Primordial Narratives: The Jōmon Period in Postwar Japanese Literature and Thought

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Title: Primordial Narratives: The Jōmon Period in Postwar Japanese Literature and Thought

This dissertation explores the reasons that Japanese intellectuals and writers reached back to the Jōmon period (12,500-500 BCE) to define Japanese culture in the wake of Imperial Japan's defeat after World War II. The Jōmon period covers the Stone Age on the Japanese archipelago. Despite leaving no written records, Jōmon period inhabitants produced some of the world's earliest pottery and left behind a cornucopia of anthropomorphic ceramics that have long fascinated archaeologists. Beginning in the 1950s, however, the discourse surrounding the Jōmon period shifted from a tone of antiquarian curiosity to a more ideologically fraught mode, where the period was recast as a foundational era of Japanese history and culture. Taking this shift in discourse as my departure point, my project examines the ways that the Jōmon period has functioned as a shifting signifier across the postwar period. Drawing equally from cultural studies and intellectual history, I trace the ways prehistory has been used to define modern Japanese identity in texts and media as varied as literary fiction, philosophy, ethnographic travel narratives, and film.

Chapter 1 introduces the historiography of prehistory in prewar Japan, focusing on the shift from Tokugawa antiquarianism to professional archaeology and anthropology in the Meiji, Taishō, and early Showa periods. In Chapter 2, I analyze the essays and travel narratives of avant-garde artist Okamoto Tarō to elucidate how Okamoto not only valorized the Jōmon period as an unacknowledged form of Japanese tradition, but also attempted to discover traces of prehistory in the postwar landscape. Chapter 3 focuses on the life and thought of philosopher

Umehara Takeshi and how he attempted to forge a new ideology of Jōmon-centered Japanese uniqueness known as "Jōmonism." Chapter 4 explores how *burakumin* novelist Nakagami Kenji appropriated Umehara's Jōmonism to critique imperialism and hegemonic notions of Japanese identity in his novel *Himatsuri* (1987). Finally, in the epilogue, I conclude my project by examining how the intellectual genealogy of this postwar discourse on the Jōmon period has influenced several of animation director Hayao Miyazaki's most famous films, including *My Neighbor Totoro* and *Princess Mononoke*.

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At the University of Oregon, I was able to join a vibrant Japanese studies community that offered support and moral encouragement throughout my time in Eugene. I want to offer my deepest thanks to my advisor, Rachel DiNitto, who guided me through the program and showed no hesitation in approving an admittedly unorthodox dissertation topic. This project would not have been possible without her indefatigable support. I also want to thank the other members of my committee, Glynne Walley, Dong Hoon Kim, and Jeffrey Hanes, for their many suggestions and revision recommendations on my prospectus and subsequent chapter drafts.

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CHAPTER I
Excavating Origins:
Prehistory in Japan from Antiquarianism to *Kokutai*

Introduction:

This dissertation explores the uses of prehistory in postwar Japan, especially the ways in which the Jōmon period or the Neolithic (New Stone Age) age on the Japanese archipelago has been re-conceptualized by certain writers, intellectuals, and artists as a foundational epoch of Japanese history. Considered beyond the boundaries of national history during the prewar era, since the 1950s, the Jōmon period has been not only valorized as a major influence on modern Japanese culture and society, but also conceived of as a sort of transhistorical force that remains latent in the landscape and tradition of Japan into modern times. This is not to say that the figures in this dissertation literally believed that it was possible to uncover an untouched Stone Age village tucked away in the hinterlands of Japan, but rather that they linked cultural practices, beliefs, and forms of social organization in postwar Japan back to prehistory in order to create a narrative of unbroken continuity. To borrow a geological metaphor from historian Reinhart Koselleck, the figures in this study held that 'sediments' of prehistory, or different layers of time, co-existed within modern strata in Japan in defiance of linear, teleological history.[1]

Searching for ancient origins to explain the foundations of national identity, culture, or political sovereignty is not at all a phenomenon unique to Japan. As Eric Hobsbawm argued, invented traditions are a basic feature of many modern national histories which "seek to inculcate

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[1] Reinhart Koselleck, *Sediments of Time: On Possible Histories* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), 3-9.

certain values and norms" by establishing "continuity with a suitable historical past."[2] Similarly, Benedict Anderson has famously described how print-capitalism and institutions such as museums helped construct national grammars of modern identity.[3] While Hobsbawm's work largely focuses on England and Western Europe and Anderson's case studies of nationalism only briefly touch on East Asia, a thorough analysis of invented traditions in modern Japan can be found in Stephen Vlastos's edited volume *Mirror of Modernity* (1998). In the introduction, Vlastos helpfully distinguishes between top-down imperial subject formation in the Meiji period which sought to reinforce the continuity of the imperial polity throughout history and other, more diffuse, inventions of tradition, such as Yanagita Kunio's *minzokugaku* (folkloristics).[4] Inherent in both state-sponsored ideologies of identity and more grass-roots conceptions of tradition is what I refer to as 'detemporalization' or the collapsing of historical time to emphasize cultural continuity. Aside from the re-invention of the Emperor as the father of the nation in the Meiji period, however, the question naturally arises: what other 'pasts' and traditions could be found in the storehouse of cultural memory?

Distinct historical periods -- identified as such by historians -- have always served as a convenient basis for the construction of narratives of continuity. Carol Gluck's essay "The Invention of Edo" included in *Mirror of Modernity* argues that Edo was constructed as a historical imaginary (referred to as "Edo-tradition" or "Edo-as-memory") by a disparate cast of

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[2] Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 1.

[3] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991), 178-84.

[4] Stephen Vlastos, ed. *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 11-12.

characters from the early Meiji period onward.[5] This imagined Edo served as a repository of tradition from which a uniquely Japanese past could be constructed from the vantage point of modernity. As a 'floating signifier' or discursive formation in the Japanese history of ideas, according to Gluck, the meaning of Edo shifted based on the changing circumstances, anxieties, and obstacles that modern Japan faced from the Meiji period onward. Politicians such as Fukuzawa Yukichi saw Edo as a period of feudal stagnation that must be decisively bookended by the embrace of progress and civilization that the Meiji Restoration heralded. As Japan successfully modernized and emerged as an industrial power, however, literati and intellectuals such as folklorist Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962), philosopher Kuki Shūzō (1888-1941), and art critic Yanagi Soetsu (1889-1961) began to mourn the loss of a uniquely Japanese tradition that they saw represented in Edo. Against the speed of Western modernity and the development of mass culture, Edo came to represent the interiority of "traditional" Japanese culture and consciousness in forms as diverse as agrarian rootedness, the carnivalesque excess of the Floating World, and the rustic simplicity of arts and crafts produced by hand rather than by machine.

The push and pull between Edo as feudal and divorced from Japan's modernization and Edo as a harbinger of later forms of Japanese culture that Gluck identifies in the discourse around Edo-as-tradition parallels the postwar valorization of the Jōmon period in many ways. Figures in the present study, such as avant-garde artist Okamoto Tarō and philosopher Umehara Takeshi, attempted to construct the Jōmon period as a 'master trope, in the same vein as those who imagined timeless tradition in Edo, that could explain Japanese-ness and serve to distinguish

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[5] Carol Gluck, "The Invention of Edo," in *Mirror of Modernity*, 262-84.

Japan from China and the West. That said, these appropriations of prehistory designed to explain modern Japanese identity and cultural values also differed in substantial ways. Whereas the Edo period was lived experience for Fukuzawa Yukichi and within the realm of sensory knowledge (via documents, photographs, and preserved artifacts) for twentieth-century scholars, the darkness of prehistory offered no written records to interpret nor cultural traditions from which to glean information about the mentality and lifeways of prior peoples. Accordingly, unlike historical periods such as Edo or the European Middle Ages, attempts to 'discover' elements of modernity in prehistory are not predicated on recorded custom or tradition, but rather unfettered imagination. In the process of constructing modern identity through the remains of the past, Edo and the Middle Ages can be thus be viewed as *palimpsests* or texts with faded and obscured writing that nevertheless offered (at times quite vivid) scintillations of bygone worlds. Prehistory, by contrast, must be treated as a sort of *tabula rasa* that could only be accessed through speculation.

In reality, this total of absence of writing or oral testimony from prehistory proved to be an asset, rather than a liability, though, following Japan's defeat in World War II and subsequent occupation by the American military. Japanese tradition quickly became a fraught topic in the immediate postwar, as the American occupation government took drastic steps to deimperialize Japan: abolishing the Emperor system (though not the imperial household itself), purging former military officials, conducting extensive land reform, overhauling the education system, and promulgating a new Constitution, among other sweeping policies.

I take this rupture of meaning heralded by the end of war and the dawn of Pax Americana as the starting point for my dissertation. Although recently the historiography of twentieth-

century Japan has begun to emphasize continuity, rather than rupture, after 1945, simply lumping developments in the later 1940s and 1950s into an uninterrupted 'transwar' period obfuscates the sense of bewilderment and lingering trauma that greeted many ordinary Japanese people with the Emperor's public announcement of surrender and subsequent reconstruction of Japanese society under American guardianship.[6] Along with the destruction unleashed by the incendiary air raids, atomic bombings, and the brutality of military campaigns in Asia and the Pacific, an entire constellation of epistemic meaning centered on the Emperor system ceased to existed. Although Hirohito continued on as a figurehead, the ideology of *kokutai* (national polity), where the Emperor was the spiritual and political center of the Japanese body-politic, was dismantled and replaced by a new rhetoric of democracy and humanism. Even if this process of democratization never fully lived up to its lofty aims, it was an utter disjuncture from the forced mobilization of the populace to support the war effort.

All this is to say that the meaning of 'Japan' was contested in the postwar and the process of war recovery entailed a fundamental re-examination of Japanese identity, culture, history, and aesthetics. Like Gluck's Edo-as-tradition, the Jōmon period became a shifting signifier, one defined less by arcane archaeological data than by the societal, cultural, and ecological challenges that Japan faced (and continues to grapple with). Accordingly, my methodology for this study draws liberally from cultural studies, intellectual history, media studies, and ecocriticism. Although interdisciplinary in scope, this dissertation does not seek to provide an exhaustive overview of the many debates about Jōmon period society and culture that have been

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[6] See the introduction of Reto Hoffman and Max Ward, eds. *Transwar Asia: Ideology, Practices, and Institutions 1920-1960* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022) for an overview of the concept of transwar.

held in Japanese archaeology and anthropology. More often than not, the figures in this study were either unconcerned with archaeological findings, hostile to what they saw as the intellectual strictures of the field, or intent on circumventing archaeology entirely by using alternative (at times highly spurious) methods to access prehistory on the Japanese archipelago.

Jōmon in Time, Space, and Knowledge

Before tracing the reception and uses of the Jōmon period through the decades of the postwar up to contemporary times, a closer examination of prehistory on the Japanese archipelago, and the ways prehistory has been interpreted, is necessary. The Jōmon period refers to the Neolithic Age or 'New Stone Age' on the Japanese archipelago, a time distinguished by the widespread use of lithic tools and the creation of some of the oldest ceramics in world history. The period is bookended by the Paleolithic or 'Old Stone Age,' which saw the first use of rudimentary lithic tools, and the Yayoi period (500 BCE-250 CE), a much more consequential epoch that saw widespread migration from the Asian continent, the introduction of rice agriculture, and the adoption (if not necessarily production) of metal tools and armaments.

In contrast to the Jomon and Yayoi periods, from which archaeological evidence is abundant, the Paleolithic period in the Japanese islands remains something of a mystery. Human inhabitation of Japan has been dated to approximately 30,000 BCE during the Late Pleistocene, or glacial age, a period characterized by a cold climate and widespread glaciation. Sea levels were dramatically lower than in contemporary times due to the increase of polar ice, leaving the Japanese archipelago connected to the Asian Continent via land bridges at both the southern and northern ends of the archipelago.[7]

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[7] Koji Mizoguchi, *An Archaeological History of Japan: 30,000 B.C. to 700 A.D.* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 50.

Because the transition from Paleolithic to Neolithic remains fuzzy, archaeologists have cautioned against reading the advent of early Jōmon period as "an epoch making event."[8] The defining cultural feature separating the Paleolithic from the Jōmon period is the appearance of pottery in the Japanese islands (indeed, the Paleolithic is sometimes referred to as 'Pre-Ceramic').[9] Potsherds from the Odai Yamamoto I site in Aomori prefecture have been dated to approximately 16,520 B.C.E, some of the oldest ceramic fragments ever recovered.[10] Although the age of Jōmon pottery has long been a point of national pride in Japan, archaeologists remain skeptical of the proposition that pottery was *invented* during the Jōmon period. Hypotheses about the diffusion of pottery into the Japanese islands have long focused on China or Russia (especially the Far East region near the Amur River basin) as the area from which the technology spread.[11] Recent discoveries of potsherds dated to 20,000 BCE in the Xianrendong Cave in Jiangxi Province, China appear to confirm this hypothesis of continental origin for pottery, although research into other sites remains ongoing.[12]

Nevertheless, for whole of the twentieth-century, Japan proudly held the distinction of possessing the oldest ceramics in world history. The fact that the Jōmon period inhabitants produced impressive material artifacts such as ceramics, variously used for cooking and ceremonial purposes, is the main reason that the Jōmon period has been more readily recognized

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[8] Junko Habu, *Ancient Jōmon of Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 247.

[9] Keiji Imamura, *Prehistoric Japan*: *New perspectives on insular East Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), 46. Imamura favors the term 'pre-ceramic' in his publication, although the use of Paleolithic is more common in contemporary scholarship.

[10] Mizoguchi, *An Archaeological History of Japan*, 76.

[11] Habu, *Ancient Jomon of Japan*, 32-6.

[12] Xiaohong Wu et al. "Early Pottery at 20,000 Years Ago in Xianrendong Cave, China," *Science* 336 (2012), 1696-1700.

than the Paleolithic as being connected with later forms of Japanese culture.[13] Despite the Paleolithic and Neolithic periods both being prehistoric, the Paleolithic remains a dim and largely uncelebrated epoch that rarely features into modern discussions about Japanese culture, in sharp contrast to the Jōmon period which over the course of the postwar has been increasingly celebrated as a foundational period for the development of Japanese culture.

The Jōmon period is commonly divided into six discrete sub-periods in modern archaeology: Incipient (approx. 13,350-10,550 BCE), Initial or Earliest (10,550-5050 BCE), Early (5050-3520 BCE), Middle (3520-2470 BCE), Late (2470 -1250 BCE), and Final or Latest (1250 - 970 BCE).[14] The dates for these sub-periods are approximate and have been debated and revised many times based on archaeological, linguistic, and paleogeographic evidence. As these sub-periods indicate, the Jomon period was in no way a static era, but rather witnessed numerous cultural, societal, and ecological shifts across the Neolithic millennia. Despite this, the conventional image of the Jōmon period in modern Japan remains one of uninterrupted continuity wherein the Jomon inhabitants are either alternately aboriginals unrelated to later more consequential periods (i.e. Yayoi, Kofun, Asuka-Nara, etc.) or pioneers of Japanese culture who nonetheless failed to advance beyond their primitive life-ways.[15] Discussions of the Jōmon period outside of archeology also frequently (though not always) omit sub-periods leading to public perception of the period as a singular cultural epoch.

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[13] Mizoguchi, *An Archaeological History of Japan*, 75.

[14] Gina L. Barnes, *Archaeology of East Asia: The Rise of Civilization in China, Korea, and Japan* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2015), 23.

[15] Mizoguchi, *An Archaeological History of Japan*, 31-2.

In actuality, Neolithic Japan was punctuated with numerous changes over the millennia leading up to the Yayoi period. Material culture, such as ceramics and clay figurines, in particular, offers a compelling window into the changes that occurred on the prehistoric Japanese archipelago. Almost without exception, books on the Jōmon period (in either Japanese or English) often incorporate pictures of either *dogū*, anthropomorphic clay figurines often associated with the spiritual practices of the Jōmon period people, or *doki*, earthenware pots often incised with decorative patterns of varying sophistication. Yet, the production of ceramics such as *dogū* and *doki* varied widely by region and time period across the ten millennia comprising the Neolithic. For example, pots in the Incipient and Initial Jōmon period were often thin in composition, only modestly decorated, and fired at uneven temperatures.[16] By the Middle Jōmon period, however, ceramics became much more visually striking in nature, a testament to the growing social complexity of this sub-period. Ceramics from this period include 'flame-type' vessels featuring elaborate spirals resembling crackling flames and other pots that include a rich iconographic system of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic shapes.[17]

Nonetheless, in public discourse, the Jōmon period is often dehistoricized into a continuous slog of prehistorical time, unpunctuated by cultural or societal developments. Along with this dehistoricization, another common assumption about the Jōmon period is that the Japanese archipelago remained isolated from the Asian continent prior to the arrival of Yayoi migrants. Evidence for the insularity of the Jōmon period comes from the absence of any evidence of adoption of large-scale agriculture or metal tools prior to the Yayoi period. Recently,

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[16] Douglas Moore Kendrick, *Jōmon of Japan: The World's Oldest Pottery* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1995). 30-2, 51-2.

[17] Ibid., 53.

this conception of insular Jōmon has been challenged by evidence that many Jōmon lithic tools from the Late and Final sub-periods exhibit '*skeuomorphism*' or the conscious imitation of a certain object using a different material.[18] For example, stone knives and hand-axes closely resembling bronze daggers and axes produced by Bronze Age societies in China and Korea have been discovered in Jōmon excavations that date from the Middle, Late, and Final sub-periods, suggesting that contact between Japan and the continent was more widespread than previously assumed.[19] Similarly, in Late Jōmon, spouted vessels shaped like teapots bear a strong resemblance to Chinese bronze vessels, possibly indicating that the circulations of continental goods and peoples was already underway before the Yayoi period proper.[20]

Much as the use of ceramics marks the transition from Paleolithic to Neolithic in prehistoric Japan, the gradual spread of rice agriculture from the Asian Continent to the archipelago marks the transition from Jōmon to Yayoi. First arriving in Kyushu from the Korean peninsula sometime between 1000-500 BCE, the adoption rice agriculture signaled the gradual end of the Jōmon hunter-gatherer culture and a shift toward sedentary settlement and hierarchization in society. Other highly consequential developments include the gradual introduction of iron tools, new styles of pottery, and the importation of prestige goods (such as bronze mirrors) from Han China.

To briefly summarize then, certain conceptions of the Jōmon period have traditionally prevailed in the modern Japanese consciousness about prehistory on the archipelago: namely,

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[18] Mark Hudson et al. "Bronze Age Globalisation and Eurasian Impacts on Later Jōmon Social Change," *Journal of World Prehistory* 34 (2021), 127.

[19] Ibid., 132-8.

[20] Ibid., 139-40.

that the period witnessed little to no development in culture or society during its millennia of history; that Japan remained insular and isolated from the Asian continent; and, finally, despite evidence of plant cultivation, the period was based on a hunter-gathered economy. All this is to say that, despite the Jōmon period being traditionally considered outside the bounds of national history, the Neolithic age was imbued with romantic connotations of 'uniqueness' and insularity that made it ripe for appropriation in the postwar era when culture was in flux during a time of economic and psychological recovery from the war.

Prior to these appropriations during the postwar, the Jōmon period (or even prehistory, in general) remained understudied until the Meiji period when the notion of a Japanese 'Stone Age' entered the academic vernacular following work by foreign scholars such as Edward Sylvester Morse. Even as the Jōmon period became a topic of scholarly research among archaeologists in the Meiji and Taishō periods, prewar textbooks rarely discussed the Jōmon and Yayoi periods as separate epochs, instead lumping them together as a single Stone Age.[21] Further complicating matters was the dominance of *kokutai* ideology in historical scholarship during the the 1930s and 1940s which elevated the mythohistorical *Kojiki* (712) and *Nihon Shoki* (720) chronicles as Japan's prescribed Emperor-centered history until the end of the Asia-Pacific War. Thus, the meaning of the Jōmon period (a term that did not truly rise to prominence until the postwar) and its connection to later Japanese culture was often contested during the Meiji, Taishō, and early Showa periods.

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[21] Yamada Yasuhiro, *Tsukurareta Jōmon Jidai: Nihon bunka no genzō wo saguru* (Shinchōsha, 2015), 17-8.

Dawn to the Past: Edo Antiquarianism and Western Archaeology

Before Westerners arrived with modern, scientific archaeological techniques in the Meiji period, there was no indigenous concept of 'prehistory' as such in Japan. The creation myths of the Japanese islands transcribed in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon Shoki* subsumed the period of time before human history into the "Age of Gods" offering a divine explanation for prehistoric artifacts. Although the premodern peasantry would not necessarily have been familiar with these creation myths, interpreting excavated ephemera as supernatural in origin was common.[22] During the 'long peace' of the Tokugawa period, a rich tradition of antiquarianism, or the collecting and cataloguing of ancient artifacts, emerged among elite scholars and *bakufu* officials as part of the tradition of *honzōgaku* (wide-ranging studies of natural history incorporating plants, animals, materia medica, and historical artifacts).[23] Peter Bleed has described these antiquarian and scientific activities as "almost archaeology," a testament to the deep interest in history and sophisticated methods that scholars and collectors used to study ancient artifacts.[24] Figures such as Arai Hakuseki, Tō Teikan, and Kiuichi Sekiten analyzed artifacts such as prehistoric pottery, bronzes, rocks, fossils, and lithic tools in their writings, leading them to the conclusion that such remains were not remnants of "the Age of Gods" described in the *Kojiki* but rather human-made objects. The case of Kyoto-based Confucian scholar Tō Teikan, in particular, offers an early example of the tension between empirical research and mythohistorical texts such as the *Kojik*i

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[22] Peter Bleed, "Almost Archaeology: Early Archaeological Interest in Japan," in *Windows on the Japanese Past: Studies in Archaeology and Prehistory*, ed. Richard Pearson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1986), 59.

[23] See Federico Marcon, *The Knowledge of Nature and the Nature of Knowledge in Early Modern Japan* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015) for an overview of *honzōgaku* in the Edo period.

[24] Bleed, "Almost Archaeology," 57-8.

that claimed a divine origin for Japanese culture. Through painstaking analysis of historical artifacts such as Yayoi-period *haniwa*, Teikan ultimately came to the conclusion that ancient Japan had been heavily influenced by Korea. This belief in the pronounced Korean influence on Japanese culture motivated Teikan to compare the historical record presented in the *Nihon Shoki* against continental histories, ultimately leading him to declare that the foundation of the Japanese imperial line (traditionally dated to 660 B.C. with the inauguration of Emperor Jinmu) was inaccurate and occurred nearly 600 years after the supposed date.[25]

Teikan's claims led to heated criticism from *kokugaku* (native learning) scholar Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801), a Chinese medicine doctor by training who would become infamous as a philologist devoted to discovering the origins of Japanese culture in ancient works such as the *Kojiki*, *Nihon Shoki*, and the *Man'yōshū*. Motoori's nativist thought was composed in reaction to the dominant Neo-Confucianism of the Tokugawa period, which privileged China as the arbiter of civilization for Japan. Motoori argued that texts such as the *Kojiki* represented a native Japanese "Way" that was much more emotionally profound and attuned to nature than Chinese poetry or thought. The Japanese naturally lived in harmony with the "gods" (*kami*), in Motoori's view, and the Emperor, as a living god, was the spiritual center of the Japanese nation and had governed the land since time immemorial.[26]

The *kokugaku* movement was much larger than Motoori Norinaga alone; it encompassed rival schools that variously supported Sinocentricism and Neo-Confucianism or militated against any foreign influence at all. That said, Motoori's apotheosis of the Emperor and support for a

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[25] Ibid., 60-1.

[26] Mark McNally, *Proving the Way: Conflict and Practice in the History of Japanese Nativism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005), 42.

chronology of Japanese history beginning with the Age of the Gods offers an early example of hostility toward positivism and intolerance toward competing theories of Japanese origins that would later characterize prewar Japan in the early twentieth-century. The very notion of prehistory was not epistemologically viable in Motoori's thought given that the identity, culture, and history of Japan were neatly explained and narrativized in the divine chronicles. At the same, the antiquarian tradition in Tokugawa Japan offered early resistance and dissent from what Umehara Takeshi, himself by no means a liberal, called the "narrow nationalism" (*semai nationarizumu*) of *kokugaku*. This tension between a mythical view of Japanese origins and a much more complex understanding of how Japanese culture developed historically would characterize much of the early discourse around prehistory during the approximately seven decades between the Meiji Restoration and the end of World War II.

With the fall of the Shogunate in 1868 and the solidification of power by the Meiji oligarchs, Japan began a rapid process of modernization in the 1870s that emphasized industrialization and the embrace of Western learning and customs. Along with diplomatic fact-finding trips sent abroad, such as the Iwakura Mission of 1871-1873, the Meiji government also courted scholars from the United States and Europe to come teach in Japan. Although not officially invited as a foreign scholar, American zoologist Edward Sylvester Morse traveled to Japan in 1877 and quickly made an impression on his Japanese hosts. Within three weeks of his arrival, Morse was offered a position teaching zoology at the University of Tokyo (then known as Tokyo Imperial University). Morse had previously studied what was then called 'natural history'

under biologist Louis Agassiz at the Lawrence Scientific School (attached to Harvard University) and had taught comparative anatomy and zoology at Bowdoin College before arriving in Japan.[27]

During his sojourn in Japan, Morse excavated a shell-midden at Omori in Tokyo with his assistants from the University of Tokyo and later published their findings as *Shell Mounds of Omori* in 1879. Morse noted that the pottery shards excavated at Omori amongst the shells and other detritus were "rude" and bore "the impression of the well-known cord mark" design. The Japanese translation of this term "cord mark" (*jōmon*) would eventually come to characterize the entirety of the culture across the Neolithic Japanese archipelago. Morse concluded that the earliest inhabitants of the Japanese archipelago were cannibals, due to what appeared to be injuries found on the excavated human bones. Since neither the modern Japanese nor Ainu practiced cannibalism, Morse argued that a different race must have lived in Japan during the Stone Age and that those people were subsequently conquered by descendants of the modern Japanese.[28] Although *Shell Mounds of Omori* contained many errant hypotheses (including the idea of prehistoric cannibalism), Morse's hypotheses about Japanese prehistory ignited modern debates about Japanese identity and origins that would forcefully shift the discourse away from antiquarian curiosity toward a more specialized scientific purview.

Important to note is that prehistory as a conceptual category was relatively new not only in Japan, but also in Europe and the United States where archaeology was beginning to professionalize into a distinct discipline. The concept of prehistory emerged in the mid-

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[27] Hiroyuki Suzuki, trans. Maki Fukuoka *Antiquarians of Nineteenth-Century Japan: The Archaeology of Things in the Late Tokugawa and Early Meiji Periods* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2022), 198-202.

[28] Oguma Eiji, *A Genealogy of Japanese Self-Images*, trans. David Askew (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2002). 3-5.

nineteenth century Europe in tandem with the rise of the natural sciences and increased secularization that continued to challenge the Biblical narratives that had previously sufficed as explanations for the discovery of fossils and artifacts such as ancient stone tools. Around the 1830s, terms such *ante-history* (from French) and *forhistorik* (from Danish) began to appear and circulate in historical publications leading to the adoption of the word 'prehistory' in English to describe the period of human history predating any written records.[29]

Although Morse introduced the concept of prehistory and the idea of a culturally distinct Stone Age in Japan, it was Japanese successors such as anthropologist Tsuboi Shogoro (1863-1913), who helped establish the study of prehistory in academe and popularize theories about the origins of the Japanese people. Tsuboi was a pivotal figure in the transition from the lingering antiquarian approach to professional archaeology during the Meiji period, who believed that the cultural and ethnic characteristics of the Japanese people should studied by the Japanese themselves rather than Western researchers. To this end, Tsuboi founded the Anthropological Society of Tokyo in 1884 and then the Institute of Anthropology (focused broadly on both archaeology and anthropology) in 1893.[30]

Despite Tsuboi's attempt to distance himself from the legacy of Morse, anthropology and archaeology in Meiji and Taishō Japan were heavily influenced by Euro-American intellectual currents. Along with methods in anthropology, racialist thought, which posited that races (more often than not linked to nations) possessed certain immutable physical and cultural

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[29] Peter Rowley-Conwy, "The Concept of Prehistory and the Invention of the Terms 'Prehistoric' and 'Prehistorian': The Scandinavian Origin, 1833-1850," *European Journal of Archaeology* 9 No.1 (2006), 103-130.

[30] Morris Low, "Physical Anthropology in Japan: The Ainu and the Search for Origins of the Japanese," *Current Anthropology* 53, Supplement 5 (April 2012), S59.

characteristics, was also adopted in Japan as part of the quest to explain Japanese origins. Elucidating the precise characteristics of the Japanese race for intellectuals in this era was not an idle, armchair task either, but rather an essential part of nation-building and during the age of imperialism. As Oguma Eiji notes, discovering the origins of the Japanese people was crucial for constructing the modern boundaries of 'Japanese-ness' as imperial Japan initiated the colonization of Taiwan and Korea.[31] This quest for an "Ur-Japanese" identity involved not only probing the relationship between Japan and neighboring Asian countries, but also distinguishing the Ainu peoples (in Hokkaido, Sakhalin, and the Kuril Islands) and the Okinawans in the Ryukyu island chain, the southernmost islands of the archipelago, from Japanese subjects on mainland Japan.

Both the Ainu and the Okinawans had been subject to proto-colonial policies under the Tokugawa Shogunate that morphed into outright colonization and coerced integration into the Japanese polity during the Meiji period.[32] Along with the solidification of Japan's geopolitical boundaries, the colonization of Hokkaido and Okinawan provided researchers in anthropology and archaeology access to human subjects, long regarded as primitive and underdeveloped, to study the question of Japanese origins. The Ainu, in particular, became a fetishized object of study concerning Japanese prehistory given that they were regarded as cultural holdovers from the Stone Age who had maintained their hunter-gatherer lifestyle in defiance of sedentary agriculture. In other words, the Ainu were regarded as living fossils preserving the oldest forms of Japanese culture and thus the original descendants of the Japanese. This idea of the Ainu as

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[31] Oguma Eiji, *A Genealogy of Japanese Self-Images*.

[32] Although Hokkaido and Okinawa were only formally annexed by Japan in 1869 and 1879 respectively, Japanese involvement in managing the affairs of both regions dates back to the Tokugawa period.

the original Japanese was not new. Philip Franz Von Siebold (1796-1866), a German botanist and physician who lived on the Dutch colony of Dejima during the Edo period, had proposed the idea that the Ainu were the original Japanese in the 1820s. Siebold may not have been the first writer to proffer this argument (he was familiar with earlier Japanese writings on the Ainu), however, he certainly popularized it in European scholarly circles through his publications on the Ainu in French and German.[33]

Tsuboi Shōgorō, on the other hand, was a proponent of what is known as the 'mixed nation' theory or the idea that the Japanese race was multi-ethnic and multicultural in disposition. Despite pushing back against the notion of Japanese purity, Tsuboi did not endorse the idea that the Ainu were original Japanese, but instead claimed that the two represented separate races. Prehistoric stone artifacts in Hokkaido, Tsuboi argued, were the work of the Korpokunkur, a pygmy-like race of peoples predating the Ainu that appear in Ainu folklore and early modern Japanese sources.[34] This "pre-Ainu hypothesis" was but one of several theories concerning Japanese origins during the Meiji and Taishō periods. Koganei Yoshikiyo (1859-1944), one of Tsuboi's students who conducted fieldwork on the Ainu with him in Hokkaido, came to the conclusion that the Jōmon were indeed closely related to the Ainu following osteological comparisons between Ainu and Jōmon period skeletal remains.[35] Following Tsuboi's death in

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[33] Hudson, *Ruins of Identity*: *Ethnogenesis in the Japanese Islands* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999), 32.

[34] Hudson, *Ruins of Identity*, 36

[35] Low, "Physical Anthropology in Japan," S59.

1913, the Korpokunkur or pre-Ainu hypothesis quickly fell out of favor and Koganei's argument that the Jōmon and Ainu were related gradually gained wide acceptance.[36]

Recognition that the Jōmon or the earliest Japanese inhabitants of the archipelago were related to the Ainu did not in any way help the status of the modern Ainu people, though. As Richard Siddle has documented, even as the Ainu became widely discussed in relation to Japanese origins, the Japanese and European perception of the Ainu in the Meiji period was one of racial inferiority and underdevelopment.[37] Colonialism in Hokkaido, Okinawa, and later continental Asia was seen as part of a necessary civilizing mission, a notion that would inform Japanese archaeology and anthropology during the imperial era.

The career of polymath Torii Ryūzō (1870-1953) exemplifies that close connection between imperialism and scholarship in the social sciences. Trained as an anthropologist, Torii was also well-versed in the Chinese classics and "Western disciplines" as disparate as geology and art history.[38] Torii undertook numerous anthropological expeditions to Taiwan, the Korean peninsula, and Manchuria on behalf of the Tokyo Anthropological Society in cooperation with Japanese colonial authorities, amassing a massive collection of prehistoric artifacts and ethnographic photos of indigenous peoples.[39] Through his expeditions and subsequent

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[36] Richard Siddle, "The Ainu and the Discourse of Race," in *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan*, ed. Frank Dikötter (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), 141.

[37] Ibid., 141-2.

[38] Hyung Il Pai, *Constructing Korean Origins: A Critical Review of Archaeology, Historiography, and Racial Myth in Korean State-Formation Theories* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000), 23.

[39] On the ethnographic activities of Torii see Hyung Il Pai, "Capturing Visions of Japan's Prehistoric Past: Torii Ryūzō's Field Photographs of "Primitive" Races and Lost Civilizations" in *Looking Modern: East Asian Visual Culture from Treaty Ports to World War II*, eds. Jennifer Purtle and Hans Bjarne Thomsen (Chicago: Art Media Resources, 2009), 265-293.

publications, Torii helped popularize the idea that the modern Japanese people were the result of hybridization or extensive mixing between the autochthonous Jōmon people and immigrants from Northeast Asia known as the 'Yayoi' who used a noticeably different style of pottery. For Torii, the Yayoi were the "proper Japanese" and largely responsible for the development of Japanese culture, a position that would come in for criticism by figures in this dissertation such as Okamoto Tarō and Umehara Takeshi.[40]

Archaeology was not only site of discourse about Japanese origins during the Meiji and Taishō periods. Meiji bureaucrat turned folklorist Yanagita Kunio began to document vanishing customs and folktales as he watched modernization sweep over the Japanese countryside, irreversibly changing rural lifeways. Yanagita was famously critical of archaeology, believing that the discipline overemphasized the study of artifacts that were merely one part of a much richer untold history.[41] While Yanagita himself was a prodigious collector of artifacts and curio, he believed customs, language, and folktales passed down orally between generations offered a much more compelling window into the "the rural, the unwritten, and the vanishing."[42] This impulse to discover the untold histories of the common people in the agrarian villages that dotted rural Japan led Yanagita to formulate his own discipline of ethnology known as "*minzokugaku*," often translated as "folkloristics," but more broadly known as "ethnology."

Initially, during the final years of the Meiji period while still working as bureaucrat, Yanagita embraced the idea that the Japanese people were composed of distinct ethnic groups,

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[40] Hudson, *Ruins of Identity*, 40-1.

[41] Shitara Hiromi, Kudō Yuichiro, Matsuda Mutsuhiko, eds. *Yanagita Kunio to kōkogaku: Naze Yanagita ha kōko shiryō wo shūshū shita no ka* (Tokyo: Shisensha, 2016), 111.

[42] Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 80.

including the Ainu and Emishi. Most famously, he believed that the Japanese living in the mountains, known either as *yamabito* or *sanjin*, were the ancestors of the *senjūmin* (native peoples) or the original Stone Age inhabitants of Japan, one of the terms used to describe them before the term Jōmon was widely adopted. Yanagita identified the *senjūmin* with the Ainu, a theory supported by the Ainu language toponyms scattered across Tōhoku.[43] During the Taishō period, however, Yanagita moved away from his earlier fascination with ethno-cultural diversity to theorize that the Japanese were a singular people defined by rice agriculture *(inasaku*).[44] Yanagita termed these normative Japanese subjects the "*jōmin*" or "abiding folk," an all-encompassing term that effaced difference and romanticized the Japanese as culturally homogeneous.[45]

Although Yanagita's efforts to study Japanese origins through folktales, customs, and language change would be extremely influential in the postwar discourse surrounding the Jōmon period, the reception of his ideas has been highly polarized in modern Japan. Critics have accused Yanagita of editing or even fabricating folk tales that he claimed to have collected as authentic oral narratives. More damningly, postcolonial critiques of Yanagita and his attempts to construct a homogeneous Japanese identity have taken aim at how *minzokugaku* implicitly supported Japanese imperialism.[46] Despite these controversies, however, Yanagita and *minzokugaku* are impossible to ignore in Japanese discourse on culture and identity. Accordingly,

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[43] Yamada Yasuhiro, "Torii Ryūzō to Yanagita Kunio: Senjūmin = Ainu-setsu wo meguru futatsu no taiō," *Bulletin of the National Museum of Japanese History*, no. 202 (2017), 188.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Gerald Figal, *A Discipline on Foot: Inventing Japanese Ethnography, 1910-1945* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012), 180.

[46] Ibid., 179-181.

whether the reaction was critical or appreciative, the figures in this dissertation had little choice but to grapple with Yanagita and his ideas.

This rejection of cultural and ethnic heterogeneity and embrace of the homogenous *jōmin* identity by Yanagita parallels a broader cultural-political shift that occurred in the late prewar period. As ultranationalism took hold in the 1930s, the period of spirited inquiry that characterized debates about prehistory and Japanese origins during the Meiji and Taishō periods gave way to a period of growing intolerance of dissent from national ideology. As imperial Japan became further embroiled in colonial expansion in Asia and the Pacific, Japanese history and identity became fraught topics that were increasingly defined solely by the mythologies of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* used to uphold the Emperor system.

Against this tide, Torii Ryūzō, for example, criticized the history textbooks produced by the Ministry of Education in 1934 for beginning the narrative of Japanese history with imperial mythology rather than including any discussion of the Ainu (by which he meant the Jōmon) and their "consolidation" (*tōitsu*) with "our ancestors" (*wareware no sosen*) or the Yayoi peoples who arrived from the Asian continent.[47] These criticisms by Torii highlight two salient points about the status of the Jōmon period in the prewar era. First and foremost, the irreconcilability of the existence of a Stone Age with the mythologies of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* meant that the Jōmon and Yayoi periods were often relegated by state ideology to the periphery of Japanese history. Coverage of Stone Age artifacts was included as part of the compulsory education curriculum, but only in *kokugo* (social studies) textbooks rather than history textbooks to avoid

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[47] Teshigawara Akira, *Rekishi kyōkasho wa kodai wo dō egaiteikitaka* (Tokyo: Shin Nihon Shuppatsusha, 2005), 93.

contradicting the state-sponsored mytho-history.[48] Second, despite the multi-ethnic rhetoric of the Japanese Empire in the colonies, the history taught *in* Japan emphasized an unbroken narrative of Japanese uniqueness that omitted or downplayed questions of ethnic or racial alterity. In this sense, the imperial histories of the prewar era offered a blueprint for defining Japanese-ness that would be resurrected in the postwar discourse of *Nihonjinron* which posited that the Japanese people were culturally and ethnically homogeneous (known in Japanese as '*tanitsu minzoku*').[49]

Under the ultranationalist ideology of *kokutai* during the 1930s and early 1940s, the Jōmon period was left in an ambiguous position where, despite the vigorous debates about the origins of the Japanese people and the nature of the Stone Age in Japan during the previous decades, the period was separated from the trajectory of the Japanese nation-state. Following Japan's surrender and the beginning of the American occupation under SCAP, new hypotheses about ancient Japanese history began to circulate and archaeological excavations once again resumed in earnest. Although little of this initial postwar discourse on ancient history was focused on the Jōmon period, this fascination with the prehistory and proto-history of Japan exemplifies that the figures of this dissertation were part of a larger societal trend toward looking back to the past in the wake of defeat.

