

ENVISIONING FASCIST SPACE, TIME, AND BODY:  
JAPANESE PAINTING DURING THE FIFTEEN-YEAR WAR (1931-1945)

by

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation investigates how fascist ideology—the modern political ideology that promotes spiritual collectivism—was translated into the Japanese context and was mediated through the visual culture. My study ultimately locates wartime Japan in the global politics and culture of the 1930s and the 1940s.

The dissertation scrutinizes the development of both Japanese-style paintings (*Nihon-ga*) and Western-style paintings (*yōga*) in the wartime period, exploring how they manifest fascist imaginations of social space, historical time, and the human body. It considers the Japanese paintings in relation to ideas that have been identified as fascist. I examine works by such artists as Saeki Shunkō, Uemura Shōen, Miyamoto Saburō, and Fujita Tsuguharu, focusing on issues of social regimentation, new classicism, eugenics, and the mechanized human body.

My study is not only an important contribution to scholarship on the art produced during the war—the period that was long considered “the dark valley”—but is also the first comprehensive study to investigate the question of Japanese fascism in the discipline of art history. Using cultural translation as a model of analysis and developing a nuanced vocabulary to describe wartime Japan within the framework of fascism, I challenge the notion that fascism was a phenomenon that existed only in Europe.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

In 1940, the year in which Germany, Italy, and Japan signed the Axis Pact, art critic Maruo Shōsaburō declared that the alliance among the three nations should be not only political and economic but also cultural.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, there was a great deal of artistic exchange among them. In 1930, an exhibition of contemporary Japanese-style paintings was organized in Rome, which was already in Mussolini's control. Artist Yokoyama Taikan travelled there for the occasion, stating that exhibiting Japanese art in Rome was more meaningful than it would be in London or Paris.<sup>2</sup> When the Hitler Youth went to Japan in 1938, Taikan gave them a lecture about the spirituality inherent in Japanese art.<sup>3</sup>

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### Notes

Unless otherwise noted, translations are all mine. Except for those whose names are known outside Japan, all Japanese names are written according to Japanese convention, with surname first. While Western-style painters are always referred to by their last names, in regard to Japanese-style painters, some are referred to by their studio names. I follow the convention of how a particular artist was referred to by art critics and the public. In this dissertation, I am only reproducing works whose copyright have legally expired.

<sup>1</sup> Maruo Shōsaburō, “Bijutsu ai no nichu doku kōryū” [Japan-German Relationship through Art], *Tōei*, October 1940.

<sup>2</sup> “Shuppatsu ni saishite” [Upon Departure], *Asahi shinbun*, January 23, 1930.

<sup>3</sup> “Bijutsu no gosan” [Lunch over Art], *Asahi shinbun*, September 28, 1938.

At the same time, contemporary art from Germany and Italy was introduced to Japan. In 1937, art critic Uemura Takachiyo translated Eugène Wernert's book about Nazi art, which Uemura considered useful for Japan,<sup>4</sup> and the magazine *Bijutsu* published photographic reproductions of sculptures and paintings from Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy in 1944. These exchanges are emblematic of the global flow of political and artistic ideas during the 1930s and 1940s. In this dissertation, I argue that Japan, Germany, and Italy shared the same political ideology, that is, fascism, and that art played an important role in disseminating this ideology.

This dissertation examines Japanese art during the Fifteen-Year War (1931-1945) and investigates the question of Japanese fascism. The Fifteen-Year War refers to the Japanese context of the Second World War, which began with the country's advancement into Manchuria in 1931; its undeclared war with China in 1937; the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941; and finally ended with its unconditional surrender in 1945.<sup>5</sup> My study

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<sup>4</sup> Uemura Takachiyo, "Nachisu geijutsu seisaku no zenyō" [Nazi Art in its Entirety], *Atorie*, October 1937. The translated French book here is *L'Art dans le III Reich: Une tentative d'esthétique dirigée* (Paris: Paul Harmann, 1936).

<sup>5</sup> I chose to use the framework of the "Fifteen-Year War" because, unlike other names for the conflict—the Asia-Pacific War (*Ajia-taiheiyō sensō*, 1937-1945), the Great East Asian War (*Daitōa sensō*, 1941-1945), the Pacific War (*Taiheiyō sensō*), or the Second World War (*dai niji sekai taisen*, 1939-1945)—it acknowledges the importance of Japan's territorial expansion into Manchuria in 1931 and the intricate connection between colonialism (beginning in 1931) and the war (beginning in 1937). The Manchurian Incident importantly marked the Imperial Army's control over the government and the

scrutinizes both Japanese-style ink paintings (*Nihon-ga*) and Western-style oil paintings (*yōga*) created by such artists as Saeki Shunkō, Uemura Shōen, Miyamoto Saburō, and Fujita Tsuguharu, and contextualizes these works with reference to wartime social and aesthetic discourses. The dissertation will for the first time employ the concept of Japanese fascism as a heuristic tool to understand Japanese war art by looking at how fascism was mediated through the visual field of war art. What is fascism? How was it mediated through Japanese wartime culture, paintings in particular? How were the visual manifestations of fascism potentially different in Japan, and why? This dissertation is an attempt to answer these questions. More specifically, my study presents analyses of works of art in relation to the concepts of social regimentation, new classicism, eugenics, and the mechanized human body. Using cultural translation as the project's theoretical underpinning, I develop a nuanced vocabulary to describe wartime Japan and its visual culture within the framework of fascism and locate Japan in the global politics and culture of the 1930s and 1940s, thereby challenging the notion that fascism is a phenomenon exclusive to Europe.

### **Historical Background**

On September 18, 1931, a section of railroad was blown up near Mukden in southern Manchuria. This event, now known as the Manchurian Incident, was staged by the Kwantung Army (Japanese Imperial Army in Manchuria), which blamed the Chinese for the action and retaliated by launching a military attack on the Chinese army and

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beginning of Japan's aggressive foreign policies toward Asia, as well as state mobilization of material and human resources for the war.



establishing Japan's puppet government in Manchuria the following year. The Imperial Army's advance had not been ordered by the civilian government in Tokyo, and the incident therefore symbolized the military's control over Japan's foreign policy, which would last for the next fifteen years.<sup>6</sup> As historian Mary Hanneman writes, the incident marked "the beginning of Japan's drive for hegemony in Asia that directly led to the explosion of the . . . 'Fifteen Year War.'"<sup>7</sup> Criticized by the United States, Britain, and France, among others, Japan withdrew from the League of Nations in 1933, isolating itself from the international community.

Despite the fact that it was undertaken without official approval from the government, the military's action in Manchuria was hailed by the Japanese public. The period that preceded the incident was characterized by economic devastation resulting from the Great Depression and ideological conflict between the Left and the Right. Many ultranationalist organizations were established during this period, including Sakurakai, Gen'yōsha, and Kokuryūkai, led by ultranationalists like Kita Ikki and Ōkawa Shumei, who called for a "Shōwa Restoration" to restore the emperor as the ultimate political authority. The military officials and ultranationalist group members, who often came from economically devastated rural areas and who believed that expansion into Asia would help Japan's domestic economy, had been utterly frustrated by the civilian government. Already in 1930, a year before the Manchurian Incident, Prime Minister

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<sup>6</sup> The Imperial Army in the Meiji Constitution was only accountable to the emperor, not to the Diet or the cabinet. Mary L. Hanneman, *Japan Faces the World: 1925-1952*, (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2001), 40.

<sup>7</sup> Hanneman, *Japan Faces the World*, 41.

Hamaguchi, who had signed a treaty at the London Conference that would prevent Japan from acquiring naval power equal to that of the United States and England, had been shot by a young member of one of the ultranationalist organizations, Aikokusha. Similarly, on May 15, 1932, Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi was murdered by a group of young ultranationalists. The assassination was praised by War Minister Araki Sadao as benefitting Imperial Japan.<sup>8</sup> Also on February 26, 1936, 1400 troops from three army regiments staged an attempted coup d'état, surrounding the Diet building, declaring the Shōwa Restoration, and killing three government officials. Although the attempt failed and those who participated were swiftly executed, the incident underscored the impotence of the civilian government. Between 1932 and 1936, membership in ultranationalist groups doubled from 300,000 to 600,000.<sup>9</sup>

After the Manchurian Incident, Japan's domestic life became militarized and this process prepared Japan for the subsequent "total war" with China and the Allies. As historian Louise Young explains, Japan's colonialism in Manchuria was distinct from that in Taiwan and Korea, because of the degree to which it influenced the lives of the Japanese themselves. As she writes, Japan's empire was "made on the home front": Japan's colonialism in Manchuria "entailed the mass and multidimensional mobilization of domestic society: cultural, military, political, and economic... The process of empire building in Manchuria touched the lives of most Japanese in the 1930s in one way or

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<sup>8</sup> Hanneman, *Japan Faces the World*, 48.

<sup>9</sup> Hanneman, *Japan Faces the World*, 44.

another.”<sup>10</sup> Japan’s advancement into Manchuria attracted “mass audiences” that included all citizens, not just the elites, including workers, women, and youth.<sup>11</sup>

Indispensable to this national scale of mobilization were modernization (popularization of modern mass media, such as radio, magazines, and newspapers) and the development of civil organizations that took place in the preceding period. In the National Defense Campaign (*kokubō*) launched in the early 1930s, the army reached out to disseminate its militarist ideology using local communities, youth groups, and women’s and religious organizations, most of them founded in the 1920s. Festivals, spectacles, and exhibitions regarding national defense were organized by local elites such as government officials, newspaper executives, and educational and religious leaders at temples, shrines, and schools.<sup>12</sup>

Some artists were already glorifying Japan’s militarist activity. Nihon Bijutsu-in (Japan Art Institute), a non-governmental Japanese-style painting organization, dedicated the proceeds from sales of their paintings to the army as early as 1932.<sup>13</sup> In 1934, the Cabinet Information Bureau, in collaboration with the modernist photographer group Nippon Kōbō, founded a propaganda photographic magazine called *NIPPON*, which was

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<sup>10</sup> Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 13.

<sup>11</sup> Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 117.

<sup>12</sup> Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 138.

<sup>13</sup> Hariu Ichirō et al., *Sensō to bijutsu 1937-1945/ Art in Wartime Japan 1937-1945* (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 2007), 285.

targeted at Western audiences.<sup>14</sup> In the same year, Japanese-style painter Yokoyama Taikan offered one of his paintings to the puppet emperor of Manchuria, Puyi.<sup>15</sup> In 1935, the Ministry of Education initiated reform of state sponsored-exhibitions (*teiten*), aiming to bring young artists in numerous private organizations under state control.<sup>16</sup>

Decisive change to the lives of Japanese people came in 1937, when Japan advanced further into northern China, engaging with the Chinese forces at the Marco Polo Bridge just outside Beijing. Chiang Kai-shek, the nationalist leader who initially collaborated with Japan to fight the Chinese communist forces, decided to work with the communists and refused to acknowledge Manchuria as Japanese. Prime Minister Prince Konoe Fumimaro decided that Japan would fight China, and at the same time justified the decision by developing, in his 1938 “New Order in East Asia,” the rhetoric that Japan would liberate Asia from Western colonialism. Konoe presented the grand vision of a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere in which China, Manchukuo (Manchuria), Taiwan, Southeast Asia, and the South Pacific would live under Japan’s leadership with a self-sufficient economic structure free from Western exploitation. In reality, of course, as Mary Hanneman aptly points out, “Japan simply sought to establish its own hegemony over Asia,” and many Asians suffered from Japanese atrocities such as the Nanjing

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<sup>14</sup> Hariu et al., *Sensō to bijutsu*, 285.

<sup>15</sup> Hariu et al., *Sensō to bijutsu*, 285.

<sup>16</sup> Maki Kaneko, “Art in the Service of the State: Artistic Production in Japan during the Asia-Pacific War,” Ph.D. diss. (University of East Anglia, 2006), 75.

Massacre in 1937, systematized sex slavery, biological experimentation, and forced labor.<sup>17</sup>

The friction between Japan and Western democratic nations worsened, and the United States placed an embargo on the sale of war materials to Japan in 1938. Meanwhile, Germany invaded Poland, and Japan signed the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy in 1940, updating the Anti-Comintern Pact that Japan had signed with Nazi Germany in 1936. In 1940, Prime Minister Konoe declared the creation of the “New Order,” re-organizing economic, political, and cultural structures under the state, and founding the Imperial Rule Assistance Association (IRAA), a single unified political entity which officially ended party politics. In 1941, the United States placed a total embargo on exports to Japan. With 80% of its oil supplies coming from the U.S., Japan sought reconciliation; as the American government demanded Japan’s withdrawal from Manchuria, however, negotiations fell apart. Unable to make a decision on whether or not to go to war with the United States, Prime Minister Konoe resigned and was replaced by Army General Tōjō Hideki. Tōjō immediately took the path to the war, and on December 8, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, declaring war also against the British and Dutch forces that occupied Guam, Wake Island, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Singapore, Burma, Fiji, Samoa, Indonesia, and New Caledonia, among others. What Japan needed from the Southeast Asian countries was oil, which they could no longer buy from the United States.

Beginning with the Battle of Midway in June 1942, Japan lost in a series of actions in Guadalcanal, Attu, Saipan, and Iwo Jima, to name a few. In these battles, despite the

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<sup>17</sup> Hanneman, *Japan Faces the World*, 57.

certainty of defeat, the Japanese military chose the path of collective suicide attacks (*gyokusai*), hoping to inflict any damage it could on the enemy, however slight. Both wounded soldiers and civilians (in Saipan) were asked to kill themselves to avoid the humiliation of capture. The last, desperate hope in the final months of the war were the kamikaze suicide bombers (to which I return in Chapter Five), who deliberately crashed their planes into enemy ships.<sup>18</sup> In March 1945, the American landing in Okinawa, which resulted in approximately 100,000 civilian deaths, and the air raids on Tokyo in the same month, which also caused more than 100,000 deaths, dealt a fatal blow to Japan.<sup>19</sup> Until the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, however, surrender or defeat were *not* an option. Wartime Minister Shigemitsu Mamoru recalled in 1958:

It was a “total war”: kill or be killed. The Army was resolved to fight to the very end. If anyone spoke of making peace before that, he was ruthlessly punished. The War Minister rigidly enforced the autocratic powers of the Army and used the gendarmerie as state police. To them a peace advocate was a pacifist and anyone who mentioned defeat was a rebel and such people were to be suppressed.<sup>20</sup>

Several days after the atomic bombings, Japan accepted the Potsdam Declaration and unconditional surrender.

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<sup>18</sup> The Kamikaze Special Attack Forces program was launched in October 1944.

<sup>19</sup> Hanneman, *Japan Faces the World*, 79.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Hanneman, *Japan Faces the World*, 77.

The Fifteen-Year War was indeed a “total war,” in which the state mobilized both human and material resources.<sup>21</sup> Unlike previous wars (the First Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars), civilians as well as soldiers were asked to work and fight for the nation. The government launched the National Spiritual Mobilization Movement (*Kokumin Seishin Sōdōin Undō*) in 1937, in which nationalist organizations rallied the nation, propagating war with (very creative) catchphrases such as “extravagance is the enemy” (*zeitaku wa teki da*) and “covet nothing until we win” (*hoshigarimasen katsu made wa*), and prohibiting such things as permed hair, dance halls, Hollywood movies, and Western loan words. The government’s investment in the war was also buttressed by the National Mobilization Law in 1938, which justified state control of industries and civil organizations. The state ultimately nationalized the local communities and independent organizations that they used during the National Defense Campaign, destroying civil society. As historian Andrew Gordon writes, citizens were “linked to the state and the emperor through a vast and expanding network of functional organs imposed upon them by the state: youth groups, women’s groups, village and neighborhood associations, and Sanpō workplace associations, and agricultural and industrial producers’ unions.”<sup>22</sup> Most important was the state’s creation and control of

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<sup>21</sup> Yamanouchi Yasushi, “Total-War and System Integration: A Methodological Introduction,” in *Total War and “Modernization,”* ed. Yasushi Yamanouchi, J. Victor Koschmann, and Ryuichi Narita (Ithaca; New York: Cornell University, 1998), 3-4.

<sup>22</sup> Andrew Gordon, *Labor and Imperial Democracy in Prewar Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 330.

the *tonarigumi* (neighborhood associations), each of which consisted of several households and functioned as a local surveillance system.

Citizens were mobilized ideologically as well as physically. The war was conceived as a “thought war” (*shisō sen*), and the state imposed control over both mass media and education. After 1937, all information about the national economy and foreign policies was considered a state secret, and it went through a screening process before publication.<sup>23</sup> Journalists also regarded their job as leading public opinion to Japan’s victory in the war. Hōjō Seiichi wrote in the *Nichi Nichi* newspaper in December 1942: “In time of war journalists are the front-line fighters in the ideological war, and newspapers are the ideological bullets.”<sup>24</sup> Newspapers typically manipulated the number of casualties in the war.<sup>25</sup> At the same time, the militarist government took control over education, renaming elementary school *kokumin gakkō* (citizens’ school) in 1941. *The Essence of the National Polity (Kokutai no hongī)*, which reiterates the concept of the national polity (*kokutai*), the belief that Japanese citizens maintain an organic connection to the sun goddess Amaterasu, was issued by the Ministry of Education in 1937 and taught to every school child.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ben-Ami Shillony, *Politics and Culture in Wartime Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 93.

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Shillony, *Politics and Culture*, 98.

<sup>25</sup> Ienaga Saburō, *The Pacific War, 1931-1945* (New York: Pantheon, 1978), 99.

<sup>26</sup> Alan Tansman, *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism* (University of California Press, 2009), 150-151; Ienaga, *The Pacific War*, 107.



Intellectuals and writers also collaborated with the state for the war effort. The Literary Patriotic Association (*Nihon Bungaku Hōkokukai*), for example, was established in 1942, and 3100 novelists, playwrights, critics, and poets joined.<sup>27</sup> In the same year, members of the Kyoto School of philosophy, the Literary Society, and the Japan Romantic group (*Rōman-ha*) held a symposium on “overcoming the modern” (*kindai no chōkoku*), at which they discussed the meaning of the war with the United States and claimed that Japan must eliminate Americanism and restore “authentic” Japanese culture.<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile, the state intensified surveillance, especially on Marxists, and the Peace Preservation Law allowed the *kempeitai*, the military police, to use physical force to suppress those who opposed the war.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, after they were imprisoned, many Marxists recanted their beliefs (called “conversion” or *tenkō*) and supported the wartime state: it is difficult to determine how many were “forced” to convert and how many were wearing “a convenient disguise (*gisō tenkō*),” but only a small number of Marxists refused to recant.<sup>30</sup> Japanese historian Ienaga Saburō argues that some Marxists indeed strongly supported the state, and contends that both Marxist and non-Marxist intellectuals were responsible for the war.<sup>31</sup> Notably, there was no organized anti-war movement, and nobody fled Japan to avoid involvement in the war effort.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Shillony, *Politics and Culture*, 116.

<sup>28</sup> Harry Harootunian, “Overcoming Modernity,” in *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

<sup>29</sup> The Peace Preservation Law was in effect from 1925. Ienaga, *The Pacific War*, 113.

<sup>30</sup> Shillony, *Politics and Culture*, 120.

<sup>31</sup> Ienaga, *The Pacific War*, 121-122.

With the beginning of the war with China in 1937, more and more artists worked with and for the state under the slogan of “serving the nation by art” (*saikan hōkoku*).<sup>33</sup> In 1937, the Japan Art Institute (*Nihon Bijutsu-in*) donated seven thousand yen to the army, and both Japanese-style and Western-style painters organized “dedication exhibitions” (*kennō-ga ten*) at the department stores Matsuzakaya and Matsuya, and the proceeds from the sales of their paintings were donated to the army. From 1938 on, artists (many Western-style and a few Japanese-style) were sent to the front to produce War Campaign Record Paintings (*Sensō Sakusen Kirokuga*). Within a year, ten artists including Nakamura Ken’ichi were sent to Shanghai, two artists (Kawabata Ryūshi and Tsuruya Gorō) to North China, and several, including Fujita Tsuguharu, followed the Navy.<sup>34</sup> Numerous art exhibitions—called “War Art Exhibition” (*Sensō Bijutsu-ten*), “Holy War Art Exhibition” (*Seisen Bijutsu-ten*), and “Army Art Exhibition” (*Rikugun Jūgun Gaka-ten*), to name a few—were held at department stores and art museums and funded by the army and by newspaper companies. These were continued throughout the war: the last Army Art Exhibition (*Rikugun Bijutsu-ten*) was held in April 1945, four months before Japan’s defeat.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Shillony, *Politics and Culture*, 126.

<sup>33</sup> In addition, numerous artists and art students were sent to the battlefield as soldiers. For artists who died on the battlefield, see Kuboshima Sei’ichirō, *Mugonkan nōto* [The Silence Museum Notebook] (Tokyo: Shūei sha, 2005).

<sup>34</sup> Hariu et al., *Sensō to bijutsu*, 283.

<sup>35</sup> Hariu et al., *Sensō to bijutsu*, 273.

Matsumoto Shunsuke, who wrote “The Living Artist” (*Ikiteiru gaka*) in 1941, was one of the very few artists who publicly protested against the militarist views of art.<sup>36</sup> Referring to the symposium where militarist officials declared that artists should contribute to the war by producing propaganda paintings, Matsumoto wrote, “I regret to say in the symposium entitled ‘National Defense State and the Fine Arts’ I found no value. It is wise to keep silent, but I do not believe keeping silent today is necessarily the correct thing to do.”<sup>37</sup> Although independent art groups continued to exist during the war (for example, the surrealist groups *Bijutsu Bunka Kyōkai* and *Shinjin Gakai* were founded in 1939 and 1943 respectively), the state imposed a high degree of control over their activities by consolidating art magazines, whose number was reduced to eight in 1941 and to only two in 1944.<sup>38</sup> The Patriotic Association of Japanese-style Painters (*Nihon Gaka Hōkokukai*) and Patriotic Association of Japanese Artists (*Nihon Bijutsu Hōkokukai*) were formed in 1941 and 1943, bringing almost all active artists under national control. It was generally difficult to obtain art supplies, especially after the American embargo, and naturally official war artists were given privileged access to them.<sup>39</sup> Authorities and police labeled surrealist works “unhealthy” and linked them to

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<sup>36</sup> Mark H. Sandler, “The Living Artist: Matsumoto Shunsuke’s Reply to the State,” *Art Journal* 55.3 (Autumn, 1996): 74-82.

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Sandler, “The Living Artist,” 78.

<sup>38</sup> *Seisaku* [Production] and *Bijutsu* [Art] were the last two magazines. More research is necessary, but I do not think that these two “private” organizations *Bijutsu bunka kyōkai* and *Shinjin gakai* were necessarily against the state ideology.

<sup>39</sup> Kaneko, “Art in the Service of the State,” 135-137.

“dangerous” thoughts of communism. In 1941 they arrested the leaders of the Japanese surrealist movement, Fukuzawa and Takiguchi Shūzō.<sup>40</sup>

According to art historian Kawata Akihisa, over three hundred Western-style painters participated in official war art production and painted War Campaign Record Paintings.<sup>41</sup> It is important to note that the prominent war painters—Fujita Tsuguharu, Miyamoto Saburō, Mukai Junkichi, Inokuma Gen’ichirō, and Ihara Usaburō—were leading prewar modernists who studied in Paris. In 1944, military official Akiyama Kunio spelled out the meaning of War Campaign Record Paintings as works that “have the significant historical purpose of recording and preserving the army’s war campaign forever.”<sup>42</sup> Another official, Yamanouchi Ichirō, advocated the realist style of European

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<sup>40</sup> John Clark, “Artistic Subjectivity in the Taisho and Early Shōwa Avant-Garde,” in *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, ed. Alexandra Munroe (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994), 48.

<sup>41</sup> Kawata Akihisa, “Sensō-ga towa nanika” [What Is *Sensō-ga*?], *Geijutsu Shinchō*, August 1995. For more on Japanese official war art, see *Geijutsu Shinchō*, August 1995; Kawata Akihisa and Tan’o Yasunori, *Imēji no nakano sensō: nisshin, nichiro sensō kara rēsen made* [War in Images: From the Sino-Japanese War to the Cold War] (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1996); Hariu Ichirō et al., *Sensō to bijutsu 1937-1945*.

<sup>42</sup> Akiyama Kunio, “Honnendo kirokuga ni tsuite” [On This Year’s Record Paintings], *Bijutsu*, May 1944, 2.

neo-classicism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially works by Jacques-Louis David, as proper models.<sup>43</sup>

It was generally agreed that Japanese-style paintings were not suitable for realism and depicting the war.<sup>44</sup> Japanese-style painters nevertheless found ways to support the state: Kawabata Ryūshi and Ikegami Shūho went to the front, Hashimoto Kansetsu and Kohayagawa Shūsei painted battles and soldiers, and the army commissioned Yasuda Yukihiro to paint a portrait of Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku, who died in the Battle of Midway.<sup>45</sup> Yokoyama Taikan never went to the front, but his wartime activity illuminates how one could support the state without going to battle: among his numerous military-related wartime activities, he made an offering of one of his paintings to Hitler and, as we saw, delivered a lecture to a Hitler Youth group that visited Japan in 1938.<sup>46</sup> He also donated a painting to Etajima Naval Academy in Hiroshima in 1942 and became president of the Patriotic Association of Japanese Artists (*Nihon Bijutsu Hōkokukai*) in 1943.<sup>47</sup> The paintings of Uemura Shōen, Kobayashi Kokei, and Maeda Seison were

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<sup>43</sup> Yamanouchi Ichirō, “Sakusen kirokuga no ari kata” [How War Paintings Should Be], *Bijutsu*, May 1944, 2-5.

<sup>44</sup> “Daitōa to bijutsu” [Great East Asia and Art], *Kikan bijutsu*, May 1942. Reproduced in *Nihon bijutsuin hyakunenshi* [One Hundred Year History of Nihon Bijutsu-in], vol 7 (Tokyo: Nihon bijutsuin, 1998), 846-849.

<sup>45</sup> Hariu et al., *Sensō to bijutsu*, 278-283.

<sup>46</sup> Hariu et al., *Sensō to bijutsu*, 283.

<sup>47</sup> Hariu et al., *Sensō to bijutsu*, 276-277.

praised by art critic Okazaki Yoshie as “truly Japanese” art that stood in opposition to the art of the enemy.<sup>48</sup>

### **Literature Review/ Methodology**

Since the war, the art of the late 1930s and early 1940s has been excluded from Japanese art survey books and considered taboo. There are several reasons for this. First, war art has been largely neglected in the history of art in general. For example, *Janson’s History of Art: the Western Tradition*, one of the most popular introductory art history survey textbooks in North America, covers twentieth century art in three chapters—“Toward Abstraction: The Modernist Revolution, 1904-1914,” “Art between the Wars,” and “Postwar to Postmodern, 1945-1980”—with remarkable gaps between 1914 and 1919, and again between the early 1930s and 1945.<sup>49</sup> Even though various countries (Britain, Australia, Canada, and the United States, among others) produced official war art, it tends to be stored in military institutions, and has thus evaded art historical evaluation.<sup>50</sup> Second, access to some of the Japanese art produced during the Fifteen-Year War has been physically limited. The Japanese state and war artists purposely destroyed many documents and paintings before the landing of the Occupation forces, and the United States confiscated the most important collection of propaganda war

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<sup>48</sup> Okazaki Yoshie, “Gendai Nihonga to kokumin sei” [Contemporary Japanese-style Painting and its National Characteristics], *Kokuga*, May 1942, 5.

<sup>49</sup> H.W. Janson, *Janson’s History of Art: The Western Tradition*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed (New Jersey: Pearson Education, 2007).

<sup>50</sup> Laura Brandon, *Art & War* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

paintings in the 1950s, which they returned to the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo only in 1970 and on “indefinite loan.”<sup>51</sup> Third, especially in the Euro-American context, where an Orientalist view of Japanese art still prevails, Japanese art has been discussed separately from politics. As I explain in Chapter One, paintings of modern girls (*moga*) were rendered signs of the exotic in exhibitions such as *Taishō Chic* (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 2006) and *Shōwa Sophistication* (Honolulu Academy of Art, 2008) even though most of the paintings they displayed were from the mid and late 1930s. Overtly militaristic Japanese propaganda paintings have never been displayed in the United States or in Europe.

Last and most important, the Fifteen-Year War has been a particularly sensitive topic both within and outside Japan. In Japan, views on the war are contested. Members of the Left seek to interrogate the country’s past violence toward Asia. Members of the Right, who tend to dominate the government, reiterate the positive effects of colonialism (such as modernization), deny that Asian people suffered under Japan’s control, and justify the war on the grounds that it was inevitable in the face of Western colonialism and that its purpose was to free Asians from Western exploitation. The issue is most prominent and contested in the field of education. Historian Ienaga Saburō (1913-2002) is well known for fighting censorship by the Ministry of Education that seeks to eliminate “inconvenient” facts from school history textbooks, such as mass rapes and murders, systematized sex slavery, biological experimentation on Chinese civilians and POWs, and

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<sup>51</sup> Asato Ikeda, “Japan’s Haunting War Art: Contested War Memories and Art Museums,” *disClosure* 18 (April 2009): 5-32.

forced labor.<sup>52</sup> The Japanese government has issued official apologies for some of these, but they are constantly undermined by national leaders' frequent ill-conceived comments that make it difficult to believe in the sincerity of the apologies. Prime Minister Abe Shinzō, for example, stated in 2007 that there had been no Nanjing Massacre and that Asian women enslaved by the state were prostitutes, even though an apology had already been made to “comfort women” (*ianfu*), not “prostitutes,” by the Hashimoto government in 1995.<sup>53</sup> The conservative government's views naturally anger formerly colonized nations, especially Korea and China, and Japan's diplomatic relations with those nations are still affected by a war that ended over sixty years ago.

This friction between Japan and its neighbors is partly a result of the way the American Occupation government handled the reconstruction of Japanese politics in the immediate postwar years. The Occupation government did not hold the emperor accountable in the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal even though the “holy war” was fought in his name, and they restored former militarists to the government in order to fortify Japan against the Cold War communist threat. What emerged within this context was what

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<sup>52</sup> Jeff Kingston, “Historian Battles to Redeem the Past,” *The Japan Times*, April 7 2001 <<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/fb20010407a1.html> > (accessed November 9, 2010).

<sup>53</sup> Hiroko Tabuchi, “Soldier Confirms Wartime Sex Slavery,” *The Japan Times*, March, 2007 < <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20070304a1.html>>; Reiji Yoshida, “Sex Slave History Erased From Texts; '93 Apology Next?” *The Japan Times*, March 11, 2007 < <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20070311f1.html>> (Accessed November 9, 2010).



historian Igarashi Yoshikuni calls the “foundational narrative” that the United States restored Japan’s peace with the atomic bombs and that the emperor symbolizes that peace.<sup>54</sup> This narrative obscured both the ethical question of America’s use of nuclear weapons and Japan’s responsibility for suffering in Asia by (re)presenting Japan as victim rather than perpetrator.<sup>55</sup>

The art of the Fifteen-Year War is located within this highly polarized political discussion about Japan’s role in the war, but there are issues particular to war art. For one thing, we cannot ignore the ethical issue of those artists who collaborated with the militarists. As early as 1945 there began a public discussion about artists’ culpability, which dissolved into ugly disputes over who did or did not paint propaganda and who had or had not been a willing collaborator. Although none of them was actually tried by the Allies, some leading war artists were blacklisted and expelled from art communities as “war criminals.” This war responsibility (*sensō sekinin*) discussion virtually ended when the most famous war painter, Fujita Tsuguharu, left Japan permanently in 1949. Since then, no war artists have spoken of their ethical and political responsibility, yet examination of wartime art cannot be separated from the question of artists’ complicity with the state.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, the war responsibility of Japanese-style painters, who were

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<sup>54</sup> Igarashi Yoshikuni, *Bodies of Memory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 19-28.

<sup>55</sup> Lisa Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

<sup>56</sup> Most of them did not speak about their wartime works. On the other hand, Miyamoto Saburō praised his own works as counterparts to European war art when they were found

active during the war but produced seemingly non-militaristic paintings, has never been interrogated. Uemura Shōen and Yasuda Yukihiko, who frequently exhibited their works in state-sanctioned exhibitions, for example, received the Order of Culture (*bunka kunshō*) from the emperor in 1947.

