could do without. Students who did not have their hensachi scores felt both out of place as well as confused as to what other sort of information they should use to gauge their potential for academic placement.

The exam industry's second step in marking the character of the education was to rank all schools and universities with the convenient hensachi, market intricate catalogues to publicize such information, and employ counselors to explain the rankings and scores to anxious teachers, parents and students. These rankings fluctuate according to the cohorts of students each year, and they are published annually. The continuous testing and marketing of results created a non-formal regionalization and nationalization of the exam process at the level of senior high and university entrance, creating what Anderson would call an "imagined community" of test takers.18 Entrance examinees could be continuously reassured of their camaraderie with other anonymous cohorts in their prefecture and across

Japan; not a single college-bound student can do without the meticulous, ubiquitous *hensachi* catalogues. (At the level of university entrance, test-taking also becomes officially nationalized with the National Common Examination.) Such a community could parallel the "deep, horizontal comradeship" of the nation as long as the examinees' purposes corresponded with those of the central bureaucracy. As we shall see, however, the imagined community of test-takers could also constitute a community transcending the limited imaginings of the state.

A rōnin can depend on one institution, the *yobikō*, for counseling and instruction to mediate between himself and the university he hopes to enter. Students still enrolled in junior or senior high, however, are still dependent on their own homeroom teachers who, like counselors, bear the responsibility for guiding students into the next level of schooling. Thus, the third way the *hensachi* altered the face of formal education was to make regular school teachers dependent on the services of the exam industry in order to guide their students.

The *hensachi* was thus able to reverse the pattern of "respect for officials, contempt for people." by greatly empowering students, and teachers who sincerely wished to help them, with necessary information to advance to the most appropriate school for their academic abilities. This empowerment of min, or people, relaxing the sovereign boundaries of kan, the educational public bureaucracy, functioned as an "exchange" impulse leading to "the management of people," the Japanese etymology of privatization (*mineika*); the influence of the exam industry can be thought of as "privatization" to the extent that school education is considered part of the public domain. This private sector education, of course, was not the same as what Japan's liberal educators had in mind in advocating "people's education." The exam entrepreneurs and liberal critics both state their aims at focusing attention on the
needs of the individual student, but the education of the entrance exam industry does so by homogenizing knowledge, restricting time and maximizing material gain for providers, whereas the Japanese liberal cry for a "people's education" has generally intended to unleash knowledge from the protective grasp of bureaucracy and thus provide greater freedom of movement for students. (The shortcomings of juku education for facilitating democracy will be further discussed in Chapter Six.)

The *Hensachi* as a Micro-Japan, Inc.

We can see, then, that like the impression of Japan, Inc., the commercialized *hensachi* developed in coordination with public purposes, and along with the officially mandated entrance exam, it created a dynamic model of efficiency in education – but only up to a point.

Public End, Private Means

The first resemblance of the *hensachi* to Japan, Inc., is that it straddles the public and private sectors, serving the needs of "Japan" – the national educational bureaucracy – but created by an "Inc." – the examination industry. We saw in the previous chapter that the entrance exam in turn is the public "means" for the "end," of both public and private organizations, of filling labor requirements. Industries benefit from a well-disciplined, stratified pool of job applicants, and their hiring procedures which take place consistently on April 1 of every year are as well-orchestrated as the entrance exam process.

Thus, it is no coincidence that the economic boom period was also the time when all of the juku one sees today proliferated. Such commercialized schools provided the private "means" of scoring methods and studying methods – for the
public "end" of the entrance exam. This influence of the examination industry and related non-formal schooling was the first form of "privatism" (private sector influence) encouraged by widespread use of the hensachi in particular, and students' needs to improve test-taking skills in general. Such a form of privatism occurs almost entirely off track of the formal school system. "Study juku" (gakushū juku) which include "placement juku" (shingaku juku) for rigorous exam-coaching, remedial juku (hoshū juku) for students who need supplementary material to catch up with their lessons, and juku which combine various learning programs, are all considered with their counterparts, the keiko juku for arts and sports, as a form of "social education," referring to educational activities outside the formal school system. No legal restrictions are imposed on the selection of teachers, teaching materials, or administration, despite the fact that the shingaku juku often duplicate the teaching materials of the formal schools. Public school teachers are forbidden by law to moonlight as juku instructors or private tutors, although in 1976, before this regulation was strictly enforced, 17% of juku instructors were regular public school teachers. Many juku are simply expanded neighborhood tutorial services offered by homemakers or university students without a formal business license; thus the total number of juku is very difficult to identify precisely.¹⁹

Only the yobikō, for advanced high school students and rônin, is under public control to some extent. Classified as a "miscellaneous school," the local prefectural governor must formally approve the yobikō, overseeing some administrative and curricular matters.²⁰ The large yobikō are often administratively connected with the

¹⁹Yuuki, "Out-of-School Supplementary Education in Japan."

²⁰Yuuki, "Out-of-School Supplementary Education in Japan," p. 11.
testing services that administer the ubiquitous commercially-prepared mock exams (gyōsha tesuto) used to calculate the hensachi.

Despite the image of endless mock exams, juku are often considered more relaxed and personalized than their formal school counterparts. Strict rules and regulations over such things as uniforms and hairstyles do not apply to teachers or students, and students prefer the attention given to their personal test scores and progress. Many teachers leave public schools to teach in juku or yobikō to escape what they consider stifling working conditions; in 1986, about 40% of juku instructors were credentialed public school teachers.21

Not surprisingly, however, the juku (and yobikō in particular, which requires full-time attendance and tuition) exacerbates class and gender bias. The yobikō, where testing for the hensachi is the principal teaching and guidance method, favors students from more socioeconomically advantaged households. This bias is not caused directly by the hensachi, but the hensachi becomes a location where social bias is reflected and reproduced. Those who attended more elite high schools are channeled into higher ranking classes within the yobikō and generally do better than students who attended more average high schools. Because of the high cost of the yobikō, students from wealthier families are also able to select the more prestigious yobikō institutions.22 Furthermore, most juku teachers are male, and male students constitute about 85% of yobikō classes, which channel their students

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into higher-ranked universities. Among students who fail exams, approximately 85% of males become ronin, compared with 15% of females. Females who fail entrance exams are more likely to be channeled by family and social pressures into junior colleges or technical schools. Ronin males have the advantage, provided by the yobiko, of waiting another year or two to enter a good university. Parents may not wish to spend the equivalent of university tuition for daughters to attend yobiko (between $3000 to $30,000 per annum in 1988 US dollars, according to Tsukada). Moreover, female ronin students, because of their independence and defiance of social conventions, are more apt to be negatively stereotyped.24

Unlike "Japan, Inc." there are no large organizations overseeing the coordination of formal education with non-formal juku and testing services. The structural analogue of Keidanren (alliance of business and government leaders) was the parent-student-teacher conference, when teachers used the hensachi to make recommendations for high school entrance.

Yet for the most part, the impression continues to be one of two separate school systems. Formal school teachers maintain an air of distance from private educational services, and do not recommend specific juku to their students. In the early years of the juku boom there was considerable secrecy involved with sending one's child to so-called "second schools." Tutors often visited private homes under a vow of confidentiality.

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24 Tsukada, "The Yobiko." pp. 70-72; 195; 198; 28.
Much of the need for secrecy has changed as juku became the norm rather than the exception. Meanwhile, the dependence of public schools on the private exam industry for the commercial tests and hensachi scores escalated, resonating most acutely at the level of junior high schools. The image that Westerners often hold of Japan's "exam war" is usually that of high school seniors trying to get into the most famous universities, such as Tokyo University (Tōdai). This was indeed the case in the early stages of Japan's growth, and indeed, long before the second world war. As the continuous gauging of the hensachi through practice tests proliferated, however, the most conspicuous participants to the exam war were junior high school students, trying to get into whatever the computer told them was their personal list of "good schools." Most students knew they could not get into Tōdai, yet they often could not help judging the worth of their school according to the Tōdai gold standard.

Thomas Rohlen depicts senior high schools as the important juncture of the Japanese social ecology, for this is where hierarchical stratification begins. Egalitarianism does not end, according to Rohlen, but it ceases to be the dominant institutional mode as it is during the years of compulsory education.25 Some students even elect to become "junior high rōnin" at this critical young age: they would rather spend a year in private tutoring than risk their future by graduating from a high school with little potential.

Thus, because the volume of students taking exams to enter high school is so large, and the stakes so critical – for it is here that the mostly irreversible tracking begins – that many junior high schools allowed the exam industry to conduct the


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commercial *hensachi* tests on their own grounds. Nearly all three-year junior high schools relied heavily on the *hensachi* for offering guidance to students and their parents regardless of whether students intended to enter public or private high schools. Until one year ago, these commercial educational companies also conducted practice tests on several public school premises during regular school hours, as often as once a month to all three grades of junior high.

For private schools within the formal system, the *hensachi* represented not only a placement guide for teachers to advise students, helping to predict whether or not they could pass the necessary entrance exams: the number became, in effect, a placement tool in itself. The commercial mock exam, a simulation of the real test, could substitute for the real exam under the privilege of "special recommendation." Private high schools have long held the leeway of admitting certain students by recommendation rather than the entrance exam. The practice was intended to allow latitude for students with certain outstanding talents that compensated for test-taking skills, but it often led to abuse. The *hensachi* presented an enticing opportunity to accept students using the mock exam score itself as a qualification for "recommendation." Among the market-driven private schools, competing for students became critical in the late 1980s when the numbers of school age children began to drop and schools needed to maintain their enrollments.26 This, of course, reversed the tradition of institutions remaining stable while only students had to compete. It seemed to portend the fears of policy analysts that "student consumerism" would create desperation on the part of educators selling their "products" to make gimmicky appeals to their "clients." In the mid-1980s,

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26 As stated in Chapter Two, the population of children aged 0-14 decreased from 35.4% in 1950 to 18.2% in 1990.
anticipating that such a trend would soon affect Japanese higher education.

Kitamura suggested the analogy used by David Riesman, who believed students in American colleges had become "passive consumers" waiting to be the "courted customers" of "academic supermarkets."27

The foreshadow of such desperation seemed to be occurring in the efforts of private high schools to recruit students early on the basis of the hensachi. The crescendo of students using the mock test to apply to private schools crossed the line of "abuse" not only with over-use of the hensachi. In a few areas, private schools began to offer places to students in advance of the usual entrance exam "season" lasting from January to March. According to one teacher, in recent years, up to 90% of the students he advised were offered enrollment in private high schools on the basis of their hensachi score alone, since these private schools offered such admissions in the fall, well in advance of the usual test date. (The students did not necessarily choose to attend, if they also passed into a public school.) This phenomenon was known as "selling rice before the harvest" (aotagai), and it was toward the ethics of this issue that the crackdown on the hensachi at the junior high level (for high school placement) first got started.28

The use of the hensachi thus gained in momentum, propelled by the needs of private high schools in particular to maintain their enrollments, and the market opportunity for testing companies and cram schools to fill the needs of insecure

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students with ambitious expectations. However, students still had to struggle
harder than ever to earn their hensachi; thus, they were hardly "passive consumers"
in the changing academic marketplace. While the formalized private schools
competed for students, the private cram schools and testing companies were
profiting by increased sales of hensachi exams (which cost each student about ¥1000
yen or US$11 to take).

Moreover, the cozy relationship between the hensachi and private schools led
to a second form of privatism, the growth in prestige of private schools within the
formal school system. Like the traditional reverence of kan, or officialdom, public
schools have generally enjoyed more prestige than private schools, especially the
handful of "national" schools at each level of education. A typical pattern was for
only a few private schools in each district to equal or surpass the reputation of
national and public schools, with the rest of all private schools considered as
second rate. However, education critic Higaki Takashi notes that precedents of
private school predominance (shikōkōtei, "private top, public bottom") existed in the
attitudes of Meiji-era reformers such as Fukuzawa Yukichi, founder of the highly
prestigious private Keio University, as well as in three prefectures, Kōchi, Ehime and
Yamagata. In eight other regional prefectures (Aomori, Yamagata, Niigata,
Fukuyama, Fukui, Nagano, Tottori, Saga), not a single private school existed until
the 1980s, and public school predominance (kōkōshitei, "public top, private bottom")
still persists. Yet in the heavily urban Kanto and Kansai areas, the pattern of public
school predominance reversed to private school predominance, as private schools
began to increase their rates of students passing into Tokyo University. Higaki
attributes this reversal of prestige to the role of the hensachi, which has brought students all the way down to the kindergarten level under its ordering system.\textsuperscript{29}

Although the prestige of private high schools became greatly enhanced by enrollments of high hensachi-scoring students, it is not clear from nationwide statistics whether the practice of aotagai directly led to greater enrollments in private high schools. Higaki notes that the average size of a private school classroom is 45 students, compared with 30 in public schools, a gap which may have widened since Rohlen noted average rates of 44 in public schools and 54 private, according to his 1983 publication.\textsuperscript{30} Moreover, in 1991, four public high schools closed while two private high schools opened in Japan.\textsuperscript{31} Generally, however, the ratio of public to private senior high schools has remained about the same: 7 to 3.\textsuperscript{32}

What is more apparent is that as the prestige of private schools in general began to improve, parents decided to circumvent high school competition by entering children in private school at the junior high level, which has traditionally been overwhelmingly public. Thus, a phenomenal change occurred with the increase of private lower secondary schools, including the highly popular 6-year schools with attached senior highs, eliminating the need for the senior high entrance exam.

\textsuperscript{29} Higaki, "Hensachi Kyōsō," p. 33.

\textsuperscript{30} Higaki, "Hensachi Kyōsō," p. 34; Rohlen, Japan's High Schools, p. 19.

\textsuperscript{31} Shimizu et. al., ed., Kyōiku Deetarando '93-'94. p. 9.

\textsuperscript{32} Takizawa, "Private Schools." p. 1.
Higaki cites 170 joint junior-senior high schools in Japan. This change was most pronounced in Tokyo, where applicants to private junior high schools nearly doubled between 1983 and 1992, a considerable increase given the concurrent decrease of children in this age cohort. 67,711 students applied for entrance to private junior high schools in 1983, 20,826 of whom were accepted, compared with 130,313 applicants in 1992, of whom only 35,172 were accepted. The number of private junior high schools increased from 136 to 159 during this time. Because acceptance of students did not increase as dramatically as the total numbers of applicants, the private junior high school entrance exam became another conspicuous marker in the overall entrance exam war. This may have reduced the significance of the hensachi at the senior high entrance level only for those students admitted to a joint junior-senior high school, but even for such students, the hensachi for university entrance became increasingly important.

The elusive co-mingling of public and private reproduced in the hensachi was thus negotiated at several levels of mediation, especially that of society itself, which continuously puts pressure on students to demonstrate their academic worthiness. The mass media also played a large role in promoting this educational private boom," according to Ona Sei, an English teacher at the junior and senior high levels. Ona believes four reasons have been widely circulated in the media to explain the phenomenal increase of applicants to private junior high schools. First, public schools bear the image of being heavily chained to the curriculum prescribed by the

33 Higaki, "Hensachi Kyōsō," p. 35

34 Ona Sei, "Tōkyō no 'shiritsu buumu' to ikinokori senryaku" (Tokyo's "private school boom" and survival strategy). Kyōiku no. 557 (January 1993), p. 63.
Ministry of Education, thus being a disadvantage to success in entrance exams.

Second, combined private junior and senior high schools have earned a reputation for success in helping students with the university entrance exam. Third, private schooling alleviates pressure for the senior high entrance exam, either because the junior highs are attached to a senior high, or use the hensachi to gain early acceptance. Fourth, private schools promote their teaching methods as being more "traditional" and therefore beneficial to entrance exam success.35

These four reasons, promoted by the mass media, however, cloud other important issues, continues Ona. For example, it is well known that the private school administrators must use tactics just to stay afloat in the era of declining students. Such tactics include offering special courses for entrance exam study, promoting national conferences, beefing up instructional equipment, boosting club activities and even advertising their reputation for gender equality.36 As mentioned, all such self-promotion is unusual since Japanese schools have rarely used advertising. Promoting gender equality is especially a recent phenomenon, given that private schools have traditionally been gender segregated.

Moreover, the decline in student numbers has threatened the entrance exam industry as much as the private schools. To cope with this tendency, juku have targeted the market of students who hope to enter private schools, using the mass media to promote "the theory that public schools are no good" (kōritsu chūgakkō

35 Ona, "Tōkyō no 'shiritsu buumu," pp. 64-65.

"It is as if to say the 'private school boom' itself is the trump card for the survival plan of juku industry students."37

The information generated by the exam industry has proved harmonious with other aspects of "information society" (another nickname of Japan, touted mostly by bureaucrats and politicians) as well. Summarizing an article from the weekly Shūkan Asahi, Tsukada elucidates in detail how the yobiko calculates this number by using the copy of the national common entrance exam printed in national newspapers every year on the day following the test date:38

1. Students planning to take an entrance examination of a national university take the national common examinations on January 23 and 24 throughout Japan;
2. On the following day the Center for the College Entrance Examination publicizes correct answers to all the questions asked in each subject in major newspapers and the students who have taken the examination remember their answers and check them against the correct answers in the newspapers;
3. The yobiko staff members estimate the weight of test scores . . . After reaching a consensus . . . the yobiko makes a list of the weight of test scores of each subject and sends it directly to its branches, the other yobiko, and high schools throughout Japan;
4. The yobiko and high schools which have received the list of weighted test scores will spend one class period in which students estimate their test scores according to the list;
5. Each student writes his estimated test scores for each subject on a standard form along with the schools he or she plans to apply to. Each yobiko and high school sends the filled-out forms to the headquarters of the yobiko;
6. All the collected forms of students' estimated test scores on the national common examinations are entered in a computerized system in the headquarters of the yobiko. The computerized system produces estimated distributions of test scores for each department of universities throughout Japan;

37 Ona, "Tōkyō no 'shiritsu buumu."

38 "Yobiko no ichiban atsui muika kan" (The six hottest days of a yobiko). February 19, 1988, in Tsukada, "The Yobiko," pp. 33-35. Translated and summarized by Tsukada.
7. The experienced yobikō teachers have a series of conferences to determine boundary lines for success for each university and university department on the basis of the distributions of all the estimated test scores; and

8. After determining specific test scores for the boundary line for success for each university department, the headquarters of the yobikō prints all the statistics regarding the ranking of universities along with their ranking of the standardized value of each university department throughout Japan.

The entire process, which takes about a week, according to Tsukada, culminates in students’ receiving catalogued information estimating the hensachi level of each institution in categories of "successful line," "boundary line," and "minimum." With these data, obtained entirely off the track of the Ministry of Education through the services of computers, newspapers, and private sector statisticians, the students and their advisers can now calculate their strategies for successful exam taking.

The newspaper industry also contributes to the services of the yobikō by offering "newspaper scholarships" to the less affluent rōnin. In exchange for delivering newspapers, the students are offered free room and board, and loans for tuition payments.39

The Government as "Big Follower"

The most important mediating level of public and private is perhaps government itself. Thus, the second reason to qualify the hensachi as a microcosm of Japan, Inc. in the context of this paper, in which the government became the "big follower" of private industry, is that very little of education’s public-private coordination was officially planned, even while it was publicly allowed. To put this

paradox in Japanese conceptualization, the *hensachi* was allowed at the level of *honne* rather than *tatemae*. As mentioned, the latter, a socially presentable discourse ("standing façade," literally) helps to cushion the conflict of the "true intention," or *honne*. Just as Japan, Inc. developed as an informal nickname to describe the pervasive influence of the private sector in the Japanese political economy, the *hensachi* represented the pervasive influence of the private sector in education. Both depicted an "exchange impulse." Corporations attracted a more borderless exchange of goods and services: the *hensachi* attracted a more borderless exchange of educational information and services. In both cases, the government has, until recently, been ambivalent. On one hand, it decried the over-emphasis on economic expediency, urging people to become more relaxed, as a *tatemae*. On the other hand, the economic ambitions of the nation grew out of deliberate public policies to stimulate growth, and benefitted the economic position of the nation, a *honne* to keep the *hensachi* intact.

Yet the *hensachi* was not overseen by the Ministry of Education: on the contrary, the Ministry cautioned against its use in its official discourse. In 1976, the MOE issued a statement that the *hensachi* should be used only with "self-restraint" so that teachers will not be overly dependent on it as a placement guide. By 1983, however, then-Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro explicitly advised educators not to use the *hensachi* and to reform the exam system which encourages its use: the MOE consequently changed its tune and officially called for a stop to *hensachi* guidance methods.40

40 Yagura Hisayasu, "'Sūji shinkō' wo kutsugaesu bunkakakumei ga hitsuyō" (A cultural revolution is necessary to overturn "the creed of numbers"). *Ekonomisuto* 71, no. 8 (February 16, 1993), p. 40.
One year later, Nakasone convened a National Council on Educational Reform that would spent three years issuing recommendations for what was intended to be the third great wave of Japanese educational reform, after that of the Meiji Restoration and Allied Occupation. The educational guidelines from 1991 which I will discuss shortly, along with the "lifestyle superpower" ideas and their antecedents, resonate with some of the themes of Nakasone's council, especially its calls for the "principle of putting emphasis on individuality," the "cultivation of creativity, thinking ability and power of expression," and "expansion of opportunity for choices." In general, the themes of the reform council were broad, stressing such popular issues as coping with the "information age," and "internationalization" – the buzzwords of the 1980s. Conservative reforms such as textbook guidance, and the revamping of home economics courses and morals courses were also suggested.41

The rose-colored tone of the Reform Council's discourse was similar to that of the Maekawa Report, parading the theme of "internationalization" as its leitmotif. Yet critical reportage understandably emphasized the conservative agenda that critics believed to be smoldering under the surface – increased textbook control and the re-introduction of the concept of "patriotism" – rather than other administrative details. Unlike educational reports from the 1990s, Nakasone's group failed to hone in on specific criticism of private school education, juku over-attendance and the hensachi. The hensachi is mentioned only in reference to university entrance, where

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the council merely recommended that universities reform their own entrance procedures to discourage over-dependence on the hensachi.42

Thus, Nakasone’s comprehensive plan to reform education had little immediate effect on reducing educators’ hensachi dependence. Until the hensachi ban was announced in 1993, its use as a placement indicator for public high schools was conducted by exam industries and overseen by local governors in conjunction with prefectural education boards. Most local administrators saw little reason to curtail its use. Thus, at the national level, the government became a de facto "big follower" of the exam industry, while at the local level government was often a de jure big follower. Strictly in terms of administration, public governance over the use of test scores, until the junior high ban, was decentralized and minimal, and there is considerable regional variation over their use. Until this year’s ban, the statistical procedure was used throughout Japan, except the prefectures of Hokkaido and Nagano and the City of Osaka. Tsukada cites an interesting exception to this pattern from Yamanashi prefecture, in which a large yobikō founded its own private high school. Another public high school wanted to compete with the yobikō high school by sending its third year students to a yobikō in Tokyo; the Ministry of Education, however, stepped in to refuse the idea.43

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The Hensachi and Efficiency

The third point of resemblance is its reputation for efficiency. The hensachi is valued (for the same reason for which it has now been decried by the Ministry of Education and its other opponents) as a user-friendly, "lean" or very efficient, guidance method. It is analogous to efficient methods of production used in the private sector such as the highly reputed JIT: "Just In Time Delivery."44 Students, teachers, parents, testing service representatives and admissions officers work closely together using detailed, reliable and highly objective criteria to process supplies of students. The hensachi system assured "Just In Time Delivery" to direct students from one level of schooling to the next with minimal inventories, i.e., students undecided about which test to take or to which school to apply. Cumulatively, each student acting in self-interest produced an "invisible hand" effect, by allocating his or her hensachi to an appropriate "market" or high school, then perhaps a university, ultimately landing in an appropriate labor pool.

The "wasted inventories" of the delivery system are the students who fail their exams to schools of choice and opt to be "school-less" - the rōnin. While there are many high school rōnin who fail their exams to university level, the incidence of junior high school rōnin is small, but considered far more tragic. Rōnin usually engage in intensive examination study, often at a cram school, and try again the following year. Teachers are under much scrutiny to pass their students into "appropriate" high schools and to avoid the incidence of these dangling inventories of students. For teachers, the hensachi is indispensable, for without it, many

students would overrate themselves (or be overrated by their parents) and attempt to enter high schools above their level of ability.

In this situation, efficiency became privileged over egalitarianism, and the quality of education became less important than the skill of matching each student with an appropriate institution. As mentioned in Chapter Two, companies and government bureaus maintained tight control over supplies of students, hiring students with specific diplomas at specific intervals. Universities, whose enrollments are strictly defined by government regulation, also held this supply-side bias. Thus a student looked at his or her hensachi and decided to which faculty of the university he or she could apply. (Each faculty, or department, has a separate hensachi requirement, and only in rare instances can students change majors once they are in.) It is not at all uncommon for students to radically change their academic or career interests based on their hensachi.

But policymakers had much to fear in letting go of the buyer's market of human resources in the looming possibility that "student consumerism" would weaken the capacity of labor suppliers to define the parameters of their markets. Unlike many proponents of private sector education in the U.S., who believe institutional competitiveness will enhance the educational product, the fears originally implied by policymakers in Japan were that institutional competitiveness would give too much power to students, whose self-judgment over their educations could not be trusted without proper guidance. Despite the growing importance of the tatemae of "respect for the individual," it did not mesh with patterns of Japanese culture to allow citizens, as individual consumers, to influence patterns of formal education through their own volition. As mentioned, the pattern of matching schools to consumer preference had traditionally been solved by the generous
allowance of private schools that would supplement – but never replace – the public system. Thus there is gamut of private schools ranging from quasi-babysitting services to Spartan academies. But there is great cultural resistance, despite the inevitable "lifestyle superpower" tendencies now underway, to allow individuals to exercise too much control over knowledge. By the early 1990s, however, policymakers had to confront the reality of a new information age that was empowering individuals and consumers just as it was weakening the power base of nation-states. More importantly, elites are now professing that a new form of consumer/student empowerment, while still guided "from above," might actually prove beneficial.

Another aspect to consider here is not only the relationship between education as a labor pool for the economic realm, but also the construction of knowledge itself as a foundation of culture. Increased privatism as I have heretofore depicted it involved a proliferation of simulated teaching materials. The exam industry simulated "real" entrance exams and administered their mock exams to students with increasing speed. Entrance exams were of course based on the centrally-defined standardized curriculum, which consequently became increasingly reproduced and reified. The exam industry's textbooks, moreover, dissect the original curriculum of public, formal schools. As these practice texts and the hensachi mock exams gradually became more important to students than the "real" curriculum, the ownership of standardized knowledge moved out of the hands of the original creator, i.e. the Ministry of Education. This process has many resonances elsewhere in postmodern society, in which simulation - "versimilitude" or the "hyperreal" - has confused the structural "reality" or "truth" it claims to represent. As stated in the introduction, this represents another way in which education
economicus is "chronopolitical," having its investment in the time of students rather than in the concrete space of the formal classroom.45

**Education and the Lifestyle Superpower**

The kind of efficiency developed from examination warfare that helped to smoothly channel the swell of the younger population into stable labor pools for employers has become less pertinent to today's Japan. More and more employers have come to deplore the tendencies that turned a generation of children waiting for printouts of their test scores into a class of *shijimaichi ningen* - "humans who don't know what to do until they are given an order."

With recession-mired Japan experiencing a glut of white collar "redundant" workers and a shortage of low-skilled laborers, criticism of the way education was harnessed to industrial policy was no longer the territory of outside critics on the left. Economics writer Sakaiya Taichi, a former member of the powerful Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), has been among the most outspoken of the more conservative economists and business leaders from the "inside" who criticize excessive uniformity in education. Sakaiya's concern is that both education and the economic policies of the nation have put too much emphasis on standardized mass production:46

This homogenizing educational system eliminates all pleasure from school life and destroys student creativity and individuality. On the other


hand, it is effective in instilling a common level of knowledge and skills and in getting students used to enduring long hours filled with discomfort. In sum, it is effective in training a labor force suitable for employment in the workplaces of standardized mass production.

The economy needed a new kind of diversification of labor which became expressed in the call for a lifestyle superpower. Thus, as Japan began to change its focus from economic superpower to a lifestyle superpower, it also had to change education.

In announcing the expulsion, the Ministry issued a new guidance plan for educators titled, "Toward a Placement Guidance That Cultivates Individuality" (kōsei wo tsasu shinrō shidō wo mezashite). Urging teachers to help fulfill the individual dreams and ambitions of their students, the plan emphasized a "guidance for a way of life" (ikikata no shidō), and (as mentioned), the need to change the attitudes of students from entering the schools they can enter to those they want to enter.47 The plan urged teachers to help students to be more self-perceptive and self-reliant, rather than having students depend on them for every step of guidance.48

Yet the "hidden curriculum" of the new call for "respect for the individual" and "diversity" in education also implies an aim to discourage the high expectations of parents for their children to embark on the scholastic trail to securely-employed

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47 "Gakkō sentaku kara 'ikikata' no shidō e" (From 'school choice' to 'guidance for a 'way of life'), Naigai Kyōiku, no. 3 (May 25, 1993), p. 7.

48 The venerated position of "guidance" in the educational culture of Japan embraces far more than placement guidance and is aptly called "lifestyle guidance." Two cogent, anthropological discussions of this topic can be found in Gerald LeTendre, "Guiding Them On: Teaching, Hierarchy, and Social Organization in Japanese Middle Schools," Journal of Japanese Studies 20, no. 1 (Winter 1994), and Rebecca Erwin Fukuzawa, "The Path to Adulthood According to Japanese Middle Schools," Journal of Japanese Studies 20, no. 1 (Winter 1994).
white collar positions, for such jobs must be downsized in the economy of today and the near future. The change from an industrial society to a technological society will not mean an increase in intellectual jobs or a decrease in the so-called 3-D jobs (dirty, dangerous, difficult), according to Kumazawa. The job pyramid that rewards high pay and high prestige to a highly-educated elite will remain, even if in a different form.\(^4\) Although toting a language of post-economics, therefore, the "lifestyle superpower" and expulsion of the *hensachi* may actually contain highly rational economic ideas. Perhaps students need to "independently" demonstrate more self-reliance to choose a career from the "diversity" of jobs other than the one most valued by society, that of the white collar worker. Employers, too, need to downsize their staffs to those who are productively "creative" rather than redundantly obedient. The ideas of giving "respect for the individual," or promoting "creativity" and "diversity" indeed sound attractive and progressive, yet in this sense they also conform to the conservative demands of corporate Japan.

Although the discourse to explain the expulsion of the *hensachi* did not make explicit reference to current economic plans or the lifestyle superpower, a document published by the MOE in 1991, one year before the Economic Planning Agency's lifestyle superpower 5-year economic plan, also forecasts the "lifestyle" and individuality motifs. That document is "the Comprehensive Structural Reform of Education For Coping with a New Age" (*Atarashii jidai ni taiou suru kyōiku no shoseido no kaikaku*), the report of the fourteenth central special deliberation council on education.

Like other lifestyle themes, "New Age" depicts the nation's goal of catching up to the Western nations as having been fulfilled, stating that the country now needs to complete its shift from pursuing materialistic wealth to spiritual wealth. As the numbers of schoolchildren have declined, education needs to change its focus from "quantity" to "quality," from economically-oriented "efficiency" to respecting the spiritual needs of the individual. Such themes resonate well with the "Lifestyle Superpower" ideas of the Economic Planning Agency. For example, the "Lifestyle Superpower" plan uses the expression, "...we have to change our economy and society on the basis of respect to every individual by shifting our focus from the principles of esteeming mere efficiency..." The Ministry of Education's "New Age" reform plan acknowledges that education has been used throughout Japan's postwar recovery period to promote economic growth, but the resulting emphasis on "efficiency" greatly hindered the qualitative aspects of education, as in the passage below (emphasis added):\(^{50}\)

Industrial development relies heavily on education. However, the rapid tempo of Japan's transformation may be considered unprecedented in the history of the world. Compared with other advanced nations, there can be no denial that education was compelled to an extent rarely seen before, swept away by a focus on efficiency, with negative conditions such as the loss of breathing room growing stronger all the time until arriving where we are today. If any pathological conditions were to erupt now in education, that is the price which must be paid for the success of Japanese industries which was achieved in such a short period of time. The other side of this distorted situation must be told.

The hensachi as the epitome of "efficiency": As stated earlier, the hensachi, as a high school placement determinant, epitomizes the emphasis on "efficiency" in the curriculum. Continues the Ministry of Education: 51

...in advancing from junior high school, there is the matter of the placement guidance which relies heavily on the hensachi. Such kind of guidance serves the efficient purpose of sending junior high students to high school without their becoming rônin. But it does not adequately take into consideration the characters, abilities, hopes and ambitions of the students.

The other concept besides "efficiency" which is brought into new light through this report is that of "equality." Kumazawa explains that "equality" in Japanese education has traditionally meant that all students started off on an equal foot and distributed themselves throughout the social strata "by reasonable consequence" of their educational achievements. 52 "Equality" in "New Age" alludes to the similarity of curricula used throughout all levels of education. Such "formal equality" must be "diversified" (stratified) into an "actual equality" which will accommodate the special needs of individual students: 53

From now on, it is not the formal equality which provides identical educational content to all people which becomes important, but rather, the realization of actual equality which aims at accepting each and every aspect of difference in the individual.


52 Kumazawa, "Japan's Corporate Society and Democratic Education," p. 28.

Based on such ideas, the three "focal points" for the reform of high school education include the following themes: 54

1. From quantitative emphasis to qualitative fulfillment;
2. From formal equality to actual equality;
3. From over-emphasis on the hensachi to respect for the individual and recognizing the importance of humanity.

Other significant lifestyle superpower changes in education: The significance of the "New Age" or "Lifestyle Superpower" plans has to do not only with the new climate of post-economics but also with the specific plans now being laid out to operationalize such ideas. Other than the hensachi prohibition, two other reforms deserve mention for their compatibility with the "lifestyle" plans. Both of them began as reform suggestions in the Nakasone administration and have been carried through with much fanfare in the past few years.

The first is the "five day school week." As of 1993, public schools must close down one Saturday per month. Many competitive private high schools have chosen to ignore this policy directive. It is also likely that this initiative is rooted in the 1986 Maekawa report, which recommended a shortened work week. One year following the Maekawa report, a new law [1987] changed the official number of working hours per week from 46 to 44, and government offices closed down every other Saturday. Educational administration was not specifically alluded to in the Maekawa Report, but many educators believe that the "experimental five-day school week" effected shortly after the shortened work week was part of the Maekawa thrust: both the shortened work week and shortened school week were then mentioned in the 1988 Economic Report.


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Perhaps the policy which best matches the lifestyle superpower in its comprehensiveness is "Lifelong Education," a theme now being advanced all around the world, but Japan's case may be significant in the way all forms of extracurricular educational activities are now being tabulated under the Ministry of Education. This is ironic, given the abundance of educational opportunities which already lay outside the formal educational system. The difference now is that the Ministry is consolidating its own collection of educational activities, which includes nearly everything from English conversation lessons to senior citizens' gateball. Such lessons and activities have been renamed "lifelong learning" and are now embraced by the Ministry of Education's data bank. Employers and administrators are being strongly "encouraged" to provide such opportunities for employees, and families are also encouraged to participate in "lifelong learning" during their free Saturdays and Sundays. Lifelong learning and the issue of the hensachi are two of the principal subjects of the Comprehensive New Age Education plan.

The echoes of "respect for the individual," "humanity," "diversity" and so on are favored for the "new age," while the group-oriented homogeneity of culture in general as well as curriculum are declared out-of-style. Students these days "do not want to grow up," according to the MOE; their parents all want them to enter the most famous private or national schools regardless of the students' abilities and interests, and teachers have been relying on a simple yardstick – the hensachi – which lines the students up one after the other, states the report.

Yet in spite of its disparagement of "efficient" reductionism, this new plea for a new "quality of education," like the "quality of life," also represents a sensible economic plan. The report calls for a complete overhaul of the high school system in
Japan, aiming in particular at the sharp division between the "normal" high school course and the "vocational" high school course. The discourse reveals regret that nowadays three quarters of high school students want to enter a "normal" school with its university preparatory curriculum, whereas in 1960 only 40% of high school students were enrolled in any type of high school. Not everyone in the normal curriculum is suited for university entrance nor do they truly wish to be there, according to the Ministry.

Presumably to discourage the glut of students aiming for university, who in turn would represent the redundant white collar workers, "New Age" offers suggestions for a number of "new type" schools. Some would have a comprehensive curriculum (like American schools) offering both vocational and college prep courses. Some would be four-year high schools offering a "variety" of new courses, especially in fields of "internationalization" and information sciences. Some would be remedial, to help students who fell behind in junior high and high school, offering them basic "life guidance" rather than a strictly academic curriculum. Citing 12,000 dropouts from high school per year (far fewer than in America), "New Age" also discloses, "Because high school attendance is not compulsory education, it is necessary to establish in the broad, general social consciousness the 'freedom to not attend school' and the 'freedom to return to school at any point in one's life.'"55

Higaki also implies that the motives of the hensachi expulsion are directed toward

vocational purposes by noting that the directive to expel the evaluation method was issued by the Employment Division of the Ministry of Education.\textsuperscript{56}

This vocationalization of education would not narrow the educational focus of high schools, justifies the report, because already the college prep focus of normal-track high schools, and that of private schools in particular, uses a highly constricted examination preparatory curriculum. Sometimes elite private high schools finish their general curriculum by the eleventh grade, to devote the entire last year to exam preparation.

The "New Age" educational report advocates a radical change in Japanese behavior, the competitiveness which leads many people to desire a single type of educational experience, a university degree, for which the preparation entails entrance into a prestigious high school, before that, a junior high, and sometimes all the way from kindergarten (which begins at age three and often requires an entrance exam). That desire has been closely linked with the competitiveness of Japanese people in the larger political economy.