The first figure to reach back to the Jōmon period to redefine postwar Japanese culture was Okamoto Tarō, an avant-garde artist trained in Paris during the 1930s, who saw in the

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[48] Ibid., 104.

[49] There is no universally accepted definition of *Nihonjinron*, though the term is commonly taken to indicate a set of beliefs predicated on espousing Japanese uniqueness that developed throughout the postwar period. For foundational examinations of *Nihonjinron*, see Peter N. Dale, *The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness* (London: Routledge, 1988) and Harumi Befu, *Hegemony of Homogeneity* (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2001).

Neolithic ceramics and statuettes an unrecognized form of Japanese tradition. Chapter 2 examines the art treatises and travel narratives, in which Okamoto re-interpreted Jōmon culture as an indigenous identity for the modern Japanese that rejected both prewar ultranationalism and postwar Americanization. Okamoto's valorization of Jōmon culture began with aesthetics, as he that sought to integrate the grotesquerie and 'primitive' design of Jōmon ceramics into a broader re-examination of Japanese tradition (*dentō*). Later, in his travel narratives published in the 1950s and 1960s, Okamoto ventured out in search of traces of the Jōmon period in the peripheries of Japan to find evidence for his belief that prehistory was a living essence or life force that remained latent in modern Japan.

Chapter 3 offers a critical overview of philosopher and public intellectual Umehara Takeshi and how he followed in Okamoto's footsteps to reposition the Jōmon period as the foundation of Japanese culture, an ideology known as "Jōmonism." In tracing the development of Umehara's thought from his days as a philosophy student at Kyoto University during the immediate postwar to his ascension as the director of the International Center for Japanese Studies in the 1980s under Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro, I argue that his Jōmonism functioned as a neo-nationalist ideology that sought to affirm Japanese modernity while simultaneously downplaying Western influence on Japan and rhetorically opposing prewar ultranationalism.

Chapter 4 explores the influence of Jōmonism on Japanese literature and film in the 1980s through a comparative analysis of Nakagami Kenji's novel *Himatsuri* (1987) and the film of the same name directed by Yanagimachi Mitsuo in 1985. Nakagami remains best-known in Anglophone Japanese Studies as a minority novelist who sought to inscribe the violence and

marginalization faced by the *burakumin* into the canon of modern Japanese literature. At the same time, Nakagami also collaborated with Umehara and appropriated the philosopher's neo-nationalist Jōmonism to destabilize hegemonic notions of Japanese culture and identity, a part of Nakagami's career that has been largely understudied. For Nakagami, the Jōmon period was a not a storehouse of timeless tradition, but rather a site of resistance to the lingering influence of imperial histories in the postwar. Accordingly, in my analysis of *Himatsuri* as fiction and cinema, I focus on uncovering how Nakagami juxtaposes Jōmon nature and religion *against* Japanese tradition.

Finally, Chapter 5 examines the "Jōmon Boom" or the surge in popularity surrounding the Jōmon period among the Japanese public since the 1990s. Following the excavation of the Sannai Maruyama site in 1992, fascination with prehistory in Japan shifted from largely academic circles to a more populist attraction with a rise in tourism to Jōmon sites and an uptick in museum exhibitions focused on prehistory. In tandem with these changes, the Jōmon period has increasingly featured into contemporary environmental thought and Japanese popular culture. After surveying these developments, I conclude my study with an examination of Hayao Miyazaki's masterpiece *Mononoke Hime* (Princess Mononoke, 1997) as an example of how popular culture and ecological concerns intersect and exemplify the disparate ways prehistory has been used to define Japan and 'Japanese-ness' since Okamoto's initial reconceptualization of the Jōmon period.

Conclusion:

As these overviews of the Jōmon period and the historiography of antiquarianism and the social sciences in Japan exemplify, the study of prehistory in Japan has been heavily debated and

encompasses numerous paradigms and methodologies that have at times been antithetical to one another. Archaeological studies of the Jōmon period continue apace in contemporary Japan and continue to enrich our understanding of the Neolithic and beyond. The figures in this dissertation often only tangentially dealt with archaeology, however, and more often than not attempted to circumvent scientific inquiry into prehistory by substituting their own intuition or speculation. Thus, I leave it to a historian of science or professional archaeologist to fully cover the range of debates about the Jōmon period in archaeology, anthropology, and the affiliated sciences. Tracing the Jōmon period as a shifting signifier across the postwar to contemporary times more often than not involves engaging with 'non-prehistoric' sources such as literature and visual media. Accordingly, the picture that of the Jōmon period that emerges often bears the imprints of anxieties concerning nation, identity, and Japanese modernity in a globalized world.

CHAPTER I
AVANT-GARDE NATIVISM:
OKAMOTO TARŌ AND JŌMON AS JAPANESE TRADITION

Introduction: Jōmon as Japanese Tradition

Aside from Edward Sylvester Morse, no individual has been more intimately associated with the discourse of the Jōmon period than avant-garde artist Okamoto Tarō (1911-1996). Although Morse coined the term 'Jōmon' (cord-marked pottery) and helped pioneer the discipline of modern archeology in Japan, the influence of Okamoto's views on the Jōmon period has been so pervasive in modern Japan that he has often credited with "discovering" the period.[1] In contrast to Morse's empirical methodology of studying prehistory, derived from the natural sciences, Okamoto pursued a speculative approach that drew liberally from aesthetics, ethnography, sociology, and philosophy. For Okamoto, the dazzling flame-motif ceramics and *dogū* figurines of the Jomon period were not mere curio that represented an inscrutable darkness, but rather evidence of a primordial religion that had once characterized the whole of the prehistoric Japanese archipelago.

At first glance, Okamoto's assertion might seem little different from a hypothesis that a professional archaeologist would arrive at after careful review of excavated ephemera from a prehistoric culture. Given the complete absence of written records or oral testimony, the precise function of prehistoric material objects such as *dogū* figurines necessarily involves a degree of speculation. Moreover, subjectivity of scholars and the extent of personal opinions in shaping

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[1] See, for example, the article by Kobayashi Tatsuo "Okamoto Tarō to Jōmon no hakken" in *Tōhokugaku* Vol. 13 (2007), 40-51. Kobayashi, a professional archaeologist who has written extensively about the Jōmon period, argues that Okamoto was, along with Morse, one of the discoverers of the Jōmon given that Okamoto was the first to recognize the beauty of Jōmon ceramics and connect them to modern Japan.

research of the ancient past have long been topics of debate in archaeology and related social sciences such as history.[2] Although Okamoto had no formal training as an archaeologist, he was familiar with ideas about prehistory from his studies at the Sorbonne in the 1930s which included coursework in anthropology and sociology. Similarly, primitivism, as an artistic trend, appears to have made an impression on him during his training in Paris. Thus, Okamoto's 're-discovery' of the Jōmon period in the early postwar resonated with his longstanding interest in prehistory and a fetishized notion of the 'primitive.'

Okamoto published his landmark re-appraisal of Jōmon period art "On Jōmon Ceramics: Dialogue with the Fourth Dimension" (*Jōmon doki-ron: Yojigen to no taiwa*) in the belles-art journal *Mizue* in February 1952. In the article, Okamoto positioned Jōmon artifacts such as *doki* and *dogū* as indigenous Japanese art that represented the antithesis of elegant Yayoi ceramics such as *haniwa* and the decadent Buddhist artwork of the Nara period. "On Jōmon Ceramics" would establish the postwar precedent of presenting the Jōmon and Yayoi periods as locked in dialectical opposition between one and another. In contrast to prewar archaeology and *kokutai*-oriented ancient history, which treated the Jōmon period as completely divorced from Japan's historical trajectory, Okamoto argued that Jōmon art, with its grotesquerie and disharmony, embodied an unacknowledged type of Japanese aesthetics that had been excised from the narrative of Japanese tradition.

Inscribing Jōmon period art and aesthetics into the canon of Japanese art and culture was an intermedial effort by Okamoto that spanned disparate genres and media. Critic and art historian Patrick Waldberg, a close friend of Okamoto who studied with him at the Sorbonne in

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[2] Bruce Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

the 1930s, noted Okamoto's interdisciplinary expansiveness in a retrospective publication praising him as a "poet, author, essayist, archaeologist, historian, painter, sculptor, and architect."[3] Waldberg's praise is overly effusive, yet such an accolade highlights how Okamoto's artistic endeavors were inseparable from his writings on culture and identity. For example, the influence of Jōmon aesthetics can be seen in Okamoto's own artwork created around the time of "On Jōmon Ceramics" publication: most notably in *Kao* (Face, 1952), a cryptically-named sculpture made from mosaic tiles features a two-sided humanoid figure with outstretched arms and protruding breasts strongly reminiscent of a Middle Jōmon *dogū*.

More important than such artistic experimentation, though, was Okamoto's idea that traces of the Jōmon period remained embedded in modern Japanese culture, a strain of thought he would develop in his ethnographic travel narratives about Japan published in the late 1950s through the 1960s. In "On Jomon Ceramics," Okamoto proposed that Jomon aesthetics should be regarded as a form of Japanese tradition, albeit an iconoclastic tradition that could inform postwar avant-garde artistic practice. Then, in his later travelogues, he attempted to identity how traces of hunter-gatherer Jomon culture had survived in the peripheries of Japan, namely Tōhoku and Okinawa. This search for Jōmon culture by Okamoto was preceded by a radical reinterpretation of the category of tradition itself, however. In 1956, he revised his article "On Jomon Ceramics" and published it as the first chapter of a new treatise he entitled *Japanese Tradition* (*Nihon no Dentō*). As the title indicates, Okamoto further sharpened his argument that the Jomon period art was a quintessential type of Japanese tradition, one on par with influences

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[3] Patrick Waldberg, *Taro Okamoto: Le Baladin Des Antipodes* (Paris: Edition de la Difference, 1976), 8. The original French text reads "Poète, romancier, essayiste, archéologue, historien, peintre, sculpteur, architecte."

from China such as Buddhism and aesthetic principles associated with Buddhist teachings. 'Tradition' in Okamoto's terminology did not merely mean the way ossified behavior and customs were passed from one generation to another. Rather, in Okamoto's view, tradition was imbued with a vitalist energy that connected past and present. In *Japanese Tradition*, Okamoto differentiated between staid, hegemonic forms of convention (*inshū*) and tradition as a "life force" (*seimeiryoku*) that dwelled within the hearts and minds of the common people.

Okamoto's reappraisal of *doki* and *dogū* in "On Jōmon Ceramics" was largely ignored or went unnoticed by contemporary archaeologists. As an aesthetic reappraisal of Japanese art history, however, Okamoto's thesis on Jōmon art as a hidden repository of Japanese tradition was enthusiastically embraced by other artists and architects in the 1950s and early 1960s. Influential architects including Tange Kenzo, Shirai Seichi, Arata Isozaki, and Noboru Kawazoe quickly adopted and expanded upon Okamoto's idea of a Jōmon-Yayoi binary to interpret features of Japanese architecture and built environments in their own publications, leading to a debate about "Japanese tradition" in postwar architecture. These architectural writings on how Jōmon and Yayoi represented transhistorical forces in space and design have only been tangentially touched upon in English language scholarship.[4] Within the broader history of the Jōmon period's reception in the postwar, however, there is little evidence that these architectural writings had any major impact on Japanese perceptions of prehistory-- circulating mainly, as they did, among figures involved in the belles-arts. By contrast, Okamoto's essays and travelogues would be

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[4] Jonathan Reynolds briefly discusses the influence of Okamoto on Japanese architectural theory during the 1950s in his *Allegories of Time and Space*: *Japanese Identity in Photography and Architecture* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2015), 78-84.

widely read and ignite the long process of integrating Jōmon into the narrative of Japanese national history.

This chapter begins by examining the formation of Okamoto's intellectual outlook during his long sojourn in Paris from 1930 to mid-1940, a heady period where he studied and associated with a plethora of influential artists and literati including Pablo Picasso, André Breton, Alexandre Kojeve, Georges Bataille, and Marcel Mauss. In particular, I focus on how exposure to intellectual and artistic movements such as primitivism in the arts, ethnography, and the revival of Hegelian thought influenced Okamoto's reconceptualization of the Jōmon period in the early postwar. Despite his vigorous involvement in the 1930s Parisian art scene, Okamoto's time in Paris remains a rather mysterious period of his life in many ways.[5] Okamoto is rarely mentioned in Anglophone histories of Surrealism or in histories of interwar French art, and his career was severely disrupted by the events of World War II which he experienced on both sides of the Eurasian continent. With the invasion of France by Nazi Germany in 1940 and subsequent occupation of Paris later that year, Okamoto was forced to flee to Japan from Marseille. Soon after his return to Japan, Okamoto was drafted into the Imperial Army. In 1942, he was sent as a painter to the front in China and would not be repatriated to Japan until 1946. Despite this rupture, I argue that there is broad continuity between Okamoto's prewar intellectual interest in the primitive and his postwar activities as a public intellectual and artist. Postwar debates about the status of Japanese culture in a new era of deimperialization and Americanization provided a

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[5] As of writing the best overview of Okamoto's time in Paris can be found in *minzokugaku* scholar Akasaka Norio's biography of Okamoto. See the first chapters of Akasaka's *Okamoto Tarō no mita Nihon* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2007).

fertile environment for Okamoto's thesis that the Jōmon period was a foundational aspect of Japanese culture and identity.

"On Jōmon Ceramics," which critics have analyzed in-depth both in Japanese and English, remains Okamoto's most famous essay.[6] My approach to this text differs slightly from previous scholarship in that I read "On Jōmon Ceramics" as a dynamic work that must be read comparatively between its original publication in *Mizue* and its subsequent revision and republication in *Japanese Tradition*. In essence, the overall argument of "On Jōmon Ceramics" remains the same in *Japanese Tradition*; Okamoto argues for acknowledging that the grotesqueness and asymmetry of Jōmon ceramics represent as indigenous form of Japanese tradition. That said, I argue that the editorial changes and interpolations in the revised version laid the groundwork for Okamoto's subsequent attempts to discover traces of Jōmon culture in the hinterlands of the Japanese archipelago in the late 1950s through the 1960s. Okamoto also greatly expanded his critical discussion of 'tradition' in *Japanese Tradition*, grasping towards his notion of tradition as a transhistorical force that flows within the everyday lives of the common people. This apparent recourse to mysticism, along with Okamoto's frequent appeals to "our ancestors" (*wareware no sosen*) and his claims that tradition flows through one's "blood" (*chi*), raise profoundly problematic questions regarding his valorization of Jomon art as Japanese tradition. Rather than reading these rhetorical claims regarding ancestry and blood as a throwback to the ultranationalism of the wartime years, I argue that Okamoto's use of hematological phraseology was meant to highlight the cultural heterogeneity of the Japanese

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[6] Chapter 2 of Jonathan Reynold's *Allegories of Time and Space* is devoted to Okamoto's "On Jōmon Ceramics" and touches on many of the same points as this chapter. My overall aim differs though, as I hope to show that Okamoto's initial valorization of Jōmon in the early 1950s led the way for a subsequent search to discover prehistory in the modern landscape.

archipelago. Blood in Okamoto's view was not "pure" and homogeneous, but rather an admixture of Jōmon and Yayoi lineages.

The final portion of this chapter examines the ethnographic travel narratives produced by Okamoto in the late 1950s and 1960s. In works such as *Nihon Saihakken: Geijutsu Fudoki* (Japan Rediscovered: Records of Regional Art, 1958), *Wasurerareta Nihon*: *Okinawa Bunkaron* (Forgotten Japan: On Okinawan Culture, 1961), and *Shinpi Nihon* (Mysterious Japan, 1964), Okamoto explored the traditions and arts of the Japanese archipelago in an attempt to (re)discover traces of Jomon culture and art in the modern landscape. Drawing from Carribean theorist Edouard Glissant's notion of "archipelagic thought" (*pensée archipelique*), my analysis of these texts shows how Okamoto connected cultural practices in the modern landscape of Japan to the prehistoric Jomon culture, especially the magical worldview that he believed characterized the lifeways of Jomon people.

In particular, Okamoto focused on (re)discovering the Jomon qualities of peripheral spaces in the Japanese archipelago, such as Tōhoku and Okinawa, creating a 'geography of Jomon-ness' that would influence later essays and travelogues by thinkers such as Umehara Takeshi. Given this focus on connecting peripheries and hinterlands to prehistory, my analysis specifically hones in how Okamoto blurred temporalities and linear space to create his own version of Japan, one marked by cultural and linguistic diversity that offered numerous forms of tradition unbeholden to neither the prewar imperial body-politic nor the spectre of postwar American hegemony.

Early Life and Parisian Milieu

Okamoto was born in 1911, the final year of the Meiji period, to journalist and proto-*manga* illustrator Okamoto Ippei (1886-1948) and author and *tanka* poet Okamoto Kanoko (1889-1939). Ippei had begun working as a cartoonist for the *Asahi Shinbun* shortly after Tarō's birth, winning widespread acclaim among the public and providing the family with a modicum of financial security.[7] Kanoko came from an aristocratic family and aspired to a literary career from a young age. Influenced by currents such as Romanticism and the sensual poetry of Yosano Akiko, Kanoko initially specialized in writing *tanka* poetry before later switching to fiction writing, the genre for which she remains best remembered.[8] Many of Kanoko's novels and short stories feature domineering women striving to overcome societal or psychological limitations, especially the strictures imposed by insecure or resentful male characters, a literary trait that reflected her often acrimonious relationship with Ippei. The couple fought frequently, and Kanoko openly carried on multiple extra-marital affairs. Growing up in this chaotic environment was less than ideal for the young Okamoto, who was sent to boarding school in 1918 and would later enroll in the Tokyo School of Fine Arts in 1929.[9]

Okamoto left for Europe with his parents in late 1929 in order for Ippei to cover the London Naval Disarmament Conference of 1930. While his parents continued to travel around

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[7] Maryellen T. Mori, "The Splendor of Self-Exaltation: The Life and Fiction of Okamoto Kanoko," *Monumenta Nipponica* 50:1 (Spring 1995), 81.

[8] Ibid., 73-74.

[9] Biographical information take from the *nenpyō* (chronological timeline) provided in *Okamoto Tarō: A Retrospective* (Tokyo: Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum NHK Promotions, 2022). See footnote 27 in "The Splendor of Self-Exaltation," on p. 84 for Okamoto's reminiscences about his "dismal childhood."

Europe, Okamoto elected to remain in France alone and become an art student at a lycée in Paris. Beginning in 1932 he also began to audit courses at the Sorbonne, quickly becoming enmeshed in the thriving abstract art scenes that surrounded the university. In 1933, he joined Abstract-Creation as the youngest member (at age 22) and began to emulate Surrealist motifs in his paintings.[10] Much of his work from this time (all of which was later destroyed in the war) featured floating objects suspended in space, designs untethered from any discernible context that invite the reader to reflect on their perception of shape and color.

In Okamoto's postwar reminiscences about his time in Paris, he described his sojourn there as "mentally breaking free from Japan" (*Nihon dasshutsu no shinkyō*).[11] Noting that he was initially seized by feelings of alienation and "hopelessness" (*zetsubō*), Okamoto quickly came to see Paris as an escape from his chaotic family life and what he believed to be the stifling, overly conservative state of art education in Japan. Other Japanese artists, such as painter Fujita Tsuguharu, studied in Paris at various times throughout the 1930s, often congregating together and selling their pieces to Japanese art collectors.[12] Whether Okamoto was in contact with other Paris-based Japanese artists is unclear. He does not mention maintaining connections with other Japanese artists during his time in Paris and by all accounts made every effort to integrate himself into the cosmopolitan Parisian milieu. Aside from letters exchanged with his parents (who provided him a modest stipend) and occasional visits from Japanese intellectuals traveling

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[10] *Okamoto Tarō: A Retrospective*, 308-9 .

[11] Okamoto Taro, "Watashi to jinruigaku: Pari daigaku minzokugakka no koro" in *Okamoto Taro no Hon* 5 (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 1999), 250. Collection cited as *OTH* hereafter with corresponding volume number.

[12] Asato Ikeda, *The Politics of Painting: Fascism and Japanese Art during the Second World War* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2018), 88.

through Paris (such as novelist and *Shinkankakuha* founder Yokomitsu Riichi), Okamoto was effectively isolated from changes in Japanese society during the 1930s.

The France that Okamoto encountered in 1930 was a society in cultural and political flux. Although Paris remained the "cultural Capital of the West" in the 1930s, France had suffered grievously during World War I and the following decade was one of melancholic reflection on how the 'Great War' represented a sharp reversal in national prestige.[13] In the arts, this sense of upheaval manifested itself in the continued decline of Classicism and the rise of new currents of abstract art such as Surrealism and Dada.

Primitivism and the Arts

Surrealism and Dada in France interacted with and existed coterminously with other artistic movements. Most influential among these for Okamoto's later reconceptualization of the Jōmon period was primitivism, the fetishized use of so-called "primitive" elements of design from cultures in Asia, Africa, and Oceania in Western compositions to reflect the human subject unfettered by the constraints of civilization. Unlike Surrealism, which had a coterie of thinkers who published manifestos outlining their artistic aims, primitivism was considerably more diffuse and thus difficult to define precisely. Furthermore, the flattened image of primitive design drew from so many different cultures across multiple continents that it is vexingly difficult to trace influences in primitivist artwork.

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[13] H. Stuart Hughes, *The Obstructed Path: French Social Thought in the Years of Desperation 1930-1960* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1966), 3.

Frances Connelly has argued that primitivism in modern art represented the "dark mirror image" or "inverse" of Classicism in the Western tradition.[14] Whereas the classical tradition stressed correct proportion and ratiocination, the design of arts and crafts as varied as Maori boat carvings, African masks, and (Edo-period) Japanese prints were considered to be overly abstract and unsophisticated by European observers. These attempts to differentiate so-called 'primitive' artwork from the Western classical tradition drew from a long tradition of writing by travelers, missionaries, and early colonists that stressed the profound physical and mental differences between Europeans and the peoples they encountered during their exploration of Asia, Africa, and North and South America.[15]

Primitivism as an *idea* arose in the eighteenth-century amidst the backdrop of continued European exploration and colonial expansion in Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and North America. For Enlightenment thinkers such as Giambiattista Vico, non-European cultures were infantile and not fully developed. In his *New Science* (*La scienza nuova*) published in 1725, Vico romanticized the primitive subject as motivated by passion and deep emotion, rather than metaphysics or reason.[16] This closeness to nature, unfettered by abstract thinking according to Vico, offered an alternative to the rigor of the Classical tradition which stressed formal training and a firm grasp of past tradition. In essence, despite his infantilization of non-European cultures, Vico argued that 'primitive' decoration and design were worthy of study and could inform Western art practice. As

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[14] Frances S. Connelly, *The Sleep of Reason: Primitivism in Modern European Art and Aesthetics, 1725-1907* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995) 9, 24.

[15] See, for example, the first two chapters of Michael Adas's *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

[16] Connelly, *The Sleep of Reason*, 22-3, 29-30.

a style of artistic practice, primitivism came into recognizable form with the art of Paul Gaugin (1848-1903), whose paintings of Tahitian life often featured pastoral scenes with somnambulant (and unclothed) women wistfully passing time in nature. Although Gaugin's indigenous female subjects simultaneously evoked the sort of child-like innocence and deep passion that Vico ascribed to the primitive subject, it was Pablo Picasso who firmly imbued primitivism with connotations of the grotesque. Picasso's painting *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (The Young Ladies of Avignon), first exhibited in 1907, featured several sex workers from Barcelona rendered as garish nudes with uneven body proportions and warped faces inspired by Picasso's fondness for West African masks.

Okamoto writes about visiting the "primitive" art galleries at the Louvre during the 1930s, though he does not specify what sorts of artifacts were on display.[17] Okamoto first encountered Picasso's paintings in art dealer Paul Rosenberg's gallery alongside works by Henri Matisse and Andre Derain. His later recollection of stumbling upon Picasso's work is related as an almost religious experience, with Okamoto claiming that he clenched his fists and began to weep as "the strong spirit of Picasso's aura began to spread and reverberate throughout my body" (*sono oku kara takumashii geijutsuka no seishin biri biri to kochira no zenshin ni tsutawatte kuru*).[18] This revelatory experience tracks closely with Okamoto's later encounter with Jōmon ceramics in the Tokyo National Museum in 1951, which subsequently led him to begin his valorization of prehistoric artifacts as Japanese tradition. In both cases, Okamoto experienced the

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[17] OTH 5: 232.

[18] Okamoto Tarō, *Seishun Pikaso* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2000), 12.

objects on display as artworks tinged with a sort of vitalist power that enveloped the viewer and changed their perception of the world.

Dialectics and Ethnology

Okamoto's interest in primitive cultures also led him to explore academic pursuits outside of painting and his artistic education. Most notably, during his final years in France, he studied under ethnographers Marcel Mauss and Paul Rivet at the Sorbonne. Such cross-fertilization between the belles-arts and the sciences (as ethnography was categorized as in France at the time) was not uncommon in the Parisian art scene of the 1920s and 1930s. As James Clifford has argued, ethnography's focus on magic, exoticism, and the interrogation of putatively natural customs and taxonomies aligned closely with Surrealism's de-centering of bourgeois morality and rationalism in art and literature.[19]

Prior to his engagement with ethnography, however, Okamoto initially pursued a more traditional course of study in aesthetics befitting an art student. This interest in aesthetics led him to audit the lectures of Victor Basch on Hegelian aesthetics in 1933.[20] Basch's lectures were a minor part of a much larger reception and integration of Hegelian thought in France spanning the 1930s into the postwar era that Okamoto became intimately imbricated in.[21] This re-evaluation of the Hegelian thought in interwar France offered a compelling form of dialectical reasoning that stressed the generative aspects of defeat and negative historical experience. Far more

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[19] James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988). 119-121. Surrealism had a much deeper connection with primitivism and early French ethnography that due to space constraints I will not explore in-depth.

[20] *Okamoto: A Retrospective*, 309. Basch was a French Jewish philosopher who specialized in German thought.

[21] Judith Butler, *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 61-2.

consequential than Basch's lectures in this respect were the series of seminars held by Alexander Kojève at the Sorbonne on Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) which Okamoto began attending in the late 1930s.[22] Kojève's re-reading of Hegel in the lectures at the Sorbonne stressed the central role of "desire" in human action and historical agency, identifying the human subject's primal urge for recognition from the world as the catalyst for human consciousness.[23] The technicality and abstruseness of Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Spirit* notwithstanding, one of the most important aspects of Kojève's elucidation of Hegel for Okamoto's postwar writings was the outsize prominence Kojève assigned to the "Lord-Bondsman" section of the *Phenomenology*, better known as the "Master-Slave" dialectic. Dialectical interplay, or opposition without the possibility for reconciliation, would become a recurring theme of Okamoto's postwar art and writings, not only in the polarization of Jōmon and Yayoi, but also in broader postwar art movements such as "Polarism" (*taikyokushu shūgi*).

Okamoto writes in postwar reminiscences about his time in Paris that his initial fascination with Hegelian thought gave way to doubts that philosophical "speculation" (*shiben*) alone was satisfactory to explain questions of existence and aesthetics. His writings about this period from 1937-1938 also reveal his growing frustration with the Surrealist movement, a dissatisfaction that Waldberg writes was also motivated by Okamoto's disillusionment with the

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[22] Kojève's lectures on Hegel at the Sorbonne were held from 1933-1939. The dates of Okamoto's attendance are murky and difficult to verify. Waldberg writes that Okamoto began to attend around 1939, although Okamoto claims that he began studying ethnography around 1938 after becoming dissatisfied with the philosophical speculation in Kojève's seminar. See Waldberg, *Le Baladin*, p. 99 and *OTH* 5, p. 251 for the difference in dates.

[23] See Chapter 2 of Butler's *Subject of Desires* for a thorough overview of how Kojève reworked Hegelian philosophy.

practice of art itself.[24] In 1938, Okamoto exhibited his famous prewar painting *The Wounded Arm* (Jpn: *Itamashiki ude*, Fr: *La main douloureuse*) at the International Exposition of Surrealism held in Paris. Reception of the painting was unexpectedly chilly and led Okamoto ultimately to break with Surrealism.[25] Okamoto's break from art would not last, but it did allow him to focus his energies on scholarship, particularly ethnography, during his final years in Paris.

Through attending Kojéve's lectures on Hegel, Okamoto became acquainted with George Bataille, Pierre Klossowski, Raymond Aron, Raymond Queneau, and other students who would later become prominent figures in the world of French philosophy. Among these attendees, Okamoto's friendship with Bataille would prove the most consequential, as it was Bataille who encouraged him to begin studying ethnography with Marcel Mauss and Michel Leiris. Bataille himself was an idiosyncratic thinker who dabbled liberally in religious studies, philosophy, literature, and art history. Like Okamoto, Bataille had originally been heavily involved with the Surrealist movement, but left the movement after clashing with Andre Breton. Okamoto joined Bataille's secret society known as Acéphale, which met between 1936 and 1939, one of Bataille's many intellectual projects that also included the more mainstream College of Sociology (*Collège de Sociologie*), an informal lecture group, which attracted participants such as Claude Lévi-Strauss, Jean Paul Sartre, and Walter Benjamin, among other luminaries.[26] Okamoto's actual involvement in Acéphale and the College of Sociology is a matter of debate. According to

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[24] OTH 5: 251. Okamoto notes his exasperation reading contradictory statements such as "colorless color" (*iro de nai iro*) and "formless form" (*katachi de nai katachi*) in avant-garde art magazines here. Waldberg also discusses this period in *Le Baladin* on p. 95.

[25] Waldberg, *Le Baladin*, 95.

[26] Frank Pearce, "Introduction: the Collège de sociologie and French social thought," *Economy and Society* 32:1 (February 2003), 2. Among the other names included in the exhaustive list by Pearce are Jacques Lacan, Theodor Adorno, and Max Horkenheimer.

Waldberg, Okamoto was inducted into Acephale in 1938, although Okamoto never published or contributed art to any of Bataille's journals.

Bataille's encouragement of Okamoto to study ethnography with Marcel Mauss would profoundly shape his postwar intellectual trajectory. Mauss was the nephew of Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), one of the pioneers of modern sociology alongside Karl Marx and Max Weber, and a highly regarded ethnographer in his own right. In foundational works such as *A General Theory of Magic* (*Esquisse d'une théorie générale de la magie*, 1902) and *The Gift* (*Essai sur le don*, 1925), Mauss examined the function of social phenomena such as magic and gift-exchange to show how 'primitive' or 'archaic' societies structured their interpersonal relationships and broader relations with the natural world. Importantly, however, Mauss did not believe that such phenomena were solely confined to the 'primitive' state of nature, but rather that they remained a feature of modern, 'developed' societies in Europe. In other words, despite the apparent chasm between primeval society and industrial *Gesellschaft*-style nation-states, there were similarities between, say, the cultural norms of remote Pacific Islanders and the modern Germans.[27]

Even as Okamoto immersed himself in ethnography during his final years in Paris, the political situation on the European continent was becoming increasingly dangerous. Nazi Germany invaded France in May 1940 and quickly overwhelmed French opposition. By June, the fall of Paris seemed inevitable. Aside from the obvious danger of staying in a war zone, Imperial Japan's alliance with Nazi Germany also meant that Okamoto quickly became viewed

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[27] Mauss never fully fleshed out the advantages of studying primitive culture to understand modernity, but he alluded to it multiple times. See, for example, the concluding paragraphs of *A General Theory of Magic* (London: Routledge, 2001) on pg. 178. Harry Liebersohn discusses how Mauss teased out the similarities of gift-giving between the Pacific and the Germans in his The *Return of the Gift: European History of a Global Idea* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 156-8.

with suspicion by former friends and acquaintances. Prior to evacuating Paris and returning to Japan, Okamoto paid his farewells to Marcel Mauss, during which he recalls Michel Leiris treated him as an "enemy" and remained disdainful throughout the exchange.[28]

Okamoto returned to a thoroughly militarized and expansion-oriented Japan in August 1940. Compared to the years of relative calm during the "Taishō Democracy" in which Okamoto had been raised, Japan in the 1940s was much more jingoistic and intolerant of dissent. After reuniting with Ippei upon his arrival (Kanoko had passed away the previous year), Okamoto resumed his artistic work and held several exhibitions where he displayed paintings produced during his time in Paris. Despite being "utterly opposed to the war," Okamoto was drafted and sent to China as painter in early 1942.[29] He would spend the next four years in China as the Sino-Japanese war raged. Aside from a few drawings and paintings produced during the war, little is no known about the circumstances of his deployment.

Hunter-Gatherer Aesthetics and the Fourth Dimension

After spending approximately six months in Chang'an (now Xi'an) as a POW at the end of war, Okamoto was repatriated to Japan in 1946. The incendiary bombings of Tokyo had destroyed his childhood home and all of his artwork. Given the dire situation in the city at the time, Okamoto briefly relocated to Kamakura to live with novelist and family friend Kawabata Yasunari. He also traveled to re-connect with Ippei who had been evacuated from Tokyo. During the immediate postwar years, Okamoto set about reviving the avant-garde art community in

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[28] OTH 5: 253.

[29] The original quote from Okamoto reads: "*zetai ni sensō hantai da shi, kateru hazu ga nai to shinjita*" (I was utterly opposed to the war and did not believe there was a chance we would win). Quoted in Akasaka Norio, *Okamoto Tarō no mita Nihon*, 64.

Tokyo. This included not only a furious return to painting, but also active engagement with other artists, writers, and critics in an effort to open a dialogue about the role of art in a democratizing society and to re-establish links with European and North America art scenes that had existed in the early 1940s before the intensification of the war. In 1948, Okamoto founded the "Night Society" (*Yoru no Kai*) with literary critic Hanada Kiyoteru which hosted meetings in a French restaurant that attracted other prominent intellectuals such as Abe Kobo and Noma Hiroshi.[30]

Against this backdrop of re-invigorating avant-garde art and criticism, Okamoto published "On Jōmon Ceramics" in the February 1952 issue of *Mizue*.[31] The common narrative of Okamoto's discovery of Jōmon ceramics involves him stumbling upon them at an exhibit in the Tokyo National Museum in Ueno Park during the fall of 1951. Although Okamoto was undoubtedly aware of the Jōmon period before encountering the ceramics in Ueno, the feigned shock of realizing that artifacts such as *dogū* and *doki* were created by the *Japanese* (italics mine) plays a valuable rhetorical role given the historical circumstances. "On Jōmon Ceramics" was published at the tail end of the American Occupation of Japan, a time when Japan was entering a new phase of rebuilding and recovery following the years of *kyodatsu* (war-induced lethargy or exhaustion), hunger, and material precarity that characterized the immediate postwar years.[32] Okamoto's championing of *dogū* and *doki* as indigenous Japanese art in "On Jomon Ceramics" directly challenged the genealogy of Japanese culture that began with the Yayoi

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[30] Ken Yoshida, "Artist Groups and Collectives in Postwar Japan" in *From Postwar to Postmodern: Art in Japan, 1945-1989* ed. Doryung Chong et al. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2012, 39-40.

[31] Okamoto Tarō, "Jōmon Doki Ron: Yojigen to no taidan," *Mizue* 558 (February 1952), 3-18.

[32] On *kyodatsu* and the dire situation of Japan in the immediate postwar see See John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 87-120.

period and moved teleologically from the agricultural village to feudalism to the imperial body-politic.

In style and structure, "On Jōmon Ceramics" represents the synthesis of Okamoto's studies in Paris, encompassing major currents such as artistic primitivism (in the vein of Picasso), ethnographic research on 'primitive' cultures, and Hegelian dialectics. Through creating a dialectical opposition between the proportionality of Yayoi *haniwa* and the grotesquerie of Jōmon pottery, Okamoto transposed Picasso's aesthetic strategy of "primitivizing" Western art by valorizing Jōmon aesthetics qualities such as asymmetry and disharmony in proportion and decoration. In this formulation the formalism of *haniwa*, the decadence of Buddhist art, and the more muted, traditional aesthetics such as *wabi* and *sabi* represent a genealogy closely approximating Classicism or what Okamoto refers to as the "cultural horizon" beginning in Yayoi.[33]

Okamoto's challenge to the genealogy of Japanese aesthetics beginning in the Yayoi period was not solely an argument rooted in art history, however. Okamoto urged his readers to consider the idea that the Jōmon people were the 'ancestors' of the modern Japanese, despite the apparent incommensurability of their prehistoric culture with the subsequent trajectory of Japanese history. Although Okamoto was reticent to pursue these questions of ethnicity and ancestry fully in "On Jōmon Ceramics," his argument that Japanese blood was a "complex mix" subtly challenged the idea of Japanese homogeneity and blood purity (commonly known in Japanese as *tanitsu minzoku*) that would gradually take hold over the postwar. Recognizing the Jomon people as ancestors allowed Okamoto to integrate the grotesquerie and disharmony of

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[33] English translations are taken from Jonathan Reynolds translation of "Jōmon doki ron." See "On Jōmon Ceramics" *Art in Translation* 1:1 (2009), 49-60.

Jōmon pottery and figurines into the effete sensibility of the Japanese aesthetic canon and, by extension, redefine the category of tradition itself.

Important to note here is that for Okamoto aesthetics was inseparable from culture. He believed the primal energy that *doki* and *dogū* convey in their asymmetry and disjunction was a literal reflection of the unpredictability of prehistoric hunter-gatherer life. Given that hunting was a necessity for survival, Okamoto claimed that artifacts such as *dogū* created were as magic charms that could communicate or even control the supernatural world in order to capture prey or appease slain animals. Citing both Durkheim's theories of magic and Lucien Levy-Bruhl's "Law of Participation," Okamoto further claims that "primitive religion" (*genshi shūkyō*) dominated all aspects of Jōmon culture, leading to a form of aesthetic appreciation wherein composition was not constrained by a three-dimensional conception of space.[34] Rather, Jōmon ceramics were intimately connected with the "fourth dimension" or the world of the spirits beyond spatio-temporal boundaries. By contrast, Yayoi *haniwa* and other ceramics bore the traces of a sedentary agricultural society. From the Yayoi period onward, Okamoto argued, art has lost contact with the "fourth dimension," a trend that only deepened with the acceleration of capitalism and industrialization much later in Japanese history.

There is an evident tension in "On Jōmon Ceramics" between Okamoto's desire to radically redefine Japanese tradition through the strength and vigor of Jōmon and his more modest goal of allowing Jōmon aesthetics to inform avant-garde artistic practice. Despite beginning the process of connecting Jōmon to Japanese modernity, Okamoto ended "On Jōmon Ceramics" not with a call to rethink Japanese culture along Jōmon lines, but rather with an

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[34] Okamoto, "Jōmon doki ron," p. 9.

exhortation to create art that directly addresses the social reality of the day, art that is unbeholden to consumer taste or the demands of the "manufacturing age" (*manifakuchua jidai*).[35] Like Walter Benjamin, who similarly saw artistic practice as originating in ritual, Okamoto did not argue for "art for art's sakes," but rather called for a politically engaged avant-garde that recognizes the place of tradition.[36] Although Okamoto does not directly address the war or American occupation, his brief mention of the atomic bombings at the end of the essay highlights the sense of rupture that he believed postwar Japan was confronting. In short, a new form of tradition, one unconnected with the mimesis of Japanese aesthetics and culture that had ended in an aestheticized death-drive, was needed to rebuild the Japanese consciousness for the modern age.