*Visual* representations of militarism (the war in particular) have the potential to evoke powerful emotional reactions. The “Visualizing Cultures” website project at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, launched in 2006 by one of the most established historians of Japan, John Dower, is important in this regard. The website, which features images of the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) that depict Japanese executions of Chinese, came under harsh attack from the Chinese community within and outside the university. The emails and phone calls to the scholars involved in the project were so threatening that the institution reported them to the police.<sup>57</sup> The purpose of the website project, along with Dower’s texts, which are critical of Japan’s conduct, was to analyze the power of propaganda, but opponents argued that Dower was insensitive to the suffering of the Chinese people. The “Visualizing Cultures” controversy is an extreme example, and it is reasonable to wonder why one hundred year-old prints triggered such controversy when

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in the United States in the late 1960s. Ogawara Shū was virtually the only artist who spoke critically of his past. Asato Ikeda, “Twentieth Century Japanese Art and the Wartime State: Reassessing the Art of Ogawara Shū and Fujita Tsuguharu,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 43-2-10. October 25, 2010.

<sup>57</sup> Peter C. Perdue, “Reflections on the ‘Visualizing Cultures’ Incident,” *MIT Faculty Newsletter*, Vol. XVIII No.5 May/ June 2006

<<http://web.mit.edu/fnl/volume/185/perdue.html>> (accessed November 9, 2010).

images of violence seem to be everywhere in modern culture—on TV, in movies and magazines, and on the Internet—but it must be remembered that the power of visual propaganda and the potential for the abuse of images is precisely why Nazi art, for example, was not released to the public for decades after the war. The MIT incident suggests that the art of the Fifteen Year War, much more recent than the Sino-Japanese War, could be an even more sensitive issue and could stir heated, emotional reactions.

Since the death of Emperor Hirohito in 1989, scholars have begun investigating Japanese war art in a more critical light. In Japan, art historians Kawata Akihisa and Tan'ō Yasunori co-authored the book *War in Images: From the Sino-Japanese to the Cold War* (1996), which pioneered the field by examining woodblock prints, Japanese-style paintings, and Western-style oil paintings.<sup>58</sup> The book covered the Sino-Japanese War, the Russo-Japanese War, and the Fifteen-Year War, and demonstrated how works on both military themes (battles, swords, war machinery) and non-military themes mirrored Japan's militarist ideology. The 2006 retrospective of Fujita Tsuguharu, the leading war painter who was once ostracized by the Japanese public, was organized by the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, and renewed scholarly interest in war art.<sup>59</sup> The book *Art in Wartime Japan 1937-1945* (2007) brought together major scholars in the field, such as Kawata Akihisa, Ōtani Shōgo, Haru Ichirō, and Sawaragi Noi, and reproduced a few hundred paintings produced during the war, including some that had

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<sup>58</sup> Kawata and Tan'ō, *Imēji no nakano sensō*.

<sup>59</sup> Asato Ikeda, "Fujita Tsuguharu Retrospective 2006: Resurrection of a Former Official War Painter," *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 21 (December 2009): 97-115.

been lost and those once confiscated by the United States.<sup>60</sup> American art historian Bert Winther-Tamaki published a ground-breaking article in 1997, “Embodiment/Disembodiment: Japanese Paintings during the Fifteen Year War,” which analyzed wartime works by artists including Matsumoto Shunsuke, Yokoyama Taikan, and Fujita Tsuguharu in relation to the issue of embodiment and disembodiment.<sup>61</sup> The Ph.D. dissertations of Mayu Tsuruya (2005) and Maki Kaneko (2006), completed in the United States and England, respectively, followed Winther-Tamaki and showed how war art was entrenched in the development of a Japanese modern art that was intricately related to Japan’s nation building. In so doing, both Tsuruya and Kaneko refuted the previous assumption that war art was a product of historical aberration.<sup>62</sup> *Art and War in Japan and Its Empire: 1931-1960*, which I am currently co-editing with Ming Tiampo and Aya Louisa McDonald, will be the first English anthology on Japanese war art and will bring together scholars from Asia, North America, and Europe—Bert Winther-Tamaki, Mayu Tsuruya, Maki Kaneko, Kawata Akihisa, Laura Hein, Julia Thomas, and Michael Lucken

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<sup>60</sup> Hariu et al., *Sensō to bijutsu 1937-1945*.

<sup>61</sup> Bert Winther-Tamaki, “Embodiment/Disembodiment: Japanese Painting during the Fifteen-Year War,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 52. 2 (Summer, 1997): 145-80.

<sup>62</sup> Mayu Tsuruya, “Sensō Sakusen Kirokuga [War Campaign Documentary Art Painting]: Japan’s National Imagery of the ‘Holy War’ 1937-1945,” Ph.D. diss., (University of Pittsburgh, 2005); Maki Kaneko, “Art in the Service of the State: Artistic Production in Japan during the Asia-Pacific War,” Ph.D. diss. (University of East Anglia, 2006).

among others.<sup>63</sup> In addition to paintings, Julia Adeney Thomas, Kaneko Ryūichi, and Inoue Yūko have published research on wartime photography, and Kim Brandt and Yuko Kikuchi have thoroughly documented the wartime activities of the Japanese Arts and Crafts Movement (*mingei*).<sup>64</sup> Hirase Reita has examined wartime sculpture, while Inoue Shōkichi, Jonathan M. Reynolds, and Jacqueline Eve Kestenbaum have probed into Japanese wartime architecture.<sup>65</sup> Also important to the study of Japanese war art is the

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<sup>63</sup> Asato Ikeda, Ming Tiampo, and Aya Louisa McDonald, eds., *Art and War in Japan and its Empire: 1931-1960* (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

<sup>64</sup> Julia Adeney Thomas, “Photography, National Identity, and the ‘Cataract of Times’: Wartime Images and the Case of Japan,” *The American Historical Review* 103.5 (December, 1998): 1475-1501; Kaneko Ryūichi, “Realism and Propaganda: The Photographer’s Eye Trained on Society,” in *The History of Japanese Photography*, ed. Anne Wilkes Tucker (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2003); Inoue Yūko, *Senji gurafu zasshi no sendansen* [Strategies of Wartime Graphic Magazines](Tokyo: Seitōsha, 2009); Kim Brandt, *Kingdom of Beauty: Mingei and the Politics of Folk Art in Imperial Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Yuko Kikuchi, *Japanese Modernization and Mingei Theory: Cultural Nationalism and Oriental Orientalism* (London: Routledge, 2004).

<sup>65</sup> Hirase Reita, “*Sensō to bijutsu korekushon: sokoni atte wa naranai mono* [War and Art Collection: Things That Ought Not Be There], in *Kōza Nihon bijutsu shi: bijutsu o sasaeru mono* [Studies in the History of Japanese Art 6: What Makes Art Possible], ed. Kinoshita Naoyuki (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 2005); Inoue Shōkichi, *Āto, kicchu, japanesuku* [Art, Kitsch, Japanesque] (Tokyo: Asahi shuppansha, 1995); Jonathan

art of colonialism, as Japan's war was a "colonial war." The research findings and analysis by Kim Hyeshin, Kari Shepardson-Scott, and Aida Yuen-Wong about colonial Korea, Manchuria, Taiwan and Mainland China illuminate Japan's artistic activities beyond its own borders.<sup>66</sup>

## **Fascism**

What distinguishes my study from previous scholarship is that, following numerous scholars who have investigated the issue in the disciplines of history, political science and literature, I explore the concept of Japanese fascism in the field of art history.<sup>67</sup> While

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M. Reynolds, *Maekawa Kunio and the Emergence of Japanese Modernist Architecture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Jacqueline Eve Kestenbaum, "Modernism and Tradition in Japanese Architectural Ideology, 1931-1955," Ph.D. diss. (New York: Columbia University, 1996).

<sup>66</sup> Kim Hye-sin, *Kankoku kindai bijutsu kenkyū: shokuminchiki chōsenbijutsutenrankai ni miru ibunkashihai to bunka hyōshō* [Studies of Korean Modern Art: Cultural Control and Cultural Representation in Colonial "Korean Art Exhibitions"] (Tokyo: Brücke, 2005); Kari Shepherdson-Scott, "Utopia/ Dystopia: Japan's Image of the Manchurian Ideal," Ph.D. diss. (Durham: Duke University, forthcoming); Aida Yuen Wong, *Parting the Mists: Discovering Japan and the Rise of National-style Painting* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006).

<sup>67</sup> Historian Kim Brandt has investigated fascism in her study on *mingei*. Aida Yuen-Wong's recent scholarship touches on fascist aesthetics and paintings by Taiwanese artists who studied in Japan. Brandt, *Kingdom of Beauty*; Aida Yuen Wong, "Art of Non-

acknowledging the long history and contested nature of the concept, I specifically draw on the definition of fascism that appeared in the 1990s and uses the framework of cultural translation in discussing its Japanese manifestation.

I must begin by noting that there are scholars who argue *against* utilizing fascism as a methodological framework. What exactly fascism *is* remains a disputed question, and disagreement on the meaning of the term leads historian S.J. Woolf to assert, “Perhaps the word fascism should be banned, at least temporarily, from our political vocabulary.”<sup>68</sup> Gilbert Allardyce argues that the concept of fascism is inadequate for comparative studies and that historians are using the term without agreeing on what it means. Asserting that “the word *fascismo* has no meaning beyond Italy,” Allardyce argues that even the cases of Italy and Germany are different and cannot be reduced to one single political model, contending that fascism is neither a generic concept nor ideology.<sup>69</sup> On the other hand there are scholars, like Stanley Payne, author of the influential book *Fascism: Definition and Comparison* (1980), who argue that Germany and Spain *were* fascist, but that fascism cannot exist outside Europe. Payne writes that fascism is “a historical phenomenon primarily limited to Europe during the era of the two world wars” and that

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Resistance: Elitism, Fascist Aesthetics, and the Taiwanese Painter Lin Chih-chu, 1930s-1940s,” in *Art and War in Japan and its Empire*.

<sup>68</sup> Gilbert Allardyce, “What Fascism is Not: Thoughts on the Deflation of a Concept,” *The American Historical Review* 84.2 (April 1979): 367.

<sup>69</sup> Allardyce, “What Fascism is Not,” 370.

“the full characteristics of European fascism could not be reproduced on a significant scale outside Europe.”<sup>70</sup>

Not surprisingly, there are those who follow Allardyce and Payne in arguing against using the concept in the Japanese context. George Macklin Wilson in his article published in 1968 dismisses the idea of Japanese fascism. In his discussion of the work of Maruyama Masao and his idea of Emperor-System Fascism, Wilson points out that one can easily drop the term “fascism” at any point, as there is no specificity attached to it.<sup>71</sup> He suggests that instead of comparing Japan to Western nations, we should compare it to *non*-Western ones.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, he questions the “psychological attitude” that motivated leftist Japanese scholars to investigate the concept of fascism, that is, their political motive for criticizing and fighting against the former militarists.<sup>73</sup> Finally, he suggests that historians should use the alternative model of “movement-regime” or “the revolutionary mass-movement regime under single-party auspices” to analyze the case of Japan.<sup>74</sup>

Wilson’s points are echoed in an article by Peter Duus and Daniel Okamoto published in 1979. They maintain that if it is difficult to find core characteristics within European fascism, it is virtually impossible to apply the concept to Japan, and that it is

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<sup>70</sup> Quoted in Roger Eatwell, “*Universal Fascism?*” 15. Originally in Stanley Payne, *Fascism: Definition and Comparison* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980).

<sup>71</sup> George Wilson, “A New Look,” 406.

<sup>72</sup> George Wilson, “A New Look,” 409.

<sup>73</sup> George Wilson, “A New Look,” 407.

<sup>74</sup> George Wilson, “A New Look,” 409.



therefore meaningless to speak of Japanese fascism. They write, “sometimes incidental differences add up to an essential difference.”<sup>75</sup> Although they admit that similar political characteristics can be found in Germany and Japan, they do not call Japan fascist because there is no moment analogous to the rise of Nazi power, and what we see in Japan is actually the further consolidation of Meiji nationalism rather than revolution from below. We need to develop a new model, they argue, and they suggest “corporatism.”<sup>76</sup> Finally, like Wilson, they question the political motive behind Japanese fascism studies: “one of the underlying reasons for the postwar flurry of Japanese studies on fascism—the psychological need to identify who or what was responsible for the tragedy of the Second World War—may have passed. So, too, may the scholarly rationale for directing so much attention to this subject.”<sup>77</sup>

As Gavan McCormack aptly summarizes the historiography of Japanese fascism, other scholars argue against Japanese fascism based on “the absence of a charismatic leader, or a mass fascist-style party, or a sharply delineated point of transition, or of repression on the scale of Nazi Germany (death camps), or the presence of apparently

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<sup>75</sup> Peter Duus and Daniel Okamoto, “Fascism and the History of Prewar Japan: The Failure of a Concept,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 39. 1 (November, 1979): 66. See also Duus’s review of the 2009 anthology *The Culture of Japanese Fascism* in *The Journal of Asian Studies* 69.2 (May 2010): 612-615.

<sup>76</sup> Duus and Okamoto, “Fascism and the History of Prewar Japan,” 72.

<sup>77</sup> Duus and Okamoto, “Fascism and the History of Prewar Japan,” 76.

unbroken continuity between the institutions and elites of Meiji and 1930s Japan.”<sup>78</sup> Ben-Ami Shillony, who also argues against the concept of Japanese fascism, shows in his *Politics and Culture in Wartime Japan* (1981) how wartime imperial institutions and the bureaucracy functioned just as before the war and the militarist Prime Minister Tōjō Hideki never had total control over the cabinet, concluding that Japan was neither totalitarian nor fascist.<sup>79</sup>

The confusion over the definition of fascism whether in the European or the Japanese context, can be explained by several points. First of all, unlike socialism (which had Karl Marx’s *Communist Manifesto*) or capitalism (which had Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations*), there is no foundational text that theorizes the movement. Therefore, fascism has been largely examined by non-fascists. Second, scholarship on fascism both during and after the Second World War has tended to be politically motivated. Marxists produced a great deal of work on fascism, but they understand it only in terms of its economy and define it as a monopoly on capital by the bourgeoisie. In the Cold War, American historians and political scientists developed the idea of “totalitarianism,” and they barely distinguished fascism from socialism.<sup>80</sup> It was not until the end of the Cold War that a more “neutral” analysis of fascism emerged and scholars such as Roger Griffin and Roger Eatwell sought to develop its definition, acknowledging the politicized

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<sup>78</sup> Gavan McCormack, “Nineteen Thirties Japan: Fascism?” *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 14. 2 (April-June 1982): 29.

<sup>79</sup> Shillony, *Politics and Culture in Wartime Japan*. See also Andrew Gordon’s book review of Shillony in *The Journal of Asian Studies* 42. 3 (May 1983): 676-678.

<sup>80</sup> McCormack, “Nineteen Thirties Japan: Fascism?” 23.

scholarship on fascism in the immediate postwar period. Thirdly, because of their xenophobia, only the Italian Fascists referred to themselves as such. Gilbert Allardyce is correct in pointing out that those who named themselves “fascist” outside Italy came to “recognize the curse of its association with things foreign.”<sup>81</sup>

In regard to Japanese fascism, it is necessary to add a few remarks about the postwar politics of Japanese wartime history/historiography. As Joseph P. Sottile and Gavan McCormack argue, American scholarship that views wartime Japan as non-fascist was heavily embedded within the postwar alliance between the two nations and the creation of Igarashi’s “foundational narrative” in the context of the Cold War. McCormack explains the process of wartime Japan being designated as “militarist” after the war:

Reintegration of Japan into the Western camp under a conservative, bureaucratic, and business leadership demanded an explanation of the war that was largely exculpatory of mainstream Japanese conservatism. Totalitarianism, with its identification of fascist and communist systems, was inappropriate because it would be threatening to those elements of the Japanese elite who had been prominent in the 1930s; fascist theory itself, unless modified by being recast in the totalitarianism mold, had too strong associations deriving from its Marxist connotation of capitalist dictatorship. The solution was found in the development of a theory of “militarism”... Militarism, a category little referred to in analysis of

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<sup>81</sup> Allardyce, “What Fascism is Not,” 370.

European movements of the 1930s, became the orthodoxy among Western scholars writing on Japan.<sup>82</sup>

Sottile argues along the same lines, noting that especially when the emperor was alive it was preferable for American historians to promote a positive view of Japan, disassociating it from the ugly term “fascism.”<sup>83</sup> Cold War politics account for the gap between scholarship on wartime Japan by Japanese and American scholars.

Despite the complex and contested historiography of study on fascism, I opt to employ the concept as it is important to situate Japan’s case within the global context of the 1930s. My study uses the definition of fascism advanced after the Cold War in the 1990s by a new generation of historians such as Roger Griffin, Roger Eatwell, and Zeev Sternhell.<sup>84</sup> Arguing against Payne and Allardyce, Griffin, Eatwell, and Sternhell assert that we must take fascism seriously. They contend that we must consider it a political ideology and a generic concept, emphasizing the importance of discussing fascism as a

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<sup>82</sup> McCormack, “Nineteen Thirties Japan: Fascism?” 28.

<sup>83</sup> Joseph P. Sottile, “The Fascist Era: Imperial Japan and the Axis Alliance in Historical Perspective,” in *Japan in the Fascist Era*, ed. Reynolds, E. Bruce (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 11-13.

<sup>84</sup> Roger Griffin, “Introduction,” in *Fascism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Roger Eatwell, “Universal Fascism? Approaches and Definitions,” in *Fascism outside Europe: The European Impulse against Domestic Conditions in the Diffusion of Global Fascism*, ed. Stein Ugelvik Larsen (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); Zeev Sternhell, “Fascist Ideology,” in *Fascism: A Reader’s Guide: Analyses, Interpretations, Bibliography*, ed. Walter Laqueur (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

global phenomenon. Eatwell and Sternhell point out that fascism is a generic concept like socialism, democracy, capitalism, and modernism, and that every country's manifestation of those ideologies is different.<sup>85</sup> What comes out of their scholarship is the idea that we should not be fixated on the political and economic structures of fascism, such as economic monopoly and single party dominance.

Among these historians, I suggest that Roger Eatwell provides the most comprehensive, reasonable definition of fascism. According to Eatwell, fascism has four basic characteristics.<sup>86</sup> First, it is a nationalistic ideology. Second, it is a form of collectivism, which advocates the benefit of a community and a group over that of individuals. It “portrays man as a victim of alienation,” and seeks to create a society where individuals are bound with each other, such as that of the premodern period.<sup>87</sup> Third, it is a form of radicalism: rather than maintaining the status-quo, it attempts to establish a new political culture, “overcoming” existing problems and “transcending” into a new phase of history. Despite its yearning for the premodern, in other words, fascism does not advocate going back to the past society where no technology exists. As Eatwell states, “fascism is an alternative form of modernity.”<sup>88</sup> Fourth, it is the “third way” between socialism and capitalism: although it has collectivism in common with socialism, fascism is hostile to the materialistic aspects, internationalist tendency, and “false” view of equality of the socialist ideology. Fascism regards that true equality is to be found in a

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<sup>85</sup> Eatwell, “Universal Fascism?” 19-20; Sternhell, “Fascist Ideology,” 316-317.

<sup>86</sup> Eatwell, “Universal Fascism?” 33.

<sup>87</sup> Eatwell, “Universal Fascism?” 33.

<sup>88</sup> Eatwell, “Universal Fascism?” 34.

hierarchical society. At the same time, it opposes the liberalist and individualist aspects of capitalist society. Overall, Eatwell argues, syncretism between right- and left-wing thoughts characterize fascism, and fascism often resorts to extreme violence and aggression to achieve its political goals.

As Louis Althusser's model of Ideological State Apparatuses shows, state ideologies are propagated and disseminated through cultural institutions.<sup>89</sup> Recent scholarship on the cultural dimensions of fascism has enriched our understanding. Susan Sontag's famous 1974 essay "Fascinating Fascism" convincingly, if also controversially, demonstrates how fascist ideals could be mediated through particular aesthetics, which she called "fascist aesthetics."<sup>90</sup> As Alice Yaeger Kaplan, who examines French fascist culture in her 1986 book, argues, it is important to understand the ideology of fascism, "as a reproduction of desires and discourses, that is, in terms of the persuasive language used by fascism."<sup>91</sup> Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi reiterates Kaplan's point in her 1998 analysis of Italian fascism's use of symbols, images, rituals, and speeches, asserting that power produces representation but representations also produce power.<sup>92</sup> In other words, these scholars see fascism not merely as a particular form of government and economy

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<sup>89</sup> Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1997), 127-186.

<sup>90</sup> Susan Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism," *Under the Sign of Saturn*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2002).

<sup>91</sup> Kaplan, *Reproduction of Banality*, 20.

<sup>92</sup> Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 2-3.

but as a form of culture. What they find is that Eatwell's syncretism is also evident in fascist culture. Sontag illuminates the contradictory aspect of the fascist ideal:

[Fascist aesthetics] endorse two seemingly opposite states, egomania and servitude. The relations of domination and enslavement take the form of a characteristic pageantry: the massing of groups of people; the turning of people into things; the multiplication or replication of things; and the grouping of people; things around an all-powerful hypnotic leader-figure or force. The fascist dramaturgy centers on the orgiastic transaction between mighty forces and their puppets, uniformly garbed and shown in ever swelling numbers. Its choreography alternates between ceaseless motion and a congealed, static, "virile" posing. Fascist art glorifies surrender, it exalts mindlessness, it glamorizes death.<sup>93</sup>

Likewise, describing fascism as a "polarity machine," Kaplan contends that it includes both "mother-bound" and "father-bound" aspects, the mother-bound aspect being "oceanic feeling" (the "limitless, unbounded sensation that characterizes the religious experience") and the father-bound aspect being the images of black shirts, swastikas, and political sadism.<sup>94</sup>

Klaus Theweleit, Hal Foster, and Elena Gomel employ psychoanalysis in their examinations of the "polarity machine" in cultural representations of the human body.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism," 91.

<sup>94</sup> Kaplan, *Reproduction of Banality*, 12-13.

<sup>95</sup> Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1987);

Following Theweleit, Foster argues that the proto-fascist body is created from outside, through the academy, military drills, and battles, and against dissolution, fragmentation, and disintegration. It is characterized as a steely, hard, “armored” body that is to defend against the “feminine”: Jews, women, communists, and homosexuals.<sup>96</sup> The proto-fascist, furthermore, considers machines as a part of the body, and sees technology as an extension of human power.<sup>97</sup> Although the importance of machines is emphasized in socialism, Jeffrey Schnapp argues that fascist and socialist relationships with machines are different because fascists identify themselves *as* machines, which he calls “metallization.”<sup>98</sup> At the same time, Foster identifies the rather contradictory demand of the fascist subject who seeks to be free of armor, masochistically wanting to merge with the “feminine” other.<sup>99</sup>

The most important finding of studies of fascist culture is that fascism is not incompatible with artistic modernism. This finding challenges the previously held equation of modernism and liberalism and the assumption that fascist art was uncivilized and barbaric and came into existence out of a vacuum. Despite the infamous expulsion of

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Elena Gomel, “Hard and Wet: Luce Irigaray and the Fascist Body,” *Textual Practice* 12.2 (1998): 199-223; Hal Foster, “Armor Fou,” *October* 56 (Spring 1991): 64-97.

<sup>96</sup> Foster, “Armor Fou,” 84-85.

<sup>97</sup> Susan Buck-Morss, “Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin’s Artwork Essay Reconsidered,” *October* 62 (Autumn, 1992): 33.

<sup>98</sup> Jeffrey Schnapp, “18 BL: Fascist Mass Spectacle,” *Representations* 43 (Summer 1993): 113.

<sup>99</sup> Foster, “Armor Fou,” 85.



“degenerate” art, then, modernist art played an important role in the Third Reich. The study of fascist art thus amounts to a critical reassessment of modernism and its relationship to politics. As Mark Antliff writes,

Scholars now recognize the role of both fascism and modernist aesthetics in the emergence of anti-Enlightenment movements opposed to the democratic tradition that was the heritage of Enlightenment thought...[C]oncepts associated with modernist aesthetics—including regeneration, spiritualism, pre-modernism, and avant-gardism—were integrated into the anti-Enlightenment pantheon of fascist values, with the result that many artists found ground with these new movements.<sup>100</sup>

Acknowledging the modernist aspect of fascism, Andrew Hewitt, Jeffrey Herf, and Elizabeth Cowling call fascist art Fascist Modernism, Reactionary Modernism, and Avant-Garde Classicism, respectively.<sup>101</sup> Numerous scholars—including Mark Antliff, Jeffery Schnapp, Emily Braun, Diane Y. Ghirardo, Ian Boyd Whyte, Terri J. Gordon, Winfried Nerdinger, and John Heskett—have shown how modernist aesthetics in the field of architecture, design, painting, dance, and theater continued to exist under fascist rule in

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<sup>100</sup> Mark Antliff, “Fascism, Modernism, and Modernity,” *Art Bulletin* 84.1 (March 2002): 148-149.

<sup>101</sup> Elizabeth Cowling, “Introduction,” *On Classic Ground: Picasso, Léger, de Chirico and the New Classicism 1910-1930*, ed. Elizabeth Cowling and Jennifer Mundy (London: Tate Gallery, 1990); Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*; Andrew Hewitt, *Fascist Modernism: Aesthetics, Politics, and the Avant-Garde* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993).

Germany and Italy.<sup>102</sup> In particular, a great deal of scholarship shows that Bauhaus and Le Corbusier's rationalist design and architecture played an important role in fascist politics.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Mark Antliff, *Avant-Garde Fascism: The Mobilization of Myth, Art, and Culture in France, 1909-1939* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Jeffery Schnapp, "Epic Demonstrations: Fascist Modernity and the 1932 Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution," in *Fascism, Aesthetics, and Culture*, ed. Richard J. Golsan (Hanover; London: University Press of New England, 1992); Emily Braun, *Mario Sironi and Italian Modernism: Art and Politics under Fascism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Diane Y. Ghirardo, "Italian Architects and Fascist Politics: An Evaluation of the Rationalist Role in Regime Building," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 39.2 (May 1980): 109-127; Terri J. Gordon, "Fascism and the Female Form: Performance Art in the Third Reich," in *Sexuality and German Fascism*, ed. Dagmar Herzog (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005); Ian Boyd Whyte, "National Socialism and Modernism," in *Art and Power: Europe under the Dictators, 1930-45* (London: Hayward Gallery, 1995); Winfried Nerdinger, "A Hierarchy of Styles: National Socialist Architecture Between Neoclassicism and Regionalism," in *Art and Power*; John Heskett, "Modernism and Archaism in Design in the Third Reich," in *The Nazification of Art*, ed. Brandon Taylor and Wilfried van der Will (Winchester: The Winchester Press, 1990)

<sup>103</sup> Antliff, "La Cité Française: Georges Valois, Le Corbusier, and Fascist Theories of Urbanism," in *Avant-Garde Fascism*; Theodore Dalrymple, "The Architect as Totalitarian: Le Corbusier's Baleful Influence," *City Journal* 19. 4 (Autumn 2009): 244-246; Mary McLeod, "'Architecture or Revolution': Taylorism, Technocracy and Social

This raises a question about artistic style (form) and ideology: how precisely to understand the relationship between modernism and fascism.<sup>104</sup> Were there inherently “fascistic” elements in Bauhaus and Le Corbusier’s work that made it particularly appealing to fascists? Or do Bauhaus-style designs produced in the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich display stylistic differences, if only slightly, perhaps reflecting different underlying ideologies? Relevant to these questions is the claim that fascist art shares characteristics with socialist and capitalist art. Specifically, Lutz Koepnick, Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, and Karen Pinkus point out the use of commercial advertisements and graphic design in fascist art, and that fascist art appealed to viewers’ pleasure and desire.<sup>105</sup> Koepnick, for example, argues that the politics of fascism should be understood as “a form of commodity aesthetics” and explains that the brand-name “Hitler” became a fetish, appealing to diverse desires and fantasies.<sup>106</sup> Jeffrey Schnapp

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Change,” *Art Journal* 43. 2 (1987): 132-47; Winfried Nerdinger, “Bauhaus Architecture in the Third Reich,” in *Bauhaus Culture: From Weimar to The Cold War*, ed. Kathleen James-Chakraborty (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

<sup>104</sup> This question is best articulated in Susan A. Manning, “Modern Dance in the Third Reich: Six Positions and a Coda,” in *Choreographing History*, ed. Susan Leigh Foster (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995).

<sup>105</sup> Lutz Koepnick, “Fascist Aesthetics Revisited,” *Modernism Modernity* 6.1 (January 1999): 51-73; Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Karen Pinkus, *Bodily Regimes* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).

<sup>106</sup> Koepnick, “Fascist Aesthetics Revisited,” 55-6.

and Susan Buck-Morss have likewise pointed out similarities between socialist and fascist art, both of which are totalitarian styles that emphasize the collective and are obsessed with machines.<sup>107</sup>

My approach to this problem is to understand fascist art as the fascists' *appropriation* of modern art. In other words, even if we see the same style of architecture and design in the Soviet Union, the United States, Germany and Italy, we need to look at the surrounding environment to assess its meaning.<sup>108</sup> Here, I follow the approaches of Terri Gordon and Winfried Nerdinger. Gordon studies the capitalist commercial theater that initially developed in the Weimar period and continued to exist in the Third Reich. She distinguishes the revue from the Weimar and that from the Third Reich and writes, "What is particular to the Nazi period is its explicit nationalization and instrumentalization of the genre. The visual display of the female form in ornamental patterns in the Weimar period was imbued with political content in the Nazi era."<sup>109</sup> Similarly, confronting the vexed problem that neo-classicist architecture existed both in the United States and Germany in the 1930s, Nerdinger writes, "The distinction between neoclassicism in Germany and elsewhere must be drawn...No one can analyze the Nazi system by looking at architectural forms alone...ultimately, the decisive factors are function, content, and social relevance."<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Schnapp, "18 BL: Fascist Mass Spectacle"; Buck-Morss, "Aesthetics and Anaesthetics."

<sup>108</sup> Nerdinger, "A Hierarchy of Styles," 323.

<sup>109</sup> Terri J. Gordon, "Fascism and the Female Form," 183.

<sup>110</sup> Nerdinger, "A Hierarchy of Styles," 323-324.

My approach is also indebted to that taken by Serge Guilbaut, who demonstrates how international modernism was arrested by the state agenda in the United States in the early 1940s.<sup>111</sup> Guilbaut's study shows how the United States "stole" modernism in its fight against fascism and communism in the Second World War and the Cold War. In America, modernism became "American" art that was believed to embody the state ideology of freedom, individualism, democracy, and capitalism.<sup>112</sup> Thus my study is based on the view that the ideological manifestations of modern art vary from one country to another. We might see an element of capitalism and socialism in fascist culture, but it is important to recognize that such an element was ultimately appropriated by the ideology of fascism and deployed as a vehicle to convey fascist messages. Michel Foucault's "discursive formation" and Terry Eagleton's "ideology of the aesthetic" also inform my scholarship.<sup>113</sup> In other words, I will examine artworks not individually but in relation to networks and systems that consist of "the interplay of the rules that make possible the appearance of objects during a given period of time."<sup>114</sup> Finally, my study stems from the understanding that the realm of the aesthetic is not immune to the political or the social.

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<sup>111</sup> Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

<sup>112</sup> Here, ironically, American art critics and artists incorrectly assumed that fascist art was "non-modern" art.

<sup>113</sup> Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990); Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969; repr., London: Routledge, 2002).

<sup>114</sup> Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, 36.

As for Japanese fascism, I argue that the studies by Griffin, Eatwell, and Sternhell, which see fascism as an ideology, are sufficient to refute the claims of Wilson, Duus, Okamoto, and Shillony. If we follow Eatwell's definition of fascism, wartime Japan was clearly a fascist state. The wartime Japanese state touted nationalism, collectivism, and recreation of a premodern Japanese community without entirely abandoning modern science and technology, and publically denounced socialism and capitalism. It is important to note that none of their "alternative" models (movement-regime and corporatism) have gained significant currency. In particular, Wilson's suggestion that Japan should be compared to China and Korea rather than Italy and Germany both fails to recognize the fact that Japan was a fully modernized nation that became the only non-Western colonial power. Moreover, regarding Duus and Okamoto's statement that "the psychological need to identify who or what was responsible for the tragedy of the Second World War may have passed," I agree with historian Hilary Conroy, who wrote, "discussion of any ideology, system, or 'ism' is not a dead issue until the toll of dead, wounded, and brutalized it produced has been considered in more than a theoretical way."<sup>115</sup> On the other hand, I must concur with Wilson that the word fascism, especially in Japanese scholarship, has been used in a way that it is far too loose. Throughout this dissertation, therefore, I strive to be attentive to the specific characteristics of fascism.