Yet such a change is not just directed toward founding a new "respect for the individual" and "diversity." It may also help institute more centralized control over the private sector, asserting a "leadership" rather than the "followership" which has characterized the Japanese political economy as well as its educational system. For just as Japan is putting a damper on its "Inc." with a new rallying call to respect the quality of life, it is also cracking down on the "privatized" education in calling for a new quality of education. For example, just as the media have been criticizing the public schools, the MOE has gone on the offensive with private schools. Three

\textsuperscript{56} Higaki, "Hensachi Kyōsō," p. 34.
concerns have been cited by Ministry officials. The first is the tendency for private schools to offer early admissions, as in *aotagai*—"selling rice before the harvest" to students with high *hensachi* scores. The second is that private schools deviate from the prescribed curriculum by focusing on subjects that will appear in examinations. The third is that private schools have not been cooperative in offering students at least one Saturday off per month in instituting the "experimental five day school week" which also began in 1993.57

In educational administration, public lower secondary schools are overseen by local Boards of Education, whose members are career bureaucrats trained to deal with educational issues. Private schools, guaranteed autonomy under Japanese law, may be overseen to some extent by municipal Boards of Education only if those boards sponsored the founding of the school; yet, even in that case they can exercise no "supervisory rights." This situation, applying to 70% of private schools, was designed to protect the right of private schools from unfair treatment by the public sector. The other 30% of private schools fall under the administration of the prefectural governor, who has minimal educational expertise and is thus deemed sufficiently neutral. One suggestion to reform the situation of private schools is to create a unified administrative body over both public and private schools within municipal Boards of Education. Another suggestion is to reform school juridical bodies to make them more accountable for ensuring the criteria of public needs. Yet such assertion of public over private is currently a "taboo subject" in Japan, according to Takizawa Hiromitsu, Director of the MOE's National Institute for

This is perhaps because the Japanese people greatly fear any encroachments of public on the private, especially in education, where the memory of severe public control over schools during wartime Japan still lingers in popular memory.

In making these suggestions to curb the autonomy of private schools, in forbidding testing companies from conducting their hensachi tests on the grounds of public schools, and by preventing schoolteachers to use the hensachi in their guidance methods, the government of Japan is exercising a "sovereignty impulse": it is specifying the domain within which education can be made eligible as "public." It is attempting to draw a new picture of collective identity of the Japanese, encouraging them to respect the individual identities of students, allowing them to choose among several, "diverse," "new type" schools rather than set their aspirations only on the "normal" university-tracked schools. The Japanese of the "new age" should be dispossessed of the single-minded economic thinking that was useful during the economic boom period. They should be dispossessed of the tool of such single-mindedness in education: the hensachi. The Japanese should instead cultivate a new quality of life, stresses the government.

On one hand, this "sovereignty" impulse of the Japanese government has been challenged by proponents of the "exchange" impulse. Higaki Takashi, for example, argues that the privatization of Japanese education is compatible with that taking place in other advanced industrialized nations. Politicians are being "anachronistic" and "hypocritical" when arguing for the preservation of public-sector education, while for their own families they prefer the "private." In the US, for example.

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190
President Clinton campaigned on behalf of public education, then enrolled First Daughter Chelsea in private school. Japanese parliamentarians have also done likewise. Higaki claims that the companies producing hensachi evaluations are far more professional and thorough than the teachers who cling to the old hand-written "arbitrary" naishinshō, and the MOE should not exercise jurisdiction over the juku, because as private companies, juku should be overseen by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, he argues. The government labels the hensachi issue the "commercial test problem" (gyōsha tesuto mondai) merely to evoke contempt for commercial testing companies, and to stereotype teachers as "teaching machines." Yet in spite of the images of standardization and mass production, the supposedly "egotistical" hensachi represents the "self portrait" of the Japanese people, according to Higaki. If competitiveness has become too severe, it is the fault of parents who believe that their own children all possess academic skills comparable to the running skills of Olympic athlete Carl Lewis. Parents still claimed that hensachi evaluations were too infrequent even where they took place eight times per year. The hensachi should not be blamed, concludes Higaki, and children should be allowed to be more relaxed and enjoy their juku experience.59

Yet on the other hand, the narrative of "new respect for the individual" functions, like Barthes's definition of myth, to make certain economic conditions already taking place "depoliticized." To speak of offering more diversity for children sounds clear, appealing and natural; yet, to say there are no longer enough white collar positions to match the ambitions of hopeful parents (as does the "New Age" report) may be too blunt. Thus, the present incompatibility of public and private

may be temporary, as the economy and education enter a phase to readjust the supplies of students with the future demands of industry. In such a situation, the MOE's expulsion of the hensachi may represent less of an assertion of control over the private sector as a helping hand in phasing out an economic tool which may be no longer necessary.

This chapter has traced the development of the hensachi as a tool to satisfy students' needs for academic information. For many students, the hensachi functioned like a simple red arrow on a complicated map which says, "You are here." Traditional evaluation methods refused to empower them with such pertinent information, ostensibly to keep open the range of student choices. Yet withholding such information also betrayed a legacy of bureaucratic snobbery. The information provided by the exam company could tell the student which entrance exams for which school she or he could attempt given that individual's qualifications; it explained the student's position in relationship to all other students, and it told the student how the schools she or he hoped to enter compared with all other schools (nationally, for universities, and regionally, for high schools). For one number to accomplish so much, it is no wonder that the hensachi has been considered indispensable, efficient and convenient. The image of the juku as a "cram" school tells only part of the story. For what the students are seeking in addition to improving their test-taking abilities is totally objective, reliable and consistent information about their own academic potentials and prospects.

The hensachi can also be considered as a microcosm of Japan, Inc., because it represents a fusion of public and private sectors; it reflects the weakness of the central bureaucracy, and it is a highly efficient tool to ensure stability in the
processing of students from one level of schooling to the next. The Ministry of Education's "New Age" plan aims to purge the hensachi for the same reasons that the "Lifestyle Superpower" plan aims to purge the nation's emphasis on economic advancement as a national goal. In both cases, the people have borne the costs of too much "efficiency" and high productivity. In both cases, the government is pursuing a new narrative of respect for the individual, for education, and the nation.

Yet questions will remain of whether the MOE is staging a temporary battle with private education in the short run, forging a new relationship with the private sector for the long run, or some combination of both. Such questions also relate to the broad concerns of the lifestyle superpower, and will be addressed again in the final chapter. In the next chapter, however, I will take a more synchronous view of identity issues raised by the hensachi.
CHAPTER VI

The Taming of Choice: "The Way of the Empirical" Hensachi

Collect more numbers, and more regularities will appear.

Ian Hacking, The Taming of Chance, 1990

With the rise of the economic superpower came the rise of the middle class, and, according to historian John Dower, it was depoliticized, homogenized, and "[preoccupied] with local and personal matters." In the case of education during this era, such preoccupation often became as localized as the space of a single number, the hensachi.

The Ministry of Education and other writers of educational discourse acknowledge that the hensachi was education's tool of efficiency. They also acknowledge that the efficiency of postwar education contributed to the economic success of Japan. Indirectly, they imply that the hensachi was an instrument, and that students have been the conduits, of an economic nationalism.

Yet it is readily apparent that such a nationalism, if it can be called so, was strikingly different from the nationalism of the prewar era. In the nineteenth century, Japan's leaders created their modern "nation" by inventing an ideology of emperor worship. The highly nationalistic prewar curriculum taught students to follow the "Way of the Empire" and its line of Imperial ancestors as an absolute

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yardstick to measure all educational learning and political behavior. Through such learning, each individual was assured of his or her "proper place" in the Empire. At the start of each day, every student had to bow before the imperial portrait and recite the Imperial Rescript on Education.

In the economic superpower, students were no longer forced to follow such a comprehensive state ideology. Instead, all students, as equals, were given ample freedom of choice to enter good schools leading to good jobs. The need to narrow down such choices, however, necessitated a new "absolute yardstick": the hensachi became the ideal empirical instrument to help each student find a rational position in the educational hierarchy. Thus, the student no longer looked up to the clearly perceptible imperial portrait, reciting the line of eternal emperors, thinking of his or her position in the family state. He or she now looked down to the printout from the exam industry, devised by an anonymous computer, thinking of his or her position in a strategy for entering School A, B, or C. That strategy benefited the state and industrial bureaucracies which favored conformity, efficiency, and discipline. Yet for most students, the idea that their educational challenges help the nation is far from their minds.

Michel Foucault described this change of power relations as a hallmark of modernity, the point when "power" is no longer directed unilaterally from the emperor or sovereign, and is no longer symbolically rich and publicly visible. Instead, power has become circulatory, more subtly coercive, controlling the body through silently rigorous disciplines lying outside the formal juridical state. Education is one such discipline; it produces through indirect power not only knowing students, but

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2 For example, the guidelines from the Official Ministry of Education Policy on Instruction for the ethics course in the prewar system includes the directive, "A spirit of reverence for the deities and one's ancestors and of public service shall be cultivated by guiding the students in walking the Way of the Empire in all phases of national life." Cited in Kokutai no Hongi: Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan, trans. John Owen Gauntlett (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), p. 193.
also students who are known.³ The student "population" is known – monitored and managed – by test scores, number of days in school, severity of regulations, and so on. Such knowledge is enabling for the functioning of state and corporate power, but Foucault urges that power be studied not as an institution, but as the complex, elusive conditions throughout society which give institutional power its legitimacy.

To apply this concept of subtle, circulatory power to understand economic nationalism is different from the model typically cited to explain how individual decisions indirectly reproduce institutional, collective power. In 1776, Adam Smith described an ideal capitalist marketplace in which the individual, without regard to the public interest, seeks his own gain and security, and in so doing, is "led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. . . . By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it."⁴

Instead of Smith's "invisible hand," this chapter will stress that the metaphor of power operating in the competitive years of Japanese education is visibility. Increased statistical data made students known, visible, and self-conscious as if under a "gaze." And just as two bureaucracies converge in education, so do two gazes: the hensachi of private sector and the naishinski of the public sector. Thus I will further elucidate the way these two evaluation methods have made students into visible objects of knowledge.

The two gazes of the evaluation methods, as I have suggested in the previous chapter, emanate from opposite conceptual directions. The underpinnings of the naishinski stress collective identity, public empowerment, equality, personalization

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(e.g., physical punishment, handwritten evaluation), and fixed time (e.g., staying within the boundaries of established examination schedules). Such underpinnings resemble the "sovereignty exchange," in that they "[militate] in the direction of drawing firm boundaries around the self," constructing a fixed, "bordered" subjectivity. In contrast, the hensachi gives weight to "individualized" identities or differences, private empowerment, competitiveness, efficiency, impersonalization (e.g., anonymous discipline, computerized evaluation) and speed (e.g., jumping ahead of the boundaries of examination schedules). Thus the private sector hensachi, like an "exchange" impulse, relaxes central control, liberating the naishinshō's domain of control.5

We already know from Japan's recent history that the sovereignty impulse of the public sector and the exchange impulse of the private sector have largely been mutually facilitating, culminating in the dynamic rise of Japan as an economic superpower. Lately, at the levels of the nation as well as in education, however, there have been signs of strain. The government has called on citizens to slow down and enjoy the quality of life. The Ministry of Education has called on private exam companies to slow down or curtail their evaluation methods. Students and teachers have exhibited signs of increasing "burnout," evidenced in social problems such as increased student bullying and other forms of violence. Employers struggling with the recession have lost patience with employees who have little self-reliance as a result of too much standardized and homogenized education.

The putative empowerment gained from hensachi has thus been ironic. The knowledge of self-identity represented in the statistical value was gained from mock exams which resembled real exams. Schools staked their reputations on the percentages of students admitted to schools deemed prestigious by hensachi rankings. When high schools became overly competitive for their reputations for university placement, parents chose to enter their children in prestigious junior

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highs. Sometimes the competition even extends to kindergarten. Not surprisingly, a gradual homogenization of exams and hence, knowledge, occurred with this self-proliferation of exam-oriented education. Earlier, I suggested this situation represented an "imagined community": students became conscious of their fellowship with the simultaneous, homogeneous activities of test-takers throughout the nation.

Another way to conceptualize the relationship between numerical identities of students and the national identity is through what Michel Foucault describes as the disciplinary power of the panopticon. The "panopticon" depicts a disciplinary technique of surveillance, which, as a mechanism, situates a guard who will observe all inhabitants of a village from a central, elevated point, recording each of their moves so as to establish a perfect catalogue of standards for judging the subjects under surveillance. Thus the person observed cannot help but locate his or her own identity against such standards, all the time while locked in a small "cell." The subject, as object, is thus "in a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power."6

The examination in such a context is the "ceremony of this objectification" in the power of the panopticon.7 The exam enables power to reverse itself, such that the location of the power (the hidden guard) becomes invisible while the object of the power (located in the cell) becomes increasingly visible through continuous analysis, rationalization and documentation. Applying this theory to the situation of the hensachi, the elusive state has become out of focus like the village guard, while the student, undergoing exam after exam, is increasingly objectified: seen but not heard.

6 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 201.

The paradox of the educational "cell" is this: In order to make choices, more and more must be learned about the individual, by gathering ever more precise units of knowledge. The more knowledge gained, however, the more that person under observation will lose his or her individuality. The system of "taming" educational choices corresponds with the processes of state rationalization, which Ian Hacking, whom I paraphrase, called the "taming of chance." As stated in the epigraph, Hacking's social history of the nineteenth century demonstrated that the more states began to use statistical methods to eliminate "chance" – the uncertainty threatening their authority – the more the individuals they observed became known by regular patterns of evaluation. Regular patterns came to define "the normal," and since "Few of us fancy being pathological," then "most of us' try to make ourselves normal, which in turn affects what is normal." The formula, then, is one of gradual homogenization of the populace.

In Japanese education of the high growth period, students likewise sought more and more information to eliminate personal uncertainty, the chance that was euphemistically rendered as "choice." The regular patterns of hensachi evaluation reached such a state of atomization and homogenization that the state, by expelling the hensachi, is now attempting to reverse the procedure, by reinvigorating the concept of "choice" to mean a wider choice of vocations.

**Numerical Identity: The Gaze of the Hensachi**

The two predominant methods of evaluation, the hensachi and the naishinshô, observe the student through two competing "gazes" – the lens of power creating subjects who are dissected, analyzed and highly self-conscious of being "watched."

The hensachi represented not only the definitive yardstick measuring learning but also, sometimes, the definitive yardstick measuring the way a person thought.

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about herself, as a student, teacher or parent. The *hensachi* did not define the student, but it often defined the standard against which students' own identities had to compete. The important goal was to aim above the mean score of 50, to strive, therefore to be *above average*. "Above average" was the established "norm" against which one was determined to be fit or unfit for entry into a college-preparatory high school - an admission with a high "exchange value" for a permanent sense of "place." The statistical accuracy of the bell-shaped curve, however, assured that such a yardstick over the definition of "normal" would exclude more students than it would include.9

The extent of identification with the number is especially true if the student is aiming for acceptance into a prestigious or relatively prestigious school, at the "high" level, or if the student fears failure, or rejection by any college-preparatory school, at the "low" level. Many students in Japan will never know the ranking of their grades, but they will always know their *hensachi* score. Until this year, nearly all students in three-year junior highs and college-bound students at the university level probably measured their educational achievement, and sometimes, their greater sense of self, through the *hensachi*. The importance of the *hensachi* became magnified in the approximate five years preceding this year's ban, as the numbers of students decreased and private schools struggled to maintain enrollment by offering early places to students.

From one angle, the cram school system acted in partnership with the regular school system, by maintaining the mandated curriculum and competitive structure of education, albeit with considerable acceleration. From another angle, however, the commercial schools offered a competing gaze. The *hensachi* made the students visible both ways: students were told where their positions were in relation to

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9 Boards of education specify strict grade distribution curves. On a scale of five to one corresponding with A to F, a typical pattern is to allow for 7 per cent of 1s and 5s, 24 percent 2s and 4s, and 38 per cent 3s. See Fukuzawa, "The Path to Adulthood," p. 67.
others and what types of schools they could apply to based on their positions. It eliminated guesswork. It compartmentalized students into ever smaller units, located in heavily dissected maps of the entrance examination maze. Naturally, some educators, including the Japan Teachers' Union and then the Ministry of Education (previously long-time rivals), saw this process as extremely self-limiting. They would prefer that students were provided with a wider range of educational options.

Importantly for students, however, this ability to see oneself, even if in such a narrow space as the *hensachi*, was paradoxically empowering. It was better to know were you were going in the hallway than to be lost on the freeway. In the 1980s, the *hensachi* became the most important tool for academic guidance. Thus, the Ministry's ban announced in 1993 left many students as well as their parents and teachers of such students extremely angry and confused.

A well-known autobiography by a mother who discovers the *hensachi* system when her son begins faltering in junior high school depicts this constraint on individual choices. What follows is the dialogue between the mother and the son's homeroom teacher, when the mother finds out her son may not be eligible for high school:10

"Impossible?"
"I'm not saying it's impossible, but if he continues on the present course."
"You're talking about his *hensachi*?
Until now, the dreadful word "*hensachi*" had never fallen from my mouth. But at that moment I whipped it out like a sword. This different me gazed dispassionately back on my former self.

Every page of the yellow book she had just shown me was filled with the characters spelling "*hensachi*." At the school conference I just came from, teachers uttered the word "*hensachi*" in their talks. I saw it with my eyes. I heard it with my ears. And at last I myself had the experience of this word, "*hensachi*," spewing from my mouth.
"Is he around the 50 or 60 range?", I remembered to ask her.
"Yes, but probably fifties. . ."
"Then about 55 or 60?"
"

"1 or 2?"
"Well..."
I was horrified. At the same time I was seething with anger. Damn!
I felt humiliated. My child had made me terribly ashamed in front of his
home room teacher.
But I could not bow out now. If only I could make her see my child's true
abilities.
"So what about a municipal school?"
"Well, let's see. The municipal schools draw from the bottom, don't they.
Your son is at the bottom of the 22nd group. It's still going to be rather
difficult at this level."
... [walking away from the school] I wondered if mothers of children
whose hensachi is in the 50s should offer some sort of lecture at the school. I
wonder if they would allow such a thing. If they stood up on the stage, what
could they possibly say to the mothers of honor students?
... To have a hensachi of 50 is "average." It is right smack in the middle
of "above" and "below." I had always thought of my child as "average" in the
objective sense. That's why I never felt I should be surprised the way I have
come to be now.

The title of this story, "The Sprout Brothers' Diary of a Hensachi," reveals how
the "hensachi" becomes the metaphor of the "student." It also depicts how the
hensachi has become the marker of today's younger generation. The mother, a full
time medical doctor, had been too busy to follow the latest educational tendencies
and was mostly unaware of the power of this one particular number to define not
only the capabilities of her child but also his character as "average" — but not
"good." Through a year of intense struggle with raising the boy's hensachi, mother
and son are "tamed" to learn the salience of that number to define educational
choices. (The implications for the mother will be discussed in the following section.)
As "above average" became the more accepted definition of "normal" moreover, it is
not difficult to see how the hensachi became a perpetrator of extreme self-
consciousness. Foucault calls this by-product of surveillance "normalization." The
disciplinary "penalty" of institutions such as schools functions like the penalty of
law: "[it] differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it
normalizes."¹¹

In the yobikō, where all other methods of educational learning are absent, the
hensachi's social weight is amplified, as Tsukada points out. After each testing

period, the *yobikô* posts the *hensachi* of each student along with their names. Students thus become highly conscious of the status differences between themselves and other students. One student interviewed by Tsukada claimed that the *hensachi* was the perfect measurement of happiness as well as academic achievement. Another said that he adjusted his level of speech to the level of the *hensachi* of his fellow classmates: 12

> If the standardized values [hensachi] are far lower than mine, I do not talk to them as if I am showing off my knowledge and talk about something light. When I talk to the student of a high standardized value, I talk about something serious [as] if I don't have a sense of inferiority.

Thus, for those students who could compete well, the *hensachi* confirmed a sense of “place,” or personal identity, within the school, cram school, as well as the vast, complex, anonymous pool of students. The *hensachi* “place,” of course, was just a faster-motion foreshadow of the official exams, and the “choice” of a position in life that would be waiting at the end of all of the years of testing.

Another way to look at this is to consider how the sense of “place” has become increasingly abstract over time, just as “choices” have become more open and competitive. In the prewar era, the village or community – and later combined with the ideology of the emperor system – provided individuals with an immutable sense of place. Yet in the postwar era, as one father in a television show expressed it, “We no longer have the land and resources to pass on to our children. We have nothing but education.”13 But the “choice” of that education as an inheritance right is a misnomer, for students cannot choose without fierce competition.

12 Tsukada, “The Yobiko,” p. 204.


203
The hensachi filled in a much-needed gap, that of helping students to learn more about their capabilities. Such information was not provided by the naishinshō—the annual report of a student's progress in his or her grade. The report is also one of the main requirements for passing from junior high to high school, and again from high school to university, along with the exam itself. It includes quantitative criteria (scaled from one to five on a bell-shaped curve) to measure students' performance in basic subjects, as well as qualitative criteria to explain students' special characteristics or concerns and problems. The naishinshō is usually of secondary importance to the entrance exam, and in most cases where students have been "average," the teacher will simply log perfunctory responses (such as "nothing special") in the spaces reserved for qualitative judgments.

Teachers will not skimp on words to describe delinquent behavior on the part of the student, however, and such words could irreversibly hinder the student's progress. The most common form of delinquent behavior is violation of the school regulations, or kōsoku. The numerical, individualizing gaze of the naishinshō, therefore, is held in check through the regulations that are often enforced to militaristic precision, often with physical punishment.

Moreover, as cram schools to market the hensachi proliferated, teachers in regular schools came to feel that their own importance was diminished: why have a regular school system when students get their best training from the cram schools? According to Sakamoto Hideo, their response was to use the naishinshō for securing their own foothold. This report card represented "the only weapon" teachers had to justify the broader spectrum of curriculum not covered by the entrance exam, including school activities, sports and arts. Thus, this traditional evaluation method
schools, competing with elite schools to present an image of effectiveness reflected in well-rounded, ambitious college-bound youngsters, stepped up the heat on the enforcement of school regulations. Again, this was the same era, of high economic growth and its aftermath, when rounds of mock exams, and juku and yobiko for coaching students for such mock exams also proliferated.

Nearly all Japanese junior high and high schools have some form of student regulations, a topic discussed in greater detail in Chapter Twelve. With the confidential naishinshō as the teacher's tool of empowerment, the power disadvantage on the part of the student is formidable. The method of evaluation and discipline conforms to the image of power of panopticon: students know they are being watched, they just don't know how they are seen. Thus, both the hensachi and the naishinshō created a student who was the object of markedly increased evaluation and inspection. Yet the ideological underpinnings of the two methodologies of measurement represented a binarism. The test scores, calculated as often as once a month at the junior high level, admonish students to rise above the statistical mean in order to gain a sense of accomplishment, i.e., to become eligible to enter a "good" high school. Thus they encourage and demand fierce competition. The speed and simplicity of the test results also ensure efficiency.

Educators justify the student regulations, on the other hand, by the doctrine of equality. The rules admonish students not to be competitive, to be just like any other typical junior high or high school student: gakuseirashii, or "studentlike."


15 Horio discusses the general issue of academic freedom in Japan in the legal context, in Horio, Educational Thought and Ideology, pp. 279-294. Horio also reveals that the one exception to finding out the contents of the naishinshō may come when parents hire a private detective to conduct research on a prospective marriage partner for their child.
embodying the model of an ordinary student. Thus the numbers which define a student's appearance, as the length of the hair, contents of the bag, folds in the anklets and so on, reinforce a radical egalitarianism. Students are not allowed to individualize themselves by clothing or personal possessions; even things as small as mechanical pencils are often prohibited in order to prevent competition.

Teachers of cram schools and teachers of formal schools intended that their respective methods be a counterbalance to mitigate the deleterious effects of the other. The naishinshō should liberate education from the unrestrained competitiveness of the hensachi: freed from fashion competition, one's individual ability to perform in exams is supposedly unleashed, for in this category students are compelled to compete and rise above one another. The hensachi should liberate education from the stifling egalitarianism of the naishinshō. It is not uncommon for critics to compare the secret dossier with the evaluation methods of a "police state" and to declare such methods unconstitutional by contemporary Japanese standards. Yet either method of precise and quantitative control, whether aimed toward competitive liberalism or radical egalitarianism, suffocated the nourishment of the student's qualitative individuality.

While the hensachi has offered the paradoxical empowerment of knowing the scope and potential of one's numerical identity, the naishinshō silences the voices of students who long for some other outlet of individual expression. The reasons students and parents fail to speak out against regulations have to do with the naishinshō and its volatility as an impediment to permanently thwart a child's path to success. Likewise, the reasons children often do not inform their parents of egregious violations also concern their fears that parents will not believe them or take them seriously—all in the name of keeping the path clear for entrance exam drills. The kōsoku and the political economy which values such conformity and discipline of

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16 Sakamoto, Kōsoku no hanashi, pp. 22-23.
future workers thus inhibit the expression of the students' legitimate frustrations and pain.

Yet this is not as dismal as it seems to the independence of human agency. In Chapter Twelve I will present an example of one student who took the time out to protest the regulations, and then made a career out of it with four books and an advice column answering the concerns of many young students with their student regulations. A few wards in Tokyo have made portions of the *naishinshō* available to public inspection, and in May of 1990, the first time in history, a mother filed for permission to have her son's punishment report changed to reflect his side of an incident. The boy's teacher had filed a report stating that he punished the boy for hitting him. Yet the boy claimed he was struck by the teacher about 20 times for reading a book that was not part of the school curriculum.17

Thus, the *hensachi* s connection to the economic superpower is mostly one of methodology and not overtly imprinted "ideology." To inspire students to study hard for the sake of economic growth, teachers did not need to force their students to bow before the imperial portrait. The way of the numerically "empirical" *hensachi* was to anonymously control the space and movement of students by inhibiting their choices, and instilling a self-consciousness within a space of ever-precise possibilities of thought and action. The *hensachi* is the tamer of choice.

CHAPTER VII

The Expulsion of the Hensachi

The intention of this section has been to present the hensachi issue as a case study of a broader transition now in flux in Japanese society. That transition is one of a change from the politics of an economic system geared toward mass production to a new economic system that cultivates and takes advantage of human creativity and individuality.

Whether or not expelling the hensachi from formal education will facilitate such a change cannot fully be determined at this point in the transition. However, it is possible to take a preliminary reading of the present course of events. In this chapter, I will review the expulsion of the hensachi and make three preliminary observations.

First, the hensachi has realigned traditional conflict in education in such a way that may smother the discourse of democracy. Despite its advantage over the cumbersome naishinshō, the hensachi is not an adequate measurement tool for democratic education. This is significant, as the hensachi emblematizes not only the "exchange" impulse within the nation but also the global tendency for increased communication exchanges to "empower" individuals, yet shrink democracy.

Second, although the "lifestyle superpower" and directive to expel the hensachi seem to re-ignite the central pulse of the state, thus far, the hensachi issue merely amplifies the shortcomings of a decentered state. Although the directive was given by the Ministry of Education, the implementation of new guidance methods have been sporadic, and compliance to the aims of the expulsion has been weak.
Third, though many have found a way to cope with the current state of confusion in guidance methods, it is not clear that Japanese people are comfortable with the present status quo. What is significant, however, is that the people have shown they are not necessarily the docile followers of either the state bureaucracy of the MOE or the market imperative of the entrance exam industry.

The Expulsion of the Hensachi and New Language of "Choice"

As mentioned, the hensachi had been portrayed by government officials as an unnecessary tool of economic efficiency long before it was expelled from school. In 1983, then-Prime Minister Nakasone cautioned against its use. But as long as the government remained committed to economic expansion at the same time it decried the hensachi, and as long as it never took action to back up its words, its protests could only be ambiguous, a tatemae to cover its true intentions honne. In addition, as mentioned in Chapter Three, the Maekawa Report was so in tune with the melody of foreign critics, it, too, was viewed as an unrealistic tatemae within Japan, and even a "jokebook" to the international community.  

Then, at the start of 1990s, the rumblings began which would lead to the expulsion of hensachi guidance methods at the junior high level, and effective as of the school year beginning in April of 1994, the Japanese Ministry of Education announced an official prohibition on the use of the hensachi. Examination companies were prohibited from testing in public junior high schools, and teachers were not allowed to coach their students using hensachi data.

The origin of the ban began in Saitama prefecture, near Tokyo. Disturbed by the high incidence of "selling rice before the harvest" (early acceptance based on the hensachi), in recent years, the Saitama Prefectural Board of Education banned its public junior high schools from distributing hensachi scores to private high schools.

effective in 1993. Saitama's *hensachi* testing had been administered by a single company and had been used for approximately twenty years in all but one of the prefecture's 46 junior high schools.

Because Saitama's crackdown on the *hensachi* occurred one year before the nationwide announcement by the MOE, that prefecture's long ordeal with the testing and admissions controversy prompted a nationwide discussion of the "Saitama method." But the "Saitama method" not only referred to the prohibition on the *hensachi* but also signaled the lack of public commitment and support that its citizens would give to support such a ban. To some, the "Saitama method" may have been synonymous with "confusion."

From the beginning of the announcement, junior high school teachers began to defy the Board by surreptitiously telephoning private high schools to inform them of their students' scores and making special "deals." Nervous about betting their whole lives on the one exam at the end of the road, students directly solicited the *juku* to ask to take the early *hensachi* exam. That year (1992-1993), 12,000 Saitama students applied to attend high school outside the prefecture. The chairman of the Board, however, continued to decry the "infectious" nature of the *hensachi,* reaffirming the ban and encouraging students to study hard.

When a meeting was convened for all junior high school principals, no agreement was reached except on the state of confusion. Another meeting was held for all private junior high schools in the City of Tokyo and its five surrounding prefectures to discuss the "Saitama method," but it was boycotted by 90% of the representatives.

Finally, a former Minister of Education stepped in to call for an end to the confusion which was spreading nationwide, and to rally up support for the ban. In deference, the president of the prefectural junior high association and the

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2 Much of this discussion on Saitama's experiment with the testing ban is gratefully credited to Takeda Saori, "'Saitama hōshiku' wa teichaku suru ka?" ("Are we arriving at the Saitama method?"). *Sekai* (February 1993), pp. 27-30.
chairman of the Board of Education then shook hands in "agreement" over the first hensachi expulsion. Most observers, however, understood that the handshake was superficial and indeed it quickly degenerated to backbiting and more conflict.

Some teachers admitted they had a "guilty conscience" about using the hensachi tests, but they wanted to protect students from the shock of sudden change. Principals said they understood why the early admissions needed to be stopped, but could not understand why the hensachi should be eliminated altogether.

Throughout the country, the hensachi method continued as usual despite what was at that point "administrative guidance" from the Ministry of Education to eliminate the scoring procedures. Private schools still accepted students in advance, arguing that students would run away otherwise - as they did in Saitama. Private schools in Tokyo were the most uncompromising, claiming they would hold onto their hensachi catalogues forever and calculate the scores by themselves if they had to. Juku were quick to jump in and take advantage of the situation, offering hensachi exams on their own premises, and in at least one case acting as intermediary in place of the private schools to help "sell" (distribute) the scores for admissions.

Meanwhile, the pool of applicants to private schools in Saitama dropped by one-half, and many students also applied to high schools which were below their level of expectations. Teachers called on the Board of Education to provide an alternative method of guidance but were not satisfied. In terms of discrediting or at least downplaying the influence of both the privatized testing industry as well as private schools within the formal system, the Saitama Board of Education and the Ministry of Education may have considered their experiment successful at the outset. But in terms of galvanizing public support, they had far to go.

In response to the failed experiment in Saitama, the Ministry of Education issued a nationwide ban on the use of the hensachi for high school admissions,
effective for the school year beginning in April of 1994. This meant that junior high schools had one year to prepare their students to be admitted to high school without the controversial hensachi score.

The guidance teachers were supposed to offer students was framed in the language of "choice" specified by the MOE: "Do not aim for the school you can enter, but the school you want to enter." Schools used either intra-school tests which they designed themselves or public tests which did not make use of the hensachi. The latter were permitted as long as schools did not trade scoring results among themselves.

Only My Own Child

The first year of the ban on using hensachi test scores for high school admissions reveals little evidence of significant public identification with either the Ministry of Education or the commercial testing companies. The prevailing public opinion includes reactions of irony, among those who regard numerical identification as a "necessary evil," as well as open indifference, among those who disregarded the ban or sought alternative testing procedures that mimic the hensachi.

Yet many students and school districts found other ways to measure students' abilities. At first, Tokyo testing companies began offering the usual hensachi testing on their own premises – what became known as a kaiba test, taken on the premises of the company. On September 12, 30,000 third-year junior high students took a newly-designed kaiba test. The test, administered by two companies, was similar to the one used in previous years except that it used 10 levels of evaluation. Its data were said to be less smooth than that of the hensachi but nevertheless useful for "diagnostic" purposes. A testing company spokesperson stated that the new form of testing would better facilitate the students' own educational ambitions. Interviewing students who took the test, the Asahi Shim bun,
one of Japan's leading newspapers, judged the most prevalent reason to be, "I don't know what will happen when I take the entrance exam. I just want to know what my abilities are to have a yardstick to gauge what schools I can apply to." Often it was the teachers themselves who recommended students to take the test. Other cram schools throughout the country were also mimicking the hensachi testing and before the start of the next school year, three areas, Aomori and Kagoshima prefectures and one section of Osaka uniformly defied the prohibition by using a quasi-hensachi test.

Following the "entrance exam season" at the end of March, the Asahi Shimbun polled educational representatives from the nation's 47 urban and prefectural districts. In answer to the question of whether their guidance testing methods worked well, 26 districts reported that the methods went well; 19 reported that their testing basically went well but with some problems; none reported that the testing went poorly, and two failed to respond. As for whether the choices of school entry broadened, 19 districts stated that the student's choices of school entry broadened, 25 responded that they stayed the same, and 3 schools failed to respond. However, 29 districts said they went along with the prohibition reluctantly since they did not agree with it. Ten stated that they agreed with the ban though there were some things they had problems complying with, and 8 failed to respond. Many of the complaints were that it was too difficult to advise students without knowing how other students in the prefecture were performing.

Educators further removed from the testing locations, such as those in administrative positions, strongly support the ban. Yet the closer one or one's child is to the critical exam years, the more one expresses criticism toward the test scoring

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5 Asahi Shimbun, March 28, 1994, p. 3.
prohibition, a phenomenon which has come to be called wagako shimpai – "I am worried about my child." It is a chronological version – not during the time of my child’s school years – of the spatial concept of NIMBY, "not in my backyard," not in my space. The prevailing public opinion seems to be expressed in this sort of irony, that the hensachi is an "evil necessity." Reaction to the expulsion of test scores likely follows the bell-shaped curve, with public administrators and cram school business divided on each end, but with the rest of the general public taking some sort of qualified or ironic position.

During the past year, therefore, many junior high school teachers have been struggling with other forms of student evaluation, such as using school-by-school tests, or recognizing special talents and individual capabilities. Private high schools are permitting entrance by recommendation (not related to hensachi) in a greater number of cases. Other teachers are openly or surreptitiously defying the so-called expulsion of the hensachi. After years of dependence on the ease and efficiency of a simple, standardized statistical procedure, teachers found themselves at a loss for how to teach, and more importantly, how to advise students to apply to high school. Few alternative procedures were recommended by the Ministry, and the basic entrance examination system remained intact with few other procedural changes.

During the 1993-1994 school year, teachers and principals throughout Japan held meetings in their respective districts to reach an agreement on some way to implement the directives of the MOE. Yet the report from Saitama, which pioneered the hensachi expulsion a year earlier than the rest of the country, has not been encouraging for students or educators. Saitama prefecture’s alternative measuring devise combined the handwritten method of the naishinshō with the objectivity of the hensachi. The "follow-up report of confidential points" (naishin tsuiseki chōsa) scaled students' scores from nine subjects to predict high school entrance

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capability, but according to teachers, it is not as accurate or easy to use as the hensachi. The main problem with the follow-up report, however, is that neither students nor parents are allowed to see the results. Consultation between the parent and the teacher for high school placement is naturally difficult, since teachers can only refer to the "confidential points" in "roundabout expressions." 7

Realignment of Educational Politics

The hensachi case points to a curious realignment in the politics of education in Japan. As of the beginning of 1993, the Ministry of Education, Japan Teachers' Union, and all political parties from left to right favored the hensachi expulsion. 8 Yet proponents of market-based education such as Higaki continued to defend the merits of the hensachi. The split thus appears to be between the governmental bureaucracy in its broadest terms (including educational administrators and politicians), and advocates of market-based education, (including social critics such as Higaki, juku instructors and junior high school teachers who depend on the exam). The present chapter reveals that the predominant public reaction was to waffle across the merits and demerits of the statistical evaluation procedure, rather than find another solution. Yet it seems, from the preliminary research of this thesis that is by no means exhaustive, that a valuable component of educational discourse has been overshadowed. That is the discourse of democratic education.

The politics of postwar Japanese education has typically been characterized by high-profile clashes at the national level between the centralized control of the Ministry of Education, and the liberal priorities of the Japan Teachers' Union. Because of Japan's polarized political climate which changed radically in the early 1990s, the MOE became associated with the center-right Liberal Democratic Party.

8 Higaki, "Hensachi Kyōsō," p. 35.
and the JTU with the extreme leftist politics of the Japan Socialist Party and Japan Communist Party. Writing in the early 1980s, Thomas Rohlen notes that "No Japanese institution in the postwar period has experienced more conflict than public education." Such conflict was characterized by "fistfights in the Diet, teachers' strikes, sit-ins, mass arrests, and legal suits," especially over areas such as textbook control and teacher training.9

Even if characterized by "a lot of smoke but only periodically very much fire," such a heating up of educational politics permitted a range of discourse which has apparently constricted in the issue of the hensachi.10 The backbone of Horio's criticism of Japanese education, for example, was the "People's Education Movement" (Minkan Kyōiku Undō), an alliance of teachers promoting democracy and voicing resistance to governmental authority in education.11 While such organizations may have voiced their opinions about the commercial testing problem, such opinions have not been expressed in the mainstream newspapers which I researched for this thesis. Instead, the prevailing opinions seem to be quite impoverished of solutions that represent the aims of democracy.