"On Jōmon Ceramics" would be republished as the first chapter of Okamoto's *Japanese Tradition* in 1956. This re-publication was, as Sunohara Fumihiro argues, a move toward exposing Okamoto's arguments about Jōmon aesthetics as Japanese tradition to a mass audience. Sunohara notes that Okamoto rewrote his earlier dedication in "On Jōmon Ceramics" to address the "future people" (*kore kara no hitobito*) rather than merely "future artists" (*kore kara no geijūtsuka*).[37] In terms of the materiality of the text, older, more arcane kanji (*kyūjitai*) and obsolete kana were replaced by their modern equivalents to enhance readability. New sections added to *Japanese Tradition* included an introduction and conclusion that significantly expanded

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[35] Ibid., 10.

[36] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Production," in *Illuminations* trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schoken Books, 2007), 223-4.

[37] Sunohara Fumihiro, "Okamoto Tarō 'Jōmon doki ron no haikei to sono hyōka: Sengo Nihon no bigaku to Jōmon wo meguru dōkō ni tsuite no ichi kōsatsu," *Geisō* 25 (2008), 82.

upon Okamoto's reconceptualization of tradition as a sort of 'life force' that animates artistic creativity, rather than an unwavering reverence for tired rituals, such as the tea ceremony, that Okamoto believed were, like Yayoi *haniwa*, monotonous and uninspired. In the new conclusion, Okamoto differentiated between *inshū* (staid, old customs) and *dentō* (tradition). Like many of Okamoto's dichotomies, the fault lines between *inshū* and *dentō* were not clearly defined.[38] What is clear, however, is that Okamoto believed that florid customs and aesthetics that had little connection to everyday Japanese life had been canonized in the rush to modernize during the Meiji period while Japan was under pressure from the West. As Okamoto writes: "The word *dentō* was created in the Meiji period so that the Meiji bureaucrats could hastily assemble a tradition."[39]

The primal emotion that the Jōmon ceramics conjured up for Okamoto embodied this form of living tradition or 'life force' that was undomesticated by academic parameters or bureaucratic regulation. Indeed, the new chapter subtitle for "On Jōmon Ceramics" in *Japanese Tradition* was entitled "The People's Life Force" (*minzoku no seimei ryoku*). This championing of Jōmon as a transhistorical force as something that connected the modern Japanese people with prehistory put Okamoto on fraught ideological ground. Many of his claims about ancestry and blood appeared sharply nationalistic in the postwar context. In the introduction to *Japanese Tradition* Okamoto writes that "Tradition is our blood, it is our bones" (*dentō wa wareware no ketsueki de ari, kokkaku de ari*).[40] Before merely dismissing this as blood-and-soil nationalism,

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[38] OTCS 4: 176

[39] Ibid., 177.

[40] Ibid., 8

however, it is important to keep in mind that Okamoto argued *against* the notion of Japanese ethnic purity; blood was not pure in his mind, but rather reflected a confluence of heterogeneous peoples and cultures. Moreover, in the same section, Okamoto warns against using ultranationalism to define tradition, cautioning the reader that such totalizing systems were as pernicious as facile subservience to the West.[41]

Reconceptualizing tradition as 'life force' in *Japanese Tradition* set the stage for Okamoto's subsequent travels to rediscover traces of the Jōmon period across the Japanese archipelago. In the revised chapter on Jōmon ceramics in *Japanese Tradition*, Okamoto discusses how the sort of primordial magic that Jōmon *doki* and *dogū* embodied could be found in rituals such as the "Deer Dance" performed in Iwate Prefecture wherein performers don deer masks with real antlers as a form of apotropaic magic. Similarly, Okamoto claims that the Ainu bear festival known as Iomate preserved the ritualistic elements of primordial religion that had once characterized hunter-gatherer society.[42] By setting out to photograph events such as the Deer Dance and write up his accounts of traveling across the archipelago, Okamoto attempted to grasp "the hidden pre-Buddhist nature" that he believed remained immanent in modern Japan.[43]

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[41] Okamoto's phrasing of this warning is rather awkward. While calling for the necessity of grasping a new form of Japanese tradition he writes: "There is no need to become an ultranationalist, nor is there any need to emulate the West" (*kokusuishūgisha nimo, mata haikara nimo naru hitsuyō wa nai*). See OTH 2: 23.

[42] OTH 2: 37.

[43] OTCS 5: 402.

The Jōmon Archipelago

Okamoto initiated his travels around the archipelago in 1957 and began serializing his observations of various cities and regions in the magazine *Geijutsu Shinchō*. These travel accounts were subsequently published in paperback form as *Japan Rediscovered: Records of Regional Art* (*Nihon Saihakken: Geijutsu Fudoki*) in 1958. This was followed by a travelogue focusing exclusively on Okinawa and the Ryukyū Islands entitled *Forgotten Japan: On Okinawan Culture* (*Wasurerareta Nihon: Okinawa Bunakron*) in 1960 and then finally *Mysterious Japan* (*Shinpi Nihon)* in 1964. Important to note here is that while the search for traces of Jomon culture and art, sometimes referred to metonymically by related topics such as "primordial religion" (*genshi shūkyō*), constitutes a major aspect of Okamoto's travel narratives he did not focus exclusively on linking the prehistoric archipelago to modern Japan. The topics of Okamoto's travel writing varied considerably by location; his visit to Osaka, for example, includes a lengthy reflection on how the city appeared to be struggling to recover from the war, but no mention of prehistory. Similarly, Okamoto's trip to Nagasaki largely focused on the how the city functioned as a conduit for foreign culture (namely the 'West' *seiyō bunka*) to enter Japan during the *sakoku* ('closed country') period and then later during Meiji-era modernization. These critical musings align closely with his critique of tradition put forward in *Japanese Tradition,* that modern 'tradition' was largely invented by Meiji bureaucrats, but likewise do not touch on the Jōmon period.

The regions in which that Okamoto discovered elements of the Jōmon period in were largely the rural hinterlands of Japan such as Tōhoku, located at the northern tip of Honshū, and Okinawa and the Ryukyu Islands, the southernmost islands of the archipelago. These peripheral

spaces, particularly Tōhoku and Okinawa, contain some of the poorest areas of the modern nation-state and have historically been characterized as colonial spaces vis-a-vis the Tokyo metropole. The case of Okinawa is particularly fraught given the island's complex history as former tributary state to both the Tokugawa Shogunate and the Qing state during the early modern period and the island's 'double-colonization' by Japan and the United States military in the postwar era. Tōhoku, comprising the contemporary prefectures of Aomori, Akita, Iwate, Miyagi, Yamagata, and Fukushima, has long been a part of the Japanese polity; yet the uneven development of the region in modern times, lack of substantial urbanization, and the regions's historical connection with the Emishi people who opposed the expansion of the Yamato state into northern Honshū during the Heian period has led some historians to discuss the region as an internal colony of Japan.[44]

Taken together, the regions where Okamoto discovered Jōmon culture in comprise a 'geography of Jōmon-ness' or set of peripheries where Okamoto believed that prehistory and modernity remain intimately linked through rituals, religious practices, and material crafts. Okamoto's vision of the Japanese archipelago was one that stressed internal alterity and cultural heterogeneity while never abandoning the national unit of "Japan" as an organizing category. The fact that some variation of "Japan" (*Nihon*) appears in the title of every ethnographic travel narrative by Okamoto was not incidental. In his postscript to *Mysterious Japan*, Okamoto framed his focus on Japanese culture as a reorientation, although not outright rejection, from his earlier fascination with European culture and Western art:

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[44] On the question of internal colonialism in Tōhoku see the introduction of Nathaniel Hopson, *Ennobling the Savage Northeast: Tōhoku as Postwar Thought, 1945-2011* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2017).

> Originally, I thought it was better to be a citizen of the world, rather than a Japanese person. For 10 years of my youth I lived in Paris, a place where every culture of the globe flows through, striving to completely become a citizen of the world. However, when I looked at the world, I unexpectedly realized that I had to stare at myself. That is natural, (the world) connects with all the factors that have nurtured you and led to your development. I was clearly a Japanese person. Unless I could thoroughly grasp being a Japanese individual, I would be unable to adequately contemplate the world.[45]

Rather than rediscover stultified, feudal traditions such as *wabi* and *sabi* or look for meaning in the discredited ultranationalism of the previous decade, however, Okamoto pursued an archipelagic vision of Japan that stressed the importance of the *chihō* (region) and local color over centralized identity.

Caribbean writer and philosopher Eduoard Glissant utilized the geographic formation of the archipelago to propose a new form of "archipelagic thought" (*pensée archipélique*), a fragmentary epistemology where knowledge is neither systematic nor centralized, but rather inductive and exploratory.[46] The scattered islands of the Caribbean, with their numerous zones of admixture containing creoles, syncretized religious beliefs, and oral folktales, informed Glissant's rethinking of culture and history along marginal lines - a form of thought where the invisible fault lines occluded by the nation-state could be perceived. Glissant's archipelagic thought does not align perfectly with Okamoto's impulse to rediscover Jomon culture in the Japanese hinterlands - there is undeniably an atavistic sort of nativism inherent in his geography of Jomon-ness with its focus on the romanticized "microcosm" of the nation. That said, Okamoto's ethnographic travel narratives consciously resist what Glissant terms "Continental thought" (*pensée continentale*), the systematic, rational, and centripetal approaches to history and

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[45] OTCS 5: 401.

[46] Glissant, *Introduction à une poétique du divers* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), 43-44.

geography that Glissant identifies with much of Western philosophy. Works such as *Japan Rediscovered* and *Mysterious Japan* are not straightforward linear narratives where the traveling subject follows a prescribed itinerary. Just as Okamoto detemporalizes prehistory by blurring synchronic and diachronic time, he dispenses with cartographic logic in his travel narratives. That is to say, travel destinations are not grouped together by region or geographic proximity. For example, Okamoto begins *Japan Rediscovered* by traveling to Akita in northern Honshu to explore the traditional crafts and customs of the region, particularly the Nagahame festival that takes place on News Year. This opening section is followed by a chapter focused on Nagasaki in southern Kyushu, over 1,500 kilometers away. Such elliptical jumps in space highlight the vastness and diversity of cultural zones in the Japanese archipelago while de-centering centers of cultural and artistic authority. Kyoto, the ancient imperial capital and arbiter of Japanese tradition, receives its own chapter, but so do prefectures typically treated as provincial backwaters such as Akita and Iwate.

In the broadest sense Okamoto's travel narratives could be categorized as "travel literature" (*kikō bungaku*), a genre that dates back to Heian-period Japan with genres such as the diary (*nikki*) and poetry featuring famous locations. And yet, the category of travel literature fails to capture the polysemy and genre-crossing that Okamoto engages in as he travels across the archipelago. Okamoto does briefly mention famed poet Matsuo Bashō's travelogue *Narrow Road to the Deep North* (Oku no hosomichi, 1694) when discussing his itinerary in Tōhoku, yet understandably he conveys no interest in connecting his travels to Bashō's aestheticization of

Tōhoku into the canon of Japanese cultural memory.[47] For Okamoto, the point of traveling through the archipelago was not to recreate a Japanese monoculture (no matter how poetically vibrant), but to highlight cultural alterity.

An additional problem in delineating Okamoto's travel narratives into a singular genre is the tenuousness of space in his writing. As previously mentioned, there is no prescribed itinerary for Okamoto's travels following a conventional East-West or North-South axis. Yet, even chapters devoted to a single locale often branch off into digressions and wistful speculation. In this sense, Okamoto could be seen as grasping toward the amorphous or 'formless' genre of *zuihistsu* (lit. "following the brush"), a mode of writing defined by its seeming inability to follow prescribed conventions in either narrative prose or verse.[48]

More well-defined than *zuihitsu*, but still remarkably obscure by modern standards, is the ancient genre of "*fudoki*" that Okamoto invokes in the subtitle of *Japan Rediscovered*. *Fudoki* (literally "records of wind and earth," but also translated as "records of land and customs") were regional gazetteers commissioned by the imperial court during the Nara period to collect information on local customs, topography, legends, and the etymology of place names.[49] As David Lurie argues, *fudoki* were not full-fledged prose compositions, but rather "fragmentary

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[47] See Haruo Shirane, *Traces of Dreams: Landscapes, Cultural Memory, and the Poetry of Bashō* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 212-53 for a thorough examination of how Bashō reconfigured Tōhoku (then known as *Michi no oku*) into a landscape that was deeply imbricated with both the Sinitic and classical Japanese literary traditions.

[48] On the boundaries of *zuihitsu* see of Linda H. Chance, *Formless in Form: Kenkō, Tsurezuregusa, and the Rhetoric of Japanese Fragmentary Prose* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 46-76.

[49] David Lurie, "Fudoki gazetteers," in *The Cambridge History of Japanese Literature* eds. Haruo Shirane, Tomi Suzuki, and David Lurie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 45.

narratives" or documents designed to serve the needs of a central authority while also capturing snippets of oral tradition and folklore that might otherwise be lost to history.[50]

The miscellaneous nature of both *fudoki* and *zuihitsu* links up with Okamoto's speculative 'method' of discovering Jomon culture in the minutiae of local tradition, folklore, and handicrafts. Okamoto's travel writing was 'ethnographic' in the sense that he relied on observation and documentation before extrapolating how the certain customs and traditions harken back to prehistory. At the same time, Okamoto never identified himself as an ethnographer of a particular school such as Yanagita Kunio's *minzokugaku* or Durkheim's sociology. Okamoto does cite Yanagita's folkloristic scholarship when introducing certain places or traditions (such as Nagahame in Akita), but never yields an authoritative voice to Yanagita. The *minzokugaku* founder's writing merely represents one interpretation that Okamoto reflects upon before proposing his own opinion.

My analysis of Okamoto's 'geography of Jomon-ness' follows a regional approach, focusing first on his exploration of the Jomon aspects of Tōhoku in *Japan Rediscovered* and *Mysterious Japan*, and then moving on briefly to consider the position of Okinawa and the Ryukyu Islands in Okamoto's archipelagic thought. More so than the southern islands, Okamoto links Tōhoku with Jomon culture and the forgotten genealogy of Japanese tradition before it was warped by Chinese and Western influences. While the geography of Jomon-ness shifts (and continues to shift) over the course of the postwar, Tōhoku occupies an outsize role in the Japanese imagination about the Jomon period. As such, the bulk of my analysis focuses on the northern region.

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[50] Ibid., 49

Wild Horses, Domesticated Cows: Okamoto's Travels in Tōhoku

Japan Rediscovered begins with Okamoto traveling to Akita in the dead of winter. The choice of winter travel dates conforms with the "discourse of seasonality" in Japan which posits that Tōhoku is a snow country (*yukiguni*) locked in constant struggle with the elements.[51] Riding in a train toward Akita Station as dawn breaks, Okamoto looks out on the "dark greenish gray" waters of the Sea of Japan crashing into the mountains as "faint snow" falls on the roofs of the fishermen's houses along the shore.[52] Accentuating this wild scenery are the "ferocious gusts of wind" (*mōretsu na toppu*) that Okamoto likens to the "cry of a monster moving across the ridges of the houses" (*kaijū no sakebi no you ni ie no mune wo wataru*).[53] Taken together, these opening passages establish Akita as inhospitable and far removed from the orderly postwar society being (re)constructed in Tokyo. For Okamoto, the harsh climate projects an image of "fierceness" (*susamajisa*), a characteristic that he also applies to the people of Akita.

This merging of the people of Akita with the landscape, whereby the people are even described as "stronger than the environment," functions as a rejoinder to what Okamoto considered belittling and feminine portrayals of Tōhoku broadly from artists and writers hailing from the region. Jumping ahead briefly to his chapter on Iwate, Okamoto links representations of Tohoku as poor and backward to the writings of *tanka* poet Ishikawa Takuboku and idiosyncratic

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[51] See Harumi Befu, "Concepts of Japan, Japanese culture, and the Japanese" *in The Cambridge Companion to Modern Japanese Culture*, ed. Yoshio Sugimoto (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 22-23 for a discussion of how Japanese seasonality geographically favors Kanto/southern Honshū.

[52] Okamoto Tarō, *Okamoto Tarō Chosakushū* Vol. 4 (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1979), 189. Collected works cited hereafter as OTCS with corresponding volume.

[53] OTCS 4: 189-90.

novelist-cum-poet Miyazawa Kenji, best known for his children's literature, but also for his fervent Nichiren Buddhist faith and interest in improving agricultural productivity for poor farmers in Iwate.[54] At first glance, Okamoto's charge that Ishikawa and Miyazawa perpetuated backward stereotypes of the region is perplexing. Along with highlighting the harsh climate, Okamoto's own representations of the people of Akita in *Japan Rediscovered* emphasize the idyllic simplicity of their daily lives and the comparative lack of modernization in the city -- tropes inseparable from the discourse surrounding Tōhoku's supposed underdevelopment. Red-cheeked children playing in the snow are described as "overflowing with a tender vitality" (*yawarakute seiki ni afureteiru*).[55] Adults are portrayed as "sturdy" and possessing "unbounded good nature."[56] Moreover, the prospect of further modernization is viewed as a lamentable certainty by Okamoto, who muses that Akita will continue to change, slowly losing their local traditions.

Okamoto's romanticized representations of the people of Akita and their daily lives link up neatly with the literary-spatial concept of *furusato* (lit. "old village") often translated as 'native place,' a locale (almost always rural or agrarian) imbued with an aura of authentic tradition vis-a-vis urban modernity (more often than not Tokyo). Stephen Dodd argues that the nostalgic idea of the *furusato* was first constituted in Japanese literature during the mid-Meiji period before becoming firmly enmeshed as a recurrent trope in the works of writers such as

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[54] Donald Keene provides an excellent biography of Takuboku in his *The First Modern Japanese: The Life of Ishikawa Takuboku* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016). For an overview of Miyazawa Kenji's poetry and social activism concerning Tōhoku see Hoyt Long's *On Uneven Ground: Miyazawa Kenji and the Making of Place in Modern Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012).

[55] OTCS 4: 190

[56] Ibid.

Shimazaki Toson, Sato Haruo, and Shiga Naoya in the Taishō and early Showa periods.[57] The 'nativeness' of *furusato* is highly subjective, however, with some writers inventing an imaginary space to represent the countryside as the utopian inverse to the city, despite being born and raised in Tokyo or urban areas. Other novelists, such as Dazai Osamu and Nakagami Kenji, drew liberally from their experiences growing up in isolated locales outside of Tokyo to depict a 'native place' in their fiction, albeit often embellished or fantastical.

In practical terms, Okamoto's rhetorical attack on supposedly "effeminate" portrayals of Tōhoku produced by Ishikawa and Miyazawa allowed him to imbue the region with a masculinist ethos of strength. The origin of this strength, of course, lies within the hunter-gatherer lifestyle of the Jōmon period that Okamoto saw as intimately connected with the modern people and landscape of Tōhoku. Traces of the Jōmon period might not be readily evident in everyday life, argued Okamoto, but they remained latent within the unique rituals and religious events spread across Tōhoku and other peripheral regions in Japan. In Akita, Okamoto hones in on the ritual of Namahage as an example of how remnants of prehistoric religion and culture survived into modernity. Namahage refers to a ritualistic event held on the Oga Peninsula in Akita usually around New Year's Eve.[58] Local men don demonic, ogre-like masks, usually painted red, with straw capes (known as *mino*) and travel through the town at midnight, going from house to house boisterously inquiring in the local dialect ('Akita-ben') whether there are any naughty children at the targeted family's residence. After chasing the kids, the Namahage

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[57] Stephen Doddd, *Writing Home: Representations of the Native Place in Modern Japanese Literature*, 1-23.

[58] The actual date of Namahage can vary whether participants are using the Gregorian calendar or the traditional Chinese lunisolar calendar. Okamoto visited Akita in February 1957 when Namahage was held according to the Chinese New Year.

participants generally share a meal with the parents of the household, engaging in friendly banter while drinking *sake*, before moving on to the next house and repeating the ritual.[59]

Where does Okamoto see evidence of the Jōmon period in the Namahage ritual? The conventional origin story of the ritual often traces it back to a legend that Emperor Han Wudi (141-87 B.C.E.) sent demons out to search for the Elixir of Immortality. After stopping to rest on the Oga Peninsula, the demons ultimately took up residence in the mountains.[60] Other variations of the legend trace it to foreign shipwrecked sailors (either Chinese, British, Spanish, or a mixture of ethnicities) who arrive on the shores of Akita.[61] Okamoto omits any mention of either of these origin stories in his speculations about the roots of the ritual. Rather, he posits that Namahage was originally part of a shamanistic, primordial religion (*genshi shūkyō*) that was first warped by influence from the Yamato court and then further altered by Buddhism and Confucianism. These changes were part of a larger transition to 'feudal agriculture society' wherein the original, 'primordial' meaning of the ritual was transmogrified, but not irretrievably lost.

Important to note here is Okamoto's use of the 'metaphor of strata' or the figurative use of geological stratification to describe how rituals, traditions, and art are composed of distinct "cultural layers" (*bunka so*).[62] Along with his conception of Jōmon and Yayoi as dialectically

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[59] Michael Dylan Foster provides a comprehensive overview of the Namahage ritual in his article "Inviting the Uninvited Guest: Festival, Tourism, and the Namahage of Japan" *The American Journal of Folklore* Vol. 126: 501(Summer 2013), 302-7. Okamoto himself provides a descriptive account of the ritual in his chapter on Akita as it was practiced in the 1950s (citing Yanagita) in OTCS 4: 193-6.

[60] This story is the one promoted by the Namahage Museum in Akita. See "Oga no Namahage" at https://namahage.co.jp/namahagekan/namahage/. Accessed April 1, 2024.

[61] Foster, "Inviting the Uninvited Guest," 306.

[62] OTCS 4: 199

antithetical forces, the metaphor of strata becomes a prominent feature of discourse about Jomon period in the postwar. Okamoto makes no attempt to 'excavate' the respective layers of strata or identify which parts of the ritual are later Buddhist or Confucian imports. Rather, he relies on conjecture and assumes that there is a base or 'ur-layer' dating from the Jomon period upon which subsequent influences gradually accumulated across millennia.

Okamoto speculates that Namahage, as practiced on the Japanese archipelago during the Jōmon period, was originally an induction ceremony for young men in the village to enter adult society. On it's own, this conclusion is uncontroversial. More fascinating, though, is how Okamoto uses comparative anthropology to come to the conclusion that Namahage was a coming-of-age ceremony. Reminiscent of comparativist approaches by Mauss and also earlier ethnologists such as James Frazer, Okamoto inductively draws in examples from other so-called 'primitive' societies to interpret the features of Namahage and shine light on their supposed prehistoric origin. For example, Okamoto notes that the centrality of masks in Namahage has a strong parallel with the traditions the Chukchi people in northeastern Siberia and the Alaskan Indians where masks are used to frighten children.[63] Okamoto claims that the power of the mask allows the wearer to temporarily transcend their human form (*ningen wo koeteiru*) and become a god or demon in the eyes of participants. By assuming supernatural form via the mask and terrifying the children into submission, he believed, primitive groups maintain their cohesiveness and are able to survive. Reaching even beyond the Jōmon period, Okamoto argues that evidence

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[63] OTCS 4: 199-200.

of this ritual can be seen in the animal masks depicted in the "rock paintings of the Old Stone Age [Paleolithic] (*kyū sekki jidai no iwae*). "[64]

Okamoto's travels in Iwate, the third chapter overall in *Japan Rediscovered*, further expands on how he perceived of Tōhoku as a Jōmon region. The strength and fierceness that Okamoto originally identified in the people and landscape of Akita becomes reimagined in Iwate as a form of resistance to the centralization of the Yamato state. Most notably, Okamoto links the Jōmon people with the Emishi tribe who opposed the Yamato court in the 7th and 8th centuries and the Ainu people indigenous to "Ezo" (contemporary Hokkaido). It must be immediately noted that Okamoto's blurring of ethnic identities, like his de-temporalization of prehistory, elides vast historical changes and innumerable cultural differences. Although both the Ainu and Emishi are often seen as descendants of remnant Jōmon populations, this should not be taken to suggest that they existed unchanged from the Stone Age.[65] Emishi was often employed as a pejorative label for all non-Japanese people in the north that opposed the Yamato court. Anthropologists and historians date the ethnogenesis of the Ainu considerably later in the medieval period, often around the the twelfth or thirteenth century CE. Adding to the confusion about ethnic identity (if that category can even be applied), the *kanji* for Emishi was also often used to refer to Ezo and, by extension, the Ainu.[66] Suffice to say, Okamoto deals with none of these intricacies in any significant detail; rather, by constructing a genealogy stretching from the Jōmon to the Emishi/Ainu to the modern inhabitants of Iwate he calls into question the (postwar)

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[64] Ibid., 202.

[65] On the ethnogenesis of the Ainu as a distinct ethnocultural group see Mark Hudson, *Ruins of Identity*, 206-232.

[66] Ibid., 198-9.

myth of Japanese homogeneity and recasts the Jōmon, rather than the Yayoi-period migrants, as "the true Japanese" (*honrai no nihonjin*).[67]

Okamoto first alluded to the idea of Japanese mixed-race ancestry in "On Jōmon Ceramics" when claiming that Jōmon pottery was made by the ancestors of Japanese. Although he avoided tackling the issue in depth, choosing instead to emphasize the aesthetic differences between *haniwa* and *doki*, his reference to the "mixed blood" of the Japanese subtly raised the notion that the Jōmon and Yayoi were distinct peoples. In the Iwate chapter of *Japan Rediscovered*, Okamoto puts forward his own theory of the transition from the Jōmon to Yayoi periods, claiming that the Yayoi migrants who arrived on Kyushu brought agriculture which then spread throughout the archipelago. The limit of Yayoi expansion in Okamoto's rough model was approximately Shirakawa in Fukushima prefecture, a city near the edge of the contemporary border of Tōhoku. Okamoto claims that the Jōmon lifestyle largely continued beyond this imaginary border, leaving "Ezo" or the land of the Emishi as the sole remnant of a larger prehistoric culture that once "covered the entire land of Japan" (*katsute nihon zendo wo ooi*).[68] By positioning the Yayoi migrants as conquerors or "colonists," Okamoto valorized the Jōmon as native Japanese defending their culture against continental invaders and later the Yamato court.

Okamoto began his travels through Iwate prefecture by visiting various temples and ruins around the town of Hiraizumi, the ancient capital of the Northern Fujiwara court who ruled over much of Tōhoku (then known as *michinoku*) as a semi-independent polity during the late Heian period (approx. 1094-1189 CE). Hiraizumi and the Northern Fujiwara have long been linked

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[67] OTCS 4: 282.

[68] Ibid., 282.

with the descendants of the Emishi people who, in turn, were almost certainly related to the Jōmon people. As Okamoto wandered around the ruined temples of Motsuji and Chūsonji, he senses an aura of weirdness or difference (*ishitsu*) within the temples that contrasts sharply with the high culture of the Heian period culture. Here again, Okamoto attaches the characteristics of strength (*takumashii*) and simplicity (*soboku*) to the artifacts and architecture of the temples, the same lexical descriptors used to distinguish the people and landscape of Akita.

In Chūsonji, Okamoto comes across the Golden Hall (*konjiki-do*) within the temple, a mausoleum replete with golden decorations housing the mummified remains of three generations of the Northern Fujiwara family who ruled over Hiraizumi. Mummification was an exceedingly rare practice in premodern Japan that rarely occurred outside of ascetic Buddhism.[69] Okamoto does not take up the issue of mummification, however, aside from mentioning it in passing while entering the mausoleum. More important than the mummification practice to Okamoto are the burial adornments of the Fujiwara. While viewing the coffins of the Northern Fujiwara rulers he is struck by the fragmentary decorations made of deer bone on the sarcophagus of Fujiwara no Motohira (1105-1157). The deer bone decorations evoke a "fierce Ezo design, that is also Ainu-like, and moreover, ultimately a trace of Jōmon culture" (*Hageshi Ezo monyō da. Ainu-teki de ari. Mata masani Jōmon bunka no kehai demo aru*).[70]

Okamoto likens this sensory revelation to the passion he first felt when he 'discovered' Jōmon ceramics. Seeing the deer bone fragment in the Golden Hall is akin to "an ancient moan" (*kodai jidai no umeki*) that reverberates through the figurative strata under which Jōmon culture

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[69] Mark Hudson, " Ainu Ethnogenesis and the Northern Fujiwara," *Arctic Anthropology* Vol. 36 (1999) 78-9.

[70] OTCS 4: 281.

is buried.[71] Linking the Northern Fujiwara to Jōmon culture takes a bizarre turn in this section, however, as Okamoto's digressions veer from speculation toward outright mysticism as he begins pondering how horses represent the spirit (*tamashi*) of Jōmon culture in Tōhoku. Okamoto writes that Jōmon culture was a 'horse culture' (*uma no bunka*) whereas Yayoi culture was a 'cattle culture' (*ushi no bunka*). This division, one of Okamoto's many binaries, recasts the horse as a wild beast representing Jomon/Emishi resistance to sedentary agriculture, a form of domestication Okamoto sees as represented by the cattle used to cultivate the field.[72] In contrast to his interpretation of Namahage, which was based on comparative examples, Okamoto offers no explanation for linking Jōmon to horses and Yayoi to cattle. Indeed, there is no evidence of any equestrian tradition among the Jōmon, and it is highly probably that horse domestication was not widespread until after the Yayoi period.

Okamoto's fantastical idea of the mounted Jōmon warrior (presumably riding bareback) appears to derive at least in part from the image of Native Americans defending themselves from encroachment by white settlers. Okamoto likens the Emishi who defended northern Honshū from invasion by the Yamato court to the "frontier age American Indians" (*furonteia jidai no amerikan indeian*).[73] Historians of Tōhoku such as Takahashi Tomio have made similar comparisons concerning the conquest of the Emishi, citing the political stratification of the Emishi peoples into competing chiefdoms and their frequent competition with settlers from central and southern

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[71] OTCS 4: 282.

[72] Ibid., 283.

[73] Ibid., 284

Honshū.[74] Okamoto's valorization of the Emishi as akin to Native Americans is not a value-free historical comparison, however. By casting the Jōmon (via the Emishi and Ainu) as the true ancestors of the Japanese, Okamoto cast Yayoi period migrants as colonists engaged in a form of ancient cultural genocide.

Recasting the Jōmon people as the ancestors of the modern Japanese in *Japan Rediscovered* was a nativist argument that responded to Cold War-era anxieties about culture and national identity. Following the nominal end of the American occupation in 1952, Japan emerged as a nation politically integrated into the American-led capitalist sphere against the Communist bloc led by the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China (PRC). Despite serving as an outpost for the American military in East Asia, the renunciation of military force, as promulgated in Article 9 of the postwar constitution, meant that Japan had to pursue a strategy of economic self-advancement that stressed mercantilism and domestic prosperity rather than political expansion. While American patronage helped Japan recover and eased the country's integration into the global economy, the political acquiescence of Japan to the United States was cause for great concern among both conservatives and Marxists alike. On the one hand, the Emperor system and ultranationalism were utterly discredited, and there were no serious calls to the return prewar status quo. On the other hand, relations between the United States and Japan resembled vassalage, and there was deep concern that Americanization would irreparably warp not only Japanese politics, but also culture and literature broadly.

Of course, the United States cannot fit into any speculative imagining of ancient Japan, despite Okamoto's penchant for blurring temporalities together. And yet, the transformative

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[74] Mimi Hall Yiengpruksawan, *Hiraizaumi: Buddhist Art and Regional Politics in Twelfth-Century Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 1998), 25

power of the United States and its culture was clearly on Okamoto's mind as he wandered through Motsuji and Chūsonji. Okamoto likens the relationship between the Northern Fujiwara government and the Heian court to the Japan nation-state in the immediate postwar when it was forced to begin a process of Americanization under the directives of SCAP.[75] In the face of being overwhelmed by a more dominant (and technologically sophisticated) power, the Northern Fujiwara managed to maintain a distinct culture that never fully acquiesced to the hegemony of the Yamato court. Given his continual emphasis on connecting the Northern Fujiwara to both the Ainu (or Ezo) and ultimately the Jōmon, this analogy of political and cultural change exemplifies how Okamoto attempted to offer the postwar Japanese an alternative genealogy of indigenous culture and identity rooted in prehistory and continuing on through the ages.

This indigenous identity, as Okamoto imagined it, was one that existed on the Japanese archipelago prior to Chinese or Western influences and, most importantly, was also antithetical to Japanese imperialism. By casting the Jōmon people as horseback-riding warriors resisting invasion first from the Yayoi migrants and then later the Yamato state's "imperialist attacks" (*teikokushūgi-teki kōgeki*), Okamoto simultaneously imagined the original Japanese as both colonized subjects forced into agriculture *and* valiant rebels who resisted incorporation into the Kinai-centered imperium that would eventually become the modern Japanese Empire.[76] The political implications of this argument about Japanese ancestry are manifold and intersect with the Japan's postwar political positionality. The image of wild Emishi resisting the Yamato court endows the original Japanese people with a heroic spirit that resisted imperialism, in sharp

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[75] OCTS 4: 280.

[76] Ibid., 284.

contrast to prewar Japan (especially from the early Showa period onward) where militarist expansion and imperial pageantry enjoyed widespread public support. At the same time, the Jōmon being invaded by the Yayoi casts the Japanese as victims, a narrative that aligns closely with what Simon Avenell has called the 'postwar cult of victimization' in which the actions of Imperial Japan in Asia and the Pacific are downplayed (if not outright denied) in favor of emphasizing Japanese suffering at the hands of American air raids, the atomic bombings, and subsequent military occupation.[77]

After his sensory revelations about the Emishi and Jōmon at Chūsonji, Okamoto continues his travels through Iwate visiting the Hanamaki and Morioka. During his stay in Hanamaki, the local residents gathered and performed the local Deer Dance (*shishi-odori*) for Okamoto to observe. This ritual, one that Okamoto had mentioned previously in *Japanese Tradition* as a remnant of primordial religion, conjures up for Okamoto the sort of violent hunter-gatherer existence that he believed characterized the Jōmon period. Much as the asymmetry of Jōmon ceramics was a reflection of unpredictability, the blurring of human and animal in the Deer Dance reflected the brutality of prehistoric life for Okamoto or as he describes it: "an age when men devoured animals, and animals devoured men" (*ningen ga dōbutsu wo kui, dōbutsu ga ningen wo kutta jidai*).[78] In actuality, the Deer Dance is almost certainly Buddhist in origin and,

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[77] Simon Avenell, *Asia and Postwar Japan: Deimperialization, Civic Activism, and National Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2022), 16.

[78] OTCS 4: 291.

like the domesticated Jōmon horses, had no referent to prehistory.[79] As should be clear by now, Okamoto's speculative attempts to connect Tōhoku to the Jōmon period often rely on outright fabrications. This speculative mode of writing, rather than the more critical comparative method used to interpret Namahage, would come to predominate Okamoto's later travelogues about not only Tōhoku, but also Okinawa.

The Forgotten South

Mysterious Japan (*Shinpi Nihon*), Okamoto's third major travelogue focused on Japan, features two sections focused on Tōhoku: one focused on Aomori prefecture and the Tsugaru micro-region near the northern tip of Honshu and another focused on the historical region of "Dewa" which encompasses contemporary Yamagata and Akita prefectures. Both of these sections closely mimic the structure and rhetorical style of Okamoto's earlier accounts on Akita and Iwate in *Japan Rediscovered*: Okamoto introduces the locale, stressing its underdevelopment and highlighting the linguistic and cultural differences vis-à-vis Tokyo, before proceeding to hone in on a particular religious or cultural practice associated with the region that he identifies as primordial or prehistoric in origin.

In terms of Okamoto's archipelagic vision of Jōmon Japan, the section on Dewa (Yamagata) contains a fascinating insight into how Okamoto believed artifacts such *doki* and *dogū* represented not only traces of primordial religion, but also identified the *spaces* of their production, or the topography of the archipelago itself. While musing on the religious roots of

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[79] Christopher Thompson claims that the Deer Dance, like many of Japan's festivals and spiritual ceremonies, came about as a result of "Buddhist-Shinto fusion" in his article "The Ochiai Deer Dance: A Traditional Dance in a Modern World," *The Journal of Popular Culture* Vol. 38:1 (August 2004), 133. One possible origin story for the ceremony is that the dance was performed by a Buddhist priest to appease the spirit of his favorite buck killed by a hunter.

Shūgendo, an ascetic form of mountain worship, during his travels through the Three Mountains of Dewa, Okamoto became fixated on how geography relates to religious practice. As he ponders Shūgendo, he rhetorically asks whether the original culture of Japan (*somosomo no bunka*) was "actually oceanic or mountainous?" (*kaiyōteki datta ka, sangakuteki teki datta ka*).[80] Okamoto continues on to claim:

> When I look at Jōmon *doki*, rather than the scent of the ocean's vastness, I cannot help but feel the depths of the woods and the darkness of mountain valleys. Regionally, within this narrow island nation, the boundaries of these of ways of living are blurry, perhaps there is no need or significance in deciding between them.[81]

Okamoto's demarcation between oceanic and sylvan forms of Jōmon culture, fuzzy and underdeveloped as it is, gestures toward his belief that it was not only Tōhoku that remained a storehouse of cultural memory. Despite the Yamato conquest and ongoing modernization, zones of admixture and exile were scattered across the Japanese archipelago. Within Okamoto's geography of Jōmon-ness, the other major region inextricably tied to the ancient past was Okinawa and the Ryukyu Islands, the subject of his other major travelogue: *Okinawa Bunka-ron: Wasurerareta Nippon.*

Okamoto traveled through Okinawa for a total of ten days in late November through early December 1959. His writings about Okinawa were subsequently serialized as *Okinawan Bunkaron* in *Chūō Kōron* from March to December 1960 and then released in paperback form

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[80] OTCS 5: 258.

[81] Ibid.

the following year.[82] *Okinawa Bunkaron* coincided with a larger efflorescence of writing about Okinawa in the postwar that also encompassed media such photography and film. In the late 1950s and 1960s figures such as Yanagita Kunio and Shimao Toshio complicated the prevailing image of Okinawa and the Ryukyu Islands as a tropical backwater by stressing the ways in which the southern islands, despite their peripheral position, were inextricably linked to premodern Japanese culture.[83]

Yanagita Kunio's *Kaijō no michi* (The Sea Road, 1960) exemplifies this style of conservative thinking that saw Okinawa as the origin of Japanese culture and thereby an integral part of Japan as a nation. The work posits a shared connection between Okinawa and the main islands of the archipelago wherein ancient immigrants from the Asian Continent moved upward to Honshū bringing with them rice agriculture and ultimately establishing Japanese culture. Yanagita's postwar writings drew from his earlier travelogues focused on the Southern islands such as *Kainan shōki* (South Sea Notes, 1925), a travel narrative focusing on both southern Kyushu and Okinawa. Melek Ortabasi argues that Yanagita sought to dispel the notion that

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[82] Okamoto Toshiko, Okamoto's adopted daughter, accompanied Tarō on many of his trips across the country. Interestingly, she claims that their trip to Okinawa was originally intended as a leisure vacation, foreshadowing the later popularity of Okinawa as a tourist destination. Okamoto, however, quickly became engrossed by Okinawan culture and adopted a more ethnographic tone in his writing. See *Okamoto Taro ni Kanpai* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1997), 104 -7.

[83] Shimao Toshio was a *junbungaku* author who lived on the Amami Islands from the 1950s through the 1970s. Shimao, like Okamoto, was heavily influenced by Yanagita Kunio and stressed the idea that the southern islands were an integral part of Japan's national culture. His idea of "Yaponesia" posited that southern Pacific cultures (such as Okinawa and the Ryukyu Islands) should be considered part of Japan's cultural heritage in the same manner that China and the Asian continent was recognized. There is not room to fully chart the intellectual genealogy between Yanagita, Okamoto, and Shimao, but, suffice to say, it appears that Shimao was also influenced by Okamoto's idea of a Jōmon-Yayoi binary as defining Japanese culture. See Phillip Gabriel, *Mad Wives and Island Dreams: Shimao Toshio and the Margins of Japanese Literature* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999), 165-181.