Admittedly, there is a theoretical difficulty when it comes to understanding *where* fascism came from in the case of Japanese fascism. One could argue that some elements of fascism already lay in Japanese culture. The violent aspect and hierarchical social

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<sup>115</sup> Hilary Conroy, "Concerning Japanese Fascism," *Journal of Asian Studies* 40.2 (February 1981): 328.

structure of fascism, for example, seem not too different from the principle of bushido (the way of warrior), which emphasized the importance of death, or Japanese traditional feudalism, which was strictly hierarchical. In fact, some scholars have suggested that fascism was heavily inspired by “Oriental” culture, and if this is the case, the affinity between fascism and Japanese traditional political and cultural values might have made it easier for Japan to understand fascism despite its supposedly European origins.

Examining the influence of non-Western forms of thought and government on fascism, Roger Eatwell cites Enrico Corradini, a key figure in Italian radical nationalism who was inspired by Japanese religious worship of the emperor.<sup>116</sup> Hugh B. Urban has written about Julius Evola, an Italian fascist who not only had a major impact on the formation of the SS but was also interested in esotericism in India.<sup>117</sup> Likewise, Russell Berman examines works by Emil Nolde, a member of the Nazi party and a German expressionist painter whose work was ironically dismissed by the Nazis as “degenerate.”<sup>118</sup> Berman contends that Nolde finds anti-Enlightenment rhetoric such as the virtue of myth, virility,

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<sup>116</sup>Eatwell, “Universal Fascism? Approaches and Definitions,” *Fascism outside Europe: The European Impulse against Domestic Conditions in the Diffusion of Global Fascism*, 26.

<sup>117</sup> Hugh B. Urban, “The Yoga of Power: Sex Magic, Tantra, and Fascism in Twentieth Century Europe,” in *Magia Sexualis: Sex, Magic, and Liberation in Modern Western Esotericism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

<sup>118</sup> Russell A. Berman, “German Primitivism/ Primitive Germany: The Case of Emil Nolde,” in *Fascism, Aesthetics, and Culture*, ed. Richard J. Golsan (Hanover; London: University Press of New England, 1992).

and community, in cultures outside Europe, and concludes that Nolde ultimately found a similar rhetoric to his modernist primitivism in the principle of fascism.<sup>119</sup> Moreover, it is often said that in “the late developing nations” (Italy, Germany, and Japan), industrial elites were not replaced by urban industrialists and that the contradiction between feudalism and industrialization necessarily led them to fascism.<sup>120</sup> This theory indeed seems to support the claim that fascism was somehow intrinsic to Japan.<sup>121</sup>

At the same time, we may consider that fascism was introduced from Europe, and thus regard fascism as external to Japan. During the war, as I discussed at the beginning of this Introduction, through the Tripartite Pact, Japan had a considerable amount of political as well as cultural exchanges and dialogues with Germany and Italy. As I demonstrate in this dissertation, the art of machine-ism and new classicism and important ideas about eugenics and racial hygiene were indeed imported from Europe. To a significant degree, then, importation of fascist practices and discourse played a role in Japanese fascism, and so the concept of “cultural translation” is pertinent to the study of Japanese fascism. This model of analysis allows us to move away from previous studies of Japanese fascism that tend to be Eurocentric. In other words, instead of comparing Japan with Germany and Italy and pointing out the “lack” of some characteristics of

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<sup>119</sup> Berman, “German Primitivism,” 63.

<sup>120</sup> Quoted in Gavan McCormack, “Nineteen Thirties Japan: Fascism?” *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 14. 2 (April-June 1982): 24. Originally in Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon, 1967), 442.

<sup>121</sup> This part is highly indebted to my dialogue with Sharalyn Orbaugh.



fascism in Japan, I look at how fascism was “translated” into the Japanese context. Recent post-colonial and transnational studies successfully challenge the teleological concept of history, especially prominent in “modernization theory,” which assumes that there are certain steps that must be taken for a country to be fully modernized. They instead illuminate how different countries make contact through trade, travel, imperialism, and war, and how these interconnections influence culture.<sup>122</sup> The symbols and meanings of one culture are modified, appropriated, selected, or discarded when translated into another. I argue that when fascism was “translated” to Japan it became *both* Japanese *and* fascist, making Japan’s fascism ambivalent. What defines the relationship between Japan and other fascist nations is thus the quality of “almost but not quite the same.”<sup>123</sup> It is liminality and partiality, not totality, that characterize Japanese fascism.

Despite the cases of Wilson, Duus, Okamoto, and Shillony, numerous scholars—both Japanese and non-Japanese—have written on fascist aspects of wartime Japan’s

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<sup>122</sup> Nikos Papastergiadis, “The Limits of Cultural Translation,” in *Over Here: International Perspectives on Art and Culture*, ed. Gerardo Mosquera and Jean Fisher (Mass., Cambridge: the MIT Press, 2004), 330; Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Routledge), 1992.

<sup>123</sup> Bhabha talks about colonialism and the power relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, which is very different from my project. Yet, his idea of how one culture becomes translated in another is relevant. Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 110.

politics and culture. As early as the 1930s, intellectuals such as Hasegawa Nyozeikan, Imanaka Tsugimaro, Gushima Kanezaburō, Sassa Hirō, and Tosaka Jun wrote on and criticized fascist aspects of Japanese politics, though some of their work was censored.<sup>124</sup> Two Soviet Japanologists, O. Tanin and E. Yahan wrote *Militarism and Fascism in Japan* in 1934.<sup>125</sup> Some of these were Marxist scholars and exclusively concerned with the economic structure of wartime Japan, but others examined fascism in a broader sense, attentive to the way in which Japanese fascism drew on existing indigenous social structures and cultural traditions, such as the emperor system and the concept of the family state. In 1947, political scientist Maruyama Masao delivered a speech on Japanese fascism, calling it “Emperor-System Fascism” (*tennōsei fashizumu*),

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<sup>124</sup> Hasegawa Nyozeikan, *Nihon fashizumu hihan* [The Critique of Japanese Fascism] (Tokyo: Ōhata shoten, 1932); Imanaka Tsugimaro and Gushima Kanezaburō, *Fashizumu ron* [The Theory of Fascism] (Tokyo: Mikasa shobō, 1935); Gushima Kanezaburō, *Fashizumu* [Fascism] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1968); Sassa Hirō, *Nihon fashizumu no hatten katei* [The Process of Development of Japanese Fascism] (Tokyo: Asano Shoten, 1932); Tosaka Jun, *Nippon ideologī ron* [The Theory of Japanese Ideology] (Tokyo: Hakuyōsha, 1935). Although Hasegawa Nyozeikan criticized Japanese fascism, he later converted and became active as a state cultural authority during the war. It is his later wartime activity that I examine in the body of the dissertation, especially in Chapter One.

<sup>125</sup> O. Tanin and T. Yohan, *Militarism and Fascism in Japan* (New York: International Publishers, 1934).

illuminating Japan-specific elements such as the *zaibatsu* (industrial and financial business conglomerates) and the feudal system.<sup>126</sup> Maruyama stated:

Japanese fascism . . . shared the ideology of its Italian and German counterparts in such matters as the rejection of the worldview of individualistic liberalism, opposition to parliamentary politics which is the political expression of liberalism, insistence on foreign expansion, a tendency to glorify military build-up and war, a strong emphasis on racial myths and the national essence, a rejection of class warfare based on totalitarianism, and the struggle against Marxism.<sup>127</sup>

In 1987 Yoshimi Yoshiaki influentially developed the idea of “grassroots fascism” (*kusano ne no fashizumu*), a state fascism that was enthusiastically embraced by politically frustrated, financially suffocated Japanese citizens, especially those in rural areas.<sup>128</sup> In so doing, Yoshimi points out the distinct characteristics of Japanese fascism as “cool fascism”—that Japanese fascism was not a result of revolution from below, but

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<sup>126</sup> George Macklin Wilson, “A New Look at the Problem of ‘Japanese Fascism,’” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 10. 4 (Jul, 1968): 402-3.

<sup>127</sup> Maruyama Masao, “The Ideology and Dynamics of Japanese Fascism,” in *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*, ed. Ivan Morris (London; Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 35. The essay was first delivered as a lecture at Tokyo University in 1947.

<sup>128</sup> Yoshimi Yoshiaki, *Kusano ne no fashizumu: Nihon minshū no sensō taiken* [Grassroots Fascism: War Experiences of the Japanese Masses] (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1987).

rather of implementation from above. In fact, a great number of Japanese scholars have written on the topic, and this trend of scholarship continues to this day.<sup>129</sup>

Only Maruyama Masao's work has been translated into English, in 1969, but since then there has been sophisticated scholarship on the subject in English that probes into Japan's connections with other fascist nations and fascist aspects of wartime Japanese politics and culture. For example, Miles Fletcher's 1982 book examines the Shōwa Research Association, which was the brain trust of the Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro's 1940 "New Order."<sup>130</sup> Fletcher compellingly demonstrates how intellectuals in the Association maintained ties with Italy and Germany (Miki Kiyoshi studied with Heidegger, for example), and specifically drew on the models of the two countries for policy-making. Calling post-1935 Japan the period of "Imperial Fascism," historian Andrew Gordon also shows how civil, private organizations established in the period of

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<sup>129</sup> For recent Japanese fascism studies by Japanese scholars, see Abe Hirozumi, *Nihon fashizumu ron* [The Theory of Fascism] (Tokyo: Kage shobō, 1996); Akazawa Shirō and Kitagawa Kenzō, eds, *Bunka to fashizumu: senjiki Nihon ni okeru bunka no kōbō* [Culture and Fascism: The Light of Culture under Wartime Japan] (Tokyo: Nihon keizai hyōron sha, 1993); Fujino Yutaka, *Kyōsei sareta kenkō: Nihon fashizumuka no seimei toshintai* [Forced Health: Life and Body under Japanese Fascism] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Hirofumi kan, 2000).

<sup>130</sup> William Miles Fletcher, *The Search for a New Order: Intellectuals and Fascism in Prewar Japan* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982).

Imperial Democracy were gradually swallowed up into state organization through the Election Purification Movement of 1935 and the National Mobilization Law of 1938.<sup>131</sup>

In her book *Authenticating Culture in Imperial Japan* (1996), Leslie Pincus traces Japanese philosopher Kuki Shūzō, who studied phenomenology and hermeneutics under Martin Heidegger in Germany, and investigates the production of Japanese aesthetics in relation to the concepts of the organic community of *Volksgemeinschaft* and the privileging of the collective “Being.”<sup>132</sup> Also arguing that 1930s Japan was fascist, historian Harry Harootunian’s 2001 book on Japan’s experience of modernity is global in its scope, and sees fascism as a modern nation’s particular response to modernity. He writes, “Fascism in Japan, and elsewhere, appeared under the guise of what might be called *gemeinschaft* capitalism and the claims of a social order free from the uncertainties and indeterminacies of an alienated civil society, where an eternalized and unchanging cultural or communal order was put into the service of the capitalist mode of production to establish a ‘capitalism without capitalism.’”<sup>133</sup> The desire for “capitalism without capitalism” was most well articulated in the 1942 symposium “overcoming the modern,” a subject Harootunian examines at length in his book.

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<sup>131</sup> Andrew Gordon, *Labor and Imperial Democracy in Prewar Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 320.

<sup>132</sup> Leslie Pincus, *Authenticating Culture in Imperial Japan: Kuki Shūzō and the Rise of National Aesthetics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

<sup>133</sup> Harry Harootunian, “Overcoming Modernity,” in *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001),

xxx.

More recently, historian Kim Brandt, in her 2007 book on the Japanese Arts and Crafts Movement (*mingei*), examines how the wartime plan for a factory dormitory sponsored by the wartime state was predicated on the vision of creating a classless, rationalist fascist utopia that prepares for total war.<sup>134</sup> The most important recent developments, however, are Japanese literature specialist Alan Tansman's monograph on fascism and wartime literature *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism* (2009), and the anthology *The Culture of Japanese Fascism* that Tansman edited. The anthology includes essays by major scholars such as Kevin Doak, Kim Brandt, Harry Harootunian, and Marilyn Ivy that specifically explore the *cultural* production of fascism. Examining a wide variety of media (film, architecture, design, literature, museum exhibition), the contributors build upon recent scholarship on fascism and fascist culture by Roger Griffin, Mark Antliff, Alice Kaplan, Jeffrey Schnapp and others. Importantly, however, the anthology does *not* include an essay on paintings.

### **Chapter Summary**

This dissertation assumes that wartime Japan was a fascist state, if not entirely, and considers what visual form the fascist ideology took in Japan. Exploring representations of space, time, and the human body in Japanese wartime paintings, this study will look at four different characteristics that have been identified as fascist by other scholars—the social regimentation, new classicism, the racialized body, and the mechanized body.

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<sup>134</sup> See especially Chapter Five of Brandt, *Kingdom of Beauty*.

Chapter One looks at a corpus of Japanese-style paintings produced between 1935 and 1940 called machine-ist paintings (*kikaishugi/ mekanizumu*), such as Saeki Shunkō's *Tearoom* (1936), that depict modern girls (*moga*). Attending to the socio-political context of their production, I suggest that the visual field of the paintings could be understood as metonymic of regimented, over-homogenized fascist social space in which individuals are subsumed by the state and are surveilled, mobilized, and disciplined for war. In so doing, I demonstrate how a strain of international modernism—machine aesthetics and rationalism—was co-opted by the state.

Chapter Two continues the discussion on Japanese-style paintings and studies *bijin-ga* (pictures of beautiful people) executed by female Japanese-style painter Uemura Shōen (1875-1949), such as *Wind* (1939) and *Lady Kusunoki* (1944). Illuminating stylistic transformations in her art that took place in the late 1930s, I situate her works within the discourse of a new classicism (*shin kotenshugi*), which combines the elements of both modernism and classicism. I demonstrate how her wartime art resonates with the early 1940s discourse of “overcoming the modern” (*kindai no chōkoku*) and how it articulates the fascist conceptualization of time, which envisions the future as a recreation of past. This chapter also compares Shōen with the German filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl and interrogates the role of female artists in a fascist state.

Chapter Three provides an overview of War Campaign Record Paintings (*Sensō Sakusen Kirokuga*), Western-style propaganda paintings commissioned by the state. It examines salient aspects of war art and surveys works by leading wartime painters such as Koiso Ryōhei, Miyamoto Saburō, Ihara Usaburō, and Fujita Tsuguharu. I explore the relationship between the War Campaign Record Paintings and photography and Germany

and also examines the prominent disembodiment of the human body that appeared in Japanese war art, more specifically, in Fujita Tsuguharu's paintings.

Chapter Four analyzes representations of the material body in War Campaign Record Paintings, including Miyamoto Saburō's *Meeting of Generals Yamashita and Percival* (1942) and Fujita Tsuguharu's *The Divine Soldier Is Here To Rescue* (1944), in relation to the fascist discourses of eugenics and scientific racism. Although scientific racism was introduced from Nazi Germany, I suggest that the paintings do *not* represent the concept of race (*jinshu*), which was understood to be about the scientific/biological measurement of external characteristics of the human body; rather, they represent a related, slightly modified concept of ethnicity (*minzoku*): human taxonomy based on "subjective," internal characteristics. That Japan modified the concept of race and its visual manifestation, I argue, reflects the fact that Japan was a non-white country fighting a colonial war.

Chapter Five continues to investigate representations of the material body in War Campaign Record Paintings. This chapter, however, considers the fascist concept of the mechanized human body and looks at the representation of the Kamikaze Special Attack Forces, a group of male soldiers who "body-rammed" into enemy targets. As in Chapter Four, I show how fascism manifested itself differently in Japan: the pilots' conception of their bodies as weapons resonates with Klaus Theweleit's claim that a fascist subject identifies his body as armor, but the visual representations of the dying attackers most often drew on "traditional" Japanese aesthetics, such as the symbolism of fallen cherry blossoms. Finally, in the Conclusion I summarize my findings and consider the postwar transformations of the fascist discourses.



## CHAPTER ONE

### The Fascist Social Space of “Proper Place” and Japanese-style Machine-ist Paintings 1935-1940

#### Introduction

*Tearoom* <Figure 1-1>, painted by Saeki Shunkō in 1936, is a painting of two café waitresses with bobbed hair. The modern girls (*moga*) wear identical Western-style uniforms, their jackets and skirts in dark yet primary colors of red, blue, and yellow. They face the viewer, standing side by side in front of a bar counter and holding a stainless steel tray. Next to them are a white concrete pedestal and an aluminum shelf that neatly holds variously shaped green cacti in separate vessels. The floor’s diamond motif, the angular edges of the plants, and the round surfaces of the waitresses’ faces and skirts add geometric harmony to the picture and signal the artist’s interest in modernist abstraction. *Shōwa Sophistication: Japan in the 1930s*, the exhibition held by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston in 2008, displayed this painting and interpreted it as Japan’s celebration of modernity. According to the museum website, paintings such as Saeki’s

expressed a worldview held by large numbers of Japanese during the 1930s.

They saw themselves as sophisticated citizens of the world: their country created a national park system to rival that of the United States, their country sent successful teams to both the winter and summer Olympics (and, in fact, was awarded the right to host the 1940s games by the International

Committee), and they celebrated Christmas exactly as all Western countries did (although in Japan it did not have any religious significance).<sup>135</sup>

Modernity here was positively understood as “sophistication” and implicitly contrasted to the following period that is known as the “dark valley.”

Not everybody reads Japanese-style paintings of modern girls produced in the late 1930s positively, however. In his exhibition review, Greg Cook critically pointed out that the museum did not explain the relationship between the paintings displayed and the socio-political context of the developing war and atrocities, including the Nanjing Massacre of 1937.<sup>136</sup> Sebastian Smee, who also reviewed the exhibition, suggests that the girls in Saeki’s painting appear “generic” and “unapproachable” and look like “palace guards”: placed against a “grid”-like background, the girls seem to be “passive women who dreamily, even languidly, accepted their place.”<sup>137</sup> Indeed, in *Tearoom*, the subjects’ faces appear hollow and grim as they look emotionlessly into the distance, and as a result,

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<sup>135</sup> The museum did not produce a catalogue for this exhibition, but information relating to it can be found on the museum’s website. The website does not name the show’s curator. <<http://www.mfa.org/exhibitions/sub.asp?key=15&subkey=7510>> (accessed on 30 May 2010).

<sup>136</sup> Greg Cook, “East meets West,” *The Boston Phoenix*, 24 March 2009. <<http://the phoenix.com/boston/arts/78854-east-meets-west/>> (accessed on 30 May 2010).

<sup>137</sup> Sebastian Smee, “A Changing Japan: Transporting Show Captures Era’s Shift,” *The Boston Globe*, 9 August 2009. <[http://www.boston.com/ae/theater\\_arts/articles/2009/08/09/showa\\_sophistication\\_reflects\\_japan\\_of\\_the\\_1930s/](http://www.boston.com/ae/theater_arts/articles/2009/08/09/showa_sophistication_reflects_japan_of_the_1930s/)> (accessed on 25 May 2010)

the painting evokes a sense of coldness, solemnity, and chilling calmness. Smee furthermore writes that the painting expresses “the flavor of Japanese modernism that had changed” and that it evokes “a new kind of conformity, one that uncannily anticipated the peculiar mixture of Westernization and corporate conformity in postwar Japan.”<sup>138</sup>

Regarding 1930s Japanese-style paintings of modern girls more broadly, art historian Shiokawa Kyōko has stated that she sees “the eeriness of fascism” behind them.<sup>139</sup>

Another art historian, Satō Miki, similarly writes that the paintings, whether directly or indirectly, represent the social conditions and unstable situation of the 1930s, the advent of the Fifteen Year War.<sup>140</sup> In other words, unlike the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, these reviewers and art historians see a quality of conformity, collectivism, and state control—rather than liberalism, individualism, and democracy—in paintings such as Saeki’s *Tearoom*.

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<sup>138</sup> Smee, “A Changing Japan.”

<sup>139</sup> Originally in Shiokawa Kyōko, “Fūzokuga: minshūshi no shōnin” [Genre Works: Witnesses of History of the Masses], in *Kindai Nihonga ni okeru fūzokuga* [Genre Works in Modern Japanese-style Paintings](Kyoto: Kyoto City Museum, 1984), 7. Quoted in Satō Miki, “Nihongaka tachi no shisen: 1930 nendai no Nihonga ni tsuite” [The Gaze of Japanese Artists: About Japanese-style Paintings of the 1930s], in *1930 nendai ten* [The Exhibition of 1930s Art] (Tsu: Mie Prefectural Art Museum, 1999). Reproduced online <[http://www.pref.mie.jp/bijutsu/hp/event/catalogue/1930\\_nihonbi/sato.htm](http://www.pref.mie.jp/bijutsu/hp/event/catalogue/1930_nihonbi/sato.htm)>(accessed 30 May 2010).

<sup>140</sup> Satō Miki, “Nihongaka tachi no shisen: 1930 nendai no Nihonga ni tsuite.”

In this chapter, I examine a corpus of Japanese-style paintings produced between 1935 and 1940 that depict modern urban women, attending to the way in which they reflect the socio-political context of their production. I will argue that the visual field of these paintings can be understood as metonymic of a regimented, over-homogenized fascist social space wherein individuals are subsumed under the state, being surveilled, mobilized, and disciplined for war. In so doing, this chapter shows how international modernist aesthetics (such as machine aesthetics and rationalism), which was informed by modernity (the development of technology and science), was co-opted by the state.

First, I trace the history of Japanese-style paintings and explain how the paintings produced between 1935 and 1940—which share aesthetics with several closely-connected modernist art forms such as Art Deco, Bauhaus, Le Corbusier’s architecture, machine art, and New Objectivity—are different from the Japanese-style paintings of the previous period. Illustrating how Bauhaus and Le Corbusier’s works survived under fascism and were appropriated by the state in Germany and Italy to design the social space of *Gleichschaltung* (German: “forcible coordination”) and *gerarchia* (Italian: “hierarchy”), I argue that this appropriation of international modernism took place in Japan too. Considered from this perspective, the group of paintings examined in this chapter, I suggest, can be read in terms of regimentation, state surveillance, and mechanization/dehumanization of the human subject. Lastly, I explain how, in Japan, the rationalized fascist social space was theorized and understood as embodying “Japanese” values and aesthetics. I conclude this chapter by drawing out how my study challenges the previously held assumptions about modern girls in particular and modernity and modern art in general.

## Japanese-Style Machinist Paintings 1935-1940

Japanese-style painting (*Nihon-ga*) is a genre established by nationalist art critic Okakura Tenshin and Harvard graduate Ernest Fenollosa in the late nineteenth century. They attempted to create “authentic” Japanese national art by (paradoxically) merging Western ideas—that fine arts should exclude calligraphic elements and be created for the public—and Japanese artistic traditions. Consequently encompassing a wide range of Japanese pre-modern artistic traditions such as the Kanō, Tosa, Rinpa, and Shijō schools, to name but a few, Japanese-style paintings were defined in opposition to Western-style paintings (*yōga*).<sup>141</sup> Kobori Tomoto’s *Abolition of the Han System* (1871) <Figure 1-2>, to which I will return, is a naturalistically rendered history painting and an example of the early Japanese-style paintings.

With the introduction of impressionism from Europe, Japanese-style painters began deploying art as a means of individualized expression.<sup>142</sup> The New Literati Painting Movement (*shin nanga*) of the late 1910s, for example, explored spontaneous

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<sup>141</sup> Victoria Weston, *Japanese Painting and National Identity: Okakura Tenshin and His Circle* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2004); Ellen Conant, *Nihonga: Transcending the Past: Japanese-Style Painting, 1868-1968* (St. Louis, MO: St. Louis Art Museum, 1995).

<sup>142</sup> Aida-Yuen Wong, “A New Life for Literati Painting in the Early Twentieth Century: Eastern Art and Modernity, a Transcultural Narrative?” *Artibus Asiae* 60 (2000): 297-326; Paul Berry and Morioka Michiyo, *Literati Modern: Bunjinga from Late Edo to Twentieth-Century Japan* (Honolulu: Honolulu Academy of Arts, 2008).

brushstrokes as expressions of artists' individual subjectivity, drawing on the Chinese literati tradition. In 1911, the magazine *Shirakaba* introduced post-impressionist works by Cézanne, van Gogh, Gauguin, and Matisse, and by Japanese-style artists such as Kokei, Maeda Seison, and Takeuchi Seihō, who had travelled to Europe in the 1920s.<sup>143</sup> Tsuchida Bakusen also studied in Europe and was heavily influenced by Paul Gauguin. Bakusen experimented with formal abstraction and dramatic colors while turning to the decorative qualities and smooth paints of Japanese traditional art, such as *yamato-e*, *Rinpa*, and *ukiyo-e*.<sup>144</sup> Unlike Kobori's 1871 work, Bakusen's *Maiko in Landscape* <Figure 1-3> features thick paint. While it might not be about contemporary life, Bakusen's work also lacks the element of historicity found in Kobori's painting. With its saturated colors, deformation of the figure, spatial disjuncture, though it belongs to the traditional genre of *bijin-ga* (paintings of beautiful people), Bakusen's work marks a new phase of Japanese-style paintings that were informed by post-impressionist modern European art.

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<sup>143</sup> *Shajitsu no keifu IV: "kaiga" no jukusei—1930 nendai no Nihonga to yōga* [The Genealogy of Realism: Maturation of "Painting"—Japanese-Style Paintings and Western-Style Paintings] (Tokyo: The Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, 1994).

<sup>144</sup> Doris Croissant, "Icons of Femininity: Japanese National Painting and the Paradox of Modernity," in *Gender and Power in The Japanese Visual Field*, ed. Joshua S. Mostow, Norman Bryson, and Maribeth Graybill (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003).

For more on Bakusen, see John Szostak, "The Kokuga Sōsaku Kyōkai and Kyoto Nihonga Reform in the Meiji, Taishō and Early Shōwa Years (1900-1928), Ph.D. diss. (Seattle: University of Washington, 2005).

A slightly different artistic trend started to develop around 1935, in which painters portrayed modern girls with modern industrial products. Sasaki's *Tearoom*, which depicts industrial materials including aluminum and steel, belongs to this genre, and for that reason is distinct from Bakusen's *Maiko in Landscape*, which focuses on the natural landscape. Yamakawa Shūhō's *Three Sisters* (1936) <Figure 1-4> shares certain characteristics with *Tearoom*. It is a portrait of three daughters of right-wing politician Kuhara Fusanosuke (1869–1965), and it brings the modern motif of a white sedan into the pictorial space of the Japanese-style painting.<sup>145</sup> Similarly, *Biwa Concert* <Figure 1-5> by Shibata Suiha (b. 1908), a painting of a woman with permed hair playing a *biwa* lute (a Japanese variation of the Chinese *pipa*), includes a microphone that looks like a modern-day camera in the right foreground of the painting.<sup>146</sup> Ōta Chōu's *Women Observing the Stars* (1936) <Figure 1-6 > depicts a woman in a kimono sitting on a modern Western chair looking through a telescope, while *Bathing Women I* (1938) by Ogura Yuki depicts two naked women in a modern bath. This artistic trend was not limited to Japan: Korean artist Lee Yoo-tae's *Research*, produced slightly later in 1944, also juxtaposes woman and modernity, showing a female scientist in a laboratory.

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<sup>145</sup> Kendall H. Brown, Sharon Minichiello, and the Honolulu Academy of Arts, *Taishō Chic: Japanese Modernity, Nostalgia, and Deco* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 46.

<sup>146</sup> Brown, "Flowers of Taisho: Images of Women in Japanese Society and Art: 1915-1935," in *Taisho Chic*, 82.

Notably, all of these paintings are remarkably large.<sup>147</sup> This artistic trend continued until 1940, when traditional and historical subjects came to dominate the field of Japanese-style paintings.

No label was attached to this artistic trend in Japanese-style paintings, either by the artists themselves or by critics. This is perhaps because the trend only continued for a few years and tended to be pursued by younger artists who had not yet established their names. *Moga* and machines might have entered the Japanese-style paintings earlier, but I argue that the quality of regimentation that I discussed above can be seen primarily in the paintings produced around and after 1935. As the *Miyako shinbun* in 1936 referred to a Japanese-style painting that shows subways as machine-ist (*mekanizumu* or *kikaishugi*), for convenience, throughout this chapter I will call the above-mentioned paintings Japanese-style machine-ist paintings.<sup>148</sup>

One of the characteristics of the Japanese-style machine-ist paintings is regimented spatial coordination. Kobori's *Abolition of the Han System*, mentioned above, creates an illusion of three-dimensional space, placing figures against an architectural background. The artist draws on the pictorial conventions of European academicism and the principle of scientific perspective. As a result, the painting is naturalistic in its execution.

Bakusen's *Maiko in Landscape*, created fifty years later, defies the spatial orientation of

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<sup>147</sup> *Tearoom* (264 x 197 cm), *Three Sisters* (177 x 333 cm), *Biwa Concert* (172 x 188 cm), *Woman* (150 x 200 cm), *Women Observing the Stars* (273 x 206 cm), *Bathing Women I* (209 x 174 cm), and *Research* (210x 151 cm).

<sup>148</sup> "Nihon-ga nimo mekanizumu" [Machine Aesthetics in Japanese-style Painting Too], *Miyako shinbun*, September 10, 1936.



Kobori's painting. Just as Gauguin rebelled against academicism, Bakusen's work challenges perspectivism, creating a flat, two-dimensional space.<sup>149</sup> In the painting, the shape of the coast snakes freely and the tree-covered island in the background seems to hover behind the girl's head. Both the coast and the island refuse to recede in space.

Machine-ist paintings of the 1930s operate in the two-dimensional space of Bakusen's painting; unlike in Bakusen's painting, however, the spatial formation of the machine-ist paintings is much more regimented, rationalized, and mechanically coordinated. While Bakusen uses organic, soft, round forms to stylize the shapes of the human figure and the natural environment, Yamakawa, for example, compares the contour lines of the three figures with the streamlined body of the car in his *Three Sisters*. In Shibata's *Biwa Concert* too, the mechanical, plastic look of the microphone is echoed by the rather stiff outline that defines the *biwa* player's body. What emphasizes the firmness of the lines is a simplified composition that makes use of a large flat blank space and focuses on the horizontal and vertical qualities of the canvas. In *Three Sisters*, spatial depth is only indicated by the grayish shadow under the car, and the background is as monotonous as the white of the car's surface. Likewise, in *Biwa Concert*, the empty space does not provide a clue as to where the female player is located.<sup>150</sup> The vertical form of the microphone is replicated in the upright posture of the woman.

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<sup>149</sup> It is important to note that Bakusen's project of Kokuga Seisaku Kyōkai was to create "national art." In that sense, it remains to be established whether he ever tried to challenge the establishment in the political sense like Gauguin.

<sup>150</sup> Kikuya Yoshio makes a similar point about the empty background in Japanese-style paintings produced around the 1930s. Kikuya Yoshio, "*Shōwa zenki ni okeru inten to*

Comparing Kokei's *Bath* (1921) <Figure 1-7> and Ogura Yuki's *Bathing Women I* (1938) makes the quality of regimentation in 1930s paintings even clearer.<sup>151</sup> The two paintings are strikingly similar: both depict two naked women soaking in emerald green water. While Kokei's bathroom has a wooden floor and tiles, however, Ogura's is made of white industrial tile. The sense of warmth that the wooden architecture creates in Kokei's painting is absent in Ogura's work, which focuses on the cool, sleek surface of the tile. And while Kokei creates a soft focus on the naked women's bodies, Ogura clearly delineates the contour of the female bodies with firm black lines. Showing the white tiles at the bottom of the bathtub through the transparent water, Ogura places both women in a grid created by the rectangular tiles.

### **The Genealogy of Machine Aesthetics in Modern Japan**

The Japanese-style machine-ist paintings employ the visual language of international modernism that embraced the development of science and technology,

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*sono hasei dantai to no kankei*" [The relationship between Inten and Other Art Groups in the Early Showa Period], in *Nihon bijutsuin hyakunenshi* (Tokyo: Nihon bijutsuin, 1998), 342–43.

<sup>151</sup> Ogura was the second female artist to receive the Order of Culture, the first being Uemura Shōen. Ogura is the most famous of the artists I examine in this chapter. Although Sasaki, Yamakawa, Shibata, Nakamura, and Ōta studied with relatively well known artists (Itō Shinsui, Itō Shōha, Kaburagi Kiyokata, Nishiyama Suishō and Maeda Seison, respectively), I could not locate writings or comments by them on the specific works analyzed here.

which emerged in the first few decades of the twentieth century. This school of international modernism, distinct from other forms of modernism such as primitivism and fauvism, celebrated ideas and aesthetics associated with modernization, such as rationality, efficiency, objectivity, mass production, and standardization. Although machine aesthetics did not appear in the Japanese-style paintings until around 1935, they existed in other artistic media. Several different yet closely connected art forms and movements in Euro-America—Art Deco, machine art, Bauhaus’ design and photography, Le Corbusier’s rationalist architecture, and New Objectivity—were introduced to Japan during the 1920s, the time of Taishō democracy, and the Japanese-style machine-ist paintings show their influence.