Perhaps the commercial testing industry enhances productivity, competitiveness, and participation, but it favors the wealthier families who can afford the training, and such families deem that expensive juku education may be more cost effective for sons than daughters. The elderly, housewives and less educated are called in to work for substandard wages, and foreign labors take up the "3-D" jobs. Yet these concerns of class, inequality and democracy have been overshadowed by the continuous debate on internationalization, according to


11 Horio, Educational Thought and Ideology, pp. 264-265.

216
Kumazawa. Progressives and conservatives alike want to believe they are all middle class and that the merit system of examination competition works. Debate over inequities has been meager, in stark contrast to the debate over whether to re-instate the national flag and national anthem.\textsuperscript{12}

Educators from the exam industry often claim to represent a free market solution to otherwise authoritarian governance over education. But for the most part, their methods do not represent an effective \textit{min} to balance the \textit{kaz}. The situation is parallel to the lack of democracy in the centripetal impulse of "exchange" that is pulling the world closer together with "fast music, fast computers and fast food" - what Benjamin R. Barber has dubbed "McWorld." It is difficult for the fast test scoring of exam conglomerates to respect the sluggishness of personalized, needlessly detailed manually evaluated education. Likewise, "markets are enemies of parochialism, isolation, fractitiousness, war." "McSchools" homogenize their exams and curricula, just as "common markets demand a common language, as well as a common currency, and they produce common behaviors of the kind bred by cosmopolitan city life everywhere." And just as the high-tech McWorld allows greater manipulation as well as greater participation, unfairness as well as greater productivity, Japan's McSchools, with their hot-selling \textit{hensachi}, have been a mixed blessing for education. In short, the dynamism of the \textit{hensachi}'s influence in education is emblematic of the high speed, homogenizing tendencies taking place in the larger world, and distracting from the aims of democracy.\textsuperscript{13}


\textsuperscript{13} Benjamin R. Barber, "Jihad Vs. McWorld," \textit{Atlantic} 269, no. 3 (March 1992), pp. 53-62.
Yet it is not clear that the MOE's directive to expel the *hensachi* from school will turn this tendency around. The early case study of the *hensachi* expulsion in Saitama prefecture has shown that local officials have been eager to assert their bureaucratic "sovereignty" impulse by making the new guidance procedures off limits to students and parents. This kind of parochial impulse at the local level is somewhat analogous to what Barber calls the axial counterpart of McWorld: the "Jihad." On the global scale, Jihad's politics are "antipolitical" and antidemocratic: the antidemocratic nature of guidance and grading methods that cannot be made known to students is as explicit as the fundamentalist, dictatorial regimes of some of Jihad. Yet "Jihad may be a last deep sigh before the eternal yawn of McWorld," as communications bring the world closer and closer together.14

The early phase of the *hensachi* expulsion thus demonstrates the weakness of the central bureaucracy in implementing its plans. Many localities have not been entirely compliant with expelling the commercial tests; teachers merely encourage students to take the *kaiba* exam. And it is not likely that *juku* will be put out of business. In the short run, they may actually benefit from the ban by attracting more students to take the test on their own premises and receive personalized consultations and tutoring as well. In the long run, the exam industry, never myopic about economic and social trends, will likely diversify in order to accommodate change, letting the current *hensachi* situation simply run its course.

Finally, it is not clear that people are complacent about the present status quo of choosing between the market imperative of the exam industry or the bureaucratic imperative of the MOE, and its ostensible aim to promote respect for the individual. The continued newsworthiness of the post-*hensachi* atmosphere

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indicates that the transition has yet to be settled. In Saitama, moreover, teachers have petitioned to have the new evaluation system made more open.\textsuperscript{15}

If the response of much of the populace is the ironic one of \textit{wagako shimpai}—e.g., "I support the expulsion, but not while my child is in school"—that does not necessarily imply apathy or effeteness. At one level, \textit{wagako shimpai} is consistent with the Japanese cultural pattern of stressing particularism and pragmatism rather than abstract, universal values.\textsuperscript{16} Practitioners of the \textit{nihonjinron} discourse, who self-righteously allege the "uniqueness" of Japanese culture, emphasize the Japanese tendency to avoid the logical thinking of Westerners. Expressed by one Japanese physicist: "The peculiarity of the Japanese mode of thinking lies in its complete neglect of complementary alternatives. [There is a] tendency to sidestep as far as possible any kind of confrontation. This, in turn, leads to the tendency to retain the existing stability with the least amount of modification at the sacrifice of a thoroughgoing solution. [There is also a tendency] to avoid any form of rational compromise based on a selection from among alternative possibilities... Japanese thought is concerned mainly [with] the local and temporary order restricted in space and time."\textsuperscript{17}

Broad cultural descriptions such as the foregoing typically dichotomize East and West. Often, they also ignore the salience of political transitions and social upheaval that throw cultural patterns into disarray, producing exceptions to the "rules." In Japan, the years leading up to the second world war, when universal values were inculcated in the military and educational institutions, signify at least

\textsuperscript{15} Asahi Shimbun, November 21, 1994, p. 9.


one highly significant exception to the Japanese tendency to avoid "morally neutral, external laws."18

In recent years, feminist scholars have discovered irony not as a disengaged civilizational tendency but as an active political strategy. ("Political" in this context embraces the interpersonal political rather than strictly governmental political.) Unlike cynicism, irony "fends off despair by accepting its less fatal companion, ambiguity," explains Kathy Ferguson. Irony can be "a vehicle for enabling political actions that resist the twin dangers of paralysis (nothing can be done because no final truth can be found) and totalization (there is one way to do things and it reflects the truth that has been found)."19 This interpretation of irony coming from the interstices of gender rather than strictly from civilization enables an understanding of the pragmatic strategy of irony in the context of the hensachi issue. It would be fatalistic for Japanese students to avoid the hensachi in their educations, if their interest is with the pragmatic goal of getting ahead in their lives. Yet neither do many people display signs of accepting the expulsion of the hensachi as a "total" or unambiguous mandate to educational problems.

The trajectory of this new mission to de-emphasize expedient education is therefore yet unclear. "I only worry about my own child" indicates a tendency to act pragmatically and avoid the authoritarian directive from the Ministry of Education. The final chapter to this section will now turn to the implied questions of national identity presenting themselves in the issue of the hensachi.

18 Smith, Japanese Society, p. 130.

CHAPTER VIII

Numerical Identities and Questions of National Identity

How do the calculations of examinations open up questions of national identity? To conclude this section, this chapter considers some collective images and implications surrounding the use of the *hensachi*, and turns to questioning what the *hensachi* expulsion could mean for the calculation of the nation. Those questions, which are not mutually exclusive, are: "Will the lifestyle superpower constitute an actual break with the closeness of nation and corporation conveyed in Japan, Inc?" And, "Is the lifestyle superpower of life a mere continuation of the present economic status quo, framed in seductive language of promoting respect for the individual?"

I will consider two trajectories of the *hensachi* expulsion as possible answers to those questions. But neither can take place exclusively within the realm of "education" or "nation." The interfaces of the global community, policies of the private sector, and concerns of the individual all play a part in how the policy of eliminating the *hensachi* scores will interface with the lifestyle superpower. Thus, although the *hensachi* appears to be a micro issue, it is more likely the intersection at which many macro themes converge.

Social and Cultural Implications of the *Hensachi*

The pervasive use of the *hensachi* has colored the image of postwar education. The negative expressions *hensachi henchō kyōdō* (education which over-emphasizes the *hensachi*), *hensachi henchō shugi* (hensachi-ism), or *tenshūgō* (test-pointism) are commonly used in everyday parlance, and have now been
criticized in official documents as well. A poet has called the *hensachi* the "sadomasochism of modernity."¹ Murasaki Fuyoko acknowledges that Japanese education should not be characterized as *hensachi kyōiku* (偏差値教育) or "hensachi education," but as its homonym (偏差値狂騷) in which the character *kyō* to mean "education" is replaced by *kō* meaning "madness."² Examples of the quantitative emphasis in education will be also be found in popular culture, such as Morita Yoshimitsu's "Family Game," (1983) a satirical film concerning Japanese education that demonstrates how geometrical configurations pervade education, society and the average household.³

The *hensachi* does not simply differentiate students and rank schools. We have seen that the *yobiko*, where testing for the *hensachi* is the principal teaching and guidance method, is heavily class and gender biased. Parents of daughters often cannot justify the time and tuition spent for employment conditions which will not treat women as equally as men, and thus send their daughters to two-year colleges which are overwhelmingly female.

The discursive over-emphasis on the precision of the *hensachi* resembles other areas of education in which excessive precision has been a subject of controversy, namely, *karin kyōiku*, or, "managed education," which I referred to above. "Managed education" is no doubt related to the "managed society" (*karin shakai*), an expression which Marilyn Ivy explains emerged in the 1960s. However, whereas

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¹ Cited in Itoh Satoru, "Gendaika suru 'hensachi shinkō': senbetsu kyōiku wa kokufuku dekiru ka" [The modernizing "faith of hensachi": can sorting-system education be subjugated?]. *Gekkan Shakai* Tō 334 (December 1984), p. 20.


³ Marie Thorsten Morimoto, "A Woman's Place is in the Kitchen of Knowledge: Film Representations in Japan's premodern "Ballad of Narayama" and postmodern "Family Game."
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"managed education" bears the implication of over-management and rigid authoritarianism, especially in reference to administering school regulations. "managed society" referred to "a reorganization of mass society according to the technical rules of industrialization, in which internal management becomes naturalized and everyone 'voluntarily submits' to the power of what is." The "managed society" is also the cousin of the "information society," (jōhō shakai) the slogan deployed by the government and allied think-tank industries to promote emerging information industries such as computers and robotics, as well as increased circulation of mass media.5

The hensachi resembles the features of the mass society. It became an object of consumer demand, led to the proliferation of juku, and emblematized the "micro­ization" of education. It depends on information technology, including computers, catalogues and information consultants. Kanri kyōiku, in contrast, is more like the image of an old Japan, with its remnants of bureaucratic kan authoritarianism in the military-like uniforms and strict adherence to group discipline. We have already seen such tendencies in the evaluation method of the naishinshō. Buildings also reflect this contrast. Yobikō are ultramodern neon-lit high rises surrounding train stations, as many highly paid teachers commute from far away teaching several cities at once. The regular schools are lifeless gray buildings, without heating or air conditioning, and only recently took in computers.

One implication of this contrast between these ideological underpinnings of kanri kyōiku and the yobikō, or the naishinshō and the hensachi, is that the private sector has been tremendously influential in marking the identity of postwar Japan.

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Japanese education. As in the impression of "Japan, Inc.," the public sector in education has benefitted from the private sector, and the former has shown itself to be much weaker than the latter in coordinating traffic between supplies and demands of students.

Another implication lays in the extent to which *yobikō* education and its micro-report card, the *hensachi*, parallels the impulse of "McWorld." The homogenized *hensachi* catalogues, exams and teaching methods created not only an "imagined community" of test-takers, but also heralded a more shrunken, standardized, mechanized, depersonalized and accessible realm of knowledge. The similarity of the *hensachi* issue with other centripetal impulses of information exchange taking place throughout the globe is unmistakable. What is significant is that Japan may be the first nation to have allowed its public educational system to be swept so far in the centripetal current of knowledge standardization. Both of these implications, of course, raise the issue of how far the state can go to re-harness the whirlwind of energy produced by the private sector *hensachi*.

**Numerical Identity, National Identity**

I turn now to the two possible trajectories raised by the expulsion of the *hensachi*, linking the calculations of examinations with the current proposal to re-calculate the image of the nation.

1. Will the lifestyle superpower constitute an actual break with the closeness of nation and corporation conveyed in Japan, Inc?

A possible scenario of the expulsion of the *hensachi* suggests one direction: *The expulsion of the hensachi may represent a sincere desire to break with the precedent of economic efficiency in education; yet, this also implies a reassertion of state control.*

Evidence to support this idea includes distinct statements to convey the idea that Japan's rapid economic advancement was not served by the *benefits* of
education, but rather by the costs. In this regard, the discourse of the "superpower of life," and of the related "New Age" plan for Japanese education, as presented in this thesis, may provide an unsettling answer to Kearns and Doyle, and all of the policymakers and business people, in the US and elsewhere, now jumping on the bandwagon to make the education of their country more like that of Japan, i.e., disciplined, standardized and geared toward economic advancement. Explains the Ministry of Education: 6

From now on, society itself is adjusting its purpose from that of modernizing in order to "catch up and surpass" the modernization of America and Europe, toward that of achieving a transformation of quality. School education incurs delicate costs and consumes time now as never before. . . . Students despise standardization and are beginning to uphold pluralistic values and yearn for individualized schools. These are the trends of the era. . . .

Until now, the education of our nation has obtained especially good results through quantitative expansion, but as for advancement in quality, it is still inadequate. As statistical numbers in education, "equality" and "efficiency" worked well, but were rather prone to forms of complete standardization, thereby shutting out the individual student. Now we have come to just these troubles over the delicate costs concerning an individualized way of life, which have not been swept away. . . . Thus [with reform], to some extent we may become economically inefficient, but we should instead consider that it is better to be educationally efficacious.

If this break with the undesirable elements of educational expediency – such as the hensachi at minimum, or the gakureki shakai at maximum – comes to fruition, it may also imply the following:

First, the exam industry may continue to circumvent the hensachi expulsion. It is not surprising, of course, that the educational businesses are the leading proponents of maintaining the hensachi since they are the ones who market the practice tests to produce it, and the guidance aids and services to channel it. Education entrepreneurs believe that there is correspondence between the individual need to know one's practice test score to enter high school, and the collective or national goal of assuring that all students receive a quality education.


225
To them, the *hensachi* simply assures that students will have adequate information to pursue their educations. Knowing your *hensachi* is like knowing where you are on the map before you make a trip: it is simply common sense.

Last year, as mentioned, Higaki Tadashi, writing in Japan’s *Economist*, refined the entrepreneurial attitude toward the *hensachi* ban, stating that “to attack the *hensachi* is an attack on the self-portrait of the Japanese.” The implication here is that people have grown content with the status quo and do not want any changes. They may continue to go along with the practice testing and *hensachi* advising, but not necessarily in the spirit of allegiance toward any follower. They just want what is best for themselves or their own children during the children’s critical exam periods.

Another question might ask what sort of qualitative education could emerge. A government which values “life” sounds liberalizing; but a “superpower” of life sounds “conservative” – in the meaning of a central government trying to “conserve” its authority to define what sort of quality that “life” will assume. For example, the public schools recently started giving students a free Saturday once a month. But the government and the media continuously survey the students to ask what they are doing. The frequently publicized results may be establishing further categories of the prescribed “normal.” For example, the photographs of students taking a day off in the “New Age” plan shows them exclusively in group or family activities. Furthermore, as noted in Chapter Five, the plan for “lifelong education” which accompanies the *hensachi* purge as the projects of “New Age” education, also depicts the MOE as drawing its own turf around all sorts of educational and recreational activities which already exist.

Because of the MOE’s reputation for touting nationalist ideas in textbooks, there is a also a great deal of mistrust toward any attempt to bring additional changes in curriculum. The Ministry may have to establish a new relationship of

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trust with the people to win their support to help "cope with education in the new age."

Returning to the question, then: Will the "lifestyle superpower" constitute an actual break with the closeness of nation and corporation conveyed in Japan, Inc? The expulsion of the *hensachi* may represent such a break, as there is evidence that the Ministry of Education no longer wishes to support the needs of an "efficient" economy through the practice of quantitatively "efficient" education. In expelling the *hensachi*, the Ministry has clearly erected at least some barrier to stand between the exam industry and formal education, by preventing the latter from conducting practice testing on the premises of schools, and by preventing teachers from using the *hensachi* as a guidance method.

But the national government clearly does not have a mandate to support such a change. The exam industry has been defiant, teachers are overwhelmed, and the individual students and their parents are mostly concerned with their individual needs. Moreover, there is lack of public trust over any attempt to reinstate any qualitative changes in educational curriculum. A comment which I frequently heard in Japan was, "If the Monbusho (Ministry of Education) will not change the entrance exam, the *hensachi* will always exist." The putative liberalization suggested in the purpose of the *hensachi* purge cannot be trusted without a more fundamental restructuring of the exam system.

Thus, if this microcosm of *hensachi* education speaks in representation of the people of Japan, it may prove tremendously difficult to separate "Japan" from its "Inc." Many people have grown accustomed to the certainty and personal empowerment created by quantitative "efficiency," and may not want to trade that for a new "quality of life" – at least not in education, as long as the entrance exam system remains intact. At this point, then, the elusive state structure reproduced in the *hensachi* seems to be favored over any attempts by the Ministry of Education
to change education, whether such change might represent a centralized reassertion or a genuine attempt to liberalize education for the people.

A second trajectory would ask the following question: Is the lifestyle superpower a mere continuation of the present economic status quo, framed in seductive language of promoting respect for the individual?

A scenario following from the microcosm of the hensachi would be as follows: the hensachi expulsion is merely following tendencies already taking place in the social and political economy. The language of post-economics may only serve to placate certain critics of educational policy, such as economists who want to follow the suggestions of gaiatsu and make Japan into a more consumer-oriented, leisurely society. Or, it may also be the case that the "New Age" plan retreats to earlier plans of the 1970s which also promoted the ambiguous slogans of individualism, diversification and creativity – all to promote the benefit of Japan, Inc., rather than to empower the people. In fact, in 1977, an organization of Japanese economists called for the complete privatization of education. This would come about through a system whereby parents would obtain tuition vouchers that they could apply to any school of their choice.8

The concepts "individualization" and "diversification" as they were applied to earlier educational reform proposals did not allude to the transformative power of education to enable the individual to control his or her own destiny. Rather, they referred to the capacity of the market to create more "diversified" or "individualized" roles for the student – implying stratification produced by competition as a way to match "manpower" requirements. Thus, while on one hand, the hensachi prohibition separated Japan from the "Inc." of cram schools, the overall plan for "diversifying" or "individualizing" education may actually be headed toward better planned coordination between education and the market, transferring "efficiency"

8 Horio, Educational Thought and Ideology, pp. 368-369.
to areas where it is needed more. One indication for this is that large companies may no longer be able to afford their renowned in-house training programs. In an effort to downsize white collar expenses while still instilling loyalty, companies are switching their fully-covered in-house educational programs to outside "lifelong learning" programs, for which they pay about half the expenses. Moreover, the Ministry's "New Age" plan states that there is no reason why a junior high school student who wants to go to work directly from junior high school should not do so, and that the general or "equal" unified curriculum at the high school level is no longer necessary. In such a context, there is evidence that "diversified" education will probably lead to greater vocationalization in which the "individual" will have a greater "variety" (another educational buzzword) of educational "choices." Horio heard corporations touting such ideas as early as the 1970s, and his prescient thoughts at that time may also be relevant for the "lifestyle superpower" in the 1990s:

...the greatest irony in all of the recent talk about liberalization is that it would leave us with an educational system even more standardized and uniform than the one we now have. The freedoms it would make available are limited to those of the consumer in a tightly regulated marketplace. They are most definitely not the freedoms of educational creativity which we have argued should be recognized as belonging to the citizens of a truly democratic nation. And they are clearly not the freedoms which should be expected from an educational system that purports to respect the value and dignity of individuals.

If the "New Age" plan and its condemnation of the hensachi turn students into "consumers in the marketplace," whether or not "tightly regulated," then such a plan does correspond with trends already taking place at the level of consumer culture. According to new theories of consumers, Ivy explains, the "undifferentiated masses" contenting themselves with three C's or three V's have become passé.

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Consumers in Japan now want to demonstrate their differences from one another. Producers are thus "compelled to appeal to (and create) highly targeted, diversified, and nuanced types of consumer desire."\textsuperscript{11}

Yet if education planners choose to create more targeted, diversified and nuanced types of student desire, their task will be far more difficult than that of Daiei or Mitsukoshi. A strong monopoly of prestige still holds on the path leading to Japan's top universities. The government began to promote the increase of two-year vocational colleges in 1990 as an alternative to junior college or university, but some students, I was told by a private education counselor, attend both university as well as vocational school, one for status, the other for skills. Then, in March of 1995, the government announced an "image boosting" campaign for high school level vocational education. Reputation enhancement will include measures such as requiring universities to set "quotas" for the admission of vocational high school students (reminiscent of America's affirmative action quotas); inviting business and academic leaders to give lectures in vocational schools, and encouraging local businesses to establish teaching and staffing partnerships.\textsuperscript{12} If education is to become less "efficient" in the screening process for universities, it is likely to become more efficient at the level of vocational education.

Image enhancement also implies an improvement in hands-on information available for students. Until recently, students have had scanty information about schools in Japan, and that which exists is of secondary importance to the catalogues explaining which hensachi is "safe" or "on the border." The difficulty of promoting advertising will be that students of the gakureki shakai will still need to be convinced that a good job will await them if they enter a certain school.

\textsuperscript{11} Ivy, "Formations of Mass Culture," pp. 253-254.

Academic advertising must therefore include rigorous occupational advertising, debunking the myth that non-white collar work is for examination flunkers.

Another implication for education consistent with the possibility that the "New Age" plan merely reflects the tendencies of the current age, as well as with the need to create more nuanced forms of consumer desire, is offered by the "prophesy" of Sakaiya Taiichi. The new trend of subjectivity, he claims, will be manifest as "knowledge-value" in every consumer decision. Consumers will seek out those products and services that display "the owner's conspicuous consumption of wisdom." However, because knowledge will be diffused throughout the economy of such high-quality, long lasting goods and services, education will be less significant, says Sakaiya. People will prove themselves as "in the know" not by their hensachi scores or university degrees only, but more importantly, by their possession of knowledge-endowed, "soft" (as in software) goods and services.

Whether one accepts the prophecy or not, the way Sakaiya discusses education in the new language of knowledge-value is a lesson in itself, since his market metaphors seem to take the merger of education and economics which began in the 1960s to a more complete level of assimilation: 13

[The education industry as represented by schools, tutorial colleges, or classes on cultural topics belongs to a knowledge industry that markets more general knowledge. Such industries do indeed market knowledge value and can expect to grow in the coming epoch. However, what they are selling to the consumer is literal units of information and if this is the only function they perform, these knowledge industries will continue to occupy a very limited niche in the overall economy.

With these implications, the question or whether or not the lifestyle superpower represents a mere continuation of current trends, framed in seductive language of individual empowerment, the tentative answer may be, "yes." Changes in society as well as the economy indicate greater desires on the part of the Japanese people to "diversify" themselves. In this scenario we see a state

bureaucracy putting a rubber stamp on trends already set in motion by private sector producers.

Yet whether that diversification will come about through truly subjective choices - or choices which are "tamed" by continued competitiveness, in some form other than the hensachi, surely remains a question for education. As Sakaiya implies, education and knowledge may continue to be homogenized to the point of becoming a market for "consumers" to purchase "information-units." The hensachi may be pressured to fade because it inflated the expectations of the populace for "escalator" education leading to one hierarchy of prestigious schools. Yet commercialized education continues to bloom, in Japan and elsewhere, and we may be in only the initial stage of understanding the juggernaut.

In either of these scenarios, we do not see a picture of the national state government acting autonomously. Global circumstance have played a part in promoting a less export-dependent and more consumer-oriented, humanitarian Japan, with more to offer the international community than a mere "checkbook." Bureaucrats have thus been compelled to respond to - whether through discursive cooption or administrative control - such concerns. The private sector, stereotyped as convergent with state bureaucracy in the image of Japan, Inc., has shown it does not necessarily conform to the demands of the Ministry of Education. The excesses of "administrative guidance" have been decried, and at least one critic has stated that it is the competitiveness generated by the hensachi represents the true portrait of Japanese identity. Finally, many individual citizens have demonstrated reluctance to cooperate with the clarion call for less "efficient" education. Students and parents have demonstrated a very pragmatic, self-oriented attitude toward education, and as long as the entrance exam itself does not change in the immediate future, they feel the hensachi is a necessary tool of self-empowerment.
CHAPTER IX

Education Mama-dzillas

and the "Domestic Politics" of Postwar Japan

Introduction

"Where are the women?"

The trademark inquiry of Cynthia Enloe, in her studies of international politics,\(^1\) is an appropriate and timely one to ask of Japan's long period of political and economic stability following the second world war.

A poster used in 1986 by Japan's Liberal-Democratic Party (LDP), that held the reigns of that stability for thirty-eight years, provides one answer to the question. It features a fresh-faced middle-aged woman clad in work clothes, her hair tied back under a scarf. Wiping a dish, she wears a happy, satisfied smile. The captions state:

Confidence, Safety, Stability: 30 Years of Preserving Freedom and Peace:
The Liberal-Democratic Party... Mother Looks Good!

The representations of the poster tell its "reader" that the domestic role of women is integral to the political stability enjoyed by postwar Japan. The poster also emblematizes the *kanji* (Chinese character, used in Japanese writing) which combines the figure of a woman under the roof of a house, creating the meaning of

The representation of the house (ie), moreover, was the designated metaphor of "nation" prior to Japan's defeat in the second world war. Where are the women, then? They are not necessarily in the home. But when they are, according to the LDP poster, they keep the home, and the nation, "confident, safe and stable."

Not all of their time is spent washing dishes, however.

In Japan of the late 1950s, a "family values" movement collided with the ascent of nationalized, competitive education. The result was the creation of a new mother whose role was to help prepare her children for exams, exams and more exams.

This section (Chapters Nine, Ten, Eleven) will discuss what has been perhaps the most salient role of the Japanese woman in the postwar economic reconstruction: that of supervising her children’s educations. From the discourse of the 1960s, we recall Prime Minister Ikeda's words that the construction of the nation depended on the construction of humans. And from "The Image of the Desired Japanese," the home became the place for love and education. "Education" (kyōiku) is used in three ways in the Japanese language, referring to the upbringing of children in the home (katei kyōiku), school education (gakkō kyōiku), and workers' training (kigyōnai kyōiku). It is natural then, that a national campaign to boost education should begin with the child's first teacher, the mother.

Fusing home education with national reconstruction, however, was not without consequences for gender imaging. Outside the postwar Japanese context of examination warfare, the attention mothers give to their children attracts a naturally favorable impression. For the Japanese after 1960, however, the picture of a mother hovering over her child’s study desk often evokes a negative impression. Unlike the happy housewife wiping a dish in the LDP poster, the mother who cares
for her children's education in Japan is likely to be stereotyped as scowling, bespectacled, and hyper-vigilant. The image derives from the severe competitiveness of Japanese education. The diligent, but vulnerable mothers of Japan must often take the "heat" from so-called "examination hell," heat which turns their otherwise everyday educational concerns into what is often recognized as pathological over-indulgence or compulsion.

Thus as early as the 1950s, the epithet, "education-excess mother" (kyōiku kajō mama) was born, shortened later to "education mama," or more simply, "mama gon." "Gon" is a suffix like the more commonly heard "san" or "chan," but it is affixed to mythological monsters such as Godzilla. The stereotype of the education mama-godzilla is that of a mother who neglects her responsibilities toward husband, household and friends. She shuts herself off in a room alone with her child, fixated on the idea that the child must study, study, study. She provides her child with the best of tutors, cram schools and study aids, and often takes up a part-time job just to cover such expenses. This obsession, however, is less for the child's own welfare than for the mother's own satisfaction that he (typically) will enter a "good" school, a ticket to a socially-defined "good" position in life.

From the time the education mamadzilla became a household term until the 1980s, the mass media did much to perpetuate the negativity of the image. They focused on the most pathological circumstances attributed to mamadzillas, through egregious stories about mothers who stole examinations, bribed school officials, or even committed incest to keep their sons' minds on their studies – mothers who generally stopped at nothing for the education of their children, until their actions drove the students to commit suicide, matricide, or some other form of antisocial behavior or madness.
Not every mother in Japan is a such a mamadzilla, surely! Today, some women have become proud of their education-mothering, even if the image remains negative. Inasmuch as the kyōiku mama-gon image has been a pervasive and powerful one, therefore, the education mamadzilla affects all mothers. As educational competition escalated, moreover, the mother who failed to keep up with the labyrinthine demands of competitive education was as quickly labeled "negligent" as she was "over-indulgent." Thus the social construction of the mamadzilla gradually became "normal" by the 1980s, interacting with the identities of nearly all postwar mothers concerned about education. This was true for the mother who wanted her child to attend the best schools, as well as for the mother who merely wanted to keep her child afloat in the average schools.

The following three chapters will explore the relationship between this highly gendered and often thankless responsibility of educational caretaking, and the stability of the Japanese nation – as a sort of "domestic politics" maintained through what I have been referring to as educational nationalism. The mother's role in education is considered problematic, for while the economy was recognized as a "miracle," the mother became stereotyped as a "monster." The relationship between the mother and educational nationalism can thus be presented as follows:

The first characteristic of education and economic nationalism is the conjoining of education and labor into a single issue, such that the pursuit of school education became largely a pragmatic, economic decision, filling the "manpower" requirements of the nation. Education as a vehicle for self-empowerment in any respect other than employment became segregated and marginalized as a "hobby." Reviewing historical conditions from wartime to 1986, the present chapter will show that
"mamadzillas" emerged in a "clearing" – the postwar labor conditions that engendered a vicious cycle whereby both education and employment circumstances discriminated against women. A space was thus opened that the intensively competitive exam system could readily fill in. Thus, by providing their services to the highly demanding "examination hell," mothers perpetuate the cycle that withholds the potential values of their own educations from the labor market.

The second characteristic of education and economic nationalism which involves the education mama is the osmosis between the boundaries of "public" and "private." Chapter Ten will show that the "private" realm of the mother functioned like a "private" welfare agency: the problems of the public realm of education were passed onto her for her comfort, care and services. The mamadzilla thus carries the weight of the examination system, making herself, not the educational system, vulnerable to the impression of "monstrosity."

Third, in economic nationalism, the state does not inculcate unambiguous ideological motives through the schools, but instead instills each student with highly individualized goals. Likewise, today's mother of students rarely relates her role to a pervasively inscribed national goal; instead, the power which the school holds over her is atomized as a deep self-consciousness, over her performance as a well-intentioned mother as well as over the future position of her child. But this kind of self-consciousness is created in social discourse that produces an ideological effect, even if, as we have seen elsewhere in this dissertation, the authorship and media of that ideology is diffused across social layers. This will be the subject of Chapter Eleven, when I will also present what some recent tendencies may imply for the education mama-gon.
Along with Mary Brinton, a sociologist who analyzed the contribution of women to the "miracle" economy of postwar Japan, I believe that mothers' input as education mamas can be analyzed in terms of both agency, or the voluntary will of individuals, and structure, the environmental constraints on will and free choice. The focus of this section, unlike Brinton's important contribution rich in quantified socio-economic data, is primarily on discursive ideas set forth in policy as well as popular culture, for it is from such discourse that we gain an understanding of how choices are made meaningful and acted upon.

Education mamazillas acquired their roles and image in a "vicious circle" whereby women were discriminated against in the labor market, channeled into the home during childrearing years, and then rendered guardians over that circle. Or, to put it in socioeconomic vocabulary, education mamas understand their value as investors in the human capital of others, their sons and sometimes daughters, rather than as investors in their own capital.

Image of the Education Mama-dzilla

It is helpful to give a brief enumeration of the roles and images of roles assumed by parents in school education as it pertains to the entrance exam. Thus these are the roles that are generally associated with the kyōiku mama. Parental roles and responsibilities in education which generally are assumed by the mother only may include any of the following, depending on the student's grade level,

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3 Brinton, Women and the Economic Miracle, p. 233.

238
academic goals and personal or family means: orienting prenatal and early childhood care to theories related to the development of intellectual abilities in the child; monitoring the student's homework and test results; enrolling the child in juku; selecting home tutors for the child; supervising regimental school rules (pertaining to length of hair, color of socks and underwear, length and width of skirts and trousers and so on); following developments in educational policy, including national and local requirements for school entrance examinations; keeping track of students' frequently measured hensachi and class rankings; researching requirements for entrance into schools and universities; keeping up to date with commercialized trends in examination preparation, such as over-the-counter examination preparation guides and materials; consulting with teachers and juku teachers or juku guidance counselors regarding the child's progress; attending parental meetings at school and juku; participating in PTA; receiving the teacher at home in the annual "home visit" in which the teacher inspects the home environment and children's study area, and for the purpose of education, remaining with the child in one's geographical location if the father is transferred to a remote area, even overseas.

Actions usually assumed by mothers but in which fathers sometimes participate include assisting the child in homework; transporting him or her from juku lessons, and engaging in informal discussions with classroom teachers. Even the busiest of fathers usually are involved in the most-important decision-making regarding the selection of schools or universities appropriate for the child's interests, skills, and academic ability.

Sometimes, parental participation traverses the bounds of what is ordinarily assigned, expected or recommended. Some mothers are known to be "education
maids," waiting on the diligent students and instructing other family members to do the same. Occasionally, as mentioned, a sensational story surfaces in the mass media, such as that of a mother who provided sexual favors to her son so that he would "keep his mind on his studies and off the girls" (Tokyo Journal, September 1987).

Another activity which may involve the mother only, both parents, the entire family, or in the case of older children, the student only, is making periodic visits to temples, particularly to those in which gods of learning are enshrined. Gokaku kigan, literally, a "prayer for passing examinations, is most often made immediately following the New Year. There are local god-of-learning shrines in most areas, but the most famous is in Fukuoka, on Japan's southernmost main island, which attracts students and their families from all over Japan. Some make the prayer only during the critical years, which correspond with 6th grade, 9th grade, and 12th grade in the U.S. system, in which the student is a jukensei, an "entrance examination student" planning to enter the next level of schooling. Some may make an annual custom of gokaku kigan until the child has entered university, while others visit shrines periodically throughout the year.

Upon entering the shrine, students fill out an application which asks for the following information: name, address, the school one hopes to enter, and whether one is making the request to the god for the entrance examination in particular, to do well in school throughout the year, or to receive blessings just upon entering a

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Some nursery schools, kindergartens, grade schools and juku also have their own entrance examination. Occasionally, one hears of mothers taking exams in place of children who are too young. For example, see Ronald P. Dore, The Diploma Disease: Education, Qualification, and Development (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), p. 49.

240
new school. Students turn in these applications before entering the main shrine to pray. They may also put their educational requests onto small pentagon-shaped wooden *ema*, which are neatly displayed on the temple grounds.

In some cases, souls of deceased family members may also be invoked to make educational decisions. The degree to which students or parents internalize the religious signification of such practices varies from individual to individual, but most claim to regard them as a good luck measures rather than as spiritual rites. In particular, the practice of *gokaku kigan* seems to have increased since the mid-sixties to early seventies, when schools became highly competitive and the entrance examination pressure began to penetrate the entire social fabric.

If the child slips and falls in the statistical labyrinth of examination-intensive education, the results are often devastating. He or she will be placed in a high school with a stigmatizing reputation, a school with no pipelines to the sought-after "good jobs." Even more drastically, especially in the case of girls, the way is made clear to the "bad jobs," the *mizu shōbai* or "water trade" service jobs in coffee shops, restaurants or night clubs, all of which are often associated with prostitution. For this, the blame is again sent back to the parents, implicitly, the mother. One man to whom I asked the question, "Do children in low-ranking high schools come from families of various backgrounds, such as (so-called) 'good households' and 'bad households'?" seemed quite perplexed. "If the household were 'good', the child would never have gotten there in the first place."

Whether mothers decide to follow, give up on or ignore the "entrance examination war," the crux of the dilemma they face is that in deciding what is

"best" for their children, they walk a fine line between what is socially regarded as negligence, and what is socially regarded as over-protection, indulgence, or egoism. One high school teacher expressed it in these cut and dried terms: "It seems there are only two types of mothers, the education mamas and the negligent mothers."

**Theoretical Approach**

My theoretical approach in this section is largely "post-structural," designating an interdisciplinary activity which asks questions such as how and in what context images were created: what sort of meaning do they produce, whose interests do they serve, and whose do they exclude? In making such inquiries, poststructuralism seeks to understand how roles, images, or any types of "structures" acquire meaning in their social and political contexts.

Poststructuralism can be thought of as a movement which reacts against the assumptions made by its predecessor, structuralism, a mode of inquiry whose genesis is usually attributed to the works of anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss.6 Levi-Strauss and scholars influenced by his approach generally hold that there is an inherent, but partially hidden "logic," not unlike the grammatical logic of language, which generates, like a code, the organization and ordering of social structures.

The "ordering" of structures figures prominently in the inquiries of poststructuralists, with the crucial distinction of denying that there is any timeless axis of logic, principle, or element of determinism which conjoins the structures. The theoretical approach here is especially indebted to Michel Foucault's *Order of Things*. In this work, Foucault sets out to jolt the structuralist tendencies of our

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imaginations first by pointing out the ludicrousness of an ancient Chinese
taxonomy of animals which groups together unlikely classifications such as those
which belong to the Emperor: are embalmed: tame: sucking pigs: and so forth. From
this starting point he demonstrates that the way different cultures group together,
divide, or put into sequence concepts or structures is subject to revolution and
rearrangement. Conceptual arrangements, not at all unlike the ordering of human
beings, are accidental and malleable. They develop in historical practices and are
therefore political:7

...there is nothing more tentative, nothing more empirical (superficially,
at least) than the process of establishing an order among things; nothing that
demands a sharper eye or a surer, better-articulated language; nothing that
more insistently requires that one allow oneself to be carried along by the
proliferation of qualities and forms.

An illustration of the structuralist approach to explain Japanese hierarchical
arrangements is the "vertical society" thesis of Nakane Chie. Dissecting every
modality in Japanese society from business and family relationships to political
factions, lunch boxes and drinking habits, Nakane efficiently demonstrates the
operation of a "vertical principle" in nearly every conceivable segment and
arrangement of human or conceptual patterns. Her precision imparts a sense of
permanence, a detached compliance to the rigidity of the social grid.8

Vertical structure, to Nakane, is "vertical principle." In contrast, sociologist
Ueno Chizuko's perspective is much more post-structural, in the sense that she

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claims not to know that traditional roots of the "vertical society" are a matter of "timeless" principle or logic. By looking at historical fissures through folklore studies, Ueno emphasizes that many of the conceptions associated with vertical relationships emerged only in the Meiji Era (1868-1912), when patterns of the dominant-ranked but numerically few samurai class were imposed on lower ranks of commoners. Before this period, both males and females had enjoyed horizontal relations in communal lodgings and village behavior.9 Many vertical concepts, such as the ie or "home" customs governing such areas as patrilineal inheritance, marriage and divorce, were instituted by law during this period.10

Also, even though Onna Daigaku (Greater Learning for Women), a treatise advocating oppressive Confucian patterns for women, was written in 1672, during the Tokugawa era (1603-1868), it was confined to upper classes, and not necessarily taken seriously even by them.11 During the Meiji era, however, Onna Daigaku became a model statement for the creation of the modern well-bred woman, using discourse such as the following:12

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9 Ueno states that community life was sexually segregated before the Meiji era, but male-female interaction was encouraged for socialization and coupling. In addition, there was much peer-group interaction within the women's sphere, whereas women became increasingly isolated from each other as Japan modernized. Ueno Chizuko, "Genesis of the Urban Housewife," Japan Quarterly 34, no. 2 (1987), p. 133.


12 Cited in Passin, Society and Education in Japan, p. 175.
Should her husband be roused at any time to anger, she must obey him with fear and trembling, and not set herself up against him in anger and forwardness. A woman should look on her husband as if he were Heaven itself, and never weary of thinking how she may yield to her husband, and thus escape celestial castigation.

Because the poststructuralist mode assumes discontinuity, we can look at both educational practices and images such as the kyōiku mama as forms of ideological production constituted in language. Our concern, therefore, is not with the institution of education and its accompanying services, but with the significance of the language which they use. Language is used to construct categories of "order" which lend sensibility to disorder; thus, the rhetoric of educational practices, and representations such as the stereotypical kyōiku mama gon, presume a logical sequence which can be "read" as a "script." The script invites itself to be "misread" as a "truth" which makes the phenomena explained appear to be clear to the "reader." In this sense, the representations within the script can be thought of as an ideological production—an ideology which is socially produced in language.13

Following such an approach, the image of the education mama can be thought of as an ideological construction which makes the academic-record society appear to be coherent, logical and legitimate. That examination warfare is a logical rite of passage leading to employment appears static and unproblematic—but its underlying turbulence is heaped upon the nurturing services of the mothers and various educational helping services. The remainder of this chapter will discuss how the education mama emerged in a conceptual space from the start of the high economic growth period in the late 1950s to the passage of the Equal Opportunity

Act of 1986. First, however, it will present two conceptual antecedents for the mama-dzilla, for as with Barthes's "myth," the education mama as a construction relied on pre-existing knowledge, or "signifying consciousness."