Okinawa was "a foreign country" (*ikoku*) in *Kainan shōki* and instead portray it as a child-like reflection of an earlier (shared) Japanese culture, a motif continued in *Kaijō no michi*.[84]

Okamoto's archipelagic vision in *Okinawa Bunkaron* shares many similarities with Yanagita's ethnological impulse to discover Japanese origins in the Southern islands. Indeed, Okamoto begins the text by citing a short folk tale from Yanagita's 1925 text *Yama no jinsei* (Mountain Life). The story concerns a poor charcoal-maker living in the mountains who attempts to commit double-suicide with his wife as their fortunes decline into abject poverty and hunger. Failing to kill himself, the charcoal-maker is imprisoned until he's sixty before receiving a special pardon and disappearing into the world.[85] Rather than merely reflecting the appalling conditions of the peasantry, this snippet of folklore for Okamoto highlights the "beauty, strength, and innocence" (*utsukishisa, tsuyosa, mujakisa*) of premodern life, all traits that Okamoto had previously identified in the people of Akita and Iwate.[86] Opening with a folk tale set in the mountains also links the Southern islands, with their proximity to the sea, to the mountainous forests and craggy valleys where Okamoto imagined that Jōmon *doki* were created in *Mysterious Japan*. Tōhoku and Okinawa are thus intimately connected in Okamoto's view and reflect a shared prehistoric Japanese culture.

Although the word Jōmon never appears in *Okinawa Bunkaron*, Okamoto claims that the sort of "primordial human existence" (*kongenteki na ningen seimei*) that once defined Japanese

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[84] Melek Ortabasi explores how Okinawan and the Southern islands fit into Yanagita's ethnological thought in *The Undiscovered Country: Text, Translation, and Modernity in the Work of Yanagita Kunio* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University East Asia Center, 2014), 83-97.

[85] OCTS 5: 7

[86] Ibid., 8

culture continued to flourish in the Southern islands, allowing visitors such as him a glimpse off the prehistoric life-ways of Japan.[87] This argument closely aligns with Yanagita's claims in *Kainan Shōki* and *Kaijō no michi*, although Okamoto demurred when it came to Yanagita's conclusion that Okinawa was the "origin" of Japanese culture. In the conclusion to *Okinawa Bunkaron*, Okamoto indirectly addresses Yanagita's claims (without mentioning him or citing his work) by asking:

> Did Japanese culture develop through the Southern islands? Did ancient Japan expand out and overflow before being established here? Even though Japanese culture has been transmogrified considerably, does the original, pure (*junsui*) form remain here? There are still numerous problems that must be clarified.[88]

These questions are not simply rhetorical; having spent two travelogues positioning Tōhoku as the *furusato* of Jōmon culture, Okamoto was understandably reticent to fully endorse Yanagita's "Southern Island" hypothesis. Nevertheless, for Okamoto, Okinawa and Japan are inextricably linked and the theory of Okinawan culture proposed in his travelogue is "at the same time a theory of Japanese culture" (*Okinawa bunakron de aru to dōji ni Nihon bunkaron de aru*).[89] Thus, the indigenous *noro* female shamanesses conducting rituals at the *utaki* (sacred grove or clearing) reflected "ancient Shinto" (*koshintō*) in Okamoto's eyes. Similarly, the numerous styles of dancing that Okamoto observes while traveling through the Ryukyu islands were ultimately dances reflecting former forms of Japanese culture rather than indigenous Okinawan traditions in

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[87] Ibid., 8. See also the same volume on pp. 16-17 for a further elucidation of how Okinawa's primordial lifeways are an essential (*honshitsu-teki*) aspect of Japanese culture.

[88] Ibid., 149 .

[89] Ibid., 17.

their own right.[90]

Okamoto's colonialist attitude toward Okinawa is striking, given how frankly he addresses the military atrocities inflicted upon the Okinawan people by the Imperial Japanese Army during the Battle of Okinawa and how bitterly he laments the continued American military occupation of the Southern islands. Okamoto visited the site of the Battle of Okinawa where he comes upon monuments such as the Himeyuri Cenotaph and the Kondei Memorial Tower. While wandering through the battlegrounds he recalled with the disgust the way in which Imperial soldiers murdered Okinawan civilians "like rats" after trapping them in caves.[91] Even while possessing an awareness of Okinawan's colonial history, the thought never occurs to Okamoto that regarding their native culture as merely a storehouse of Japanese cultural memory could be problematic. Rather, Okinawa, like Tōhoku, is romanticized as an aporia to Japan's modernization, a place where the past and present are detemporalized and primordial Japanese cultural customs co-exist in tension, but ultimately unchanged, next to American military bases.

Conclusion

By tracing the intellectual trajectory of Okamoto from his time in Paris during the heady days of the 1930s to his postwar travels across the archipelago, this chapter has sought to illuminate how he introduced the idea of Jōmon as a living form of Japanese tradition. Positioning Jōmon artifacts such as *doki* and *dogū* as embodying indigenous aesthetics and culture allowed him to valorize a form of 'Japan' that could be positioned against both the tide of postwar Americanization and, more broadly, the invention of Japanese tradition since the Meiji

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[90] Ibid., 116-7, 128. For Okamoto's view on Okinawan dance as a previous form of Japanese performance see pp. 105-6 in the same volume.

[91] Ibid., 22-4. The quote is taken from p. 23.

period, a trend that Okamoto saw as obsequious toward Western taste and criteria. As exemplified by works such as *Japan Rediscovered*, this conception of the Japanese nation-state was fragmentary, rather than homogeneous or centripetal, and favored variations of the rural *furusato* in the provinces over cities such as Kyoto and Tokyo. And yet, Okamoto's attack on what he saw as false Japanese tradition never extended toward a complete deconstruction of the nation-state. Japan continued to defy the West in Okamoto's art treatises and travel narratives, albeit with new Jōmon-inspired cultural armature that carefully avoided any association with wartime ultranationalism.

The nativism that Okamoto reached toward in his travel narratives stood in contrast with much of his intermedial postwar artistic practice, encompassing painting, architecture, and ceramics, which remained avant-garde in aim and form. Whereas Okamoto was quick to hallucinate the prehistoric roots in rituals such as Namahage or the daily life of the Okinawan in his writings, the influence of the Jōmon period was less apparent in his own creations. Certainly, the grotesquerie that Okamoto ascribed to Jōmon ceramics can be seen in primitivist sculptures such as *Kao* or in his deformed canine figurines, with their exaggerated faces reminiscent of *dogū* expressions, composed during the 1950s. And yet, the highly abstract canvas paintings that Okamoto returned to producing from the late 1940s onward grapple not with any discernible aspect of Japanese tradition (whether Jōmon or otherwise), but instead with the horrors of total war, the post-Hiroshima threat of nuclear annihilation, and the alienation of the self due to hyper-industrialization and standardization. Thematically then, at least on the surface level, Okamoto's artwork was much more overtly engaged in politics than in the speculation on identity and culture put forward in his travel narratives.

In short, Okamoto's travel narratives, and associated works such as *Japanese Tradition*, reveal not an artist looking to expand the porous boundaries of the avant-garde, but a fundamentally conservative thinker attempting to articulate the meaning of Japan in the wake of defeat and Pax Americana. As I have argued, 'Japan' for Okamoto was archipelagic in the sense of reflecting heterogeneity and opposition, not purity and unity. Even so, Okamoto could never fully discard categories such as 'tradition' or the nation-state. His attempt to resuscitate Japan by focusing on the margins — that is, by reading Okinawan culture as preserving primitive Japan or praising the Emishi and Ainu (as descendants of the Jōmon) as the "true Japanese" — represented rhetorical moves to position cultural, ethnic, and linguistic difference (underdeveloped or poorly theorized as they were) as the innermost strata upholding Japanese culture. Such moves on Okamoto's part arguably cleared the way for subsequent thinkers such as Umehara Takeshi, the subject of our next chapter, who would use the Jōmon period to construct one of the most idiosyncratic forms of modern Japanese nationalism. Rather than art history or the fine arts, then, the legacy of Okamoto's thesis of Jōmon as Japanese tradition would be most influential in fields such as philosophy, politics, literature, anthropology and eventually even popular culture. Regardless of field or intellectual discipline, though, all of the oscillations of Jōmon as a shifting signifier across the postwar began with Okamoto's disinterment of prehistory from the annals of archaeological and antiquarian curiosity to recreate the Neolithic period as sort of transtemporal, transhistorical force animating Japan.

CHAPTER III
Prehistory as Method:
Umehara Takeshi and Jōmonism

In the previous chapter we examined how Okamoto Tarō introduced the idea of Jōmon as a transhistorical force in Japanese culture through his art treatises and travel narratives. Outside of Okamoto and his acquaintances in the fine arts world, however, the the Jōmon period rarely factored into the public imagination of Japanese society. While Jōmon artifacts were exhibited in museums and coverage of the Stone Age became an established part of the public school history curriculum following the end of the war, there is little to no evidence to suggest that anyone considered the Jōmon period a major influence on later permutations of Japanese culture. Throughout the 1970s, discussion of the Jōmon period was largely confined to the domains of archaeological and paleo-anthropological discourse in specialized publications. Beginning in the late 1970s, however, philosopher turned *nihonjinron* theorist Umehara Takeshi (1925-2019) began to aggressively promote the Jōmon period as the *ur*-foundation (*kiso bunka*) of Japanese history, culture, and language. Umehara occupies a conspicuous status in postwar Japanese intellectual history given his long career, which spanned several distinct stages of scholarship, and the polarized reception of his often controversial ideas.

Umehara Takeshi was educated in the Philosophy Department of Kyoto University in the immediate postwar years when the department remained heavily influenced by the thought of Nishida Kitarō (1870-1945). Despite primarily studying with new faculty members who had joined the department after the war, Umehara would be linked to the prewar Kyoto School of Philosophy throughout his career, a tenuous connection that only increased his notoriety as an intellectual. Initially engaged as a philosopher focusing on Existentialism, Nihilism, and Ancient

Greek philosophy, from the 1960s onward, Umehara became disenchanted with what he regarded as the Eurocentrism inherent in Western philosophy. With its heavy reliance on Christian concepts, Umehara found it largely inapplicable to Japanese culture. Although for a time he looked toward the religious interconnections of Buddhism to find an all-encompassing theory of Japanese culture, Umehara eventually settled on the Stone Age Jōmon period for an alternative foundation that would allow Japan to distinguish itself from the West.

Like Okamoto, whose work had a great influence on him, Umehara attempted to avoid the strictures of empirical archaeology when writing about the Jōmon period by pursuing a speculative approach that frequently relied on appeals to emotion and romantic conceptions of Japan - not to mention outright conjecture. Drawing liberally from linguistics, physical anthropology, religious studies, and literature, Umehara essentially invented a new form of Japanology that gave his beliefs about the Jōmon period a veneer of scientific authority. As Yumiko Iida notes, the success of Umehara as a public intellectual in the 1980s was due in no small part to his "narrative dexterity with stitching facts and assumptions into an entertaining story for general readers."[1]

In spite of Umehara's success with Japanese audiences, first as a philosopher and then as a sort of *nihonjinron* pundit, controversy followed him throughout his career. Umehara's connection with the prewar Kyoto School and his perennial attempts to revitalize the 'soul'(*tamashii*) of Japan by identifying a unifying cultural center (alternatively Buddhist or prehistoric) drew accusations that he was a covert nationalist. As early as 1973, Umehara was denounced by the Japanese Communist Party for promoting what it called "reactionary

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[1] Yumiko Iida, *Rethinking Japanese Nationalism: Nationalism as Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 2002), 191.

philosophy" (*handō no tetsugaku*).[2] Similarly, in 1982, Umehara's attempts to create a new form of Japanology were dismissed as little more than "concealed fascism" (*kakusareta fashizumu*).[3] In Anglophone Japanese Studies, Umehara has similarly been viewed as the intellectual embodiment of the Japanese far-right. And yet, Umehara's ideas about Japanese identity differed substantially from other Japanese nationalists in the postwar era. Rather than subscribe to the myth of ethnic homogeneity (*tanitsu minzoku*), Umehara argued that the modern Japanese people were in essence a mixed race (*konketsu*) defined by Jōmon (the indigenous hunter-gatherer inhabitants) and Yayoi (agricultural migrants from the Asian continent) lineages.

Umehara was fond of framing this bifurcated Japanese identity along Nietzschean lines. Drawing from the division between Dionysian and Apollonian that Nietzsche formulated to describe the dichotomous realms of ancient Greek aesthetics and sensibility, Umehara cast Jōmon and Yayoi as dialectically intertwined, a marked contrast from Okamoto who saw the two forces as irreconcilable. In this schematic, Jōmon was the Dionysian or the primal id of Japanese culture; it represented feminine vitality and the sort of primal energy that animated religion and ancient customs. Conversely, Yayoi was Apollonian or the rational ego of Japanese culture that drove the development of technology and government. Put together, these two transhistorical forces formed an 'oval' structure -- with Jōmon as the mother culture and Yayoi as the father culture. This dialectic was also reflected in geography, genetics, and language: Kansai and

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[2] Tenchi Yoshiki, "Mushisō to handō no tetsugaku: Umehara Takeshi hihan," *Zenei* Vol. 361 (December 1973), 122-141. *Zenei* is the official magazine of the Japanese Communist Party.

[3] Ariki Daisaburo, "Umehara Takeshi kakusareta fashizumu shikan" *Gendai no Me* Vol. 23, no.11 (November 1982), 84-9.

southern Japan was Yayoi, whereas Kantō (and northern Japan) was Jōmon, a fact reflected in the dialects and physical characteristics of the people inhabiting these respective regions.[4]

This geographic provincialization of the Japanese archipelago -- that is, the division between Jōmon and Yayoi strongholds -- hints at the most controversial thesis of Umehara's Jōmonism. In brief, Umehara claimed that the Ainu and the Okinawans peoples were not merely descendants of residual Jōmon populations, but had preserved Jōmon language, religion, and culture largely unchanged from prehistory to the present. This idea, which was first broached by Okamoto in his travel narratives, advanced the notion of 'self-indigenization' to its mystical extreme. The Ainu, in particular, became an obsession of Umehara's from the late 1970s onward. Umehara attempted to prove that the Ainu language was the original form of Japanese, a language largely unchanged since the Jōmon period.

In the pages that follow, I chart how Umehara came to embrace the Jōmon as the foundational epoch of Japanese culture and reworked his conjectures about prehistory on the Japanese archipelago into a Jōmon-centered ideology commonly termed as Jōmonism. Through analyzing the development of Umehara's thought from his time as a student at Kyoto University to the the late 1980s when he ascended to the directorship of Nichibunken, I argue that Umehara conceived of Jōmonism as a neo-nationalist ideology that affirmed the success of Japan's (postwar) modernization while also paradoxically claiming that Japan was an ancient nation that continued to be defined by its Jōmon culture, elements of which he claimed continued to survive

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[4] On the 'oval structure' of Japanese culture see "The Japanese View of the "Other World:" Japanese Religion in World Perspective," *Japan Review* no. 2 (1991), 163. On Jōmon as the mother culture and Yayoi as the father culture see Umehara Takeshi and Watanabe Toyokazu, "Jōmon, Yami, Kenchiku," *Kenchiku Bunka* Vol. 35, no. 410 (December 1980), 35. The geographic boundaries of Jōmon and Yayoi are discussed on the same page.

into modernity. By expanding upon Okamoto's original blurring of synchronic and diachronic time, Umehara positioned Japan as a country that was simultaneously modern and prehistoric, a country that could compete with the industrialized, democratic West while retaining traditional forms of culture that served as a bulwark against complete capture by the West.

Nathaniel Hopson, in his historical study of Tōhoku as a discursive formation, uses the term Jōmonism to describe the valorization of the Jōmon period that began with Okamoto's first writings and extended to Umehara's championing of prehistory.[5] My usage of Jōmonism differs in that I use it solely to denote Umehara's thought from the late 1970s onward. Umehara's Japan-centered thought is commonly known as *Umehara Nihongaku* in Japanese which translates into "Umehara Japanology" or "Umehara Japanese Studies" in English. It should be noted that Umehara himself never used a term such as *Jōmon-shūgi*, the approximate translation of "Jōmonism," in his own writings; rather this was the label that critics gave it. Confusingly, however, *Umehara Nihongaku* was used by Umehara himself to refer to both his earlier work on ancient Japan (i.e. Nara and Heian period) in the late 1960s and 1970s and his subsequent writings on the Ainu and the Jōmon period. Other variations such as "Umehara's Ancient Studies" (*Umehara kodaigaku*) or simply "Ancient Studies" (*kodaigaku*) were also commonly used by Umehara. As such, I use "Jomonism" to differentiate Umehara's focus on prehistory and the Ainu from his earlier stages of thought.

The broad tenets of Jōmonism include: 1) a belief that Japanese culture is composed of two distinct forces: Jōmon and Yayoi; 2) a firm opposition to Western civilization and materialism, often contrasted with the supposedly spiritual nature of Japan or the "East" broadly;

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[5] Nathaniel Hopson, *Ennobling Japan's Savage Northeast: Tohoku as Postwar Thought, 1945-2011* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University East Asia Center, 2017), 203, 210.

3) an emphasis on studying the Jōmon period through Japan's contemporary ethnic minorities, namely the Ainu, but also often the Okinawan and Ryukyuan people; 4) the positioning of putatively "Jōmonist"beliefs against prewar nationalism and militarism; and 5) a belief that the Jōmon period was an ecologically harmonious 'civilization' (not simply a culture) devoid of agriculture.

Although the contours of Jōmonism remained largely the same for much of Umehara's career, the ideology was not entirely static. Initially, Umehara's championing of the Jōmon period was considerably more ethnocentric, stressing the need to recover the origins of the Japanese people and integrate the "darkness of prehistory" into the broader narrative of Japanese national history. Publications such as *Jōmon to Onryō* (Jomon and Vengeful Ghosts, 1979) and *Nihon no Shinsō* (Japan's Deepest Strata, 1983) emphasized the continuity between prehistory and later manifestations of Japanese culture in a similar vein to Okamoto's earlier essays and travelogues. Beginning in the early 1990s, however, following international criticism of Umehara's methodology of studying prehistoric language and culture through the modern Ainu people, Umehara began instead to emphasize the ecological harmony of the Jōmon period as a way to help ameliorate contemporary environmental problems. While this environmentalist posture relied on the ancient trope of Japan's innate connection with the natural world (versus the West's domination of nature), Umehara attempted to portray this rethinking of industrial civilization in universalist terms, arguing that it was not only Japan that could benefit from re-examining the Jōmon period, but the modern world itself. While Umehara's hollow appeals to universalism never gained traction, the notion of the Jōmon period as a hunter-gatherer utopia, one intimately linked with the primordial Japanese forest, later became a major aspect of

culturalist discourse surrounding the Jōmon period from the 1990s onward, influencing not only the public's imagination, but even contemporary archaeological and anthropological research about Japanese prehistory. This phenomenon will be explored further in Chapter 5.

Prior to this shift toward an ecological posture, however, Jōmonism became immensely popular in the 1980s, most notably winning over conservative Prime Minister Nakasaone Yasuhiro, who chose Umehara to serve as the first director of the Kyoto-based International Center for Japanese Studies more commonly known by its Japanese abbreviation "Nichibunken." The institutionalization of Jōmonism at Nichibunken was a significant achievement for Umehara and represented a tacit endorsement of the idea that the Jōmon period was foundational to the character of modern Japanese culture. Umehara and other public intellectuals, including philosopher Ueyama Shunpei, literary critic Kuwabara Takeo, and anthropologist Umesao Tadao, laid the groundwork for the creation of Nichibunken as an institute to disseminate the idea of Japanese uniqueness across the globe. This coterie of thinkers are commonly known as the "New Kyoto School" (*Shin kyoto gakuha*), an appellation that designates them as intellectual heirs to the pre-war Kyoto School. But, in actuality, there were few connections between the prewar Kyoto School and the New Kyoto School. Although Umehara and Ueyama were graduates of the Philosophy Department in Kyoto, both would ultimately reject Western philosophy and distance themselves from the philosophical approaches promoted by the leaders of the Kyoto School such as Nishida Kitarō and Tanabe Hajime.

Although identifying the intellectual boundaries of the New Kyoto School is beyond the scope of this chapter, in order to grasp the development of Jōmonism, it is necessary to briefly examine the life and career of Ueyama Shunpei, who preceded Umehara in advocating the need

to study the Jōmon period. Like Umehara, Ueyama was a critic of prewar ultranationalism and the postwar American order who believed that Japan needed to create a new nationalism that affirmed its cultural uniqueness from China and the West. Ueyama was the the first figure to introduce the idea of centering the Jōmon period in Japanese culture to Umehara in the late 1960s. This initial catalyst to probe prehistory led Umehara to Okamoto Taro's writings in the 1970s and then finally to his controversial "Ainu as Jōmon" hypothesis at the end of that decade. This chapter concludes at the tail end of the 1980s when Umehara's influence was at its zenith as the director of Nichibunken, an elite perch from which he was able to spread the message of Jōmonism from the rarified confines of academe into popular culture and widespread public consciousness from the 1990s onward.

Early Life and the Formative Years

Umehara Takeshi was born in 1925 in Sendai and grew up on the rural Chita peninsula in Aichi Prefecture after being adopted by relatives following the death of his birth mother. As a youth, he lived a relatively uneventful life, attending school and devouring literature until being mobilized to assist with the domestic war effort as a high school student in the early 1940s. Umehara was tasked with armament production at a Mitsubishi Factory in Nagoya producing that was subsequently bombed by the Americans during the first air raids in 1942.[6] The ferocity of the subsequent air raids and news of the deaths of fellow students conscripted into the Imperial army convinced Umehara that the war was a lost cause; this realization distilled him in a lingering distrust of the Emperor and other institutions associated with the war, such as State

[6] Quoted in Umehara Takeshi, "*Gakumon no susume*" in *Umehara Takeshi chosakushū* Vol. 20 (Tokyo: Shueisha, 1982), 55. Collection cited as UTCS hereafter. "*Gakumon no susume*" is an autobiography by Umehara that covers his life and career until early 1980s.

Shinto. According to Umehara, the despair of the war first compelled him to study philosophy and interrogate age-old questions such as the meaning of life and nature of death.[7] Along with works of luminaries of Western philosophy such as Descartes, Kant, and Hegel, Umehara devoured the works of Japanese thinkers from the so-called the Kyoto School of Philosophy: Nishida Kitarō, Watsuji Tetsuro, and Tanabe Hajime.

Nishida, in particular, would have a profound influence on Umehara; and this convinced him to pursue a degree in philosophy at Kyoto University, where Umehara he enrolled in the spring of 1945. No sooner did he participate in the university's entrance ceremonies, however, than Umehara received his conscription notice and was forced to forego his studies to serve in the final months of the war.[8] Although Umehara would publicly position himself in Nishida's shadow throughout his career, there is no evidence to suggest that he ever actually met Nishida in person. Nishida had passed away in 1945 just as Umehara was entering Kyoto University and had long since retired from teaching. Nevertheless, both domestic and international critics came to associate Umehara with the wartime Kyoto School of Philosophy and, by extension, sympathy for Japanese imperialism.

The fact that Umehara did not extend his criticism and distrust of ultranationalism to Nishida and other wartime Kyoto philosophers is surprising in many ways. Umehara writes that Nishida and Tanabe's philosophy of world history, wherein cataclysmic events are characterized as mere episodes within the overall stream of historical time, provided a 'rationalization' (*gōrika*) for the war.[9] And yet, throughout his career, Umehara largely refrained from denouncing from

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[7] UTCS 20: 57-58.

[8] Ibid., 59.

[9] Ibid., 58.

Nishida. In a 1959 retrospective article on his time as a student at Kyoto University published in *Shisō no Kagaku*, Umehara harshly criticized acolytes of Nishida's philosophy who had participated in the "Overcoming Modernity" symposium (namely, Koyama Iwao, Kōsaka Masaaki, Nishitani Kenji, and Suzuki Shigetaka) for justifying the war through their world-historical philosophy. Curiously, however, he refrained from directly criticizing Nishida himself or commenting on the fact that Nishida's writings on 'being and nothingness' provided much of the philosophical armature used by Koyama, Kōsaka, and the other participants in their debates on imperial expansion. Rather, Umehara labeled Koyama and his collaborators as the "world history faction" of the Kyoto School and treated it as a separate offshoot of the Kyoto School, leaving larger questions about Nishida and Tanabe's complicity untouched.[10]

Between Nishida's death, Tanabe's retirement in 1945, and the purge of thinkers such as Koyama and Kōsaka under the direction of SCAP, the Philosophy Department at Kyoto University in the immediate postwar was in many ways a liminal institution stuck between the long shadow of the prewar Kyoto School and a new generation of scholars in the postwar who, while perhaps conservative and anti-American, had no desire to revisit the war. Of the scholars Umehara studied under at Kyoto University, Tanaka Michitarō, a specialist in ancient Greek philosophy and philology, was among the most influential, eventually becoming Umehara's dissertation adviser. Under Tanaka's supervision, Umehara completed a dissertation on the Pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus and began teaching at Ryūkoku University in Kyoto in 1952. Shortly thereafter, in 1954, Umehara would transfer to Ritsumeikan University (also in Kyoto) where he would work until the early 1970s.

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[10] Umehara Takeshi, "*Tetsugaku to tempura: Kyoto gakuha no koshō shishi*," *Shisō no Kakagaku* (August 1959), 31-38.

Towards Japanology

Umehara's path to "Jōmonism" began as a reaction against the suffocating negativity of Existentialism and Nihilism -- ideas that he came to regard as the "philosophy of death" (*shi no tetsugaku*). This dissatisfaction did not immediately manifest itself as an outright rejection of Western philosophy, but rather as a slow embrace of Japanese culture and literature through a search for a "philosophy of life" that affirmed human dignity and offered an alternative to the disenchanted modern world. Beginning in the late 1950s, Umehara seized upon laughter as a fundamental attribute of culture in both Western and Japanese civilization that could be studied comparatively through drama and literature. Umehara's essays on humor and emotion would eventually be compiled and published as *Warai no Kōzō.*[11] Highly technical with a prodigious use of set theory and diagrammatic representations of how humor functions in various literary works, the essays in *Warai no Kōzō* differed substantially from the rest of his oeuvre. Among the essays are close readings of Natsume Soseki's *Wagahai wa neko de aru* (I am a Cat, 1906) and Shiga Naoya's *Anya Kōro* (A Dark Night's Passing, serialized from 1921-1937). Taking these authors as representative of a sort of native Japanese or "Oriental" (*tōyō*) emotion, Umehara contrasts their nihilistic, carnivalesque sense of humor with European "egoism" rooted in Christianity and an ironclad belief in objectivity.

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[11] The title of this work is an obvious allusion to Kuki Shūzō's much more famous *Iki no Kōzō* (The Structure of Iki, 1930) which sought to find a native form of Japanese phenomenological experience rooted in the sensuous culture of '*iki'* which thrived during the late Edo period. Despite being heavily indebted in method and terminology to Heidegger's hermeneutics of Being, Kuki conceived of *iki* as an "aesthetic 'way of being' beyond the horizon of Western metaphysics. For a full treatment of Kuki's writings and thought see Leslie Pincus, *Authenticating Culture in Imperial Japan: Kuki Shūzō and the Rise of National Aesthetics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

Umehara's engagement with Soseki and Shiga in the early 1960s marked his initial foray into studying Japanese literature and culture, breaking a longstanding aversion of his toward studying Japan rooted in his wartime experiences. This embrace of Japanese culture was seamlessly incorporated into his earlier critiques of Western philosophy (especially Kantian and Cartesian thought) and civilization drawn from a Nietzschean standpoint. Umehara's gradual embrace of Japanese nativism was motivated by his increasing alarm at what he believed was the "monstrous vanity" of the high-growth era (from the mid-1950s through the early 1970s) wherein the Japanese people had become mere "economic animals" craving only material prosperity.[12] Umehara's anxiety over materialism and Americanization linked up neatly with his earlier criticism from the 1950s of capitalism, scientism, and developmental thought as leading to alienation and religious disenchantment in the modern era. Importantly, though, these critiques of capitalism would gradually disappear from Umehara's work as his public stature rose and he became more closely associated with the Japanese state in the 1980s.

As an alternative to Western philosophy, in the 1960s, Umehara latched on to the idea of Buddhism as foundational pillar of Japanese culture, an influence that, in his view, animated the cultural histories of other East Asian countries as well. Mahayana Buddhism, in particular, formed the backbone of a unique East Asian civilization, as he saw it, as a shared cultural heritage uniting Japan, China, Korea, and "the East of Eurasia" broadly.[13] The Pan-Asianism of this conception was never fully developed by Umehara, whose scholarship on Buddhism as an animating, transhistorical force remained almost exclusively focused on Japan. In Buddhism,

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[12] Umehara Takeshi, "Heidegger and Buddhism," *Philosophy East and West* 20:3 (July 1970), 272.

[13] UTCS 7: 107.

Umehara found his "philosophy of life" that opposed what he saw the as the worship of violence and conquest inherent in Western civilization. This critique of Western civilization was not new -- it could be found in his earlier philosophical writings on Existentialism and ancient Greek philosophy produced in the 1950s; but now, with the benefit of a wholesale alternative to Western civilization and philosophy in the form of Mahayana Buddhism, Umehara vehemently rejected his earlier fascination with the West.

There are numerous parallels between Umehara's work on Buddhism and his subsequent Jōmonism. In both cases, they function as a spiritual center that animates Japanese culture over the course of history, endowing it with essential attributes such as peace and closeness with nature. Moreover, in both cases, Umehara posited that this essence or center had been lost in modernity due to the influence of Westernization and that recovering it was imperative for the future of Japan. In works such *Bi to Shūkyō no hakken* (The Discovery of Beauty and Religion, 1962) and *Jigoku no Shisō* (The Concept of Hell, 1966), Umehara traced the prevalence of Buddhism through Japanese culture from ancient to contemporary times, creating a mimesis of cultural continuity that he argued shaped Japanese consciousness. Certainly, Buddhism has been profoundly influential in Japan since its arrival from China in the 5th century CE. That said, elevating Buddhism as the *sole* variable that influenced not only literature and the arts, but shaped a sort of predetermined and eternal Japanese mentality from the Nara period onward, elides the rich interplay of political, economic, and environmental factors that similarly shape history.

Aside from highlighting the literary and artistic aspects of Buddhist values over the course of Japanese history, Umehara also advocated vegetarianism and exhorted the Japanese to

follow Buddhist precepts more closely in their daily lives.[14] This attempt to foster a revival of religious sensibility among the contemporary Japanese people unsurprisingly led many academics and left-wing critics to label Umehara an essentially conservative thinker, if not a crypto-nationalist. These charges were vigorously countered by Umehara who claimed that his scholarly activities were opposed to nationalism. That said, Umehara's definition of nationalism was extraordinarily narrow, consisting essentially of an intellectual genealogy stretching from *kokugaku* thinkers such as Motoori Norinaga and Hirata Atsutane in the Edo period to the Emperor system (*tennosei-do*) of the prewar era. In their search for native Japanese culture and religion, Umehara writes that Motoori and Hirata ignored the profound influence of Buddhism on ancient Shinto and mistakenly elevated the Emperor as a 'living god' through their readings of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*.[15] This rhetorical valorization of the Emperor became a political reality following the Meiji Restoration, he argued, leading to the establishment of State Shinto (*kokka shintō*) and the divination of the Emperor under the Imperial state.[16]

In articulating the idea that Buddhism formed the religio-cultural center of Japanese life, Umehara relied heavily on criticism of the ideas of other public intellectuals. For example, in 1966, Umehara attacked *junbungaku* author Mishima Yukio for downplaying the significance of Buddhism in Japanese history with his imperialist revivalism. While noting that both of them shared a desire to valorize Japanese culture against the West, Umehara accused Mishima of falling for the "fallacy" (*gobyū*) of Emperor worship, a perversion of ancient Shinto perpetrated

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[14] UTCS 7: 112-3.

[15] UTCS 19: 176-7.

[16] Ibid.

by *kokugaku* scholars.[17] Umehara concluded his diatribe against Mishima by challenging him to stop his "masturbatory body-building" with the Shield Society (*Tate no kai*) and to debate Umehara in a public forum. Mishima ignored Umehara's entreaties for discourse, however, and issued no reply before his infamous coup d'état (which failed) and subsequent ritual suicide.[18]

At the opposite end of the political spectrum from Mishima, Umehara criticized the liberalism of Maruyama Masao, whose ideas he saw as an effacement of Japanese intellectual history vis-a-vis the West.[19] In his influential 1957 essay "Japanese Thought" (*Nihon no Shisō*), later compiled with other essays and published under the same name, Maruyama argued that intellectual history in Japan lacked a distinct form of political subjectivity that could be traced across the ages. The absence of a what Maruyama called a "coordinating axis" or "nucleus" in Japanese history meant that it was impossible to write an intellectual history (*seishinshi*) of how Japan had developed as a modern nation in the same manner as the West, where long-held ideas such as democracy or freedom of expression had percolated and developed over time.[20] Thus, while it was certainly possible to study Edo-period Confucianism or Buddhism, in Maruyama's view such research was temporally limited to that specific period given the lack of influence said movements had on the Japan's modernization process.

Umehara charged that Maruyama, by failing to recognize the transhistorical continuity of Buddhism throughout Japanese history, was guilty of "religious dementia" (*shūkyōteki chihō*).[21]

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[17] UTCS 19: 176-7.

[18] Ibid., 181.

[19] UTCS 3: 89-91.

[20] Maruyama Masao, *Nihon no Shisō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2019), 4-5. First published in 1961.

[21] This critique was also directed toward Yanagi Sōetsu and Watsuji Tetsuro by Umehara. See UTCS 3: 80-90.

For Umehara, Maruyama's attempts to extricate religion from political subjectivity ignored the formative influence of Christianity on Western philosophy. In the same way that Christianity informed the ethical, epistemological, and metaphysical boundaries of European thought, Umehara claimed that (Mahayana) Buddhism had fueled developments in not only political thought, but also arts, literature, and theatre. Notably, recognizing the influence of Buddhism was not necessarily an endorsement; reactionaries against Buddhism, such Mootori Norinaga and other *kokugaku* scholars, were included as part Umehara's pantheon of Japanese intellectual history.[22]

Ueyama Shunpei and the Origins of Jōmonism

At first glance Umehara's 'discovery' of the Jōmon period in the mid-1970s appears to be a sudden revelation that enticed him to abandon his earlier studies of Buddhism and ancient (although not prehistoric) Japanese culture. In actuality, Umehara's initial valorization of the Jōmon period drew heavily from three quite dissimilar sources: Ueyama's Shunpei's eco-deterministic account of Jōmon culture, Okamoto Tarō's art criticism focusing on Jōmon-Yayoi, and anthropologist Fujiwara Hisakazu's (1940-) research on Ainu religion and culture. Despite at times discussing the physical features of Jōmon dwellings, Umehara does not appear to have been familiar with the essays on Jōmon and Yayoi architectural characteristics published by Tange Kenzo, Shirai Seichi, and others in the 1950s.[23] Although Okamoto's writings were

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[22] UTCS 3: 91.

[23] See for example the *taidan* between Umehara Takeshi and architect Watanabe Tokokazu in late 1980. Despite the topic being the relationship between the Jōmon period and Japanese architecture, Umehara provides only the vaguest explanations for how architecture was influenced by the prehistoric dwellings. There is no discussion of Shirai, Tange, or even Okamoto in the *taidan*. "*Jōmon, Yami, Kenchiku*" *Kenchiku Bunka* Vol. 35 No. 410, 33-42.

doubtlessly more influential for the formation of Jōmonism, it is worthwhile to examine Ueyama's ecological approach toward study of the Jōmon period known as the "Evergreen Forest Cultural Theory" (*shōyōjurin bunkaron*), an account that posited that the Jōmon period culture developed due to a unique combination of ecological and climatological factors.[24] Although Umehara would not adopt Ueyama's method for studying the Jōmon period, he would integrate many of the same themes and reuse certain terminologies in his own Jōmonism. Indeed, although prior exposure to Okamoto's writings cannot fully be ruled out, it appears that Ueyama was the first to introduce to Umehara the idea of centering the Jōmon period as the foundation of Japanese culture. Moreover, Ueyama would introduce Umehara to other prominent intellectuals such as Umesao Tadao, Kuwabara Takeo and Imanishi Kinji, all figures that would come to comprise the so-called "New Kyoto School."As such, an overview of Ueyama's thought, and how it differed from Umehara's Jōmonism is necessary to grasp how prehistory became a prominent topic within the discourse about Japanese identity in the 1970s.

Ueyama Shunpei was born in colonial Taiwan in 1921, but his family was originally from Wakayama Prefecture and he would return there with them after graduating high school.[25] He studied under Tanabe Hajime at Kyoto University and graduated in 1943 with a thesis focusing on Immanuel Kant. Shortly thereafter, he was conscripted into the Navy, ultimately training to be a "*Kaiten*" suicide attack crew member (*tokkō taiin*) -- that is, a "human torpedo" (*ningen*

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[24] The evergreen forest cultural theory has been translated into English several different ways including the "Laurisilvae Forest Theory" and "green leaf culture." I have ventured my own translation to distinguish Ueyama's theorization of the connection between evergreen forests and the Jōmon period from Nakao Sasuke's earlier work that pioneered many of the major ecological ideas.

[25] Ueyama's family appears to have worked in Taiwan during his youth, although his official registration (*honseki*) lists him as a resident of Wakayama Prefecture. He would return to Wakayama after the war prior to beginning graduate studies at Kyoto U. See Sugawara Jun, *Kyoto gakuha* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2018), 198-200.

gyorai) aimed at sinking an Allied naval vessels. *Kaiten* (lit. "turn heaven") referred to manned torpedoes that could be launched at enemy ships and guided by a pilot until they reached their intended target. Such suicidal naval attacks are less well known than the much more infamous *Kamikaze* suicide plane attacks undertaken by the Imperial Air Force in the final stages of the Pacific theatre of World War II, yet both tactics developed out of the same sense of desperate recognition that the tide of war had turned against Japan. On August 14th, the day before Japan officially surrendered, Ueyama was aboard a submarine armed with Kaiten torpedos preparing for a suicide mission when, after breaching the surface, the ship came under fire from an American aerial attack rendering the Kaiten torpedoes ineffective.[26]

Much like Umehara's experiences surviving the air raids during his domestic deployment, Ueyama's experience training to be a "human torpedo" left him bitterly opposed to the Emperor and wartime ultranationalism. Ueyama would return to Kyoto University in 1948 as a graduate student in philosophy focused on American pragmatism and Marxist philosophy. Although Umehara and Ueyama were studying philosophy in Kyoto at the same time, they claim to have been only passing acquaintances with little to no knowledge of the other's philosophical research at the time.[27]

Ueyama's distrust of the Emperor system and prewar nationalism did not preclude a wholesale rejection of nationalism, per se. Much like Sinologist Takeuchi Yoshimi who argued

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[26] Shibayama Tetsuya, *Shin Kyoto gakuha: Chi no furontia ni idonda gakusha tachi* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2014), 125-126. I quote Shibayama's overview of the New Kyoto School with a note of trepidation given his penchant for editorialization and overtly conservative perspective. Nevertheless, Shibayama's account of the formation of Nichibunken and biographical overviews of the major thinkers associated with Nichibunken is the most comprehensive volume available as of writing.