One of the art forms that seem to have inspired the Japanese-style machine-ist paintings is Art Deco. Charlotte Benton and Tim Benton identify Art Deco as a cosmopolitan style of art developed between 1910 and 1939 which is closely connected to capitalist consumerism, and which embraces the two dimensional, simplified shapes of electronics and machines such as streamline and zigzag.<sup>152</sup> *Taisho Chic: Japanese Modernity, Nostalgia and Deco*, the exhibition organized by the Honolulu Academy of Art in 2002, included Yamakawa Shūhō’s *Three Sisters* and Shibata Suiha’s *Biwa Concert*. As the exhibition title suggests, the museum highlighted the connection between the paintings and the Art Deco movement. The museum displayed the paintings alongside Art Deco style decorative arts, including an aluminum condiment tray set

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<sup>152</sup> Charlotte Benton and Tim Benton, “The Style and the Age,” in *Art Deco 1910-1939* (Boston: Bulfinch Press, 2003).

which, according to the exhibition catalogue, “was considered the ultimate in art deco design” at the time.<sup>153</sup>

Another art form that is important to understand the Japanese-style machine-ist paintings is machine art, the landmark exhibition which took place in the Museum of Modern Art, New York in 1934. Some of the industrial products depicted in the Japanese-style machine-ist paintings were displayed in this exhibition in which daily products ranging from forks and spoons to clocks and electric toasters became examples of “art.” The way in which these products were displayed in the exhibition and photographed for the catalogue, creating a kind of sacred aura around the objects, evoked capitalist advertising culture and commodity fetishism. Curator Philip Johnson articulated the allure of machine art, which was not so different from the aesthetics of Art Deco:

the beauty of machine art is in part the abstract beauty of ‘straight lines and circles’ made into actual tangible ‘surfaces and solids’ by means of tools...machines are, visually speaking, a practical application of geometry...A knowledge of function may be of considerable importance in the visual enjoyment of machine art...using or understanding the use of, the calipers, the retort, or the rotary floor polisher is likely to increase their aesthetic value... in addition to perfection of shape and rhythm, beauty of

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<sup>153</sup> *Taisho Chic*, 120.

surface is an important aesthetic quality of machine art at its best...the machine implies precision, simplicity, smoothness, reproducibility.<sup>154</sup>

Johnson thus claimed the beauty of industrial materials and economical design. The chair and telescope depicted in Ōta's *Women Observing the Stars* and the laboratory microscope and boiling flasks in Lee Yoo-tae's *Research* are almost identical to those displayed in the Machine Art exhibition <Figure 1-8, 1-9, 1-10, 1-11>.

The beauty of machines had already been discussed in the preceding period by artists and art critics,<sup>155</sup> especially Nakahara Minoru (1893-1990), Murayama Tomoyoshi (1901-1977), Koga Harue (1895-1933), and Itagaki Takao (1894-1966). Their discussions about machine-ism quite likely paved the way for the Japanese-style machine-ist paintings. According to art historian Omuka Toshiharu, machine-ism (*mekanizumu/ kikaishugi*) was first pursued around 1924 by a group of artists associated with Nakahara Minoru, who studied art in France and was active in the circle of Japanese avant-garde groups such as Action (*Akushon*).<sup>156</sup> Nakahara defined machine-ism not only as paintings that depict machines but also as works whose composition and structure

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<sup>154</sup> Philip Johnson, forward to *Machine Art* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1934): n.p.

<sup>155</sup> For more on machine-ism before the war, see Chinghsin Wu, "Transcending the Boundaries of the 'Isms': Pursuing Modernity Through the Machine in 1920s and 1930s Japanese Avant-Garde Art, in *Rethinking Japanese Modernism*, ed. Roy Starrs (Leiden: Brill Academic Publisher, 2011).

<sup>156</sup> Omuka Toshiharu, *Nihon no avangyarudo geijutsu: Mavo to sono jidai* [Japanese Avant-garde Art: Mavo and Its Period] (Tokyo: Seidosha, 2001), 287-288.

were mechanistic.<sup>157</sup> When machine-ism was introduced to Japan, as Omuka points out, it was associated with art that was anarchistic, anti-conformist art with elements of Dadaism.<sup>158</sup>

Murayama Tomoyoshi, the leader of the avant-garde group Mavo, enthusiastically promoted the idea of machine-ism. Murayama, who studied in Berlin for a year from 1922 to 1923, learned machine aesthetics through Italian Futurism and Russian Constructivism.<sup>159</sup> Murayama, who became increasingly interested in Marxism and joined the Japan Communist Party in 1930, wrote an essay titled “The Machine Aesthetics in Recent Art” and advocated machine art in the context of proletarian revolution.<sup>160</sup> Surveying how machine aesthetics had emerged in various art forms from surrealism to cubism and acknowledging how machines could be a tool for the bourgeoisie to exploit workers, Murayama contends that machines could be a symbol for the strength of workers and that proletarian artists’ mission is to find the beauty of machines particular to workers and elevate it to the realm of art.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Omuka, *Nihon no avangyarudo geijutsu*, 290.

<sup>158</sup> Omuka, *Nihon no avangyarudo geijutsu*, 292.

<sup>159</sup> Omuka, *Nihon no avangyarudo geijutsu*, 293-295

<sup>160</sup> Murayama Tomoyoshi, “Saikin no geijutsu ni okeru kikaibi” [The Machine Aesthetics in Recent Art], *Atorie*, May 1929.

<sup>161</sup> Murayama, “Saikin no geijutsu ni okeru kikaibi,” 22.

Another avant-garde artist Kamabara Tai also considers the role of machine in proletarian society. Kambara Tai, “Kikai wa naniga yue ni warera puroretariāto ni tottenomi

Western-style painter Koga Harue was also fascinated by machines.<sup>162</sup> He is recognized as the most representative artist of Japanese surrealism (*chōgenjitsushugi*), which appeared in Japanese visual arts for the first time at the Nikakai exhibition in 1929. Although he considered himself a surrealist, his understanding of surrealism was different from that advocated by André Breton (1896-1966), which was about the expression of inner subjectivity and the unconscious through the exploration of dream and the rejection of reason. Koga, for example, stated that “art of imagination and dream is not surrealist [*chōgenjitsu*]...Surrealism is about conscious constructivism [*ishikiteki kōsei*] that yearns for purity. Therefore, surrealism is intellectualism.”<sup>163</sup> His most famous surrealist work, *Sea* <Figure 1-12>, executed in oil on canvas in 1929, depicts a woman in swimwear with motifs that stand for the modern: factory, submarine, balloon, and lighthouse. As Ōtani Shōgo points out, Koga’s montage-like—rather than collage-like—arrangement and his attention to forms of industrial objects allude to preoccupation with the

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utsukushiika?” [Why Does Machine Art Beautiful Only to Proletariat Art?], *Shi/ Genjitsu* 3, 1930.

<sup>162</sup> For scholarship on Koga Harue in English, see Chinghsin Wu, “Japan Encounters the Avant-Garde: The Art and Thought of Koga Harue, 1895-1933,” Ph.D. diss. (Los Angeles: University of California, Los Angeles, 2010).

<sup>163</sup> Originally in *Atorie*, January 1930. Quoted in Nagato Saki, “Fuyūsuru imēji: Koga Harue [The Images that Float],” in *Koga Harue: A Retrospective* (Tokyo: Tokyo Shimbun, 2010), 173.

rationalism of machine-ism more than to surrealism.<sup>164</sup> Koga's *Sea*, which places a woman and modern industrial objects in the same visual field, indeed looks similar to Japanese-style machine-ist paintings.

Art critic Itagaki Takao also promoted machine aesthetics, and his theory became prevalent, particularly in the field of photography. Itagaki published an influential book titled *The Interrelation Between Machine and Art (Kikai to geijutsu to no kōryū)* in 1929, and in 1932 Horino Masao, who was a member of the New Photography Research Society (*Shinkō shashin kenkyūkai*), published a collection of his photographs called *Camera: Eye x Steel: Composition (Kamera, Me x tetsu. Kōsei)*, drawing on Itagaki's theory.<sup>165</sup> Challenging the pictorialist convention of photography that prevailed between the 1900s and the 1920s in Japan, Itagaki and Horino explored a new, objective way of seeing reality and advocated an art of mechanical civilization.<sup>166</sup> As art historian Takeba Joe claims, Itagaki's theory of machine-ism originated in his interest in the New Objectivity (*Neue Sachlichkeit*) movement in Germany. New Objectivity was a term coined by German museum director Gustav Hartlaub in 1923. It referred to a corpus of

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<sup>164</sup> Ōtani Shōgo, "Chōgenjitsushugi to kikaishugi no hazamade" [Between Surrealism and Machine-ism], *Geisō* (1994): 101-129. More on the connection between Koga and machine-ism, see Nagata Ken'ichi, "Koga Harue 'Umi' (1929) to tokeru sakana"[Koga Harue's *Sea* (1929) and Dissolving Fish], *Bigaku* (Fall, 2006): 29-42.

<sup>165</sup> Takeba Joe, "The Age of Modernism: From Visualization to Socialization," in *The History of Japanese Photography*, ed. Anne Wilkes Tucker (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2003), 146.

<sup>166</sup> Takeba, "The Age of Modernism: From Visualization to Socialization," 144.



post-expressionist paintings produced after the Great War that take urban contemporary life as their subject matter and represent such qualities as scientific objectivity, stillness, and sobriety, and was a part of the “return to order” movement in the post-war Europe that rejected extreme forms of avant-garde experimentation.<sup>167</sup> New Objectivity and Japanese-style machine-ist paintings seem to share some qualities in common: a sense of coldness, matter-of-factness, stillness, isolation, and mathematical precision in urban city life.

There are two canonical international art movements that influenced all of the above-mentioned Japanese artists and art critics who pursued machine-ism: Bauhaus and Le Corbusier’s rationalism. Bauhaus, founded by architect Walter Gropius in 1919 in Germany, attempted to integrate art into everyday life and create a total work of art by infusing fine arts, decorative arts, and architecture. Though the direction of the school changed over the years, Bauhaus in the 1920s embraced industrial technology and was considered to be associated with socialist reforms.<sup>168</sup> Japanese artists, such as photographer Natori Yōnosuke, who studied in Berlin in 1928, were already familiar with

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<sup>167</sup> Irene Guenther, “Magical Realism, New Objectivity, and the Arts during the Weimar Republic,” in *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*, ed. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1995); Kenneth E Silver, “A More Durable Self,” in *Chaos & Classicism: Art in France, Italy, and Germany, 1918-1936* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2010).

<sup>168</sup> Kathleen James-Chakraborty, introduction to *Bauhaus Culture: From Weimar to The Cold War*, ed. Kathleen James-Chakraborty (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), xii.

Bauhaus works, including photographs by Hungarian Bauhaus artist László Moholy-Nagy. Moholy-Nagy's Soviet-constructivist-inspired photographs became much better known in Japan when the *German International Travel Photography Exhibition*, which was based on the *Film und Foto* exhibition in Stuttgart in 1929 and displayed 1180 photographs, was held in the Tokyo Asahi Newspaper Company building in April 1931.<sup>169</sup> Japanese architects such as Mizutani Takehiko, Yamawaki Iwao, and Yamaguchi Bunzō attended the Bauhaus school in the late 1920s, and they studied Bauhaus' modern, functional, unornamented, standardized buildings. In 1932, Kawakida Renshichirō founded The Institute of Architecture and Applied Arts (*Shin kenchiku kōgei gakuin*), which was modeled on the Bauhaus school. The interior of the house built in 1935 by Tsuchiura Kameki (1897-1996), who taught at the Institute, bears a striking resemblance to the bathroom painted by Ogura Yuki in her *Bathing Women I* three years later.

Le Corbusier's rationalist architecture, which shared aesthetics with Bauhaus in many ways, was also introduced to Japan. Le Corbusier (1887-1965), a Swiss-born French architect, advocated deploying mass production and standardization of housing in an effort to reconstruct urban cities in France after the destruction of the Great War (1914-1919). Famously proclaiming that "a house is a machine for living in," Le Corbusier actively incorporated into his working principle American, capitalist models of Scientific Management such as Fordism and Taylorism, which turned to industrial efficiency and mass production and aimed at greater productivity through the use of

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<sup>169</sup> Takeba, "The Age of Modernism: From Visualization to Socialization," 146; *Tōkyō-berurin/ Tokyo-Berlin* (Tokyo: Mori Art Museum, 2006), 189.

assembly lines and standardization.<sup>170</sup> With Scientific Management, Le Corbusier thought housing could be mass-produced and thus would be available to all, which would contribute to social renewal and avoid socialist revolution.<sup>171</sup> Japanese architect Maekawa Kunio (1905-1986) lived in France between 1928 and 1930 and apprenticed with Le Corbusier. There, Maekawa studied and worked on Le Corbusier's public projects, residential designs, and low-cost housing.<sup>172</sup> Le Corbusier's design and writings were translated and introduced to Japan around 1929, and were zealously discussed and emulated by Japanese architects and critics.<sup>173</sup>

### **The Fascist Society: *Gleichschaltung*, *Gerarchia*, and Proper Place**

Although Japanese-style machine-ist paintings produced in the mid- and late- 1930s drew on machine aesthetics developed in the previous period, they were situated in a markedly different context. The modernist style of art is often associated with liberal political ideologies such as individualism and democracy, but modernism did not disappear in the 1930s in Germany, Italy, and Japan, the countries that established fascist societies. Rather than equating an artistic style with a political ideology, it is important to examine how modernism negotiated its politics as its social context changed. In what

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<sup>170</sup> Mary McLeod, "'Architecture or Revolution': Taylorism, Technocracy and Social Change," *Art Journal* 43. 2 (1987): 135.

<sup>171</sup> Mary McLeod, "'Architecture or Revolution,'" 136.

<sup>172</sup> Reynolds, *Maekawa Kunio and the Emergence of Japanese Modernist Architecture*, 59-61.

<sup>173</sup> Reynolds, *Maekawa Kunio*, 69.

follows, I will first discuss Bauhaus and Le Corbusier's works, which continued to exist in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, respectively. Drawing on historians such as Yamanouchi Yasushi, I will argue that wartime Japan was also fascist in its social structure. I will ultimately demonstrate how the state mobilized modernism for its political ends in Japan and suggest that the Japanese-style machine-ist paintings should be read in this light.

Despite the infamous “degenerate art exhibition” of 1933 held by the Nazis, which supposedly put an end to German modern art, and the closing of the Bauhaus school in the same year, recent scholarship documents the production of Bauhaus-style art and the activities of Bauhaus members under the Third Reich. The German craft movement was closely related to Nazi economic policies in which Germany tried to be self-sufficient, and Bauhaus craft design played a major role in this discourse.<sup>174</sup> Likewise, many Bauhaus architects—Gustav Hassenpflug, Konrad Püschel, Werner Hebebrand, Walter Kratz, Rudolf Wolters, to name a few—received commissions and positions from Nazi Germany and designed private industrial facilities and military buildings.<sup>175</sup> As Winfried Nerdinger indicates, Bauhaus' aesthetic principle and the Nazi ideology were not incompatible: “Connecting technology with industrial production, speed, and progress on armaments promoted the use of technical materials such as glass, steel, and concrete, as well as the architectural representation of technical values such as rationalization and

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<sup>174</sup> John Heskett, “Modernism and Archaisms in Design in the Third Reich.”

<sup>175</sup> Nerdinger, “Bauhaus Architecture in the Third Reich,” 140; 148.

functionality, even encouraging a Nazi-specific concept of the ‘beauty of technology.’”<sup>176</sup>  
Thus, Bauhaus played a role in Nazi society, which is characterized by *Gleichschaltung*.

*Gleichschaltung*, meaning “forcible coordination,” “synchronization,” or “enforced homogeneity,” refers to the mechanical means by which the Nazi party dismantled all autonomous institutions, forced citizens to join party organizations, tried to eliminate disparities between classes and regions, coordinated legal systems and bureaucracy, and rooted out resistance.<sup>177</sup> Under *Gleichschaltung*, all people were forced to act in official organizations that were like small cells that constituted the state: the society was organized in a grid.<sup>178</sup> This compartmentalization of citizens allowed the government additional influence and control. The social space of *Gleichschaltung* thus would have been evened out, geometrically organized, and homogenized.

As Bauhaus experienced a smooth transformation from the Weimar Republic to the Third Reich, Le Corbusier’s works did not have much problem shifting from the post-

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<sup>176</sup> Nerdinger, “Bauhaus Architecture,” 147.

<sup>177</sup> Yamanouchi Yasushi, “Total-War and System Integration: A Methodological Introduction,” in *Total War and “Modernization,”* ed. Yasushi Yamanouchi, J. Victor Koschmann, and Ryuichi Narita (Ithaca; New York: Cornell University, 1998), 3; Amemiya Shōichi, “Self-Renovation of Existing Social Forces and *Gleichschaltung*: The Total-War System and the Middle Classes,” in *Total War and “Modernization,”* 237; Ralf Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1969), 381-396.

<sup>178</sup> This bears a striking resemblance to the *tonarigumi* in wartime Japan, which I discuss below.

Great War France to Fascist Italy. In Fascist Italy rationalist architects, who turned to Le Corbusier's art and writings, envisioned a society that was built upon the principle of *gerarchia* (hierarchy), which was not very different from the Nazi society of *Gleichschaltung*. As Diane Yvonne Ghirardo explains:

The concept of *gerarchia* informed a society in which function and authority strictly regulated each person's place; presumably those with the appropriate capacities occupied each niche. The upper echelons defined the responsibilities of the lower strata, and all, of course, were ultimately defined by the Duce...Giovanni Gentile, one of the leading theorists of Fascism, argued that individualism was incompatible with the idea of the nation. The individual must submit to the authority of the state, and in this way realize himself more fully than would have been possibly in the traditional liberal-democratic state.<sup>179</sup>

Ghirardo suggests not only that the idea of hierarchical social order imposed from above was inherent in Le Corbusier's writing, but also that his architectural design alludes to it. The fascist ideal of self-effacement under the state corresponded with the lack of individuality and the collective anonymity that Le Corbusier's design embodied.<sup>180</sup>

Japan in the 1930s, when the Japanese-style machine-ist paintings were produced, was comparable to Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy in terms of how their societies and citizens were controlled by the state and mobilized for war. Although intense

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<sup>179</sup> Ghirardo, "Italian Architects and Fascist Politics: An Evaluation of the Rationalist Role in Regime Building": 121.

<sup>180</sup> Ghirardo, "Italian Architects," 122-123.

mobilization of Japanese citizens' lives for war did not begin until 1937, when Japan started an undeclared war with China, the Manchurian Incident of 1931 marked the rise of militarism and the beginning of the Fifteen-Year War, changing Japan's political discourse considerably. As Louise Young's study investigating the political, economic and cultural interconnectedness between Japan's colonies and home front tellingly demonstrates, "the process of empire building in Manchuria touched the lives of most Japanese in the 1930s in one way or another."<sup>181</sup> After the Manchurian Incident, Japanese domestic society gradually established a social system that prepared its citizens for total war.

With the Manchurian Incident, the civilian leadership in Tokyo lost control over the military, which became increasingly strong over the years and won support from a public that had wanted its government to take more decisive measures to solve economic and social problems triggered by the Great Depression. In 1933, following the backlash against its advancement into Manchuria, Japan withdrew from the League of Nations, isolating itself from the international community. As historian Andrew Gordon indicates, the relationship between the state and citizens substantially changed even before 1937.<sup>182</sup> Referring to the Election Purification Movement in 1935, in which the government attempted to control the function of mass politics, Gordon writes, "the state would place itself in the role of political mobilizer, not mediator, of diverse groups in society; it would not undertake to 'represent' the imperial and popular wills, as the parties sought, but to

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<sup>181</sup> Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism*, 13.

<sup>182</sup> Gordon, *Labor and Imperial Democracy in Prewar Japan*, 320.

mobilize and to direct the will of the people in service to an emperor whose will the state defined.”<sup>183</sup>

After the Manchurian Incident, the government called for the “soldierization of citizens” (*kokumin no guntai ka*) and expected people at home (*jūgo*, the home front) to devote themselves to the war as much as the soldiers on the battlefields (*zensen*, the front line).<sup>184</sup> Citizens’ private lives were increasingly brought under the state’s expansive, pyramid-like network of surveillance. Most important was the creation of *tonarigumi* (Neighborhood Associations), in which local community members acted as a group, dealing with everyday matters together and being responsible for each other. Eight duties were outlined by Tokyo authorities as the tasks of the *tonarigumi* in 1940: “[liaising] with the community councils, acting as a neighborhood social group, air and fire defense, counterespionage, crime prevention, encouraging savings deposits, reforming daily living, and distributing commodities.”<sup>185</sup> *Tonarigumi*, consisting of several households (eleven, on average), did regular activities such as organizing lectures by state officials, sending comfort kits to soldiers, and raising funds during state campaigns (most famously the *kokubō* National Self-Defense Campaign).<sup>186</sup> As many as 1,323,473 neighborhood

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<sup>183</sup> Gordon, *Labor and Imperial Democracy in Prewar Japan*, 320.

<sup>184</sup> Fujiwara Akira, *Manshū jihen to kokumin dōin* [The Manchurian Incident and the Mobilization of Citizens] (Tokyo: Ōtsuki shoten, 1983), 584-5

<sup>185</sup> Thomas Havens, *Valley of Darkness: The Japanese People and World War Two* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1978), 77.

<sup>186</sup> Havens, *Valley of Darkness*, 36-43.



associations were created by July 1942.<sup>187</sup> In October 1942, *tonarigumi* also became responsible for distributing food and clothing rations.<sup>188</sup> In historian Thomas Haven's words, each *tonarigumi* was an "organizational cell for sustaining the war."<sup>189</sup>

Patrolling for suspicious and immoral behavior within local communities, *tonarigumi* members often reported directly to the Military Police (*Kempeitai*) and Special Higher Police (*Tokubetsu Kōtō Keisatsu*) who monitored the private lives of citizens for potential espionage activities or political crimes.<sup>190</sup> They especially targeted socialists, communists, pacifists, foreign workers and anybody who opposed the emperor system. Between 1933 and 1936, the Military Police and Special Higher Police arrested approximately sixty thousand people for "dangerous thoughts."<sup>191</sup> The Military Police and Special Higher Police reported to the Army and Navy, respectively, who were ultimately under the command of the emperor <Figure 1-13>. In this system, as Gordon writes, "However passively, the people were linked to the state and the emperor through a vast and expanding network of functional organs imposed upon them by the state... All the independent organizations of workers, tenant farmers, businessmen, and politicians,

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<sup>187</sup> Havens, *Valley of Darkness*, 77.

<sup>188</sup> Havens, *Valley of Darkness*, 80.

<sup>189</sup> Havens, *Valley of Darkness*, 73.

<sup>190</sup> Edogawa Ranpo's war propaganda story *Idainaru Yume* [The Great Dream] (1943) alludes to the psychological tension resulting from surveillance by and the invisible gaze of the *kempeitai* and potential spies. Raymond Lamont-Brown, *Kempeitai: Japan's Dreaded Military Police* (Stroud, England: Sutton, 1998), 15

<sup>191</sup> Lamont-Brown, *Kempeitai*, 16.

so painstakingly and haltingly created over the previous thirty years, were dissolved and destroyed.”<sup>192</sup>

Historian Kim Brandt’s study provides the most extreme example of how women were to be scrutinized in the society of wartime surveillance. The officially sanctioned *mingei* (Japanese Arts and Crafts) group produced a plan for a girls’ dormitory for a spinning factory in 1941, though it was never realized. By building a dormitory for the factory girls, most of whom would have come from rural areas of Japan, the plan was to increase their labor productivity.<sup>193</sup> To keep them both industrious and under total control, the factory was envisioned as a site of no privacy. One of the planners said, “as soon as they return home and open the door, they [will be] monitored in the way they open and close the door, in the way they take their coats off, in how they make their greeting, how they put down their parcels, how they sit, how they stand up, and in such ways an entire training in daily lifestyle occurs.”<sup>194</sup> They even planned how the girls would spend their leisure time.

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<sup>192</sup> Gordon, *Labor and Imperial Democracy*, 330.

<sup>193</sup> Brandt, “Mingei and the Wartime State, 1937-1945.” Also see Nagata Ken’ichi, “‘Binokuni’ NIPPON to sono jitsugen no yume” [‘The Nation of Beauty’ NIPPON and The Dream of Its Realization], in *Kindai Nihon dezain shi* [History of Japanese Modern Design], ed. Nagata Ken’ichi (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppan, 2006).

<sup>194</sup> Originally in Shikiba Ryūzaburō, “Joshu rōmusha no seikatsu yōshiki no mondai” [The Issue of The Form of Daily Life for Female Workers], *Gekkan mingei* 3 (March 1941), 9. Quoted in Brandt, *Kingdom of Beauty*, 163.

This fascist society was a quintessentially *modern* space, as it turned heavily to industrial power. To realize the total war regime, the government sought to increase national industrial production, to which rationalization was central: in the Industrial Rationalization Movement (*Sangyō Gōrika Undō*), the state employed Scientific Management based on Taylorism and Fordism, which aimed to maximize the ratio of output to input through the use of assembly lines and product standardization.<sup>195</sup> In the early 1930s, the state gradually consolidated large private corporations in order to control industrial production, consumption, and distribution.<sup>196</sup> Also, even though the wartime government acknowledged the importance of the agricultural sector, in the process of increasingly turning to heavy, chemical, and military industry, they built more and more factories in rural areas, considerably changing social relations.

Japanese historians Narita Ryūichi, Amemiya Shōichi, and Yamanouchi Yasushi claim that wartime Japan and Germany share the characteristic of *Gleichschaltung*, a Nazi term for the process by which that regime established totalitarian control.<sup>197</sup> Yamanouchi Yasushi writes,

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<sup>195</sup> William Tsutsui, *Manufacturing Ideology: Scientific Management in Twentieth-Century Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

<sup>196</sup> Amemiya, “Self-Renovation of Existing Social Forces and *Gleichschaltung*,” in *Total War and “Modernization,”* 224-225.

<sup>197</sup> In Japanese, *Gleichschaltung* is written as “guraihisharutounku” and translated as *kyōseiteki kakuitsuka*, or forced/compulsory standardization. Yamanouchi Yasushi, “Total-War and System Integration: A Methodological Introduction,” in *Total War and*

[In Japan] it was expected that through “enforced homogeneity” [*Gleichschaltung*] all members of society would share the burden of the social functions required to prosecute the war. The total-war system would eradicate the impetus toward social exclusion (born of the modern status order) and social conflict, rationalizing the entire society toward the single end of conducting war in the most efficient, functional manner.<sup>198</sup>

Wartime Japanese society, which Yamanouchi describes as a society of *Gleichschaltung*, however, was understood to embody particularly “Japanese” values. As historian John Dower observes, what characterized the wartime Japanese view of an ideal society is the concept of “proper place,” the idea that individuals should respect their position in the collective.<sup>199</sup> The notion of “proper place” draws on the Confucian idea of the family, and it justified the hierarchical, patriarchal social system. The ideal is clearly outlined in *Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan (Kokutai no hongī)*, issued by the government in 1937. Declaring that “the spirit of harmony” is a unique characteristic of Japan, *Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan* reads,

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“*Modernization*, 3; Amemiya Shōichi, “Self-Renovation of Existing Social Forces and *Gleichschaltung*,” in *Total War and “Modernization*,” 237.

<sup>198</sup> Yamanouchi Yasushi, “Total-War and System Integration: A Methodological Introduction,” 3-4.

<sup>199</sup> John Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 264. “Proper place” does not have an equivalent in Japanese. The concept is epitomized by the phrase “bun o mamoru,” which is repeatedly used in *Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan*.

Harmony as of our nation is not a mechanical concert of independent individuals of the same level that has its starting point in [cold] knowledge, but a great harmony that holds itself together by having the parts within the whole through actions that fit the parts.<sup>200</sup> In each community there are those who take the upper places while there are those who work below them. Through each one fulfilling his portion is the harmony of a community obtained. To fulfill one's part means to do one's appointed task with the utmost faithfulness each in his own sphere... This applies both to the community and to the State. In order to bring national harmony to fruition, there is no way but for every person in the nation to do his allotted duty and to exalt it.<sup>201</sup>

Even if the hierarchical, regimented society was understood to be “Japanese,” it is clear that the wartime view of a society in which individuals occupy their “proper place” resonates with its German and Italian counterparts, *Gleichschaltung* and *gerarchia*.

### **Shifting Politics of Modernist Art in Wartime Japan**

As in Germany and Italy, in Japan, too, modern art managed to exist in a social context different from that with which it was initially associated. Referring to architecture by Le Corbusier, artist Hasegawa Saburō stated in 1941:

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<sup>200</sup> *Kokutai no hongī/ Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan*, trans. John Owen Gauntlett (1937; repr., Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1949), 93.

<sup>201</sup> *Kokutai no hongī*, 98.

Although modernist architecture has come to have a too-close relationship with machines, we should fairly evaluate it in that it manifests functionalism, machine-like precision, the beauty of rhythmic forms that are mathematically calculated and that have defined purposes and dynamic control.”<sup>202</sup>

He suggested that standardization is essential for total state control during war. Japanese scholar Kashiwagi Hiroshi provides a useful study which looks at how the political orientation of rationalist modern design changed over time.<sup>203</sup> In the context of Taishō democracy in 1910s and 1920s Japan, the Lifestyle Reform Movement (*Seikatsu Kaizen Undō*) took place with slogans like *kaizen*, *kairyō*, *kaizō* (all of which means “improvement”), in which Bauhaus- and Le Corbusier-inspired modernist interior designers such as Kogure Jyoichi (1881-1944) played a leading role, and rationalization of lifestyle was promoted. “Rationalization” was equivalent to “Westernization,” and

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<sup>202</sup> Hasegawa Nyozeikan, “Nihon jin no sumai to sumikata” [House and Lifestyle of Japanese], *Atorie*, July 1941, 19

<sup>203</sup> See, for example Kashiwagi Hiroshi, *Geijutsu no fukusei gijutsu jidai: nichijō no dezain* [The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Everyday Life Design] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1996); *Fasshon no nijusseiki: toshi, shōhi, sei* [The Fashion of the Twentieth Century: City, Consumption, and Sexuality] (Tokyo: NHK Books, 1998); *Modan dezain hihan* [The Critique of Modern Design] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2002); *Nichiyōhin no bunka shi* [The Cultural History of Daily Products] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1999); *Ūtopia no yume: nijusseiki no miraizō* [The Dream of Utopia: Future Images of the Twentieth Century] (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1993); *Kagu no modan dezain* [The Modern Design of Furniture] (Tokyo: Tankōsha, 2002).

lifestyle reform meant, for example, using chairs instead of sitting on the floor, or wearing Western clothes instead of kimono, which restrict movement and therefore efficiency. Kogure designed and actively promoted standardized (*kikaku-ka*, *kakuitsu-ka*, *hyōjun-ka*) furniture, such as chairs, tables, and shelves, into the Japanese lifestyle. The Lifestyle Reform Movement was embedded in the larger 1920s discourse of “culture life” (*bunka seikatsu*), and, in reality, only upper middle-class people in urban centers could afford such a lifestyle.

In the 1940 New Order campaign, the government sought to lay the foundation for a new national culture, or “daily life culture” (*seikatsu bunka*), which was defined in opposition to the “culture life” of the 1920s and in which every citizen (including women, children and rural populations) could participate.<sup>204</sup> The Ministry of Commerce and Industry organized the National Daily Products Exhibition in 1941 and advocated as “national daily products” (*kokumin seikatsu yōhin*) **<Figure 1-14>** rationalist design and standardized items including lunch boxes, drawers, and plates made of affordable materials, bamboo and wood, for example, hailing them as producing maximum function with minimum resources.<sup>205</sup> Along with the “national uniform” (*kokumin fuku*) and “national food” (*kokumin shoku*), the aim of the “national daily products” was to standardize, control, and mobilize citizens’ everyday lives.<sup>206</sup> Thus, as Kim Brandt argues, modern rationalist design in the 1940s participated in “the project of lifestyle

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<sup>204</sup> Brandt, *Kingdom of Beauty*, 148

<sup>205</sup> Brandt, *Kingdom of Beauty*, 146-155.