**The Education Mama: Pre-existing Knowledge**

*Women and the Strategies of Nationalism*: In times of great social transition, influential leaders of society, including politicians, writers, planners, religious leaders and scientists, often seek to reconstruct the female body, and its relationship to arbitrary "orders" of knowledge. To demonstrate this tendency through the capsule, Donna Haraway has shown how both science and science fiction use mediating images to experiment with alternative constructions of women as a way to relocate anxiety onto a seemingly neutral Other. One of her examples from the scientific field of displacing the gendered Other comes from the laboratory of Harry Harlow, who, in the 1960s and 1970s, produced various constructions of family units using baby chimps raised in isolation, mechanical "surrogate" mothers and highly controlled cages where scientists peered through a one-way glass at their own self-constructed visions of humanity. "We have absolute experimental control over them," the primatologist said in reference to his surrogate "cloth mothers."¹⁴

Thus, even if we can assume the universal continuity of mother-child bonding, we have less certainty about the continuity of particular instances when power is

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¹⁴ Harlow called himself a "humanist" interested in developing models of both paternity and maternity which could be adapted to the new social politics of his era. His sadistic experiments, however, were conducted entirely on surrogate "women" and their helpless infants. Donna Haraway, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge, 1989), pp. 231-243; cross-citation reference, p. 234.
used over women to structure their mothering toward certain ends. For example, the sacrificial motif of women in Japanese culture is well-known, but what is less known is how the motif was structured to serve the ends of militarism, perhaps not entirely with the "absolute control" of the scientist, but certainly with the weighted authority of elites who had considerable power to control knowledge. It is necessary, therefore, to assume a critical posture toward the various discourses of mothering found throughout history.

We learned from Chapter Two that Meiji nationalist education borrowed precepts from Confucianism to forge a new mythology that would serve the Empire. Many of these precepts were well known to the upper samurai class, whose education and lifestyles were already steeped in Confucian ethics. After 1890, this teaching that melded the "Empire as a family" mythology with Confucian ethics of the samurai class (though the samurai class constituted only 5-6% of the population), was imposed on the entire Japanese nation through the school system.15

In the Japanized Confucian ethic, as with the Chinese version, the mother's relationship with her sons was emphasized over her marital relationship. "For the male child," therefore, "the mother became a symbol of lifelong dedication and

15 Imai Yasuko argues that not all gender stratification originated in the warrior class with their study of Confucian ethics, and that other classes shared ideas of gender differences that made them receptive to the new mythology of the Meiji era. But her study also demonstrates the discontinuity of gendered differences in noting that men were largely responsible for cooking up until the Meiji era, and that both men and women shared childrearing duties. See Imai Yasuko, "The Emergence of the Japanese Shufu: Why a Shufu is More Than a "Housewife," trans. Lili Iriye Selden, U.S.-Japan Women's Journal English Supplement, no. 6 (1994), pp. 44-65.
sacrifice, the father, an image of unapproachable authority." But it must also be emphasized that this ethic strongly served the needs of militarism. Nitobe Inazo, who in 1905 wrote an exposition on the code of feudal-military ethics known as bushidō, summarized the prescription for the model role of women:

It was to maintain [the home’s] honour and integrity that [women] slaved, drudged, and gave up their lives. Night and day, in tones at once firm and tender, brave and plaintive, they sang to their little nests. As daughter, woman sacrificed herself for her father, as wife for her husband, and as mother for her son. Thus from earliest youth she was taught to deny herself. Her life was not one of independence, but of dependent service. Man’s helpmeet, if her presence is helpful she stays on the stage with him; if it hinders his work, she retires behind the curtain.

... Woman’s surrender of herself to the good of her husband, home, and family, was as willing and honourable as the man’s self-surrender to the good of his lord and country. Self-renunciation, without which no life-enigma can be solved, was the key-note of the loyalty of man as well as of the domesticity of woman. She was no more the slave of man than was her husband of his liegelord, and the part she played was recognized as naijō, “the inner help.” In the ascending scale of service stood woman, who annihilated herself for man, that he might annihilate himself for the master, that he in turn might obey Heaven.

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18 Nitobe actually attempted to encode a system of ethics which developed centuries prior to 1905, most likely during the feudal period which spanned from 1600 to 1868.
Women's maternal characteristics were also used in their capacity as teachers to instill a national loyalty that would aid military praxis. A report from prewar educational training symposium thus merges motherhood and nationhood:19

[The] maternal spirit wishing to bear a child, nurse and love it, is a source of all human hope, effort, affection, patriotism, devotion, and ecstasy! It is this image of a loving mother that gives an everlasting vigour to the heart of a Japanese warrior who is ready to sacrifice himself for the sake of his country and home. It is, so to speak, 'the eternal motherhood leads him.' Japanese mothers sacrifice everything for the sake of their children. Their life is full of unbounded comprehension and obedience. . . .There may be many reasons for the requirement of women teachers in the school education of our country. But one of the most fundamental reasons is the fact that they lead children with that beautiful virtue of womanly love and influence the young people with their characteristic devotion.

The report also depicts homes as "not mere places of comfort and repose, but . . . schools for character-building." Likewise: "Schools, especially elementary schools, are continuations of the home; therefore, schoolmistresses ought to share the life with their schoolchildren as their mothers and sisters do. By so doing the beautiful history and traditions of our country are unconsciously conveyed to the hearts of the younger generation."20

The end of the second world war opened a space for the reassessment of gender in Japan, and has some parallels with the U.S. at the end of the Cold War. Thus, the image of the domestic role of mama-dzillas as integral to the political stability of


the nation provides a salient response not only to, "Where are the women?" but also to Enloe's recent corollary, "Where are the women in the post Cold War?" Much of the world has now entered "The Morning After" the Cold War, a juncture when men's and women's lives no longer need to be shaped by the security concerns of a bipolar world, explains Enloe. The Cold War instilled the citizens of the U.S. and other bipolar regions with an overwhelmingly "acute sense of danger." It was a danger that warranted the underfunding of education and other social programs in favor of the military. It was a danger which taught women to accept men as their protectors, which taught that homosexuality or women in combat were threats to national security. Male bonding among policymakers was as common as antagonism toward female-led social reform movements, explains Enloe.21

In anticipating where the U.S. and other countries might be headed as their demilitarizations lead to new definitions of gender, Enloe might look, as other political economists and policymakers have done, to the example of Japan. In some respects, Japan already entered a phase of demilitarization fifty years ago, following the second world war. It was forced by its new legal system to restrain its military budget, defined merely as "self-defense forces," to less than 1% of the GNP. The energies of the nation were directed not at proving military capabilities but rather economic ones. Thus Japan became a model for the U.S. and other countries to follow for the purposes of turning their swords—perhaps not into plowshares, but into capital shares. In other words, Japan provided the most contemporary and comprehensive example of a nation that converted its military nationalism into full-scale economic nationalism. Its appeal to post Cold War America has been

21 Enloe, The Morning After.
expressed by Nathan Gardels, of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, (1992):22

A world order conceived in Japan that co-governs a third of humanity with China could pose a more fundamental challenge to Western liberalism than did Soviet communism. As the West's once-enviable social contract unravels, particularly in America, the order, conformity and discipline of comparatively egalitarian Japan or Singapore is admired by many. Because it enables a total societal effort leading to rapid economic growth with only a modicum of messy pluralism, the East Asian model of development has great pragmatic appeal.

Yet the results from Japan, to one looking for a new model of gender not based on militarism, are not promising. In the postwar era, scholars such as George DeVos observed the internalized obligations incurred by children to recompense for their mothers' sacrifices and orientations toward culturally-defined achievement, namely, education.23 Yet in some ways, because militaristic discipline has merely been reincarnated in the corporate world, education became the hardware manufacturer of future so-called trade warriors. And thus mothers are still compelled - as the socially pervasive military imagery reveals - to mold their sons into students who are nicknamed, "soldiers" (senshitachi), helping them to conquer "decisive battle" (kessen) after battle in the continuous "entrance examination war" (juken sensō). But this transition from military mamas to education mamas did not happen overnight.

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23 DeVos, Socialization for Achievement, pp. 144-164 and passim.
Moreover, the connection between maternal sacrifice and the overall theme of masochism in Japanese culture did not escape notice of the postwar Nihonjinron theorists, who focused on the role of the mother in their attempt to perpetuate the prewar myth espousing the uniqueness of the Japanese race. As mentioned in previous chapters, Nihonjinron, meaning literally, "the theory of being Japanese people," describes the cult of scholars, critics and politicians who insist upon the uniqueness, hence superiority, of the Japanese race. The Nihonjinron claims that there is a unique Japanese conception of "mother," and that while love for the mother may certainly be considered a universal phenomenon, the particular Japanese relationship with mothers is what some believe to be special, "a sublimity without parallel in the world."24

Accounts of the suffering female also became familiar images in literature and film, especially in the genre of film popular during the reconstruction years entitled hahamono, or "mother things."25 Common images of suffering women in such films include those who plunge to degrading professions to support their children or younger siblings; who commit suicide in illness to prevent their husbands from financial hardship; and who bear up against promiscuous husbands or domineering mothers-in-law. Often the suffering mother was a metaphor of postwar Japan itself, struggling to put its family back in order in the aftermath of war.


The role of the mother is often emphasized in historical biographies, and the mass media are also fond of reporting incidents of maternal sacrifice. Perhaps the ultimate, and the most sensational expression of "sacrifice" for the Japanese mother is the mother-child suicide, in which the despondent mother takes her children with her in order to prevent the perceived greater hardships they would suffer in her absence.

Mercantilism and militarism both involve strategies of competitiveness. Military nationalism is about constructing human armies and hardware arsenals in the name of national defense. Economic nationalism values "human resources" as its armies of national economic security. We saw in the introduction that on one hand, this comprehensively pragmatic attention given to human resources which the Japanese have utilized effectively has been interpreted as the elevating of the importance of education. Many American policymakers have thus cautiously attempted to emulate the Japanese attention given to education. To Japanese critics such as Horio, however, education as a "national economic strategy" meant not the elevation of education but rather the demise of "true" education in favor of a purely economic sorting system. In other words, as education became a purely economic decision such that the quality of learning became surpassed by the pragmatic appeal of getting into a good school, "education" ceased to exist in the form of a public institution.

Because the start of that pragmatic decision of education occurred at such a young age, the burden to prepare for such "education" fell largely on parents, and on the parent with the most time: the mother. The rise of economic nationalism in Japan therefore meant the re-construction of women to serve that need. As Enloe puts it, "It is precisely because sexuality, reproduction and child rearing acquire
such strategic importance with the rise of nationalism that many nationalist men become newly aware of their need to exert control over their community's women; controlling girls and women becomes a man's way of protecting or reviving the nation." Nationalist women, she adds, are also complicit in the project of nationalism even while it undermines them as women.26

Yet if one outcome of changing women to serve the needs of nationalism is to make them complicit in their own marginalization, another is often to make them responsible as instigators or harbingers of all sorts of social and political problems. Thus the education mama is the seemingly neutral Other onto which problems in education are displaced. We have already learned that educational problems after the 1960s became considered as social rather than (governmentally) political; the "social" cause of educational problems is largely the home, and the burden of guiding students' educations in the home largely falls on the mother. We also learned that socially-defined "good education" was not necessarily directly correlated with economic success. Likewise, socially-defined "good mothering" also did not necessarily lead to ensuring the best education for children. In sorting through the myriad causes of educational problems, the one policymakers have difficulty resisting is thus the "parent," namely the Godzillaesque mother who expects too much of her children.

_Mother Knows Best:_ In nationalism that emphasizes militarism, it is toward the end of a named or unnamed higher ideal – the nation – that women and men make their silent, but "colossal, sacrifice" (to borrow the words of Benedict

Anderson). Military mamas know that violence, killing and war — by themselves — are bad for children and for adults. Yet with strength, seriousness and sureness of purpose, they prepare their sons for "war." As Elshtain explains, the military mama's call to arms is often done "as a last resort" — a tenet of the "just-war" thesis — and she behaves not as a "woman," questioning the violence she is asked to comply with, but as a "warrior," willfully accepting her duty.27

As we have seen, however, in economic nationalism, the "nation" has been an elusively structured entity, forging in its discourse a symmetry between the individual and the nation. To construct the nation is to construct humans. The second antecedent to the social creation of education mama-dzillas is thus counterintuitive: the mother who "constructs" humans simply wants what is best for her children. At some point, however, her judgment of what constitutes good education overlaps or contends with the requirement of school education. "They don't know what real "education" means anymore!" reiterated one professional mother of two teenage boys, in reference to contemporary education. Yet mothers do tend to make decisions on projected views of the future employment of their children, rather than on the most ideal pedagogical techniques. They rarely consider education as an empowerment that could challenge existing institutions.

Clearing Time for the Education Mama-dzilla: Woman, School, Work

In spite of the conservative ideologies exhorting women to stay in the home, the years leading up to Japan's entry into the second world war saw thousands of women recruited into industrial jobs while their male counterparts went into the

militarily. Young girls in their pre-teens as well as mothers in their middle-ages endured long hours (sometimes, 18-hour shifts) of grueling labor in silk factories and manufacturing industries, especially weapons production. They were paid substantially less than the men whom they replaced, and restrictions were imposed on their right to unionize. Some girls had been literally sold to the factories by their parents; others went willingly and were happy to escape farm life. During the 1930s the numbers of women employed in manufacturing increased from 3,315 to 96,339. Those engaged in weapons production alone went from 888 to 52,018. These women drew their strength from slogans such as "We will work till we win for the emperor and our country." A popular song at that time included these lyrics:

For the boys, the military; for the girls the factory; We reel the threads for our country. I began learning to reel the thread at twelve years old. I was thin as the thread itself.

In the sense that postwar Japanese women would be compelled to "dedicate" themselves to "help keep Japan safe and prosperous" as education mamas, the

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30 Brinton, however, emphasizes that the typical wage-earning worker of the prewar era was a single young woman from a rural area engaged in temporary labor in a spinning factory before marriage in order to assist her family. She fails to consider the anomaly of female weapons manufacturers. Brinton, Women and the Economic Miracle, pp. 118-120.
parallel with their prewar counterparts is striking. It is sometimes pointed out that
Japanese women actually gained something "positive" through their wartime
recruitment into factories. For example, noted scholar Katô Shuichi believes that
"[The war period], in the end, represented the first step toward sexual equality in
Japanese society." 31 A Western woman who visited Japanese factories in 1935 had
the following insight regarding the situation of young female workers: 32

[The young females] were the vast majority of the workers in all the
export industries. Today they were even taking on such jobs as oiling of
machines, and making minor repairs. They were almost half of the workers
even in the explosive industry. Their importance was enormous. For not only
did they hold down the general wage level; not only did they hold down the
labor movement; but they released the men workers for heavy industry, for
armaments, for the army. Unconscious, unaware, fitting sleekly into the
Japanese way for which they had been so thoroughly conditioned, these little
girls [sic] were creating the "modern nation" of Japan.

Twenty years later, Japan's young women would be creating the new postwar
nation of Japan by their construction of human arsenals. By isolating themselves
with their children and devoting themselves to their examination-intensive
educations, the postwar "education mamas" also released their husbands for the
long hours of work and company devotion which made possible the economic
"miracle" of Japan. At the same time, education mamas withhold the values of their
own education and labor.

31 Katô Shuichi, "The Showa Era Reconsidered," Japan Times. January 9,

32 Helen Mears, "The Way of the Gods," in Jon Livingston, Joe Moore, and
emphasis added.
Women and Education

At the end of the war, the Occupation authorities enfranchised Japanese women and instituted co-education. Fujii Harue states that this represented the third period in modern Japanese history that signaled a willingness and readiness to correct sex discrimination in education. All three periods (the other two occurring in 1868 and 1912), however, were followed by "three periods of constriction, when women skillfully were herded back into the home to be closeted in the narrow sphere of 'good wife, wise mother' [ryōsai kembol]." 33

Thus began the "reverse course," not unlike what we might nowadays call a conservative "family values" movement, encouraging women to stay in the home, or limit their workforce participation to low-paying "part-time" work. White-collar organizations such as the bank system observed by Rohlen in the early seventies considered the nuclear families of their employees as extensions of the corporate family. Thus, they discouraged wives of male employees from taking on jobs outside the home, for, in Rohlen's words, "this would take her from her primary roles of mother and wife." Office training for women, enhancing their polite behaviour and deferential language, was considered complementary with the cultivation necessary

33 Fujii Harue, "Education for Women: The Personal and Social Damage of Anachronistic Policy," Japan Quarterly 29, no. 3 (July-September 1982), pp. 301-312. The void experienced by Japanese women at this time in some ways parallels the same situation in America. Nancy Chodorow points out that as American families began to mobilize toward suburbs, under similar conditions of male-dominated employment patterns and female-dominated domestic patterns, trends in family psychology generated more and more emphasis toward the role of mothering, at a time when there was less mothering to do. The result was an emotional over-dependence on children, with repercussions in girls who could not develop an independent sense of self, and boys who had ambiguous feelings toward women. Nancy Chodorow, The Reproduction of Mothering (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. 212.
for becoming wives. And when hiring employees, the final home inspection included the stipulation (paraphrased by Rohlen): 34

If the household is not orderly, then the applicant's character and the thoroughness of his socialization are in doubt. One favorite technique is to visit the bathroom to see whether it is clean as a test of whether the mother is a good housekeeper and, by extension, a good mother.

After the Occupation ended, the Ministry of Education also took gradual steps to undo the meaning of the postwar slogan "equal opportunity for women in education," which had little impact in the first place, as long as employers refused to hire women on an equal basis, and educators refused to challenge the employers. By the late 1950s, a virtual two-track system of junior colleges for women and four-year colleges for men had evolved. 35 The 1960s and 1970s saw increasing emphasis on the cultivation of housewives in school curricula, ranging from the promotion of home economics courses to the use of textbook images of the supporting wife and hard-working husband.

In schools, most of the opportunities which have expanded in women's education have been at lower levels. The enrollment at junior colleges is almost exclusively female, since these schools are considered the options for young women who fail to qualify for four-year universities. Young men, it will be recalled, become rōnin and wait one or more years to try university entrance exams again. Sometimes junior colleges are considered to be an extension of the high school education. In


259
some of them, women are required to wear uniforms and obey school rules just as though they were in high school. Between 1979 and 1986, the number of women entering junior colleges remained steady at about 20 percent, and the number of women entering four-year universities also remained steady at about 12 percent. Meanwhile, almost no men entered junior colleges at this time, while their numbers in four-year universities have declined slightly.36

Male-female ratios reverse themselves at opposite ends of the education ladder. The number of male kindergarten teachers is strikingly low. In 1986, the percentage of males was 6.8 percent, while females made up 93.2 percent of all female kindergarten teachers. In 1987, the ratio of men to women teachers in grade school was 44.9:55.1. The male-female ratio in junior high was 66.7:33.3. In high schools, this figure went from 81.4:18.6, and if one examines the male-female ratio ascending the age bracket, the difference is much more startling. Starting from the 35-40 year-old bracket, male high school teachers begin to outnumber females as much as 10:1.37 It may also be true that female teachers are employed in high schools where entrance examinations are less demanding.

Female teachers still have far to go to work their way into higher education as well. National junior colleges employ 857 male teachers and 317 female teachers. In national four-year universities, there are 49,240 male teachers compared to 2,860

36 Kokumin Seikatsu Sentaa (People's Life Center), editors, Kurashi no Tōkei (Statistics on Living) 1988, Monbushō (Ministry of Education), p. 166, Table 216.

females.\textsuperscript{38} The gap at the level of higher education is significant, if one takes the view that college instructors should encourage students to challenge traditional barriers. Instead, the opposite is true: many women claim that their professors discourage them from pursuing male-dominated career paths, on the grounds that those areas are closed to women anyway.

Much of the devaluation of women's educations is refracted in social discourse. Several men and perhaps some women will say, for example, that it is taboo to ask women about their educations (even while taking into consideration that Japanese in general require a more intimate contact with acquaintances before inquiring into educational background than do Americans). It is often the case that males will know the educational backgrounds of their close male friends and associates, but they dare not inquire into the background of female acquaintances, or of the wives of friends and associates; just as some wives, if they think of women as socially defined by their husbands' employment situations, avoid asking each other about academic backgrounds even while they inquire into those of each other's husbands. A middle-aged salaryman illustrates that "the way of Japanese society" is to discredit the meaning of the woman's arduous efforts to enter and graduate from a four-year university—to the point where she has no recourse but to "display a sophisticated attitude" which she hopes someone will discover:

Women will not automatically reveal the name of their university. But if they went to a four-year university, they are very proud of the fact, and they will expect others to ask them about it. To get others to ask them, they display a sophisticated attitude around friends, neighbors and acquaintances, until someone finally asks, "Which university did you attend?" All along this is

what they were waiting for. It is the way of Japanese society—for a woman to simply expect that someone will ask her.

Despite its allegedly "gender-blind" examination system, the asymmetric society dictates that the values of education accrue to men. The people who hold power strings are almost always men who graduated from top-ranking universities, and whose parents thus encouraged their educations from a very young age. Certainly the most conspicuous "good university" in the decision-making loci of the Japanese government and industry is Tokyo University, or Todai. According to 1987 statistics, Todai's graduates fill 45.6 percent of high-level government positions; 21.1 percent of Diet (parliament) members; and 15.1 percent of the executives of listed companies.39 Besides Todai, nearly all of the elite universities have established intimacies with business and government through gakubatsu, or academic cliques.

Nearly all of the prejudices against female high school teachers reflect the entrance examination system. In general, many feel that entrance examination training requires teachers with "tough" and tenacious characters. Many also feel that since this is the period when entrance examination pressure is most intense, female teachers who have to take child leave will interrupt the steady teacher-pupil relationship needed for examination preparation. Women who already have children will be forced to divide their loyalties between time needed for pupils and time needed for family. Also, the high school teacher's duties of marking tests, writing report cards and letters of recommendation, and conferring with parents, are so intense that the job has been dubbed a "salaryman teacher," in reference to the long hours required of Japan's so-called salarymen—hours which are deemed unfit for women.

The 1970s and 1980s also witnessed the ever-prevalent juku phenomenon, which further mocked the letter and spirit of "equal education" by making children's educations virtually dependent on costly tutorial services. In the case of high school and rōnin students, parents often hesitate to spend costly juku tuition on their daughters. However, government statistics, and statistics gathered by the para-educational industries, usually present only the male-female ratios for grade school and junior high level cram schools. As we saw in the foregoing section, the high school and rōnin levels of juku education are often the most gender and class discriminatory. 40

Women and Labor

Between the world wars, many of Japan's social problems which were brought on by increased industrialization and urbanization were mitigated by efforts to promote family-like dependence in both rural as well as urban sectors. Agricultural policy encouraged communalization in order that farmers could "place their feelings of dependence on a better and more stable basis." 41 At the same time, companies in

40 In addition, my research on the Hiroshima branch of the well-known Yoyogi Seminar yobikō franchise offered the following data which starkly reveal the male orientation of the entrance examination system. In 1988, Hiroshima's Yoyogi Seminar enrolled 710 rōnin students, five percent of whom had been rōnin for two years or more. Among these students, 89 percent were male, and only 11 percent were female. In the same year, the yobikō employed 24 instructors for rōnin students, among whom 23 were male. Approximately 2,000 third-year high school students also attended Yoyogi Seminar in 1988. Of this number, 70 percent were male and 30 percent were female. All of the 30 teachers employed to teach high school students were male. The significance of these numbers is underscored by the fact that Yoyogi boasts to have trained one-fourth of the freshman class which entered Tokyo University in 1987.

urban areas wishing to allay the stress of workers from the countryside also
instituted the concept of "enterprise as one family." Company policy, in effect,
communalized the workplace, allowing the worker to transfer his feelings of
dependence on family and community to the paternalistic management and group
belongingness provided by the company.42 This dependence continued, especially in
large companies, after the war. Thus, though we have considered "Japan, Inc." as a
metaphor depicting the nation as a corporation, it is equally a depiction of the
corporation as a representation of "nation." Large corporations in particular have
their own anthems, slogans, and training camps to distill loyalty and devotion. But,
one again, where are the women in these "nations"?

As in the case of education, some data can be presented that make the
employment situation for women seem relatively propitious. The percentage of
women who are paid employees outside the home rose from 13 in 1963 to 42 in
1990, representing the most rapid increase of women's employment in advanced
nations.43 The total participation of women in the labor force was 50.1 in 1990,
compared with 55.5 in the U.S in 1989. (Men's participation during the same years
was 77.2 in Japan and 72.7 in the U.S.)44

However, considering that the overall labor force participation actually declined
from 54 percent in 1960 to 50 percent in 1990, much of the increase in women's

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43 Cited in Naohiro Ogawa and Robert D. Retherford, "The Resumption of
(December 1993), p. 726.

wage-earning labor merely reflects the movement of women away from home-related businesses such as farming. In 1990, 18 percent of married women of reproductive age (the years of which are not stated) worked in family businesses and 8 percent were self-employed. For employed workers, however, the gap between the wages and working conditions of men and women has been considerable. Women earned 54 percent of men's earnings in 1970, a figure that rose only slightly to 59 percent in 1991. Most single women are employed full-time. When they leave for marriage and childbirth, they creating the familiar M-shaped pattern of women's employment, depicting the up and down pattern when women leave their jobs in their mid-twenties and then return to the market place in their 30s and 40s. Upon returning to the labor force, however, they face the possibility of "part-time" work, which is in fact a euphemism for disadvantaged labor. "Part-time" officially means less than 35 hours per week, but many actually work more than 35 hours. What it really means is that employers pay less and offer fewer benefits and almost no security: thus part-timers are almost always married women, and about half of all married women are part-timers. Many couples consider it in their best interest to have the wife work part-time, because if the wife earns more than US$9000 per year (exchange rate circa 1990; and 70 percent fall under that bracket), she will lose considerable benefits as her status as a dependent, and taxes become considerably higher.

Women have figured prominently in two places in supporting the corporate "culture" of Japan: first, explains Brinton, as "employment adjustors," filling in


labor gaps and exiting from labor gluts; and second, as investors of human capital, inspiring sons to become corporate warriors. Thus, while the loyalty of the male "salaryman" continued to be transferred from his own family to his company, his wife and children continued in his absence, largely revolving the household around children's schooling.

As Ushiogi Morikazu notes, the most significant changes in labor brought about by the expansion of higher education were the shortage of inexpensive labor and the glut of university graduates expecting high wages and benefits. The former part of the equation had to do with women, who began to fill in the needs of inexpensive labor. The latter part of the equation had to do with young men expecting high wages and benefits: the security of their career paths depended on educated women filling in temporary, often menial, positions – and on their education mamas dutifully encouraging their success.

The crux of Brinton's *Women and the Economic Miracle* has thus been to demonstrate that in Japan's economic boom, women's advancement and national economic advancement have been inversely related. After the war, soldiers returning home opted for a kind of employment that would give them stability. Companies in turn needed their devotion and loyalty. Male workers used the leverage gained through unionization during the Occupation to push for more permanent employment positions. Rooted in prewar practices, "permanent" or "lifetime" employment, especially in large firms (with over 500 employees), represented an extremely attractive career option for the following reasons, summarized by Brinton:

1) the steady wage and promotion structure; 2) low mobility between firms, and 3) the opportunity for in-house worker training ("education"). Such employment satisfied the desire for stability on the part of worker and employer. As one middle-aged banker told Brinton, "Being in a large company is like bathing in warm water – it's not very challenging, but on the other hand, it's cold when you get out."

Between 1965 to 1990, Brinton estimates that between 37-43 percent of male employees held lifetime employment positions in large firms, but the figure would be smaller if considering all male members of the labor force, including the self-employed.48

But these positions of lifetime employment in large industries or government (i.e., the power centers) were extremely disadvantageous to women. Takeuchi Hiroshi explains that employees of corporations must work late into the night and in so doing "the employees build up a sense of fellowship, which helps enhance their work efficiency." Such a work style has "many phases unsuited for women."49 It is no secret that much of the "sense of fellowship" develops through gastronomy, womanizing and inebriation, both in business as well as government. Postwar Japanese business practices have evolved to become indebted to the nurturing services of temporarily-employed tea servers in the company, food and drink servers in the entertainment centers, and most of all, the good wives who became "education mamas" safe in the home.

48 Brinton, Women and the Economic Miracle, p. 131.

Employers look back on society to explain their rigidity in accepting females. "It is not unreasonable," as Takeuchi defends "the management viewpoint" (of 1982), that companies hire college-educated women only to serve tea, because "most office girls (sic) retire either upon marriage or when they start a family." Of course, Takeuchi failed to mention how inhospitable companies are to women, by refusing to offer flexible conditions or hire them at mid-career, after they have started their families. Brinton shows that in 1987, high-school educated women in their thirties entering the labor market started at wages that were lower than those of either male junior high school graduates or male high school graduates aged 18-19.

Labor Ministry statistics on why women leave their jobs is not limited to the labor of OL, literally, "office ladies," the Japanese blanket term for female office workers, but it suggests that the number of females who leave jobs for reasons of marriage or childbirth is smaller than many employers would expect—only 16 percent in 1986. Actually, the tendency for women to leave their work in large companies has often been initiated by the company itself. One way is through unofficial matchmaking. If a couple employed by the same company decides to get married, the woman is "asked" to leave by application of the nepotism law. For those who don't find a husband on the job, another method is employed: the


52 Rōdōshō Fujin Kyoku (Women's Labor Bureau), editors, Fujin Rōdō no Jitsujō (Actual Conditions of Women's Labor), Ookurashō (Ministry of Finance), 1986, p. 49, Table 39.
procedure of *katatataki*, or "shoulder tap." James McLendon explains how the procedure works in large companies:53

The section chief or department manager typically comes up behind the woman working diligently at her desk and taps her on the shoulder, saying something like, "*Mō yametara dō desu ka?*" ("Isn't it time you resigned?") then she cannot be rehired by another large famous firm.

Japan pulled through the recessionary period of the 1970s with relatively low unemployment for men. From 1974-1975, male employment in manufacturing declined 3 percent, compared with 11 percent among females.54 Along with restrictions in hiring and strict enforcement of the retirement age, the strategy of firms to cope with the recession was also to layoff female workers who were young, full-time employees, or part-time middle-aged workers.5556

The Equal Employment Opportunity Act (EEOA), enacted in 1986, offered a legalistic discourse to formally disallow discrimination against women in the


55 A note on vocabulary: "laying off" often means encouraged retirement, as in *katatataki*, described above: "part-time," as explained earlier, is the designation for workers, usually married female, who do not receive benefits of full-time employees though they may work up more than forty hours per week; "middle-aged" means above 30.

workforce. But because the language was nevertheless constituted in the framework of "administrative guidance," meaning enforcement was "voluntary" rather than backed by penalization, the act had little immediate impact. A Tokyo City government survey found that for 37 percent of large firms (having over 1000 employees), absolutely nothing has changed since the enactment of the law. An employment placement officer at a private university in Tokyo also claimed that large companies are still hiring women mainly as clerical workers, assuming they would quit within a few years. Many women felt nothing at all has changed, or if anything, that the law benefits employers more than them. Moreover, those companies that provided some career paths for a few women were suspected of window-dressing, of having no intention of improving the status of female employees in general. Many changes have occurred since 1986, but they occurred as a result of the labor shortage, changes in women's values, the 1991 recession and tendencies of the "lifestyle superpower," more than as a result of the Equal Opportunity law.

Where else are the women of Japan? Beginning in the 1950s, the education mama-dzilla emerged in a space of time, a clearing created by the inflexibility of men's work schedules; the simultaneous encouragement of women to stay in the


home, or to postpone working until children are older; the mechanization of
housework, the tendency to have fewer children (after 1949); the decline of extended
family households in which grandparents often assisted in childrearing, and the
loneliness and isolation of women in suburban "rabbit hutch" apartment complexes
(danchi) – all factors which translated into time gained for the entrance examination
system to fill in. Since children in Japan become "tracked" into educational
directions at such a young age, usually without a second chance, the burden to
make educational/economic decisions for children was heavily weighted on the
mother, who must – consistent with the stereotype of the education mama –
conflate the meaning of "good school" with "good job."

It is not surprising, then, that when looking at the reality of gender asymmetry
in the labor structure, together with the tendency to not consider a person's
education as challenging existing structures ("supplies" influencing "demand"),
mothers based their choices of education for boys and girls on what was already
"out there," rather than what could be made possible. Repeatedly, I was told by
mothers that girls' educations could not gain in value unless companies changed
their employment practices. Data confirm this tendency for Japanese mothers to
stress boys' educations more than that of girls. A cross-national comparison
presented by Brinton confirms this self-repeating cycle. The percentage of mothers
who hope their sons attend university is 73, compared with only 27.7 percent who
hope their daughters will attend. This is not just an Asian cultural difference, as in
South Korea, the figures are much closer, 88.3 percent for sons and 81.2 percent for
daughters. In the Philippines, 48.1% of mothers hope their sons attend university, compared with 44.1 percent in case of daughters.60

In light of these conditions, it would seem that the alleged "first step toward sexual equality" created by wartime employment never took Japanese women very far once the economic mobilization got under way. True to the LDP poster, the persistence of education Mama-dzillas has contributed to the confidence, safety, and stability of the nation. Yet one cannot help but wonder: what would happen to Japanese women if not for the circumstances giving them both the time and the incentive to become absorbed in their children's examination preparation schedules?

Women have made gradual advancements in Japan, but often with the price of standing out in society, even paraded in the mass media like newborn panda bears at the zoo: cute, but unconventional. The marriage of the crown prince to a Harvard-educated foreign service officer in 1993 raised the issue of whether educated women would have more voice in governmental affairs. However, Princess Masako has mainly been kept silent thus far, with the media more interested in her fashion and fertility than in her professionalism. In the final chapter of this section, I will return to this and other changes that have taken place since the mid-1980s.

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60 Compiled by Brinton from various sources in Brinton, Women and the Economic Miracle, p. 43.
CHAPTER X

Second Schools and the Second Sex

The More Things Change...

"And now what?"

Scholars concerned with gender equality in education have increasingly turned from studying problems in opportunity for educating women, toward looking at problems in opportunity for educated women. Opportunities for children in education cannot be separated from opportunities for adults in "the real world." Thus Marie Ellou, a specialist of comparative education, asks a pithy question with regard to "equal opportunity" for girls in education: "and now what?"1

The question is entirely appropriate for Japanese educators, who often boast that their entrance examinations and school application procedures are completely gender-blind. This way, in Japan, as in many economically advanced societies, it can be said that the educational system is "equal." Japanese society, however, is characterized by profoundly unequal or "asymmetric" gender divisions. Asymmetry refers to the "extension and intensification of the traditional differentiation of roles, or division of labor, between the sexes."2 The division between the "private" domestic sphere of women's roles organized around the maternal function, and the


"public" sphere of men's roles disassociated from the maternal function, is what distinguishes a society as asymmetric.\(^3\) Though entrance exams may be gender-blind at the point when the student fills in the blank, the labor market that exams lead to nearly always distinguishes between jobs available for men and jobs available for women. In their private capacity as educational investors, education mamas therefore reproduce the public sphere of gender asymmetry.

In this chapter I compare how the private lives of women as mothers have been vulnerable to the public sphere in a similar way that private institutions are amenable to the public institutions. Yet, the more things change, as the saying goes, the more they remain the same. The "private" things that change, in this analysis, are the private lives of women, satirically dubbed the "second sex."\(^4\) The creation of the \textit{kyōiku mama} paralleled the private businesses of \textit{juku}, sometimes nicknamed "second schools" (\textit{dai ni no gakkō}). Both mothers and \textit{juku} were caring and support services that buttressed the public school system. Likewise, the "public" thing which

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\(^3\) Social scientists concerned with gender relations note and contest the "universality" of asymmetry in human culture: perhaps all societies have organized a "division of labor" assigning women most domestic duties of child-rearing. See Michelle Zimblest Rosaldo, "Women, Culture and Society: A Theoretical Overview," in Michelle Zimblest Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, eds., \textit{Women, Culture, and Society} (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), pp. 17-42. However, many "maternal" functions are not necessarily patent in the mother's biological capacity. As Nancy Chodorow cogently argues, the term "mothering" is associated with the role of nurturing, which can be performed by either parent, whereas "fathering" has generally been understood as the biological act of becoming a father. Nancy Chodorow, \textit{The Reproduction of Mothering} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), esp. p. 11: Sherry B. Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?" in Michelle Zimblest Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, eds., \textit{Women, Culture, and Society} (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), pp. 67-88.

\(^4\) The expression is borrowed from Simone de Beauvoir, \textit{The Second Sex} (1952; reprint, New York: Bantam, 1970).
does not change, or barely changes, is the institution of education, or more precisely, the exam system and academic-record society it supports.

**Public and Private**

Japanese society is not unlike other post-industrial societies, wherein the public realm, the female "is subject to laws she had no hand in making, to economic circumstances in which her labor is invisible and/or devalued, to language in which her experiences are unspeakable, and to daily life in which violence against her is an everyday event." Of course, the "domestic politics" underlying asymmetry in any society are enormously complex; it is necessary herein to adjust the terrain of the nuanced meanings of "public" and "private." Borrowing Ferguson's instructive explanation, "private" can refer to "the set of discursive and institutional practices of domestic life, the realm of personal intimacy, household labor, and reproduction within the families, kin relations, or friendship networks." The public realm may be thought of as "the outside world of paid labor, of government, and of those institutions of communication, transportation, leisure, culture, and so forth, that are rooted outside the home, in the larger world of strangers." The mother's role in Japanese education is to mediate between the spheres, but this is an action which nevertheless ultimately binds women to the "private" realm, reinforcing gender inequality.

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Within education itself lies another set of impressions of "public" and "private." Education is usually considered a public institution, mandatory for the public welfare of all citizens. The public institutions of education in turn consist both of public schools supported by public taxes as well as private schools supported by private capital. As we have seen, there are also private schools operating under a governmental canopy—but commercialized in the "private" market, in the form of cram schools. In Japan, the fact that "business" as a private realm and "government" as a public realm are linked together is no better illustrated than through this full-scale multi-yen industry which functions to assist students with studying for exams, in order for them to get into "good schools" and attain "good jobs."