[27] In *Umehara Takeshi no sekai*, 80-81, Ueyama and Umehara describe meeting for the first time during ANPO, not during their students days at Kyoto U.

for the revitalization of Japanese culture by turning toward Asia away from the West, Ueyama believed it was possible to craft a new form of Japanese nationalism rooted in an appreciation and awareness of Japanese culture that could avoid capture by Western ideals without descending into fascism. As Yumiko Iida notes, Ueyama was a critic of both prewar nationalism and the postwar geopolitical order where the rhetoric of multilateralism only faintly masked American hegemony.[28] Rather than overtly challenge the American-led order, as more fiery critics such as Etō Jun or Ishihara Shintarō chose to do, Ueyama turned toward a form of comparative civilizational analysis to theorize about Japan's historical development and attempt to find an alternative basis for a new form of nationalism. In a 1965 volume on Japanese nationalism, Ueyama argued that Japan was in essence a "concave culture" (*ōgata bunka*) or culture characterized by widespread receptivity to influence from more dominant powers known he called "convex cultures" (*otsugata bunka*).[29] Classical civilizations such as China and Greece (Ueyama does not specify particular periods) are prime examples of convex cultures; through their centrifugal projection of power they influenced surrounding countries and shaped their own cultures. In practical terms, Ueyama's conception of Japan as a concave culture allowed him to assign much of Japan's historical development to the influence of Chinese civilization. Accordingly, political institutions such as the imperial household and cultural practices such as Buddhism were not innately Japanese, but rather mere imitations of Chinese civilization. In order to craft a new nationalism, Ueyama believed it was necessary to understand the "deepest

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[28] Yumiko Iida, *Rethinking Japanese Nationalism*, 138-141.

[29] Ueyama Shunpei, *Nihon no nashionarizumu* (Tokyo: Shiseido Shoten, 1965), 17

strata" (*shinsō*) of Japanese culture or the forms of culture largely untouched by influences from the Asian continent or the West.[30]

This search for a culture untouched by Sinitic and Western ideals led Ueyama to study the Jōmon period from the late 1960s. Whereas Okamoto had looked to the rural hinterlands and attempted to focus on the 'microcosmic' elements of culture such as crafts and rituals, Ueyama's method of studying the Jōmon period focused on civilizational analysis that emphasized macro-level changes in ecology and society in both ancient Japan and East Asia broadly. Ueyama developed the Evergreen Forest Cultural Theory in tandem with agronomist Nakao Sasuke (1916-1993), plant ecologist Kira Tatsuo (1919-2011), archaeologist Okazaki Takahashi, and cultural anthropologist Iwata Keiji (1922-2013) during a two-day symposium held in 1969. The theory posits that Japan (from the Kanto plains to southern Kyushu) is part of a subtropical ecological zone extending from eastern and southern China through the Himalaya Mountains -- a zone characterized by broadleaf evergreen forests with beech trees and evergreen oaks as the primary indicator plants.[31] For Ueyama and his collaborators, these ecological features were crucial to the development of Jōmon culture, as said environment allowed for a thriving hunter-gatherer economy that was supplemented by cultivation (although not extensive agricultural production of food crops) and domestication of wild animals from the Middle Jōmon period onward. Aspects of this forest-centered prehistoric lifestyle, in turn, helped shape indigenous Japanese religion (*koyū shinkyō*) which Ueyama argued was originally separate from

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[30] The subtitle for the Evergreen Forest Cultural Theory was in fact "Japan's Deepest Strata of Culture" (*Nihon no shinsō bunka*). For Ueyama this included both the Paleolithic period and the (Neolithic) Jōmon period. See Ueyama et al. "Shōyōjurin bunkaron" i*n Ueyama Shunpei chosakushū* Vol. 6 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1995), 65-66. Collected works hereafter cited as USCS.

[31] For the geographical range of the Evergreen Forest zone see USCS 6: 67. Nakao offers a succinct summary of the ecological characteristics of the zone in USCS 6: 103.

Shinto. Given the variety of disciplinary orientations represented among the participants, the Evergreen Forest Cultural Theory is presented as a mixture of culturalist interpretations of Japanese nature and highly technical interpretations of how Japan's climate and geography compares with other regions in Asia and Pacific.

Notably, none of the participants were specialists in Jōmon archaeology, a fact mentioned by Ueyama at the beginning of the symposium.[32] Nakao Sasuke provided the bulk of the scientific expertise for the theory through his publications on the origins of agriculture, while Ueyama largely attempted to synthesize Nakao's writings on ecology and climate with his own his ideas about how to study the Jōmon period outside of archaeology.

The impetus for the development of the Evergreen Forest Cultural Theory derives from the profound influence of Umesao Tadao's ecological histories published in the late 1950s. Umesao, an anthropologist by training, was one Japan's most famous public intellectuals in the twentieth century, well known for books on comparative civilization, media history, and futurology, in addition to serving as a professor at Kyoto University and the director of the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka.[33] Umesao's ecological approach developed out his travels to China during the wartime years with his mentor, biologist Imanishi Kinji, and his later travels to India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Hindu Kush in 1955. These travels imparted upon Umesao the idea that Japanese *Civilization* (his use of this term, rather than culture, was intentional) was qualitatively different than that of countries such as India or China in terms of its historical trajectory. In his seminal 1957 article "An Ecological View of Civilization" (*Bunmei*

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[32] USSC 6: 69.

[33] For an overview of Umesao's career see the preface of *An Ecological View of History: Japanese Civilization in the World*, ed. Harumi Befu, trans. Beth Cary (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2003), x-xi.

no seitaishikan) published in *Chūō Kōrōn*, Umesao argued that the world could be divided into into two 'Zones': Zone One countries included much of Western Europe and Japan; these were countries that had successfully modernized and reached a stage of "advanced capitalism" after proceeding through feudalism and subsequent bourgeoise revolutions.[34] Zone Two countries, by contrast, were civilizations such as China and India that had historically been territorially expansive and influential, but by failing to develop the preconditions for advancement to capitalism had experienced prolonged stagnation. Despite using Marxian terminology and emphasizing modes of production, Umesao argued that ecology, rather than economics, was the ultimate determinant for whether a country could be classified as Zone One or Zone Two. The ecological characteristics of Zone One countries were plentiful precipitation, a temperate climate, and abundant forests that could be exploited and converted to farmland.[35]

Needless to say, Umesao's criteria for separating the respective Zones were extremely simplistic, ignoring as they did numerous historical variables. Indeed, labeling his view of civilization as ecological is somewhat of a misnomer, as Umesao relied on a crude climate determinism to group civilizations rather assessing actual environmental conditions or examining ways that people traditionally interacted with and modified their surrounding environs. Given the Cold War context, however, the appeal of positioning Japan alongside Western European countries as a nation that had successfully industrialized and matured into a capitalist powerhouse is obvious.

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[34] Umesao, *An Ecological View of History*, 50.

[35] Umesao, *An Ecological View of History*, 57.

The years between the publication of Umesao's ecological theory of civilization in 1957 and the publication of the Evergreen Forest Cultural Theory also saw the ascendancy of modernization theory in the social sciences in Japan, an intellectual trend exemplified by the Hakone Conference of 1960. The Hakone Conference, held amidst massive protests against the ratification of ANPO, featured famed American scholars of Japan such as historians John Hall and Marius Jansen, as well as an ideologically diverse array of Japanese scholars that included liberals, Marxists, and even a former member of the Kyoto School of Philosophy. In essence, the goal of the conference was to affirm the success of Japan's modernization (empire and defeat not withstanding) and endorse an evolutionist view of development that prescribed programmatic stages to reach modernity. In concrete political terms, modernization theory equated "the West with universality" and, in turn, linked modern Japan closely with the West, especially the United States, against the Communist bloc.[36]

Although Umesao was not directly involved with the Evergreen Forest Cultural Theory symposium, Ueyama opened the symposium by acknowledging the intellectual debt that he and the others participants owed to his work and that of biologist Imanishi Kinji (Umesao's mentor and dissertation adviser) on the development of human society.[37] Ueyama writes that the original idea for the Evergreen Forest Theory grew out a cultural anthropology research group led by Imanishi at Kyoto University -- a group in which Umesao regularly participated in. This research group was broadly focused on questions of societal developmental and the respective stages through which societies advanced through before achieving modernity, with an emphasis on a

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[36] Sebastian Conrad, " 'The Colonial Ties are Liquidated: Modernization Theory, Post-war Japan, and the Global Cold War" Past and Present No. 216 (August 2012), 192.

[37] USCS 9: 67, 71-72.

tripartite progression of development from Natural Society (*shizen shakai*) to Agricultural Society (*nōgyō shakai*), and on to Industrial Society (*kōgyō shakai*). The Evergreen Forest Cultural Theory did not seek to directly challenge modernization theory or the evolutionist idea that societies developed through programmatic stages of history (whether Marxist or liberal in political persuasion), so much as it strove to problematize the stages of development and emphasize the need to study earlier stages of development (namely, Natural and Agricultural Society) and not just Industrial Society itself, which the participants believed had been overemphasized in longitudinal studies of history.

For Ueyama and the other participants in the symposium, the Jōmon period (particularly the Middle and Late stages) bore witness to a highly developed culture on the Japanese archipelago that was forcibly ushered into an agricultural revolution with the arrival of wet-rice agriculture from Yayoi period migrants. Prior to the Yayoi period, Ueyama argues that the Jōmon people had successfully integrated plant cultivation, including fallowing and slash-and-burn agriculture, as well as small-scale animal domestication into their hunter-gatherer lifestyles. In other words, the Jōmon people exhibited autochthonous advancement toward agricultural society prior the dominance of imported wet-rice agriculture.

Umehara became familiar with Ueyama in the early 1960s while he was still teaching at Ritsumeikan University and appears to have at least occasionally attended the cultural anthropology workshops headed by Imanishi and Umesao.[38] The intellectual synergy between the pair would influence their respective research foci as each of them moved away from

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[38] UTCS 20: 88. Umehara describes meeting Ueyama at a research grouped based at Kyoto University headed by Umesao. This is also where he made the acquaintance of Kuwabara Takeo and Tsurumi Shunsuke both of whom would become associated with the New Kyoto School. See also *Umehara Takeshi no sekai*, 81-83.

Western philosophy: Umehara's *kodaigaku* scholarship on Nara and Heian Japan and the *risturyō* state would motivate Ueyama to begin studying the origins of the Emperor system and Japanese intellectual history broadly, while Ueyama would introduce Umehara to the radical notion of centering Japanese culture and history around the Jōmon period. Both of them, moreover, would come to concur on the need to create a new form of Japanese studies that could escape the Scylla of ultranationalism (represented by the experience of Japan in wartime) and the Charybdis of Eurocentrism (thinly disguised as universalism or modernization theory).

Centering the Jōmon period as the foundation of Japanese culture and creating a new discipline of Japanese studies went hand-in-hand for Ueyama and Umehara. They positioned their new form of Japanology against Western Area Studies, which Ueyama argued had come to dominate studies of Japan by Americans in the postwar era. For Ueyama, Area Studies "reeked of American political science" (*amerika seiji no porishi-seiensu teki na nio ga kiwamete tsuyoi*) which, in turn, he saw as derived from older colonial models of governance and research pioneered by the British Empire.[39] This new model of Japanology, as imagined by Umehara and Ueyama, would be based on *Japanese* scholars studying Japan and offering their interpretations of Japanese culture and history to a global audience, free from both the interference of American scholars and the "narrow nationalism" of intellectual legacies such as *kokugaku*.

Another key aspect of this effort to build a new Japanology was reconceptualizing Japanese culture as a civilization, an idea originally drawn from Umesao's comparativist writings. In Umehara and Ueyama's first recorded *taidan* together, held in 1969 shortly after the Evergreen Forest Cultural Theory symposium, Ueyama argues that Jōmon culture qualified as a

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[39] UTCS 20: 232.

civilization due to the sophistication of the artifacts such as *doki*. These artifacts, he claimed, were not merely the oldest discovered ceramics in the world, but were evidence of dense settlements consistent with sedentary lifestyles.[40] The fundamental contradiction of Jōmon being both a civilization (which, by nearly every definition, necessitates the widespread adoption of agriculture) and a prehistoric hunter-gatherer culture did not go unremarked upon by Ueyama who coined the term 'hunter-gatherer civilization" (*shuryō saishū bunmei*) to exemplify what he believed to be the uniqueness of the Jōmon period in world history.[41] Valorizing prehistoric Japan as a civilization allowed Ueyama and Umehara to challenge what they saw the Eurocentricism inherent in the concept of civilization itself. Rather than defining civilization as the domination of nature (in the form of pastoralism and agriculture,) they reconfigured it as a harmonious balance between humanity and nature.

Indigenizing Prehistory: The Modern Ainu as Jōmon

Despite Umehara and Ueyama's vigorous collaboration beginning in the late 1960s and continuing through the 1970s, the conception of the Jōmon period that Umehara would ultimately promote to the Japanese public and foreign observers in the 1980s at the zenith of his influence would be rather different than the one that he and Ueyama had theorized in their conversations. Notably, discussion of the Evergreen Forest Cultural Theory would not figure into Umehara's culturalist tracts on the connection between Jōmon and Japanese identity. Rather, from the late 1970s onward, Umehara would become obsessed with the idea that the modern day Ainu people of Hokkaido (formerly known as Ezo), Sakhalin (or Karafuto) and the Kuril Islands

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[40] Umehara Takeshi and Ueyama Shunpei, "Nihon bunka no tokushitsu" in *Umehara Takeshi Zentaiwa* Vol. 2 (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1984), 18. Collection hereafter cited as UTZT. The *taidan* was originally published in the magazine *National Design* in December 1969.

[41] UTZT 2: 31.

(or Chishima) were the direct descendants of the prehistoric Jōmon culture. Most controversially, though, he also argued that, despite well-documented interaction between the Ainu and the Japanese state since at least the medieval period, the modern Ainu had maintained their hunter-gatherer culture from the Jōmon period into contemporary times. By extension, according to Umehara, the Ainu language accurately reflected the "Japanese" language of the Jōmon period and Ainu religion offered a window into the practices of ancient "Shinto" or Japan's *ur*-form of nature worship before it was irreparably warped by Sinitic culture and the imperial institution.

As discussed in the Introduction, this "Ainu as Jōmon" thesis was not a new idea, but rather harkened back to ethnological writings about Japanese origins produced in the Edo and Meiji periods by European travelers and scholars as such Franz Siebold and Edward Morse as well as pioneers of the human sciences in Japan such as Koganei Yoshikiyo. That said, there is little to no evidence to suggest that Umehara was aware of the theories construing the Ainu as a living Stone Age people put forward by Meiji-era archaeologists and anthropologists. Archaeology and physical anthropology (including discussions of biological race) only appeared in passing and often in highly simplified form in Umehara's discussions of the connections between the Jōmon period and the Ainu people. Rather than rely extensively on archaeology, Umehara attempted to establish a genealogical connection between the Ainu and the Japanese through a spurious form of historical linguistics that ostensibly established Ainu as the original form of Japanese spoken during the Jōmon period.

What accounts for this sudden obsession with the Ainu? Although Ueyama introduced the idea of Jōmon as Japan's basal or foundational culture (*shinsō bunka*) to Umehara, the Ainu had not featured prominently in Ueyama's discussion of the Evergreen Forest Cultural Theory.

Indeed, the geographical range of the laurel forests was centered south of the Kantō Plain and largely excluded the northern half of Honshū and all of Hokkaido, the historical homelands of the Ainu on the Japanese archipelago. The most plausible explanation for Umehara's sudden obsession with the Ainu appears to be his exposure to Okamoto's art treatises and travel narratives. Although Okamoto never fully developed his theory of the Ainu as the Jōmon, he repeatedly referenced what he believed to be the genealogical connections between the Jōmon people, the Emishi (especially the Northern Fujiwara in Hirazumi), and ultimately the Ainu in *Japan Rediscovered.* Along with these *zuihistsu*-esque meditations that appear in his travel narratives, in *Japanese Tradition* Okamoto also cited the Ainu bear festival, or Iomante, as an example of how primordial religion had survived from prehistory into the present.

Umehara appears to have first become aware of Okamoto's writings on the Jōmon period in the early 1970s around the same time he and Ueyama were collaborating on the creation of a new discipline of Japanology (later to become Jōmonism). In 1973, Umehara wrote the afterword (*kaisetsu*) for a new edition of Okamoto's *Kyō no geijutsu* (Contemporary Art), originally published in 1954.[42] In it, notably, Umehara praises Okamoto as a "destroyer" (*hakaisha*) and "scorner" (*chōshōsha*) of "false Japanese traditions " (*ese dentō shugi*) such as *wabi*, *sabi*, and *yūgen*, exemplifying that Umehara was aware of Okamoto's attack on post-Meiji Japanese tradition in *Japanese Tradition*.[43] Thus, despite only briefly mentioning Jōmon artwork in the afterword, Okamoto's valorization of the Jōmon period as a hidden Japanese tradition clearly made an impression on Umehara.

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[42] See "*Okamoto Taro no kōshō*" in UTCS 16: 307-318.

[43] Ibid., 312-13.

In 1974, Umehara participated in a *taidan* with Okamoto mediated by science-fiction author Komatsu Sakyō, best known for writing the apocalyptic disaster novel *Nippon chinbotsu* (Japan Sinks) published the previous year. The title of the round-table conversation "Jomon Culture is the Homeland of the Japanese Spirit" (*Jōmon bunka koso Nihonjin no kokoro no furusato da*) reflects the degree to which Umehara had become enamored with Okamoto's thesis on the centrality of the Jōmon period in Japanese culture.[44] The text of the taidan makes clear that this was the first time Umehara and Okamoto had met in person. After exchanging introductions, Komatsu wryly noted that the reason for convening the *taidan* was Umehara's new-found passion for the Jōmon period. Umehara, in turn, proceeded to shower praise on Okamoto. Even as Umehara positioned himself as a sort of disciple to Okamoto who was eager to advance his ideas about the Jōmon period, Okamoto himself expressed doubts about Umehara's theories on ancient Japanese history. Notably, Okamoto mocked Umehara's idea that Hōryūji temple in Nara was built to protect against Prince Shotoku's *onryō* (vengeful ghost), one of the central claims of Umehara's *kodaigaku*.[45] The exchange, while not particularly contentious by the standards of the *taidan* genre, reflected the uneven nature of Okamoto and Umehara's relationship. While Umehara would glorify Okamoto as the 'discoverer of the Jōmon period' in his later publications, Okamoto largely maintained a respectful, but wary, distance from Umehara.

Although Umehara was initially exposed to Okamoto's inchoative ideas about the Ainu and Emishi in his travel narratives, he did not incorporate these ideas into his own writings until

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[44] "*Jōmon bunka koso Nihonjin no kokoro no furusato da*" in UTZT 2: 101-116.

[45] UTZT 2: 113.

the late 1970s when he made the acquaintance of a young scholar named Fujimura Hisakazu, an anthropologist specializing in Ainu culture and religion based in Sapporo. Umehara met Fujimura in 1978 when he traveled to Hokkaido to visit the Hokkaido Development Memorial Museum where Fujimura was a researcher.[46] Fujimura's scholarship on Ainu religion provided the spark for Umehara to connect the Jōmon with Ainu -- and to make this the central tenet of his new Jōmonism. Almost immediately after meeting, Umehara and Fujimura would begin a period of intense collaboration, working together on co-authored publications and organizing conferences on Japanese identity, the Ainu, and the Jōmon period. The relationship was mutually beneficial in many ways. By this time, Umehara was well-known among the Japanese public as an authority on Western philosophy, Japanese Buddhism, and ancient history. Along with an array of book-length publications, Umehara also regularly contributed articles to prominent journals such as *Chūo Kōron* and daily periodicals such as the *Tokyo Shinbun* and the *Kyoto Shinbun*. Conversely, Fujimura was younger and much less well established in Japanese academe; but was deeply knowledgable about Ainu studies and acquainted with the Ainu residents of Hokkaido via his research. Through Fujimura's connections, Umehara was able to meet with elderly Ainu residents of Hokkaido who still spoke their (severely endangered) native language and could introduce Umehara to Ainu rituals and customs.[47]

The earliest expression of Umehara's Jōmonism can be found in his 1979 monograph *Onyrō to Jōmon: Nihongaku no Kyōen* (Vengeful Ghosts and Jomon: The Feast of Japanology).

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[46] The museum has since been renamed to the Hokkaido Museum. Umehara describes meeting Fujimura in *Onryō to Jōmon: Nihongaku no Kyōen* (Tokyo: Asashi Shuppansha, 1979), 194.

[47] Fujimura provides an enthusiastic summary of his activities with Umehara up till the early 1980s in the supplemental booklet or "monthly report" (*geppō*) included with third volume of Umehara's *chosakushū*. UTC 3: Supplemental pages 6-8.

By Umehara's own declaration, the text is a transitional work that serves as a bridge from his earlier "ancient studies" (*kodaigaku*) focused on Nara and Heian Japan to a new form of Japanology that would be centered on the Jōmon period and the Ainu.[48] Structurally, the book is divided into four main sections: the first three follow many of the same themes covered in previous publications by Umehara such as Prince Shotoku, the *Kojiki*, and the *Manyōshū*. But the final chapter, entitled the "Wandering Jōmon" (*Samayoeru Jōmon*), takes a radically different direction, arguing for the need to study the Ainu in order to fully understand Japanese culture in its original prehistoric form. The common thread linking Umehara's Ainu as Jōmon thesis to his earlier *kodaigaku* was the spectral figure of the *onryō* or vengeful ghost, which Umehara argues was originally an Ainu belief later transmogrified as it entered the Yamato cultural sphere. As evidence for this Umehara cites Fujimura's research, which claimed that the various words for spectral beings were cognates between ancient Japanese and the Ainu language.[49] These linguistic similarities, Umehara argues, offered tangible evidence that Shinto and Ainu religious beliefs were of "the same system" (*taikei ga onnaji datta koto ni naru*).[50] From this shaky evidence, Umehara proceeded to launch a broader comparison between Ainu and Japanese words intended to show that Ainu was the original form of Japanese as spoken during the Jōmon period.

Notably, Umehara was only tangentially familiar with the Ainu language, relying as he did on the dictionary of Ainu produced by the Anglican missionary John Batchelor (1855-1944), along with the linguistic scholarship of Kindaichi Kyōsuke (1882-1971) and Chiri Mashiho (1909-1961). Given that Umehara's linguistic "corpus" largely consisted of Batchelor's

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[48] Umehara Takeshi, *Onryō to Jōmon*, 2-3.

[49] Ibid., 194-98.

[50] Ibid., 199.

dictionary, his argument for the shared ancestry of Ainu and Japanese was restricted to comparing the similarities between individual words. In terms of methodology, this approach to studying the Ainu language was a corruption of the diachronic "comparative method" used by historical linguists to chart language change over the centuries. Rather than etymologically link words to a common origin, Umehara merely drew attention to phonetic similarities between Ainu and Japanese words. In short, he created a confusion of synchronic and diachronic language that obviated important aspects of historical linguistics such as sound changes and the possibility of changes in semantic meaning when words crossed between languages.

Basic vocabulary such as the names of animals, fish, foodstuffs, plants, and religious objects were among the lexical categories Umehara contrasted between the two languages to demonstrate their supposed connection. Religious terms, in particular, were frequently compared by Umehara to support his argument that Ainu culture and religion could be equated with the Jomon religion. Most prominently, and this was by far Umehara's most frequently cited example, the Ainu word for "God" (*kamuy*) was compared to the Shinto term *kami*, the Japanese word for god or spirit.[51] Other words connected to Shinto were also compared with Ainu religious words by Umehara to provide evidence for his claim that the Ainu religion was actually the original form of nature worship present in the Jomon period and thereby the origin of Shinto. For example, Umehara posited that *nusa*, the wooden wands covered in streamers that are commonly seen at Shinto shrines, were adapted from the Ainu *inau*, traditional wooden shaving sticks used in Ainu rituals.[52]

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[51] See, for example, UTCS 20: 344.

[52] Umehara, *Onryō to Jōmon*, 202.

This quixotic quest to prove that the modern Japanese language was originally Ainu in origin became the focal point of Umehara's Jōmonism throughout the 1980s until his passing in 2019. To a lesser extent, Umehara also attempted to use evidence from physical anthropology and population history to support his claim that the Ainu were the original Japanese. He argued, for example, that the Japanese people were not a singular race but rather a mixed race (*konketsu*) comprised of the indigenous, hunter-gatherer Japanese people (the Jōmon people) and agrarian peoples from the Korean peninsula (the Yayoi people).[53] According to Umehara, these hypothetical Yayoi period invaders spoke an Ural-Altaic language that merged with the original Jōmon language (Ainu) to create the Japanese language. This Yayoi subjugation (rather than migration) that Umehara theorized did not completely wipe out the Jōmon culture and worldview in his schematic of Japanese prehistory. Rather, the primordial Jōmon people were scattered across the Japanese islands in a diaspora resulting in the ethnic fragmentation of the Jōmon people and a significant Jōmon-Yayoi admixture that eventually came to comprise the modern Japanese population. The pockets of Jōmon culture that fled or resisted this Yayoi conquest, according to Umehara, eventually became the Ainu, the Emishi, and the Okinawan peoples.

A rough outline of this conquest conjecture appears in the Tōhoku chapters of Okamoto's *Japan Rediscovered* while he narrates wandering around the ruins of Hiraizumi. Umehara's emphasis on conquest and domination (as opposed to migration and gradual admixture) also bears an uncanny resemblance to Egami Namio's controversial "Horserider Theory" (*kiba minzoku ron*), which posited that equestrian nomads from the Korean peninsula invaded Yayoi-period Japan by boat in the 4th century CE and ushered in the *kofun* (tomb or burial mound)

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[53] Ibid., 206.

period.[54] Umehara was certainly aware of Egami's work; the two would participate together in several major conferences where they promoted their respective narratives of ancient Japanese history, a phenomenon we will examine shortly. And yet, Umehara and Egami's conquest hypotheses also differed dramatically in the dates they gave for this invasion of Japan. Egami claims that nomads invaded in the later half of the fourth century CE; and, while Umehara's invasion lacks a precise date, he claims that an invasion occurred at the end of the Jōmon period (forcing a transition into Yayoi) which is commonly dated as beginning around 700-500 BCE. Thus, while Umehara may have taken the basic idea of an ancient conquest of the Japanese archipelago from Egami (and/or Okamoto), his mythical Yayoi invasion differs significantly from the Horserider Theory. There is no hard-and-fast archaeological evidence to suggest that a sudden invasion from the Asian Continent led to the rise of Yayoi culture. The commonly accepted model of change from Jōmon to Yayoi instead posits that the Yayoi peoples settled and interbred with the different Jōmon cultures present, leading to an admixture of peoples that gradually (rather than forcibly) adopted wet-rice agriculture and sedentary settlements.[55]

In contrast to his easily falsifiable idea of a Yayoi conquest, Umehara soon drew from more credible scientific evidence for a Jomon-Yayoi rupture from the 'Dual Structure Model' of Japanese population history put forth by physical anthropologist Hanihara Kazuro, a close confidant of Umehara who was invited to join Nichibunken when it opened in 1987. Hanihara's Dual-Structure Model posited that the Yayoi peoples had settled much of Kyushu, Shikoku, and

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[54] Egami Namio's "Horserider Theory" has been highly controversial since its publication in 1949. For a thorough analysis of the many problems with the Horserider Theory, see Walter Edwards, "Event and Process in the Founding of Japan: The Horserider Theory in Archaeological Perspective," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 9:2 (Summer 1983), 265-295.

[55] Koji Mizoguchi, *The Archaeology of Japan: From the Earliest Rice Farming Villages to the Rise of the State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 53-55.

Honshu south of the Tōhoku region. Peripheral regions such as Hokkaido, Okinawa, and the broader Ryukyu islands experienced significantly less migration during the Yayoi period, according to Hanihara, leading to greater reservoirs of Jōmon physical characteristics.[56] There is indeed considerable cranial, dental, genetic, and osteological evidence to suggest a substantial change in the population of the Japanese islands (namely, Kyushu, Shikoku, central Honshu) from the Jōmon to the Yayoi periods. Similarly, physical anthropologists agree that the majority of the modern Japanese people are descended primarily from the Yayoi-period migrants while populations in more "peripheral" regions such as Hokkaido and Okinawa display physiological differences possibly attributable to Jomon ancestry (rather than, say, environmental pressures or dietary choices).[57]

In 1982, Umehara and Hanihara would collaborate together on a series of *taidan* published as *Ainujin wa gen nihonjin ka* (Are the Ainu the Original Japanese?) wherein Hanihara presented an exhaustive overview of the field of physical anthropology and the historiography of Japanese archaeology and anthropology (including overviews of major figures such as Tsuboi Shogoro, Koganei Yoshikiyo, Torii Ryūzō, as well as European thinkers such as Edward Morse). This dialogue also provided Umehara another venue to present his theories on the common ancestry between the Japanese and Ainu languages, a hypothesis about which Hanihara

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[56] Hanihara Kazuro, "Dual Structure Model for the Population History of the Japanese," *Japan Review* No. 2 (1991), 1-33. Hanihara offers guarded optimism about Umehara's idea that such peripheral region may contain cultural fragments of the Jomon period, but qualifies that further testing is needed. This article serves as a compendium of sorts for Hanihara's research (numerous articles and monographs are self-cited) published up until 1990.

[57] Mark J. Hudson offers an exhaustive overview of the bio-anthropological data supporting the Dual Structure hypothesis (as well as critical evidence questioning aspects of it) in his *Ruins of Identity.* Despite being slightly dated, the breadth of data covered is without parallel. See Chapter 3 "Biological Anthropology and the Dual Structure Hypothesis" in *Ruins of Identity: Ethnogenesis in the Japanese Islands* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999): 59-81.

equivocated.[58] In essence, however, much of the *taidan* functioned as a sort of crash course in the major debates and theories on Japanese origins for Umehara, who had previously relied solely on speculation and dubious linguistic analysis.

Hanihara's Dual-Structural Model linked up neatly with Umehara's idea of a sort of 'Jōmon diaspora' that he put forward in *Onryō to Jōmon*. Important to note, however, is that Umehara elided much of Hanihara's scientific evidence for the Dual-Structure Model when discussing physical anthropology and archaeology in his own works. Umehara presented the ethnic duality of the Japanese people as a divide between the 'Old Mongoloid' (*ko mongoroido*) and 'New Mongoloid' (*shin mongoroido*). The 'Old Mongoloid' people, as he characterized them, were the original Jōmon population who had more body hair and a larger physique, while the 'New Mongoloid' people were the descendants of Yayoi period invaders who bore the physical features typically associated with the modern Japanese.

Armed with the scientific evidence of Hanihara's model and Fujimura's deep connections to Ainu communities in Hokkaido, Umehara aggressively promoted Jōmonism in the 1980s, churning out numerous publications and participating in a bevy of conferences to disseminate his views to other Japanese intellectuals. Many of the presentations by Umehara at these conferences recycled the same material about the supposed connection between the Japanese and Ainu languages and the need to study the Ainu people in order to understand Jōmon culture. As derivative as many of these conference proceedings were, it is worthwhile examining one conference in particular held in Sapporo in 1982. Known as the "Considering Northern Culture"

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[58] Umehara Takeshi and Hanihara Kazuri, *Ainu ha gen nihonjin ka* (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1982). Hanihara, after hearing Umehara's theories, concludes that "Ainu and Ryukyu people are more Japanese than the Japanese" on p. 226.

symposium, and later published as the volume *Ainu to Kodai Nihon* (The Ainu and Ancient Japan, 1982), the conference included many of Umehara's intellectual fellow travelers such as Egami Namio, Ueyama, Fujimura,, and Tōhoku historian Takahashi Tomio.[59] In addition, however, an Ainu rights activist by the name of Narita Tokuhei, a member of the Ainu rights group Hokkaido Utari Association, also participated, leading to the odd spectacle of Japanese scholars who aggressively fetishized the Ainu as the original Japanese people coming face-to-face with a living Ainu resident involved in the struggle to gain political recognition from the Japanese state.[60]

Narita Tokuhei's attempt to participate was originally rejected by the Japanese organizers, but it appears that his prior association with Fujimura eventually led Umehara and the others to relent.[61] Narita's presentation differed substantially from those of the other participants, who primarily emphasized interactions between the Ainu and Japanese in ancient and medieval history. Narita, by contrast, focused his attention on the struggle of the contemporary Ainu to overcome discrimination. Narita began his presentation by detailing his recent participation with other Ainu activists in the Third General Assembly of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples held in Canberra, Australia in April 1981. Showcasing the Ainu as working in tandem with other

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[59] Egami Namio et al., *Ainu to Kodai Nihon: Shinpojiamu Hoppō Bunka wo kangaeru* (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 1982).

[60] The Hokkaido Utari Association (*Hokkaido Utari Kyōkai*) was formed in 1930 as the Hokkaido Ainu Association with a pro-assimilationist policy toward integrating the Ainu into Japanese society. The association renamed itself the Hokkaido Utari Association in 1961 and gradually began to take a more aggressive stance against lingering discrimination in the 1970s. See Siddle, *Race, Resistance, and the Ainu of Japan*, p. 133-4, 159, 168-9.

[61] In his self-introduction Narita says he was born in the Kuril Islands to an Ainu mother and Japanese father in 1943. He later moved to Sapporo where he became acquainted with Fujimura. See *Ainu to Kodai Nihon*, p. 13-4. Later, on p. 311, he claims that his attempt to participate in the conference was initially rejected.

indigenous peoples from Australia, North America, and Fiji served to exemplify Narita's larger point that the Ainu were a *living* people who remained colonized. Narita noted that, despite the waves of decolonization since World War II, the racist view of the Ainu as "primitive aborigines" (*mikai na dojin*) remained widespread in Japan, informing the scholarly attitude of studying the Ainu as undeveloped and outside of modernity.[62] On this point, Narita carefully struck a balance between praising the Japanese scholars for their recognition of the contribution that Ainu culture had made to Japan, while also criticizing the limited scope of scholarly studies by most Japanese scholars (such as Umehara) who failed to engage with social movements by the Ainu themselves or "actual problems" (*genjitsu monda*i) such as poverty and poor educational opportunities in Ainu communities.[63]

Surprisingly, Fujimura Hisakazu not only echoed Narita's criticisms concerning Umehara's fetishization of the Ainu, but arguably stated them in even stronger terms. Fujimura noted that the search for Japanese origins in the Jōmon period had led many Japanese ("*wajin*") scholars from the Meiji period forward to study the Ainu people, but that few had paired this with a fundamental recognition of the Ainu people's "humanity" (*ningen-sei*). While not outright rejecting the impulse to study the connection between the Ainu and the Jōmon period, Fujimura appealed to the Japanese scholars gathered at the conference to treat the Ainu people with dignity and not view them as a living exhibition of primitive culture:

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[62] *Ainu to Kodai Nihon*, p. 306, 312.

[63] Ibid., p. 309, 315-6.

> I wish you would stop treating the Ainu people as play things likes toys or guinea pigs (*morumotto*). In actuality, however, traces or the odor of this practice continues to linger. Every year (Japanese) researchers come to Hokkaido and after have they have left, I always hear stories about people being treated like toys or guinea pigs without fail.[64]

Fujimura's entreaty to his fellow organizers was remarkable not only for (correctly) identifying the latent racism of their research, but also because Fujimura himself had facilitated Umehara's access to the Ainu communities. Although this *taidan* offers evidence that Fujimura was conflicted over the methodological and political aims of Jōmonism, there is nothing to suggest that Fujimura followed his own advice. Fujimura and Umehara continued their collaboration throughout the decade and into the 1990s. Whatever objections Fujimura had to Umehara's approach they did not preclude him from continuing to support Jōmonist research.

At first glance, then, it would appear that Jōmonism represented a challenge to the myth of Japanese homogeneity that took hold in the postwar following the dissolution of the multiethnic Japanese empire. Umehara certainly promoted the "international" (*kokusai-teki*) dimensions of his Japanology and consistently positioned his approach against prewar nationalism (and intellectual antecedents such as *kokugaku*). It must be emphasized, however, that Umehara's arguments posited that the Ainu were *Japanese*, thereby robbing them of their indigenous identity and cultural agency. Such rhetoric, of course, fed into the colonial relationship that characterized has Japanese domination of the Ainu from the early modern period through the twentieth-century.

The "Ainu as Jōmon" hypothesis central to Jōmonism thus embodied a form of cultural appropriation whereby the umbra of Japanese identity was expanded through the supposed

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[64] Ibid., 321.

championing of ethnic and cultural differences. The appropriation of a minority indigenous identity to construct a national (settler) identity is not unprecedented. Phillip Deloria has argued that the archetype of the "Indian" in the United States has served as the romantic inversion of American culture from the Boston Tea Party onward, an image of 'noble savagery' that provided settlers with the trappings of ancient origin and unfettered freedom.[65] Indeed, pictures of Umehara "playing Ainu" are replete throughout his publications in the 1980s and beyond. Whether dressed in traditional Ainu clothing while participating in an Ainu ceremony or photographed engaging in elicitation with Ainu elders (often with Fujimura in tow), Umehara sought to embody signifiers of Ainu identity as a form of visual rhetoric to legitimize his Jōmonism.

Institutionalizing Jōmonism

Umehara's development of Jōmonism in the 1980s fulfilled his long-standing desire to create a form of Japanese studies unhindered by the methodological and epistemological assumptions of Western scholars. Among the admirers of Umehara's approach was Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro, who had ascended to the premiership in 1982 following a period of factional gridlock in the National Diet. Nakasone was, in Kenneth Pyle's words, "an outspoken nationalist" but of a very different variety than Umehara.[66] In contrast to many postwar conservatives, who favored the type of 'economic nationalism' designed to remake Japan as an industrial powerhouse while remaining under the aegis of American military protection, Nakasone was a neoconservative who favored re-litigating the outcome of the Pacific War, which

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[65] Phillip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 1-9.

[66] Kenneth Pyle, "In Pursuit of Grand Design: Nakasone Betwixt the Past and the Future," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* Vol. 13 No. 2 (Summer 1987), 251.

he saw as a lingering humiliation that continued to color Japan's future. Notwithstanding his hawkish intentions and revisionist historical thinking, Nakasone did not dare suggest formal remilitarization, which remained unthinkable to the majority of the populace. Instead, Nakasone resorted to policies broadly known as *kokusaika* or 'internationalization' that aimed to promote Japanese interests in foreign affairs and have Japan use its economic clout to assert leadership in trade and cultural promotion. *Kokusaika* was thus not a set of policies designed to radically re-shape the insularity of Japanese society, but rather an effort to 'internationalize Japan' by engaging on the world stage out from under the shadow of the United States.

How exactly Umehara and Nakasone first became acquainted with one another is a matter of speculation. It is clear, however, that by the mid-1980s Nakasone was very familiar with Umehara's oeuvre. In 1985 Umehara, Ueyama, and Umesao, along with several other Kyoto-based academics, met with Nakasone to request that he establish a center that could facilitate international cooperation between Japanese scholars and scholars of Japanese studies working overseas.[67] Needless to say, this idea for international facilitation of Japanese studies linked up neatly with Nakasone's strategy of promoting Japan and Japanese values internationally. These discussions led to the establishment of the International Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken) in Kyoto in 1987. Nakasone appointed Umehara as the director of Nichibunken and gave him free rein to assemble the first cluster of researchers in residence.

Nakasone's establishment of Nichibunken and his choice of Umehara as the institute's first director were clouded in controversy from the start. Nakasone's inflammatory, nationalistic rhetoric and his choice of Kyoto as the location for the institute evoked memories of the Kyoto

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[67] Umehara discusses the planning for Nichibunken with other academics in *Umehara Takeshi no sekai*, 221-25.