<sup>206</sup> “Kokumin seikatsu yōhin tenrankai kaisai no shushi ni suite” [About the Purpose of National Daily Life Products Exhibition], *Kōgei nyūsu*, May 1941, 6-7.

reform for a nation at war.”<sup>207</sup> Accordingly, Kogure’s project, which was oriented toward the improvement and rationalization of lifestyle in the private arena of family housing in earlier decades, came to be concerned more with the benefit of rationalized lifestyle in terms of the industrial production of the nation as a “Self-Defense State” (*Kokubō Kokka*).<sup>208</sup>

The use of the modernist art forms during the war was not limited to interior design. *Asahi shinbun*’s propaganda photographic magazine *Asahi Graph Oversea Edition*, produced for foreign audiences, shows clearly modernist aesthetics. For example, the March 1936 issue <**Figure 1-15**> features a photograph of women in white *kappōgi* uniforms working in a factory producing light bulbs for export.<sup>209</sup> In the picture, a circular shape created by the lighted bulbs in the foreground is repeated in the middle and in the background, creating a beautiful geometric harmony. The roundness of their shoulders, as well as the goggles and white uniforms the women wear, echo the circles and the shapes of the bulbs themselves. In short, the photograph embodies the machine aesthetics discussed above. As it was published in a propaganda magazine, however, the photograph also contains a palpable political message. As Inoue Yūko suggests, it functioned to exhibit Japan’s growing industrial power after its conquest of Manchuria and attempted to persuade Western nations of the benefit of Japanese imperialism in terms of expanding economic markets; it also reflected Japan’s effort and need, especially after its withdrawal from the League of Nations in 1933, to find a new, modern

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<sup>207</sup> Brandt, *Kingdom of Beauty*, 154.

<sup>208</sup> Kashiwagi, *Geijutsu no fukusei gijutsu jidai: nichijō no dezain*, 41.

<sup>209</sup> Inoue Yūko, *Senji gurafu zasshi no sendensen*, 91.



national identity, one which would represent Japan to the West as a powerful, fully industrialized nation rather than as a pre-industrial nation of “geisha, Fujiyama, Utamaro” that would only respond to the Western Orientalist image of exotic Japan.<sup>210</sup>

Japanese artists and art critics, however, had to confront the uncomfortable fact that modernist aesthetics, which embraced rationalization, standardization, and machine aesthetics, initially came from the West and that what they were touting was essentially the Westernization of Japanese lifestyle and art. In the roundtable discussion on the “national daily products” in the 1941 issue of *Kogei nyūsu*, Hasegawa Nyozeikan (1875-1969) stated, “The experts have tended to focus on the form, but our spirit [*kokoro*] does not fit with it. *It is too international*” (my emphasis).<sup>211</sup> The key figure who solved this problem was none other than Bruno Taut, a Bauhaus member who fled to Japan in 1933, escaping the cultural repression of the Nazis.<sup>212</sup> In his 1939 book *The Rediscovery of Japanese Beauty*, he wrote about how he found the Bauhaus aesthetic principle in Japanese pre-modern architecture, Ise Shrine and Katsura Rikyū in particular <**Figure 1-16**>. Dismissing the aesthetics of “*wabi sabi*,” part of the vocabulary in the discourse of Western Orientalism toward Japan, as “not rational,” he argued that “the Japanese spirit”

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<sup>210</sup> Inoue Yūko, *Senji gurafu zasshi no sendensen*, 78; Gennifer Weisenfeld, “Touring ‘Japan-As-Museum’: NIPPON and Other Japanese Imperialist Travelogues, *positions* 8.3 (Winter 2000), 769.

<sup>211</sup> Quoted in Kashiwagi, *Geijutsu no fukusei gijutsu jidai: nichijō no dezain*, 71.

<sup>212</sup> Between 1940 and 1942, Le Corbusier’s student Charlotte Perriand was also in Japan, working for the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

[*nihonteki seishin*] is not incompatible with such concepts as rationality, simplicity, and functionality.<sup>213</sup>

Hasegawa Nyozeikan, once a leftist who even published a book criticizing “Japanese fascism” (as he called it) but who converted (*tenkō*) and became a prominent wartime cultural theorist, is an important figure in considering the wartime discourse of modernist aesthetics on three accounts.<sup>214</sup> First, like Taut, Nyozeikan discussed how Japanese culture, Japanese housing in particular, is rational (*gōriteki*). Admiring the straight lines and rectangular *tatami* flooring of Japanese houses, he claimed that the regulated, geometric form represented the orderliness of a uniquely Japanese “spirit” (*kokoro*).<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Bruno Taut, *Nihonbi no saihakken* [The Rediscovery of Japanese Beauty], trans. Shinoda Hideo (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1939), 14-15.

<sup>214</sup> Inoue Yūko, *Senji gurafu zasshi no sendensen*, 98. For more on Nyozeikan, see Andrew E. Barshay, “Hasegawa Nyozeikan,” in *State and Intellectual in Imperial Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

<sup>215</sup> Hasegawa Nyozeikan, “Nihon jin no sumai to sumikata” [House and Lifestyle of Japanese], *Atorie*, July 1941, 9. Taut’s theory had substantial influence on the discourse of Japanese architecture. While Maekawa Kunio’s rationalist architecture was deemed “too Corbusian,” Tange Kenzō’s architecture that combined Corbusian principles (absence of ornamentation, emphasis on simplicity, attention to form and function) and Japanese traditional architecture (Ise Shrine) was highly regarded in the early 1940s. Kestenbaum, “Modernism and Tradition in Japanese Architectural Ideology, 1931-1955,” 234. For more on wartime architecture, see Reynolds, *Maekawa Kunio*; Inoue Shōkichi,

Second, Nyozeikan linked rationalist aesthetics to Japanese society at large. Nyozeikan writes that although all Japanese have the same “spirit,” Japanese society was historically hierarchical, following the Confucian *shi, nō, kō, shō* (samurai-farmer-artisan-merchant) class division.<sup>216</sup> This social structure, he argued, is reflected in the clearly divided spaces of Japanese houses, which determine individuals’ places in certain categories/classifications (*hanchū*) within the household. Nyozeikan thus theorized the physical space of the Japanese house as a metonym for Japan’s *national* space, and his understanding of Japanese society echoed the ideal of “proper place” articulated in *Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan*.

Third, Nyozeikan further developed the modernist aesthetic by arguing that human life should recreate its orderly form. He repeatedly claimed that “art” is not an expression of beautiful emotions, but is rather a recreation of life (*seikatsu no saigen*). In his rather complicated theory, “art” had two stages: “to intuitively find [*chokkan suru*] a form [*kata*] that gives moral and aesthetic order to everyday life,” and then “to recreate that form in everyday life in return.”<sup>217</sup> What Nyozeikan called “form” is, according to

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*Āto, kicchū, japanesuku*; Miyauchi Kō, “Fashizumu to kūkan: kenchiku no 1930 nendai.” [Fascism and Space: The Architecture of the 1930s], in *Enkon no ūtopia Miyauchi Kō no iru basho* [Haunting Utopia: The Place of Miyauchi Kō], ed. Enkon no ūtopia kankō iinkai (Tokyo: Renga shobō, 2000).

<sup>216</sup> Hasegawa, “Nihon jin no sumai to sumikata,” 9.

<sup>217</sup> Inoue Yūko, *Senji gurafu zasshi no sendensen*, 98. Nyozeikan himself claims that the English translation of “kata” is “form.” Hasegawa Nyozeikan, “Nihon geijutsu no shōchō-sei” [The Symbolisms of Japanese Art], *Nihon eiga*, January 1941. Reproduced in

him, something that is regulated (*chitsujyo-ka*) and not entirely natural; the “form,” furthermore, controls and represses human emotions and instinct (*honnō*).<sup>218</sup> Even if Nyozekekan justified the rational “form” as “Japanese,” it is important to remember that this aesthetics was essentially informed by modernist machine aesthetics. Claiming that the “form” should be recreated in everyday life, Nyozekekan virtually demanded the discipline and mechanical coordination of human life and projected the machine aesthetics of functionality and productivity onto human individuals. Thus, Nyozekekan’s theory “turned people into things,” something Susan Sontag defines as a characteristic of fascist aesthetics.<sup>219</sup>

### **The Japanese Machine-ist Paintings Revisited**

Understanding the role of modernist aesthetics during the war allows us to see the Japanese-style machine-ist paintings in a different light. The paintings produced after 1935 importantly reflect the social changes of the period that affected artistic production. In 1935, Minister of Education Matsuda Genji undertook a reform in order to revitalize the state-sponsored Exhibition of the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts (*teiten*). Matsuda aimed to increase the quality of works by bringing in artists from private organizations, but paradoxically he also sought to reflect his conservative artistic taste in the exhibition.

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Hasegawa Nyozekekan, *Hasegawa Nyozekekan zenshū VII* (Tokyo Iwanami shoten, 1989), 142.

<sup>218</sup> Itagaki Tetsuo, *Hasegawa Nyozekekan no shisō* [Ideas by Hasegawa Nyozekekan] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Hirofumi kan, 2000), 94

<sup>219</sup> Sontag, “Fascinating Fascism,” 91.

As a result, the exhibition committee rejected many Japanese-style paintings of *moga* that they considered displayed signs of cultural decadence, only accepting those that were “not gaudy” (*kebakebashikunai*), subdued, and discreet.<sup>220</sup> The movement toward eradicating cultural decadence from the art world reflected the gloomy social reality of the time. Matsuda’s sentiment was shared by art critics such as Nakata Katsunosuke, who warned against excessive signs of liberalism and hedonism that “Westernized” Japanese-style paintings represented.<sup>221</sup> As early as 1933, Nakata expressed deep disappointment at paintings of *moga* seeking pleasure, having fun, and relaxing.<sup>222</sup> He argued that artists should be more socially aware in a “time of emergency” (*hijōji*), the phrase that was used to express the sense of national crisis after the Manchurian Incident.<sup>223</sup> As art historian Tanaka Hisao suggests, the 1935 Matsuda reform was the

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<sup>220</sup> Kaneko, “Art in the Service of the State,” 102. Nakata Katsunosuke, “*Teiten no Nihonga*” [The Japanese-style Paintings of the Exhibition of the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts], *Asahi shinbun*, February 29, 1936. Here, interestingly, Nakata analogizes this situation to the “*beni girai*” (dislike of red) of *ukiyo-e* prints that appeared when the Edo government prohibited luxurious lifestyles.

<sup>221</sup> Nakata, “Teiten no Nihonga,” *Asahi shinbun*, October 17, 1933.

<sup>222</sup> Nakata, “Teiten no Nihonga.”

<sup>223</sup> The term “*hijōji*” was popularized around 1933 and referred to the political circumstances following the Manchuria Incident. Some state authorities, most prominently Araki Sadao, saw the situation as an opportunity to renew the nation and begin aggressive foreign policies. Sandra Wilson, *The Manchurian Crisis and Japanese Society, 1931–1933* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 64–66.

turning point for state consolidation of art communities that prepared for the system of official war art production of later years.<sup>224</sup>

Furthermore, just like the *Asahi Graph* photograph, Japanese-style machine-ist paintings can be understood as representing a new Japanese national identity that hinged upon modernity. Art critic Nakata Katsunosuke referred to the Japanese-style paintings submitted to the Exhibition of the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts as examples of the “Westernization of Japanese-style painting.”<sup>225</sup> This “Westernization” occurred concurrently with the “Japanization of Western-style paintings,” the motivation for which was articulated by Kojima Zenzaburō in 1935. Kojima exhibited clear nationalistic sentiments: he called for “neo-Japanism” (*shin Nihonshugi*), writing, “If the Japanese

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<sup>224</sup> Originally in Tanaka Hisao, “*Nihon bijutsu to ‘teiten sōdō’*” [Japanese Art and the Teiten Incident], in *Nihon bijutsu-in hyakunenshi dai 6 kan* [The Hundred Year History of Nihon Bijutsu-in Vol. 6] (Tokyo: Nihon bijutsu-in, 1997), 365. Quoted in Kaneko, “Art in the Service of the State,” 75. Kaneko points out that the reform was not completely the “imposition” of government control over art; the artists asked for state protection. Kaneko, 136. Artists’ supportive comments about government intervention can be found in “*Bijutsukai ni kokkateki shidōkikan wa hitsuyō ka?*” [Is National Institution Necessary for Art Society?], *Atorie*, March 1936. For criticisms of the reform, see Shitamise Sei’ichi, “*Shin teiten no Nihonga hyō*” [Review of the New Imperial Exhibition], *Atorie*, April 1936; Sakai Saisui, “*Shin teiten kan*” [Review of the New Imperial Exhibition], *Bi no kuni*, April 1936.

<sup>225</sup> Nakata “Teiten no Nihonga”; “Nihonga ni okeru yōfū keikō no mondai” [The Issue of Westernization in Japanese-style Painting], *Atorie*, May 1935;

have an extraordinary beauty in their racial blood, tradition, and country, in order to express that beautiful climate and character, a special technique has to be employed... Our mission is to blend Western materialism and Oriental spirit to create a new world, in which mind and matter are united.”<sup>226</sup> His claim resonated with the larger discourse of creating a new national identity of Japan as a strong country capable of producing industrial materials, which appeared in the mid-1930s. Although Japanese-style painters did not express similar thoughts in writing, as Kojima’s piece shows, painters were aware of and often complied with the on-going political discourse.

I should now like to return to one of the characteristics of the Japanese-style machine-ist paintings: regimented, rationalized spatial representation. As Henri Lefebvre theorizes, artistic representation of space is always relevant to the social production of space.<sup>227</sup> David Harvey and Michel Foucault offer two models of society that are associated with the rational ordering of space.<sup>228</sup> Harvey discusses perspectivism, the scientific perspective developed by Renaissance Humanist artists, which uses a

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<sup>226</sup> Alicia Volk, *In Pursuit of Universalism: Yorozu Tetsugoro and Japanese Modern Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 214.

<sup>227</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991 [1974]).

<sup>228</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1970; repr., London; New York: Routledge, 2002).

systematic sense of space that is anchored by geometry.<sup>229</sup> This rational, mathematical ordering of space was not only important in visual arts; it was fundamental for the later secular individualism of the Enlightenment project, in which both material objects and human subjects were classified based on the principles of science, the rhetoric of progress, and a linear concept of history. The rational concept of space in the Enlightenment project, as Harvey points out, was expected to have *positive* social consequences, such as the establishment of individual liberties and human welfare.<sup>230</sup> Yet, as he also points out, it could easily be employed by a centralized state power.<sup>231</sup> Michel Foucault, who calls the modern rational society of perspectivism a “disciplinary society,” explores the potentially negative consequences in relation to surveillance. He explains how the coldly geometrical grid of perspectivism could contribute to the “tyranny” of the gaze and create unequal relationships between state and citizens in terms of knowledge and power.<sup>232</sup> Rational spatial ordering, in other words, can control and discipline individuals, rather than liberate them.

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<sup>229</sup> David Harvey, “The Experience of Space and Time,” in *The Condition of Post-Modernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989).

<sup>230</sup> Harvey, *The Condition of Post-Modernity*, 258.

<sup>231</sup> Harvey, *The Condition of Post-Modernity*, 247.

<sup>232</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 2nd ed., trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 209. Foucault focuses on early 20th-century Europe.



The regimented visual space of Japanese-style machine-ist paintings, I argue, is associated with the totalitarian social space discussed by Foucault rather than the one entrenched within the Humanist and Enlightenment tradition: the paintings can be read in terms of the monitoring gaze and systematic control. In particular, the paintings by Ōta Chōu and Shibata show the complex play of scopic and technological domination placed upon the women. In Ōta's *Women Observing the Stars* <Figure 1-6>, a woman in a kimono looks through a telescope, the invention of which, according to Martin Jay, contributed to the "privileging of the visual" in modern society.<sup>233</sup> The woman, although actively looking through the modern optical technology, is nevertheless undermined by the soft black shadows in the upper left and bottom right of the painting which create the uncomfortable feeling that, just as the woman is looking through a telescope, we, the viewers, are also looking at her through a telescope without her knowledge, having ultimate visual control over her. Although it is not specifically scopic, the rather disturbing relationship between women and modern technology is also apparent in Shibata's *Biwa Concert* <Figure 1-5>. In this painting, the microphone—the technology that *records* the music the woman is making—is located in the foreground, closer to the viewers, as if we have technological power over her.<sup>234</sup>

Even when modern optical equipment such as the telescope is not depicted within the picture plane, the fact that the women in the paintings express neither movement nor

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<sup>233</sup> Martin Jay, "Scopic Regimes of Modernity," in *Vision and Visuality*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988), 4.

<sup>234</sup> In the Foucauldian system, such terms as "record" and "archive" signify one's knowledge and thus power over the other.

emotion gives us a sense that they have internalized the invisible monitoring gaze. The women in Saeki's *Tearoom* <Figure 1-1> are a good example. The gazes of the café girls and the viewer never meet, and the girls, standing frontally to the viewers, display a strange quality of docility and vulnerability on the one hand, and discipline and confrontationality on the other. This recalls Foucault's point: in the "disciplinary society," the system of unequal relationships of seeing between state and citizens (the Panopticon) turned society into a self-regulating mass, and "a faceless gaze transformed the whole social body into a field of perception."<sup>235</sup> If we consider the social surveillance system of the time, Saeki's painting points to the Orwellian nightmare in which the totalitarian state uses modern technology to monitor individuals' private lives for the purposes of thought control and enforcing conformity (*Gleichschaltung*). Furthermore, as Hasegawa Nyozeikan's art theory had it, the overall orderliness of the pictorial space is recreated in the human subjects. The women depicted in these paintings appear deprived of agency, individuality, and human spirit, making them appear like automata.<sup>236</sup>

The question remains as to why in the paintings it is *women* who are juxtaposed with machines. One possible explanation is that, historically, Japanese-style paintings had almost exclusively depicted women. Most often understood as Japan's tradition and associated with nationalism, Japanese-style paintings were defined in opposition to oil paintings and the "masculine" West. More importantly, however, I would argue that Japanese-style machine-ist paintings functioned to *aestheticize* the harmony between

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<sup>235</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 214.

<sup>236</sup> Bruce Grenville, "The Uncanny: Experiments in Cyborg Culture," in *The Uncanny: Experiments in Cyborg Culture* (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 2001).

human and machine, and that as traditional objects of beauty women were more suitable for this purpose than men. This is not to say that the connection between machines and men was absent from wartime cultural discourse, however: men's bodies are often compared to industrial weapons (such as airplanes and tanks), a subject to which I return in Chapter Five.

My study of Japanese-style machine-ist paintings problematizes the conventionally accepted definition of modern girls. According to Miriam Silverberg, *moga* emerged in the context of Taishō democracy and the mass culture of the 1920s. They were defined by their appearance: they wore Western clothes and had bobbed, permed hair. They were also financially independent, since they worked.<sup>237</sup> Modern girls were thus understood to stand in opposition to the patriarchal state ideology of the “good wife, wise mother” (*ryōsai kenbo*) and were considered “socially militant.”<sup>238</sup> This equation of appearance with political identity and the assumption that *moga* were incompatible with collectivism, militarism, and patriarchy, however, seems simplistic; these women's social standing vis-à-vis the state changed considerably during the war. In short, the “socially militant” *moga* could turn militarist.

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<sup>237</sup> Miriam Silverberg, “The Café Waitress Serving Modern Japan,” in *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, ed. Stephen Vlastos (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

<sup>238</sup> Miriam Silverberg, “The Modern Girl as Militant,” in *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600–1945*, ed. Gail Lee Gernstein (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Brown, *Taishō Chic*, 19.

Historical evidence suggests that *moga* were, in fact, able to live up to the “good wife, wise mother” paradigm *within* the state structure: they executed patriotic duties and participated in the national agenda. Many working women and café girls, considered paradigmatic of *moga* in the 1920s, became members of the National Defense Women’s Association (*Kokubō Fujinkai*), the officially sanctioned organization established for women in 1932.<sup>239</sup> Participation was imposed to some degree, but there is evidence that many women actively participated in the state agenda without being coerced; newspaper reports in the early 1930s were full of stories about café waitresses donating money to the army. Historian Louise Young writes, “working women were among the most active participants... *Imon* [consolation] campaigns at textile factories and among department store shop girls raised extremely large sums, putting working women at the top of the lists of contributors.”<sup>240</sup> These women might have worn modern Western dress, but clearly they were no longer a “social threat.”

In addition, there were women who wore Western outfits and who also embraced the state ideology by opposing love marriages and women’s suffrage. Kendall Brown calls these women, who were “modern in appearance and traditional in . . . values,” a “hybrid,” and suggests that, as the modern girl embraced the state ideology, the state increasingly accepted the “hybrid” *moga*.<sup>241</sup> The most compelling example of the union

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<sup>239</sup> Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 130; 173. For more on the Association, see Sheldon Garon, “Integrating Women into Public Life: Women’s Groups and the State,” in *Molding Japanese Minds* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

<sup>240</sup> Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 173.

<sup>241</sup> Brown, *Taishō Chic*, 21.

between the state and *moga* has been uncovered by Jennifer Robertson, who studies national beauty contests in the 1930s in relation to the contemporary scientific discourse of eugenics and racial hygiene.<sup>242</sup> Robertson argues that the process by which the state recognized the importance of fit female Japanese bodies in creating eugenically superior Japanese citizens converged with the nationalistic enterprise of finding Miss Nippon—healthy, athletic *modern* women who were taller and heavier than the average.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have examined a group of what I called Japanese-style machine-ist paintings produced between 1935 and 1940. Locating the origin of machine-ist aesthetics mainly in the development of modernist art in Japan during the 1920s, I attended to the wartime socio-political context in which Japanese fascist society—where all individuals fell into their “proper place” under the state and the emperor—was established. Accordingly, I suggested that the paintings could be read as mirroring the regimentation, surveillance, and dehumanization of the time, rather than as embodying the liberal principles of individualism and democracy.

On a broader level, this chapter interrogates the relationship between modernity and fascism. As Yamanouchi Yasushi writes, World War II has been understood as “a confrontation between an irrational, absolutist form of fascist system (including Germany, Italy and Japan) and a rational, democratic New Deal-type of system (including the

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<sup>242</sup> Jennifer Robertson, “Japan’s First Cyborg? Miss Nippon, Eugenics and Wartime Technologies of Beauty, Body and Blood,” *Body & Society* 7.1 (2001): 1-34.

United States, England and France).<sup>243</sup> The former is understood to be anti-modern, while the latter is modern. However, as recent studies have demonstrated, this binary that pits modernity against totalitarian (fascist) regimes is no longer sustainable. As Zygmunt Bauman argues, the Holocaust was not an act of pre-modern barbarism; the genocide could never have been perpetrated without what modernity had brought about, such as rationality, division of labor, and taxonomy.<sup>244</sup> Historian Roger Griffin explains that fascism did not oppose modernity in its entirety but rejected only selected aspects such as cultural pluralism, individualism, and liberalism. Griffin draws an important conclusion: “To grasp this fact destroys any comforting equation between modernity and humanism, modernity and civilization, modernity and progress, modernity and the good.”<sup>245</sup> In fact, the ambivalent nature and potential danger of modernity were alluded to by Charlie Chaplin in his film *Modern Times* produced in 1936, just when Japanese-style machine-ist paintings were being produced in Japan. In the film, Chaplin comically but compellingly shows the dehumanizing effect of modern society by playing a factory worker who is forced to adjust himself to the assembly line he works on. Trying to match the movement and speed of the machine, the worker himself becomes an automaton,

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<sup>243</sup> Yamanouchi Yasushi, “Total-War and System Integration: A Methodological Introduction,” 1.

<sup>244</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000).

<sup>245</sup> Roger Griffin, “Modernity Under the New Order: The Fascist Project for Managing the Future,” in *A Fascist Century: Essays by Roger Griffin*, ed. Matthew Feldman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 43.

acting like a machine. Machines can be useful, but they can also control human subjects.

Modernity can go wrong, and fascism is one example.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Uemura Shōen's *Bijin-ga*, New Classicism, and Fascist Time

#### Introduction

By 1940, hostility toward the Allied nations, especially the United States, had grown considerably in Japan, eventually leading to the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. While Japan's national identity of the mid-1930s entailed its capability to be "modern," by the 1940s materialism was replaced by spiritualism, historicism, and essentialism. When the Pacific War began and resources became scarce, the government implemented national campaigns that emphasized saving and frugality over industrial production, under slogans such as "extravagance is the enemy" (*zeitaku wa teki da*) and "waste not, want not, until we win" (*hoshigarimasen katsu made wa*). Permanent waves were banned in 1939 as wasteful of electricity, the National Clothes Law, which stipulated citizens wear the unfashionable "national uniform," was legislated in 1940, dance halls were closed in the same year, and English expressions were purged from the official vocabulary in 1942.<sup>246</sup> Japanese-style machine-ist paintings, which I examined in Chapter One, ceased to exist before the end of the war, as such explicit signs of the "modern" came to be understood as "Western" and therefore inappropriate. What emerged after machine-ism was Japanese "new classicism" (*shin kotenshugi*), which still uses the modernist style but depicts historical subjects.

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<sup>246</sup> Thomas Havens, *Valley of Darkness*, 18; 51; Shillony, *Politics and Culture in Wartime Japan*, 148.



Uemura Shōen (1875-1949) is one of the painters whose works exemplified this new trend. One of the most important painters of *bijin-ga* (paintings of beautiful people)<sup>247</sup> as well as one of the few successful female artists in modern Japan, her works are most often discussed in the contexts of modern *bijin-ga* history and art by Japanese women. Despite the abundant scholarship on Shōen’s art and personal life, no art historian has undertaken critical readings of her wartime works. This chapter therefore attempts to historicize Shōen’s wartime works while continuing the discussion on wartime Japanese-style paintings. I will argue that her art, which is modeled on Edo-period art, can be considered in relation to the fascist conceptualization of time, which envisions the future as a recreation of the past and which was epitomized by the “overcoming the modern” discussion of the early 1940s.

I begin by addressing the problems with the existing scholarship on Shōen. Carefully attending to the stylistic transformation of the artist’s works over time, I then demonstrate how her wartime works, such as *Sudden Blast* (1939) <Figure 2-4>, exemplify the new classicism, the artistic trend that was introduced to Japan from Europe in the 1920s and became the official style of propaganda art during the war. Finally, I investigate the psychological workings of this new classicism, introducing the concept of fascist kitsch and discussing Shōen’s 1944 work, *Lady Kusunoki* <Figure 2-24>. I conclude the chapter by reflecting on the role of women and female artists in fascism.

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<sup>247</sup> Beautiful men were often depicted in *bijin-ga* in the Edo period.

## Uemura Shōen

Uemura Shōen was born Uemura Tsune in Kyoto, which had long served as the imperial capital.<sup>248</sup> When the city of Edo flourished under the Tokugawa Shogunate between 1603 and 1868, Kyoto advanced a style of art quite distinct from that in Edo.<sup>249</sup> The artist was raised by her mother Nakako, who had lost her husband when Shōen was young. Shōen studied with three teachers who were associated with the Maruyama-Shijō style, the local Kyoto style of realism developed in the Edo period. At the age of twelve, she entered the Kyoto Prefectural School of Painting, and there she studied under Suzuki Shōnen (1849-1918), with whom she later had a son whom she raised as a single mother. After working with Suzuki Shōnen, Uemura Shōen became a student of Kōno Bairei (1844-1895) in order to study figurative works; on Bairei's death, his student Takeuchi Seihō (1864-1942) took over the position at Bairei's private school. Seihō was the best-known of Shōen's three teachers, and he was instrumental in introducing new, modernist artistic trends to the Kyoto circle of Japanese-style painters following his travels and studies in Europe in 1900.

Shōen became successful early in her career, both domestically and internationally. In 1890, when she was fifteen, her *Beauties of Four Seasons* received the first prize at the third annual Domestic Industrial Exposition (*Naikoku Kangyō Hakurankai*); a different version was purchased by Prince Arthur of England. Shōen continuously received prizes

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<sup>248</sup> Shōen is her studio name. I refer to her as Shōen throughout the dissertation.

<sup>249</sup> Paul Berry and Michiyo Morioka, introduction to *Modern Masters of Kyoto: The Transformation of Japanese Painting Traditions, Nihonga from the Griffith and Patricia Way Collection* (Seattle: Seattle Art Museum, 1999), 21

at exhibitions such as the Japan Art Association Exhibition (*Nihon Bijutsu Kyōkai Ten*), Domestic Industrial Expositions, and the Exhibition of New and Old Art (*Shinko Bijutsuhin Ten*). Her works were exhibited at the Chicago and St. Louis World's Fairs in 1893 and 1904. In the 1910s and 1920s, Shōen executed a number of paintings whose themes were taken from noh plays and music, but submitted few paintings to public exhibitions.<sup>250</sup> In the late 1930s and early 1940s, her public visibility increased markedly, and her works were highly acclaimed by the public and by art critics not just in Kyoto but throughout Japan. *Dance Performed in a Noh Play* (1936), perhaps her best-known work, was purchased by the Ministry of Education. Shōen's success during this period led her to become the first female recipient of the most prestigious national award, the Order of Culture (*Bunka Kunshō*), which she received from Emperor Hirohito in 1948, three years after the end of the war.

Accounts of Shōen most often hinge upon her life as a female artist. Arguably the most popular representation of Shōen is the fictionalized biography *Jo no mai* written by Miyao Tomiko in 1983.<sup>251</sup> The novel won the Yoshikawa Eiji Award, and the film adaptation also won an award at the Asia-Pacific Film Festival in 1984. *Jo no mai* focuses on Shōen's relationship with her teacher Shōnen and the birth of her son, Shōkō, satisfying the curiosity of the general public. More specifically, the film poses the question of how Shōen's relationship with her teacher affected her work, that is, whether

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<sup>250</sup> Michiyo Morioka, "Changing Images of Women: Taisho Period Paintings by Uemura Shoen (1875-1949), Ito Shoha (1877-1968), and Kajiwara Hisako (1896-1988)," Ph.D. diss. (Seattle: University of Washington, 1990), 180.

<sup>251</sup> Miyao Tomiko, *Jo no mai* (Tokyo: Chuō Kōron sha, 1983).

it enabled her to establish her career or, conversely, ruined it. Although *Jo no mai* exposes the patriarchal nature of the Japanese art community, it represents Shōen as an innocent girl who was unable to resist the sexual advances of her teacher.

This portrayal of Shōen in *Jo no mai* clearly does not do justice to her art, but this reading exemplifies previous art historical interpretations of Shōen's works. In other words, the model for analysis of her works has remained largely biographical. This approach is also further entrenched by postwar feminist art history. Wakakuwa Midori (1935-2007), one of the most important feminist art historians in Japan, has written about Shōen. Closely following the first wave of feminist art history and Linda Nochlin's seminal 1971 essay "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" she locates commonalities among such women. For Wakakuwa, who argues that successful female artists are those who have "escaped from the strong paternalism of Japanese society," Shōen, who was herself raised by a single mother and who raised her own child as a single mother, was a perfect model for her claim.<sup>252</sup> To use her words, Shōen's family "did not have a patriarch" and she was "the 'man' in the family."<sup>253</sup>

Wakakuwa considers the relationship between Shōen and Shōnen as embodying the unequal power relationship between the genders. She writes, "Shōen and her teacher

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<sup>252</sup> Wakakuwa Midori, "Three Women Artists of the Meiji Period (1868-1912): Reconsidering Their Significance from a Feminist Perspective," trans. Naoko Aoki, in *Japanese Women: New Feminist Perspectives on the Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow and Atsuko Kameda (New York: The Feminist Press, 1994), 62.

<sup>253</sup> Wakakuwa, "Three Women Artists," 70.

may have loved each other, but their relationship was basically one in which the man dominates the woman. To contemporary eyes it may seem a form of sexual harassment... Without a father or a suitable guardian to support her financially, a woman artist had to accept a teacher or an art dealer as her patron.”<sup>254</sup> Using the gender-power dichotomy as her underlying framework, Wakakuwa praises Shōen’s work as a female artist’s attempt to de-sexualize the artistic gaze on women, who are always the object of sexual interest when painted by men.<sup>255</sup> Overall, Wakakuwa’s scholarship gives the impression that Shōen *herself* was a feminist artist.

Wakakuwa’s interpretations of the artist’s works thus naturally remain celebratory. She refers to *Late Autumn*, a painting of women in modest kimono repairing a *shōji* (paper screen) executed in 1941, as the first painting about “the reality of working women,” calling it as “significant as the works of Millet, who painted working women instead of bourgeois women.”<sup>256</sup> Wakakuwa is not the only female art historian who favorably interprets Shōen’s wartime works. Shiokawa Kyōko goes so far as to describe the same work as “anti-war” (*hansen-teki*) art. Shiokawa writes, “what the artist presents in the painting is praise of everyday life. To cherish everyday life is to cherish life... the women in Shōen’s paintings loathe war and look for a bright future. It was exactly the opposite of what militarists wanted.”<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> Wakakuwa, “Three Women Artists,” 70.

<sup>255</sup> Wakakuwa, “Three Women Artists,” 71.