Today's Japanese mother often gets wrapped around educational discourse as the typical salaryman is to his company, the latter through the concept of marukakae—"completely enveloped" through employment.\(^7\) If collective identity was inverted from the nation or community to the school and the company, it is predictable that mothers—whose terms in white collar companies have typically been transitory—should seek identification with the school, the school of her children.

While some may see the mother's dependence or over-indulgence in her children as the manifestation of a seemingly timeless ethnological heritage\(^8\), others

\(^7\) Nakane, *Japanese Society*, p. 15.

regard the mother's pampering of children as a *decidedly postwar trend*. Fukutake, for example, sees parental softness as resulting from the decline of the extended family, when parents shared the job of upbringing with their children's grandparents. Ohtō mentions that it is the postwar examination system in particular which reinforces the mother-child bond. Whereas traditional prewar mothers sought more independence for their children, postwar education provides them with an excuse for not "cutting the umbilical cord."  

Parental anxiety about education was felt most acutely when the close of the postwar high growth period put a pinch on the "good schools" and "good jobs." As competition increased, the mother came to carry more and more of the school's weight. As explained in the preceding chapter, especially in the case of white-collar wives, children's educations filled in their "empty time" obtained by unemployment or underemployment, technologically advanced housework, fewer children and prolonged separation from husbands and extended family.

To support their children's educational schedules, mothers often give up hobbies and personal commitments to supervise children's studying. Some women will elect to stay at home permanently just to make sure their children will do well in school. Others adjust their careers around children's critical examination years.

The maintenance of the mother-child bond is not isolated from its political context. The mother figure in most, perhaps all, societies embodies the virtue of

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"care." It is not only mothers toward their children but women's ties toward all others that tend to emphasize connectedness and shared experience—a factor that at the same time makes their positions vulnerable or manipulable. Women's roles manifest themselves in care and nurturant behavior; welfare agencies likewise take on the same linguistic attributes: e.g. "care," "help," "assistance" and so on. "Care" itself is a manipulable attribute, taken for granted by bureaucracy. Yet while bureaucracy—made up of dominated-dominating relationships—is basically antagonistic toward empathetic, continuous relationships, it nevertheless exploits "care" for its own purposes.

If the basic function of bureaucracy is to maintain itself, Japanese education, as bureaucracy, efficiently makes use of mothers as "care" instruments to perpetuate a male dominated ethos. The politics of maternal nurturing manifest in educational discourse reinforces gender asymmetry in several ways.

The mother, intimidated for the sake of her children by educational discourse, and made readily available in the home by a public realm which devalues her talents, can easily latch onto her children's examination hell in order to maintain a sense of purpose. The ultimate concerns of mothers are that their children do well in exams, but along with taking on pedagogical duties, they must also take charge of supervising highly-regimented school rules, such as making sure children have the precisely correct length of bangs, width of pant legs, length of skirts, color of socks and underwear, and so on. The time-consuming requirements of such a system absorb the time and energy of mothers which might otherwise be invested in their own ideals of parenting, as well as in the world outside the home.

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Furthermore, by taking on the responsibility of educational caretaker, the mutually interdependent mother-child bond is kept intact. Looking at Chodorow's psychoanalytical findings, the mother-son relationship in Western cultures begins with the parenting process, where both girls and boys are raised by the same primary parent, the mother. Girls develop a continuous role identification with the mother, whereas boys develop their masculine identification by association with outside symbols, and by repressing their "feminine" characteristics.\(^\text{12}\)

The social psychoanalytical processes which affect boys and girls in Japan may differ from the findings of Chodorow, but Japanese people often point to the tendencies of exclusive, often excessive, maternal attention between sons and mothers. Excessive mothering manifests itself, at one extreme, by the often-talked about mazakon, or "mother complex." Mothers may have trouble coping with the empty-nest created by sons who leave home. Sons may require counseling and psychiatric treatment when they first enter companies and suffer the shock of not being able to depend on their mothers. Sometimes the mother-son dependence continues after the son enters the workplace, making him the butt of ridicule, a situation sometimes portrayed in TV dramas. At the other extreme "home violence" (katei bōryoku) is associated with sons making physical assaults on mothers, often (we shall see in the next chapter) because of her excessive concern with his schooling. Likewise, the dominant imagery of incest is between mother and son, rather than father and daughter as in the West.

Thus, the intimacy between mothers and sons is facilitated by the educational system's boundless capacity to absorb and cultivate the nurturing capacity of

\[^{12}\text{Chodorow, The Reproduction of Mothering.}\]
women to construct "human capital," against the background of an employment system which devalues women's own labor. Many women report that when the mother and child are studying together, or discussing *juken*, the father often becomes a *bugaisha*, an "outsider" in his own home. To avoid interference, it becomes easier for mothers to "hen-peck" bothersome husbands, or to say, "The best husband is healthy and absent." Sometimes this is a likely indication of how educational authority becomes heavily weighted against the family's own ideal of happiness.

The ultimate, and increasingly common, manifestation of the mother's obligation toward education is in *tanshin-funin*, which, as explained earlier, means that the parents have been separated because of employment transfer. While there are exceptions, it is usually taken to mean that the father has been transferred by his company, and if his children are above grade-school age, it is assumed that they will be at too great a disadvantage if they transfer schools. The mother, therefore, must stay behind in order to shoulder the burden of their schooling. *Tanshin-funin* may last for only a few months, but it often lasts for several years. The Labor Ministry offers a conservative figure of 17,500 families separated by work transfer within Japan for the year 1986. However, the number of *tanshin-funin* families might be much higher if the number of overseas transfers of fathers only, said to

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have increased dramatically only in the past few years, were also taken into consideration.\textsuperscript{14}

*Tanshin-funin* underscores the fact that the educational system reinforces the maternal obligation to stay home with the children, and the paternal commitment to maintain loyalty to the company. Both parents are separated by the wedge of an exam-intensive system which restrains children from transferring schools. One mother stated that *tanshin-funin* is just business as usual: "In the long run, it doesn't matter anyway—the father is always an 'outsider'."

The economic advantages— to companies, not workers— of the "mother-child" family separated by the wedge of education are readily apparent. Japanese workers have worked longer hours and commute further distances than their counterparts in other industrialized countries. According to 1986 Labor Ministry statistics, the Japanese worked an average of 2,150 hours, compared to 1,934 in the United States and 1,655 in then-West Germany. Furthermore, 13.7 percent of Japanese workers needed one hour or more to commute, compared to 6 percent in the United States and 3 percent in West Germany.\textsuperscript{15} Companies and government offices undoubtedly save a great deal of trouble and money through the custom of *tanshin-funin*, though a few companies have been willing to cover a percentage of transportation and excess housing expenses incurred by the absentee father.

The allegedly gender-blind examination system constructs its own form of discrimination, by saying that the child who does best in school is the one who has

\textsuperscript{14} *The Japan Times*, December 1, 1988. The article states only that a "private company" has discovered a significant increase in overseas work transfers, where fathers are unaccompanied by their families.

\textsuperscript{15} *The Japan Times*, July 16, 1988.
his or her mother continuously beside him or her—who in other words, stays home
either by not working or by working only part time. One mother whom I interviewed
felt deeply remorseful that she had chosen to work full-time, and felt that her
children would have done better if only she had the time to be by their sides. Other
mothers said it shouldn't matter whether the mother works or not—but they
qualified their statements with the reminder that their children were still too young
to be intensely involved in examination cramming.

**Madly-Proliferating Juku and the Creation of Education Mamas**

The mother alone, however, was not sufficient to fulfill the role of school-to-
child mediator for the academic-record society. A whole "private" industry emerged
to assist her in the task, an industry which may be called "para-educational," and
has as its centerpiece, the juku.

Higher education specialist Kitamura Kazuyuki explains the existence of juku
by looking at Japanese education as a "dual structure." "The traditional policy of the
Japanese government," he claims, "was to concentrate educational resources in the
public sector in order to preserve academic quality, while leaving quantitative expansion
to private institutions, which are more responsive to changing social demands."16

The reference here is largely to juku and yobikō, which constitute a nonformal
"supporting system" working to effectively balance the formal system of regular public
schools. The formal system can function according to the "mandatory principles" of
egalitarianism and uniformity because school teachers function indirectly as "traffic

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159; emphasis added.
police," channelling high achievers to the more "progressive" juku, and low achievers to the more remedial juku.17

The point to be underscored in this "dual structure" statement is that the existence of cram schools has served to keep the formal educational system intact – what Kitamura calls a "perversely complementary" relationship. The same principal must also be true for education mamadzillas. Like the juku, the mother can be thought of as a "private institution" which "responds to social demands." Because of their existence as support mechanisms, cram schools and mothers have made the rigidity of the academic-record society possible.

What is significant is that all of these school-related cram schools were virtually non-existent in the 1960s. The 1970s became known as "the age of madly proliferating juku" following the title of a large and highly-publicized report issued by the Mainichi Shimbun. A social affairs writer from that newspaper had been impressed for some time by the number of children commuting on trains past ten o'clock in the evening and decided to do an investigative report. Japanese people were shocked to learn that these so-called "second schools" had become a formidable industry – ironically, when the rest of the country was mired in recession. In fact, many unemployed or underemployed workers jumped on the bandwagon to build juku: with an entrepreneurial spirit and conditions in their favor, it mattered little if they had no educational credentials.18 Several women started informal juku

17 Kitamura Kazuyuki, "The Decline and Reform of Education in Japan." p. 163.

18 Mainichi shinbunsha shakaibu (Social affairs section, Mainichi Newspaper), eds., Ranjuku jidal: shingaku juku repooio (The age of madly proliferating juku: report on entrance examination cram schools) (Tokyo: Simul
lessons in their homes, and a few became successful managers of prominent juku. In 1987, a prize-winning essay was published about a divorced woman with two children who was able to get her feet on the ground amid considerable social prejudice by developing a successful juku.\(^{19}\) The juku, as we learned in the previous section, represented in many respects, therefore, the "people's" education, or mīte, anyone could start a juku and use whatever teaching methods they preferred. Yet, in the long run, the prototype of exam-prep juku and the industry as a whole reinforced the structure of the central bureaucracy, or kan.

Meanwhile, this was also a period of madly-proliferating education mammas. The image of the education mama is usually directly associated with the juku: almost anyone will state that the education mamadzilla is a mother who is diligent about taking her children back and forth from juku lessons. Ranjuku jidai reported the existence of "avec-father-son juku," and some fathers have been called kyōiku papa, but generally, given the time constraint of fathers, the juku has been the mother's domain. When fathers got involved, it was typically as managers over the occasional "big" decisions rather than the day-to-day commuting and counseling. As "second schools," the cram schools as consumer services were first made

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\(^{19}\) Yamanaka Toshie, "Kyōshokusha wo yume mite karada mo kin mo ubawareta" (I dreamed of becoming a teacher and gained my health and wealth along the way), Fujin Kōron 872, no. 9 (August 1987).
attractive in large part by their appeal to mothers' anxieties about their children. The *juku* likewise represented a discourse encouraging roles that typcast the education mama. *Juku*, as explained below, tried to construct an image of the "normal" mother through messages that define what is normal — namely, sending children to *juku*.

Foucault refers to the "norm" as "the new law of modern society," an instrument which makes uniformity the imperative and human variation "deviant." Modern individuals are made self-consciously obedient to their maladjustment or adjustment to images of normality, much more than they are concerned with what is legally defined as "right" or "wrong." How to be "normal" is not defined in strict legal terms from "above," i.e., through government directives. Instead, normality is defined from within society, through the discursive practices of schools and learning centers, hospitals and clinics, image-making counselors and the panoply of service professionals. The definition of "normal" is never constant; it must continuously be reproduced.

Nevertheless, "normalizing power" must be seen to be "political" power: it controls its subjects so as to turn them into productive instruments. Thus we see burnt-out "normal" students taken over by the imperatives of company training.

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20 Mothers often remark, however, that it is the child who first initiates the inclination to attend cram school — a fact that *Ran Juku Jidai* was skeptical about. In a survey conducted by Fukutake Shōten, an entrance examination industrial conglomerate (*juken sangyō*), 43 percent said their mothers made the decision, 49 percent made the decision themselves (and presumably, got permission from their mothers), while only 5 percent said their fathers made the decision (*Fukutake Shōten Kyōiku Kenkyūshitsu* [*Fukutake Shōten Educational Research Office*] 1988: 59).

Their mothers, dependent on the normalizing authority of bureaucratic discourse, are in turn taken over by the imperatives to produce normal students.

Educational discourse which normalizes mothers is all the more restraining in that it comes from opposing directions. Japanese mothers, especially in their capacity to become "education monster mothers," must situate their self-images between "double messages": those which prompt them to give more and more time and attention to children for fear of negligence, and those which warn them against the side effects of over-indulgence. Following either direction can make mothers feel guilty. Both sets of messages aim to produce, and implicitly, to reward, the successful, normal mother: she is one who navigates her way through double messages, and produces a successful, normal child who has "made it " on the beaten track.

These double messages are the "how to be a kyōiku mama" enticements versus the "how not to be a kyōiku mama" denunciations. Like dessert displays and fad diets, the signals weave an endless dialectic of desire and self-reproach. The producers of all of these messages are the "normalizers," the professional teachers and non-professional tutors, the counselors, educational administrators and medical personnel who all specialize in some way, on making the mother, and her role in education, normal.

How to be a Kyōiku Mama: Second Schools and the Second Sex

The proliferation of juku gained momentum in no small part through skillful advertising aimed at mothers. For example, one director, Mr. Saitō, held a meeting, a "parent class" for a group of prospective juku parents. Calling himself a "Ph.D. of Mothers," he explained that the only way to guarantee that children will get good
jobs is to put them into good universities. Having been a school teacher himself, Mr. Saitō witnessed the problems between unambitious students and anxious parents, and made up his mind that the juku was the way to solve this dilemma. He explained various ways that parents could help their children realize the importance of elite universities. Fathers, for example, should take their sons to picnic in the vicinity of Tokyo University (Tōdai) on Sunday, and have a father-son discussion about the significance of Tōdai. Mothers should remind children throughout the week that "If you do such-and-such, you'll never get into Tōdai!" Mothers participating in Mr. Saitō’s meeting listened reverently as he explained that Tokyo University is the "holy land" of "entrance examination religion," that entrance examination students were in effect on a "pilgrimage." Pamphlets were distributed and many parents rushed to sign up their children.

Another juku distributed a "Ten Commandments" guidebook for mothers, titled *Parents, Become Entrance Exam Students!* The commandments are as follows:22

1) Don't let children study in the morning [night is better].
2) Have children do their homework during their break time at school.
3) Don't let children become too active in sports.
4) Feed children as soon as they come home from school.
5) Mothers must become students during study time at home.
6) A study room is by all means necessary.
7) Don't let children study over two subjects per day.
8) Establish daily study habits.
9) Give children a bath just before bed.
10) Besides just sending children to juku, put your trust in it.

Mothers often could not convince their husbands of the import of the newly-born institution, and so they sneaked their children into jukus surreptitiously, or they found part-time work to pay for juku fees themselves. In the public mind, the


287
sudden appearance of middle-aged women tending cash registers in the 1970s meant that they must be sending their children to cram schools. This was no stereotyped impression: "educational expenses," typically juku fees, still constitute one of the major reasons why married women work. The Mainichi Family Planning Survey conducted in 1992 found that 32 percent of full-time employees and 44 percent of part-time employees work for the main reason of paying educational expenses. Many mothers and other female teachers also found work in juku instead of regular schools (where the conditions are believed to be much better), or they started their own official or unofficial tutoring services.

The more "progressive" juku may offer special classes for mothers of examinees. Many mothers accompany their children to lessons and wait in a special room, or sit in on the lessons themselves. Retreat-type juku, which take children to special outlying areas during school vacation periods, often rely on mothers to prepare meals and perform other supervisory functions.

The juku's discourse of "how to be a kyōiku mama" was, of course, reinforced by the national media attention given to the "exam season." Every year from January through March, trains and hotels offer special packages for university and high school examinees (along with their mothers), and newspapers run practice exam questions (and later, the actual first screening exam) for the general public to try their skills and establish empathy with the test-takers. The final symbolic rite is

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23 Cited in Ogawa and Retherford, "The Resumption of Fertility Decline," pp. 728, 732. According to the authors' summary, 62 percent of full-time employees and 44 percent of part-time employees cited "reasons of self-fulfillment" as reasons for working. And because of educational anxiety, according to the authors, only 8 percent could say they "enjoyed raising children" in answer to the question of what is good about having children.
the announcement of all the names of students accepted into Tokyo University in major news services.

Nowadays, aggressive salesmen like Mr. Saitō, the Ph.D. of mothers, are no longer necessary. But juku continue to reinforce the aura of elite universities. They advertise the percentages of students going on to famous universities, segregate classes by the university one hopes to enter, and often pay teachers who are graduates of famous universities higher salaries.

Thus, it comes as little surprise that when juku first appeared en masse, they were treated as a serious social problem and became the focus of a great deal of media attention. The sight of school children going home at late hours provoked social outrage, as did the fact that so many of the juku operators had little or no background in school education. Education specialists worried about the long-term effects of depriving children of free time.

Similarly, the kyōiku mama also was initially treated with reprehension. I have already alluded to the sensational stories which created the image of the mamazilla in the fifties, sixties and seventies. Compared with articles in the 1970s, journalist Kido Yoshikyo claims that during the 1980s, educational problems reported in the media rarely drew attention to mothers. This is true even while mothers continue to be preoccupied with children's educations. Thus, he suggests that the mass attention drawn toward the kyōiku mama was largely constituted by sensational
events in the mass media.24 Yet the kyōiku mama became gradually legitimated, even while retaining an unfavorable meaning.

The spotlight on juku has also waned considerably. Special reports concerning juku no longer consider cram schools as a social phenomenon but as one aspect of the entire jukken (entrance exam) process. Stories usually include both the darker and the lighter sides of juku, including, for instance, the fact that students don't have to wear uniforms to juku, or that they prefer the more casual style of their cram school teachers to the impersonal commands of their regular school teachers.

A decade after Mr. Saitō spread his "religion," juku became fully entrenched in Japanese society. They commonly appear in every nook and cranny of every neighborhood, in even the most remote rural areas. True to Kitamura's explanation, the private sector of cram school education expanded quantitatively. The impact of the growth of para-educational services can be seen by looking at the increase of educational expenditure between 1960 and 1986. For public grade schools, extra-school educational expenditure increased 18 times; for public junior high schools, 20 times, and for public high schools, parents in 1986 could expect to spend 13 times as much as their counterparts did in 1960 for a single child.25

Likewise, the meaning of kyōiku mama gon also expanded. An education mama no longer refers only to the mother who wants her child to enter an elite university. The scope of the label has broadened to include a spectrum of mothers

24 Kido Yoshikyo, "Mukashi to ima: kyōiku mama" (Past and resent: education mamas), Shōnen Shinri, Youth Problem 3, no. 74 (March 1989), pp. 130-132.

pushing their children from infancy to university entrance, into the "average" sorts of "good" schools as well as the strictly "elite" "good" schools. Most importantly, although most people continue to speak of the education mama as "bad" (warui) or "gloomy" (kura), such statements are usually followed up with, "But nowadays, everyone is an education mamadzilla." Or, "The image is bad, but necessary." In other words, her role is still unacceptable, but it is accepted. It is a negative, but necessary role. Mothers who shun the label are on the wane, as there is little reason any longer to deny being an education mama. After all, as one mother put it, "The mother who insists that she isn't is usually the most education mama of all."

Cram schools, however, are still set apart from the formal school system in the sense that teachers or school principals do not officially "recommend" juku nor do parents consult them for juku referrals or advice. Mothers are less preoccupied with the question of whether or not to take advantage of the juku than with the decision of "which" juku. The decision on which juku to put their children in is usually based on hearsay or newspaper advertising. Some of the more "progressive" cram schools conduct their own recruiting by contacting mothers of children in prestigious schools. But most mothers whose children are not directly recruited by juku themselves rely on word-of-mouth information which comes from friends and neighbors. It is an informational network fathers were not part of until the nineties, as first-generation juku students are gradually becoming parents themselves.

With the gravitation of the juku and the education mama into the social fabric, therefore, both constructions passed from being thought of as "social problems" to being accepted as "evil necessities" or "welcome troubles." This has to do with their parallel purpose as a social reaction to a state-produced educational system: their private "structures" provided nurturing and support services which
helped to keep the public examination system intact, and the academic-record society stable.

Moreover, the new roles of the mother created by the exam industry figured in with "home education," the panacea of educational virtue favored by nationalist educators and politicians. We have already looked at the exhorting discourses of prewar educators and postwar politicians (especially Ikeda and Nakasone) who fused the meaning of home education with school education in the name of promoting patriotism.

But this particular rendering of home education may hardly represent its spectrum. Hata Masaharu reveals that *katei kyōiku* originally referred to infancy and early childhood upbringing. Thus, the typical impression of home education is that of manuals that emphasize guidelines for mothers regarding children's diet, growth patterns, emotional problems, and so on. It isn't that the idea of home education didn't exist for older children, explains Hata, but rather that older children had no need for it. They became independent in their teens and relied much more on the "real-life education" provided by their geographical region and from society in general. Since the 1960s, however, people have become increasingly aware that home education includes the junior high and high school periods, and that its outline of recommended roles has been very much inundated with the responsibilities of school education. For some, however, *katei kyōiku* has come to be
syndonymous with the parental role in making sure children cram for their schoolwork.26

The numerous home education manuals which were published after the war gradually assumed the inclusion of the parental role in supervising children's school education. Thus the Kaneko series on "Home Education," for example, includes the following volumes: (1) *Home education* (Katei Kyōiku); (2) *Home Discipline* (Katei no Shitsuke); (3) *Home School-related Learning* (Katei Gakushū); (4) *The Role of the Mother* (Hahaoya no Yakuwan); and, (5) *The Role of the Father* (Chichioya no Yakawar). The third volume, *Home School-related Learning*, is a manual for parental guidance in school education, largely directed toward mothers.27

Because of the entrenchment of the concept of *katei kyōiku*, the word *katei*, or home, is often dropped from the expression, making it sometimes difficult to distinguish between "home education" and "school education." For instance, the Japanese Empress Michiko is noted for having parted from imperial tradition in deciding to raise her children herself rather than turn them over to special caretakers. The phrase used by the mass media is that she wanted "to educate her children herself" (*jibun de kyōiku suru*), where the word "educate" obviously means "bring up," since her children had formal schooling by school teachers.

26 Hata Masaharu, "'Katei kyōiku' no kiki" (The crisis in 'home education'), *Shōnen Shinri* Youth Problem (Youth Psychology Youth Problem) 5, no. 63 (May 1987), pp. 74-81.

After the juku proliferation, it was possible to see titles such as the following under the category of "home education": *The Mother’s Strategy for Success in Entrance Examination* (1979); *Household Strategy for Learning to Enjoy Studying: Victory or Defeat is Determined by First Grade* (1980), or *University Entrance Exams of Parents and Children* (1988). Merry White’s American lauding of Japanese education (*The Japanese Educational Challenge: A Commitment to Children, 1987*) presented in Chapter Two was translated as *Mommy, Why Do We Have to Study So Hard? (Mama, dooshite anna ni benkyoo shinakereba tkenai no?)*.

In *Household Strategy*, for example, educator and social critic Abe Susumu directs mothers to teach preschool children a number of skills including arithmetic, music and elementary kanji (Japanese writing), all skills which are normally learned after the child enters grade school. Mothers, he says, need to kindle a flame within children that will encourage their learning desire—a flame which will not be snuffed out when children go to school. A well-intended word of advice—but more significantly, Abe infers that the burden for the child’s future success, the one-chance "social birth" in the educational process, is one which falls on mothers before all others, since "good shitsuke (mother’s home-taught discipline) leads to good grades":28

For children entering the first grade, any one of them has his or her heart bursting with expectation and enthusiasm. Then all of a sudden, after some weeks have passed, there are children who come out and say, "I hate school." If you try to cover that up as being the responsibility of the school itself, it doesn’t mean that the child will ever come to like studying. Before this happens, in order that children will not end up being repugnant, these hearts

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294
can be stimulated. Thus, what I would like mothers to give to their children is *shitsuke*.

**How Not to be a *Kyoiku Mama*: The *Tatemae* of Home Education**

But what are more likely to be shelved under "home education" are those books that admonish the mother not to become overindulgent. *Mother, Don't Hurry Me Up!* warns mothers to distinguish between true *shitsuke* and hastening children's progress, for confusing them can only lead to danger.29 Just as the public school system needed a *tatemae* to present the impression that *juku* were not integral to the maintenance of the exam system, *katei kyoiku* provided the *tatemae* that mothers need not become mamadzillas.

The Ministry of Education, in its home education guide for lower and middle grades of elementary school, runs a full circle in its advisory discourse for mothers. First of all, it advises mothers *not to take all of the responsibilities of home education upon themselves*. With no one to consult, they end up worrying too much and unconsciously transferring their chagrin to their children. Their self-centered involvement can lead to overindulgence or its opposite, negligence. Mothers should therefore seek help from their husbands; they should realize that children must one day become adults whom they will have to let go of, and they should seek their own awareness of self.30


However, with regard to whether or not mothers should work, the authors of
the same book dance on both sides of the issue. In effect, they revoke the statement
that mothers should not be overly concerned with education. They repeat the
statements which are exhausted in the United States and elsewhere: mothers carry
a double burden with home and work, and their going out to work can have either a
positive or a negative effect on children, depending on whether the mother feels
positively or negatively about her employment. (A statement never made of fathers, it
seems.) In making the decision of whether to work, mothers should make sure that
have the support and understanding from the father and children. Above all, they
conclude, the concern of home education should come first.31

In large part to ease the dilemma of being bounced back and forth between
these conflicting discourses, Japanese mothers are offered another manifestation of
normalizing power: counsel and treatment by professional "normalizers." For
example, almost anywhere in Japan, one can find a number of government (city and
prefectural)-sponsored counseling or education centers staffed by professionally-
trained "parent counselors." Because no mother should try to solve educational
problems on her own, the Ministry of Education's book on home education cites
advisory centers such as "Educational Research Offices," "Education Centers,"
"Education Consultation Rooms," various "Youth Centers" and "Public Halls," "Early
Childhood Consultation Offices," "Home Education Early Childhood Education
Offices," "Health and Well-being telephones," "Health Offices," and the police.32

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In addition, public radio (NHK) offers an hour-long daily call-in program, "Children and Education," (Kodomo to Kyōiku), which features a guest adviser from the educational or medical profession. A frequent listener of this program remarked that, "One gets the feeling that Japanese mothers have completely forgotten how to love children."

In addition to the above-mentioned services, there remain countless advice books, columns and articles in the mass media directed at parents, mostly mothers, and education. All aim to define and produce normal mothers and normal children. The alleged "terror" of the so-called "monster" mothers is unveiled by the deferential attitude they assume toward all of these "normalizing" professionals.

The More Things Stay the Same: The Academic-Record Society

Of course, in most cultures parents make sacrifices for children's educations, and in most cultures, the nurturing and sacrificial roles of women have been taken advantage of in the public domain. In the case of Japan, it is necessary to emphasize that the tractability of the role of mothering stood in sharp contrast to the in-tractability of the academic-record society. The entrance examination system is accepted by many mothers, and by the general public with a characteristically Japanese cry of resignation: it is shikata ga nai, ("nothing can be done")—a system that was held to be inevitable, unchangeable.

Japan's lifetime employment system and the uniform ranking of schools enjoyed a relatively stable and symbiotic relationship until the recessionary period of the 1990s. The fragility of lifetime employment was recognized in the seventies and finally fractured in the nineties as a result of labor tendencies, demographic conditions and the general economic climate. But the cozy relationship between
competitive education and labor stratification was often criticized, but never significantly challenged by people themselves.

In Thomas Rohlen's analysis, education in postwar Japan has been a major locus of political conflict—over matters such as the unionization of teachers and the local autonomy of schools. However, the major parties to the conflict, the Japan Teachers Union (Nikkyōso), the Ministry of Education, the ruling Liberal-Democratic Party, and the opposition parties, generally end up in stalemate following each clash. The political situation is one which gathers "a lot of smoke but only periodically very much fire." (Furthermore, the influence of the teachers' union has declined considerably in recent years.) Thus, nowhere in the political conflict described by Rohlen does the role of the ordinary citizen figure into the picture. Nor is the sanctity of the entrance examination system called into question. Rohlen's assumption is that parents and teachers are "politically naive and ideologically disinterested."

The academic-record society has rarely been subject to public accountability. Moreover, the gakureki shakai is integral to the political stability of Japan in that it imposes a rigid, uniform, system of rank and order throughout the economic and educational structures. For this reason, a significant movement against any segment of the educational stratification process would likely be seen as a radical

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33 Rohlen's analysis is based on fieldwork conducted in the mid-seventies. He also employs the outmoded assumption that it is possible to separate education and politics.

rejection of the entire social order of Japanese society. Even among radical political

groups, as Apter and Sawa note, the family structure and the educational structure

are seen as intimately connected, and thus both are regarded as the institutions

least likely to invite or be significantly affected by political pressure.35

The main political organ operating between parents and schools is the Parent-

Teacher Association (PTA). While PTAs in every community are very active, they

basically function as a support maintenance group consisting mostly of mothers, a

few teachers, and perhaps occasionally, a few fathers. Attendance is obligatory in

many places, even though there are many mothers who must excuse themselves

because of "night work." The parents and teachers discuss educational problems

with the mutual understanding of working within the status quo. Exceptions

occur, but they are rare. One male university professor who served as a PTA

committee chair called the PTA a getabako or "shoe cupboard" meeting: after

mothers take off their shoes and enter the meeting they become silent. As soon as

they put their shoes back on and head out the door, they begin discussing real

feelings among themselves.36 With "shoes on," away from official meeting places,

mothers voice strong opinions about the educational and employment

circumstances that affect their children.

Fear that their input could adversely affect their children through means such

as negative comment on the naishinshō weights heavily on their minds. PTAs that

have broken the mold of doing routine work that does not challenge the status quo

35 David E. Apter and Nagayo Sawa. Against the State: Politics and Social


have suffered consequences. If the PTA becomes too active, the school becomes unpopular for teachers who are already overworked to begin with. An elementary school near Tokyo that tried some innovative things such as inviting the elderly to teach traditional games and holding study sessions on sex education was recently issued a citation from the Ministry of Education. One mother did issue this complaint: "We only do what we are told by the (committee) chairman or the assistant principal."37

The only other organ which once served to mediate conflict between citizens and educational officials was the Board of Education, instituted in 1948 during the massive educational reorganization which followed the war. The institution was intended to guarantee citizens' rights in education and like similar bodies in America and other countries, its members and officers were locally elected. In 1956, the direct election procedure was repealed amid considerable controversy. Since then, Board of Education members and officers have been chosen only by direct appointment by the prefectural governor, in the case of Prefectural Boards, and by the city mayor, in the case of City Boards. Currently, these Boards are responsible for matters such as teacher training, and for establishing the many home education advisory services and programs.

The immobility of the parallel education and employment structures has virtually made unnecessary the need for educators or employers to advertise themselves to potential applicants (though this is slowly changing, as explained in the previous section.) Because students entering university must compete for entrance into a Faculty (department), many university students seem to know little

about what kind of program they got themselves into, except that a certain test score got them there, a certain kind of job will be waiting for them when they get out, and a certain status will be accorded them for the rest of their lives. For many students, the "how to" of job selection begins with the "social birth" and is already fixed, and therefore guaranteed, at the time of university entrance. It is for this reason that education is a "buyer's market," and enrollment limits are established and strictly adhered to by the central government.

Education specialist Shimahara Nobuo renders the top-down view of shikata ga nat: "nothing can be done." For all the difficulties presented by the entrance examination process, in his view, the Japanese recognize it as a "unique social phenomenon." Despite its intensity, is still a matter of "necessity," since "having experienced it year after year in the same manner, [Japanese people] do not know how to alleviate or change it; nor apparently does anyone know how to control it." The educational system should still be appreciated, he also notes, because its primary goals are "to mold individuals so as to promote organizational imperatives. For this purpose, Japanese are trained to be diligent, resilient, and convergent and to endure organizational pressures. They are remarkably disciplined people." 38

In a similar vein, educational sociologist Amano Ikuo traces the origin of the entrance examination war to the prewar period, when high schools were scarce as well as rigidly ranked. The postwar period was unable to resolve this situation on which industry and government depended. The "flames of desire for educational

credentials and social status had been fanned: as long they remained alight, it would be impossible to eliminate the entrance examinations.  

Thus, the more maternal and para-educational services changed, the more the entrance exam stayed the same. By playing a dual, often conflicting role between her ideals as a mother and the demands of an educational system over which she has no control, the education mamadzilla aids the stability and prosperity created by that system. The tendency for the Japanese labor market not to take seriously the education or capabilities of women not only reinforces asymmetry, it also renders the institution of motherhood as highly vulnerable. Mothers found themselves in a position—the home—where their private lives could easily be filled by the public arena of the gakureki shakai. "And now what?" is a question that must address this self-defeating cycle, in Japan and everywhere.

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CHAPTER XI

Madness and the Madly-Proliferating Education Mamas:
Momism at the Juncture

Often when I have casually introduced the topic of education mamas to Japanese individuals, they assume that I am going to "bash" such mothers for their negative effects on children. When I have casually mentioned the topic to Americans unfamiliar with Japan, they usually respond, "We should have mothers like that in America."

As with the unfavorable image of the "academic record society," the education mama is counter-intuitive to Americans. Even when borrowing analogies such as the Hollywood mother or Jewish mother, many would probably believe that such parental energies directed toward education would still be laudable.

Mothers in Japan who invest in children's educations, constrained by the resources available to them, are self-motivated by the need to secure their own future caretaking in old age and by an awareness of employment opportunities in the labor market, according to Mary Brinton's summary. Of these two, I believe the latter is far more important. Ogawa and Retherford's research indicates that only 9 percent of parents responding to a Mainichi National Family Planning survey stated that they hoped their children would support them in old age.¹ Yet both reasons,

not transcending the language of human resources, state only the "rationality" of becoming an education mama, and still cannot account for the negativity surrounding the kyōiku mama-gon image. Moreover, they omit the profound import of status security, the difficult to quantify but oft-heard statement that "education is the only leftover inheritance." the gift that parents want to leave for their children.

In this chapter, I distinguish many of the negative impressions of being an education mama as "momism" - a discourse of blaming mothers for the social conditions that turn them into mamadzillas in the first place, and for the educational problems that terrorize their children. Discursive power in stories, conversations and everyday activities helps us to see that "momism" occurs without the direct ideological imprint of central bureaucracy; instead, political goals are subtly refracted in discourse at the social level of interaction.

As with many characteristics of Japanese society in 1995, however, the topic of education mamas concerns a momism at the juncture of change in Japan's ambivalent state of identity. My goals in this chapter are first, to highlight some of the characteristics of "madness" or "monstrosity" attributed to education mamas in popular media; and second, to discuss what sort of changes in Japan today could reverse or reaffirm the tendencies to blame women for the otherwise "rational" act they should be appreciated for: assisting in their children's educations.

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2"Momism," originally used by Phylip Wylie, Generation of Vipers (New York: Farrar, 1942), is a discourse of blaming mothers for acting out their own ambitions through their children, when mothers themselves are the victims.
What troubled policymakers was not only the alleged psychological problems that education mamas were creating in their children. Mothers' best expectations also accelerated the upward mobility of students that would create the white collar glut Japan is experiencing today.

However, scholars and professionals during the era of "madly proliferating education mamas" did not take the holistic picture of women's labor and women's educational circumstances into account. Instead, they simply escorted problems in education and labor to the body of the mother, by psychologizing or medicalizing the symptoms of the education mama. Tamura Kiyo's lengthy series on "Social Groups and Mothers' Attitudes on Education," for example classifies mothers into opposing camps such as "learning-centered" versus "life-centered," or "education maniac-mother" versus "whole life guidance mother." An education oriented mother is presumed to be the polar opposite of the more favorably regarded "whole life guidance" mother, who is not driven by self-pursuit.3

Likewise, pushing her son into a prestigious university is the only way an education mama "can get rid of her inferiority complex and express her years of vindictive anger and resentment," according to Waseda university professor Katō Taizo. The price paid, however, is the mental illness of students once they enter university: "those students have felt excessive pressure to succeed since

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3 For example, see Tamura Kiyo, "Shakai kaisō to hahaoya no kyōiku taido (Dai yonhō): bōshi kankei ni okeru shinriteki tokusei" (Social class and mothers' attitudes toward education [Part 4]: psychological characteristics of the mother-child relationship). Tokyo Gakugei Kiyō 6, no. 33 (1981): 137-162.
childhood." Thus, in the view of such experts, the solution is simply for mothers to stop worrying too much about children's test scores.4

While events sensationalized in the mass media—for example, as I have mentioned, incidents of mothers stealing exams, bribing officials, even committing incest—seemed to confirm the "madness" of the madly-proliferating education mamas, critics such as Tamura or Katō paid little if any attention to the circumstances that created education mamas. Popular images thus created a popular discourse that pinned all blame upon the mother.

Increasingly, mothers have been taking advantage of on-site consultation and treatment by medical professionals. A pioneer doctor of mother's problems with their children was Dr. Kyōtoku Shigemori, who coined the expression, "mother-caused illness," or bogenbyō. The illnesses of children in the "civilized" age could no longer be attributed to viruses, he wrote in his popular three-part series on mother-caused illnesses. The illnesses of children in the age of civilization are brought on by several factors in society. But since the mother, as the primary parent, is ultimately responsible for taking care of children, it follows that these illnesses must be attributed to her—hence the expression, "mother-caused illnesses." Kyōtoku's series is filled with narratives describing the diagnoses and treatment of several cases of mother-caused illnesses (usually asthma: the "cultural cold"), in which the doctor first examines the children, then, upon hearing the details of their upbringing, decides that the onset of the "disease" is certainly caused by the mother. Sometimes, he sends the children home to their

fathers and hospitalizes the mothers until they become cognizant of their abnormal mothering. Often, the "cured" children come back to visit the good doctor after they become healthy, responsible adults.5

On popular request, Dr. Kyūtoku's final series enumerated the "types" of mothers who are "dangerous," in order that mothers may check themselves for any such "dangerous" attributes. These "dangerous mothers" include:6

Type 1: The highbrow-intellectual upbringing or rationally-oriented upbringing mama;
Type 2: Unskilled-in-housework mothers who are bad at the complete essentials;
Type 3: "Secret room" upbringing mothers who are irritable all year long;
Type 4: Lethargic mothers who produce lethargic children;
Type 5: Mothers whose child-judging measuring stick has slipped out of proportion;
Type 6: Mothers who embrace children with "warped affection";
Type 7: Servant-type mothers who wait hand and foot on their children;
Type 8: Mothers "of days gone by" whose love is too abundant;
Type 9: Career-woman type mothers who don't care about children.