School's wartime collaboration with the Imperial government. Given Umehara's connections with Nishida Kitarō, critics further charged that Umehara was forming a 'New Kyoto School' (*Shin kyoto gaku ha*) with his choice of like-minded conservative intellectuals. Indeed, the term "New Kyoto School" had been used in the Japanese press before the establishment of Nichibunken to refer to scholars such as Umehara, Ueyama, and Umesao, who were centered at universities in and around Kyoto. In a 1981 article, critic Ōno Akio described the New Kyoto School as a loose, un-organized group of academics and writers working to re-center Kyoto as the intellectual capital of Japan and move away from a Tokyo-centered view of academe. The smorgasbord of names that Ōno linked to the the New Kyoto School makes clear, as Ōno himself suggests, that describing the 'school' as a coherent intellectual movement would be inaccurate.[68]

The important thing to note, however, is that the New Kyoto School had no little to connection with the prewar Kyoto School based in the Philosophy Department of Kyoto University. Aside from Ueyama, no one associated with the group had actually studied under Nishida or Tanabe. Although Umehara had entered Kyoto University during the war, his deployment meant that any sustained philosophical study was out of the question. In short, despite sharing a geographical connection with Kyoto, there were almost no threads connecting the scholars commonly grouped as the New Kyoto School with the prewar Kyoto School and the philosophical positions held by Nishida Kitarō.

As such, rather than attempting to flesh out the precise contours of the New Kyoto school, I would like to conclude by examining how the institutionalization of Umehara's Jōmonism at Nichibunken functioned on its own as a neo-nationalist ideology that neatly suited

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[68] Ōno Akio, "Shin kyoto gakuha: Hokoritakaki mō hitotsu no chi-teki chūō," *Gendai no Me* no, 1105 (February 1981), 53.

Nakasone's policy objectives. I do not mean to imply here that Umehara and Nakasone were in complete political agreement. In fact, despite their respect for one another, they held sharply divergent beliefs about issues such as Article 9 of the postwar constitution, war responsibility, and the postwar status of the Emperor. Instead, we might describe the relationship between the two as mutually beneficial: Nakasone gave Umehara an unprecedented pulpit to espouse his unique form of Japanology, while Umehara provided Nakasone with an ideology that affirmed Japanese uniqueness through a coherent narrative of cultural continuity stretching back to prehistory and a superficial acknowledgment of ethnic plurality that did not seriously challenge the postwar myth of homogeneity.

In mid-1986, as plans for the establishment of Nichibunken were being finalized, Nakasone and Umehara held a *taidan* together titled "The Flow of World Civilizations and Japan's Role" (*Sekai bunmei no nagare to nihon no yakuwari*) published in the literary journal *Bungei Shunjū*.[69] Throughout their conversation, Nakasone repeatedly questioned Umehara about the centrality of the Jōmon period in Japanese history, displaying a deep knowledge of Umehara's writings, and seeking to link prehistory to Japan's contemporary situation. Umehara, in turn, described the Jōmon period as "an extremely peaceful era" (*taihen heiwa na jidai*) characterized by the absence of warfare. He contrasted this period of peace not only with the warfare of the Yayoi period, but also with Christianity and Western civilization, which sought to dominate nature and expand through conquest.

This notion of Japan as an essentially peaceful civilization that stood in stark contrast with the bloodthirsty West was merely a repackaging of Umehara's earlier argument that the East

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[69] Nakasone Yasuhiro and Umehara Takeshi, "Sekai bunmei no nagare to Nihon no yakuwari," *Bungei Shunju* (February 1986), 290-301.

(*tōyō*) represented harmony with nature and respect for human life. In lieu of Buddhist morality, he now argued that the hunter-gatherer Jōmon culture was the basal foundation for a modern Japan that projected peace on the world stage -- an argument that, unsurprisingly, aligned closely with the postwar political consensus. Along with the argument that Japanese culture was, in essence, peaceful, the transhistorical continuity between the Jōmon period and modern Japanese exceptionalism was also highly appealing to Nakasone. In his controversial speech to the Diet in 1985 where he declared that the level of education in the United States was worse than that of Japan due to the inferiority of "blacks" and "Puerto Ricans," Nakasone also reached back to the Jōmon period as an example of the longevity of Japanese uniqueness, praising Jōmon ceramics as the oldest in the world and offering them as evidence of the longevity of "Japan's spiritual structure" (*seishin kōzō*).[70]

Given Nakasone's avowed nationalism and the public perception of Umehara as a right-wing intellectual, the opening of Nichibunken was controversial both in Japan and overseas. The left-wing journal *Bunka Hyōron* published several lengthy pieces attacking Nakasone, accusing him of attempting to create a "neo-nationalist ideology" (*shinkokkashugi ideorogi*-) that would protect the supposed uniqueness of Japanese identity as the Prime Minister steered the country toward internationalization (*kokusaika*).[71] The New Kyoto School was also subject to extended criticism from the editors from *Bunka Hyōron* who avidly noted the "paradox" (*gyakusetsu*) and "irony" (*hiniku*) of scholars such as Umehara and Ueyama cooperating with the state to promote

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[70] Nakasone Yasuhiro, "Zen sairoku Nakasone Shushō "Chi-teki suijun" kōen" *Chūō Kōron* no. 1213 (November 1985), 159-60.

[71] Ajisaka Makoto, "Shin Kyoto Gakuha no Nihon Bunka ron," *Bunka Hyōron* no. 302 (May 1986), 99. This article is the first in a series of opinion pieces attacking Nakasone and the New Kyoto School.

Japanese culture, despite having initially chosen to study Western philosophy after becoming disenchanted with the prewar Kyoto School's collaboration with the imperial government.[72]

Much more consequential than the domestic controversy over the opening of Nichibunken, however, was the criticism of Nakasone and Umehara brought by journalist Ian Buruma who introduced the spurious claims of Jōmonism to an international audience and invited further scrutiny. Buruma, then editor of the Hong Kong-based *Far Eastern Economic Review* and a well-established commentator on Japanese affairs in the American press, published "A New Japanese Nationalism" in April 1987. The article, which appeared in the magazine edition of *The New York Times*, was an excoriating attack on Nakasone, Umehara, and other prominent Japanese academics. Buruma charged that Umehara was a "Yamatoist,"--inventing an awkward term denoting sympathy with wartime nationalism and imperialist revanchism. Specifically, he accused Umehara and New Kyoto School thinkers such as Ueyama Shunpei of trying to revive the prewar ideology of *kokutai* (national polity) wherein the Emperor was considered the absolute center of the political and spiritual life of the Japanese people. Beyond attacking Umehara's supposed political sympathies, Buruma also derided his belief that the essence of Japanese culture could be discovered through study of the Ainu and Okinawan peoples, writing that such claims comprised little more than nationalist fantasies.[73]

Umehara angrily responded to Buruma's attack several months later in the literary magazine *Chūō Kōron*, sarcastically asking whether Buruma was capable of reading Japanese before concluding that, in his opinion, Buruma had never read a single volume of his work.

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[72] Ibid., 103.

[73] Ian Buruma, "A New Japanese Nationalism," *The New York Times Magazine*, April 12, 1987, 23

Umehara further charged that rather than engaging in serious research or attempting to interview him, Buruma had merely painted him as a nationalist by analogizing the pre-war Kyoto School with Nazism and then extending that analogy to Umehara, based solely on his connection with Kyoto University. Denying that he had absorbed, much less endorsed, the wartime teachings of the Kyoto School or that he believed in the "superiority of the Japanese people" (*Nihon minzoku no yūshū sei*), Umehara painted himself as the victim of a libelous attack. He concluded his rebuttal with a full-throated endorsement of Nichibunken as an interdisciplinary institute that would welcome Japanese Studies scholars from across the globe.[74]

Buruma's criticism of Umehara as a 'Yamatoist' seeking to revive *kokutai* was essentially incorrect. Umehara and kindred thinkers such as Ueyama were resolutely opposed to the Emperor system due to their wartime experiences. On this specific point, Umehara could reasonably argue that his ideas had been misrepresented. Notably, however, Umehara struggled to respond to Buruma's criticism of his fixation on the Ainu as the origins of Japanese culture. Although he acknowledged that he did study the ancient past of the Ainu, Umehara dodged the question of whether he believed he could discover Jōmon culture among the contemporary Ainu. Instead of answering Buruma's charges directly, Umehara framed his study of the Jōmon period as a "reevaluation" (*saihyōka*) of civilization itself, describing Jōmon culture as a hunter-gatherer civilization (*shuryō saishu bunmei*), a term first proposed by Ueyama, that offered a model of civilization wherein humanity lived in harmony with nature. By studying the "wisdom" (*chie*) of the Ainu and other "primitive" peoples (Native Americans and the "many tribes of Africa" [*Afruika no oku no buzoku*] are mentioned as other examples), Umehara argued that humanity

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[74] Umehara Takeshi, "Watashi wa Yamatoisuto dewanai," *Chūō Kōron* no. 1224 (August 1987), 242-257.

could potentially find a way to create an ecologically harmonious civilization that would co-exist with nature, rather than destroying it.[75]

Needless to say, this line of argument by Umehara distorted the central claim of his Jōmonist project: that the Ainu were living remnants of prehistoric Japanese culture. By framing his study of the Ainu and other indigenous peoples as a way to ameliorate the environmental problems of industrial civilization, Umehara signaled a new turn in his Jōmonist project in which ecological concerns assumed a much greater prominence, a trend which will be explored further in the epilogue. Although this critique of Western civilization as rapacious and self-annihilating in nature was not new, Umehara's writings on the Jōmon period and the Ainu in the 1970s and 1980s rarely incorporated any explicitly ecocritical elements. Major Jōmonist works such as *Onryō to Jōmon* and *Nihon no Shinsō* were focused on finding the 'true' origins of Japanese culture, rather than addressing pressing environmental issues that Japan faced, such as pollution, deforestation, or climate change. While never abandoning his beliefs that the Ainu and Okinawans were living Jōmon peoples, in the 1990s Umehara began to shift his focus away from a strictly ethnocentric posture toward a sort of universalist rhetoric that framed study of the Jōmon period as necessary for re-conceptualizing industrial civilization.

Conclusion

Ian Buruma's fierce criticism of Jōmonism, coupled with the controversy over Nakasone's opening of Nichibunken, led to the perception of the Jōmon period being associated with right-wing politics in Japan during the 1980s. Despite the fears of critics that Umehara would use his newfound pulpit to aggressively champion *nihonjinron* theories of Japanese

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[75] Ibid., 251-52.

uniqueness, the years following the opening of institute were relatively quiet. Umehara did publish his Jōmonist views in *Japan Review*, the English language journal of Nichibunken, but the reaction was largely muted and not widely read outside of academe. Gavan McCormack notes that rather than become a nationalist mouthpiece, Nichibunken quickly integrated itself into the broader field of Japanese studies (especially in the humanities) thereby becoming a valuable source of funding and international cooperation, in keeping with the original goal of the institution.[76]

In its mature form in the 1980s, Umehara's Jōmonism constituted an ideology of Japanese exceptionalism that endowed Japan with an unbroken cultural continuity stretching back to prehistory. Connecting modern Japanese identity and culture directly to the Jōmon period allowed Umehara and kindred thinkers such as Ueyama to elide the imperial household, the Asia-Pacific War, and the substantial Western influence on Japan as mere deviations from a *longue durée* of peaceful and spiritual Jōmon civilization on the Japanese archipelago. Despite such sweeping claims, Jōmonism as an ideology was in many ways *depoliticized* and lacked any discernible praxis aside from acknowledging the putative Jōmon roots of modern Japanese culture. Weighty topics in Japanese society such as immigration, gender, and labor rights went almost entirely unaddressed by Umehara. And, in many ways, this was by design. Despite beginning his career as a Nietzschean critic of capitalism and Enlightenment modernity, Umehara never seriously sought to deconstruct Western influence in Japan nor did he embrace some sort of fringe neo-primitivism that sought to return to the Stone Age. The status quo of high-growth era Japan -- with salarymen working long hours, wives in the kitchen, and students

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[76] Gavan McCormack, "*Kokusaika*: Impediments in Japan's Deep Structure," in *Multicultural Japan*, ed. Donald Denoon et al (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 278.

at cram school (*juku*) -- was wholly acceptable to Umehara provided no one seriously argued that Japanese modernity owed more to the West than to native Japanese (i.e. Jōmon) elements.

On fraught issues that Umehara did address, such as race and ethnicity in Japan, his approach often ultimately replicated, rather challenged, the postwar myth of homogeneity. Umehara's valorization of the Ainu and Okinawan peoples as fossilized remnants of Jōmon culture effaced their own rich histories and replicated colonial policies that stripped them of the opportunity for self-determination. Rather than deconstruct the purported homogeneity of the Japanese people, Umehara's Jōmonism merely absorbed the Ainu and Okinawan peoples into the umbra of Japanese identity.

And yet, the fact that Umehara presented his claims as both a critique of imperialism and an affirmation of ethno-cultural diversity in Japan meant that Jōmonism was distinguished itself from some of the more pernicious forms of *Nihonjinron*. Indeed, despite the racist pretensions at the heart of Umehara's genteel nationalism, Jōmonism was qualitatively different than the hate nationalism espoused by many factions of the Japanese far-right. The ideological malleability of Jōmonism allowed it to be adapted and transmogrified by thinkers who did not necessarily agree wholesale with Umehara's ideas, but found the idea of an alternative Japan emanating from the Jōmon period to be a fascinating proposition. Novelist Nakagami Kenji, the subject of our next chapter, and animator Hayao Mizyaki, who will feature prominently in the epilogue, both grasped toward prehistory in their creative works via the influence of Umehara, yet the conceptions of the Jōmon period they conveyed ultimately differed from the Jōmonism that Umehara espoused in the 1980s.

CHAPTER III
The Untamed Forests and the Imperial Sea: Nakagami Kenji's *Himatsuri*

The apotheosis of Jōmonism as distinct mode of though within the broader constellation of *Nihonjinron* in the 1980s can be overwhelmingly credited to the efforts of Umehara Takeshi who, in his role as a public intellectual and later as the director of Nichibunken, tirelessly promoted the Jōmon period as the foundation of Japanese culture. Assisting Umehara in this effort was a coterie of like-minded thinkers such as Ueyama Shunpei, Kuwabara Takeo, and other individuals associated with Nichibunken who echoed Umehara's claims regarding the Jōmon period. As the polarized reaction to the opening of Nichibunken and Umehara's appointment as director of the institute demonstrates, Jōmonism and the re-interpretation of Japanese culture through a Jōmon-Yayoi binary had become a controversial topic within the space of intellectual exchange in Japan during the 1980s.

Even as Umehara found a receptive audience with politicians such as Prime Minister Nakasone and other prominent (conservative) intellectuals, Japanese society as a whole in the 1980s appeared to be moving away from a strict focus on tradition in terms of culture and aesthetics. The 1980s in Japan (along with the United States and Western Europe) are often viewed as the decade when postmodernism became an ascendent force in aspects of culture as varied as philosophy, literature, film, architecture, fashion, and music. Postmodernism in Japan was introduced and disseminated through publications by literary critics such as Karatani Kōjin, Asada Akira, and Hasumi Shigehiko, who served not only as interlocutors for intellectual currents such as poststructuralism and deconstruction, but also forged connections with French thinkers such as Jacques Derrida.

The intellectual milieu of 1980s Japan was heavily shaped by Japan's economic ascendance. Against the backdrop of corporate hyper-capitalism and international praise of Japanese business methods, 'knowledge' in the domestic sphere increasingly became recognized as a commodity. As Alexander Zahlten has argued, conspicuous consumption was a key element in the success of intellectual trends such as *Nyū Aka* (New Academicism), whose main theorists including Asada Akira and Hasumi Shigehiko became mini-celebrities for their introductions of recent French theory.[1] A corollary to the commercial success of Nyū Aka's volumes on literary theory and postmodernism can be seen in the 'Americanization' of Japanese fiction produced during the late 1970s and 1980s. Kawamura Minato notes that popular authors of the era such as Yoshimoto Banana, Murakami Haruki, and Tanaka Yasuo drew heavily from American youth culture in their writing style and frequent depiction of subcultures and consumerism.[2]

Thus, in contrast to the malaise of the immediate postwar era, the militancy of the 1960s, and the uncertainty of the 1970s, literature and criticism in 1980s Japan was defined less by political introspection and more by an apolitical sense of carefreeness that spanned the ideological spectrum. Although the 1980s was simultaneously the golden age of *Nihonjinron*, political divisions frequently receded into the background within the media-mix of literature and knowledge production. Thus, for example, Yoshimoto Takaaki, the father of the New Left in Japan, could sit down for an amicable chat with Umehara on the unique characteristics of

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[1] Alexander Zahlten, "1980s Nyū Aka: (Non)media theory as Romantic Performance" in *Media Theory in Japan* ed. Marc Steinberg and Alexander Zahlten (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 202.

[2] Kawamura Minato, *Sengo bungaku wo tou: Sono taiken to rinen* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1995), 176-88.

Japanese culture and the legacy of Yanagita Kunio's *minzokugaku* in the postwar era.[3] Similarly, a discussion between avowed Marxist Karatani Kōjin and caustic right-wing demagogue Ishihara Shintarō led to a remarkably civil dialogue on postwar politics and literature between the two despite their pronounced ideological differences.[4]

Given the free-wheeling and playful nature of intellectual exchange during the high capitalism of the 1980s, it is perhaps unsurprising that seemingly antithetical modes of thought such as Umehara's Jōmonism (with its deep skepticism toward Western epistemology and emphasis on preserving Japanese indigeneity) and postmodernism would intersect and overlap. The writer and critic who most prominently drew influences from both intellectual trends was neither an elite philosopher nor a conservative ideologue, ironically, but rather a novelist of *burakumin* (outcast) descent known for depicting the violent underbelly of Japanese society in his fiction: Nakagami Kenji (1946-1992). Despite their vastly different backgrounds, Nakagami and Umehara became acquainted with one another in the early 1980s, forming a deep friendship that would last until Nakagami's untimely death in 1992. At the same time, Nakagami was also a close confidant of Karatani Kōjin and Asada Akira.

Nakagami rose to fame in 1976 when he awarded the the Akutagawa Prize for his novel *Misaki* (The Cape), which follows the hardships of the young *burakumin* laborer Akiyuki and his family, a cast of characters loosely based off the experiences of Nakagami's extended family. Although Nakagami himself would not publicly reveal his *burakumin* descent until 1981, novels

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[3] Yoshimoto Takaaki and Umehara Takeshi, *Yoshimoto Takaaki zentaidanshū* Vol. 11 (Tokyo: Seidosha, 1989), 12-47.

[4] Karatani Kōjin and Etō Jun, *Karatani Kojin hatsugenshū, taidanshū* (Tokyo: Dokushojin, 2020), 272-289. Originally published in the September 1989 issue of *Subaru*.

such as *Misaki* featured a readily identifiable (albeit fictionalized) version of the *buraku* of Shingu in Wakayama Prefecture where Nakagami grew up before moving to a relative's home outside of the *buraku* at age eight. The use of lived experience in Nakagami's fiction immediately brings to mind the literary tradition of the "I-novel" (*shishōsetsu* or *watakushishōsetsu*) with its emphasis on the author's emotions as they navigate societal challenges and personal turmoil. Rather than subordinating his writing solely to personal experience, however, Nakagami employed a literary practice that Saitō Minako calls "projection" (*tōei*). By combining fiction with autobiographical details, Nakagami aspired to overcome the staid realism that Nakagami believed had defined previous attempts to portray the *burakumin* in fiction, such as Shimazaki Tōson's *Hakai* (The Broken Commandment, 1905).[5]

Nakagami remains best known as a *junbungaku* (pure literature) novelist who attempted to inscribe the insular and violent world of the *buraku* onto the accepted canon of Japanese literature (*kokubungaku*); yet he was also deeply involved in the ethnographic study of his home region of Kumano. Encompassing contemporary Wakayama and Mie prefectures, the Kumano region occupies the southern end of the Kii Peninsula, a landmass jutting south out of Honshū below the ancient capitals of Kyoto and Nara. Heavily forested and mountainous, Kumano has long held an outsize importance in Japanese religious and political history, despite its treacherous geography and relative isolation from the rest of the Kansai region.[6] The religious landscape of the region is organized around the Three Grand Shrines of Kumano known as the Kumano

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[5] Saitō Minako, *Nihon no dōjidai shōsetsu* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 2018), 99.

[6] Toyoshima Osamu cites the mountainous geography of Kumano (*yamagun*i) as the reason for the regions widespread perception as being isolated (*koritsu-sei*) and closed to the outside world (*sakoku-sei*). See *Shi no Kuni • Kumano: Nihonjin no seichi shūkyō* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1992), 16.

Sanzan (lit. “Three Mountains”) located in Hongu, Nachi, and Shingu (Nakagami’s hometown). Interspersed with these major shrines are numerous other religious sites such as the Ise Grand Shrine dedicated to the Sun Goddess Amaterasu. Beginning in the Heian period, this Buddho-Shinto syncretism gave rise to a number of pilgrimage routes (collectively known as the “Kumano Kodō”) that remained extremely popular through the medieval and early modern periods, ultimately being designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2004.[7]

Nakagami’s amateur ethnographic research on Kumano coincided with his fictional world-building of the Shingu *buraku*. Following his newfound fame after receiving the Akutagawa Prize, the editor of the *Asahi Journal* commissioned Nakagami to write a travelogue about Kumano and the Kii peninsula. The resulting text was serialized as *Kishū: Ki no kuni, ne no kuni monogatari* (Kishū: Tales from the Country of Trees, Country of Roots) between 1977-78. Although Nakagami had firsthand knowledge of the Shingu *buraku* from his youth and immediate family, he had yet to visit the other scattered *buraku* on the Kii peninsula. Exploring the issue of contemporary discrimination in Japan and highlighting the experiences of the *burakumin* living in Kumano thus formed a major thematic of *Kishū*. The travelogue did not merely focus synchronically on the lived experience of the *burakumin* that Nakagami encountered, however, but also diachronically on Kumano as a historically colonized space or “hidden country” (*komoriku*), a separate country that was both deeply imbricated in the national fabric of Japan, but yet forever banished to the periphery.[8]

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[7] Tsukamoto Akira, *Edo jidai no Kumano kaido to tabibito tachi* (Tokyo: Hanawashobo, 2022), 1-3.

[8] Nakagami Kenji, *Nakagami Kenji Zenshū* Vol. 14 (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1996), 482. Collection cited as NKZ hereafter.

The terminology Nakagami used in *Kishū* to accentuate the separateness of Kumano varied, drawing from the region's geography and history. Aside from labeling Kumano a "hidden country," he also graphically described it as the "genitals of Japan" (*tairiku ya heichi no chibu*), a naming that simultaneously highlighted the phallic geography of the Kii peninsula and the hidden histories of discrimination that boiled under the surface, but also underscored the fecund vitality of the region.[9] Most prominently, Nakagami identified Kumano as a "nation of darkness" (*yami no kokka*) or a defeated land that had been metaphorically shrouded in darkness since Emperor Jimmu (the mythical progenitor of the Imperial household and founder of Yamato) conquered the land as narrated in the *Kojiki* (712).[10] *Kishū* marks the beginning of Nakagami's engagement with the prehistory (or mythohistory) of Kumano, an inquiry that probed the origins of imperialism and how discrimination became an ingrained social feature of Japanese society through the ages.

This chapters moves away from a strict focus on intellectual history to examine the influence of Umehara's Jōmonism on literature and film in the 1980s through an exploration of Nakagami Kenji's novel *Himatsuri* (Fire Festival, 1987) and the film of the same name directed by Yanagimachi Mituso and released in 1985. Although both the filmic and novelistic versions of *Himatsuri* have faded into relative obscurity since their respective releases, I argue in this chapter that a re-evaluation of *Himatsuri* and the paratext surrounding the respective releases is necessary to understand how Jōmonism became intertwined with ecology and resistance to modernity. The remnant forms of Jōmon religion and nature that Nakagami depicts as existing

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[9] NKZ 14: 482.

[10] Ibid.

unchanged into modernity in *Himatsuri* draw heavily from Umehara's Jōmonism. That said, Nakagami also adds his own twist by narrating a conflict that pits primordial (Jōmon) nature *against* Japanese tradition, embodied in the film and novel as industrial development shrouded in a veneer of imperialist symbolism.

Whereas Okamoto and Umehara attempted to locate in the Jōmon period the hidden foundations of Japanese culture (or civilization in Umehara's case), Nakagami saw the Jōmon period as a site of resistance to the imperialist histories and hegemonic notions of tradition that underpinned the Japanese nation-state. Rupture, rather than concealed continuity, with what Komori Yoichi calls the 'trinity' (*sanmi-ittai*) of Japan as nation, homogeneous ethnicity, and singular language motivated Nakagami to look back to the darkness of the Jōmon period in an attempt to uncover a form of culture that existed on the Japanese archipelago prior to the foundation of the imperial state by Emperor Jimmu.[11]

Before detailing the differences between the filmic and novel versions, a synopsis of the narrative is necessary. *Himatsuri* is set in the 1980s in Nigishima, a town on the rural Kii Peninsula located in Wakayama prefecture in the broader Kumano region. The story follows the woodcutter Tatsuo as he wrestles with growing pressure from the other townspeople in Nigishima to sell the ancestral mountain on which he lives with his family so the town can be re-developed into a marine park celebrating the landing of Emperor Jimmu. Tatsuo leads a logging crew of other men from Nigishima, including his perennial sidekick Ryōta, an illegitimate son from one of his numerous sexual escapades. Throughout the novel Tatsuo is portrayed as a brash, violent, and promiscuous character. Despite being married and having two children, he

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[11] Komori Yoichi, *Yuragi no Nihon Bungaku* (Tokyo: NHK Books, 1998), 6.

routinely keeps company with his childhood sweetheart, Kimiko, who works as a sex worker in her sister's bar. Tatsuo's aggression and lack of respect put him into frequent conflict with the fishermen of Nigishima and the other townspeople.

Compounding the tension between Tatsuo and the townspeople of Nigishima are the changing socio-economic circumstances in Kumano. Bubble-era development projects are pouring into the region with unscrupulous brokers offering quick money to the impoverished residents. Given these changing circumstances, the townspeople of Nigishima and Tatsuo's family overwhelming favor selling their land. Tatsuo, however, is violently opposed to the idea. Deep within the mountainous forests resides a nameless mountain goddess that Tatsuo is capable of communicating with. As the narrative progresses, it is gradually revealed that Tatsuo can not only communicate with the mountain goddess, but maintains a deep, erotic veneration for her and, by extension, the primordial nature of the mountain. As the tension mounts between Tatsuo, his family, and the rest of the town, he gradually becomes detached from reality and increasingly violent. After attending the town's fire festival at the local Shinto shrine, Tatsuo ultimately murders his entire family before committing suicide at the end of the novel and film.

In order to elucidate the ways Nakagami adapted and expanded upon Umehara's Jōmonism in *Himatsuri*, this chapter first examines how Umehara and Nakagami conceived of Kumano as a Jōmon space in their *taidan* collection *Kimi ha Jōmon-jin ka, Yayoi-jin ka* (Are you Jōmon or Yayoi?, 1984) before proceeding on to a close reading of the novel. Although the novel and film are essentially the same in terms of plot structure and characters, there are notable differences between the two versions. These differences can attributed, I believe, to two major factors: first, Nakagami's attempt to compose an auratic text, and second, the torturous

production of *Himatsuri*, which was marked by major disputes over artistic direction. As such, my analysis prioritizes the novel as a more complete expression of Nakagami's authorial vision concerning Kumano as a Jōmon landscape. At the same time, given that Nakagami was the screenwriter for *Himatsuri*, I also analyze various scenes in the film for comparative purposes to identify differences between the respective versions.

Despite being the screenwriter for *Himatsuri*, Nakagami's actual input during the filming of *Himatsuri* was minimal to non-existent. Accordingly, contemporary reviews of Himatsuri and subsequent scholarship have tended to analyze the film as an expression of Yanagimachi's auteurism and largely downplayed Nakagami's creative contributions. Famed film critic Donald Richie, who provided the English subtitles for the film's international release, describes in a retrospective article on the film how Nakagami and Yanagimachi had a heated falling out during the production of *Himatsuri* over the film's artistic direction. Parco, the department store conglomerate, had commissioned Yanagimachi to direct the film as part of its expansion into the film industry, but balked at the transgressive themes, such as homoeroticism and incest, that Nakagami had written into the screenplay, demanding significant revisions. The ensuing tension between Yanagimachi, Nakagami, and Parco ultimately led to Nakagami acrimoniously quitting the production of *Himasturi* before filming was complete -- which created a rift between the writer and his former friend Yanagimachi, who had previously adapted two of Nakagami's novels into film.[12]

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[12] Donald Richie, "Transgression and Retribution: Yanagimachi Mitsuo's Fire Festival (1985)," in *Japanese Cinema: Texts and Contexts*, ed. Alastair Phillips and Julian Stringer (New York: Routledge, 2007), 258-61.

Unmentioned by Ritchie, but quite possibly adding to the controversy around the film, was the fact that the story's bloody ending, with Tatsuo massacring his family, was inspired by an actual event that occurred in Nigishima. In February 1, 1980, a stonecutter named Ikeda Kazumichi murdered seven members of his family and wounded three more with an ax and hunting rifle before killing himself. The murder-suicide would come to fascinate Nakagami; and while the overall subject matter of *Himatsuri* only tangentially relates to the crime, it is undeniable that setting the film in the town where the massacre occurred had the potential to provoke controversy.[13]

Kumano as Jomon: Memories of Conquest in the Land of the Dead

The narrative kernels of what would eventually become the full text (both filmic and novelistic) of *Himatsuri* were drawn liberally by Nakagami from real-life events such as the Kumano murders and familiar literary themes running across his oeuvre -- such as transgression, severed familial ties, and the interpersonal violence within insular communities. That said, *Himatsuri* differs from earlier Nakagami novels such as *Misaki* and *Sennen no Yuraku* (A Thousand Years of Pleasure, 1985) in its emphasis on Kumano's place in the foundational myths surrounding Japan. Rather than highlight the violence and poverty of the *buraku* (metonymically known as the '*roji*' [alleyway] in Nakagami's fiction), *Himatsuri* grapples with how Kumano has functioned as a point of origin for discrimination and dominance via imperialism.

Despite the modern setting of the novel, the core conflict of *Himatsuri* harkens back to events described in the *Kojiki*, Japan's oldest extant text and a critical document that helped

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[13] Noboru Tomonari, "Re-imagining the Japanese: Himatsuri (Fire Festival), the Film and the Novella," *Asian Cinema* 18:1 (Spring/Summer 2007), 202.

justify imperial mythology. Tatsuo's fight to preserve his primordial lifeways and avoid selling his land so the town can be redeveloped as a waterpark honoring Emperor Jimmu metaphorically re-enacts the conquest of Kumano by the first Emperor as a modern allegory for the coming of modernity. For Nakagami, the conquest of Kumano by Jimmu did not merely represent the political subjugation of the people living on the Kii peninsula prior to the foundation of Yamato (i.e. Jōmon), but also heralded the suppression of oral, pre-literate culture via the authority of the written word.

While evidence of writing on the Japanese archipelago predates the composition of the *Kojiki*, the connection between the written word and political power that the *Kojiki* symbolized was a perennial focus of Nakagami's provincialization of Japanese culture. Indeed, he coined the term 'imperial syntax' to highlight the ways that imperialism subtly continued to set the cultural-political rules of the Japanese language and literary composition.[14] Anne McKnight has posited that Nakagami's skepticism toward the authority of the written word aligns closely with the Derridean critique of logocentricism in Western thought.[15] The privileging of script over oral speech or phonetic signs necessarily creates a hierarchy of meaning wherein the written word (imperial syntax) banishes any ambiguity, difference, or polysemous meaning. In lieu of merely substituting phonocentricism as an inverse for the dominance of logocentricism, McKnight argues that Nakagami engages in a sort of free play of signifiers in his fiction and ethnographic writings.

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[14] Anne McKnight, "Imperial Syntax: Nakagami Kenji's *Monogatari* and Modern Japanese Literature as Ethnography," *Discourse* 28.1 (Winter 2006): 159-161

[15] Anne McKnight, *Nakagami, Kumano*, 100-102.

The close affinity between Nakagami's playful confusion and disarticulation of the Japanese language and Derridean deconstruction are remarkable; and certainly Nakagami, through his own readings and associations with Karatani Kojin and Asada Akira, was aware of the theoretical interventions put forward by structuralism, poststructuralism, and deconstruction. At the same time, however, Nakagami's writings also reveal a profound interest in the linguistic and cultural excavations undertaken by *minzokugaku* scholars Yanagita Kunio and Orikuchi Shinobu. Etymology, the study of toponyms, and dialectology featured prominently in the work of both scholars as part of their attempts to study the origins of Japanese culture and language. For Yanagita, in particular, these efforts to reconstruct the genealogy of Japanese language and culture before the advent of (Western) modernity were, in turn, motivated by a desire to document the agrarian customs and lifeways of the Japanese countryside before they were extinguished by centralized statecraft. Yanagita's countryside, comprised of numerous distinct regions (*chihō*) and later Okinawa, was of course "an imaginary, constructed from a discourse that alone promised to conserve and preserve traces of a lost presence" in the words of Harry Harootunian.[16]

Although Nakagami cannot be termed a *minzokugaku* scholar (a classification he would have undoubtedly rejected), his fiction and ethnography concerning Kumano bear a closer affinity to the intellectual and disciplinary orientation of Yanagita and Orikuchi than they do to poststructuralism. The tantalizing possibility of uncovering the oral, pre-literate past of Kumano prior to Jimmu's invasion ultimately led Nakagami to Umehara's Jomonism (*Nihongaku*) with its

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[16] Harry Harootunian, "Disciplinizing Native Knowledge and Producing Place: Yanagita Kunio, Origuchi Shinobu, Takata Yasuma," in *Culture and Identity: Japanese Intellectuals During the Interwar Years* (Princeton, Princeton University Press 1990), 105.

heady mix of linguistic anthropology, religious studies, Continental philosophy, and *minzokugaku*-style ethnology. While Umehara's methodology was riven with numerous errors and fallacies -- charges, ironically, that he himself had leveled against Yanagita for fictionalizing the folktales he had recorded in *Tōno Monogatari* -- there was a temporal and multidisciplinary sweep to Jōmonism that held great appeal for Nakagami. In the afterword to his taidan with Umehara, Nakagami praised the ways in which Umehara "sprints through ancient and modern, the Gods and mankind, Kumano and Yamato and Kyoto, Jomon and Yayoi, Ainu culture and ancient Korea" in his "new theses" (*shingakusetsu*) on Japanese culture.[17]

The conversations between Umehara and Nakagami that comprised *Kimi wa Yayoi-jin ka, Jōmon-jin ka* were held between Umehara and Nakagami in 1983 in Shingu under the auspices of the Asahi Publishing group, which subsequently published the *taidan*. Along with debating the Jōmon characteristics of Kumano, the discussion topics included other stock topics drawn from Jōmonism such as the supposed connection between the Ainu and Japanese languages and the virtues and flaws of Yanagita's *minzokugaku*. Umehara opens the *taidan* by citing Kumano's position of 'in-betweenness' (*chūkankō*) or liminality as the reason for his abiding interest in the region.[18] This positioning has multiple meanings; geographic, temporal, and spiritual. Similar to his numerous arguments concerning Tōhoku, Umehara claims that Kumano as a region has retained more Jōmon characteristics than other areas on Honshū. Most importantly, the prominence of the mountains and the seas have created two distinct life-worlds among the people of Kumano: the mountain people (*sanjin*) and sea people (*amajin*). Using Yanagita's terminology

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[17] *Kimi wa Yayoijin ka, Jomonjin ka*, 210.

[18] Ibid. 8

here is intentional as both Umehara and Nakagami concurred that in contrast to the *jōmin* (abiding folks) who adapted agriculture and became the normative, idealized Japanese subject, the people of Kumano had retained their pre-agrarian occupations and customs.[19]

Harkening back to his earlier conception of Kumano as a hidden country in Japan, put forward in *Kishū*, Nakagami theorizes about Kumano's position as the "land of the dead" (*yomi no kuni*) in the primordial mythology described in the *Kojiki*. Rather than linking Kumano to a Western, vertically bifurcated conception of heaven and hell, Nakagami seized upon the idea of the underworld as a place where the supernatural has undue influence over the affairs of humans. A region, for example, where the evil spirits of mountains and streams (*chimimōryō*) might suddenly materialize out of the landscape.[20] In Nakagami's view, the scattered places in Kumano where this form of supernatural nature remained most immanent were the mountains. While the *sanjin* and *amajin* divide reflects a pre-agricultural world, Umehara and Nakagami both agreed that the mountain people were the least affected by the spread of agriculture following Emperor Jimmu's invasion and subsequent conquest.[21] Thus, by inverting Yanagita Kunio's critique of the *sanjin* as the least civilized Japanese people on the archipelago, Umehara and Nakagami valorized them as having preserved aspects of Jōmon religion into modern times.

In Umehara's view, the most prominent example of a primordial Jomon belief among the mountain people is their conception of the mountain as a feminine presence or a mountain goddess. Nakagami concurs and notes that mountain goddesses are often celebrated through

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[19] Ibid. 14

[20] *Kimi wa Yayoijin ka, Jōmonjin ka*, 13-14, 210-11.

[21] Ibid., 26, 34-36

rituals of sexual satiation in Kumano, recalling that a childhood friend of his in Kumano would often masturbate facing the mountain when collecting herbs and plants. This memory, he continues, reflects the ancient "faith of the mountain people" (*sanjin no shinkō*).[22]

Even as Nakagami positioned himself as a sort of native informant for Umehara about Kumano and its primordial landscape, the conversations in the *taidan* did not suggest that Nakagami was intimately familiar with the nature, or specific flora and fauna, of the region. In a *taidan* with novelist Enchi Fumiko held in 1979, for example, Nakagami describes the nature of Kumano as one of "mountains, bare rock, and trees," all topographic features that can be found anywhere across the Japanese archipelago.[23] Rather than draw from ecology, Nakagami continually reached toward the realm of myth, namely the *Kojiki*, to enchant the nature of Kumano. This subordination of nature to myth bears an uncanny resemblance to what Christine Marran calls 'ethnic environmentalism' or the ways in which *ethnos* or cultural claims are used to construct notions of the environment.[24] For Nakagami, however, the sensuous nature of Kumano was not rooted in ethnic or national consciousness, but rather in the cultural difference and historical stigma that had stained the region since Jimmu's invasion. In this sense, Nakagami's environmental vision concerning Kumano was inherently parochial, a sharp contrast from much of the ethnic environmentalist thought in Japan focused on the nation more broadly.

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[22] *Kimi wa Yayoijin ka, Jōmonjin ka*, 37.

[23] *Nakagami Kenji Zenhatsugen II: 1978-1980* (Tokyo: Shueisha, 1980), 427.

[24] Christine Marran, *Ecology without Culture: Aesthetics for a Toxic World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 12-14.

Umehara, of course, was a major figure in promoting Japanese ethnic environmental thought.[25] And yet, in the early 1980s, when he held his first *taidan* with Nakagami, environmental concerns did not feature extensively into his Jōmonism. At this juncture, Umehara was still deeply immersed in his studies of the Ainu through his collaborations with Fujimura Hisakazu. Environmental concerns would not become a prominent feature of Jōmonism until the 1990s. Indeed, in many ways, Nakagami's focus in *Himatsuri* on the landscape of Kumano as a precarious environment precedes (and differs from) Umehara's later focus on the Jōmon period as an ecological utopia. Thus, while Nakagami was indeed influenced by Jōmonism, it is important to note that he not did passively accept all of Umehara's claims, but rather drew from them selectively in crafting his fiction. In short, the ecological themes in *Himatsuri* reflect Nakagami's continual effort to represent the specific contours of Kumano as a marginalized region in imperial histories. The Jōmon period was a site of resistance for Nakagami, a conflict that he allegorizes by transposing the origins of imperialism onto the hyper-capitalist world of 1980s Japan.