<sup>256</sup> Wakakuwa, “Three Women Artists,” 71.

<sup>257</sup> Shiokawa Kyōko, “Uemura Shōen no shōgai to geijutsu” [The Life and Works of Uemura Shōen], in *Uemura Shōen* (Tokyo: Gakken, 1993), 103.

Art historian Michiyo Morioka challenges the uncritical scholarship on Shōen by feminist art historians in her Ph.D. dissertation “Changing Images of Women: Taishō Period Paintings by Uemura Shōen (1875-1949), Itō Shōha (1877-1968), and Kajiwara Hisako (1896-1988).” By analyzing statements made by the artist, she reveals that Shōen was in fact quite conservative. Shōen’s image of ideal women is resonant with the Confucian text *Onna daigaku*, which places women in the domestic sphere as subordinate to their “master” (husband). Morioka states, “Thoroughly traditional-minded, Shōen embraced the *Onna daigaku* without ever recognizing its oppressive and discriminatory definition of women’s role.”<sup>258</sup> Thus, contrary to the claims by the feminist art historians, Shōen was not a feminist who fought for women’s rights and freedom from the patriarchy. Furthermore, her art was often highly nationalistic. In 1904, at the height of nationalism during the Russo-Japanese War, she painted a portrait of the courtesan Kiyū, who killed herself rather than accepting American and British clients. Shōen in her publication celebrated this female suicide and insisted that all Japanese women should emulate the spirit of Kiyū.<sup>259</sup> While Morioka’s scholarship maintains a tone critical of Shōen, curiously, she does not investigate the artist’s wartime works even though she writes, “the last two decades of Shōen’s life—the 1930s and 1940s—witnessed the maturity of her art.”<sup>260</sup> She concludes her study with the statement, “Shōen’s art, her belief in beauty, truth, and goodness remains unchanged throughout her career.”<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> Morioka, “Changing Images of Women,” 152.

<sup>259</sup> Uemura Shōen, “Yūjo Kiyū” [Courtesan Kiyū](n.p.), *Seibishō*, 53.

<sup>260</sup> Morioka, “Changing Images of Women,” 77.

<sup>261</sup> Morioka, “Changing Images of Women,” 218.

I argue, in contrast, that one cannot ignore how active Shōen was during the war. She painted at a furious pace. Between 1935 and 1945, she completed at least ninety-five paintings. In 1941, she became a member of the Japan Art Academy (*Teikoku Bijutsuin*), Japan's most prestigious art institution, run by the Ministry of Education. To celebrate this achievement, the art magazines *Bi no kuni* and *Kokuga* published lengthy special issues on the artist in 1941 and 1942, respectively.<sup>262</sup> She was also actively involved in state-sanctioned events, submitting at least four paintings to donation exhibitions (*kennō ten*) such as the Army Donation Exhibition (*Rikugun Kennōga Ten*) in 1941 and the Japanese Artist Patriotic Society Donation Exhibition for Battle Planes (*Nihon Gaka Hōkokukai Gunyōki Kennōga Ten*) in 1942, the proceeds of which were given to the state. In 1941, at the age of sixty-six, she made her first trip abroad, to China (Shanghai and Hangzhou). She was invited by China's Central Railroad (*Kachū Tetsudō*) to present a gift to Wang Jingwei, the leader of Japan's puppet government in Nanjing, which was praised as exemplifying her passionate patriotism.<sup>263</sup> In 1944, she donated a work to the Kyoto Reizan Gokoku Shrine, which is dedicated to warriors who sacrificed their lives for the country. She also painted a portrait of Kusunoki Masashige's wife, which she described as an act of *saikan hōkoku* (serving the nation by art).<sup>264</sup> However, it

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<sup>262</sup> *Kokuga*, April 1942; *Bi no kuni*. July 1942.

<sup>263</sup> Yoshifuku Teizō, "Jikyoku to Shōen no geijutsu" [The War and Shōen's Art], *Kokuga*, April 1942, 17.

<sup>264</sup> Uemura Shōen, *Seibishō shūi* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1976), 135. The publication does not indicate when this particular entry was written, but it seems to have been around 1940.

was not only through her involvement in public events but also through her art, as I will show below, that Shōen participated in the ideological discourse of the war.

### **Shōen and Edo**

Shōen studied Japan's classical art throughout her career, and many of her works were inspired by *bijin-ga*, a genre whose origins in Japan can be traced back as far as the Nara period (710-784) but was primarily popularized in *ukiyo-e* ("pictures of floating world") in the Edo period.<sup>265</sup> *A Long Autumn Night* <Figure 2-1>, which the artist executed in 1907, is a good example. Shōen painted two kimono-clad women spending a quiet night together, sitting directly on the floor. One is checking the candle in a lantern while the other is reading a book. The soft, dim light that illuminates them in the shadowy scene creates a warm feeling, and the tone of the painting—grayish and earth-toned—maintains a restrained tastefulness. Art historian Katō Ruiko compares *A Long Autumn Night* to Nishikawa Sukenobu's *One Hundred Women Classified According to Their Rank* <Figure 2-2>,<sup>266</sup> and it also looks similar to the prints of Suzuki Harunobu <Figure 2-3>, who often produced indoor scenes of women reading. Their facial characteristics are somewhat different, but the women in Shōen and Harunobu's works are nevertheless remarkably similar: both have one elbow on the floor, where the book is, with the opposite hand turning a page. Their gold hair accessories and the way in which the edges and sleeves of their kimono are arranged in the foreground also make the

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<sup>265</sup> Katō Ruiko, "Bijin-ga," in *Nihonga: Transcending the Past: Japanese-Style Painting, 1868-1968*, ed. Ellen Conant (St. Louis, MO: St. Louis Art Museum, 1995), 108-109.

<sup>266</sup> It should be noted that Sukenobu was a Kyoto artist.



pictures look alike. *Sudden Blast* <Figure 2-4>, produced more than thirty years later in 1939, is another example of Shōen's works that seem inspired by *ukiyo-e*. As Katō suggests, the artist likely drew on Edo art such as Teisai Hokuba's *Shunpū bijin-zu* <Figure 2-5>, which depicts a woman holding her kimono together as it erotically exposes her bare feet. Shōen's painting also recalls Harunobu's *Wind* <Figure 2-6>, which shows a kimono-clad woman leaning forward, her left hand on her head, trying to protect her hair from the breeze.

Shōen was not the only painter who referred to the Edo art tradition. There was a surge of interest in Edo art among the Kyoto circle of Japanese-style painters in the 1910s and 1920s. When Ernest Fenollosa and Okakura Tenshin established Japanese-style painting as “national art” back in the 1870s, they did not highly regard the commercial, reproducible *ukiyo-e* prints that represented Edo period art. When European modernist artists came to be acknowledged in Japan, however, a number of artists, the second generation of Japanese-style painters, began explicitly alluding to *ukiyo-e*. They did so, importantly, in the context of artistic modernism, which rebelled against the established, academic style of Japanese-style paintings established by Fenollosa and Okakura and pursued individualized, creative, original artistic expressions.

There was certainly a “paradox,” as art historian Doris Croissant calls it, in that Japanese “modernist” artists who supposedly sought to break away from the past were turning to their national tradition. As Croissant explains, however, “the impact of Japanese art on postimpressionist painters such as Cézanne, van Gogh, and Gauguin provided ‘Japanese’ painting with a model of aesthetic self-identification that encouraged

the *return* to early modern *ukiyo-e* aesthetics and subject matter” (emphasis added).<sup>267</sup> A good example of this is *Fisherwomen* (1913) <Figure 2-7> by Tsuchida Bakusen (1887-1936), who studied with Shōen under Takeuchi Seihō and was the leader of the Association for the Creation of Japanese Painting (*Kokuga Sōsaku Kyōkai*), a group that was established to practice alternative art to that of government-sponsored Bunten (the exhibition of Ministry of Education).<sup>268</sup> The painting is clearly inspired by Gauguin’s primitivist painting *Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?* (1897-1898) <Figure 2-8>,<sup>269</sup> but at the same time, as Croissant argues, Bakusen demonstrates his careful study of the same subject matter by *ukiyo-e* artist Kitagawa Utamaro <Figure 2-9>.<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> Doris Croissant, “Icons of Femininity: Japanese national Painting and the Paradox of Modernity,” in *Gender and Power in The Japanese Visual Field*, ed. Joshua S. Mostow, Norman Bryson, and Maribeth Graybill (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003), 119-120.

<sup>268</sup> Szostak, “The Kokuga Sōsaku Kyōkai and Kyoto Nihonga Reform in the Meiji, Taishō and Early Shōwa Years (1900-1928),” 1.

<sup>269</sup> Croissant, “Icons of Femininity,” 124-127; 129.

<sup>270</sup> Croissant argues that although he provided an alternative to government approved Bunten paintings, Bakusen’s works were “tinted with patriotic flavor” and “a claim for the ethnic purity of national painting,” underscoring the artist’s political conservatism. The question of Bakusen’s standing vis-à-vis nationalism is beyond the scope of the present study, however. Croissant, “Icons of Femininity,” 124-127; 129.

Some Japanese-style painters in Kyoto mocked idealized representations of beautiful women in Edo art by reworking the *bijin-ga* tradition, which art historian John Szostak calls the discourse of “anti-bijin” (anti-beauty). These artists painted women who did not conventionally fall into the category of “beautiful women,” such as lower-class, ugly, and mad women, shocking viewers. Szostak writes that, through the use of anti-bijin images, progressive Nihonga painters alluded to Japan’s traditional past while simultaneously rejecting artistic conservatism of their colleagues.<sup>271</sup> Szostak’s examination includes a study of works by Kajiwara Hisako, who, like Shōen, was a female Japanese-style painter in Kyoto. Her *Sisters* (ca. 1915) depicts siblings, a woman and an adolescent girl, both of them mentally disabled. With their deformed faces and shabby clothes, the sisters in Kajiwara’s painting stand in stark contrast to the idealized, culturally sophisticated, doll-like women in fashionable kimono portrayed in Shōen’s works. Indeed, unlike Shōen, Kajiwara was never concerned with female beauty. She stated, “I had no intention of painting a pretty woman in the traditional style, which was precisely what I wanted to break away from.”<sup>272</sup> Often dealing with the issue of hardship

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<sup>271</sup> John Szostak, “Fair Is Foul, and Foul Is Fair’: Kyoto Nihonga Anti-Bijin Portraiture and The Psychology of the Grotesque,” in *Rethinking Japanese Modernism*, ed. Roy Starrs (Leiden: Global Oriental, 2012), 364. Sincere thanks to John Szostak who shared with me his unpublished manuscript.

<sup>272</sup> Originally in Kajiwara Hisako, “Omoide no arubamu,” *Bijutsu*, 1974. Quoted in Szostak, “Fair Is Foul, and Foul Is Fair,” 375.

experienced by women, her works are considered part of the Humanist School (*Jinseiha*).<sup>273</sup>

The most extreme examples of *anti-bijin* are perhaps the works by Kainoshō Tadaoto, who submitted to the exhibition organized by Bakusen's Association for the Creation of Japanese Painting as a guest. His *Nude*, painted around 1921, depicts a woman whose body does not fit the frame of the canvas. The glittering surface of her skin adds realism to the sensuality of her plump, fleshy body. His *Woman with Balloon*, a painting of a semi-nude woman, created in 1926, was repudiated even by Tsuchida Bakusen as a "filthy picture" (*kitanai e*), and was removed from the Association for the Creation of Japanese Painting exhibition in that year. Kainoshō's paintings were often considered to manifest Satanism (*akuma shugi*), aestheticism (*yuibi shugi*), and decadence (*taihai shugi*), which could also be found in some contemporary literary works, especially Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's novels.<sup>274</sup>

Shōen was not unaware of modernist trends. She seems to have explored a new artistic dimension by dealing with the subject of mad love and trying to express the emotional depth of women. *Flower Basket* (1915) <**Figure 2-10**> and *Flames* (1918)

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<sup>273</sup> Szostak, "Fair Is Foul, and Foul Is Fair" 372

<sup>274</sup> *Kainoshō Tadaoto to Taishō ki no gaka tachi* [Kainoshō Tadaoto and Other Artists of the Taishō Period] (Chiba: Chiba City Museum, 1999), 11. Doris Croissant, "From Madonna to Femme Fatale: Gender Play in Japanese National Painting," in *Performing "Nation": Gender Politics in Literature, Theater, and the Visual Arts of China and Japan, 1880-1940*, ed. Doris Croissant, Catherine Vance Yeh, and Joshua S. Mostow (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008), 304-305.

<Figure 2-11> are two good examples. In *Flower Basket*, like Kajiwara, Shōen deals with the mentally ill whom she studied at a mental hospital in Kyoto. She portrays Lady Teruhi no Mae from Zeami's *noh* play *Hanagatami* (*Flower Basket*), who falls in love with the sixth-century Emperor Keitai. The heroine, who has gone mad after parting with the emperor, performs the "dance of insanity," holding in her right hand a basket given to her by him.<sup>275</sup> *Flames*, produced in 1918, is also inspired by a *noh* play, *Lady Aoi* (*Aoi no ue*). In the painting, Rokujō, the lover of the hero Hikaru Genji in *The Tale of Genji*, twists her body to the right and bites her own hair, expressing jealousy over Lady Aoi, who is the principle wife of Genji.

Despite these attempts, however, Shōen did not receive as much attention as the progressive Kyoto painters such as Bakusen and Kainoshō, and her works were in fact harshly criticized as lacking innovation and originality.<sup>276</sup> Even Shōen's teacher Takeuchi Seihō commented,

She continues to study and work with a steady pace of her own. She pursues her path untiringly and does not change her characteristic style. As a result she creates neither an exceptional masterpiece nor a sloppy, poor-quality work...As usual, this painting [*Willow and Cherry* (1909)] displays meticulous and sensitive attention to every square inch of its

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<sup>275</sup> Uemura Shōen (Tokyo: National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, 2010), 30.

<sup>276</sup> Morioka, "Changing Images of Women," 161- 170.

surface *but it lacks an innovative element or notable progress*

(emphasis mine).<sup>277</sup>

In the 1910s and 1920s, as she admitted herself, Shōen experienced a “slump” and worked almost exclusively on private commissions, rarely submitting her works to public exhibitions.

Unlike the “anti-bijin” painters, Shōen’s reference to the Edo artistic heritage was her attempt to revive, not challenge, the tradition, and her art was more truthful to the original. In this sense, her works were closer to those of Kaburaki Kiyotaka (1878-1972), whose lineage can be traced back to prominent *ukiyo-e* artist Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839-1892), and to Itō Shinsui (1898-1972), a painter who was also involved in New Print Movement (*Shin Hanga Undō*) that attempted to recuperate the Edo print-making practice.<sup>278</sup> Taking inspiration from the Edo period and Edo art, Shōen, Shinsui, and

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<sup>277</sup> Takeuchi Seihō, “Tenrankai shokan,” *Kyoto bijutsu* 16 (1909), 16. Quoted and translated in Morioka, “Changing Images of Women,” 165.

<sup>278</sup> For more on the comparison of the three artists, see *Shōen, Kiyokata, Shinsui san kyoshō ten* [Shōen, Kiyokata, Shinsui Three Masters of Beauty] (Aichi: Meito Art Museum, 2005); *Bi no daikyōen: Uemura Shōen, Kaburaki Kiyokata, Itō Shinsui* [The Competition of Beauty: Uemura Shōen, Kaburaki Kiyokata, and Itō Shinsui] (Aichi: Meito Art Museum, 2008); *Bijunga no keifu ten: Uemura Shōen, Kaburaki Kiyokata, Itō Shinsui* [The Genealogy of *Bijin-ga*: Uemura Shōen, Kaburaki Kiyokata, Itō Shinsui] (Kagoshima: Kagoshima City Museum, 1999); *Shōen, Kiyokata, Shinsui o chūshin ni: Meito bijutsukan meihin ten* [Focusing on Shōen, Kyokata, Shinsui: Meito Art Museum Masterpieces] (Tokyo: Asahi Newspaper Company, 1999).

Kiyokata produced works that are often striking in their similarity. For example, both Shōen and Kiyokata produced paintings with the motif of Oman, a woman who pretends to be a *wakashu* (an adolescent boy in a male-male relationship) in Ihara Saikaku's novel *Five Women Who Loved Love* (*Kōshoku Gonin Onna*).<sup>279</sup> Kiyokata's *Saikaku's Five Women, Oman* (1911) <Figure 2-12> and Shōen's *Oman* (1915) <Figure 2-13>, both depict her falling down on her way to the house of Gengobei, her lover, and not only have the same composition but look almost identical.<sup>280</sup> Likewise, Shōen's *Meiden* (1942) <Figure 2-14> and Shinsui's *Needle Sewing* (1945) are similar in subject matter, style, and composition. Depicting a woman in a kimono engaging in needlework, both draw on the *ukiyo-e* genre of *ōkubi-e* (big head picture) that show the subject in close-up.

By reviving *ukiyo-e*, Shōen joined the discourse of cultural nostalgia in which “Edo”—both its time and place—became a signifier for “good old Japan,” which was thought to have been lost in the process of modernization. As historian Carol Gluck observes, the tradition and culture of Edo has been constantly invented from the Meiji period to this day.<sup>281</sup> When the Meiji government, established in 1868, promoted the rapid, radical modernization of the country under the slogan of Civilization and Enlightenment (*Bunmei Kaika*), Edo was seen as representing the pre-modern,

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<sup>279</sup> The novel has been translated into English: Ihara Saikaku, *Five Women Who Loved Love*, translated by William Theodore De Bary (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1959).

<sup>280</sup> I could not find an image of Oman produced during the Edo period.

<sup>281</sup> Carol Gluck, “The Invention of Edo,” *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, ed. Stephen Valstos (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

uncivilized, evil custom of old Japan, from which they desperately wanted to be disassociated. Gluck explains, however, that some people began to understand Edo positively from around the 1890s. She writes, “Edo-as-tradition offered a cultural space, timeless and unchanging, where the spirit abraded by the masses, machines, and modish modernism could ‘return’ to be refreshed and re-Japanized.”<sup>282</sup> Interwar intellectuals including folklore scholar Yanagita Kunio, historian Tsuda Sōkichi, and novelist Nagai Kafū, who were fascinated by Edo, were among those who were dismayed by the degree to which Japan was modernized (i.e. Westernized). Nagai decried, “Let me list a few of the things I dislike about the Ginza: the enormous cupid dolls, the dolls of the Tengadō, and the girls of the Lion Café.”<sup>283</sup> His critique of the modern girls was shared by Shōen, who publically denounced Westernized Japanese women with plucked eyebrows and permed hair.<sup>284</sup>

### **The New Classicism**

Like Kiyokata and Shinsui, Shōen contributed to the revival of Edo, but Shōen’s work went through a notable stylistic transformation, which we do not necessarily see in the works by Kiyokata and Shinsui. Toward the end of her career, Shōen became increasingly interested in modernist visual language. As Michiyo Morioka writes,

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<sup>282</sup> Gluck, “The Invention of Edo,” 271.

<sup>283</sup> Quoted in Gluck, “The Invention of Edo,” 271.

<sup>284</sup> Uemura Shōen, “Teiten no bijin-ga” [*Bijin-ga* at Teiten] (1929), *Seibishō sono go* (Tokyo: Kyūryūdō, 1985), 33-34; Uemura Shōen, “Mayu no ki” [Eyebrows]; “Mage” [Hair] (n.d.), *Seibishō*, 36; 42.



“pursuing her traditional ideal, she achieved a surprisingly *modern* visual statement during the last decade of her life. In such highly acclaimed works as *Late Autumn* <Figure 2-15>, Shōen demonstrates her sensitivity to formal design” (emphasis mine).<sup>285</sup> Shōen’s modernist turn can be seen in the comparison between *A Long Autumn Night* <Figure 2-1> and *Sudden Blast* <Figure 2-4>, the two works mentioned above. The sense of spatial depth created by chiaroscuro is absent from the latter. The kimono of the two women in *A Long Autumn Night* are meticulously detailed and delicately textured, but those of the women in *Sudden Blast* are plain and bold. More obvious differences can be seen in the use of color. Shōen mostly uses brownish, subdued colors in *A Long Autumn Wind*, while she applies a thick paint of vivid, strong red and blue in *Sudden Blast*.

The artist’s use of modernist style is most evident in her *Late Autumn* (1943) <Figure 2-15>. In the painting, a woman in a modest kimono engages in domestic housework. She repairs a *shōji* screen, filling its holes with paper shaped like snow flakes. She kneels, facing the *shōji*, her face turned toward the viewer as she looks at the paste and scissors on the floor beside her. The woman is captured from behind, which naturally flattens her body, making her gesture somewhat awkward, stiff, and motionless. Compared to *A Long Autumn Night* <Figure 2-1>, *Late Autumn* uses fewer and brighter colors: the color of the kimono that marks the woman’s body is monotonous, matte pastel blue, which emphasizes its graphic impact and the abstract shape of the garment. The vertical and horizontal lines of the *shōji* further emphasize the two-dimensionality.

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<sup>285</sup> Conant, *Nihonga: Transcending the Past*, 328.

Shōen in fact stated in 1932, “I have a desire to paint contemporary life when I am ready...but what would it be like if I were to paint it?...I do not think I would treat the modern as modern as it is. I would pull the modern into the ambience of the classics (*kotentekina kūki*).”<sup>286</sup> Although *Late Autumn* displays signs of the historical (the woman’s hair is in the *sakkō* style popular in the late Edo and early Meiji period), stylistically speaking, it is not so different from Saeki Shunkō’s *Tearoom* (1936) <Figure 1-1> discussed in Chapter One. Both painters apply thick layers of saturated colors, emphasize the graphic pattern of the women’s garments, and minimize the spatial depth. The characteristics of Shōen’s wartime art, I suggest, make her an artist of the new classicism (*shin kotenshugi*), the style with which other Japanese-style painters such as Kobayashi Kokei and Yasuda Yukihiro were associated in the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>287</sup> Art historian Kikuya Yoshio observes that works by the new classicists displayed four

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<sup>286</sup> Uemura, “Kiri no Kanata” (1932), *Seibishō sonogo*.

<sup>287</sup> Whether or not there was *shin kotenshugi* in Japan has been a contested issue.

Hamanaka Shinji and Kusanagi Natsuko referred to neo-classicist paintings by Jacques-Louis David in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century as the model of *shin kotenshugi* and argued against calling ca.1930s Japanese classicism *shin kotenshugi*. However, as Ōkuma Toshiyuki observes, artists around the 1930s emulated works of what is now called “new classicism” of the 1920s, not neo-classicism of the earlier period. The confusion, in part, is a result of translation of the words into Japanese. For more on this issue, see *Nihon ni shinkotenshugi kaiga wa atta ka?* [Was There Neo-Classical Painting in Japan?] (Tokyo: Yamatane Museum, 1999).

characteristics.<sup>288</sup> First, they boldly created blank space, making their compositions extremely orderly and organized. Second, they used firm outlines to indicate the contours of objects, rather than chiaroscuro or color gradation, which makes the paintings look flat. Third, the artists' palettes were intense and bright. Finally, they dealt with historical themes.

Art historian Ōkuma Toshiyuki suggests that Japanese new classicism was an incarnation of its European counterpart, which developed after the chaos of the Great War. It was introduced to Japan in the late 1920s by artists such as Ihara Usaburō, who wrote ardently about Picasso's new classicist works. At the end of the nineteenth century, modernist artists such as Paul Cézanne and Georges Seurat already sought to recreate some form of structure and rule after Impressionists rejected the academic style. The tendency to restore order by returning to old masters, tradition, and classicism was further elaborated by avant-gardists of the 1920s. They had previously challenged artistic conventions by borrowing themes and styles from "Oriental" cultures; abstracting and stylizing objects; narrowing pictorial space; using non-naturalistic colors; and applying thick paint with visible, rough brushstrokes.<sup>289</sup> After the traumatic experience of the first modern war, however, artists including Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, André Derain, and

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<sup>288</sup> Kikuya Yoshio, "Kansei no me kara risei no zunō e" [From the Visual Sense to Conceptual Intellect], *Nihon bijutsu zenshū* 23 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1993), 176.

<sup>289</sup> Ōkuma Toshiyuki, "Riarizumu no shosō: 1920-30 nendai no tenkai" [Various Aspects of Realism: Its Development in the 1920s and 1930s], *Nihon no rearizumu 1920-50s* [Realism in Japan 1920-50s] (Sapporo: The Hokkaido Museum of Modern Art, 2007).

George de Chirico began advocating a return to order, learning from antiquities and once again seeking realism in figurative representation.<sup>290</sup>

This early twentieth century *new* classicism was importantly distinct from classicisms of previous periods. First, as Ōkuma points out, new classicist works inevitably look deformed, as the artists were former modernists. For this reason, art historian Elizabeth Cowling calls new classicism “avant-garde classicism.”<sup>291</sup> Second, although many of the new classicists were interested in the Greco-Roman antiquity, they were not interested in a single style of art: some of them emulated, for instance, works by Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665) or Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472-1553).<sup>292</sup> Finally, new classicism was much more nationalistic in its character, which made it easy for fascist states to employ it as official art.

New classicist works—paintings by Mario Sironi and George de Chirico, sculptures by Arno Breker, and architecture by Albert Speer—manifested the official vision of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, that their future would rebuild the grand culture of the

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<sup>290</sup> Elizabeth Cowling, Introduction to *On Classic Ground: Picasso, Léger, de Chirico and the New Classicism 1910-1930*, ed. Elizabeth Cowling and Jennifer Mundy. (London: Tate Gallery, 1990), 11; *Chaos & Classicism: Art in France, Italy, and Germany, 1918-1936* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2010).

<sup>291</sup> Ōkuma Toshiyuki, “Omo ni Nihon no kindai yōga o chūshin to shinagara” [Focusing on Modern Western-style Painting], in *Nihon ni shinkotenshugi kaiga wa attaka?*, 42. Elizabeth Cowling, introduction to *On Classic Ground*.

<sup>292</sup> Ōkuma, “Omo ni Nihon no kindai yōga o chūshin to shinagara,” 44.

Greco-Roman civilization.<sup>293</sup> Leni Riefenstahl's film *Olympia*, which recorded the 1936 Berlin Olympics that took place under the rule of Hitler, was perhaps one of the most sophisticated artworks produced under the Third Reich, and had a great impact on how films were to be made in subsequent periods. Using the quintessentially modern artistic medium, Riefenstahl conveys the classical ideal of perfect form and proportion in the documentary: it begins with shots of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia and the Acropolis in Athens, and then Greco-Roman sculptures of male athletes gradually transform into real human figures.<sup>294</sup> The film, which articulates the perfection of the human form, however, also reflected the Nazi racial ideology of Aryan superiority and anti-Semitism.

In Japan too, new classicism became official culture during the war. Kobayashi Kokei's *Acalanatha* <**Figure 2-16**>, which was executed in 1940 and which represents the religious history of the nation, exemplifies the wartime new classicism. It was displayed in the 1940 Japan World Exhibition, which commemorated the 2600<sup>th</sup> year of the Imperial Era. The art exhibition was a part of the national wide celebration that organized various cultural events, including sports festivals and the compiling of an imperial history, sponsored by both national and local governments as well as mass

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<sup>293</sup> Braun, *Mario Sironi and Italian Modernism: Art and Politics under Fascism*; Peter Adam, "Sculpture," in *Art of the Third Reich* (New York: Abrams, 1992); Nerdinger, "A Hierarchy of Styles: National Socialist Architecture Between Neoclassicism and Regionalism."

<sup>294</sup> *Chaos & Classicism*, 48.

media and department stores.<sup>295</sup> Although the artist himself did not clarify the relationship between the war and the Buddhist deity, the painting of Acalanatha, known as “the immobile one,” was received by some as expressing Japanese public’s decisiveness toward the 1937 China Incident.<sup>296</sup> In the painting, the artist depicts the Buddhist deity sitting on a rock like pedestal, his left leg on his right knee, a sword in his right hand and a lariat in his left. *Acalanatha* is a highly schematic painting: the ribs of the deity consist of only a few lines, his eyes are white circles with a black dot, and his teeth are flat white squares. The artist demarcates the contour of the figure with solid red lines accentuated with the bright vermilion of the cloth that covers the deity’s legs. With his highly stylized body, the painting does not convey the volume of his flesh. Overall, despite the flames and black shadows behind him, Acalanatha does not look powerful.

*Acalanatha* builds upon a modernist technique, which the artist learned during his year-long trip to Europe in 1921, and which we can see in his work *Hair Combing* produced in 1931. *Hair Combing* <**Figure 2-17**>, a three-quarter portrait of two women, is characterized by highly simplified composition, bold graphic design, and little tonal variation. The elongated eyes of the women, which emphasize the roundness of the eyeballs, and the ritualistic pose of the woman crossing her arms, might point to the artists’ fascination with Egyptian art, which he saw on his trip, but the stylistic features of the painting unmistakably come from European post-impressionism.<sup>297</sup> Due to its

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<sup>295</sup> Ken Ruoff, *Imperial Japan at Its Zenith: The Wartime Celebration of the Empire’s 2006<sup>th</sup> Anniversary* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 6.

<sup>296</sup> Hariu Ichirō et al., *Sensō to bijutsu*, 112.

<sup>297</sup> *Kobayashi Kokei* (Tokyo: The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, 2005), 177.

modernist style, *Acalanatha* could not look more different from *Cave in Kanzaki* <Figure 2-18>, the painting with a historical theme that Kokei created in 1907. As with *Acalanatha*, the painting refers to Japan's religious history by depicting a Shinto myth documented in *The Izumo Fūdoki* written in the eighth century. In the painting, the Shinto deity baby Sada is proving himself to be the son of a god by finding and shooting a golden arrow. In contrast to *Acalanatha*, however, *Cave in Kanzaki* is painted in a naturalistic manner: Kokei creates spatial distance between the foreground, where the Sada deity's mother Kisagaihime sits, and the background, where the baby Sada stands, by the use of atmospheric perspective. The baby Sada emits light, indicating his sacredness, and the shading of the rock effectively conveys the soft contrast of light and dark. Unlike the women in *Hair Combing*, the contour lines of Kisagaihime are thin, soft, and natural.

Yasuda Yukihiro is another Japanese-style painter whose wartime works embody the new classicist style. Without question, he was one of the Japanese-style painters whose statements were imbued with nationalism and who was actively involved in producing art when the war was fought. As a professor at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts in 1944, Yasuda encouraged the study of Japanese classical art as a way to “understand the tradition of the imperial nation (*kōkoku*) that will live eternally.”<sup>298</sup> His *Camp at Kisegawa* consists of two folding screens, each comprising six panels. Yasuda produced the left panel to display at the 1940 Japan World Exhibition, and completed the right one a year later. The work represents the loyalty of warrior Minamoto no Yoshitsune (1159-

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<sup>298</sup> Yasuda Yukihiro, “Kihonteki na gijutsu kyōiku” [Basic Technical Education], *Bijutsu*, August 1944,

1189), who came to Kisegawa to support his brother Yoritomo (1181-1199) in the Genpei War of the twelfth century. The left panel depicts Yoshitsune kneeling, armed with a bow and arrows and a sword. In the right panel, his older brother Yoritomo sits on a *tatami* mat with his armor behind him, looking toward Yoshitsune. Produced during the war, the painting clearly points to the spirit of military solidarity.