While it is uncertain whether Dr. Kyūtoku's definition of "mother-caused illnesses" had an impact on the overall medical and counseling profession, it is true that his books were best sellers and deeply affected the way mothers thought about themselves. The medical clinic continues to serve as an outlet for mothers to seek


counseling for children's problems, especially for school-related problems such as "school-refusal syndrome."

The Education Mama in Popular Culture

In the worst case, the education mother was seen as possessed of violent tendencies and capable of passing such tendencies to children. Below, I present two works of popular culture, a novel and a TV mini-series, convey this image of the mother made Godzillaesque. The purpose of this comparison is to demonstrate the presence of power in social messages—power with political salience though not necessarily sanctified by official authorities.

The first novel is Shiroyama Saburō's morbid satire, Sunao na Senshitachi (The Obedient Soldiers), published in 1978. The second is a 120-minute television mini-series aired by Japan's public broadcasting system (NHK) in the fall of 1988. Entitled Kaiware Zoku No Tatakai (Battle of the Sprout Brothers). This series was based the novel Kaiware Zoku no Hensachi Nikki (Sprout Brothers' Diary of a Hensachi) mentioned in the previous section. Both works can be considered political commentaries explaining that the kyōiku mama was a postwar creation and a vehicle in which the voice of educational nationalism was expressed through the mother.


The Obedient Soldiers was written at the start of the age of madly proliferating juku and kyōiku mama. It casts the mother into the villain image and shows her indirectly transferring her overprotective persona to the figure of her son. Ten years later, NHK's production of Sprout Brothers re-structures the kyōiku mama through its opposite impression: the protagonist is originally the working mother who didn't pay enough attention to her son. The role of the Godzillaesque mother is thus legitimated, for we see the difficulties mothers experience when they don't become education mamas. Sprout Brothers, having been based on an autobiography, allows much more of the education mama's highly ambivalent subjectivity to be expressed.

The Obedient Soldiers concerns a young couple whose grand plan is to enter their first-born son, Eiichirō, into Tokyo University. The quintessential education mama, Chie (a homonym of chie meaning "wisdom"), scrupulously engineers the correct ingredients of heredity, environment, learning theories and superstition right from her first encounter for an arranged marriage. Chie also makes personal renunciations to symbolize her dedication: she vows not to wear make-up or drink tea until her son is accepted into Tokyo University. In turn, she begs her reluctant husband, Akio, to shave his mustache and give up alcohol.

Eiichirō develops the same qualities as his mother, qualities which facilitate his success in examinations. He is friendless, meticulous, one-track-minded and most importantly, sunao. Perhaps one of the most difficult Japanese words to translate into English, sunao can render such meanings as gentle, frank, honest, obedient, or docile. As the word applies to children, it is perhaps most equivalent to the English word "good"; it describes children who are "obedient" to their elders. The
etymology of sunao alliterates with Chie's unmade-up face, sugao, which also uses the same character su, meaning "uncovered."

Foucault observed that modern technological societies have created disciplinary practices through which humans are becoming increasingly docile, and that their docility is tied to the imperative to be productive. The docility-productivity concept emerges in both of the title metaphors of *The Obedient Soldiers* and *The Battle of the Sprout Brothers*. In *The Obedient Soldiers*, the author makes use of the double insinuation of sunao. First it refers to "good" students who, as entrance examination students, become "obedient soldiers." Later, as Eiichirō begins to manifest increasing signs of "psychological violence," the father, Akio, complains that his son has become sunao—wherein the meaning conveyed is more akin to "docile": "He's a docile child, docile like a fine thread. That's why I'm worried." Chie replies, "If that's the case, fine with me. As Eiichirō suffers, I'll just have to protect him all the more."¹⁰

Though Chie is a robotic slave to the demands of the entrance examination system, husband Akio (a stereotyped "henpecked" husband) trails along, his conscience vacillating over whether or not the educational plan is really a good idea. But Shiroyama conveys this deceptive subordination as dependence. Once away from home, in his faltering company, he reflects on Chie's words and actions and derives strength and courage from her, especially when teased by the boss and "office ladies."

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Void of all emotion, Chie thinks of herself as a "queen," and the most skillful tactician of study technologies. Idolizing Tokyo University and the national bureaucracy, she selects a distant relative who is a career foreign service officer to be her son's role model; yet the role model commits suicide over a scandal. Shiroyama's focus on the mother as the source of examination hell is thus subtly interfaced with a critique of the bureaucracy which examination hell produces. It is significant, then that Shiroyama, also a historian, creates echoes of Prime Minister Ikeda's patriotic call to "construct human beings for the sake of the nation" in Chie's soliloquy:

In order to be of assistance to Japan, to be of strength, there is nothing available but human ability. So, I think that to construct the highest possible genius is a way to help Japan, to do something for the nation.

In the end, the obedient and sickly Eiichirō uses the same precision skills which his mother taught him for making study plans in order to construct a murder plan: he plans to kill his younger brother by pushing him from a balcony. The plan fails—both brothers fall—but it is Eiichirō who ends up permanently "docile" from brain and bodily injuries. Following the disaster which permanently injures her eldest son, the Tōdai "experiment," Chie's only comment is, "I guess I didn't give him enough calcium." She proceeds to make plans to put her second son into Tōdai instead.

In *The Battle of the Sprout Brothers*, a medical doctor with an "each to his or her own" style of upbringing is thunderstruck when she discovers her son is faltering in his third year of junior high school. His hensachi has slipped so low

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that he may not be able to enter a prestigious high school. Announcing that she will become an eleventh-hour education mama, Ayako prepares a special study room where she and Shunsuke "battle" together night after night. She gives up most of her outside social activities, and directs Shunsuke to do the same.

Ayako fails, however, in her attempts to get her husband to give up his activities—his golf, for example, is necessary for business. His efforts to assist in tutoring fail as well. Annoyed, she ends up sending him to live in his company dormitory until the entrance examination season is out of the way. He and his friend, also an entrance examination "widower," later share their thoughts about the education system in a bar. After some drunken discussing, they agree that although the school system is difficult, and education mamas can be cruel and obsessive, they are, after all, necessary, and nothing can be done about them. Besides, they feel education is the only thing nowadays that parents without fortune or property can pass onto their children (see previous section). *Sprout Brothers* thus depicts the father as *bugaisha*, the outsider, and confirms that examination warfare is the mother's domain.

The metaphor of "sprouts" used in *The Battle of the Sprout Brothers*, analogous to *sunao*, indicates that obedience comes from adhering to the group. As the story opens and Ayako hears the shocking news that Shunsuke has not been doing well in school, she reflects on her naivete for having been content at the thought that Shunsuke was simply normal like any other boy. In describing Shunsuke and boys his age as *kaiware* (radish) sprouts, she is drawing a similarity with *moyashi* sprouts. The latter form of sprouts signifies young students who have been made slithery weaklings from excessive studying. *Kaiware* sprouts are a bit more firm
than *moyashi* sprouts, and they are usually sold attached to a strip of styrofoam
which keeps them together. Ayako makes the distinction:

When I see my son Shunsuke, his friends, boys of his age, I am always
reminded of *kaiware* sprouts. Not quite the same as *moyashi*-kids which we
used to talk about, as in the meaning of "weakness" or "limpness." But, what
they say and do is all average—they don't have particular individualities to be
mentioned. They are just normal boys.

Shunsuke and his friends adopt the name *Kaiware Zoku* to form a type of
secret club to help each other survive "examination hell." Throughout the entrance
examination season, Shunsuke derives strength from his allegiance to the group
morale of the *Kaiware* Brothers. The comrades even help him drag himself to
school when he catches cold just before his entrance exam.

Ayako, the education mama of *Battle of the Sprout Brothers*, is not without
conscience. After considerable reflection, she becomes a *kyōiku mama* against
opposition from both her husband and her best friend. Her husband can't agree
with the way schools teach children these days, and he thinks it would be okay to
let Shunsuke enter a low-ranked high school. Her friend, Misae, suggests sending
Shunsuke to America. In a conversation with Misae, Ayako reconfirms her
commitment to conquer examination hell, and insists it is necessary for "spiritual
power." The following dialogue reveals how the education mama makes herself
complicit in the examination warfare of the academic-record society:

**AYAKO:** To be a victor in examination hell, I have to become a devil, if I
don't become a devil—

**MISAE:** Ayako!

**AYAKO:** Misae, I'm already on the battlefield. Shunsuke is an incoming
soldier and I am the devil's sergeant. The General Staff Office has
ordered me to take that hill...

**MISAE:** The General Staff Office?

**AYAKO:** In other words—the academic-record society, that's it. Biased
and superstitious school education! I don't know why on earth
such a thing is necessary, but it means we must do battle. It's terrible. But because it's terrible, running away from it would be the same thing as losing out to it.

Shunsuke initially reacts to the new mother-son study regiment with signs of rebellion, and he even tries to run away from home. Ayako brushes off all the criticism that this is her fault. Unlike Chie, however, Ayako efforts end up "rewarded": Shunsuke raises his *hensachi* and enters a private high school, and Ayako earns praise from friends and family.

Both of these stories, especially the first, are satirical dramatizations, and exaggerate the impact of examination warfare on most students and mothers. But it is instructive to understand that in both works, we see that it is the mother who buttresses the hierarchy of schools and employment from behind. The *gakureki shakai* would collapse without her, and at the same time, the side-effects point to her as the cause. In *The Obedient Soldiers*, Chie's dedication to the ideals of Tōdai and her support of the national bureaucracy, combined with her own lack of self-identity, compel her to become an education mama in full colors. To do so, she must make herself a compassionless slate for educational theories to write on. The anti-human nature of her study plan finally leaves her son physically injured and mentally useless. As a political statement, Chie's situation warns mothers not to become too involved with children's educations, and to look for outside fulfillment: they, in other words, are at fault. It also says that fathers should not be hamstrung by their wives and should pay attention to their own consciences: they, in other words, are not at fault, and should stay away from the educational pressure-cooker. The message here is ambiguous, however, because the author
does make subtle reference to the political circumstances that create mothers like Chie.

*The Battle of the Sprout Brothers* calls home the futility of the message presented by *The Obedient Soldiers*. Even if mothers find self-fulfillment outside of being a *kyōiku mama*, as in the case of Ayako, who enjoys her work as a doctor of internal medicine, they risk the possibility that their children might make a devastating "slip" or "fall" from the education-success ladder. As a political message, *The Battle of the Sprout Brothers* warns working women that they must still heed to the imperatives of school education. Thus, as in *The Obedient Soldiers*, this newer story still puts the weight of the educational bureaucracy into the mother's—not the father's—domain. It also warns mothers that when things go awry, they must accept the responsibility. Unlike *The Obedient Soldiers*, however, *The Battle of the Sprout Brothers* shows that "spiritual strength" can be garnered from the entrance examination system, since Shunsuke becomes obedient to its imperatives; and it shows that mothers can also derive self satisfaction from their supervisory role—if they are "successful."

Both stories, therefore, emphasize the act of becoming an education mama creates a role in which the burden of education is passed onto the mother. It follows that her sacrificial role is necessary to spawn the same type of commitment in their sons. The husbands of both stories, inspired by the commitments of their *kyōiku* wives, also make their own sacrifices, and they both renew their commitments to support examination-intensive education. And in both stories, the mothers' ideals are transferred to their sons. The imperative to become *sunao* should make a "good" student into an "obedient" soldier and worker in the public realm—but the story makes the statement that there is a fine distinction between "strong" obedience and "weak" docility. *The Battle of the Sprout Brothers* shows that
"strength" can be mustered through group morale—but warns that students lose their individuality in the long run.

The stories also accentuate the severe nature of *juken* (entrance exams) by the repetition of violent metaphors. *The Obedient Soldiers* transforms a study plan to a murder plan. Likewise, Shunsuke of *The Battle of the Sprout Brothers* doodles murder victims while studying: on his way to *juku*, he fantasizes that he is the victim of a firing squad. In a background of carnival music, the *juku* teacher leads a pep rally in which the "soldiers" resound their battle cries before they begin their mock-exam. The teacher warns them not to even budge if a neighbor drops an eraser: picking it up would violate the spirit of "glory."

Perhaps the most disturbingly realistic image of violence in *Battle of the Sprout Brothers* occurs next door to the protagonists' home. Often the son or mother's attention is drawn out the window to the sounds of their neighbor's son yelling and committing acts of rage against his mother. Hence, mother and son are warned, as they proceed to take up arms in the examination warfare, of the ever-present danger of "household violence" (*kateinai boryoku*). In Japan, "household violence" has usually been interpreted to mean acts of violence committed by children, almost always boys, against other members of the family, usually mothers. Cases of household violence of this general type—boys assailing against mothers, sometimes fatally—began noticeable in the early 1960s and were considered a major social problem by the early 1980s. The most prevalent interpretation of the causes of household violence point to the competitive entrance exams in a context of an expanding materialist value system in which parents "overindulge" their children.
(i.e., become like education mamas). Closely related to household violence are school violence, between teachers and students (but in this case the teacher is more apt to be violent, as we will see in the next chapter) and ijime, or bullying between students, which became the most conspicuous problem in education in 1994.

In all of these images of the kyōiku mama, it is often difficult to draw the line between stereotype and reality. Likewise, it is difficult to distinguish between a mother’s own acts of love for children and her acts of resignation to the gakureki shakai. But my concern here has simply been that over the long run, placing too much attention, through whatever discursive medium, on the dangerous behavior of mothers, rather than dangers of examination warfare, can be regarded as "momist." The real sources of anxiety should be a labor system which will not accept the educations of women, and an educational system producing young adults whose boundaries of knowledge have been shaped by years and years of conformity to multiple choice questions and standardized exams.

Human resource specialists would argue that the mother’s over-attention helped to create an oversupply of students with expectations to become white collar employees. As revealed in Battle of the Sprout Brothers, however, mothers walk a fine line between being overprotective, as a kyōiku mama, and being negligent, or not becoming a kyōiku mama. A number of recent developments, however, could affect this situation whereby the mother who does what she thinks is right for her children is cast in a negative light. Such developments include trends in economics,

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education, labor, and demographics, mostly depending on whether we can expect improved conditions for women in labor, in education and in the home.

**Labor and Lifestyle Issues**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the 1986 Equal Employment Opportunity Law did little to set in motion the radical changes it promised. In 1988, the Labor Ministry conducted a campaign to promote childcare, using a poster of a woman holding a child with the captions "I love children! I love work!"

Only 14.6 percent of companies had childcare practices in 1985, a figure that changed little with the "voluntary" equal opportunity legislation. But much of the problem lay with the unchanging conditions of lifetime employment, which offer no flexibility for temporary leaves of absence. Thus, signs of fracture in the lifetime employment system that became undeniable at the start of the recession in the early 1990s could have presented a silver lining by opening up more flexibility to accommodate women's labor. In addition, "lifestyle superpower" trends and policies supported fewer working hours for employees, and increased time for men to be more to their families than "Sunday fathers." *Matshoomu-ism* ("my home-ism") was becoming popular among men who preferred to go home to their families rather than work late or go out drinking with their fellow employees. The Ministry of Education began to include high school boys in home economics courses, promoting the idea that men should share responsibility for housework.

As the recession continued, however, measures to cope with poor economic conditions mostly offset or neutralized progressive trends, exacerbating the

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318
tendency for women to be "the last hired and the first fired." The 1986 Equal Employment Opportunity Act had eliminated the category of "women's general position," but only a few firms allowed even partial compliance with the act by offering women a choice for a permanent position or "women's position." Often women quit their career track positions because employers still refused to take them seriously. Employers hiring in the 1995 have scaled back the number of new employees by 20 to 30 percent. With the recession underway, however, firms found it increasingly difficult to sacrifice men's and women's employment equally. At first, companies would not bluntly state that they preferred men: they tried indirect tactics such as advertising only for science and engineering backgrounds. (Large trading firms are traditionally known to hire generalists.) By 1994, however, Mitsubishi Corporation and several other large companies openly announced they would not hire any female four-year graduates in 1995. Large companies have cut down on both male new employees as well, but men can usually get hired in smaller companies, whereas women will find the doors more apt to be closed to them there as well.  

Not surprisingly, doors have been opening wide in the temporary "employment adjustor" positions. Japan Airlines became one of the first companies to hire "part-time" flight attendants on a yearly contract. The voguish designation of "contract worker" helps defer criticism that employers are merely being opportunistic in hiring these employees who work the same number of hours as regular employees but receive fewer benefits and usually lower pay. Employers

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claim, however, that contract workers are hired for their special skills. In some cases it is true that new specialists are being hired with maximum terms of employment specified. Generally however, the designation "contract worker" helps make an old category more attractive. Some young men have been recruited as "contract employees," but labor specialists believe their situation is a "temporary phenomenon" related to the recession, unlike for the traditional "employment adjustor" categories of women and older men.¹⁵

Another gender-reinforcing opportunity is the mommy-track position. Mitsui Marine & Fire Co. established an information-systems subsidiary in 1986 that exclusively hires women (but also borrows a few men from the parent company). The firm offers extremely favorable conditions for women who are pregnant or mothers of newborns. Pregnant women can arrive at work a half hour late and leave a half hour early to avoid rush hour traffic. For the first year after childbirth, mothers can also leave an hour early with full pay. Osawa Tsutsumu, the firm's executive director, confirmed the gendered nature of this work: "Developing computer systems requires creativity and attention to detail. We thought that since women tend to be quite skilled in these areas, we should create a working atmosphere that would attract the best female university grads."¹⁶

Such gender stereotyping will likely outlive the recession and further delay the fulfillment of equal opportunity goals. Current trends toward vocationalization offer women more employment opportunities but it is not certain


whether they will reduce stereotyping. Many junior colleges are converting to vocational schools that emphasize emerging fields of "women's work" such as the information processing mentioned above.

Whether a mother's commitment as a kyōiku mama can become more appreciated hinges on these tendencies in the workforce. For without changes in the labor market, mothers' discrimination of daughters will also not go away. And, if measures to improve the image of vocational education are effective, mothers can ease their expectations of children in education. However, if increased vocationalization occurs without changes in the social image of education, competitiveness could instead increase. In terms of their own labor, mothers will also be less inclined to become overprotective of children's educations if their own social worth appreciates. Conversely, the current trend toward subjecting women's labor to limited contracts or marginalized mommy tracking may discourage women from recognizing their own labor value.

Changing Values

Yet the fact that labor has not been hospitable to women, along with increased internationalization, has created significant reactions in several young women. In recent years, a strong tendency has developed among young women to avoid or postpone marriage; to seek employment with international firms in Japan or abroad, and generally to enjoy themselves to the greatest extent with the resources available to them. Up until the mid-1980s, a woman who didn't marry was considered stale as an uneaten Christmas cake, with no choice but to be "sold" at a "discount." But the singulate mean age at marriage (SMAM) rose from 25 in
1960 to a high of 26.9 for women in 1990, and it could no longer be said that marriage and childbirth were almost certain events in the lifecourses of women.\(^{17}\)

While waiting to be married—or deciding whether to marry at all—young women have formed a phenomenal "new single lifestyle," and indeed, as Karen Kelsky depicts it, a veritable "OL (office lady) subculture." Mostly junior college graduates who live at home entirely dependent on their parents, OLs serve tea and perform menial, dead-end tasks on the job. Off hours, however, they have developed a consumer power with their own earnings and proved their lives are better this way than in the average "salaryman" position. Along with using their time and money to travel abroad, they are seen purchasing expensive clothing and enriching their lives with language lessons and other value-added hobbies.

OLs and other young working women have directed their consumer power most significantly to the marriage "market." Young urban women have created a "buyer's market" in which they refuse to be "chosen" as economically dependent brides, and instead, consider themselves free to "choose" their household "partners." At first, the media sensationalized their preferences for the "3 highs" (sankō) — high academic status, high income, and height. But their other demands have challenged gendered borders. Namely, without the promise of companionship and partnership, many opt not to marry at all—defying the analogy of late Christmas cakes begging to be sold at any price. Best-sellers appealing to young urban women in the 1990s include Tanimura Shiho's *I May Not Marry* Syndrome, explaining that women have the power to be self-supportive, and Yoshihiro Kiyoko's *Why Women Don't Want to Have Children*, justifying women's choices to


322
neither marry nor have children on the inflexibility of men's employment and behavior patterns.\textsuperscript{18}

As Kelsky asserts, "[The OL's] relative wealth, freedom from commitments, and power in the marriage market are all antithetical to the traditional ideals of womanhood which emphasized innocence, subordination, and obedience."\textsuperscript{19} Such women may not be able to change the public sphere that subordinates them, but many have demonstrated the need to change the private sphere of the household into a marriage of partnership. The real test of the OL subculture will thus be what kinds of positive changes they can inspire over the long run - their hopes, of course, being dependent on concurrent changes in the political economy. Princess Masako, though unlike OLs in that she was secured in an employment situation commensurate with her education, seemed to emblematize the tendency to enjoy freedom in her twenties and marry "late." Yet if her marriage to the Crown Prince is any indication of what happens when assertive young women finally do marry, we can expect business as usual: the bride's career terminates before it blossoms. Moreover, the very consumer power these women have gained has also constructed what many believe to be the negative imagery of the Japanese "economic animal."

\textbf{Demographic Changes}

The significant marker in Japan's population decline occurred in 1973, when fertility declined in proportion with changes in the overall age structure. In spite of

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\textsuperscript{19} Kelsky, "Postcards from the Edge," p. 19.
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a small second baby boom in the mid-1970s, therefore, annual births declined to such an extent that by 1989 an international media blitz occurred over Japan's "1.57 shock." The news resulted in the enactment of certain pronatalist policies hoping to raise the birth rate. Monthly allowances for children were increased after 1992, and as mentioned, the option of up to one year of unpaid childcare was also guaranteed after 1992, hoping to reassure working women that it was possible to both work and bear children.20

Yet the most significant deterrent to having more children may be education itself. The population research of Ogawa and Retherford shows that costs of education--both financial and psychological--bear more heavily in the minds of Japanese families than do housing costs.21 Thus, the drop in numbers of young people did not cool the fires of examination hell, as some had hoped. As stated in the previous section, students had to study for the hensachi harder than ever, and even with hensachi expelled from formal school, students are now going to juku to take the on-site examination. Yet without major changes in the exam system, the academic-record society and social values, it is unlikely that demographic changes alone can mitigate the conditions of examination warfare.

Thus, the decline in school-age children seems to be creating increased competitiveness, rather than vice versa. Hishimura Yukihiko, Director General of the National Institute for Educational Research of Japan, writing in November of 1994, after the expulsion of the hensachi, cites as one of the main reasons why the


324
"double schooling" characteristic of examination warfare will not go away as the low birth rate. A continued low birth rate (1.4 in 1994) will lead to increased juku attendance, he suggests, because "[t]he smaller the number of births becomes, the more time parents are going to be able to devote to bringing children up and the more likely we are to see an increase in the number of parents sending their children to juku in order to get them into a better school." Hishimura also believes that the juku has taken over the place of parents, and that the second juku generation will be more likely to accept the juku as an inherent part of education.22

Ogawa and Retherford believe that the promotion of vocational education (as the government is recently doing) would help ease parents' minds about education. The trends of 1994 data may help substantiate such a claim, as the total fertility rate rose a slight percentage, from 1.46 in 1993 to an estimated 1.47-1.49 in 1994. Many believe a new "baby fever" will soon be booming to help bring the nation back to a zero-population growth ratio of 2.08 births per childbearing woman.23

Meanwhile, the call for women to become caretakers of the elderly has also gained momentum. The libraries of government-sponsored "Women's Education Associations" (Fujin Kyoku Kai) are increasingly being filled with literature calling attention to the future needs of the "graying society." Lifelong learning, with its many volunteer programs aimed at non-working women, also reinforces women's position as caretaker of the elderly.

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In 1988, Nihon University Population Research Institute (NUPRI) and the Japan Medical Association conducted research on population and economic trends. Their survey reveals that by the year 2021, nearly one out of every four persons will be over 65 years of age, making Japan the most aged society in the experience of the world. In the study, economics professor Ogawa Naohiro insinuates that today's girls will not have to worry about becoming tomorrow's education mamas: they will be "gray" mamas instead:24

The question is who will take care of the increasing number of old people who are bedridden or suffering from senile dementia. So we calculated the ratio between the aged people either bedridden or suffering from senile dementia and women not holding jobs, who in Japanese society are most likely to take care of those aged people. The results are not encouraging.

According to the report, in the year 2000, 18.94 percent of the percentage of unemployed women in their 40s will have to take care of the elderly. This figure will leap to 47.05 by the year 2025. Ogawa qualified, however, that "there is no guarantee that these women will stay at home and actually take care of these aged people, because they may want to work outside or they may divorce."25

Japan as World Leader and Role Model of Asian Countries

Some Asian leaders are soliciting Japan to act as an official role model for developing nations of the region, but in terms of educational and employment status, they may not wish to select Japanese women as role models. Japan's women rank only 34th among 99 countries in terms of their well-being in health,

24 Japan Times, July 7, 1988; italics added.

marriage and children, education, employment and social equality, according to research conducted in 1988 by Washington-based Population Crisis Committee. It was the latter three categories—education, employment and social equality—in which Japanese women fared worst.26

On the other hand, comparison with American women, Japan's conservative leaders appreciate the traditions of Japanese women, even the benefits of the education mama-dzilla. Takeuchi, for example, acknowledges that it is "truly a worthwhile life" for women to quit their jobs for the benefit of their children, and that the fruits of their efforts are reflected back into the economy. For "thanks to the strict discipline of their mother's (sic) upbringing, Japan's workers are among the most hard-working and best in quality (sic) in the world."27 In addition, a Tokyo University professor extends this eulogy as a warning for Japanese women not to follow the American precedent of feminism:28

Japanese women should be commended for their role as mothers and household managers. Their quiet dedication has helped to keep Japan safe and prosperous. U.S. education can't be improved until American mothers show greater concern for their children's scholastic achievement.

Hirakawa argued that although Japan has often learned its lessons from foreign countries, East and West, its women should stop following the precedents

26 The Japan Times, July 2, 1988, p. 3.


327
of foreigners where feminism is concerned. He denounces Americans for treating
Christa McAuliffe, the teacher who perished in the 1986 Challenger explosion, as a
heroine: "Most Japanese women, I'm sure, were appalled that a mother of two
small children participated in such a dangerous project. After all, the space
program had many single women to choose from."29 (Japan has since then put its
own female astronaut into orbit.)

This chapter has shown that an understanding of education mamas must
counter the negativity of the image, and the way such negativity can be an
instrument of power. Such negativity works to keep women self-conscious,
knowing they have little room between the overprotective behavior of the education
mama and the negligent treatment of the non-education mama. But the alleged
"madness" of education mamas is at a juncture in Japan. Just as the education
mama was constructed when a "family values" incentive to keep women in the
home coincided with the rise of educational competitiveness – the decline of
negativity over mothers' educational caretaking roles will depend on the reverse of
those trends. Yet signs of reversal of "overheated" education as well as gender
discrimination are ambivalent, and unlikely to become more focused as long as
poor economic conditions continue in Japan.


328
CHAPTER XII

The Nail That Came Out All the Way:
Hayashi Takeshi's Case against the
Regulation of the Student Body

The nail that protrudes gets hammered down.
Traditional Japanese saying

The nail that comes out all the way never gets hammered down.
Contemporary Japanese saying

In May, 1985, a young high school student was on a school trip to the Tsukuba Expo, a world science exhibition. In violation of school regulations, he borrowed his friend's hair dryer to style his hair. When his teacher caught him in the act, the boy apologized and began crying, but his remorse was in vain. The teacher forced him to kneel down while he beat and kicked the young student to his death.

At that time, another student, Hayashi Takeshi, was beginning his third year of high school in Chiba prefecture. Impressed by the incident at Tsukuba as an indication of the severity of Japanese student regulations, Hayashi led a group of fifteen students in protesting the regulations of their own prefectural high school. Their movement successfully resulted in a relaxation of many of the more rigid stipulations.

Less than a year after graduating from high school, Hayashi published his first book protesting Japan's kōsoku, the codes of school regulations and sanctions. The response to *Down with School Regulations!* was overwhelming; a second volume quickly followed compiling excerpts from more than three thousand letters from students informing Hayashi of their personal situations with the kōsoku. Now, over a decade later, Hayashi's career has been completely shaped by his movement against school regulations. He writes an advice column on school regulations for a young women's magazine, for which he receives about one hundred letters per month. He works with an attorney's group to help solve problems of children's educational rights, and he has been interviewed by several foreign media sources including *Newsweek* and the *New York Times*. His fourth volume of *Down with School Regulations!* is now in print.

I became interested in the young education critic not only for the substance of his argument against kōsoku, but for the author's own style as a remarkable exception to everything the kōsoku seemed aimed to produce, in Hayashi's own frequently-used epithet, robots. *Down with School Regulations!* is an adolescent catharsis, no doubt, but it is anything but robotic. It is a highly creative work of investigative journalism interspersed with self-penned poetry, personal anecdotes, inevitable teeny-bop illustrations, and last but not least, a manifesto for teenagers to hone up on constitutional law and stand up for their rights.

Interviewing Hayashi, I asked him at the outset why he was an exception to the oft-heard dictum, "The nail that protrudes gets hammered down," which defines a social structure believed to inhibit the development of the self. While there is little doubt that group adherence is more important in Japan and elsewhere in Asia than it is in the West, it must also be true that if no nail ever protruded, Japan would still be a land of sword-wielding samurai and airy aristocrats ruling over the masses of farmers and merchants. Hayashi explained...
that he and other student activists have taken as their motto a more contemporary saying, "The nail that comes out all the way never gets hammered down." They believe their self-identities are masked and manipulated, but not muted. They aim to instill confidence in their role as active human agents assailing a solid but not invincible structure: the Japanese school regulations.

Hayashi's extracted nail may protrude from our usual impression of "things Japanese," impressions of conformity, discipline and obedience to authority. Yet Hayashi's case represents not only the interstices of the "typically Japanese," but perhaps more pertinently, the interstices of "East" and "West." The geopolitical "orders" of nation and civilization are becoming increasingly fluid in today's world, just as new, belated, definitions of identity defying traditional borders are on the rise. Perhaps the most conspicuous of new identities is that of the "East," the general region of "Asia" or the "Pacific Rim." Several questions thus converge around the extracted nail: Does Hayashi's work mean young Japanese are defying the "Asian"? Does his project exemplify the plurality of identities of "Asia"? Will Westerners soon find Japanese-style corporal discipline more attractive?

Even keeping these panoramic questions in mind, however, I am not sure that it is fair to hammer down Hayashi's case in the flurry of identity reconstruction going on in the "global" picture, especially without first focusing on the "local" nature of his work. Most of our understanding of new identities taking shape on the global front is that of elites, yet it is readily apparent from Hayashi's case that he is not "elite": his work of answering letters and commenting on specific cases of corporal abuse is personal, particular and pragmatic. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter will be to look more deeply at Hayashi's resistance itself, to understand that whatever the broader, ambivalent issues of national or civilizational identity that may be refracted in the topic of
student regulations. the work of young educational assailants such as Hayashi remains more concisely local, concerned with the basic freedom of the human body.

The first goal of this chapter will be to outline Hayashi's basic position that the student regulations are unconstitutional, illegitimate, and inhumane. Second, I will explain how his definition of "rights" is not universally but relatively defined, in a way that pragmatically fits his needs as a protestor of violations against the most basic, bodily freedom of students. Third, I will outline some reasons why the scenario of East and West, which might easily place Hayashi's case into an outmoded role of "modernization," would not be appropriate. Finally, I will suggest some recent circumstances that may affect the kōsoku and the silencing of educational criticism.

Certainly Hayashi's gumption to write and get published on this otherwise silenced subject is remarkable: before meeting him, I had pictured him as a lone nail protruding. But my conversation with him, and my continued reading of his books, suggested to me that the message in his well-articulated frustration may be neither unusual nor un-Japanese. I was impressed much less by the legal code he defends as much as I was by the simple issue of seeking freedom of the body. I decided thus to explore whether it is the kōsoku - the system of regulations governing the minutae of student "bodies" - which may be less traditionally "Japanese" than Hayashi himself.

Foucault distinguishes between "power" as the system of rights and duties, governed through officials and institutions, and "power" that works subtly, often anonymously, through the technique of disciplining human bodies. The latter form of control, "bio-power," concentrates on the management of entire populations as well as the discipline of the individual body. If formal laws have been less significant in Japan than informal sanctions
era; rather, it has "infiltrated" and coopted the more recognizable forms of
power, making possible "an infinitesimal distribution of the power relations."² In
this chapter, Hayashi's work is presented to convey the significance of power
acting directly upon the individual body. The continuous surveillance of
clothing, behavior and movement has made the student body into an object of
knowledge, a "docile body" to be improved at each academic or vocational
transition.³ Hayashi's project is to defy this socially constructed docile body.

Introduction to Student Regulations and Hayashi's Case against Them

Nearly all Japanese junior high and high schools have some form of
student regulations. The majority of schools regulates such things as hairstyle,
clothing, school cleaning, and behavior while commuting to and from school.
Some schools also regulate personal possessions, manners and greetings, and
behavior and appearance off-campus and even in the home.⁴ Many students are
not allowed to hold part-time jobs or to fraternize with students from other
schools. They often cannot enter public places such as game centers, bowling
alleys, restaurants, parks, and even supermarkets. Following the publicity
surrounding Hayashi's first book, several foreign media services began

² Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 216.


⁴ According to a public survey of 2,900 schools cited by education critic Hideo
Sakamoto, 88.9% of junior high schools and 94.9% of senior high schools regulate
clothing. Other regulations are as follows: hairstyle (81.7% junior high, 89% senior
high); cleaning (83.4% junior high, 79.8% senior high); commuting behavior 85.4%
junior high; 75.3% high school); personal possessions (63.6% junior high, 42%
senior high); off-campus and home behavior (58.1% junior high, 41.8% senior high),
manners and greetings (47.7% junior high, 33% senior high). Sakamoto Hideo,
interviewing students about the severity of their student regulations. Even this may have broken the rules: it is not unusual for students to be forbidden to write letters to the opinion sections of newspapers, or to speak to reporters.

Regulations vary from school to school according to the elaboration of the details and the disciplinary enforcement. The punishment for violations is so often physical that the two issues – the control of the body through detailed regulations and the punishment of the body for failure to keep the rules – are usually merged whenever the subject of kōsoku is addressed as a social problem, especially in Hayashi’s work. Another, broader, term to define this phenomenon is kanri kyōiku – or "over-regulated education."

Part of the task of Down with School Regulations! is to collect samples of the myriad forms of regulations and their enforcement, rules that often are as elaborate as they are esoteric. Below is an excerpt from a public junior high school in Kobe – a section of the code that also demonstrates gender discrimination sometimes found in the rules:5

On-campus:

- Boys and girls may be friends but not enter into relationships. Exchange of gifts, borrowing and lending, or any other reciprocal relationship is absolutely forbidden.
- Boys and girls who are friends must act according to appropriate junior high school behavior whenever they are seen by anyone. Whenever criticism is received, irrespective of the reason, guidance must be enforced by parents.
- When boys and girls talk to one another, as much as possible, there should be at least three students together, and there should be more than two meters between each student.
- Conversation between the sexes for more than three consecutive minutes, or walking together for more than three meters, is forbidden. Naturally, an exception will be made for assemblies.

Punishment for scandalous occurrences between boys and girls will be as follows:

• Third-year boys: Write a self-reflection essay of no less than two thousand characters and do seiza sitting for three hours.6
• Third-year girls: Write a self-reflection essay of no less than two thousand characters and do seiza sitting for six hours.
• Second-year boys: Write a self-reflection essay of no less than two thousand characters and do seiza sitting for one and a half hours.
• Second-year girls: Write a self-reflection essay of no less than two thousand characters and do seiza sitting for three hours.
• First-year boys: Exempt.
• First-year girls: Do seiza sitting for one and a half hours.

Not all school regulations may be this severe, yet a few may be worse (Hayashi cites one school requiring seven hours of seiza). There is considerable variation among all types of schools. Some students do not mind the regulations; they may find it easier to put on a uniform every day than join up in a fashion competition – one of the reasons often given for the persistence of the rules. For some students, school regulations are so important that they set their aspirations on entering a school where the regulations are more relaxed. This variation indicates how elusive the locus of power is – or appears to be – in the school system. Japan's Ministry of Education does control the school curriculum and university entrance exam from its centralized location. However, the ministry does not control the student regulations directly; these are set to some extent by local governments but mostly by individual schools.

The case can be made, however, that kōsoku are indirectly governed by the uniform entrance exam system. As long as parents believe that education is directly linked to employment and that this linkage must be established in the early stages of childhood through the irreversible outcome of exams, they will do whatever they can to ensure their children's success in education.

Obeying the rules is a large part of ensuring that success. One of the main requirements for passing from junior high to high school, and again from

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6 Seiza is the traditional rigidly-postured seating position in which the legs are folded straight under the body. It is comfortably tolerable for no more than twenty minutes by today's long-legged youth. Afterwards the legs become tremendously painful and numb.
high school to university, is (along with the exam itself) the *naishinshô*, the secret report card referred to in Chapter VI. Because the *naishinshô* is always kept private from students and parents, the power disadvantage of the student is considerable. It is like a one-way glass: students know they are being watched, they just don’t know how they are seen.7 (An analogy can be found in Japanese medical practices, in which doctors are legally permitted to withhold information from patients.)

The *naishinshô* represented, as Foucault would put it, an "apparatus of writing" that enabled the functioning of disciplinary power. It made possible the objectification of the individual "under the gaze of a permanent corpus of knowledge," and it (along with other methods of evaluation, namely official exams and commercial mock exams) made possible a comparative system to analyze collective characteristics of students.8 Perhaps most importantly, reinforcement of student regulations through the secret *naishinshô* made the student's experience something like one continuous classroom from junior high to university entrance. Students and parents, whether in Japan or America, often fail to speak out on issues that concern them if they have reason to believe the teacher can retaliate by issuing poor grades or references. Because the *naishinshô* is passed from grade to grade without a chance for the student to ever start afresh, silence is also maintained from grade to grade.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the code of *kôsoku* became increasingly severe, as did violent acts committed against students by teachers, against

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7 For a discussion on the relationship between the *naishinshô* and the general issue of academic freedom in Japan in the legal context, see Horio, *Educational Thought and Ideology*, pp. 279-294. Horio also reveals that the one exception to finding out the contents of the *naishinshô* may come when parents hire a private detective to conduct research on a prospective marriage partner for their child.