Endangered Parochialism: Landscape and Ecological Anxiety

Himatsuri opens deep in the mountains outside of Totsukawa, Nara Prefecture approximately 80 kilometers from Nigishima, on the coast, where the bulk of the novel takes place. Tatsuo, the anti-hero of the novel, is guiding the crew of woodcutters he manages as they fell cypress (*sugi*) trees and cut through other undergrowth. Ryōta, a youth in his early twenties and Tatsuo's unclaimed, illegitimate son, has recently joined in, unsettling the formerly tight-

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[25] Marran notes that one of the prominent proponents of Japanese ethnic environmentalism is archaeologist Yasuda Yoshinori, a disciple of Umehara's Jōmonism. I will touch on his thought in the following chapter. See *Ecology without Culture*, 15-16.

knight group of lumberjacks. As mentioned in the earlier synopsis, Ryōta is Tatsuo's unclaimed son fathered out of wedlock; Ryōta suspects that Tatsuo is his father, but refrains from confronting him until later in the novel. Unlike the Oedipal struggles of Akiyuki to gain the acceptance of his father in the earlier *Misaki* trilogy, Ryōta enjoys a close proximity to Tatsuo from the outset of the novel. Ryōta admires Tatsuo's aggressive persona and frequently asks him about his numerous sexual escapades with the women from Nigishima and beyond. Although the pair are denied familial recognition from the townspeople, Ryōta refers to Tatsuo as *ani* (older brother) throughout the novel and attempts to emulate Tatsuo's violently masculine persona.

It quickly becomes clear that Ryōta's presence in Tatsuo's logging crew has violated the ancient division of labor that governs life in Nigishima. Namely, the fetishized cultural binary between mountain and sea that Nakagami and Umehara theorized as a main feature of Kumano's Jōmon residue is dramatized in the novel as a divide between the woodcutters who work in the mountainous forests (*yama-shigoto*) and the fishermen (*ryōshi*) who run a fishery co-operative (*gyokyō*) that employs a majority of the townspeople. Whereas the film depicts the divide between mountain and sea occupations as ironclad, the labor division is presented as slightly more porous in the novel. Ryōta was originally employed by the fishery co-operative as a delivery driver, but was forced to quit after he crashed his car and lost his driver's license. Likewise, Tatsuo initially worked in the fishery co-operative, but was forced out after he repeatedly went fishing in the sacred waters in defiance of local religious precepts.

Tatsuo's liminal position between the mountains and the sea as both a former fishermen and current leader of the *yama-shigoto* woodcutters is reflected in the landscape of his ancestral home, a forested mountain that overlooks the sweeping bay of Nigishima. Nakagami writes that

Tatsuo's family had lived on the mountain since the "age of the gods" (*kami no yo*), a reference to the first period of history outlined in the *Kojiki*.[26] This allusion to the prelapsarian world before Jimmu's conquest of the Japanese archipelago is coupled with the placement of the town's red Shinto shrine *torii* gate directly below Tatsuo's home on the water.[27] Invoking Shinto in the landscape raises ideologically fraught questions that I will address in greater detail later on; but it is worth highlighting the mythic dimensions that the *torii* shrine gate gestures towards. Jimmu's invasion from the sea in the Kojiki heralded not only the beginning of the imperial institution, but also Shinto as a standardized practice separate from the indigenous beliefs of the Jōmon inhabitants. The connotations of water with Shinto (*ama-jin*) versus the sylvan connotations of the mountain goddess that the *yama-shigoto* workers worship are reflected in the mountainous forests of cedar, camelia, and oak that dwarf the Shinto shrine above Tatsuo's ancestral home.

The sweeping polarities between mountain and sea that Nakagami uses to convey the otherworldly aura of Tatsuo's ancestral home are diametrically opposed to the current situation in Nigishima. Whereas the mountains and seas are seemingly 'out of time,' the picture Nakagami paints of Nigishima as a whole is one of a parochial, backwater town reckoning with the disruptive effects of industrial capitalism. Nigishima was once even more isolated, but after the Kisei Line opened several decades earlier, the town unsuccessfully strove to become a tourist destination. Given the town's stagnation, growing class stratification has begun to afflict it with land-owners and the few wealthy families that head the fishery cooperative reaping substantial gains while the other townspeople struggle to scrape by. Beyond Nigishima, too, the Kumano

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[26] NKZ 8: 232

[27] Ibid.

region is awash in high-growth era development projects: a nuclear power plant has recently opened in the nearby town of Hadasu and major companies are buying land to build resorts and hotels. Adding to the anxiety of the residents are rumors of further development spread by the brokers, or real estate prospectors, who have come to Nigishima in search of cheap land.[28]

Gossip (*uwasa*) permeates the social world of Nakagami's Nigishima. Rumors, innuendo, and whispered side-conversations help propel the narrative of *Himatsuri* through the introduction of key characters (such as Kimiko) and major events. As Mark Morris has argued, this oral subtext is a common feature of Nakagami's fiction; gossip is not only a narrative tool, but also often functions as a character unto itself.[29] Scattered dialogue from a polyphony of voices helps bring secrets and apprehensions about the future to the forefront, adding context to the often-ambiguous form of Nakagami's longer texts. Crucially, the characters who circulate gossip are often women. Morris cites Oryū no Oba, the otherworldly narrator and midwife for the *roji* in *Sennen no Yuraku*, and Mon, who runs a bar in the Akiyuki trilogy that serves as a conduit for circulating rumors, as primary examples of how gossip functions as a gendered narrative technique for advancing plot.[30]

The women in Nigishima gossip not only about Tatsuo and his nighttime trysts, but also about the uncertain future the town faces as modernity continues to aggressively encroach upon the region. In the filmic version, gossip becomes personified in the form of a group of elderly

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[28] NKZ 8: 237-39. Nakagami writes that the brokers are spreading rumors about development on p. 251.

[29] Mark Morris, "Gossip and history: Nakagami, Faulkner, Garcia Márquez," *Japan Forum* 8:1 (1996), 38.

[30] Ibid. 38-41.

fisherwomen who work at the Nigishima harbor. Whether gutting and deboning fish or chatting over cigarettes, the old ladies eagerly share the latest morsels of gossip with one another, joking about the broker's infatuation with Kimiko (a minor plot point of the novel that is given more prominence in the film) and other happenings in the town. In one of the few scenes with any comic relief in the film, the elderly ladies beam as they watch Ryōta and two other teens perform a choreographed dance to rock band The Mods' hit single "*Hageshii Ame ga*."

By contrast, the women of Nigishima in the novel are largely undeveloped as characters. Beyond being occasionally described as female fishermen (*ryōshi no onnara*), they are devoid of distinguishing characteristics and merely flit in and out of the narrative, commenting on the actions of Tatsuo, Ryōta, and the other men engaged in *yama-shigoto* before disappearing back into the fabric of the text. And yet, the apprehensions and fears that the women voice about the ongoing development projects in the region illuminate the other major threat facing Nigishima: namely, the possibility that a nuclear power plant could be built instead of the waterpark honoring Emperor Jimmu. Although the narrative in the novel eventually settles on the waterpark (the prospect of a nuclear power plant being built in Nigishima goes unmentioned in the film), initially the women whisper amongst themselves that the redevelopment project for Nigishima has yet to decided.[31]

The looming possibility of a nuclear power plant being built immediately brings to mind Japan's traumatic history with nuclear energy from the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 and the radiation contamination of the Lucky Dragon 5 fishing crew following

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[31] The possibility of a nuclear power plant being in *Hadasu* (a neighboring town, but not Nigishima) is mentioned in the film by the unscrupulous broker once in a conversation with Kimiko where he tries to seduce her.

the United State's nuclear testing in the Pacific in 1954. More broadly, however, the potential for massive ecological and cultural upheaval to occur invokes the longer history of industrial pollution and eco-catastrophe that has long haunted Japanese industrialization and modernization efforts. In particular, pollution to the sea, waterways, and rivers became a recurrent feature of twentieth-century Japanese development from the Ashio Copper Mine incidents involving water contaminated with mining run-off beginning in the 1870s and 1880s to the Minamata disaster wherein the people of Minamata township on Kyūshu were poisoned with methyl-mercury over the course of approximately three decades beginning in the late 1930s.[32]

Although Nakagami does not directly grapple with this history of environmental destruction in his taidan with Umehara or in his collected interviews, the spectre of a nuclear power plant in Nigishima sparks fear in the town inhabitants, subtly gesturing toward an awareness of past eco-catastrophes. This fear is reflected in the gossip of the townswomen. Nakagami writes that "even hearing about nuclear power made the women shudder" (*onnara ha genshiryoku to kiita dake de furueagatta*) as the ladies trade gossip concerning the town's future.[33] Well aware that Tatsuo will oppose either development project, one of the anonymous female interlocutors opines that "the waterpark would be better" (*kaichū kōen no hō yoppodo ga ee noni*), speculating that more employment opportunities would result from a tourist attraction.[34] This dialogue, delivered in a folksy Kansai twang, highlights the indeterminacy of Nigishima's

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[32] Brett Walker offers a comprehensive history of industrial pollution in Japan (including the Ashio Copper Mine and Minamata disasters) in his monograph *Toxic Archipelago: A History of Industrial Disease in Japan* (Seattle: University of Washington Press), 2010.

[33] NKZ 8: 240.

[34] Ibid.

future, while also affirming that the townspeople are well aware of the risks construction of a nuclear power plant would entail.

To be sure, a nuclear power plant cannot be equated with a testing site or detonation zone. However, as Lawrence Buell has persuasively argued, as a technology, the history-ending, annihilative potential of nuclear power is so awesome that even pondering its uses conjures up contradictory, yet often visceral, emotions (for example, vehement opposition mixed with disbelief).[35] While Buell discusses nuclear power in relation to American environmental apocalypticism in literature and how the Atomic age ushered in a new paradigm of secular apocalypse, as opposed to previous eschatological beliefs drawn from the Judeo-Christian tradition, the cognitive dissonance in regards to the nuclear can be readily identified in *Himatsuri*. Nakagami writes that the women "half believed-half doubted" the gossip concerning the waterpark and nuclear power.[36]

The uncertainty over whether the redevelopment of Nigishima would result in either the waterpark or the nuclear power plant reflects an ecological contradiction Karen Thornber has termed 'ecoambiguity' or the incongruous ways in which humanity both affects and can be affected by an array of ecosystems (human and nonhuman) in an attempt to modify, preserve, or destroy the environment.[37] In *Himatsuri*, Nakagami appears to suggest that drastic transformation of the land is inevitable and that the only question is to what extent Nigishima

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[35] Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 298-99.

[36] NKZ 8: 240

[37] Karen Thornber, *Ecoambiguity: Environmental Crises and East Asian Literatures* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012), 8-13.

and the surrounding nature will remain after the town's redevelopment. Given the threat of radiation and toxic pollution runoff from the power plant, the waterpark seemingly represents the less destructive option of the two. That said, the imperial connotations of the project and its proposed scale also represent the homogenizing force of the nation-state in the form of a built-environment that will eviscerate pre-industrial ways of life and radically transform the aquatic and terrestrial environments of Nigishima.

Viewed in this light, Tatsuo's opposition to selling his ancestral land could be seen as an act of environmental preservation as much as a desire to maintain his family's property (and stature) in their traditional, insular community. Reading Nakagami's emplotment of the struggle between nature and modernity through the lens of ecocriticism is a fraught task, however, given the absence of any discernible moralizing or recuperative aims in the narrative. Whereas ecocriticism often engages with environmental crises and ecological degradation from the standpoint of rectifying such issues, Nakagami provides scant evidence that Tatsuo possesses any sort of moral framework. While the 'slow violence' that the nuclear power plant potentially heralds fills the townspeople with dread, the cruelty and violent transgressions against nature and other persons that Tatsuo commits incite more immediate opprobrium and disgust from the townspeople.

Many of Tatsuo's transgressions involve prohibitions regarding Shinto and nature. Whether fishing in the sacred waters near the shrine that the fishery co-operative considers a forbidden zone (*kinku*) or cutting down the *sakaki* (evergreen) tree regarded as sacred in Shinto, Tatsuo's general disregard for the norms governing the use of nature in Nigishima complicates any attempt to read his actions as ideologically motivated in any political or environmental

sense. As Eve Zimmerman has argued, the violent male protagonists (or anti-heroes) that Nakagami crafts are often devoid of psychological interiority.[38] The absence of any psychological depth in Tatsuo as a character leaves the reader to decipher his actions through the perspective of Ryōta. Given this context, analyzing the homosocial bond between Tatsuo and Ryōta in greater detail offers insight into Tatsuo as a character and how his behavior reflects the premodern worldview of the Jōmon period that Nakagami, following Umehara, believed remains latent in Kumano into contemporary times.

Before Shinto: Sacrality and the Homosocial

An undercurrent of homoeroticism pervades the relationship between Tatsuo and Ryōta. Donald Richie notes that Nakagami's original screenplay for *Himatsuri* contained a more frank treatment of the homoerotic relationship between Ryōta and Tatsuo, but that Parco's repeated interference during the filming process led to the excision of any homoerotic content from the film.[39] Traces of this homoerotic tension between the pair are evident in the novelization where Nakagami had considerably more freedom. References to the physique and sweaty bodies of Tatsuo and Ryōta are scattered through the novel. In part, this can attributed to the fact that partial and full nudity are common among the *yama-shigoto* lumberjacks.[40] And yet, at other points in the novel, the ambivalent, but often mutual, gaze between the two appears to be tinged with romanticism and innuendo. During a sequence where Tatsuo and Ryōta go lobster hunting

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[38] Eve Zimmerman, *Out of the Alleyway: Nakagami Kenji and the Poetics of Outcaste Fiction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007), 124.

[39] Richie, "Transgression and Retribution," 260.

[40] See, for example, NKZ 8: 245 which features not only Ryōta staring at the sweat dripping down by Tatsuo's back, but also Ryōta bathing nude in the mountain stream, leading to the other yama-shigoto workers to joke that the mountain goddess wouldn't want to watch him.

(*iseebi-tori*) in the early evening together, Ryōta watches in awe as Tatsuo ascends a craggy rock above the sea and completely undresses (*fuku o nugi, suhadaka ni nari*) before donning a speedo or jockstrap and diving deep into the gold-hued water (*kiiroiro ni hikaru mizu*) with a fishing spear.[41]

While such eroticized imagery could be read as traces of Nakagami's more explicit treatment of Ryōta and Tatsuo's relationship, merely interpreting the gaze that the two project onto one another as sexual desire obviates the complexity of their dynamic. As noted previously, Ryōta is Tatsuo's illegitimate son. Although denied official recognition by his father, Ryōta and Tatsuo's relationship resembles a familial dynamic, albeit one where biological kinship remains tactfully unacknowledged. Tatsuo immediately takes Ryōta under his wing after he is ostracized from the fishery cooperative and watches over Ryōta at the expense of his other legitimate sons. Despite this close proximity between the two, Ryōta's efforts to be recognized as Tatsuo's son are continually thwarted through the novel. Early in the narrative Ryōta confronts his mother about whether she ever slept with Tatsuo. In response, Ryōta's mother violently slaps him and vehemently chastises him.[42] Similarly, when Ryōta finally works up the courage to ask Tatsuo if he had relations with his mother, Tatsuo laughs off the question and refuses to provide a firm answer.[43]

Intimacy between Ryōta and Tatsuo thus follows a strictly platonic model where heteronormativity remains the standard despite the surfeit of homosocial desire that Ryōta

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[41] NKZ 8: 264

[42] NKZ 8: 249

[43] NKZ 8: 268

projects toward Tatsuo. Eve Kosofky Sedgwick has argued that homosocial desire as depicted in (English) literature encompasses a continuum of male bonding relationships that include not only libidinal desire, but also homosocial affection such as "male friendship, mentorship, entitlement, rivalry" and other patriarchal norms.[44] Historical and cultural differences notwithstanding, Sedgwick's definition of a literary form of male-centered homosocial desire is readily applicable to the dynamic between Tatsuo and Ryōta. Unlike the filmic version where Ryōta unquestioningly follows Tatsuo, the novel makes clear that Ryōta's feelings toward Tatsuo vary wildly — from adoration to deep hatred. The cognitive dissonance Ryōta feels toward Tatsuo is never fully fleshed out by Nakagami. Much like the whispered gossip that drives the narrative, Ryōta's feelings of inadequacy drive the narrative forward through acts of ecological and sexual violence that complicate any ecocritical reading of the novel.

Furthering complicating the unresolved dialectic of homosocial bonding between Tatsuo and Ryōta is the entrance of Kimiko, a sex worker and Tatsuo's childhood sweetheart, who returns to Nigishima to work at her sister Misako's "snack bar" (*sunakku*). Ryōta immediately becomes enamored of Kimiko, crudely propositioning her only to be forcefully rejected.[45] Despite being a sex worker, Kimiko operates with a considerable amount of autonomy and reserves her true affection for Tatsuo whom she has adored since her teenage years. Tatsuo,

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[44] Eve Kosofky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 1.

[45] NKZ 8: 250

however, treats her with contempt and claims to regards his relationship with her as a mere distraction.[46]

Although Tatsuo and Kimiko rekindle their relationship, he initially responds to her arrival by taunting her with a grotesque gift: a dead monkey. The offering is emblematic of Tatsuo's contempt for Kimiko, but also exemplifies Tatsuo's transgression of the sacred norms governing nature and society in Nigishima. Tatsuo takes Ryōta monkey hunting with another *yama-shigoto* lumberjack who then helps Tatsuo shame Kimiko by feigning coitus with the dead monkey and hoisting it at her feet. After humiliating Kimiko and laughing uproariously at her reaction, Tatsuo, his *yama-shigoto* crew, and other male friends from neighboring towns proceed to eat the monkey meat raw (*nama-niku*) at the town assembly hall. This feast of raw flesh horrifies the townspeople more than Tatsuo's humiliation of Kimiko. Nakagami writes that upon hearing of Tatsuo's plan to eat monkey meat, people of all occupations, including both fishermen and even other *yama-shigoto* workers, were all "uniformly alarmed and trembled with fear" (*ichiyō ni odoroki, ichi miburuishita no datta*).[47] This palpable sense of fear strongly echoes the earlier apprehension among the women about the construction of the nuclear power plant, exemplifying how ancient superstitions remain a source of anxiety even as modernization continues to warp local life in Nigishima.

Monkeys (*saru*) are regarded by the townspeople of Nigishima as "wise animals" (*chie no aru*) that "resemble humans" (*ningen to yoku nite*), thus consuming them as food is

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[46] Ibid., 249

[47] NKZ 8: 254

prohibited.[48] The uncanny humanness of monkeys is similarly referenced in the film when the fishermen see the slaughtered animals and gasp at how they "resemble humans" (*ningen mitai*). Beyond straddling the boundary between human and animal, the monkey embodies a multiplicity of meanings in Japanese culture that harken back to ancient changes in religion and sensibility. Anthropologist Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney argues that prior to the Medieval era in Japan (i.e. the Muromachi and Sengoku periods), the monkey was widely viewed by the Japanese as a sacred mediator between the human world and the realm of the deities.[49] Given its status as a sacred animal, Ohnuki-Tierney posits that the avoidance of monkey meat gradually become a formalized prohibition. While prohibitions on animal meat are generally linked to the spread of Buddhism in Japan, Ohnuki-Tierney argues that this prohibition originated in Shinto or the indigenous folk beliefs before the syncretism of the two traditions. Archaeological evidence shows that monkey bones, while a common feature of Jōmon period settlement remains, are absent from Yayoi excavation sites, lending credence to the hypothesis that the idea of the monkey as a sacred mediator dates from Yayoi period agricultural society.[50]

Along with fishing in the sacred waters, slaughtering and feasting on the wild monkeys represents one of Tatsuo's more flagrant violations of the Shinto beliefs that guide the parochial life-ways of Nigishima. The fact that the local shrine in Nigishima is on Tatsuo's ancestral land and that his family bears responsibility for painting the iconic red *torii* gate complicates any

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[48] Ibid.

[49] Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *The Monkey as Metaphor: Symbolic Transformations in Japanese History and Ritual* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 43-52.

[50] Ibid, 56

interpretation of his actions as resistance to Shinto. Aside from noting that Tatsuo's family has traditionally managed the shrine, though, Nakagami provides no information about the shrine's connection to the larger network of state-recognized shrines that comprise institutional Shinto in modern Japan. Given this lack of information, it seems likely that the shrine is a rural place of worship unincorporated in the larger system of state-recognized shrines.

That said, taking Shinto to constitute a unitary religious tradition is problematic for a variety of reasons. As Jason Ānada Josephson has strenuously argued, Shinto cannot be described a cohesive 'religion' in the same manner as Christianity or Islam.[51] The forced aggrandizement of local beliefs and ceremonies with the imperial cult that occurred during the early Meiji period and then gradually coalesced into State Shinto during the Imperial, prewar period entailed the creation of a 'religion' in the Western sense; but this effort also excluded (sometimes arbitrarily) folkways and rituals deemed 'superstitious' and antithetical to modernization efforts.[52] Much like allusions to the history of eco-catastrophe and pollution that signified by the threat of nuclear power, Nakagami only gestures toward an awareness of the fraught history involving the construction of Shinto as a national religion. Tellingly, though, the word 'Shinto' never appears in the novel despite the prominence of the red *torii* gate in Nigishima's landscape. Thus, rather than retroactively applying modern conceptions of Shinto onto a text that Nakagami consciously composed to reflect a premodern (or prehistoric)

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[51] Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

[52] For an examination of shrine regulation as Meiji statecraft, see Gerald Figal, *Civilization and Monsters: Spirits of Modernity in Meiji Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 200-207.

worldview, the violations of Shinto precepts by Tatsuo can best be interpreted through a Jōmon-Yayoi binary.

The sea around Nigishima, with its connotations toward the fishermen or *ama-jin* that Umehara and Nakagami discuss in their taidan, represents a location in the novel where the fishermen have attempted to domesticate nature through fishing prohibitions and raising fish in enclosed hatcheries and pens. Although not agricultural, these attempts to domesticate nature reflect the sort of environmental alteration that Umehara argues has characterized Japanese culture since the Yayoi period. As such, transgressing the Jomon-Yayoi divide involves ecological and interpersonal violence on the open waters of Nigishima, a reflection of the continual tension between the *sanjin* and the *ama-jin* in the Jōmonist *Welt* of *Himatsuri*.

For example, in an effort to match Tatsuo's bravado and seeming carelessness towards nature and Shinto prohibitions, Ryōta dumps fuel oil into (*jyūyu*) into the fishery cooperative's hatcheries, killing the farm-raised fish and causing significant monetary damage to the fishermen. The fishermen immediately suspect Kimiko and Tatsuo as the culprits, raising tensions in Nigishima and heightening the existing acrimony between the fishermen and the woodcutters. Shortly thereafter, however, Ryōta is revealed to be the culprit through an internal monologue where he argues strenuously with himself that Tatsuo not would only have approved of his actions, but that Tatsuo had in fact joined him in dumping the oil:

> Tatsuo dumped the oil into the fish pen, into the narrow enclosure where the fishes' skin was molding, where their scales flaked off as they bumped against the net, where they panted as they struggled to swing. Tatsuo had the right to kill them. The yellowtail (*hamachi*) raised in the fish pen, that ate the bait and medicine fed to them by the

> fishermen, were disgusting to look upon. Tatsuo didn't want to look at that. Tatsuo had taken his boat out under the cover of darkness and dumped the oil.[53]

This schizophrenic train of thought reveals not only the instability of Ryōta as a narrator but also a twisted sense of justification for his actions. The domestication of the farm-raised fish appears as a violation of nature itself, with the narrow nets and force-feeding of the fish being discussed as a passive form of ecological violence in and of itself.

Killing the farm-raised fish thus represents a form of mimicry that attempts to match or rather exceed Tatsuo's violations of nature in terms of shock and transgression. Along with ecological violence, Ryōta's continual inability to match Tatsuo's machismo leads to interpersonal violence as well, most notably toward Kimiko who suffers a horrifying rape at the hands of Ryōta, which Tatsuo sanctions. Nakagami was no stranger to using sexual violence and abnormal sexual relations as plot devices in his stories (in many cases rather gratuitously). The rape of Kimiko by Ryōta is no exception, as it signifies not only the solidification of Tatsuo and Ryōta's homosocial bond, but also the beginning of Tatsuo slowly becoming consumed by his devotion to the mountain goddess.

The rape scene unfolds during one of Tatsuo and Kimiko's late-night trysts while sailing in the prohibited waters near the shrine. Ryōta rows up and demands to have sex with Kimiko as well, terrifying Kimiko and leading her to appeal Tatsuo that she is only worthy of him, a god incarnate (*kami-sama*). Kimiko's sobbing entreaties go unheeded, with Tatsuo's coldly replying that if he is indeed a god he exists as a "god of pestilence" (*yakubyōgami*), before asking Ryōta

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[53] NKZ 8: 272.

whether they should have sex with Kimiko together or whether Ryōta alone will take Kimiko.[54] Ryōta remains taciturn momentarily before raising his voice and shouting that he alone will violate Kimiko ("*suru. hitori de suru*").[55]

The rape of Kimiko by Ryōta is perhaps the most consequential difference between the filmic and novelistic versions of *Himatsuri*. In the film, Kimiko and Tatsuo take the boat into the sea at night to have relations while Ryōta merely serves as a lookout. The sex is consensual and there is no hint of coercion. Ryōta watches the pair with jealousy or perhaps lust, but never proceeds beyond voyeurism. Aside from reaffirming that Tatsuo has little interest in his own wife or family, the sex scene with Kimiko barely registers as significant. Kimiko, in turn, eventually quits her sister's snack bar and leaves Nigishima after borrowing money from an unscrupulous real estate broker (which the film makes clear she has no intention of repaying).

The novel, by contrast, follows a much darker trajectory after Kimiko's rape. Tatsuo's mother goes to the snack bar and demands that Kimiko cease having relations with Tatsuo. Ryōta shows up to drink as Tatsuo's mother leaves and laughs at her predicament. While drinking, Kimiko suddenly asks Ryōta if he dumped the oil in the fish pens. Flustered by her sudden inquisitiveness, Ryōta denies being the culprit, but Kimiko continues to press him. Ryōta turns the tables on her questioning by accusing Kimiko of dumping the oil and violently threatensing her further sexual violence unless she leaves Nigishima. Distraught, Kimiko leaves for nearby Shingu and largely disappears from the narrative.[56]

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[54] NKZ 8: 304

[55] Ibid. 305

[56] Ibid. 316.

Bloody Promises: Communion with The Mountain Goddess

As plot devices, the rape of Kimiko and the killing of the farm-raised fish fuel more gossip in the novel. Tatsuo becomes increasingly withdrawn from daily life after Kimiko's exit. This change in Tatsuo's persona are accompanied by a vague spectrality that begins to suffuse the narrative. The day after Kimiko's rape, Tatsuo's children begin to say that they can see ghosts (*yūrei*) around the house, foreshadowing not only the massacre at the end of the novel, but also signaling the intrusion of the supernatural into the ordered world of Nigishima.[57]

This intrusion of the uncanny links up with Tatsuo's flight into the supernatural landscape of the mountain forests where the mountain goddess dwells. Following Kimiko's departure from Nigishima, Tatsuo leaves his ancestral home and moves into the forests above the town where he erects a hut (*koya*) and begins working feverishly. During this period near the end of the novel, Nakagami suggests that Tatsuo has become linked subconsciously with the animistic energy (*kiryū*) of the mountain. While working there Tatsuo is able to sense the layers (*sō*) of the wind as they begin blowing across the mountain and shaking the treetops of the forest. Tatsuo believes this heightened elemental awareness represents the breath (*iki*) of the mountain goddess and regards the sensuous feeling of the elements as a form of "consolation" (*isha*), hinting that the mountain goddess has replaced Kimiko as the focus of Tatsuo's desire.[58]

The mountain goddess herself defies form, being gendered and anthropomorphized solely through the belief system of the townspeople of Nigishima, rather than any detailed description in the novel. Unlike the shamans and snake women of his previous narratives, who straddled the

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[57] NKZ 8: 311

[58] Ibid. 322

boundaries of human and non-human, Nakagami highlights the presence of the mountain goddess solely through elemental phenomena. While wandering in the mountain forests, Ryōta witnesses Tatsuo's communion with the mountain goddess expressed through a bricolage of elemental phenomena such as mist (*kiri*) that begins to move toward Tatsuo pushed by gale winds mixed with rain. The rain falls around Tatsuo but not directly on him and he remains untouched by the ominous weather (*ame ni nurenakatta*). Collectively, the sounds from the maelstrom are characterized as a "supernatural shriek" (*fushigi na himei*).[59]

The uncanny merging of elemental phenomena, transmogrified from natural occurrences into a supernatural encounter, provides a sort of visuality to the mountain goddess that highlights how she suffuses the mountain. This scene also hints at a sort of verbality, or a language beyond words, related to Tatsuo's understanding of the plethora of sounds produced by the elemental phenomena - something Ryōta later characterizes as a "promise" (*yakusoku*). Ryōta's literal distance from Tatsuo during this supernatural encounter (viewing the occurrence from behind him) symbolizes his limited access to the supernatural, which the text suggests only Tatsuo can fully engage with.[60]

As Tatsuo and Ryōta's time in the mountain wilderness drags on, Tatsuo becomes completely entranced with the mountain goddess, waking up in the middle of the night to wander through the darkness to the mountain streams (*keiryū*) where he strips naked and immerses himself in the water in a ritual that the text suggests is reminiscent of *misogi* purification.[61] The

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[59] NKZ 8: 323

[60] Ibid. 328

[61] Ibid.

merging of human and nature in this ritual exhibits not only the type of indigenous animism typically taken to characterize Shinto, but also exemplifies the erotic devotion of Tatsuo to the mountain goddess, who the narrative suggests has replaced Kimiko as the focus of Tatsuo's libidinal energy. Ryōta, on the other hand, is unable to follow Tatsuo in engaging in this *misogi*-like ritual, reduced instead to the role of witness and narrator who apprehends Tatsuo's promise with the goddess made during these orgiastic experiences, yet does not reveal its meaning to the reader. As such, Nakagami does not permit a synchronic interpretation of this "promise"; the vagueness of the promise can only be understood in light of Tatsuo's massacre of his family, which the narrative suggests was ordained by the mountain goddess. The absence of language or dialogic communication from the mountain goddess, however, allows Nakagami to utilize the elemental phenomena as a means of conveying the otherworldliness of the pre-textual, prehistoric space of Kumano, which he suggests is incapable of being fully domesticated by modernity. Read in light of Nakagami's taidan with Umehara, this feminine space of nature can read as the final remnant of the supernatural Jōmon landscape.

Tatsuo and Ryōta return to Nigishima after their prolonged absence in the forest close to the beginning of the annual fire festival in the neighboring town Shingu. During a family meeting with his mother and six sisters, Tatsuo denounces the "indulgent" (*jidaraku*) and "lazy" (*yaru ki ga nai*) fishermen that want to sell their property and obstinately refuses to consider selling his family's ancestral mountain or the sea beneath it. The following morning a siren blares near the fishery cooperative: oil has been dumped in the fish-farming pens again. Shortly thereafter, Nakagami reveals that Tatsuo has now joined Ryōta in sabotaging the fishermen's livelihood. Accordingly, the tension between Tatsuo and the fishermen reaches a dangerous level.

Before any resolution or future confrontation can take place, however, the novel abruptly ends with Tatsuo's massacre of his family and subsequent suicide. The gunshots and final words of Tatsuo's family are narrated emotionlessly by Ryōta in short, fragmentary prose that mimics the brevity of the gunshots. The last sentence of the novel cryptically describes Ryōta turning his head toward the echoes of the gunshots leaving the reader suspended with an indeterminate image.[62]

Conclusion

As a novel *Himatsuri* typifies a certain feature of Nakagami's later fiction: an emphasis on world-building rather than narratological coherence. In terms of closure, neither work offers a structurally sound ending. Yet, the film, which ends with Ryōta standing beside Tatsuo's hunting dogs on a cliff overlooking the sea as the sun sets, at least attempts to convey the magnitude of Tatsuo's massacre and what it holds for the future of Nigishima. The vermillion brilliance of the sun sinking beneath the horizon gradually reddens the water, revealing dead fish floating in the fuel oil from Tatsuo and Ryōta's ecological sabotage. Returning to the perspective from the cliffs, the water continues to redden, slowly filling the screen and then finally overtaking the diegesis entirely. The Chinese character *kan* ('complete') briefly flashes in red on the screen before the credits roll. As a signifier for blood, the imagery of the red washout metaphorically bathes the viewer in the gory horror of the crime. At the same time, the Red Sun (*nichirin*) is the most conspicuous symbol of the Japanese nation-state and an obvious synecdoche for the Imperial house. On a purely visual level, the film appears to suggest that Emperor Jimmu's

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[62] NKZ 8: 335

conquest of Kumano - this time in the form of capitalism and industrial development - has succeeded once again.

On the other hand, the lack of denouement in the novel necessarily leaves the reader to wallow in hypotheticals and counterfactuals about the course of events after the massacre. Whether due to anger over his dispute with Yanagimachi and Parco regarding the artistic direction of the film or simply a desire to violate Aristotelian plot structure, Nakagami leaves the textual version of *Himatsuri* an essentially incomplete work. Mats Karlsson has noted this tendency in Nakagami's later fiction (i.e. from the mid-1980s onward), commenting on the author's change in narrative style and how texts keep "flowing on and on without apparent aim or direction."[63] In contrast to the tightly woven narratives that characterize Nakagami's novels about the Shingu *buraku* such as *Misaki* and *Karekinada* or the Mandala-like cyclicality of *Sennen no Yuraku*, *Himatsuri* features a rich, Jomon-inspired variation on his Kumano world-building that prioritizes sensuous nature and mythopoetic symbolism while relegating narrativization to the margins of the text. Plot in *Himatsuri* advances solely through the gossip of the anonymous women of Nigishima and Ryōta's unstable perspective as a narrator.

Sidestepping the question of whether the novel version succeeds critically as a text, *Himatsuri* illustrates the breadth of influence that Umehara's Jōmonism had in the 1980s and its malleability as an ideology concerning Japanese identity. Although Umehara promoted Jōmonism as revealing the hidden origins of Japanese culture, Nakagami appropriated this focus on prehistory in an effort to access the pre-literate histories of the peoples who lived on the

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[63] Mats Karlsson, *The Kumano Saga of Nakagami Kenji* (Stockholm University: Department of Japanese Studies, 2001), 21.

(Japanese) archipelago before Jimmu's invasion. Moreover, the superficial heterogeneity that Jōmonism offered in its valorization of the Ainu, southern islands, and customs of the *chihō* linked up neatly with Nakagami's emphasis on depicting alterity and exploring suppressed histories and legends in his fiction. In short, Jōmonism gave Nakagami the means to study the language, identity, and culture of Kumano before it was colonized by Japan.

Given that *Himatsuri* was produced at a time when postmodernism was ascendant and Nakagami was actively collaborating with figures such as Karatani Kōjin and Jacques Derrida, Nakagami's intellectual kinship with Umehara has been poorly received by contemporary critics. In a *taidan* of leading Japanese theoreticians and critics, including Otsuka Eiji and Azuma Hiroki, Nakagami's novels in the 1980s receive high praise for problematizing normative assumptions about postwar Japanese society. Conversely, when literary critic Ichikawa Makoto brings up *Kimi wa Jōmon-jin ka, Yayoi-jin ka* and Nakagami's collaborations with Umehara, the conversation abruptly ends on an awkward note as the participants refuse to engage with *taidan*.[64]

And yet, among Nakagami's novels and short stories, *Himatsuri* stands out for its emphasis on depicting imperialism as a recurrent event that continually threatens to subjugate resistant subjects and incorporate them into the umbra of the Japanese nation. Perhaps equally as important, Nakagami grasps toward a nascent environmentalism in the novelization. This environmentalism is not recuperative, however, but rather reflects a parochial form of spirituality rooted in the landscape of Kumano. Although ecological violence and the threat of capitalist development eviscerating a rural community are inextricable elements of the narrative, they are

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[64] Azuma Hiroki ed. *Gendai Nihon no Hihyō 1975-2000* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2017), 64.

juxtaposed with an equally brutal form of primordial nature anthropomorphized by the mountain goddess. Although the supernatural forest and seas around Nigishima represent the antithesis of modernity, however, this conception of nature is neither utopian nor even remotely benevolent. Rather, as the characters of Tatsuo and the other *yama-shigoto* workers exemplify, nature in *Himatsuri* reflects a primitive ethos of violence and insularity reminiscent of the sort of culture that Nakagami believed characterized the hunter-gatherer Jōmon period before the foundation of Japan.

Epilogue
The Jōmon Boom

The Jōmon period continues to be transformed and reshaped according to modern sensibilities and anxieties in contemporary Japan. Since the 1990s, there has been a surge in interest among the Japanese public concerning Jōmon culture that has resulted in increased tourism to Jōmon excavation sites, the further integration of prehistory into the broader national history of Japan, and the appearance of Jōmon-esque elements in popular culture. This populuar embrace of the Jōmon period is often referred to as the "Jōmon Boom" or sometimes the "Jōmon Renaissance."[1] Public enthusiasm for prehistory represents a departure from the earlier discourse about the Jōmon period outside of archaeology, which was often elitist in nature and dominated by artists and intellectuals.

Tracing the permutations of Jōmon as Japan, or what Mark Hudson has called the "Japanization" of prehistory, across the postwar has involved closely tracking developments in Japanese culture and society since the end of American occupation. In the wake of defeat, Okamoto Tarō embraced the Jōmon period as a source of indigenous Japanese identity unbeholden to either the prewar Emperor system or postwar Pax Americana. Okamoto's archipelagic thinking attempted to retain the trappings of national identity by stressing alterity and the celebrating provincial culture without lapsing into a more chauvinistic posture. The dangers of Jōmonizing the rural hinterlands of Japan were made evident by Umehara Takeshi and the so-called New Kyoto School who used the Ainu and Okinawans as props to create a new form of nationalism for Japan's later high-growth era when self-confidence reached its zenith.

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[1] Yoshiaki Furuya, *Jōmon Runesansu*: *Gendai shakai ga hakken suru atarashii jōmon* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2019).

Nakagami Kenji, on the other hand, wove Umehara's Jōmonism together with poststructuralist ambivalence about grand narratives and ecological anxiety into his fiction and screenplay to critique imperial histories, exemplifying that the Jōmon period could either support or *oppose* the idea that prehistory was part of Japan's national history. In this sense, Nakagami foreshadowed the trend of not only linking the Jōmon period with environmental concerns, but also unmooring it from strict connotations of "Japanese tradition" and treating it as a shifting signifier adaptable to changes in public attitude.