The art critic who most rigorously theorized new classicism in Japan during the war was Yanagi Ryō (1903-1978). Yanagi discussed the importance of learning from the classics (*koten*) in a series of articles in 1941.<sup>299</sup> They clearly demonstrate how wartime interest in the classics in Japan was mediated through modernism. While he presents analyses of works by European masters including Ingres, interestingly, Yanagi found the ultimate model of classicism in modern art, specifically, paintings by Georges Seurat (1859-1891). Yanagi shows how Seurat's compositions follow scientific rules and a rational order grounded on geometry, such as symmetry and the "golden ratio." Although rationality is now understood as a byproduct of modernization, he argues, it indeed existed before the modern era: classical works including ancient Greek sculpture, the Christian Cross, Byzantine and Romanesque churches are mathematically grounded and geometrically harmonious.<sup>300</sup> Yanagi provides a diagram <Figure 2-19> in which he

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<sup>299</sup> Art historian Kuraya Mika provides an excellent study on how Yanagi's theory influenced the production of war art. Kuraya Mika, "Senjika no yōroppa bijutsu kenkyū," *Sensō to bijutsu 1937-1945/ Art in Wartime Japan 1937-1945*, ed. Hariu Ichirō et al. (Tokyo: kokusho kankōkai, 2007)

<sup>300</sup> Yanagi Ryō, "Sūra" [Seurat], *Shin bijutsu*. September 1941, 36; "Shudaiga to kōzu no mondai" [Subject Painting and the Issue of Composition]. *Bijutsu*. December 1944, 9.



divides *The Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* (1884-1886) by drawing eight diagonal lines, six vertical lines, and two horizontal lines, and analyzes how the composition and color scheme of the painting comprises rectangles and squares. On this basis, Yanagi contends that Seurat's works are close to those of Paul Cézanne (1839-1908), who saw the world in abstract forms and reduced nature to spheres, cones, and cylinders. In so doing, he carefully distinguishes the art of Seurat and Cézanne from Impressionism's "vulgarism" (*hizoku shugi*) and Gauguin's primitivism.<sup>301</sup> In Yanagi's theory, importantly, the flat, two-dimensional, static, and essentially modernist quality of Seurat's painting is understood to reinforce the orderliness of the picture and contribute to the classicizing aspect of his art.<sup>302</sup> Indeed, some Japanese artists and art critics acknowledged the modernist aspects of new classicism as early as 1929. Art critic Maeda Kanji wrote that contemporary artists sought to recreate classical works only with rigid mathematical theories, such as found in Cubism, and without the spirit of humanism.<sup>303</sup> In his publication of 1943, Moriguchi Tari describes Picasso's new classicist works as "a realism that went through avant-gardism (*shinkōga fū*)."<sup>304</sup>

Yanagi's art theory also shows how new classicism became the preferred artistic style for propaganda art in Japan. In his 1941 article titled "Subject Painting and the

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<sup>301</sup> Yanagi, "Sūra," 41; Yanagi, "Shudaiga," 9.

<sup>302</sup> Yanagi, "Sūra," 27.

<sup>303</sup> Maeda Kanji, "Koten ha to shin koten-ha to wa nani ka" [What Classicism and New Classicism Are], *Bijutsu shinron*, January 1929, 23.

<sup>304</sup> Moriguchi Tari, *Bijutsu gojūnen shi* [The Fifty Year History of Japanese Art History] (Tokyo: Masu shobō, 1943), 524-526.

Issue of Composition,” Yanagi essentially promotes Seurat’s art as the ideal style for war propaganda paintings. He declares that the most important aspect of propaganda art (*mokuteki geijutsu*) is careful planning (*kōsō*), which is naturally about composition.<sup>305</sup> Even though well-structured composition is indispensable to war paintings, he comments, artists who have exhibited at Holy War Art Exhibitions, Navy Art Exhibitions, and Air Force Art Exhibitions are not conscious enough of this.<sup>306</sup> Yanagi explains that Japanese Western-style painters lack a basic understanding of, and consciousness about, composition, because they are primarily trained in Impressionism. He finally suggests, “there is a need to reflect on the classics.”<sup>307</sup>

Yanagi refers to both Yasuda and Shōen’s paintings as examples of ideal propaganda art. He also discusses Western-style oil paintings such as Fujita Tsuguharu’s *The Battle on the Bank of the Haluha, Nomonhan* (1941) <**Figure 2-20**>, an official war painting, but comes to the conclusion that Japanese-style painting is more suitable for the propaganda art of his vision. He explains that there are two categories of paintings: one that is two-dimensional, rational, classical, and static, and the other that is realistic and dynamic. He contends that the former is suitable for war propaganda and that Japanese-style painting, rather than Western-style oil painting, is prone to produce the desired visual effects.<sup>308</sup> It is Yasuda’s *Camp at Kisegawa* and Shōen’s *Twilight* (1941) that

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<sup>305</sup> Yanagi Ryō, “Shudaiga,” 8.

<sup>306</sup> Yanagi, “Shudaiga,” 8.

<sup>307</sup> Yanagi, “Shudaiga,” 9.

<sup>308</sup> Yanagi, “Shudaiga,” 10.

particularly satisfy Yanagi's expectations for propaganda art.<sup>309</sup> Yanagi again provides diagrams <Figure 2-21, 2-22>, illustrating how the compositions of the two works maintain stable, balanced, and perfectly proportioned structures: Yasuda's composition follows the ratio of one to nine while Shōen's is based on the square root of five.<sup>310</sup> In regard to Shōen's work, the art critic stated, "I have not seen works like Shōen's in which the various elements of painting work so well. This is a kind of painting that both has good subject matter and good composition."<sup>311</sup> Interestingly, the work that Yanagi chose to demonstrate the "bad example" of Japanese-style painting was *The Image of Contemporary Women* (1941) <Figure 2-23> by Itō Shinsui. Yanagi describes Shinsui's painting that depicts five kimono-clad women strolling together as "not having classical elements at all" and "merely a snap shot of women."<sup>312</sup>

Informed by European new classicism, works by Shōen, Yasuda and Kokei at the same time seem to express particularly "Japanese" qualities as they were understood during the 1930s and 1940s. Here, it is useful to introduce the concept of "monumental style" articulated by Darrell William Davis, who has studied wartime *kokusaku* (national policy) films. While acknowledging that Japanese filmmakers produced "ordinary" propaganda, Davis suggests that there was another kind of film that was subtler and

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<sup>309</sup> Yanagi, "Shudaiga," 10.

<sup>310</sup> Yanagi, "Shudaiga," 10.

<sup>311</sup> Yanagi, "Shudaiga," 15.

<sup>312</sup> Yanagi, "Shudaiga," 15.

represented a “Japanese” aura by drawing on the nation’s traditional aesthetics.<sup>313</sup> He explains that the “monumental style,” which he asserts is a form of Japanese fundamentalism, is characterized by aesthetics that were understood as embodying “Japaneseness,” such as “the primacy of perception over narrative,” “poverty of drama,” “a sacred, deliberative aura,” and “a sense of restraint and decorum.”<sup>314</sup> Paintings such as *Sudden Blast*, *Acalanatha*, and *Camp at Kisegawa*, all of which look motionless and discreet, likely contributed to the discursive practice of producing art of “Japaneseness.”

In fact, Okazaki Yoshie, a prominent art critic, theorized that the new classicist style was a “uniquely Japanese” style. In his essay “Contemporary Japanese-Style Painting and its National Characteristics” (published in 1942), Okazaki refers to paintings by Shōen, Kokei, and Yasuda as “textbook examples” of ideal Japanese-style paintings. He proclaims that “uniquely Japanese” art has strong lines (*sen*) and flatness (*heimen sei*).<sup>315</sup> If one understands new classicism as a kind of modernism, it is not surprising that Okazaki found formal affinities between new classicism and Japanese traditional arts, because European modernist works stylistically drew so much on “Oriental” art including Japanese art. Okazaki was not alone in relating new classicism to Japanese traditional art. Yanagi Ryō also stated that the classicizing elements of Seurat’s art were compatible

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<sup>313</sup> Darrell William Davis, *Picturing Japaneseness: Monumental Style, National Identity, Japanese Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 2.

<sup>314</sup> Davis, *Picturing Japaneseness*, 136; 176-177.

<sup>315</sup> Okazaki Yoshie, “Gendai Nihonga to kokumin sei” [Contemporary Japanese-style Painting and its National Characteristics], *Kokuga*, May 1942, 5.

to the aesthetic of Japanese *noh* masks.<sup>316</sup> Moriguchi Tari wrote that one finds the orderliness and quietness of new classicism in Japan's tea ceremony.<sup>317</sup>

What is interesting is how Okazaki developed his own theory to claim the superiority of Japan vis-à-vis the West and the rest of Asia by espousing the new classicist style. He states that line is not so much about defining an object's contour as it is about expressing the backbone of the will, calling the style of drawing solid, decisive, strong lines as "*koppō*" ("the bone method").<sup>318</sup> Echoing Okakura Tenshin's understanding of Buddhism, Okazaki claims that Japan's cultural origin lay in India, came through China, but flourished only in Japan.<sup>319</sup> The "bone method," he notes, is weak in India, and although it exists in China, their lines are too rigid and the quality is declining.<sup>320</sup> It is in Japan that this method was maintained and developed, and the relative flexibility of Japanese lines gave birth to the uniquely Japanese aesthetics of "*aware*," "*yūgen*" and "*iki*."<sup>321</sup> The flatness of space that results from the line deprives the paintings of shadow, but the absence of shadow indicates, Okazaki argues, that they depict scenes not under bright daylight but in darkness, at dawn or sunset, when the light is softer.<sup>322</sup> Like Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's *In Praise of Shadows*, Okazaki places Japan in

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<sup>316</sup> Yanagi Ryō, "Sūra," 27.

<sup>317</sup> Moriguchi, *Bijutsu gojūnen shi*, 514.

<sup>318</sup> Okazaki, "Gendai Nihonga," 2.

<sup>319</sup> Okakura Tenshin, *The Ideal of the East* (1903; repr., London: Murray, 1920).

<sup>320</sup> Okazaki, "Gendai Nihonga," 3.

<sup>321</sup> Okazaki, "Gendai Nihonga," 4.

<sup>322</sup> Okazaki, "Gendai Nihonga," 4.

darkness and the West in brightness. In so doing, Okazaki located Japanese art at the pinnacle of Asian civilization and also pointed to its essential difference from Western art.

Toward the end of the article, Okazaki's rhetoric becomes remarkably militaristic. Likening the difference between Japanese and Western artistic systems to fighting strategies, Okazaki writes that the Japanese painting is not a "standard tactic of attack" (*seikō hō*), but rather a "surprise attack" (*kishū sakusen*). He states,

If the paintings of trees and birds have the power of the bone method, they will lead to the surprise attack's victory. Western paintings that apply paint all over canvas will lose their power in front of the Japanese art...I feel supernatural power in the bone method.<sup>323</sup>

Writing in 1942, it is clear that Okazaki was referring to Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor the year before.

The discursive retreat to Japan's past in the form of classicism resonated with the larger political discourse, which was encapsulated by the symposium on "overcoming the modern" (*kindai no chōkoku*) that took place in 1942 at the beginning of the Pacific War.<sup>324</sup> The participants were leading intellectuals and writers—members of the Kyoto School of Philosophy, the Literary Society, and the Japan Romantic Group, and in the symposium, they discussed "the meaning of Japan's war in light of its modernizing

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<sup>323</sup> Okazaki, "Gendai Nihonga," 4.

<sup>324</sup> Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan*, 78.

experience.”<sup>325</sup> They argued that Japan’s modernization since the Meiji period brought about “Americanism”: individualism, liberalism, and materialism. Furthermore, modern technology created new communication media, which consequently produced an endless series of partial representations.<sup>326</sup> Specialization of knowledge, rationalization, and division of labor gave birth to a new way of knowing, feeling, and living. Modernization, they contended, destroyed Japan’s spiritual connection with the gods, and the sense of mystery, wonder, and aura in everyday life; it destroyed the immediacy of experience and a sense of totality. The symposium came to the conclusion that Japan must restore its spiritual, pre-modern life by “overcoming” the modern.<sup>327</sup> In this context, the war was seen as an opportunity to “rid [Japan] of the ‘sickness’ of Westernization” and “restitute... ‘authentic’ Japanese culture.”<sup>328</sup>

The cultural theory developed by Kuki Shūzō, philosopher at the University of Kyoto, illuminates how the cultural imagination of Edo could share the 1940s government’s vision to establish the Japanese community anew. In 1930, Kuki published *The Structure of Iki* in the journal *Shisō*. The philosopher examined the word *iki* (“bordello chic”), which developed around the unlicensed prostitution district of Fukagawa in Edo in the early nineteenth century. Arguing that *iki* refers to the specific culture of Japan, he claimed that the word could not be translated into any other language and asserted that the aesthetic of *iki* was an expression of Japan’s collective “Being” or

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<sup>325</sup> Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity*, 35.

<sup>326</sup> Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity*, 65.

<sup>327</sup> Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity*, 38.

<sup>328</sup> Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity*, 35.

ethnicity (*minzoku*).<sup>329</sup> Kuki wrote, “*iki* can be safely considered to be a distinct self-expression of an oriental culture or, no, more precisely, a specific mode of Being of the Yamato people.”<sup>330</sup> Kuki’s philosophy was strongly influenced by the concept of “Being” articulated in *Being and Time* (1929) by Martin Heidegger, with whom he had direct contact during his stay in Europe in the 1920s. The issues of Heidegger’s ideological contribution to Nazism and his participation in the Nazi party are beyond the scope of this investigation, but his nationalistic philosophy was taken much further by ardent Japanese followers of his works, including Nishida Kitarō, Watsuji Tetsurō, and Kuki, who used the concept of “Being” to define national communities differentiated by collective identity and to justify war seen as geopolitical conflicts between them.<sup>331</sup>

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<sup>329</sup>Joshua S. Mostow, “Utagawa Shunga, Kuki’s ‘Chic,’ and the Construction of a National Erotics in Japan,” in *Performing “Nation,”* 383-4; Leslie Pincus, *Authenticating Culture in Imperial Japan: Kuki Shūzō and the Rise of National Aesthetics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 247.

<sup>330</sup> Kuki Shūzō, *The Structure of Iki* (1931), translated and reproduced in Nara Hiroshi, *The Structure of Detachment: The Aesthetic View of Kuki Shūzō with a Translation of Iki no kōzō* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), 15;17.

<sup>331</sup> Pincus, *Authenticating Culture*, 172. For more on Heidegger and Nazism, see David Harvey, *The Condition of Post-Modernity*; Lacoue-Labarthe, Philippe. *Heidegger, Art and Politics: The Fiction of the Political*, Trans. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990). For the relationship between Heidegger and Japanese philosophers, see Graham Mayeda, *Time, Space and Ethics in the Philosophy of Watsuji Tetsurō, Kuki Shūzō, and Martin*



Even though *The Structure of Iki* was published in 1930, the liminal period that was yet to see the full rise of militarism, historian Leslie Pincus highlights the continuum between Kuki's work and the wartime ideology of later years.<sup>332</sup> She writes, "Kuki turned to an indigenous tradition in order to reclaim cultural authenticity from the clutches of Enlightenment history. On this common ground, Kuki's project contributed to a larger enterprise aimed at replacing the rootlessness of modern urban-industrial society with an organic community grounded in national soil."<sup>333</sup>

As historian Harry Harootunian suggests, the "overcoming the modern" symposium marked wartime Japan's "fascist turn."<sup>334</sup> It represents the fascist conceptualization of time, which envisions its future by trying to recuperate its past. According to historian Roger Griffin, fascism shows "the vision of the (perceived) crisis of the nation as betokening the birth-pangs of a new order. It crystallizes in the image of the national community, once purged and rejuvenated, rising phoenix-like from the ashes of a morally bankrupt state and the decadent culture associated with it."<sup>335</sup> Likewise, art historian Mark Antliff states, "fascists selectively plundered their historical past for moments

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*Heidegger* (New York; London: Routledge, 2006); Graham Parkes, Ed. *Heidegger and Asian Thought* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987).

<sup>332</sup> Pincus, *Authenticating Culture*, 228-229.

<sup>333</sup> Pincus, *Authenticating Culture*, 88.

<sup>334</sup> Najita Tetsuo and H.D. Harootunian, "Japanese Revolt against the West: Political and Cultural Criticism in the Twentieth Century," *The Cambridge History of Japan*, ed. Peter Duus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). 741.

<sup>335</sup> Roger Griffin, ed. *Fascism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 3.

reflective of the values they wished to inculcate for their radical transformation of national consciousness and public institution.”<sup>336</sup> As Kobayashi Kokei, Yasuda Yukihiro, and Uemura Shōen’s works demonstrate, new classicism, which originally came from Europe during the 1920s, was thus appropriated by the state and became the official art that advocated modern Japan’s “transcendence” into a “pre-modern” future.

### **New Classicism, Fascist Kitsch, and Death**

As discussed above, new classicism was different from the classicisms of previous periods: it was imbued with modernist stylistic features. Also, as art historian Elizabeth Cowling suggests, even though previous classicisms assumed that the “Golden Age” existed in the past and were suspicious of innovation, new classicism paradoxically maintained that the “Golden Age” would be realized in the future.<sup>337</sup> Examining de Chirico’s new classicist phase, another art historian, Emily Braun, points to the bizarre union of modernism and classicism found in new classicism. She writes,

elements of antiquity and modern industry meet in an illogical world without spatial or temporal coherence...the breaks in continuity and a sense of suspended time reveal the irremediable gap between the present and the past...After de Chirico, the use of classical vocabulary could never be quite the same, for he emptied the “sign” of its ideological significance...Even his images of gladiators, nudes and horses on the beach of the following decade, painted at the height of Fascism, parody traditional values...; their

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<sup>336</sup> Antliff, “Fascism, Modernism, and Modernity”: 150.

<sup>337</sup> Cowling, “Introduction,” 19.

flaccid forms and garish colours resolutely refuse to bear the weight of any invested meaning.<sup>338</sup>

New classicism, in other words, was not “true” classicism but a “fake.” On this basis, Braun calls new classicism kitsch.<sup>339</sup>

Kitsch is a form of art that is often simply defined as exemplifying “bad taste.” Yet, it is not a subjective aesthetic judgment: at least in art historical discourses, it has its own criteria and originated in a specific historical context. Such is the case of the discussion of kitsch by Clement Greenberg in his 1939 “Avant-Garde and Kitsch.” In this seminal essay, bemoaning the gradual disappearance of avant-garde art that can be shared only by a minority of intellectuals and cultured bourgeois, Greenberg claims that kitsch is the opposite of avant-garde art. He describes kitsch as “rear-garde,” and states that it can be understood by the uneducated, low class masses. Kitsch, according to him, is “popular, commercial art and literature with their Chromeotypes, magazine covers, illustrations, ads, slick and pulp fiction, comics, Tin Pan Alley music, tap dancing,

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<sup>338</sup> Braun, “Political Rhetoric and Poetic Irony,” 347. Braun writes another essay on de Chirico and kitsch: Emily Braun, “Kitsch and the Avant-Garde: The Case of de Chirico,” in *Rethinking Art Between the Wars: New Perspective in Art History*, ed. Hans Dem Christensen, Øystein Hjort, Niels Marup Jensen (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2001).

<sup>339</sup> Emily Braun, “Political Rhetoric and Poetic Irony: The Uses of Classicism in the Art of Fascist Italy,” in *On Classic Ground*, 347.

Hollywood movies, etc., etc.”<sup>340</sup> Kitsch emerged as a result of the industrial revolution, and can be mechanically reproduced by formula. Moreover, because kitsch imitates authentic art, it elicits a strong affect of beauty and harmony and provides an ecstatic and illusionary vision of the world, which is exactly why the masses embrace it.<sup>341</sup> In short, kitsch is tasteless yet moving. But, as only a simulacrum of “genuine culture,” the affect it evokes, Greenberg asserts, is always a “faked sensation.”<sup>342</sup>

Greenberg mentions that kitsch can be found in the art of totalitarian states, but it is Milan Kundera and Saul Friedländer who elucidate the function of kitsch in the politics of totalitarianism, fascism in particular. In his *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984), novelist Milan Kundera has examined how kitsch can lend itself to political

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<sup>340</sup> Clement Greenberg, “The Avant-Garde and Kitsch,” in *Art in Theory 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 543.

<sup>341</sup> Eva Le Grand, “Kitsch and Death for Eternity,” *Kundera, or the Memory of Desire*, trans. Lin Burman (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1999). For more on kitsch, see Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, trans. Michael Henry Heim (London: Faber and Faber, 1995); Lisa Saltzman, “‘Avant-Garde and Kitsch’ Revisited: On the Ethics of Representation,” in *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/ Recent Art*, ed. Norman L. Kleeblatt. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, and The Jewish Museum, New York, 2002); Hermann Broch, “Evil in the Value-System of Art,” in *Geist and Zeitgeist: The Spirit in an Unspiritual Age* (New York: Counterpoint, 2002).

<sup>342</sup> Greenberg, “The Avant-Garde and Kitsch,” 543.

manipulation. Scholar Eva Le Grand succinctly summarizes Kundera's ideas. Kitsch can:

misrepresent what is real as an idyllic and ecstatic vision of the world to which we sacrifice without scruple all ethical and critical awareness...Kitsch likes to feed off abstract ideals and feelings and sets them up as absolute values. Within such logic, it can only show illness, desire, the body or death under a "mask of beauty"...It is through such esthetic and emotional idealization of what is real, especially when it prettifies deaths, war, massacres, denunciations, executions or imprisonments, that kitsch becomes totalitarian.<sup>343</sup>

The beautiful, ecstatic worldview which kitsch provides hinders the viewer from confronting the reality of filth, impurity, and death, and distinguishing the imaginary from the real, which consequently legitimizes and promotes violence, war, and atrocities.<sup>344</sup>

In his book *Reflections of Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death*, Friedländer goes further and examines how exactly the aesthetic of kitsch can promote death. First of all, he explains that anything—even death, which is furthest from beauty—can be kitsch. Kitschy death is an idealized, beautified death, or a fake death. Here is the example Friedländer uses to illustrate kitschy death: "[a hero] collapses, his eyes already dulled,

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<sup>343</sup> Le Grand, "Kitsch and Death for Eternity," 10; 21-22. Quoted in Sharalyn Orbaugh, "Killer Kitsch: Kamishibai in the Fifteen Year War, 1931-1945" (Paper Presented at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, October 28, 2009).

<sup>344</sup> Le Grand, "Kitsch and Death for Eternity."

one hand at the wound where blood spills, but the other still gripping the broken flagstaff; any child in a school yard who mimics the death of a cowboy or Indian, cop or thief, Mafioso or incorruptible gives a kitsch performance of death.”<sup>345</sup> The kitschy death, however, is dangerous because it does not convey the real value of death, thus displacing and neutralizing the feeling of terror and solitude. In other words, it allows people to feel easier about dying.

Death becomes kitsch, Friedländer explains, when it is surrounded by kitsch. The most crucial point of his discussion, which does not appear in Kundera’s theory, is the argument that what made death kitsch in Nazi Germany was new classicism, which sought to recreate, in vain, the culture of the past. Friedländer writes,

The kitsch here [in Nazi Germany] is a return to a debased romantic inspiration, to an aesthetic stripped of the force and novelty it had 150 years ago at the dawn of modernity. And it is in this pre- and antimodern ambience that the opposing themes of harmonious kitsch and death flower and spread. A major theme thrown up by the multiple reflections of this juxtaposition is that of the hero. The hero being, to be sure, he who will die.”<sup>346</sup>

In Nazi Germany what rendered death kitsch were the beautiful young heroes dying for the cause of the nation who were repeatedly represented in new classicist art. Thus, new classicism was the crucial element in the fascist-specific formula of kitsch and death, and

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<sup>345</sup> Saul Friedländer, *Reflections of Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), 26.

<sup>346</sup> Friedländer, *Reflections of Nazism*, 30.

it is in this context that I would finally like to discuss Shōen's *Lady Kusunoki*, a portrait of the wife of imperial loyalist Kusunoki Masashige.<sup>347</sup>

### **Lady Kusunoki**

Shōen completed *Lady Kusunoki* <Figure 2-24> in 1944, a year before the end of the war. It was commissioned by Minatogawa Shrine in Kobe, which is dedicated to the spirit of Kusunoki Masashige (1294-1336), a military commander of the medieval period.<sup>348</sup> Yokoyama Taikan, who was the most prominent advocate of the war in the art world and a Japanese-style painter, also produced a portrait of Masashige, which was supposed to be paired with Shōen's *Lady Kusunoki*. The story of the Kusunoki is documented in *Taiheiki*, one of the most important Japanese war tales. Written sometime in the fourteenth century, it covers events from the ascension of Emperor Godaigo in 1318, the Kemmu restoration in 1333, the subsequent split of the imperial court into the southern court of Yoshino and northern court backed by the Ashikaga, and conflicts within the Ashikaga *bakufu*.<sup>349</sup> Kusunoki Masashige is a hero of imperial loyalism who served Emperor Godaigo and died fighting Ashikaga Takauji in the Battle of Minatogawa

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<sup>347</sup> For a few of the scholars who have written on wartime Japanese culture and kitsch, see, Inoue Shōkichi, *Āto, kicchu, japanesuku*; Sharalyn Orbaugh, "Killer Kitsch"; Tansman, *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism*.

<sup>348</sup> Uemura Shōen, *Seibishō shūi* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1976), 135. The writing has no date, but was most likely written around 1940.

<sup>349</sup> Paul Varley, *Warriors of Japan: As Portrayed in the War Tales* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 168

in 1336. Paul H. Varley asserts that the *Taiheiki* is an embodiment of failed loyalist heroes and self-sacrifice, claiming that “imperial loyalism does not emerge as a central belief governing warrior behavior in the war tales until *Taiheiki*.”<sup>350</sup> At the Battle of Minatogawa, anticipating being outnumbered by Takauji’s forces, Masashige decides that that this will be his “last battle.”<sup>351</sup> A group of warriors, including Masashige and his brother Masasue, then withdraw to a peasant’s house and commit suicide, refusing to be killed by the enemy. Masashige and Masasue’s laudable mentality of fighting for the country was popularized as *shichishōhōkoku*, or a dedication to serving the nation so strong that one would do so no matter how many times one was reincarnated.<sup>352</sup> Lady Kusunoki loses her husband in this battle, but her son Masatsura promises to serve the emperor after his father’s death.

The Kusunoki were popularized in the Meiji period against the historical backdrop of the restoration of the emperor and modern nation- and Empire-building. Peter Wetzler writes,

Kusunoki ideology was pushed to extremes between 1886 and August 1945...it had a prominent position in the school textbooks that were standardized and distributed by the central government beginning in 1903...the few places [in *Taiheiki*] where Kusunoki is mentioned were cited

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<sup>350</sup> Varley, *Warriors of Japan*, 179-80.

<sup>351</sup> Varley, *Warriors of Japan*, 197.

<sup>352</sup> Ōtani Shōgo, “Rekishiga”[History Painting], in *Sensō to bijutsu*, 108.



with ever increasing frequency and in a variety of ways in official schoolbooks after 1903.<sup>353</sup>

The Kusunokis were the most represented historical figures during the Fifteen-Year War, and their story became instrumental in communicating the virtue of dying for the emperor.

The Kusunoki story resonated with the state ideology of the 1930s and 1940s. First, it embodied the principle of *kokutai*—which is articulated in *The Essence of the National Polity (Kokutai no hongī)* issued by the Ministry of Education in 1937—that Japanese subjects have an organic connection to the emperor and therefore are obliged to die for him. Second, Masashige and Masasue’s decision to take their own lives before being captured by the enemy exemplified the method of fighting that was advocated toward the end of the Fifteen-Year War. In such battles as those at Attu Island, Saipan, and Okinawa, where the defeat of Japanese forces was both inevitable and imminent, citizens were instructed by the state officials to kill themselves and remain loyal to the emperor until the very end.

Tōjō Hideki, who became Japan's Prime Minister in 1941 and whose father was a Kusunoki scholar, publically spoke about the Kusunoki ideal. He stated,

I believe that Prince Kusunoki is the most superlative person in the world.

Napoleon and others cannot be compared with him... With conviction he gathered loyal troops from all over the land for this battle to the death, and

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<sup>353</sup> Peter Wetzler, *Hirohito and War: Imperial Tradition and Military Decision Making in Prewar Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 71.

they fought hard. I believe that Kusunoki fought as a statesman for a great principle.<sup>354</sup>

Likewise, Watanabe Ikujiro (1867-1960), a specialist of Japanese history, published an article on Kusunoki in the *Yomiuri shinbun* in April 1944, a year before the war ended.<sup>355</sup> Watanabe notes how Kusunoki embodies imperial loyalism and claims that he stands at the top of Japanese ethnicity (*minzoku*). He declares that the spirit of Kusunoki only exists among the Japanese populace, and that with that spirit the Japanese could defeat the United States and Britain. The concluding paragraph reads, “If we truly maintain the Kusunoki spirit of imperial loyalism, dying and living for the sake of the nation, there is nothing we are afraid of. Our imperial nation is eternal. Our victory is certain.” Shōen’s *Lady Kusunoki*, which was painted in 1944 when suicide as a war stratagem was at its peak, is clearly complicit with the wartime state authorities in propagating the virtue of suicide. In addition to the virtue of fighting for the emperor, Shōen’s depiction of Kusunoki’s wife represents the ideal image of women as both marrying men who are loyal to their superiors, and also raise loyal sons.

*How* Lady Kusunoki is represented in the painting is important. The seated woman gazes slightly to her left, her hands crossed in her lap. She looks serene, humble, but confident. Her hair is thick and black. Brown, almost the only color used besides black and white, is used extensively for her jacket and exaggerates the abstract contour of her body. The folds of the jacket are broad and bold, which reduces the figure in volume. In general, simplification, abstraction, and two-dimensionality characterize the picture. As

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<sup>354</sup> Peter Wetzler, *Hirohito and War*, 72.

<sup>355</sup> Watanabe Ikujiro, “Kōkoku goji no daiseishin,” *Yomiuri shinbun*, April 16, 1944.

with *Late Autumn* <**Figure 2-15**>, *Lady Kusunoki*, executed in modernist style and portraying a historical figure, is a new classical painting which imitates authentic classicism. Coupled with the theme of death in the form of the wife of a military general who signifies self-sacrifice, this particular painting not only seems to invite ecstatic feelings of beauty and harmony, but also misrepresents and idealizes death under a mask of beauty. In other words, it functions as kitsch. Although the painting can be easily categorized as an example of *bijin-ga*, the historical context of its production, its theme, and its mode of representation reveal how the work was to act as propaganda art, even if not as directly as the officially commissioned battle paintings produced by Western-style painters around the same time.

### **The Role of Female Artist in Fascism**

The high visibility that Shōen maintained during the war calls into question the role of female artists under a fascist state. Referring to the 1970s rehabilitation of the film maker Leni Riefenstahl, who produced “masterpieces” under the Nazis, cultural critic Susan Sontag has written, “Part of the impetus behind Riefenstahl’s recent promotion to the status of a cultural monument surely owes to the fact that she is a woman.”<sup>356</sup> As the case of Riefenstahl proves, however, the mere fact that an artist is female does not necessarily mean that she works for the cause of feminism, which is to say, toward the liberation of women from patriarchal control. Female artists can serve a fascist state, one which maintains a patriarchal view on the role of women in society, and I argue that through her public activities and art Shōen did precisely that. Indeed, Shōen was by no

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<sup>356</sup> Sontag, “Fascinating Fascism,” 84.

means the only woman artist who made significant contribution to the Japanese state during the war.<sup>357</sup> Nakada Kikuyo and Kataoka Tamako painted soldiers, and Hasegawa Haruko formed what was called the Japan Woman Artists' Patriotic Association (*Joryū Bijutsuka Hōkōtai*), a female version of the Japan Patriotic Art Association (*Nihon Bijutsu Hōkoku kai*), which consisted of forty female artists. They collectively painted *Women of Imperial Japan at Work During the Greater East Asian War: Autumn and Winter* (1944), a painting of women engaging in various types of labor, including house work, farming, nursing, military training, working at factories, cooking, and doing the laundry.<sup>358</sup> The painting was displayed at the Army Art Exhibition in 1944 and is now housed at the Museum at Yasukuni Shrine.<sup>359</sup>

Recent feminist scholarship for example, by Kanō Mikiyo and Okano Yukie, has reconsidered and self-critically assessed the role of Japanese women in the war, focusing on their role as victimizers rather than victims.<sup>360</sup> They have found that women,

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<sup>357</sup> Kokatsu Reiko, *Hashiru onnatachi: Josei gaka no senzen, sengo 1930-1950/ Japanese Women Artists before and after World War II, 1930s-1950s* (Utsunomiya: Tochigi Prefectural Museum, 2001).

<sup>358</sup> Kokatsu Reiko, *Hashiru onnatachi*, 6-7.

<sup>359</sup> *Shōwa no bijutsu* [Art of the Showa Period] (Niigata, Japan: Niigata Prefectural Museum of Modern Art, 2005), 80.

<sup>360</sup> Kanō Mikiyo, *Onnatachi no jūgo* [Women on the Home Front] (Tokyo: Inpakuto shuppankai, 1995); Okano Yukie, et al. *Onnatachi no sensō sekinin* [War Responsibility of Women] (Tokyo: Tokyodō shuppan, 2004). For similar feminist scholarship about

especially prewar feminist activists including Ichikawa Fusae and Hiratsuka Raichō, among others, endorsed the war and militarism. Their studies have illuminated the fact that, contrary to the conventional understanding, women were active in both the private and public spheres: they participated in state campaigns targeted at domestic homes, such as the frugality and hygiene campaigns; and they belonged to state organizations, such as the National Defense Women's Association (*Kokubō Fujinkai*) and the Great Japan Women's Association (*Dai Nihon Fujinkai*), which had regular public meetings.<sup>361</sup> Hasegawa Shigure, a feminist and a founder of the magazine *Women's Art* (*Nyonin Geijutsu*), for example, claimed that the home front (*jūgo*) was the place where women could unite and show their utmost usefulness and energy.<sup>362</sup> The wartime authorities advocated the essentialist concept of gender roles and valued women only if they were housewives and mothers. This meant, however, that as long as women remained housewives and mothers, their contributions were acknowledged by the state. The prewar feminists and wartime state authorities thus shared their goals and eventually developed a symbiotic relationship: the government gave women an unprecedented degree of social responsibility; in turn, women were publicly recognized for their

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Nazi Germany, see Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family, and Nazi Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1987).