8 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 190.
teachers by students, and between students. The latter form of violence, *jime*, or bullying, has been especially disconcerting to the Japanese. The bullies sometimes act out the role of teachers and authority figures; they act as young vigilantes who take the rules and regulations into their own hands by harming those who violate the mandated codes of conduct.

Student regulations have thus suffocated the nourishment of the student's qualitative individuality - the kind Hayashi and other young students yearn for. Thus Hayashi's purpose (along with other student and lawyers associations who have taken up the mission of battling the *kōsoku*) is to protest against this loss, the "robbing" of identity. Hayashi's own signature on this theme, if you will pardon the pun, is the writing of his pen name in the phonetic, generic hiragana script, as would a kindergartner, rather than in personalized, individualized Chinese characters (*kanji*) - the usual way of writing adult names. The metaphors of his books, moreover, are those that portray the restriction of the body, depicting the school as a prison, as a military unit, or as an animal cage, and the student as a subject bound by head and by foot (*ganyūgarame*).

While at times his creative vignettes and illustrations seem to disburden more than discuss, Hayashi never fails to drive home his unwavering position that the *kōsoku* are unconstitutional, illegitimate and inhumane. At the close of his first book, he cites from tracts published by legal organizations that answer basic questions concerning the legality of the student regulations. This chapter, along with commentary in Part 2 and Part 3, address three of the most important legal documents in Japan, the Constitution of Japan, the Fundamental Law of Education, and the School Education Law (1947), all of which were enacted during the early years of the Allied Occupation of Japan. The following excerpts summarize what are considered by Hayashi and other educational rights activists as the most relevant articles demonstrating the
educational rights activists as the most relevant articles demonstrating the illegality of kōsoku:

**Unconstitutionality of Kōsoku**

Most important is the law expressly forbidding corporal punishment:⁹

Principals and teachers of schools may punish their students, pupils, and children, when they recognize it (sic) necessary in the light of education, in compliance with the regulations issued by the competent authorities. They shall not, however, inflict corporal punishment.

Article 11 in the School Education Law

To protect against the violation of children's rights and to defend respect for individuality:¹⁰

All of the people shall be respected as individuals. Their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness shall, to the extent that it does not interfere with the public welfare, be the supreme consideration in legislation and in other governmental affairs.

Article 13 in the Constitution of Japan

To protect against the searching of private bags and belongings:¹¹

The right of all persons to be secure in their homes, papers and effects against entries, searches and seizures shall not be impaired except upon warrant issued for adequate cause and particularly describing the place to be searched and things to be seized....

. . . Each search or seizure shall be made upon separate warrant issued by a competent judicial officer.

Article 35 in the Constitution of Japan

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¹¹ ibid., p. 9.
Hayashi closes the first volume with the entire copies of the constitution and Fundamental Law of Education, and an enthusiastic recommendation for students to study up on them.

Illegitimacy of Kōsoku

While the extent to which the constitutional provisions are applicable to children's rights may be debatable, the prohibition against corporal punishment in schools is succinctly stipulated. Yet as with other legal codes, informal sanctions bear more weight than formal laws. The definition of corporal punishment as cited in Hayashi's work includes any type of physical hitting such as kicking or inflicting other sorts of injury, as well as signs of physical distress such as that incurred from long hours of maintaining the seiza posture alluded to above. If seiza is legitimately mentioned in some schools' official regulations, it is perhaps because people still sit seiza-style in many normal situations and it is not a recognizable form of punishment unless one does too many minutes of it.

Another form of cultural legitimation must exist therefore to account for why the kōsoku have persisted and even worsened in some cases. Hayashi names this process in his third volume, labeling it as a disease: that of "homogenitis" (minna onaji byō), literally, the "everyone the same disease": 12

Exam-centered education, the attention given to names of schools, the prevention of school violence – these are the usual reasons offered [to account for the severity of Japan's school regulations]. Yet the deeper and more fundamental reason is that the Japanese people, especially teachers, have poisoned junior high and high schools with the disease of "homogenitis" (group conformism). This is a very dreadful disease in which blending oneself with the prevailing surroundings is considered better than stating one's own opinion or way of thinking in terms of, "I am such and such," or "I believe in such and such." . . . The unfortunate thing is, the majority of students contract "homogenitis" from the teachers who are inflicted with the disease. Because of the strange regulations which govern them from the tops of their heads to the tips of

12 *DWSR! Part 3*, p. 170.
their toes, they follow along without making judgment and without nourishing any suspicion or dissatisfaction, becoming like elephants or tigers in the zoo, who can't do anything without orders. Thus they turn into "wait-for-the-order humans" (shijimachiningen) who can't do anything without their homogenitis-inflicted teachers telling them, "Do this! Do that!"

Hayashi thus implies that conformity is structure and not culture, nurture and not nature. The school regulations have "robbed" children of what is originally and rightfully theirs: their individuality. Conformity, therefore, is the illness and individuality is the norm. Likewise, his handwritten decree at the opening of Part 1:

Somewhere today there is a student getting beaten up.
We must not give in!
Let us all raise our voices
To all the schools that rob students of their individualities:
"Down with school regulations!" . . . Hang in there, all junior high and high school students of Japan!"

Inhumanity of Kōsoku

Three junior high boys explained their plight to Hayashi: "If we go to Harajuku with haircuts like these, people will think we're on a school trip from out in the sticks somewhere." The kids are concerned with more than their reputations at Tokyo's famous juvenile hangout, however. According to Hayashi, when young boys have to shave their heads or young girls are forbidden from letting their hair touch the shoulders, they feel they are denied freedom of the body, freedom of speech, freedom of self-determination, and freedom to have their belongings kept private unless approached with a search warrant.13

More fundamentally, when students are made to look like monks, prisoners, or soldiers, when they have teachers hover over them ready to shave or cut their hair, their human rights are violated, stresses Hayashi. Since 1988, it has become increasingly common to hear of kōsoku problems discussed as

human rights issues. In April of that year, a lawyers’ association called the Defense Counsel for Children’s Human Rights formed to deal with complaints, "Declarations of Human Rights Violations," from students about serious abuses of teachers’ authority. Such organizations have become extremely helpful in helping students and their parents receive apologies and compensations, both in and out of court, for their problems with school authorities.

The following imaginary dialogue, from Hayashi's first book, depicts the way in which students would like to argue with and subvert educational authorities, if their voices could be heard, and it summarizes Hayashi's position that the kōsoku are unconstitutional, illegitimate, and inhumane: 14

Teacher: Hey, you! No perms allowed!
Student: Yes, sir. I have a perm. Is there something wrong with that?
Teacher: Don’t smart aleck me! It’s written in the regulations! Check your student handbook!
Student: But why can’t we have perms?
Teacher: Because it says so in the rules, that’s why you can’t have a perm!
Student: But those regulations ignore human rights. Please have them reformed. So why can’t we have perms?
Teacher: Because people will think you’re delinquent if you have a perm.
Student: But there are so many people on the street who have perms. Are you telling me they are all delinquent? I’m sure even people you know have perms.
Teacher: For adults it’s OK.
Student: Why is it wrong only for students?
Teacher: Because perms cost a lot of money. It’s a burden on your parents.
Student: I got a perm with my own pocket money that I saved up. My parents said it was OK. That’s why I don’t want you telling me perms are forbidden. And I still don’t get why perms are forbidden anyway.
Teacher: OK! When you get a perm you pay so much attention to your hair that could otherwise be spent on your studies.
Student: Oh? There is no connection between perming your hair and studying! Give me proof if there is. Show me some statistics from the Ministry of Education!
Teacher: You cheeky little brat! I’m going to write this down on your naishinshō! A rule’s a rule, so you just have to follow it, that’s all!
Student: There now, please don’t threaten me. Wearing one’s own hair according to one’s own taste should be the freedom of each

individual. The School Education Law emphasizes the individual freedom and independence of students, as in, "Education shall aim for the actualization of human character... the value of the individual shall be honored... fulfillment of the independent spirit..." Teacher: I get it. I get it. That's fine with me but I don't know what the other teachers will do when they catch you. Student: At that time, I'll count on you as my ally.

Human Rights and the Student Body

It would be fairly easy for some to dismiss Hayashi's work as a typical product of the rebellion of youth. In some ways it is, but it is not similar to the way that young people of the previous generation rebelled. In the sixties and seventies, the dictum that, "if you are not a Marxist at twenty, you have no heart, but if you are still a Marxist at age thirty, you have no brain," was popular in Japan, as many of Japan's young radicals were quick to join the workaholic, conservative white collar labor force and leave their peace signs behind them. For young people of Hayashi's generation, however, the story is different. The entire system of kosoku and academic credentialism militates against forgiveness for the ephemeral turbulence of youth. A violation reported on the naishinsô may damage a student's academic goals for life, and unlike the situation for their parents, most of these violations are not in the same category as holding sit-ins, protesting war or advocating a political ideology. They are in the category of letting the hair grow a centimeter too long, forgetting to fold the anklets in the proper trifold, wearing colored underwear, taking a part-time job at McDonald's, driving a motorcycle, or using a hair dryer.

Even the time spent to organize a protest movement, as Hayashi and other students have done, can impede the pace of scholastic progress necessary to enter university. Hayashi himself spent two years at a yobikô before entering the Nihon University Faculty of Law. Disillusioned, he dropped out and returned to his writing - a move that is indeed unusual, since university education in Japan is not considered difficult, once all of the hurdles to gain admission are met. The other fourteen boys who joined his signature drive have all taken
regular "salaryman" jobs, Hayashi says, but as for their movement in high school to challenge school regulations, "They have not forgotten."

Dropping out of university, establishing himself as a writer at a young age, successfully rebelling against entrenched structures of authoritarianism with little support from his elders, not even his parents - these are not typical life experiences for Japanese young people. Yet what makes this young rebel more typical of his generation is the ahistorical nature of his argument. This is true for many of his older educational rights mentors as well: they draw from the well of democratic language as though "constitutional protection," "human rights," and "individual liberty" were concepts indigenous to Japan.

But it is important to remember that while the democratic lexicon was largely imported from the West in the late nineteenth century and popularized at the start of the Occupation period, the system of emperor-worship imposed on the Japanese people in the nineteenth century also seemed alien; yet it was such an ideology that degenerated into the ultranationalism exploited by the Japanese military. As a result of Japan's defeat in World War II, young people of Hayashi's generation were brought up in an educational system that disdained the prewar educational system with its mythmaking of Japanese history. But the postwar educational system has thrown the baby out with the bathwater in avoiding Japan's recent past rather than seeking to understand and interpret it. At the time Hayashi was in high school (he graduated in 1986), it was the social norm to shun conversation about the emperor, the national flag, and other reminders of nationalism. It was the norm to be seen as neither for nor against nor even neutral about love and pride for one's country, but more preferably, avoidant.

Critical of American education, I often got cornered into denying a self-congratulatory posture every time Hayashi insisted that American schools, even with their gun-toters and drug dealers, were better than those of Japan.
Yet I began to see that when he made his comparative remarks, he drove home but a simple point: the Japanese do not defend their rights; Americans do. In the following conversation, he convinced me, on the matter of "underwear inspection." In the more "innocuous" instances of this rare but infamous practice, teachers will inspect girls' suitcases before embarking on a school excursion. In the more egregious cases, students are strip searched and told they are as worthless as prostitutes or bar hostesses if their underwear is anything but unfrilled regulation white:15

H.T.: Do American schools have anything such as the underwear inspection?
M.T.M: I've heard about that in the news. No, America has nothing like it. It's unbelievable.
H.T. (strongly): Yes, that's what I'm saying, you may hear about it in the news but that's all. As for students who go to such schools, no matter how disgusting they think it is, they just reluctantly go along with it. And their parents are stupid. Everyone just keeps silent. But if this were an American school, what would happen? It would be a huge problem.
M.T.M: You're right.
H.T.: The students would flatly refuse to allow such a thing and their parents would naturally complain on their behalf. But there's no such thing in Japan. That's why I'm saying America is wonderful. I think it's a good place. It's because their consciousness of rights is very high.

In Hayashi's work the issue is not just conformity versus individuality, where his argument is well pronounced but sociologically thin; nor is the topic America versus Japan, where his comments in the interview were employed liberally but with functional pragmatism. Hayashi speaks no English and has never been to the United States or any other foreign country. His first two volumes address virtually no international comparisons. Exceptions include the cover of his first book, which features a delinquent-looking character extending his middle finger, a better approximation, perhaps, of the sentiments behind the expression, "Down with...!" Part 2 features a small illustration of two faces, a

15 Interview with Hayashi Takeshi, October 1, 1993.
Japanese labeled "gloomy" and a foreigner labeled "bright." The caption states: "How enjoyable it would be to live in a foreign country where everyone is free! Japanese schools are terrible in comparison." It is not until the end of his more mature and somber third volume that he discusses his topic of "homogenitis" as the way he would have to explain Japan's educational system if he were in a conversation with foreigners. (At this point, he says he has been collecting a great deal of material concerning education in Europe and America; we can perhaps expect more comparative notations from his upcoming fourth volume.)

Set in this ahistorical context, therefore, his more provocative, more exclamatory message surrounds the issue of constraint of the body vs. freedom of the body. He is no doubt naively influenced by the West, as Japanese educators have long been. Yet as the words, "democracy," "freedom," and "rights" are trumpeted throughout the opus, the weighty concepts are streamlined to serve a utilitarian purpose, disengaged from their historical or cultural contexts. Hayashi merely points out, here are the regulations that the schools invent, and here are the principles that they violate.

There are no grand themes in book. And why should there be? It would be unfair to compare Hayashi with other protestors of other generations, whose mantras were "the war to end all wars," "peace and love," and so on. Hayashi's theme is neither global nor national but as local as one's own body, one's own self. The weight of the argument is concisely, consistently, corporeal: it seeks the freedom to dress as one pleases, to wear one's individual hairstyle, to walk home from school with friends of choice and in the direction one pleases, to have the privacy of one's belongings protected. On its surface, it has nothing to do with curriculum, ideology, education in America versus education in Japan, the past or the future.

"Rights" as Hayashi uses the term means simply that either you have freedom of the body or you don't. In his view, America does and Japan doesn't.
He doesn't open a space for discussing the universality or relativity of his position, but neither does he close it.

Yet his unaffected approach of attacking all of Japanese education in terms of the way students feel the constraint of bodily freedom and movement is not the weakness of this work; it is its strength and its poignancy. Perhaps the imported words of "freedom," "individuality" and "rights" have structured the verbalization of pain and the way that distress is mediated to the individual. Yet to focus on the basic emotions of that distress rather than the origins of the language used to express it, we can sense that the young student body which expresses the pain of educational experiences, whether psychological or physical, has become the target space onto which the assaults of more complex problems in education and the larger political economy have been directed.

**Beyond "East" and "West"**

While studying Hayashi's case against student regulations, a formal incident of corporal punishment occurred in Singapore and developed into an international commotion. In May, 1994, a nineteen-year old American, Michael Fay, was sentenced to six lashes of a cane by the Singapore government for the charge of vandalism. The highly publicized incident created the impression to many Americans that "controlled," that is, politically sanctioned violence such as corporal punishment, and the benefits of social order created by fear of punishment, is a distinctively "Asian" norm. In contrast, the lack of discipline and uncontrolled violence, such as rioting, was seen as the more characteristically "Western" way to violate the rights of children. The Singapore incident also coincided with a political climate in the People's Republic of China that rejected the Western definition of human rights, especially the definition in the United States that failed to acknowledge its own hypocritical treatment of its citizens. Such a context opened the possibility that the "national" images of
America and Japan would become highlighted in their "civilizational" forms, as in "Western" or "Euro-American," and "Eastern," or "Asian."

I started to apprehensively imagine that if Hayashi's case were to be heard now in America of 1994, in the wake of the Michael Fay incident, and in the climate beckoning the dawn of a Pacific age, that the narrative of *Down with School Regulations!* would follow a plotline similar to the Michael Fay story. The *kōsoku* might be seen as the "Asian" way of discipline. Hayashi might be cast as the lone dissenter applying universal human rights in a way that mimics Americanization. The application of human rights to specific situations in the context of Japanese education, as depicted in the foregoing section, would be surrounded either by smugly imagined connotations of the righteousness of the democratic way, or, conversely, by a view of the failure of Western democracy to realize anything like the stabilized social order characteristic of Asia. What I am concerned with in this writing, however, are the concerns of the "non-elite," the children and adults who support critiques of corporal discipline such as that of Hayashi. Voices of such individuals would be lost in any reifying "civilizational" framework that only interprets national identities as culturally unchallenged, and fails likewise to steer a course between absolutism and relativism.

*Again and again in Down with School Regulations!* the reasons provided for students and parents failing to speak out against regulations have to do with the *naishinshō* and its volatility as an impediment that can permanently thwart a child's path to success. Likewise, the reasons children often do not inform their parents of egregious violations is for fear the parents will not believe them or take them seriously – all in the name of keeping the path clear for entrance exam drills. The *kōsoku* and the political economy that values such conformity and discipline of future workers thus inhibit the expression of the students' legitimate frustrations and pain.
It is this aspect of the kōsoku as a strategy of silencing which facile national stereotypes bulldoze over. Images of national identity privilege their own standards and ignore the myriad "local" voices; in the case of the kōsoku problem, the accepted cultural standard is the nail that dares not protrude. That standard ignores the political conditions that inhibit other nails from letting the constructions they support reveal their worm-eaten holes. National or "civilizational" identities also ignore global issues which transcend borders, factors such as technological linkages, macroeconomic strategies, and knowledge convergence. Finally, national identities have been subject to a grammar which until recently posited West or North as "subject," acting upon East or South as "object," rather than looking at the vulnerability of borders, the exchange between and among nations, and the continuous state of cultural realignment.

For these reasons I would like to invite another possibility of understanding: the consideration that Hayashi, as a human agent arguing against severe regulation of the human body, is not alone in his protest, nor is such a role as his historically unprecedented. Below, I have outlined six other possibilities for problematizing our knowledge of kōsoku so as to question the self-limiting categories of "Japan" and "America," or "East" and "West." The possibilities cited thus help to situate the significance of Down with School Regulations! as more consistent with changing Japanese cultural patterns than it might seem at first blush.

The Kōsoku as a Reminder of Militarism

To begin with, the precisionism dictated by the kōsoku—socializing children to obey the microscopic school regulations verbatim or to risk potentially irreversible punishment—seems inconsistent with other commonly recognized characteristics of Japanese culture, such as relativity, flexibility, or
tolerance of ambiguity. True, Japan is also known for delicate rules of conduct and speech, but these are generally subject to informal social sanctions rather than the formal disciplinary mechanisms of schools. It is also true that many of the indigenous Japanese arts as well as traditional and modern sports demand rigorous self-discipline, characterized by such concepts as seishin (spirit), shitsuke (discipline) and gaman (endurance). But as anthropologist Robert J. Smith reveals, the relationship between instructor and pupil in such an instance must be built on trust and mutual acknowledgment of the benefits of the training, for "What makes such treatment tolerable is one thing alone: the pupil must remain firmly convinced of the absolute justice and impartiality of the teacher's assessment of his or her progress."\(^{16}\) Clearly, the contribution of *Down with School Regulations!* is to reveal that it is not only the opinion of one young rebel but of the thousands of young people and their parents who have written to him that today's students are not at all convinced of the "absolute justice and impartiality of the teacher's assessment." The perception instead is that teachers are out of touch with basic humanitarian needs of students.

Japan's kōsoku, after all, signify a strict model of logocentrism, the supremacy of written law or words usually associated with Western civilization. Some schools even consider that the regulation codes are an analogous extension of their Constitution, as in one rule stating, "Just as the nation has the Constitution, the schools have the kōsoku. Just as we obey the constitution, we must obey the kōsoku." According to education critic Sakamoto Hideo, such a stipulation is not uncommon.\(^{17}\) It is a sadly ironic analogy, however, considering the unconstitutionality of the corporal punishment used to


\(^{17}\) Sakamoto, *Kōsoku no hanashi*, p. 22.
however, considering the unconstitutionality of the corporal punishment used to enforce the regulations.

The rules may also be less redolent of the particularist features of Japanese culture than of the features of militarism or a police state – features that are both universal, in the sense that all cultures have had some sort of militarism, and particular, in that Japan's educational system was heavily yoked to militarism prior to the World War II.

If we examine the historical precedent, the roots of the Japanese connection between militarism and education date from the Tokugawa era (1600-1868) when the civil and military arts, bun and bu respectively, were joined in the formal education of the samurai class. But we find less evidence here for unbroken cultural continuity of the strict discipline characteristic of today's kōsoku. The grounds for military training were often located on or very near school premises, and a typical regimen was to study book learning in the morning and military training in the afternoon. In such schools, etiquette was strictly observed, but formal school rules were apparently limited to school-related concerns. R.P. Dore, the leading scholar on Tokugawa education, lists the most common of them as "quarrelling, talking during classes, running in corridors, banging doors and partitions, scrambling for clogs when leaving, talking or laughing in a loud voice, leaving one's seat without permission, illegally delaying one's return from the lavatory, abusive speech, late arrival, illegal absence, the offering of false excuses, and in one case, lewd talk of women." The most common forms of punishment were expulsion and cleaning chores, and corporal punishment was rare. Dore cites two schools that used caning and one that used moxa cautery, burning powder on the skin. Moxa cautery is also a disciplinary technique still used in some Japanese households.

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today, but it is supposed to have a medicinal quality traditionally believed to exorcise evil spirits. (The method causes some Westerners to cringe but it is perhaps no less unpleasant than cod liver oil.) While Dore does not compare military regulations with the academic regulations, he does imply that the academic portion of a samurai boy's education was probably more rigorous and challenging in general than the military portion of his schooling.¹⁹

The population of samurai in this era, however, was less than 10 percent of the population. If their educational methods utilized but a few forms of corporal discipline, the education of commoners provided even fewer, Dore implies. One of the prominent and coveted features of Japanese history was the country's widespread education of commoners: it is believed (based on Dore's research) that about 40 percent of boys and 10 percent of girls received basic education outside the home during the Tokugawa period. The commoners' schools were considerably less strict than those of the military class, and as Dore depicts them, were quite relaxed: "It seems to have been a genial kind of education, predicated on the assumption that children were basically well-disposed creatures who could be easily persuaded to co-operate, whose delinquencies were mostly harmless and who had a right to their occasional fun. They did not necessarily have to be beaten for every sneeze in order to tame the devil in them." Forms of punishment were rarely corporal and at worst, usually aimed to produce noise rather than pain.²⁰ One would have a weak case, therefore, in justifying the kōsoku as traditionally Japanese.

In letter less than spirit, today's elaborate codes of kōsoku recall the nationalistic education instituted in the late nineteenth century, which, along with military conscription, consolidated the nation of Japan. At first, in

¹⁹ Dore, Education in Tokugawa Japan, p. 313.

²⁰ Dore, Education in Tokugawa Japan, pp. 254, 273.
preparation for the establishment of universal education, Japan was mostly impressed by the pedagogical ideas of the Swiss and the Americans, and by the highly centralized administrative structure of the French. With the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian war, Prussian models of discipline and militarism became favored at the same time that American-style individual-centered learning was brought into serious question. In 1880, under the guidance of Motoda Eifu, an adviser who favored a return to Confucian principles, an ordinance was passed introducing military drills for educational discipline. Mori Arinori, Japan's first minister of education, who had studied American and European models of education and social organization extensively, had also decided to favor the more collective ideas of the Germans when, in 1885, he issued a series of ordinances establishing the organization of Japan's modern educational system into elementary, middle and normal schools and universities. The goals for the new system, according to Ronald Anderson, stressed "(1) loyalty to the Emperor-state, (2) productive ability, and (3) military training." At the start of Japan's entry into war in 1937, schools were again reorganized as Prussian-style "people's schools," (kokumin gakkō), and both the pedagogy and physical training were geared more directly to filling the needs of the military until the defeat of Japan in 1945.

The schools which use kōsoku thus resemble the prewar linkage of education with military discipline, but such an interface does not represent the entire picture of today's educational system. The schools Hayashi decries for the severity of their kōsoku are largely junior high and senior high schools. Joseph Tobin's work on preschools in Japan demonstrates that children begin their foothold on the education ladder with a pedagogy often quite tolerant of the

variations in children’s development, and in some cases perhaps too
un-disciplined for Americans. 22 Few elementary schools have rigid school
regulations: Hayashi opens his first book reminiscing about his pleasant days in
elementary school, when teachers played dodgeball with children who did not
even know how to read the characters spelling “corporal punishment.” And on
the final rung of the education ladder, with the exception of a handful of
traditional women’s colleges, the colleges and universities have not only
abandoned most forms of kōsoku, they have become notorious "leisurelands"
where formalized compliance often seems the exception rather than the rule.

In the broader cultural and historical context, therefore, there may not be
enough consistency to label kōsoku as the unchallenged ”Japanese way." But
what can be said about the period of intensive regulating in today’s education is
that it clearly overlaps with the period of intense competitiveness in entrance
examinations. Though one evaluation method pulls the student toward a value
system of equality (kōsoku) and the other toward a value system of
competitiveness (exams), both are largely products of the postwar frenzy to
achieve economic stability - for individual families as well as the nation – in a
short period of time – and to do it through education.

Furthermore, while critics suggest a continuity between the prewar
character of the Japanese police state and the present condition of
over-regulating in Japanese education, there is, of course, the fundamental
difference: the present educational system does not buttress the foundations of
the militarist nation by inculcating the ideology of emperor worship in the
schools. The point has often been made, however, that the present system now
serves the nation by supplying a compliant, well-organized work force to the

22 Joseph J. Tobin, David Y.H. Wu and Dana H. Davidson, Preschool in Three
Cultures: Japan, China and the United States (New Haven, Yale University Press,

353
labor pools toward the aim of economic rather than military nationalism. In addition, some changes which are said to glorify militarism have been introduced in the curriculum, but amid widespread publicity and controversy. The possibility that the schools could return to the cozy relationship with militarism as it existed in the past still remains remote, however. Instead, other signifiers such as the militaristic school uniforms and regulations, along with frequently-used sayings which refer to exam pressure as the "entrance exam war," students as "soldiers," and major exams as "critical battles" function as subtle, metaphoric reminders of the strategic importance of educational competitiveness on the national scale.

The salient point here is that the implied connection today between education and militarism, even if atavistic and symbolic, pinpoints why Hayashi's emphasis on bodily freedom is on target. Both militaristic discipline and the kōsoku are practices which violate the human body. Japan, after all, has not always been a rationally unified state as it is today nor a heavily militarized state as it was during the second world war. At the start of the Meiji period (1868) which ushered in Japan's modernization, the newly formed nation was highly decentralized, divided into 240 han (prefectures). Thus, when the new army began to conscript young soldiers from the provinces, historian Takashi Fujitani notes that the standardized stipulations, governing not only military technique but control of the body over such things as sleep patterns and bowel movements, created a tremendous psychological impact on the young men and on all villagers in general. This control of the body through militarization perhaps became "normalized" - made into the standard of "normal" by authoritarian governance - but it was never something that became naturalized among individual men. Until this day, soldiers and their loved ones, asked to
recall some aspect of their military experiences, are likely to express some way
that the military affected their bodies above all else.23

In a similar way, Hayashi remembers how dismayed he was when he first
entered junior high school and had his own body regulated by the kōsoku. He
had to wear the regulation black uniform, cap and white socks, and to cut his
hair in the "nerdy" nearly-shaven crew cut. In the beginning, he had every
intention of obeying the rules compliantly, for to not do so would be to accept
the label of "juvenile delinquent." After several months, however, he started
looking on the teachers as his enemies. In contrast to his halcyon days of
elementary school, he remembers little else about his three years of junior high
school except for the practice of corporal punishment – and that inflicted by one
teacher in particular. This teacher straddled young boys like a pro wrestler to
beat them, and delivered rounds of face-slapping to students who skimped on
their cleaning chores. In a manner Hayashi says was more like a gorilla than an
educator, he caused severe injuries beating up a boy who was watching television
past the curfew hour on a school trip.24

For Hayashi to remember first and foremost this pain of injury to the
student body was not without precedent in Japanese history. Soldiers of the
military Empire and students of the economic superpower both wore the
blueprint of authoritarianism on their bodies, bodies which in turn became
building blocks for the continuous reproduction of that authoritarianism.
During Japan’s transition to modernity, as Fujitani’s study illustrates, this
"standardizing" of bodies was the mission of rationalizing the nation: it was

23 Takashi Fujitani, "Local Cultures/Military Cultures: Discipline and
Nationalism in Modern Japan," presentation at East-West Center, Honolulu, April
12, 1994. Used with permission.

necessary for the central government to "homogenize" its populace as a way to achieve greater social control.\textsuperscript{25}

In the contemporary situation, however, the control is more elusively directed, in the sense, as I have already mentioned, that it is not the central government which \textit{directly} dictates the standard uniforms, behavior and discipline of students. The central government governs the standardization of the curriculum and university entrance exam; most other standards are established by the direct actions of local governments, school boards (non-elected), individual schools, and in the case of testing methods and procedures, commercialized cram schools. Government which \textit{directly} dictates the standard uniforms, behavior and discipline of students. The central government governs the standardization of the curriculum and university entrance exam; most other standards are established by the direct actions of local governments, school boards (non-elected), individual schools, and in the case of testing methods and procedures, commercialized cram schools.

\textbf{Hayashi as a Mediator}

Another point of comparison between the early phase of military discipline and the contemporary state of educational discipline has to do with the role of mediating structures. Because pre-modern Japan was greatly decentralized, the early authorities of the central government who entered villages to recruit soldiers and re-construct their standards of behavior were not synchronized with the attitudes of local officials. The latter often held more allegiance to the needs of the draftees rather than the purposes of the state, and were known to offer assistance to those who wished to evade their conscription.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{25} Fujitani, \textit{op. cit.}

\textsuperscript{26} \textit{ibid.}
In the contemporary situation, it is true that local boards of education and other local government officials have some degree of administrative autonomy from the Ministry of Education, and more than is often realized. Nevertheless, the policies and procedures, the general intentions and certainly the language used are highly synchronized and uniform in comparison with early modern Japan. It would be a rare situation for any official to play the role of advocate on behalf of students against educational authorities, whether local, prefectural or national, public or private. Instead, the role of advocacy is now being belatedly undertaken by various lawyer's associations, under the theme of children's rights or human rights in general.

Hayashi's role is not only to support frustrated students through his empathic power of the pen, which allows students to vent their frustrations through his books and advice column. He also offers tips on legal courses of action to take, and he has also taken up the direct role of mediator himself. In 1988 he received a telephone call from the mother of a girl in a large municipal junior high school located in Hayashi's home prefecture. Hayashi agreed to meet the mother, her daughter and her daughter's friend to discuss the severity of student beatings at their school. The mother's daughter had been labeled an "insubordinate" for taking a stand asking teachers to be "a little more considerate of the feelings of students." The teachers obviously did not appreciate these words of constructive criticism, and they responded with acts of humiliation and corporal punishment against her and her friend. In addition to this problem, other girls at the school had their hair pulled and their perms dunked into water. One group of girls was severely beaten for possession of Valentine's Day chocolates. Another group of students was beaten until bloody, for walking away from their desks during study hour. Some students were beaten for going to noodle shops, talking while cleaning, or wearing ribbons in their hair. Most ominously, students believed that at least one student per day was
brought to a secluded meeting room on the second floor for a "lynching" (severe bullying).

Hayashi acted on behalf of concerned students and parents by filing a "Declaration of Human Rights" to an attorney's association calling attention to the inhumanity of four named teachers and seeking an end to student regulations. In so doing, he took the heat of inevitable negative reaction away from the students and parents. As an established writer, he was also able to get the incident well-publicized. The principal and teachers of the school staunchly denied any wrongdoing, but finally it was agreed that 3 of the 4 teachers would be transferred to other schools.27

**Westernized language, Japanized syntax**

Importantly, as revealed in the foregoing example, the constitutional and legal language sounds Americanized (as it in fact often is), the method of dealing with problems as they occur is more characteristically, unlitigiously, Japanese. Citing from the counsel of attorneys, the first volume of *Down with School Regulations* advises students who have been beaten by teachers to see a physician, get a certified assessment of their injuries and tape record statements from any witnesses. Then they should consider the following steps. First, they should obtain an apology from the perpetrating teacher and principal, and obtain consolation money as a settlement. If this does not work, they should contact the mass media and cause embarrassment to the school. The third course of action if the media fail to intimidate the school is for the student to seek the help from an attorney. The final course of action, if an out-of-court settlement

27 DWSR, Part 3, pp. 79-128
cannot be reached by any other means, is to file a lawsuit and contact the police. 28

Xenophilia as "Ordinarily Japanese"

Some might regard Hayashi as infatuated with American legalese: yet even this is historically preceded in other eras when Japan borrowed heavily from Western nations, for example, under the motto, "Western knowledge, Japanese spirit." Even before Western knowledge became attractive, China had been Japan's cultural mentor for several centuries, and Japanese education borrowed abundantly from Chinese knowledge. It is not surprising, then, that the Confucian scholars of the feudal era were known to (according to the rival "National Learning" scholars) "adulate the traditions of China and scorn those of their own country." The same criticism resounded with the important "Dutch scholars" of the nineteenth century who introduced Western learning to Japan. In Dore's paraphrasing, critics claimed they would "allow themselves to be fascinated with useless toy devices and theories of no practical value: they have a taste for foreign luxuries and they would even flirt with Christianity." 29 Yet both the Confucian and the Dutch scholars were, of course, important catalysts of change in Japanese education, history and culture.

Of course, Japan never became another China or another Holland: cultures adapt and realign themselves in continuous adjustment to new phenomena. Hayashi's outcry against "homogenitis" and the regulation of the student body are indeed influenced by American ideas of educational freedom. But this is not new,


29 Dore, Education in Tokugawa Japan, pp. 30,168.
and in the history of Japanese education it might make him more usual than otherwise. Since the founding of the Japanese nation in 1868, the country has made the institution of education its priority, and in order to do so, ideas were generously imported from the West, from France, Prussia and the United States, all of them structurally amalgamated with the more traditional Chinese and indigenous Japanese features.

**Mutability of Boundaries East and West**

On the Japanese side, Hayashi’s work and movement might be taken less seriously, not for "Americanization" per se than for his youthfulness and failure to complete his education. Seniority and pedigree are still the leading indicators for respect among the posse of Japanese social critics. The danger of trivializing Hayashi’s work as "Americanization" may be more likely to occur from the ranks of Western scholars and journalists themselves. On the one hand, critics emphasize that the Western imagination greatly exaggerated the potential and probability that Japan would eventually become Americanized. Journalist James Fallows (catching up to what academic scholars have been saying all along), for example, recalls in his recently released book a *Life Magazine* special edition from 1964 in which various portents on the Japanese social landscape, such as the tendency of Japanese young people to decry their workaholic fathers (a lament also voiced by Hayashi), were marshaled to usher in the coming Westernization of Japan. Of course, it never happened.\(^{30}\)

On the other hand, thirty years later, an increasingly popular position is to suggest the need for increased Asianization of the West. Kishore Mahbubani,
permanent secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Singapore, for example, hopes that more Americans will visit Asia and thus, "come to realize that their society has swung too much in one direction: liberating the individual while imprisoning society."
The experience Americans would have in feeling safety on the streets in Asia would help them "begin to understand that freedom can also result from greater social order and discipline."^31

Thus the boundary guarding the exclusiveness of East and West, or Japan and the United States, has exposed its vulnerability. There is no longer the expectation that the East will become like the West, or that the twain dividing the two civilizations shall never meet. Many in America would not disagree with Mahbubani. Some critics even sided with Singapore's caning method, believing it to be preferable or superior to America's own disciplinary negligence. Surely many side with Asian leaders' point that America should also recognize its own forms of abuse as another form of human rights violations. At the same time, many people both inside and outside of Asia feared that the new assertiveness of Asian leaders such as Singapore's former president Lee Kuan Yew, who deny the universality of "human rights" while campaigning to restore traditional values such as those of Confucianism, might become a mandate for the legitimization of despotism.

What is less well-known, moreover, is that legally sanctioned corporal punishment still does exist in American schools. The unexpected cheerleading around the Michael Fay incident prompted two education specialists, who are also attorneys, Charles H. Rathbone and Ronald T. Hyman, to draw attention to the overlooked fact that many American schools do practice legally mandated corporal punishment. In

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the U.S., there is no federal statute prohibiting corporal punishment, and only one-half of the states expressly forbid it. Some local districts which permit corporal punishment "merely specify the length, width, and thickness of the paddle to be used." Other districts allow carefully supervised corporal punishment only when it can be proved that all other disciplinary methods have failed. Both attorneys believe, however, that the tendency for states to enact legislation justifying physical force may be on the rise.32

"Americanizations"

In such a scenario that undoes or counterbalances the long legacy of "modernization theory," which falsely imagined the perfectly linear Westernization of the East, the voice of a Japanese youth beaming with some naive Americanisms would be out of synch. It can no longer be assumed, however, that the "Westernized" veneer of youth has anything to do with Westernization, Americanization, or modernization. For instance, Hayashi implicated that xenophilia for Western countries can be a regretful condition of national self-abnegation and distrust of elites, as is his own. Critics such as Hayashi hope to insulate themselves from a possible new "Asiaism" that might amount to a fast-forwarding of wartime pan-Japanism, a re-creation of the prewar "Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere."

Many foreigners in Japan also have had the experience of believing a Japanese friend to be Westernized or cosmopolitan only to find out how much that person is unaware of his or her own feelings of national exclusion. This was the theme of Tokyo

32 Charles H. Rathbone and Ronald T. Hyman, "Singapore-Style Discipline: Corporal Punishment is Educationally Unsound and Fundamentally Wrong," Commentary in Education Week (vol. 13, no. 6), June 1, 1994, p. 36.
Pop, a film from the mid-1980s, in which a young American woman breaks up with her Japanese boyfriend when he is unable to let go of his prejudice that she will never understand him as a Japanese.

Perhaps the more likely significance of the Japanese touting of Western images is that often there is little significance at all. I have met some Japanese young people who do not know that Coke, Big Macs or Mickey Mouse are American in origin, just as some American youngsters don't know their Panasonic stereos or Sony TVs are Japanese in origin. American males (and females) are now wearing the shaved hairdo that Hayashi's retinue are railing against, while their adventurous Japanese counterparts get perms to sport the Elvis or Jimmy Dean look.

If there is no single theme connecting the kaleidoscope of Westernized pop culture signs, or the language of human rights and individual rights, other than the fact of their popularity among Japanese young people, then Hayashi's embrace of these signs should identify him as nothing more than an ordinary Japanese young adult. To only read "Americanization" into his work, the possibility that I feared, would be not only to recognize the ordinariness of the language he latches onto. It would also be to attach labels of national identity that are no longer as restrictive as they once were and to therefore misread the thrust of his argument as an aberration rather than a natural consequence of overly-regulated education.