If war memory and the imperative to create a new nationalism fueled the discourse around "Jōmon as Japan" from the 1950s through the 1980s, since the 1990s mounting concern over environmental and social problems has led thinkers and activists to reach back to Neolithic times in search of an ecologically harmonious era that could help the modern Japanese overcome the ills of industrial civilization. The Jōmon Boom coincides with a growing sense of precarity in modern Japan that has begun to fundamentally reshape assumptions about Japan's future as a nation-state. Sociologist Yoshimi Shunya argues that Japan has been subject to recurrent "shocks" from the end of the Showa period onward. The bursting of the asset price bubble in 1991, the Aum Shinrikyo sarin nerve gas attacks and the Great Hanshin Earthquake both in 1995 -- and especially the 3/11 Triple Disasters consisting of an earthquake, tsunami, and subsequent nuclear reactor meltdown in Fukushima prefecture -- have all contributed to a sense of disillusionment with Japan's trajectory.[2]

This epilogue explores the contours of the ongoing Jōmon Boom by focusing on the Hayao Miyazaki's masterpiece *Mononoke Hime* (Princess Mononoke, 1997), an animated film

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[2] Yoshimi Shunya, *Heisei Jidai* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 2019), 21-8.

that subtly bears the hallmarks of various postwar theories about Jōmon culture, such as Umehara's Jōmonism and the Evergreen Forest Cultural Theory, as well as more recent ecocritical thought that intersects with Japan's ongoing soul searching about the course of the nation. The Jōmon Boom is, of course, a much larger phenomenon than Miyazaki's film work, and I do not claim to provide a comprehensive treatment. Rather, by concluding with an analysis of these divergent trends, I aim to exemplify the malleability of the Jōmon period as a shifting signifier.

Sacralizing the Jōmon Forest

Chapter 4 argued that Nakagami Kenji represented residual forms of Jōmon nature and religion in *Himatsuri*. The image of Jōmon nature in Nakagami's fiction was dark and inhospitable; although opposed to modernity, the steep forests where the mountain goddess dwells did not offer any recourse to the twin perils of imperialism or nuclear energy that threatened the sensuous landscape that Tatsuo could communicate with. By contrast, from the 1990s onward, the Jōmon period has increasingly been imbued with romantic notions of ecological harmony and recast as a utopia where human and nature co-existed in complete equilibrium.

Following Ian Buruma's criticism of Jōmonism in the late 1980s, Umehara began to retool his ideology to emphasize the ecological aspects of the Jōmon period much more heavily. As we have seen, attempts to link the Jōmon period to innate features of Japanese nature were not unprecedented. For Okamoto, artifacts such as *doki* evoked dense forests and craggy mountains, rather than the coast or the open seas. For Ueyama, influenced by Nakao Sasuke, the broadleaf evergreen forest was the font of Jōmon culture that accommodated both hunting and

gathering and indigenous forms of low-level cultivation. In mainstream archaeology and anthropology, too, there was "affluent foragers" thesis of Jōmon hunter-gatherers which posited that rich resources of fish and tree nuts enabled the Jōmon people to meet their subsistence needs with relative ease.[3]

Unsurprisingly, Umehara's 'eco-Jōmonism' largely eschewed hard science, as well as concrete discussions of how contemporary Japan might look back to the Jōmon period for remedies to modern environmental problems. In lieu of offering solutions, Umehara relied on the tired trope of Western civilization's conquest of nature versus Japan's supposedly spiritual and ecologically friendly civilization rooted in the Jōmon period. In the 1990s, rather than use the relying on the Ainu as sole evidence of Japan's living Jōmon culture, however, Umehara increasingly stressed the role of the Japanese forest (*mori*) in preserving continuity from prehistory to the present. In 1991, he published his first eco-Jōmonist tract *Mori no Bunmei* (The Civilization of the Forest) outlining his views on how the Jōmon period was characterized by "co-existence" (*kyōzon*) or symbiosis between humans, animals, and plants.[4] This state of symbiosis was reflected in Jōmon religion which worshiped nature, particularly the forest, as an animistic force that humans lived side by side with.

Nature worship in the Jōmon period comprised the original form of Shinto in Umehara's view. Despite being warped by the *kokugaku* scholars and appropriated by the imperial court, the

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[3] See the conference proceedings of *Affluent Foragers: Pacific Coasts East and West*, Shuzo Koyama and David Hurst Thomas, eds. (Osaka: The National Museum of Ethnology, 1982).

[4] *Mori no Bunmei*, like many of Umehara's publications, is a sprawling work compiled for several different presentations that also touches on subjects only tangentially connected to the romanticization of the forest. For the relevant sections see *Umehara Takeshi Chosakushū: Jinruigaku no sōzō* Vol.17 (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 2001), 156-215. Note that this chosakushū is different than the one published by Shūeisha in the early 1980s.

true essence of prehistoric Shinto remained latent in the spiritual practices and shrine architecture of modern Shinto. This sacralization of the imagined Jōmon forest as an enduring site of Japanese religious and aesthetic sensibility is a major aspect of what has been variously termed "ethnic environmentalism" and Japanese "reactionary ecology."[5] Ethnic environmentalism and reactionary ecology are both rooted in the idea the Japanese culture holds a special reverence for nature, a notion that Nakagami gleefully mocked in *Himatsuri*. Although this strand of thinking has a long tradition in modern Japan, I prefer to use the term 'eco-Jōmonism' to differentiate Umehara's ecological thought from other attempts to link Japan with the natural world such as Watsuji Tetsuro's writings on climate and culture. Eco-Jōmonism shares much in common with Umehara's earlier Jōmonism, although the rhetoric about Japanese identity came to feature a much greater emphasis on the forest and "civilization" (*bunmei*) rather than the Ainu and "culture" (*bunka*). These ideas about the centrality of the forest and Japan possessing a distinct civilization were already introduced to Umehara through his associations with Ueyama Shunpei and Umesao Tadao in the late 1960s. Umehara's valorization of the Jōmon forest should not be taken as sign that he accepted the Evergreen Forest Cultural Theory, though. In fact, Umehara believed that Nakao and Ueyama overemphasized the importance of western Japan and neglected the importance of Tōhoku (and the Ainu) in preserving Jōmon culture.[6]

The conflation of the Jōmon period and environmental harmony has become a major aspect of Umehara's legacy in contemporary Japanese intellectual history, with a new generation

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[5] On ethnic environmentalism see Marran, *Ecology Without Culture*, 14-5. On reactionary ecology see Richard Reita, "Ecology and Japanese History: Reactionary Environmentalism's Troubled Relationship with the Past," Asia-Pacific Journal Vol. 15:3, no.2 (February 2017), 1-18.

[6] Miyazaki Hayao, *Turning Points: 1997-2008*, trans. Beth Cary and Frederik L. Schott (San Francisco: Viz Media, 2008), 100-01.

of scholars continuing to popularize eco-Jōmonism among the Japanese public in the twenty-first century. Most prominent among these scholars is archaeologist Yasuda Yoshinori, who has published extensively on the importance of the forest in shaping Japanese history. Originally a geographer by training, Yasuda was hired by Umehara to join the staff at Nichibunken in 1988. The two would go on to co-author several works on the Jōmon period and comparative civilization together in the 1990s.[7] Like Fujimura Hisakazu, whose knowledge of Ainu studies and access to Ainu communities in Hokkaido helped Umehara shape Jōmonism in the 1980s, Yasuda offered Umehara a disciplinary toolkit that was otherwise unavailable to the philosopher. In this case, it was archaeology, specifically environmental archaeology (*kankyō kōkogaku*), which bolstered the supposedly scientific pedigree of Jōmonism and linked up neatly with Umehara's new focus on environmental concerns.

While Umehara and Yasuda's sacralization of the Jōmon forest and arguments that Japan was at heart a "forest civilization" have been subject to withering criticism, the popularity of eco-Jōmonism in contemporary Japan should not be underestimated.[8] Indeed, many of the same ideas put forward by Umehara and Yasuda have been received warmly both in Japan and internationally when represented through visual media. The filmography of Miyazaki Hayao, perhaps the most famous living Japanese director, bears the hallmarks of eco-Jōmonism in his animation, an influence that often competes for analytical recognition amidst the intertextual references to literature, Eastern spirituality, and "Western" religions such as Christianity.

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[7] Mark J. Hudson, "Global environmental justice and the natural environment in Japanese archaeology," in *Multidisciplinary Studies of the Environment and Civilization*, Yoshinori Yasuda and Mark K. Hudson eds. (London: Routledge, 2018), 169-70.

[8] Mark J. Hudson, "Global environmental justice and the natural environment in Japanese archaeology," 171.

Jōmon in Popular Culture

Throughout this dissertation, we have seen the Jōmon period construed as a sort of transhistorical, transtemporal force connecting modernity to prehistory. Accordingly, when the Jōmon period has been featured in literature and film (such as *Himatsuri*), it has often taken a transmutable and amorphous form. But what of representations of the *actual* Jōmon period (i.e. set in Neolithic times) in literature, film, and other forms of media? Outside of educational materials, such as documentary films or textbooks aimed at schoolchildren, depictions of the Jōmon period itself in literature and media are exceedingly rare. Whereas the Edo and Sengoku periods have been the backdrop for countless *jidai-geki* (period piece) films, historical novels, and *manga*, the Jōmon and Yayoi periods (as well as other proto-historical periods such as the Kofun) have remained largely unexplored in fiction or mass media.

Mizuki Shigeru provides one of the few representations of Jōmon life actually set in prehistoric times. Mizuki's manga *Jōmon Jidai Shōnen Yogi* (The Jōmon Boy Yogi, 1976) [hereafter *Yogi*], set at an indeterminate point in the Jōmon period, follows the many mishaps and tribulations of Yogi, a teenage boy who ekes out an existence with his village while trying to survive in the brutal state of prehistoric nature.[9] The manga opens with winter setting in as food supplies dwindle for Yogi and his village, setting the stage for the numerous obstacles and near-death experiences that the young protagonist faces. Whether escaping from cannibals, outrunning man-eating giant rats, or simply braving the elements, Mizuki consistently emphasizes the harsh living conditions that characterized the Jōmon period. Far from the image of the Jōmon people as "affluent foragers" or the virginal, radiant image of Japanese nature associated with ethnic

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[9] Mizuki Shigeru, *Jōmon Jidai Shōnen Yogi* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1992). First serialized in 1976.

environmental discourse, Mizuki's representation features an inhospitable state of nature, often highlighted in panels featuring the prehistoric landscape in semi-realistic *gekiga* style with liberal amounts of *sumi* ink, where death (often in gruesome fashion) waits around every corner.

Most importantly, though, Mizuki's imaging of the Jōmon period is almost completely unconnected with any notion of Japan or Japanese culture. Aside from extra-diegetic panels at the beginning and end of the manga describing how the struggles of Yogi and his people form a "thread" from "our ancestors" to the present, the Jōmon period remains dark and distant, rather than fecund and living in the Japanese landscape. The use of the word "ancestors" could be read as a veiled attempt to connect the Jōmon period to the present, and yet nowhere in the manga does Mizuki suggest that the Jōmon period was in any way influential on later Japanese culture. Rather, the manga is a dark and often fantastical rendering of the Stone Age, replete with gallows humor, that makes no attempt to 'Japanize' prehistory. Miyazaki does feature creatures closely resembling *yokai* in *Yogi*; however, I would argue that such characters reflect Mizuki's well-known fondness for the uncanny and fantastical rather than any allusion to Japanese tradition. Similarly, although the word *kami* (god or spirit) appears in the *manga*, Jōmon spirituality in *Yogi* remains fuzzy and ill-defined; there is seemingly no connection with Shinto or any other type of Japanese religious practices.

Mizuki's portrayal of the Jōmon period as dark and unconnected to later forms of Japanese culture contrasts sharply with Miyazaki Hayao's vision of the Jōmon period as the foundation for an alternative vision of Japan. Specifically, I argue that Miyazaki emplots the postwar genealogy of the Jōmon period as a transhistorical force into his animation in keeping with a vision of Japan that emphasizes environmental stewardship and maintains the postwar

consensus on Japan's constitutionally-enshrined pacifism. By tracing the valences of Jōmonist influence in Miyazaki's 1997 blockbuster *Princess Mononoke* (Mononoke Hime), this epilogue will exemplify how 'Japanized' prehistory remains a valuable apparatus for constructing meta-narratives of Japanese identity and culture in contemporary times.

Aside from perhaps Kurosawa Akira, Miyazaki remains Japan's best-known director across the globe and is commonly regarded as auteur representing a uniquely Japanese sensibility toward nature, spirituality, and human relations in his oeuvre. Miyazaki was born in January 1941 when Imperial Japan was near the apex of its power. From this initial position of military strength, the country quickly descended into the "dark valley" of total war as it simultaneously battled the Allied Forces in the Pacific and Chinese resistance on the Asian continent. The first years of Miyazaki's life were thus marked by the omnipresent threat of American air raids, ultimately culminating in Japan's defeat after the atomic bombings. Given his wartime experiences as a child, Miyazaki, like other figures in this dissertation, developed a strong adversity to war and militarism.[10]

Accordingly, many of Miyazaki's films feature a strong anti-war message that often extends to a critique of humanity's propensity for destroying itself and the natural world out of hubris and lust for power. In some films, such as *The Wind Rises* (Kaze tachinu, 2013) and *The Boy and the Heron* (Kimitachi ha dō ikiru ka, 2023), the war depicted or alluded to is quite literally the violence of the Asia-Pacific War that Miyazaki that raged during the first years of Miyazaki's life. More often than not, though, war in Miyazaki's work is deeply allegorical and only connected to Japan's experiences through authorial association or paratextual sources.

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[10] Susan Napier offers an account of Miyazaki's upbringing and his commitment to pacifism in her *Miyazakiworld: A Life in Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 1-15.

Nausicaa Valley of the Wind (Kaze no tani Nausicaa, 1984), based off an earlier manga series by Miyazaki, for example, feature a post-apocalyptic landscape where, following the collapse of industrial civilization, the human world lives under the constant threat of the ever-expanding Sea of Decay (*Fukai* lit. "rotten sea") where giant insectoid creatures known as Ohm dwell. Nausicaa, the film's protagonist and princess of the titular Valley, attempts to promote peace and harmony between the precarious human world and that of Ohm throughout the film. Her efforts are stymied by the militaristic Tolmekia Kingdom which seeks to annihilate the Ohm through an ancient mecha-like weapon known as Giant Warriors. The final battle in the film features Nausicaa's death and resurrection by the Ohm as she attempts to stop the Tolmekians from using a Giant Warrior to destroy the Ohm. The ending of the film promotes an unambiguous message of co-existence between humanity and nature, one that also stresses reason over force and portrays weapons of mass destruction as ineffective for resolving conflict.

Although not set in Japan, the allegorical messages present in *Nausicaa* clearly relate to issues pertinent to the modern nation-state including the folly of war, the potential for eco-catastrophe due to pollution and climate change, and the perils of using nuclear energy. Thus, *Nausicaa* exemplifies what Thomas Lamarre has called "*the multiplication of frames of references*" in anime, a convergence of historical, ideological, and religious references that overlap to create a narrative structure unbeholden to a particular frame of reference demarcated by culture or nation.[11] In other words, Miyazaki's animation is not dominated by a metanarrative of Japanese culture, instead elements of Japanese culture are part of a larger assemblage of global influences that only subtly gesture back to their origin.

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[11] Thomas LaMarre, *The Anime Machine: A Media Theory of Animation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 155-165. Quote in original italics appears on p. 164.

This multiplication of frames of reference, I argue, is precisely the way that Miyazaki embodies the Jōmon period in several of his animated films: through suggestion, inference, and genealogical connections that cause the viewer to contemplate the origins of the diegesis and narrative. Nowhere in Miyazaki's oeuvre does he provide an actual representation of the Jōmon period, as Mizuki Shigeru does in *Yogi*. Rather, through close analysis of the intersecting references, both textual and para-textual, it is possible to tease out how the Jōmon period has shaped Miyazaki's world-building.

A visual clue to Miyazaki's long-standing interest in the Jōmon period can be seen in his animated children's film *My Neighbor Totoro* (Tonari no totoro, 1988). Set in the 1950s, *My Neighbor Totoro* features the gentle adventures of Satsuki Kusakabe and her younger sister Mei as they move into a rural estate with their archaeologist father Tatsuo while their mother recuperates from an unspecified illness. Much of the film focuses on Satsuki and Mei's interactions with the spirits of the surrounding woods, including a large raccoon-like creature known as Totoro who lives in the hollow trunk of the giant camphor tree in their backyard. Much like the spatial conception of the Jōmon period remaining latent in Japan's peripheries that we have seen across the postwar, the only direct reference to the Jōmon period appears in the literal background of the film. As Tatsuo works in his study while Mei and Satsuki play outside, pictures of what appear to be Middle or Late Jōmon ceramics are visible behind Tatsuo on the wall. The pictures appear inconsequential within the overall mise-en-scene. Indeed, the scene changes quickly to reveal books on Tatsuo's desk labeled "*Kofun*" and "*Asuka*," two periods postdating Jōmon, one proto-historical and the other firmly in the realm of written history, that suggest Tatsuo's research speciality lies elsewhere.

And yet, the fleeting, seemingly marginal image of the Jōmon ceramics in Tatsuo's office belies the more substantial influence of the Jōmon period on *My Neighbor* Totoro. Totoro and the spirits that Mei and Satsuki interact with represent Miyazaki's belief in conveying "animism" or the belief that all features of the natural world (animals, plants, minerals, etc.) are imbued with a living energy. As Eriko Ogihara-Schuck argues, the boundaries of Miyazaki's animism can be quite blurry. Miyazaki himself has taken pains to separate animism from State Shinto and any connotation of imperialism.[12] That said, at first glance, the playful animism in *My Neighbor Totoro* appears to be clearly coded as Shinto. The giant camphor tree where Totoro lives is wrapped with a *shimenawa* or a hemp rope used in Shinto to indicates a sacred place.[13] Importantly, though, the camphor tree is not itself a shrine. As we saw in *Himatsuri* with Nakagami's polarization between the wild forests of the mountain goddess and the more domesticated littoral waters containing the town *torii* gate, distance from civilization often connotes a greater connection to unmediated spirituality where the supernatural remains wild and undomesticated.

As a sort of gateway to the supernatural world, then, the camphor tree itself functions as a spiritual locus in its own right, rather than by connection to a superficial form of national Shinto. Evidence for this position can be seen in a 1988 interview with Miyazaki conducted shortly after the release of *My Neighbor Totoro* where he dismisses Shinto shrines as "gaudy" and claims that "it seems much more likely to me that the gods of the Japanese are deep in the mountains and

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[12] Eriko Ogihara-Schuck, *Miyazaki's Animism Abroad: The Reception of Japanese Religious Themes by American and German Audiences* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company Inc., 2014),

[13] Helen Hardacre, *Shinto: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 417. In addition to providing a brief definition of *shimenawa*, Hardacre also touches on how informal places of worship (such as trees) were stamped out during shrine mergers undertaken in the Meiji period.

far-off valleys."[14] In the same interview, Miyazaki also claims this worship of the forests, mountains, and other far-flung locations reflects "an animistic primitive religion," the likes of which continue to exist in Okinawa where trees and rocks are worshipped as sacred.[15] Although Miyazaki does not explicitly call this form of spirituality "Jōmon religion," he is clearly connecting the animism he sought to portray in *My Neighbor Totoro* to the Jōmon period.

For Miyazaki, the dense forests of the Japanese archipelago were the foundation of Japanese culture, an idea he took from the Evergreen Forest Cultural Theory that we first explored in Chapter Three. Miyazaki correctly credits botanist Nakao Sasuke with coining with the term and first formulating the broad outlines of theory.[16] The Evergreen Forest Cultural Theory was subject to several rounds of debate throughout the late 1960s and 1970s, however, where other intellectuals such as Ueyama Shunpei attempted to link broadleaf evergreen forests to the development of Jōmon culture and its indigenous forms of cultivation.

The supposed ties between the primordial forests of laurel and oak and Jōmon culture were immensely appealing to Miyazaki as it offered a deep connection to Japanese culture rooted in neither nationalism nor hegemonic notions of Japanese tradition. Moreover, the geographic spread of the evergreen forest zone across Asia endowed Japan with an eco-cultural connection to countries such as China and Bhutan. Thus, rather than isolationism or militarism, the vast forests connoted a sort of pan-Asian form of prehistory that had once linked Japan to the continent. Much like the other figures in this dissertation, then, Miyazaki found in the Jōmon

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[14] Miyazaki Hayao, *Starting Point: 1979-1996* trans. Beth Cary and Frederik L. Schott (San Francisco: Viz Media, 1996), 360.

[15] Ibid., 359.

[16] Ibid., 357

period an imaginative palimpsest, only lightly etched with markings about nature and primitive religion, on which he could sketch out an alternative vision of Japan. Rather merely engaging in a *taidan* or writing a travelogue, though, Miyazaki quite literally transposed what he imagined to be the sensuousness and viridescence of the Jōmon forest into his animation.

To return briefly to LaMarre's idea of overlapping frames of reference in anime, we can identify two specific 'frames' or ideological references to the Jōmon period in the composition and narrative of *My Neighbor Totoro*. First, and most direct, are the brief references to the Jōmon period in Tatsuo's study where he engages with archaeological scholarship. This enclosed space signifies the empirico-scientific approach to the Jōmon period, the standard in archaeology and related nature sciences, wherein prehistory is firmly confined to the past and taken as a remnant of a world far removed from the present. Conversely, we can also grasp the Jōmon period obliquely as a living force that suffuses the diegesis of the film in the form of the animistic spirits, including Totoro, and the giant camphor tree that serves a living font of Jōmon spirituality. These frames of reference seem diametrically opposed to one another, yet they do overlap. As Susan Napier notes, Tatsuo invokes the Jōmon period when he tells Mei and Satsuki that "Long ago, people and trees were friends."[17] This contrast between an interiorized, scientific approach to prehistory and a closeness to sensuous nature, unchanged since time immemorial, can be extrapolated to a broader conflict between anthropocentric science, often taking the form of technological advancement, and uninhibited, spiritual nature that characterizes many of Miyazaki's films from *My Neighbor Totoro* to *Nausicaa* to *Princess Mononoke*.

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[17] Napier, *Miyazakiworld*, 104.

Whereas the tension between science and nature in *My Neighbor Totoro* largely remains in the background of the film's idyllic narrative of childhood discovery, *Princess Mononoke*, Miyazaki's other film influenced by Jōmon period culture and aesthetics, features a much darker and more violent confrontation between science and technology, as the harbingers of modernity, and nature, vividly represented in the form of the primordial forest stretching back to prehistory. The images of nature in *Princess Mononoke* — and especially the scenes set in the forest at the heart of the film's conflict — are heavily influenced by the Evergreen Forest Cultural Theory, as previous critics have noted.[18] At the same time, however, *Princess Mononoke* also represents an engagement with Umehara's Jōmonism, an ideological frame that overlaps significantly the Evergreen Forest Cultural Theory.

Miyazaki's engagement with Umehara's Jōmonism is less immediately apparent than his long fascination with the Evergreen Forest Cultural Theory, which he cites numerous times in his interviews and *taidan*. While Miyazaki and Umehara were probably aware of each other's work in the 1980s, their paths did not significantly intersect until 1989 when Umehara contacted Miyazaki to request that the director adapt his play on the ancient Mesopotamian tale of *Gilgamesh*. Although there was not space to explore this aspect of Umehara's career in Chapter Three, Umehara was also well-known in Japan as a playwright focusing on "super" (*supā*) productions of traditional performing arts such as *kabuki* and *kyōgen* that featured extravagant sets and pre-recorded musical scores.[19] Originally, the famed animator Osamu Tezaku was set to

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[18] See, for example, Nomura Kōichiro's exhaustive discussion in *Miyazaki Hayao no chihei: Hiroba no gotoku, shōyō jūrin, animizumu* (Kyoto: L'Espirit Nouveau, 2010), 116-200.

[19] For a summary of Umehara's theatrical career see Eric Rath,"Godzilla Meets Super Kyōgen, or How a Dinosaur Saved the World" in *Godzilla's Footsteps: Japanese Pop Culture Icons on the Global Stage* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 139-152.

direct Umehara's play, however, the death of Osamu in 1989 led Umehara to reach out to Miyazaki as a replacement. The similarities between between *Gilgamesh* and *Princess Mononoke*, with both works focused on killing the forest god, was a minor point of friction between Umehara and Miyazaki, but did not lead to a serious break between the two. In a *taidan* between Umehara, Miyazaki, historian Amino Yoshihiko, and Buddhist priest Seiryū Kōsaka, following the film's release, Miyazaki admitted that he had probably incorporated aspects of Umehara's thought into his work, while also claiming that he did so unconsciously.[20]

Princess Mononoke was released in 1997 to critical acclaim in Japan, becoming for a time the highest grossing Japanese movie ever. The epic scope of the film, coupled with its morally ambiguous messages about humanity's relationship with the natural world, also helped establish anime as an accepted form of 'high art' among Japanese academics and literati.[21] The film is set in fourteenth-century Japan or the Muromachi period (1336-1573), which saw the continued decline of the shogunate's central authority and the rise of provincial warlords who vied for influence.[22]

The story focuses on the adventures of Ashitaka, the son of an Emishi ruler in northern Japan, who is forced to leave his homeland and journey to the west (toward Kantō) in search of a cure for the deadly curse that has afflicted him. At the start of the film, Ashitaka saves his village from being destroyed by a boar god, Nago, which has been shot by a blunderbuss. The iron ball projectile has infected the boar turning it into a demonic entity covered in tentacles that leech a

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[20] Miyazaki, *Turning Points*, 97.

[21] Shiro Yoshioka, "Princess Mononoke: A Game Changer" in *Princess Mononoke: Understanding Studio Ghibli's Monster Princess*, edited by Rayna Denison (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 26.

[22] Brett Walker, *A Concise History of Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 20150, 67-70.

toxic sludge. Ashitaka's curse endows him with superhuman strength, but also portends his eventual death as the brand (or infection) from the boar god's tentacles spreads throughout his body. In search of a cure, Ashitaka travels "West" (toward central Honshū) where he arrives at Tatara, an ironworking town run by the shrewd Lady Eboshi who seeks to conquer the woods of the *Shishigami* (often referred to in English as the "Deer God"), a primordial deity whose presence enchants the forest. Opposing Eboshi are the animals of the forest, including the wolf goddess Moro whose adopted human daughter San, the 'princess' of the story who repeatedly attempts to kill her.

Despite being set in the Muromachi period, *Princess Mononoke* is not a straight-forward *jidaigeki* (period piece), but rather reflects a detemporalized vision of Japan where medieval samurai, Emishi warriors, and animistic spirits cohabitate in an increasingly precarious state of existence. As anthropologist Komatsu Kazuhiko notes, stock characters from the medieval period that commonly populate *jidaigeki*, including peasants, samurai, the shogun, and the Emperor, appear only in the "background" (*enkei*) or more accurately factor into the film through allusion and extrapolation.[23] Brief scenes of rogue samurai preying on agricultural villagers exemplify the fragmentation of power during the Muromachi period and possibly allude to the numerous battles fought between competing *daimyō*. Similarly, the proliferation of rudimentary armaments such as muskets and cannons, weapons central to the film's conflict between technology and nature, hint at the presence of Europeans in Japan conducting trade and influencing the course of history off-screen.

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[23] Komatsu Kazuhiko, "Mori no kamikoroshi to sono noroi," *Eureka* 29, no. 11 (August 1997), 52.

These nods to the *jidaigeki* genre are overshadowed, I argue, by the incorporation of elements from the Evergreen Forest Cultural Theory and Umehara's Jōmonism, which portray multiples layers (or 'strata') of history existing together in tension. The opening title card after the credits establishes the sylvan heritage of Japan with a stark message that "Long ago, this land was covered in dense forests where gods lived from ancient times" (*mukashi, kono kuni ha fukai mori ni ooware, soko ni ha taiko kara no kamigami ga sundeita*). This title card quickly transitions into an establishing shot that shows the ancient forests being transgressed by the cursed boar god covered in tar-like tentacles. The diegetic transition from the title card to the establishing shot of the forest creates a narrative of continuity from ancient times to the medieval period on the cusp of hurtling toward modernity. Ashitaka and the Emishi people are thus introduced as characters uniquely attuned to the rhythms and balance of the primordial forest, as they immediately detect the coming of the cursed boar god given the absence of bird cries or the presence of wildlife (*kemono* lit. 'beasts').

Although quite easy to miss given the chaotic opening to the film with Ashitaka's slaying of the boar god, the nameless Emishi village and the characters that inhabit it are represented by Miyazaki as embodying Jōmon culture. Eija Niskanen argues that the watchtower where Ashitaka and his compatriot Jiji are first attacked by the boar god was modeled off the famed reconstruction of a Jōmon watchtower featured at the Sannai Maruyama site.[24] Aside from the wooden frame, the resemblance of the Emishi watchtower to the Sannai Maruyama reconstruction is superficial at best. Miyazaki did indeed visit the Sannai Maruyama site as part of his location scouting, though, and the brief scenes of Ashitaka's village contain houses

[24] Eija Niskanen, "Deer Gods, Nativism, and History: Mythical and Archaeological Layers in Princess Mononoke," in *Princess Mononoke: Understanding Studio Ghibli's Monster Princess*, p. 44-5.

strongly reminiscent of Jōmon pit houses with straw-thatched roofs. Interspersed within the pit houses are raised storage houses and a central longhouse, both architectural features found at Sannai Maruyama and other Jōmon sites, that help accentuate the cultural continuity between the Jōmon and the medieval Emishi.

The Jōmonist symbolism that Miyazaki seeks to evoke with the Emishi becomes much more apparent in the scene following the boar god's death where Ashitaka and the village men consult with the seer Hi-sama on how to lift the curse. The room where Hi-sama augurs Ashitaka's fate through reading deer antlers and precious stones is decorated with cord-marked ceramics containing wild asymmetrical patterns. These pots and vessels are not merely evocative of Jōmon design, they are clearly meant to represent *doki*. Much as Okamoto collapsed the Jōmon period into the medieval Emishi and the early modern Ainu in his travel narratives, Miyazaki's animation engages multiple temporalities to make the Jōmon period a transtemporal current. The dialogue of the Emishi men mourning Ashitaka's exile from the village exemplify this warp and weft of temporalities as they lament that despite the fact that the Emperor (*Yamato no ō*) has lost power and the Shogun has been "defanged" (*Shōgun domo no kiba mo oreta*) their Emishi tribe continues to suffer. These clear allusions to the breakdown of authority in the Muromachi period have no historical connection with the Emishi, however, who were subjugated and well-integrated into the Japanese polity by the fourteenth-century.[25]

The opening scenes of Ashitaka's village establish him as a character embodying Jōmon culture through his close connection with nature and the rich prehistoric designs that Miyazaki employs as background symbolism. The Jōmonist influence on *Princess Mononoke* is not merely

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[25] Mimi Hall Yiengpruksawan, *Hiraizumi*, 25-7.

confined to the opening, but rather than extends throughout the film through the representation of the primordial forest where the major conflict between Eboshi and Tatara and the ancient gods of the forest occurs. As Ashitaka journeys to western Japan, he encounters San and Moro following their first attack on Lady Eboshi and her convoy of soldiers from Tatara. Ashitaka rescues two wounded soldiers from Tatara and begins traveling through the shishigami's forest to return them to town, inadvertently embroiling himself in the conflict between Lady Eboshi and the gods of the forest.

The forest of the shishigami is home to not only animals such as wolves, boars, and monkeys, but also *kodama*, small sprite-like creatures that guide Ashitaka through the forest to a verdant pool where the shishigami resides. *Kodama* are tree spirits in the Shinto pantheon and like the *shimenawa* wrapped around the camphor tree in *My Neighbor Totoro* seemingly provide a semiotic link between Shinto and Miyazaki's diegesis. As discussed previously, however, Shinto for Miyazaki was not based around shrines or the myths of the *Kojiki*, but rather reflected animistic spirituality from the Jōmon period. The glossy leaves of the trees and shrubs in the shishigami's forest suggest that Miyazaki was attempting to visually represent what he imagined was a broadleaf evergreen forest dating back to prehistoric Japan. Indeed, the art book for Princess Mononoke featuring Miyazaki's preliminary sketches and cel art for the film describes the forest as an "evergreen forest" (*shōyō jūrin*).[26]

Ashitaka immediately recognizes the *kodama* and engages in friendly banter with them, suggesting that he and the Emishi people are familiar with them from their home forests. As he

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[26] *The Art of The Princess Mononoke* (Tokyo: Tokuman Shoten, 1997), 54. The designation of the forest as "evergreen" only appears in the Japanese version of this Studio Ghibli art book. The English version simply refers to it as a "forest."

crosses through the forest he also immediately recognizes the "mother" (*hahaoyaka*) tree of the *kodama*, praising it as a "magnificent tree" (*rippa na ki*). Conversely, Kōroku, one of the men from Tatara rescued by Ashitaka, is terrified by the sight of the *kodama* and begs Ashitaka not to venture into the interior of the forest. Similarly, upon arriving at the verdant pool of the shishigami, Kōroku expresses not reverence, but merely fear and warns Ashitaka that they have arrived at "entrance to the other world" (*ano yo no iriguchi da).*

These scenes of Ashitaka traveling through the Jōmon evergreen forest establish the basic dichotomy that fuels the conflict of the film: reverence and understanding toward nature versus fear and the desire to dominate or destroy nature. The inhabitants of Tatara view the forest as a threat that must tamed in order to secure their livelihood. Nature has not been disenchanted for the townspeople, but it has become something that must be domesticated rather than revered or protected. Despite Ashitaka's closeness to nature as an Emishi, he is still initially treated as an outsider by San and the wolf pack who merely see him as a human intruding into the primordial woods. As a character, San is inscribed with both "wildness and primitive sexuality" in the words Susan Napier.[27] Clad in furs, adorned with jewelry made of precious stones, and armed with a stone knife, San reflects a primordial subject wholly untamed by the force of civilization. Even more so than perhaps the Emishi then, San evokes the prelapsarian state of the Jōmon period before the arrival of the Yamato conquerors when humans, animals, and gods lived harmoniously together in the evergreen forests that once covered the land.

And yet, Lady Eboshi and the people of Tatara are not archetypal representations of the Yamato people, such as *samurai* or imperial courtiers, but rather a community of outcastes that,

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[27] Susan Napier, "Confronting Master Narratives: History as Vision in Miyazaki Hayao's Cinema of De-assurance," *positions* 9:2 (Fall 2001), 481.

like the Emishi and San's wolf pack, live on the margins of the Japanese cultural sphere. Tatara appears as a proto-industrial town in the film where women control the means of production and lepers, normally confined to segregated colonies, assist with making the firearms that will be used to conquer the forest. Thus, rather than being coded as a villain, Lady Eboshi appears primarily as a benevolent figure working to protect the autonomy and self-sufficiency of her community.

The supposedly just ambitions of Lady Eboshi to slay the shishigami in the name of self-preservation are complicated by her collaborations with Jikō-bo, a mysterious monk that Ashitaka encounters on his travels to Tatara. Jikō-bo leads an armed group of hunters, perhaps a sectarian Buddhist militia given his status as a monk, seeking to slay the *shishigami*, a goal that ultimately leads them to join up with Lady Eboshi. In the first scene where the shishigami reveals the towering, majestic form it assumes at night, Jikō-bo reminds his hunters, who fear going blind from looking at the shishigami, that they have permission from the Emperor to kill the god. This imperial authorization that Jikō-bo carries raises tantalizing questions. What does the Emperor seek to gain from the death of the shishigami and in what capacity does Jikō-bo serve the Emperor? Dialogue between Eboshi and Jikō-bo clarifies that the imperial court and Tatara are working or at least trading together, but what each party hopes to gain from slaying the *shishigami* remains unclear, though.

The absent Emperor indicates that the shadow of patriarchy and, by extension, hegemonic Japanese tradition, remains present despite the ensemble of female protagonists (Eboshi, San, and Moro) that Miyazaki includes in the film. Indeed, the alliance between Eboshi and Jikō-bo is uneasy at best and the hunters under his command openly muse about the possibility of killing

Eboshi in the lead up to the climax. After Eboshi shoots the shishigami and severs its head, Jikō-bo and his men promptly attempt to escape with the head as the deity transforms into a headless, deformed version of its towering nocturnal form. The situation quickly comes untenable as the shishigami's body begins to ooze deadly liquid that kills any human it touches and desiccates the forest. Symbolically then, the death of the shishigami parallels the death of nature itself. Accordingly, the scenes of destruction as the deadly liquid begins to engulf the landscape and move toward Tatara closely mirror a modern eco-catastrophe.

Ultimately San and Ashitaka succeed in returning the head of the *shishigami* to the raging deity, leading it to collapse into Tatara in a final paroxysm of destruction. With the death of the shishigami, greenery returns to the mountains surrounding Tatara and the townspeople congregate to begin building the town anew. This new revivified nature is not the shishigami's primordial forest, however, as San astutely notes while surveying the new landscape, but rather "a gentler, more pastoral" place where humanity has finally dominated nature. The parting environmental message of the film is rather ambiguous, though, as Susan Napier notes.[28] The final shot before the credit features a lone *kodama* appearing in the woods amidst newly sprouted vegetation. Does this signal that the shishigami will return? Or does this lone *kodama* exemplify that traces of the primordial forest, and the original spirituality that animated Japanese nature, remain within the new domesticated landscape?

I am inclined to support the latter interpretation. Miyazaki makes clear that nature has irreversibly changed at the end of *Princess Mononoke*. The new landscape that Ashitaka and San gaze out at represents the dawn of a new Japan where humanity has displaced nature as the most

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[28] Napier, *Miyazakiworld*, 194.

consequential force in the land. And yet, traces of prehistory and the environmental harmony that characterized the Jōmon period remain. An allegorical reading of the fate of Ashitaka and San's relationship illuminates how this represents Miyazaki's alternative view of Japan. San, unable to forgive the humans for the death of the shishigami, goes with her wolf pack to what remains of the woods. Conversely, Ashitaka returns not to his Emishi homeland the but to Tatara to help Eboshi and the townspeople rebuild. In this sense, Ashitaka has relinquished his identity as an "Other" and chosen to integrate fully into Japanese culture. Yet, Ashitaka and San claim they will live together despite the cultural and spatial separations between them. This contrast between the remnants of wild nature and the proto-industrial mechanization of Tatara highlights the dialectical divide between Jōmon and Yayoi that we have seen across the postwar from the writings of Okamoto onward through Umehara. Ashitaka signifies the masculine Yayoi current in Japanese history that acquiesces to the power of science and technology. San represents the dark, feminine undercurrent of the Jōmon that continues to resist to the pull of civilization.

Conclusion

Princess Mononoke is far from the only example of the Jōmon period appearing in popular culture in contemporary Japan. As of writing, a lifestyle magazine devoted to the Jōmon continues to be published, and Jōmon-centered museums and excavations remain popular tourist destinations. Books extolling the influence of the Jōmon period on modern Japan also continue to appear in print regularly and can easily be found in major bookstores such as Kinokuniya. By all accounts, then, Okamoto and Umehara's argument that the Jōmon period was (and is) a central foundation of Japanese culture has become highly influential and entered popular consciousness. Despite not having fully traced the contours of the ongoing Jōmon Boom,

Miyazaki's animation is a convenient place to end this project, as it highlights the obliqueness of the genealogy traced in this dissertation. References to prehistory are indirect and fleeting in *Princess Mononoke* and *My Neighbor Totoro*, and yet, as Miyazaki's interviews attest, the Jōmon period forms the basis of an alternative Japan in his animation, one peaceful and environmentally conscious, that has captivated audiences across the globe.

Major Collected Works and Abbreviations

OTCS *Okamoto Tarō chosakushū*, 9 volumes. Tokyo: Kodansha, 1980.

OTH *Okamoto Tarō no hon,* 5 volumes. Tokyo, Misuzu Shobō, 2000.

NKZ *Nakagami Kenji zenshū*, 15 volumes. Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1996.

USCS *Ueyama Shunpei chosakushū*, 10 volumes. Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1996.

UTCS *Umehara Takeshi chosakushū*, 20 volumes. Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1983.

UTZT *Umehara Takeshi zentaiwa,* 6 volumes. Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1984.

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