Thus, the space for understanding Hayashi's case against the homogenitis of the Japanese student body would not seem to neatly locate itself in the language of modernization that implies a typology of convergence, the loosening of national identities, pointing out that the Japanese are becoming more like American, or vice versa. Hayashi's Americanization is naive at worst – since he does not seem to recognize America's own educational "human rights" record – or pragmatic at best –
since he borrows legal codes precedented in America to counter the violence inherent in the codes of school regulations. And surely there is even less reason to believe that *Down with School Regulations!* is intended to consolidate any sort of meaning of "being Japanese." Instead, it is important to recognize that either of the categories of understanding, whether pointing to the loosening or tightening of national identity, both presuppose an immutably unitarian model of "being Japanese." This chapter questioned that model of unity. It proposes instead that arguments springing forth from young "rebels" such as Hayashi Takeshi be seen not as un-Japanese but as suppressed or subdued voices of the ordinarily Japanese – of the "other nails" which dare to protrude "all the way" and never get hammered down.

Some changes on the contemporary Japanese landscape may also heighten the audibility of such underheard voices. In 1988, the Ministry advised local boards of education to do away with the more detailed and severe regulations in their schools. Yet in Hayashi's words, this amounted to "sprinkling some water on hot lava." According to a survey of seventy-seven junior and senior high schools conducted by the National Education Institute, some senior high schools eased their regulations, while many junior high schools made some regulations even stricter, especially on dress codes (31 percent, stricter; 25 percent, more relaxed) and hairstyles (25 percent stricter; 15 percent, more relaxed).34

33 *DWSR! Part 3,* p. 49.

34 *Japan Times,* May 12, 1990, p. 2. The survey followed up a 1984 study which looked at the regulations of 257 schools. The National Education Institute is affiliated with the Japan Teachers' Union, usually considered a rival of the Ministry of Education, although conflict between them has dwindled over the past
If public consciousness on the severity of kōsoku began to increase since then, it probably had less to do with the Ministry’s guidance, or efforts such as Hayashi’s, than with broadly changing socio-economic and political conditions. As seen in Chapter One, labor economists of advanced nations increasingly warn that militaristic, mass production methods of schooling and labor are no longer conducive to the changing technological environment that values creativity and individualized consumerism. Earlier chapters also revealed that Japan has had to adjust to this change during its longest postwar recession, in an international atmosphere compelling the country to soften its image and improve the welfare of its citizens. The declaration of a “lifestyle superpower” in 1992 reverberated in educational changes such as reduced dependence on commercial mock exams, a shortened schoolweek, and a renaissance of admonitions to respect and elevate the importance of the individual in education.

Meanwhile, a few particular incidents gained international notoriety – the third reason why the case against kōsoku may become more audible. Perhaps the most widely publicized incident occurred on July 6, 1990, when 15-year old Ishida Ryōko was rushing to her morning class. She had never been late to school before. Her school, Takatsuka High School, in Kobe, maintained a strict policy of shutting their 1.5 meter-high sliding metal gate at precisely 8:30 a.m. to discourage students from tardiness. “Tardiness and absence leads to delinquency,” according to the principal, Nomura Atsuo. The teacher in charge of operating the gate that morning, Hosoi Toshikiko, was disappointed with his record of letting 5 or 6 tardy boys slip by the gate. “Since then, I made up my mind to close the gate in an abrupt manner,” he later

decade. The Ministry of Education also conducted its own survey of regulations at that time, but the results were not revealed to the press.
told police. That morning, Ryōko barely made it to the gate by the 8:30 deadline. But she failed to pass through before Hosoi abruptly and punctually lowered the gate, crushing the young girl's head against the entrance post. Ryōko was rushed to a hospital where she later died of a fractured skull.\footnote{Japan Times, July 17, 1990, p. 4.}

Afterward, Nomura explained the "accident" to students by telling them it could have been avoided if students were tardy less often. The public, however, was greatly moved, and various symposia were held throughout Japan to discuss excessive kōsoku. The parents and students' most vocalized concern, however, remained that it would be too risky to speak out against the kōsoku, considering the power teachers have to prevent students from entering high school or university if they have violated the regulations.\footnote{Japan Times, August 23, 1990, p. 2.}

A significant challenge is thus posed by changing socio-economic conditions to the traditional, but often criticized preponderance of bureaucrats over the people (kansorininyū) that legitimates the practice of kōsoku and the persistence of rigidly enforced group conformism. This challenge coincides with other phenomenal changes in Japan in the mid-1990s, such as the end of thirty-eight years of single-party dominance by the Liberal-Democratic Party (LDP); the subsequent formation of a coalition between the LDP and the Social Democratic Party of Japan and election of the latter party's leader, Murayama Tomiichi, to the office of prime minister; the recovery of the nation from the massive 1995 Hanshin earthquake, the split among financial elites of the high yen, the confrontation with history in the fiftieth anniversary of World War II's end, and the rise of an apocalyptic religious cult that
killed several people in a Tokyo subway with fatal nerve gas. Yet the cloudy conditions could also open up a silver lining, however, if the atmosphere provides more fertility for discussion and debate of critical social and political issues. Perhaps then, dissenting ideas such as those of Hayashi Takeshi might generate some more productive results.

In August, 1993, for example, a junior high school group formed in Japan's Kansai area to protest student regulations. Like Hayashi, they also took as their motto, "The nail that protrudes all the way never gets hammered down." The youngsters sent a letter calling for an immediate end to the kōsoku to Akamatsu Ryōko, recently named education minister by then prime minister Hosokawa. While conceding that an end to all regulations was out of the question, Akamatsu, considered somewhat of a maverick, did have some acerbic words for the dreaded marugari, the close-cropped haircuts that are easily recognized insignia of many Japanese junior high school boys. One third of all public junior high schools require marugari, and teachers will sometimes stand by with shears or have students abide by a written contract to keep their hair cut short. Answering the students' letter publicly, the minister candidly stated, "As an individual, whenever I see the marugari, I am dismayed, because it reminds me of the soldiers who wore their hair that way during the war." She urged junior high schools and local authorities to follow the trend of the times and reconsider the necessity of the militaristic haircuts. In so doing, however, she stopped short - as the Ministry did in 1988 - of assuming authority to end needless or outmoded regulations.37

Nevertheless, the Osaka Municipal Board of Education took an unexpected step of abolishing the marugari after hearing her remarks. An adult group also formed in

37 Asahi Shimbun, September 4, 1993, p. 3.

367
the Kansai area to give direct support to the junior high school students. The group has since then asked another thirteen schools to abolish the marugari, and remains active in attempts to abolish the kōsoku.38

Such developments still do not seem promising to an activist such as Hayashi Takeshi, for whom work is never finished. As stated at the outset, Hayashi is skeptical about the way the Japanese government and businesses are now touting the importance of the individual. To him, the rhetoric does not mesh with the present reality of what you see from day to day in urban Tokyo: husbands and wives who rarely see one another because of the expectations of company life on working men.

But Hayashi himself will not break away from his own workaholic schedule of reading hundreds of letters per month, writing his books and columns, helping troubled students seek legal advice and collecting his own library of books on educational problems. Hayashi believes there are few Japanese young people like himself. He prefers to compare his spunk with that popular entertainers than with that of the other "new species" (shinjinrui, like America's "Generation X").

While it is true that few Japanese young people have his willpower, my impression of Hayashi as more "ordinary" than I first suspected was directed at the basic substance and style of his argument. He effectively demonstrates that thousands of young people have tremendous conflicts with school regulations, and he relays their frustrations in the common language of young people, with defiance, directness, and desire to subvert the existing structures of authority.

Learning about Hayashi for me was also a process of self-learning. As conditioned as I am as a scholar to be wary of *nihonjūron* (the theory of Japanese uniqueness and superiority), I felt sorrow when Hayashi outwardly expressed hatred of Japan. There must be another way to open the history books for young people without the prejudice of inducing debilitating nationalism. Claiming to have no educational mentors in history, Hayashi's most frequently mentioned educational heroes are a television creation of the 1980s, "Mr. Kimpatsu," (*Kimpatsu Sensei*), a long-haired, empathic teacher who took time to understand students and their problems on an individual basis, and real-life teachers who resemble Mr. Kimpatsu.

At the same time, *Down with School Regulations!* represents an alternative and overdue cultural artifact that recognizes and takes seriously the presence of dissenting voices in Japan. When we think merely in terms of the unitary images of national or civilizational identity, we often react only to the dominant images of the mass media, the sanctioned stereotypes and worn-out dictums of collective identity. This is especially true of the popular image of Japan and of Asia, as highly conformist societies where nails that stick out do get hammered down. Often, however, as I have tried to demonstrate, the many nails that have suppressed their nonconformist urges also deserve to be included in the cultural landscape. Lately, young people such as Hayashi Takeshi have ventured to portray a new impression of the subjective human agency in Japan: that by persisting "all the way" with one's ideals, or by becoming nails that resist getting hammered down, obsolete constructions of human enterprise can be affected.
...to have the ability to make choices even without a test.

Definition of "liberal," Arimoto Masaaki, Executive Director, Osaka International Peace Center

Since the end of the Cold War, it has become increasingly apparent that a nation's security can no longer be sustained simply by its armaments. The economic power of nations, along with education as a leading indicator of that power, have attained a new relevance in the discourse of international affairs. Rather than looking at education as a one-way factor contributing to economic strength, the purpose of this dissertation has emphasized that perceptions and patterns of global importance influence the way nations develop their educations, the way people develop a consciousness of the importance of knowledge, and the way education imparts a discourse of identity that shapes the self-awareness of individuals.

In America of the 1980s and Japan of the 1960s, national governments and business leaders began promoting narratives linking education with the economic strength of the nation. I have suggested a naming of such an educational system operating – or perceived to be operating – as an appendage of economic nationalism, as education *economicus*. The manifest imagery of education
economicus is that the individual, as *homo economicus*, acts in self-interest to improve her education, and in turn, her economic social status. The nation in turn benefits from the aggregate contributions of each individual's self-acquired knowledge.

However, because education *economicus* is also a representation of collective identity, and because education is a mediator between the identity formation of individuals and that of the nation, I have posed education *economicus* as a question. Inasmuch as education and economics affect all individuals on a highly personal basis, it is tempting to rush to quick solutions to the problems of how best to educate, and how best to economize. The nations of Japan and the United States are tightly intertwined economically, yet their educational systems have had diametrically opposite features. Leaders on both sides have succumbed to temptations of parading the Other's mirror image as the way things ought to be. American leaders envy the "efficiency" of Japan's system, while at the same time, Japan has expressed disenchantment with efficient, standardized education, and now wishes to cultivate creativity and respect for the individual.

Although it may be a useful and productive project to borrow yardstick images, I also believe that most comparative literature concerning the national significance of education in the past decade has focused on the expedient, seductive images promoting the "end" benefits of education, rather than on the more compelling, enigmatic issues of identity and the "means" of education. Education *economicus* should therefore ask: besides national economic advancement, what are the implications for the interrelationships among nation, knowledge and identity? This dissertation has focused on the Japanese precedent of education *economicus* as a way of refining and reflecting on this basic question.
The remainder of this chapter integrates some of the issues already discussed thus far with the question of Japan's social consciousness of education economicus; with questions that should be posed of education economicus in general, and finally with the suggestion that education economicus, qua economic nationalism and a narrative of collective identity, be re-conceptualized as a negotiation, rather than a settlement, of the centripetal and centrifugal forces in contemporary politics.

**Collective Consciousness of Education, Economicus?**

If I begin with the analogy that knowledge is the software of human resources, who in turn are the hardware of economic nationalism as weapons are for military nationalisms, I must first consider the consciousness of "economic nationalism" as a discourse of national identity. Here as elsewhere I employ Reich's definition of the "new" economic nationalism elevating the importance of knowledge, hence education, as a resource attracting economic activity (see Chapter One).

Economic nationalism is not usually juxtaposed with national identity, because it is not a recognizable blueprint outlining a map of cultural memory. But there are nevertheless several reasons to consider economic nationalism in relationship to the topic of national identity, especially in case of Japan. To summarize some of the points introduced in this thesis, first, people do have feelings about the various images of Japan's "economic identity," even if those images have not been directly promulgated in documents or inculcated in the curriculum. For example, "Do not call us economic animals" is the oft-heard plea in recent social discourse, reinforcing and refracting the aims of the "lifestyle
superpower." People are conscious of the spendthrift stereotypes that apply to them as individuals, and the government has been made conscious of ethical and political considerations lost in the climate of "economics first." Second, attempts to "break" with the economic superpower through the introduction of a new consciousness of a "lifestyle superpower" imply that the idioms of a national economic ethos have been present, even if subtle, silent, and diffused in culture.

The third reason has to do with the character of Japan's economic nationalism, involving what Virilio might depict as a "government of time." Overtime work and the overloaded school curriculum have reduced qualitative reflection time, deferring reconciliation with cultural identity and obviating the need to understand Japan's recent history. For this reason I have looked at national identity as a conceptual space of contention rather than as a specified set of attributes.

Finally, economic nationalism is in part a contradiction in terms, because economics, permitting the trade of goods and more importantly, knowledge, creates fluidity between borders and thus detracts from the aims of "nationalism." But rather than casting it aside as a nationalism that is not about identity, it should be recognized all the more as a narrative pertinent to the topic of national identities in the changing world.

Japan's cultural nationalism posited a uniqueness of the Japanese people that resonated with the modernization slogan of the nineteenth century to cultivate "Western knowledge, Japanese spirit." Elites believed it was possible to objectify knowledge of the Other and still maintain a purity of Self. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Japan embraced Asia into its identity by conquering the Other. It erected classrooms in Korea, Manchuria and Taiwan and
forced the peoples of those countries to learn Japanese and bow before the imperial portrait.

Now, in the late twentieth century, Japan has been asked by leaders of newly industrialized countries in Asia to acknowledge itself a prototype of economic development in Asia. Many in Japan might welcome this opportunity to play a more prominent role in the region. But the very implication of Japan's leadership in Asia grates on the ears of other critics both inside and outside Japan. The fear that economic internationalism will amount to nothing more than a fast forwarding of pan-Japanism weighs heavily in Asia.

The stated purpose of the lifestyle superpower is to put economics to the side burner to rekindle a quality of life. But it also has created a zone of suspension between fulfillment of an "economics first" policy of catching up to the West, and a new definition of a political role for Japan. Most people associate the aims of the lifestyle superpower with the revamping of domestic infrastructure. But the imagery may also soften the impression of Japan in the global community, helping it to achieve such goals as a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council.

Whether inculcated or imagined, it is important to acknowledge the gap in how we understand the receptivity of all collective images, identities and ideologies. We have tendency to see nations as unitary entities; I cannot escape this problem myself in the present writing. In language, we use names of nations as subjects without considering who actually speaks on behalf of the name of "Japan" or the "U.S." For example, we might say, "China is a Communist country." A recent film on China's conversion to Communism, To Live (1994) presents an epic portrait of the Communist takeover of China, in which the central government extended its ideology to every corner of the nation. But the poignancy of the film is to reveal
that average people under the Communist state went along with their day-to-day lives just "to live." A by-product of nationalism, militarism in general also reinforces the myth that people who have been persuaded to die and kill for their countries surely must share a mutually understood commitment to national values.

Unlike *To Live*, many popular impressions of nationalism or national identity therefore assume an automatic reception of ideas, failing to take into account the doubts and conflict within citizens. Some impressions also predate the information age, assuming that what people believe in has been unambiguously scripted by leaders rather than filtered through layers of social discourse, especially the mass media.

But public memories of any collective identities can nevertheless be profoundly personal, not necessarily rooted in reminders of imposed ideologies. Patricia Masters found that war memories in Japan and elsewhere are "sensual," expressed in such things as the taste of food eaten during wartime.¹ Likewise, the postwar "income doubling" era of the 1960s evokes memories of household material items, the washing machine, refrigerator or television one owned at the time—rather than the need for Japan to "catch up and surpass" nations of the West.

In times of heated economic relations, education as the basis for economic nationalism is often promoted by elites. Yet, in economic nationalism, to the extent it can be called a narrative of national identity, it is the "personal" rather than the collective that is more often the mandated goal. Governments encourage citizens to do their best; educators encourage students to study hard. The goals of national economic advancement and collective economic security are expressed in

¹ Masters, "The Politics of Memory."
continuity with the promotion of individual livelihood. In the 1960s, Japanese governmental discourse forged a continuity between the "growth" of the individual through schooling and the "growth" of the nation; the United States of the 1980s likewise solicited educational reforms because children as individuals, and the nation as a whole, were deemed "at risk." Unlike cultural nationalisms to promote the sacrifices of individuals for military purposes, economic nationalisms ask citizens to live, not die. Individuals in turn are most often concerned with asking, "What's at stake for me?" At this point, Japan's citizens have now realized that tremendous sacrifices indeed were made in the postwar period of economic growth, and the consumer's benefits were often transferred to the benefits of corporations. But the need to reap the benefits of "economics first" and keep up with the latest appliances were more often the focus for individuals, rather than thinking of how their sacrifices benefit the larger picture of the "nation."

With identity inverted from the nation to the individual school, household and company, it was not the broad awareness of an "economic nationalism" that mattered as much as securing one's identity through academic affiliation. To ask about the people's consciousness of economic nationalism is therefore to ask of this consciousness of identification with schooling. As in the case of Americans, Japanese have only become aware of "economic nationalism" per se as a result of the post Cold War world – in spite of the fact that their nation is so often touted as the model of economic nationalism.

This paper looked at three examples of "individualized" identities produced by education. First, we saw how education created "choices" for students that were dependent on the student's hensachi rather than individual volition; the hensachi in turn processed future labor pools of human resources smoothly and efficiently.
Second, mothers whose own educations were devalued by labor markets merged their identities with the educational ambitions of their children, fulfilling Ikeda's clarion call to make the home a place of love and education. Third, the rigid school regulations enforcing "equality" counterbalanced the function of exams to differentiate themselves through exams, removing what critics believe to be the individualities of students.

But is there a collective consciousness of education as a national strategy, other than that "imagined" through mutual hardship and shared knowledge? I found that if the question were framed in the way Kearns and Doyle expressed it (p. 6): "Is education a national economic policy?" – that the answers were mixed. Most "elites" whom I spoke with answered "yes," explaining that education is designed to create elites, to balance the supplies of future workers with the demands of labor, to fill in "gaps" in the labor supply, and to strengthen qualities of competitiveness and endurance needed for the labor market. Often they gave these answers hesitatingly or with qualification, remarking, for instance, that the real education geared toward economic advancement is that provided by the company, not the school. But I found that the question, expressed broadly as it was, and answers I received were "academic." "Non-elites," such as students or teachers, seemed to have not thought about this issue much or at all: their answers were generally that the manifestations of educational competitiveness were the result of too much emphasis in society on academic credentials (gakureki shakai), that essentially (according to a typical response), the Japanese need to impress their neighbors and have lost their "common sense" about what constitutes good
education. All that has become important is the name of the school and the name of the employer.

These answers demonstrated the diffusion of perceptions in society and the contrast between economic nationalism and military nationalism. You would not go to soldier and ask if his training were part of a national policy. In asking the question (Is education part of a national economic policy?), however, I wanted to demonstrate the difference between what has been implied in the writings of American economic nationalists such as Kearns and Doyle, and the actual nature of power in Japanese education. Despite the offhand comments of Japanese politicians such as Nakasone and Sakurauchi (Chapter Two), there is little discursive evidence of a national consciousness of education as an indicator of national strength. To the extent that education *economicus* is an economic nationalism, it is the kind of "atomized" nationalism alluded to by Maruyama Masao (Chapter Two), what I have elsewhere depicted as "inverted "nationalism: the school, rather than the nation, has become the reference point of identity. In Chapter Six, I also used Foucault's metaphor of the panopticon: the central "source" of educational power become seemingly invisible, whereas the atomized power of computerized "maps" of *hensachi* scores "tamed" the personal choices available to students.

The following issues, however, were noticeably present in informal educational discourse, and in some ways "refracted" the ideas of Japan's education *economicus* as expressed, for example, by Prime Minister Ikeda: "[If we are to build the nation of Japan, we must build human beings" (see Chapter Two). First, the idea that education is intimately connected with labor is conveyed in the image of
the **gakureki shakai**, the academic-record society. The first impression of economic nationalism that probably comes to the minds of Americans is that of a pride in ownership of "American" brands and labels. In Japan, another kind of pride also extends to membership in schools and corporations; it has been an important determinant of social status to aspire to employment with the most prestigious companies and civil service positions. Though only 30 to 40 percent of male employees held the sought-after prestigious lifetime employment positions, the competition for such spots set the pace for educational competition in general.

Second, there is also a strong awareness of education as a kind of "population manager." Japanese people seem to be aware of how many students are admitted to key universities and other schools from year to year. Such figures are published in newspapers, as are the annual figures of job-seekers to job takers, creating a picture of the match or mismatch of supply and demand. In America, people are usually aware of the admission and placement statistics for their particular fields, but otherwise have little interest or awareness of how many students are admitted or denied admission to Harvard, Stanford and so on. Also, America's unemployment figures do not create pictures of the specific cohorts of school graduates, segregated by gender, as Japan's job-seeker to job-taker ratios.

Third, the Japanese seem to keenly aware of education as a "resource." The imagery of education **economicus** in part suggests to the individual an infinite flow of knowledge in which anyone can indulge. But because nations and corporations make use of knowledge as a **resource**, it follows that such a resource must be constructed from precious materials, as in military hardware, and that such a resource must in turn be treated as a **finite** material, not unlike the natural resources of land, oil and water. On a personal level, therefore, one often hears
parents speaking of education as the "last inheritance," since most people had to start their lives from scratch after the war.

Fourth, the Japanese tend to emphasize the skills that need improvement, making comparative notes as if to "spur on" such improvement (corresponding to the legacy of a "catch up" mentality). Many frequently mention Japan's need to improve foreign languages; they seem to feel they have a unique handicap in learning languages compared with persons of other nationalities. Other frequent comments are of the need to improve creativity, since Japan has received few Nobel prizes, and the need to improve volunteerism, because Japan has had little experience with volunteer activities compared with America and other countries (according to what I often heard).

There are probably several reasons for why the Japanese emphasize the negative aspects of their educational system and what needs improvement, rather than rest on the laurels granted them by an envious international community. One may be that on a personal level, the Japanese have a cultural tendency not to "brag" of their own family members; they may be extending this tendency to their nation's education. However, there certainly is ample evidence of national pride verbally expressed on other matters such as the taste of rice or – until the subway terrorism of March 1995 – public safety. (I tried to elicit responses of whether the Japanese people in general had pride in education, to allow each interviewee to speak in generalization before articulating his or her own feelings.) The reason for negativity that I have emphasized in this thesis has to do with the legitimate transition from the era of hard work to the new cultivation of quality of life. Yet whatever the reason, it is significant that one rarely hears vainglorious comments such as the widely publicized gaffe of then Prime Minister Nakasone, expounding
on the virtues of Japan as a well-educated, intelligent society in comparison with America.

Finally, there is the long tradition of respect for self-discipline and endurance in Japanese culture, reinforced by competitive education but not necessarily directly caused by it. In this dissertation, I have referred to the secret report card as an impediment to individuals' voicing of educational criticism, yet I have also presented a number of critical voices expressed in popular culture, as well as the recent "lifestyle" literature pouring out on the need to "end" the era of long hours of work, study, and commuting. In many of the cultural critiques depicting the difficult lives of overworked examinees and employees, it is sometimes difficult to tell whether they are challenging the structures of power or egging on these traditions of *gaman* (endurance), *gamburu* (do your best), and *shitsuke* (discipline) — therefore not challenging social structures. Displaced in anonymity, many of the "difficult life" stories such as those broadcast during the exam season are not necessarily "biting hand that feeds them," but instead creating an "imagined community" of individuals in mutual predicaments.

**Education Economicus? Raising Questions**

Having introduced this dissertation with the salience of Japan's education *economicus* in an international context, I now will consider refining the categories of questioning posed by the increased significance of education in the context of economic nationalism, with the experience of Japan as a background. While by no means exhaustive, the following areas open questions to consider.

*The diffusion of power in educational politics: Who creates "education"?* While national governments are often thought of as the key movers of educational politics
at the national level, Japan's experience points to the important impact of the private sector as well as the mass media in setting the context for the way education is perceived and constructed. International politics have facilitated the strengthening of private sectors and the independence of the mass media; for nations to keep up with the pace of "new" economic nationalism, moreover, schooling as representational of future economic strength also has turned education into a quasi-foreign policy. Thus, the three issues presented in this dissertation – the problems of commercial testing, education mamas and school regulations – all reveal a lack of central coordination in certain aspects of education.

In the commercial testing problem, the government took a clear position against the use of the hensachi, yet commercial companies transformed the character of education with their continuous marketing of tests, advice and exam aids. And even with the hensachi officially "expelled" from school, commercial companies continue to conduct their testing outside the formal classroom.

In the second issue presented, politicians of the 1960s designated the home as the locus of "education and love," but they did not dictate that mothers should exhaust themselves for the service of their children to the point of being negatively represented as kyōiku mama-gon, "education mama-monsters." This section also drew our attention to the significance of nonformal schooling and the mass media in constructing and condemning the roles of mothers in education.

In the third issue, school regulations and corporal punishment reveal a legacy of bureaucratic elitism, but even in this situation, the national government of Japan has again taken a stance against tight regulation and corporal
punishment, while it is the individual schools and localities that continue to maintain their oppressive codes of conduct.

Economic nationalism, because it heightens the significance of the private sector as well as the preponderance of the mass media, thus influences the extent to which nonformal institutional discourse can create a "hidden curriculum" of identity.

The conflation of school and labor: Can schools "challenge" the labor market? Japan's experience with education *economicus* was to create a formidable "buyer's market" in which employers set the pace for who gets hired, when employees get hired and how employees should be treated. In the *hensachi* issue, we saw how this convenient test score helped to "process" the future labor pools of students by moving them efficiently from one level of schooling to the next, to the benefit of companies who are then ready to hire and train their selections of workers. But students and their parents had few opportunities to think of what other personal qualities they could cultivate and "sell" to employers; what mattered most was the *hensachi*.

The consequences to gender and status were discussed in the second issue. As long as mothers are well-aware of the types of jobs pigeon-holed for males and females, and what kinds of images adhere to graduates of "good schools" and "bad schools," they will continue to set their personal "home educations" by acting within the boundaries of the "buyers' market," rather than by challenging such boundaries. Thus they appear to be prejudiced against their own daughters by denying them the same opportunities as boys, and they appear to be pushing their children into schools beyond their capabilities.
In the third issue presented, we learned that students and their parents hesitate to speak out on problems such as the school regulations in apprehension that their teachers will make irreversible remarks on the naishinshō. Formal schooling becomes like a continuous classroom from junior high entrance (or earlier) to employment, silencing the concerns of students who fear the "invisible whip" of the permanent dossier.

Chronopolitics: does the management of time diffuse the importance of content? Chapter One introduced "chronopolitics" as the government of time in a world when reflection time can no longer be afforded. The weight of the hensachi has meant not only that students have come to identify with impersonal computerized advice, but also that educational knowledge became increasingly standardized, cemented and sped up to its fullest capacity. Examination warfare also filled the time of postwar mothers, time that might otherwise be spent away from the demands of competitive education. Strict school regulations also regulate every detail of the student's body including his or her movement, a chronopolitics acting with a "bio" (of the body)-politics. As stated in the introduction, it is necessary to keep chronopolitics in mind when analyzing the attempts of elites to create identity by symbolic intervention in the curriculum. The speed of lesson transmission might dissipate whatever reflective ideological effect might be intended.

Competition between state and individual: what are the consequences of individuals' putting their own fingers on knowledge? A renaissance of "respect for the individual" is now underway in Japan's public policy discourse. While the meaning of "respect for the individual" is yet unclear, it is true that Japanese elites have had a strong history since the Meiji era of failure to trust the "people's" knowledge or education. Hence the expression kansoruminipi, "respect for authorities, contempt
for people." People were given considerable latitude to develop private institutions or juku, but as long as the formal structures of schools and their connected labor markets remained intact, the min would not threaten the kan. Commercialized testing represented a cross between min and kan. Hensachi tests were created by the private sector but ultimately, by facilitating the mechanics of examination warfare, the tests benefitted the state structure or kan. The current conflict between the Ministry of Education and the hensachi proponents demonstrates the potential dangers to the state posed by irresistible technological advancements. However, the fact that the hensachi over-dependence is often described, at best, as an "evil necessity," signifies that private sector, partially min-represented educational methods might also be far less than ideal.

Until recently, the idea of people-oriented education has not been a problem because of the buyers' market in labor: people wanted first of all to be eligible for jobs, and their special learning interests could be fulfilled in hobbies. The challenge for any new type of education will be to likewise effect changes in hiring procedures, allowing more opportunities for female students and all students from "off the beaten track." If the recession and new mood to downplay economic focusing brings about major changes in the lifetime employment system, the possibilities for innovative hiring would greatly facilitate education. In such a case, however, the prejudice against the individual's right to pursue knowledge (for more than just a hobby) must be overcome.

**Re-contextualizing the Discourse of Economic Nationalism**

As presented in Chapter One, education as a discourse of economic nationalism is often conceptualized in market, military and quantitative...
metaphors. If we are now embarking on a borderless world where economic nationalism will no longer be of consequence, then what are the implications for identity? The former conceptualization represents a centripetal force; to speak of "examination warfare" in terms of "kill or be killed," for example, resonates with the implication that knowledge be used only to "conquer" or "be converted." William Connolly offers the insight that conquest and conversion are "two authorized orientations to otherness," yet "neither engages the enigma of otherness." This thesis demonstrated that Japan strove to keep knowledge of Self and knowledge of Other distinct and separate, rather than engage the "enigma" of integration. Much of Japan's quest for knowledge predating the Meiji era has been expressed as knowledge of the Other, whether of China and Asia or of America and Europe. Imported knowledge became "conquered" knowledge, expressed in the slogan, "Western knowledge, Japanese spirit." Exported knowledge also helped "conquer" the colonies of the Japanese Empire. Yet Japanese who acquire too much know-how abroad, in contrast, have often been prejudiced as having "converted," becoming too un-Japanese. Knowledge therefore converged around the collective Self and ostracized the Other.

A borderless education system in a borderless world, however, implies that collective identity in general will dissipate in centrifugal force. Identity might become completely atomized as individual identity. At present, the circulation of knowledge and trade has created identity crises in Japan and the United States (and elsewhere!): both nations have proposed or instituted educational reforms.

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suggestive of a knowledge "convergence." Rather than expecting an actual convergence in the near future, however, we should instead be alerted to the ways in which each nation tries to engage or escape the "enigma" of knowledge "otherness." For Japan, especially as it approaches a new integration with the highly diverse region of Asia, this new knowledge integration may hinge on how it interprets the currently voguish concepts of "diversity," "choice" and "respect for the individual."

In other words, rather than limiting the conceptualization of education economicus to the extremes of centripetal or centrifugal forces, however, the future of identity issues in schooling might concern how different identities can overlap and diversify without obliterating one another through conquering or converting. The kinder, gentler lexicon of the lifestyle superpower is politically appealing because it coopts various constituencies, offering nuanced meanings of "diversity."

Japan's economic elites, for example, have long used the terms in reference to career selection, implying that it would be more sensible to create "diversified" schools at lower levels of education, giving every student the "individual" choice of selecting his or her career, without the time-consuming process of elitist entrance exams. "Diversification" is thus vocationalization, and respect for the individual means respecting the individual's right to choose a vocation first, then an education, without being first screened by the intricate numerical selection process. The hensachi expulsion may have opened a way to return to this type of education, by gradually introducing more educational "choices" for students; but it is ironic that these choices will nevertheless be created from "above," and it is difficult to say how much young children are truly capable of "choosing" potentially irreversible careers.
Others believe diversification is the wave of the new economic future, in which the government will no longer have the clout to direct individual choices. As consumers become more empowered through purchasing power and personal computing, governments will have to accept their impotence to define the parameters of collective identity. In this scenario, the bureaucracy will seek to adjust its long-standing prejudice against individually-controlled knowledge.

Yet neither of these interpretations of "diversity" engage the enigma of otherness, allowing the stability of self identity while simultaneously inviting the continuity of various collective identities. I present then another "counter-hegemonic" definition of "diversification" that is venting away from the bureaucratic metropole. The municipally-controlled Osaka International Peace Center offers a discourse to invite "layered" identities without conquering or conquest. Nicknamed "Peace Osaka," the large multi-media, multi-lingual museum adjacent to the Osaka castle offers a counter-discourse to the prevailing impression that "Japan" as a unitary entity will not accept its own responsibility in war.

Arimoto Masaaki, the museum's Executive Director explains that a consequence of war is that "victims remember and assailants forget." Peace Osaka therefore endeavored to tell not only the story of what happened to Osaka and Japan as air raided victims, but also to shed light on why the war got started, recalling Japan's role as "assailant."³

Entering the museum from the north to "Exhibit Room A," one learns first of "Osaka Air Raid and the Daily Life of the People," but the ambulatory narrative then takes its "reader" to the lower level, "interior" memory of Japan's own

³ Interview, August 31, 1993.
aggression in Asia. Here, in Exhibit Room B, "The Fifteen Year War" (where there is another entrance), the visitor begins with the prologue of Japan of the 1920s: the nation had proved its military capability was on a par with the greatest Western powers in World War I, and needed to divert its citizenry from the economic crises of the Great Depression. By the 1930s, the government and mass media were in full swing of their campaign to raise the "fighting spirit" of Japanese soldiers encroaching upon Asia with the "sanko" banner of "burn all, kill all and loot all." One walks through Japan's entire military and propaganda campaign in Asian and the Pacific before at last experiencing the atom bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. A comparison of the war in Europe and Auschwitz death camp is also presented before reaching the "epilogue." Chinese textbooks describing the Nanking Massacre are presented in these exhibits, as are a registry of Japanese names Koreans were forced to adopt, and propaganda pamphlets encouraging Japanese to colonize Manchuria. Exhibits also include references to resistance movements in colonized Japan, and present-day concerns of former prisoners-of-war and "comfort women." It is in the final "Exhibit Room C" that one ascends to the "Aspiration for Peace," integrating war memory with present-day global concerns of peace and respect for the environment.

School education is a focal point of the museum's own cultural education. In its private library, Peace Osaka houses a donated collection of nearly every school textbook used in Japan since the wartime era. In trying to understand how the Japanese people were seduced to accept the ideology of imperialist aggression, the role of education cannot be overlooked. Explains Director Arimoto:

"It is from the content of these textbooks that the consciousness of the Japanese people was created from the time of childhood. This involved taking children who are not yet able to see the world clearly, and educating them..."
step by step in the philosophy of militarism. By the time they were able to understand, they had already been made to believe that the war of aggression in Asia was a righteous war. . . . Peace Osaka must therefore try to express how the war got started and why the people fought in unity without criticizing or going against it. Textbooks are essential if one begins to research this process of promoting war that was so phenomenal.

Moving into the postwar period, however, Arimoto's assessment is "chronopolitical." He does not believe children are being indoctrinated – on the contrary, they are "sleeping." Instead of ideological inculcation, children's lives are dominated by the wristwatch, the imperative to arrive punctually at various juku lessons. The curriculum is monopolized by memorization of facts for exams, and although "internationalization" is taught, the past one hundred years of Japan's history are ignored. Arimoto expresses his criticism as an average "liberal" citizen who votes during elections because he has "the ability to choose even without a test." A person's "choice" is therefore no longer an aberration from state-imposed ideology, but the ability to make time for oneself, and choices for oneself, other than those given in a culture of continuous examinations. "Teachers may have authority, but many people in today's world have the ability to curb that authority," explains Arimoto.

The structure of Peace Osaka, with its roof as its pièce de résistance, became Peace Osaka's metaphor of "many people" and their ability to make change. One of the slogans used by the Japanese Imperial army was "Eight Corners of the World Under One Roof." The roof of Peace Osaka is a variegated split level to represent, in the Director's words, "the differences of peoples, nations, languages, religions and histories." With recognition of diversity in this sense, Arimoto feels, collision can be avoided and decisions made for the betterment of peoples' lives everywhere. This
representation, then, of eight corners of the world under many roofs may help Japan to engage the "enigma of otherness." Operationalizing this metaphor in education will be the challenge of the nation as it struggles with integration with Asia and with acceptance in the international community as a superpower whose "lifestyle" contributions are commensurate with its status as an economic power.

Embedded in the most manifest reason for educational improvement – that of the "end" of economic success – there are surely more limited political agendas of myriad constituents such as those promoting, in the case of the United States, cultural unity, gendered roles, and cross-cultural educational emphasis (or de-emphasis). Japan's "lifestyle superpower" also appeals to diverse constituents, even while its aims also represent consistent economic plans. I embrace all of these concerns under the rubric of "economic nationalism" because, in the global picture, this "new" economic nationalism magnifying the importance of education has become newly significant since the end of the Cold War.

Japan's experience with education economicus reveals that although the importance of education may elevated when it is conceived as the building block of national economic strength, its distribution must also be carefully controlled in order to use knowledge as efficiently as possible as a resource. In some respects, knowledge is following the new borderless exchange of goods and services; increased standardization of content will facilitate the flow of educational knowledge in increasing academic exchanges. But in other respects, nations have

4 A more philosophical interpretation of the impact of Japan on America's national identity reflected in education is provided by Walter Feinberg, Japan and the Pursuit of a New American Identity: Work and Education in a Multicultural Age (New York: Routledge, 1993).
treated human resources like protected armies, maximizing their capabilities to "capture" foreign markets, and defend the future economic security of the populace.

This dissertation has presented a view of some of Japan's experiences in managing this conflict between the salience of knowledge as a national and social resource, and the necessity of limiting the distribution of knowledge in such a way as to maximize the efficiency of its human resources. One of Japan's "resolutions" to such conflict, of course, has been to create an extremely competitive educational system, which in turn created or reinforced habits and attitudes such as hard work, endurance, competitiveness and acceptance of one's circumstances. Another method was to segregate the educational knowledge necessary to enter labor pools, from the more individualized knowledge intended to cultivate one's personal growth as a "hobby."

I opened with the seductive appeal of Japan's education to America's new vanguard of economic nationalists. Yet the desire expressed by America's policymakers and pundits to have an educational system that works as efficiently as Japan's is ironic, namely because Japan has reached a point in its development where it has decided that its vaunted "efficiency" should now be replaced by a new cultivation of the quality of life. Rather than engaging merely in the competitive spirit of trying to find the best formula of matching education to economic strength, however, I have instead presented a case for understanding that the identities of individuals as well as nations are implicated in education economicus. The apparent "convergence" of two nation's educational systems enamored of each other's mirror image only reinforces the need to better understand the convergence of nation, knowledge and identity in the context of education economicus.

392


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