<sup>361</sup> Kanō Mikiyo, *Onnatachi no jūgo* [Women on the Home Front] (Tokyo: Inpakuto shuppankai, 1995); Okano Yukie et al., *Onnatachi no sensō sekinin* [War Responsibility of Women] (Tokyo: Tokyodō shuppan, 2004).

<sup>362</sup> Ogata Akiko, “‘Kagayaku’ no jūgo undō” [The Homefront Movement of Magazine “Kagayaku”], in *Onnatachi no sensō sekinin*, ed. Okano Yukie, 190.

achievements for the first time in their history. Shōen's case must be considered in the context of this paradigm in which women acquired relatively higher social mobility and achieved success by paradoxically reinforcing the idea of the patriarchy.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have focused on a single artist, Uemura Shōen, and on fascist temporality. Pointing out the problems of previous scholarship on the artist, I have tried to investigate Shōen's works in conjunction with the artistic movement of new classicism. As I have shown, new classicism, which combined elements of modernism and classicism and which initially came from Europe, became the dominant style of propaganda art during the war. Just as the aesthetic of rationalism was understood in relation to Japan's traditional art, as I discussed in Chapter One, Japanese art critics legitimized the use of European-inspired new classicism by theorizing it as manifesting "unique Japaneseness." My analysis also illuminates how Shōen's *Lady Kusunoki*, a new classicist painting that treats the subject of self-sacrifice, would have elicited affective responses from the viewers, masking the violence of death under the aesthetic of kitsch. One may reasonably wonder how machine-ism, which I discussed in Chapter One, could be compatible with new classicism. The stylistic features of machine-ism and new classicism, I suggest, were in fact similar as they both used the visual language of modernism. Furthermore, the shift from machine-ism to new classicism pointed to the development of fascist art and reflected the transformation of Japan's national identity, which increasingly emphasized spirituality over materialism toward the end of the war.

Shōen received the Order of Culture in 1948. A photograph <Figure 2-25> that was taken in front of the Imperial Palace on the occasion makes it clear why she received the prize. Next to Shōen, who is wearing a kimono and sitting on a chair, is Yasuda Yukihiro, who painted *Camp at Kisegawa*. Behind her stands Hasegawa Nyozeikan, whose numerous publications about Japanese culture during the war I cited in Chapter One. Even though she is often celebrated as the first female winner of the Order, I contend that Shōen's achievement did not contribute to the feminist cause. Her success can be ascribed to the fact that she espoused, rather than questioned, the structure of the patriarchy. Considering the line-up of winners of that year, she was clearly awarded the prize because of her contribution to the wartime state.

## CHAPTER THREE

### War Campaign Record Paintings

#### Introduction

A group of 153 war paintings stored at the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, constitutes one of the most controversial collections of Japanese art. Many paintings in the collection are War Campaign Record Paintings (*Sensō Sakusen Kiroku-ga*), propaganda works executed in oil on canvas that were officially commissioned by the state during the Fifteen-Year War. The collection, which is deemed to encapsulate the “evil” state ideology of wartime Japan, has never been exhibited in its entirety, either to the public or to scholars.<sup>363</sup> While Chapters One and Two focused on Japanese-style paintings, this chapter examines Western-style paintings, and I limit my study to the War Campaign Record Paintings because, although Western-style paintings other than this genre of painting admittedly existed during the war,<sup>364</sup> the Campaign Record Paintings dominated the medium and supposedly conveyed the state ideology most directly.

Before I discuss the works in light of the concept of fascism, I will present an overview of the paintings, examining salient aspects of the war art and surveying works by leading war painters such as Koiso Ryōhei (1903-1988), Miyamoto Saburō (1905-1974), Ihara

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<sup>363</sup> For more discussion on the collection, see Asato Ikeda, “Japan’s Haunting War Art: Contested War Memories and Art Museums,” *disClosure* 18 (2009): 5-32.

<sup>364</sup> For example, there were painters who were not commissioned but produced paintings of soldiers, depicted women working at munitions factories, and portrayed women they saw in places under Japanese occupation. These paintings were displayed at exhibitions that were under intense state surveillance.



Usaburō (1894-1976), and Fujita Tsuguharu (1886-1968). I will first discuss the historical context in which the War Campaign Record Paintings were produced, scrutinizing how artists and the state began their collaboration. I will then discuss the propaganda paintings' relationship with contemporary German art and photography, which sets the stage for Chapters Four and Five, in which I discuss the discrepancies between them. The last part of this chapter will look at representations of the human body, and in particular, I will attend to the disembodiment of individual soldiers' bodies in the creation of the collective body of *kokutai*.

### **Historical Background**

The War Campaign Record Paintings were officially commissioned by the state, including the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Army Information Bureau, and the Education Ministry. Of course, Japan was not the only country that had an official war art program: the United States, Britain, Germany, Canada, and Australia, to name only a few, also produced official war art.<sup>365</sup> Neither were the War Campaign Record Paintings the first war art produced in the history of Japanese art. *Mōko Shūrai Ekotoba* or *Illustrated Account of Mongol Invasion*, produced in the thirteenth century and currently stored at the Museum of Imperial Collections, is perhaps the most famous war art of pre-modern Japan.<sup>366</sup> During the Meiji period, woodblock printmakers produced numerous works that depict the battles of the Sino-Japanese (1894-1895) and Russo-Japanese

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<sup>365</sup> Laura Brandon, *Art & War* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

<sup>366</sup> Tanaka Hisao, *Nihon no sensō-ga: sono keifu to tokushitsu* [Sensō-ga: Genealogy and Characteristics] (Tokyo: Perikan Publisher, 1985), 21.

(1904-1905) Wars. These presented dramatized images of the battles and reported the progress of the war to the public. For Japan's first modern wars, painters—such as Asai Chū, Koyama Shōtarō, Kuroda Seiki, and Yamamoto Hōsun—also travelled to battlefields and produced paintings, though none of them painted actual battles; nor were they hired by the government.<sup>367</sup>

The War Campaign Record Paintings are remarkably different from the previous Japanese war art in that painters were mobilized by the state on a large scale and exhibitions of war paintings became national events, an example of what Louis Althusser called “Ideological State Apparatuses,” where the state disseminates, propagates, and naturalizes its official ideology.<sup>368</sup> Interestingly, it was the artists themselves who initiated collaboration with the state.<sup>369</sup> The period preceding the war was characterized by the booming of mass media and commercial entertainment, including magazines and cinema, which took art audiences away from museums. In this context, to revive the world of fine arts, artists volunteered to produce war paintings.<sup>370</sup> Although he was

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<sup>367</sup> Yamanashi Toshio, *Egakareta rekishi: Nihon kindai to “rekishiga” no jijō* [Painted History: Japan's Modernity and The Magnetic Field of “History Paintings”] (Tokyo: Brücke, 2005), 260.

<sup>368</sup> Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards and Investigation),” in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1971), 127-186.

<sup>369</sup> Kawata Akihisa, “Sensō bijutsu to sono jidai: 1931-1977” [War Art and Its Era: 1931-1977], in *Gaka tachi no “sensō”* [Painters' “War”] (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2010), 93.

<sup>370</sup> Kawata, “Sensō bijutsu to sono jidai: 1931-1977,” 93.

turned down, Western-style painter Tsuruta Gorō requested the state to take him to the front when the China-Japan War began in 1937. Mukai Junkichi covered his own travel expenses when he followed the army. It was only in the face of such enthusiasm on the part of artists such as Tsuruta and Mukai that the state started considering officially employing visual artists.<sup>371</sup>

The production of war art officially began in 1938 after the breakout of the China-Japan War. The so-called China Incident took place in 1937, when Chinese troops fired at Japanese forces conducting maneuvers at the Marco Polo Bridge outside Beijing.<sup>372</sup> The political and military tension between China and Japan had been evident since Japan's expansion into Manchuria, a territory Japan saw as strategically important in order to defend itself against the Soviet Union. Chinese Nationalists, led by Chiang Kai-shek, and the Chinese Communist Party, the two forces fighting within China, had by 1937 agreed to eliminate the Japanese forces from China first, and thus all-out war between China and Japan began. By December of the same year, Japanese troops advanced into Shanghai launching a military campaign in Nanjing. The Japanese public responded to the war with China with great enthusiasm. Japan's decision to embark on this war was to prove fatal: it did not end until 1945.

In 1937 alone ten artists, including Nakamura Ken'ichi and Koiso Ryōhei, were dispatched to Shanghai in May, Kawabata Ryūshi and Tsuruta Gorō went to Northern China with the army in the same month, and other artists including Fujishima Takeji and

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<sup>371</sup> Kawata, "Sensō bijutsu to sono jidai," 93.

<sup>372</sup> Hanneman, *Japan Faces the World*, 52-55.

Fujita Tsuguharu followed the Navy in September.<sup>373</sup> Already by April 1939, as the *Asahi shinbun* reported, approximately two hundred artists had left for the battlefield in the spirit of “Serving the Nation by Art” (*saikan hōkoku*). By the end of the war, as many as three hundred artists had served the state.<sup>374</sup> A newspaper article published in the late 1930s gives the impression that artists were excited about their assignments: there is no sense that the state was “forcing” them to work.<sup>375</sup> In 1942, Western-style painter Ihara Usaburō claimed that the state should make use of artists’ talents and skills to inspire the common people for the war and to establish the grand culture of the future.<sup>376</sup> He suggested that artists could do more than just producing war paintings, pointing out that they could also produce propaganda posters and booklets and advertise national bonds.<sup>377</sup> Fujita Tsuguharu, one of the most famous war painters, wrote in 1944: “We have a mission to produce war paintings and pass the record of the war to the next generation.

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<sup>373</sup> *Shōwa no bijutsu*, 188-189.

<sup>374</sup> Kawata Akihisa, “Sensō-ga towa nanika,” 78-80.

<sup>375</sup> “Sensō-ga umareyo to ‘Rikugun bijutsu kyōkai’” [Army Art Association Established to Create War Paintings], *Asahi shinbun*, April 16, 1939. Reprinted in Hariu et al., *Sensō to bijutsu*, 258.

<sup>376</sup> Ihara Usaburō, “Daitōa sensō to bijutsuka” [The Great East Asian War and Artists], *Shin bijutsu*, February 1942, 6.

<sup>377</sup> Ihara, “Daitōa sensō to bijutsuka,” 6.

We must make our utmost effort to serve the country by uplifting the spirit of citizens to fight for this great war!”<sup>378</sup>

The state authorities’ attitude towards artists became coercive in the roundtable titled “National Defense State and the Fine Arts” published in *Mizue* in 1941. The participants included three officials from the Army Information Bureau (Akiyama Kunio, Suzuki Kurazō, and Kuroda Senkichirō), art critic Araki Sueo, and magazine editor Kamigōri Suguru. They discussed how until that time artists had worked for their patrons within the system of capitalist commercialism.<sup>379</sup> After the Meiji period, they concurred, Japanese art had become a colony of French art, producing works with “triangles and circles” that even the mentally ill could draw.<sup>380</sup> They declared that Japanese artists should instead be conscious of their own ethnicity (*minzoku*) while maintaining the universality of their artistic appeal and value. Noting that creating a painting during a time of war is a luxury, Akiyama Kunio demanded that artists consider what they could do first as Japanese and then as artists.<sup>381</sup> Suzuki Kurazō threatened artists more explicitly, saying that the state would not provide art supplies to those who did not comply, and that artists who did not wish to listen to the state should leave the country.<sup>382</sup>

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<sup>378</sup> Fujita Tsuguharu, “Sensō-ga seisaku no yōkō” [The Platform of the Production of the War Campaign Record Paintings], *Bijutsu*, May 1944, 22.

<sup>379</sup> “Kokubō kokka to bijutsu: shoka wa nani o subekika” [National Defense State and the Fine Arts: What Should Artists Do Now?], *Mizue*, January 1941, 130.

<sup>380</sup> “Kokubō kokka to bijutsu,” 130; 132

<sup>381</sup> “Kokubō kokka to bijutsu,” 130; 133.

<sup>382</sup> “Kokubō kokka to bijutsu,” 129.

Artistic protests against the state were rare, and those who refused to cooperate with the state were either imprisoned or sent to the battlefield. Matsumoto Shunsuke, who wrote “The Living Artist” in 1941, was one of the very few artists who criticized the authorities’ views of art.<sup>383</sup> Referring to the above-mentioned symposium, Matsumoto wrote, “I regret to say in the symposium entitled ‘National Defense State and the Fine Arts’ I found no value. It is wise to keep silent, but I do not believe keeping silent today is necessarily the correct thing to do.”<sup>384</sup> He shrewdly criticized the statements by the government officials, pointing out the logical incoherencies of their argument. For example, Matsumoto suggested that totalitarianism was, as much as liberalism, informed by the West.<sup>385</sup> He also countered the authorities’ view of paintings with “circles and triangles” as a product of the mentally ill, comparing the abstract quality of art found in the Japanese tradition, such as the famed rock garden at Ryōan-ji, Kyoto.<sup>386</sup>

On the other hand, it must be noted that Matsumoto’s rhetoric sometimes uncannily resembles that of the authorities. He states that the ethnicity (*minzoku*) that would create the new world order is the one that truly mixes East and West; he validates his fellow artists’ emulation of European art as an effort to “transcend” the West.<sup>387</sup> In fact, as recent research reveals, Matsumoto produced a painting of soldiers and several

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<sup>383</sup> Sandler, “The Living Artist: Matsumoto Shunsuke’s Reply to the State,” 74-82.

<sup>384</sup> Matsumoto Shunsuke, “Ikite iru gaka” [The Living Artist], *Mizue*, April 1941, 477.

This translation is by Mark Sandler. Sandler, “The Living Artist,” 77.

<sup>385</sup> Matsumoto, “Ikite iru gaka,” 477.

<sup>386</sup> Matsumoto, “Ikite iru gaka,” 480.

<sup>387</sup> Matsumoto, “Ikite iru gaka,” 478.

propaganda posters. For this reason, Japanese art historian Kozawa Setsuko argues against treating him as a “heroic” artist who fought against the state.<sup>388</sup> Similar caution is necessary in the case of Fukuzawa Ichirō. Although Fukuzawa, one of the leaders of Japanese surrealism, was arrested in 1941, he painted a War Campaign Record Painting, whether “forced” or not.<sup>389</sup>

The state exerted control over the art world by forming state-sanctioned art groups. Numerous official organizations were established: the Great Japan Army Artist Association (*Dai Nippon Rikugun Jyūgun Gaka Kyōkai*) was formed in 1938; the Army Art Association (*Rikugun Bijutsu Kyōkai*) in 1939; the Great Japan Navy Art Association (*Dai Nippon Kaiyō Bijutsu Kyōkai*) in 1941; and the Japan Art Patriotic Association (*Nihon Bijutsu Hōkokukai*) in 1943. Corporations and mass media supported and advertised the official art program and exhibitions. The *Asahi shinbun* in particular played a major role in financially sponsoring war art exhibitions such as the Great East Asia War Art Exhibition (*Daitōa Sensō Bijutsu Tenrankai*) and the Holy War Art Exhibition (*Seisen Bijutsu Tenrankai*). *Asahi* was also heavily involved in organizing such events as the Army Art Exhibition (*Rikugun Bijutsu-ten*), Great Japan Navy Art Exhibition (*Dainihon Kaiyō Bijutsuten*), and Great Japan Air Force Art Exhibition

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<sup>388</sup> Kozawa Setsuko, *Avan garudo no sensō taiken* [Wartime Experiences of Avant-Garde Artists] (Tokyo: Aoki Shoten, 2004), 154; 156.

<sup>389</sup> Clark, “Artistic Subjectivity in the Taisho and Early Showa Avant-Garde,” 48; Fukuzawa’s painting *Special Unit Ship Leaves the Base* (1945) is now stored in the war art collection at the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo.

(*Dainihon Kōkū Bijutsu-ten*).<sup>390</sup> These were often held at large department stores, such as Mitsukoshi, Matsuzakaya, and Isetan. As a result of corporate investment, 3,854,000 people visited the First Great East Asia War Art Exhibition of 1942, which celebrated Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor.<sup>391</sup> War art exhibitions turned out to be a big success.

### **War Campaign Record Painting and Nazi Germany**

New classicism, which I explored in the context of Japanese-style painting in Chapter Two, was also prevalent in the field of Western-style painting.<sup>392</sup> Although new classicism was initially introduced by artists who studied in France during the Great War, the artists increasingly modeled their paintings on the new classicism of German, and to a lesser extent, Italian art.

Numerous Japanese oil painters travelled to Paris in the 1920s. Ihara Usaburō, who studied in Paris between 1925 and 1929, was instrumental in introducing Picasso's works to Japan, including works from his so-called "new-classicist" phase of the 1920s.<sup>393</sup> In *Group in A Room* (1928-9), Ihara painted three women, two with exposed breasts. The woman on the left has her legs crossed, extending her right arm forward palm up and

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<sup>390</sup> Kawata, "Sensō bijutsu to sono jidai," 96.

<sup>391</sup> Tsuruya, "Sensō Sakusen Kirokuga [War Campaign Documentary Art Painting]," 5.

<sup>392</sup> I understand new classicism as a global trend of "return to order" in the post-Great War period.

<sup>393</sup> Egawa Yoshihide, "Ihara Usaburō o megutte: seitousa to ishitsu sa to"[In regard to Ihara Usaburō: Orthodoxy and Unorthodoxy], in *Ihara Usaburō: seitai hyakunen o kinen shite* [Ihara Usaburō: A Hundred Anniversary] (Tokyo: Meguro Museum, 1994).



placing her left hand on her head as if in contemplation. The woman on the right has her legs covered with classical drapery and shares a sofa with the woman on the left, holding a book with both hands. The other woman, dressed in blue, stands between the two, placing a hand on each woman. The work shows classicizing elements. The poses of the women are carefully modeled, the artist uses triangular composition to stabilize the picture, and the shading creates depth in visual space and renders the round, curvy, relatively large bodies of the women naturalistically.

Ihara's painting can be compared to Picasso's *Three Women at the Spring* <Figure 3-1>, created several years earlier in 1921. Unlike his famous *Les Femmes d'Alger* (1907), which represents fragmented female bodies, *Three Women at the Spring* embodies the idea of "return to order" in the post-Great War period of Europe and depicts three women in classical dress. Like Ihara's *Group in A Room*, *Three Women at the Spring* consists of three large-bodied women. The women in both paintings have brown hair and big, round eyes, wear simple, ancient-looking dress, and show their breasts. The pose of the woman in the middle in Picasso's painting looks almost identical to that of the woman on the left in Ihara's work.

Picasso's new classicist works introduced by Ihara prompted discursive interest in realism, classicism, and academicism among Japanese artists and art critics. The discussion of realism, classicism, and academicism, which questioned the modernist abstraction and formal experimentation, appeared in the late 1920s. Art magazine *Bijutsu shinron* published special issues on this topic twice, in 1929 and 1933.<sup>394</sup> Authors who contributed to these issues used the words realism (*shajitsu shugi*), classicism

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<sup>394</sup> *Bijutsu shinron*, January 1929 and January 1933.

(*kotenshugi/kurashikku*), and academicism (*akademikku*), and interestingly, leading artist and art critic Fujishima Takeji admitted that he did not know the precise distinction among them.<sup>395</sup> Yet, pointing out that Kuroda Seiki (the first generation teacher of oil painting at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts) was strongly influenced by French impressionism, Fujishima proposed that Japanese artists have proper training in realism and learn the basic foundations of oil painting.<sup>396</sup> The three terms (realism, classicism, and academicism) were thus used almost interchangeably, and throughout the special issues the authors referred to such artists as Courbet, Ingres, Raphael, Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Géricault, and Delacroix. Unlike Japanese-style new classicists such as Uemura Shōen, Kobayashi Kokei, and Yasuda Yukihiro, who looked at Japanese historical art and subjects (such as Acalanatha, Minamoto no Yoritomo, and beautiful women in Edo), Western-style new classicists thus sought to emulate European art of the past. Furthermore, the critics and artists were not referring to a body of works from a certain historical period; rather, they were referring to the “masters” of European art.

New classicism was central to the production of the War Campaign Record Paintings. The government authorities, who as we have seen disliked abstract paintings consisting of “circles and triangles,” embraced the realist, representational expressions of the new classicist style. As I discussed in Chapter Two, art critics such as Yanagi Ryō advocated the new classicist style as the ideal style for propaganda paintings. At the same time, as the war progressed there was a growing sense that contemporary French art

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<sup>395</sup> Fujishima Takeji, “Rearizumu wo futatabi kentō suru” [Reconsidering Realism], *Bijutsu shinron*, January 1933, 4.

<sup>396</sup> Fujishima, “Rearizumu o futatabi kentō suru,” 2.

would no longer serve as a model for Japan. This sentiment was epitomized by the roundtable titled “Where Will French Art Go?” which took place in August 1940, two months after the fall of France to Nazi Germany.<sup>397</sup> Now that Germany controlled France, participants including Miyamoto Saburō argued, Japanese artists must reassess the influence of French art on their works. Since successful artists such as Picasso and Chagall were not French, they concurred, modern French art was a product of “foreigners.” Ultimately, the participants agreed that Japanese art should be modeled on the examples of Italy and Germany, which drew on premodern European masters and produced “art of [their] ethnicity (*minzoku*).”<sup>398</sup> In fact, already in 1937 art critic Uemura Takachiyo had translated E. Wernert’s book about Nazi art.<sup>399</sup> Art magazine *Bijutsu* published photographs of contemporary German and Italian sculptures and paintings in August 1944.

Ihara Usaburō’s new classicism, which started with his pursuit of Picasso, developed in this context into a different kind of new classicism: new classicism in support of the wartime state. In 1944, a year before the war ended, Ihara painted *Hong Kong Surrender: The Meeting of Governor Yong and General Sakai*. The subject of the painting is the meeting between Yong and Sakai after Britain’s surrender to Japan in Hong Kong in December, 1941. Ihara did not actually witness the event, but he travelled to the site two years later in 1943 and made sketches of Yong and the room where the

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<sup>397</sup> “Furansu bijutsu wa dokoe iku”[Where Will French Art Go?], *Mizue*, August 1940.

<sup>398</sup> “Furansu bijutsu wa dokoe iku,” 220-221.

<sup>399</sup> Uemura Takachiyo, “Nachisu geijutsu seisaku no zenyō.”

meeting took place.<sup>400</sup> The painting portrays fourteen Japanese officials, most of them sitting in a circle on the left side of the painting. The official with glasses on the left, the only person who rather inconspicuously looks straight at the viewer, is General Sakai, who led the meeting. They surround Governor Yong and another British officer standing with a white flag toward the right. The Japanese interrogates Yong with a penetrating stare; Yong looks frightened and has his hand over the face in distress. The room is plain and dark, and lit candles placed in front of the Japanese officers cast grim shadows of the figures on the wall, which communicates the intense, austere atmosphere of the meeting.

Ihara's painting looks similar to the Nazi painting *In The Beginning Was the Word* by Hermann Otto Hoyer in 1937. Although there is no evidence that Ihara knew this particular painting it is not impossible given that many Nazi works were reproduced in Japanese art magazines. Hoyer's painting depicts a congregation around a wooden table. Hitler stands on the right of the painting on a stool, surrounded by an audience of men and women young and old, who fill the room and earnestly listen to him. Hitler speaks with exaggerated gesture, placing his right arm forward and bent, and left hand on his waist. Behind him is a man standing straight, beside the flag of National Socialism.

The compositions of *The Meeting of Governor Yong and General Sakai* can be compared to that of *The Beginning Was the Word*. Both portray gatherings of people and place the person of attention on the right. Behind both Governor Yong and Hitler are standing men, next to whom stand flags. In Ihara's painting, however, Hitler is replaced by a defeated British official, and the Nazi flag by a white flag of surrender. It is possible to read Ihara's painting as a parody or critique of the Nazi painting, but it is more

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<sup>400</sup> Hariu et al., *Sensō to bijutsu*, 225.

plausible to consider that Ihara modeled his painting on Hoyer's work, a view bolstered by the fact that his wartime comments were supportive of contemporary German art.<sup>401</sup> Interestingly Ihara, previously an ardent follower of Picasso, recognized the affinity between Picasso's new classicism and German Nazi art. Rather than understanding Nazi art as an appropriation of new classicism, Ihara saw Nazism in Picasso's art. In 1942, he stated that Picasso's art was very much "Germanic" (*doitsu teki*) and wondered why Picasso was anti-Franco and turned his back on the Axis Nations.<sup>402</sup>

### **War Campaign Record Painting and Photography**

One important aspect of the War Campaign Record Paintings is their close interaction with photography. Although war painters travelled to the front, they did not have firsthand experience of battles and therefore they turned to photographs of iconic scenes and victorious events. *Japanese Marching Through Niangziguan* by Koiso Ryōhei (1903-1988) in 1941 is a good example that speaks to this interaction. Koiso studied with Fujishima Takeji at the Tokyo School of Art, where his drawing skills were highly praised and he graduated at the top of his class. After spending two years in Paris, he went back to Japan in 1930 and travelled to the battlefield three times (twice to China, in 1938 and 1940, and once to Java, in 1942).<sup>403</sup>

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<sup>401</sup> Ihara, "Daitōa sensō to bijutsu ka," 7.

<sup>402</sup> Ihara, "Daitōa sensō to bijutsu ka," 4.

<sup>403</sup> *Koiso Ryōhei kaikoten* [Koiso Ryōhei Retrospective] (Tokyo: Yomiuri Shinbunsha, 2002-3), 160-163.

*Japanese Marching Through Niangziguan* portrays the battle at Niangziguan in 1937, when the Japanese and the Chinese fought in the course of Japan's invasion of Shanxi province. The battle was difficult for the Japanese because of the mountainous terrain. The painting documents the activity of Japanese soldiers and makes the unfamiliar, foreign landscape available to Japan's domestic audiences. The painting is one of the representative works of wartime propaganda, which won the Imperial Art Award (*Teikoku Bijutsuin Shō*), a prize given to only two paintings (the other was Miyamoto Saburō's *The Meeting of General Yamashita and General Percival*).<sup>404</sup>

According to the exhibition catalogue produced by the Army Art Association in 1942, the painting represents a heroic action wherein the soldiers led by a General Kobayashi are driving the enemy out of the area after the battle.<sup>405</sup> The artist focuses on two soldiers who stand near the center in the foreground. In front of the two soldiers, horses and other soldiers walk toward the brick architecture and deserted mountains in the background. The flank of the horse next to the soldiers is as large as the entire body of the soldiers. The khaki color of the military uniform resonates with the brownish tones of the mountain and the horse, which correspond with the monotone blue of the sky. Art critic Araki Sueo applauded Koiso's accurate depiction of the soldiers and the horse, while the artist's former teacher Fujishima Takeji praised the work's function as a

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<sup>404</sup> Hariu et al., *Sensō to bijutsu*, 204.

<sup>405</sup> Originally in *Seisen bijutsu* [Holy War Art](Tokyo: Rikugun bijutsu kyokai, 1942).

Quoted in Hariu et al., *Sensō to bijutsu*, 204.

“record-painting” and Koiso’s detailed depiction and careful study of modern weapons.<sup>406</sup>

Despite the positive reviews it received during the war, the painting does not seem successful in conveying a sense of heroism. Without textual description, it is hard to see what the two soldiers in the work are doing. Are they about to join the forces to move to the direction of the mountain? Or are they watching their comrades passing by? Are those on the left side of the painting Chinese soldiers who were being “driven out” by the Japanese? The two Japanese soldiers focused on by the artist look as though they are dawdling rather than proudly “marching.” In fact, there were some critics who did not evaluate this painting highly. Ogawa Takei, for example, criticized *Marching Through Niangziguan* as “mediocre.” He claimed that Koiso’s painting was not a war propaganda painting, but simply a “landscape where soldiers are.”<sup>407</sup>

As the battle took place in 1937, before Koiso actually travelled to the front, the artist likely produced the work by looking at photographs such as the one published in the *Asahi shinbun* in October 1937 <**Figure 3-2**>, which shows lines of Japanese soldiers marching through the vast mountain landscape.<sup>408</sup> The photograph shows the backs of a

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<sup>406</sup> Araki Sueo, “Fujita, Koiso no rikisaku” [Masterpieces by Fujita and Koiso], *Asahi shinbun*, July 5, 1941; Fujishima Takeji, “Koisokun to sensō-ga” [Koiso’s War Art], *Asahi shinbun*, April 14, 1942.

<sup>407</sup> Ogawa Takei, “Tenrankai geppyō” [Monthly Exhibition Review], *Mizue*, August 1941, 243.

<sup>408</sup> “Jyōshikan daishingeki” [Great Advancement in Niangziguan], *Asahi shinbun*, October 30, 1937.

great number of soldiers who climb up and down the mountain. Capturing the walking soldiers in distance in the background, which is contrasted to those in the foreground, the photograph speaks to the size, organization, and magnificence of the Japanese forces and records the historic moment of victory. Although Koiso's painting makes this scene available in color and makes the event a personal, more intimate story by painting particular soldiers closely, the photograph seems to be more successful in producing a sense of heroism.

*Marching through Niangziguan* is not the only painting modeled on photographs. Miyamoto Saburō's *The Meeting of General Yamashita and General Percival* (1942) drew on a photograph that appeared in a February 20, 1942 *Asahi shinbun* article titled "The Victory of the Century" <**Figure 3-3**>. Miyamoto travelled to Singapore to make sketches of the generals and the place of the meeting between General Yamashita and Percival. However, he arrived a few months after the actual event, and thus the composition of his painting was taken from the photograph.<sup>409</sup> In the work, the Japanese officials, including General Yamashita, sit facing the viewer. Across the table facing the Japanese are three British officials. In contrast to Koiso's painting, Miyamoto's painting looks more dramatic than the original photograph. While in the photograph, the room is crowded and the negotiation in progress seems rather casual, the painting adds austerity and solemnity to the scene by making the meeting room look more spacious and the participants' faces more serious. The poses of the attendants are much better crafted and more deliberate in the painting. General Yamamoto, in a defining, aggressive pose with his arms crossed over his chest and resting on his sword, gazes straight at General

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<sup>409</sup> Hariu et al., *Sensō to bijutsu*, 211.



Percival, one of the three British officials sitting in the middle. To render Japan's victory more palpable, Miyamoto added a British flag and a white flag, a sign of surrender, neither of which appear in the photograph. Koiso and Miyamoto's paintings illuminate how much War Campaign Record Paintings depended on photographs.

### **Representations of Human Bodies in War Campaign Record Paintings**

Although some Japanese-style artists such as Dōmoto Inshō painted soldiers and battles, Western-style paintings were deemed more suitable for propaganda paintings. This is because the non-naturalistic tendency of Japanese-style paintings lends itself to imaginary, idealistic, nostalgic images of nature, mind, and the past, while Western-style painters depicted contemporary subject matter. More importantly, oil paintings are capable of articulating human bodies much more realistically than Japanese-style painting. Such techniques as shading and foreshortening, which are historically associated with oil paintings, can better express the volume of human flesh. When oil painting was introduced and studied in Japan, the medium's attention to the representation of the human body was ardently pursued. Discussing Japanese training in oil painting, Norman Bryson writes, "Detailed anatomical knowledge of the human form was essential to Western painting—even when the figures to be depicted were clothed."<sup>410</sup> It is this attention to the body in Western-style paintings that makes them conducive to inquiry regarding how culture and politics are inscribed on the material body in War Campaign Record Paintings.

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<sup>410</sup> Norman Bryson, "Westernizing Bodies: Women, Art, and Power in Meiji *Yōga*," in *Gender and Power in The Japanese Visual Field*, ed. Joshua Mostow et al., 101.

The bodies that war artists painted prior to the war were most often those of naked women. Many leading war artists—Koiso Ryōhei, Miyamoto Saburō, Ihara Usaburō, and Fujita Tsuguharu, to name a few—previously studied in France, and their pre-war works display the influence of post-impressionist European modernism. As the war started, however, their subject shifted from naked female bodies to uniformed male bodies. Miyamoto Saburō is a good example of this transformation. Born in Ishikawa Prefecture in 1905, he went to Tokyo in 1922 and studied at the private Kawabata Art School where he learned painting skills from Fujishima Takeji.<sup>411</sup> Miyamoto associated himself with The Second Section Society (*Nikakai*), which was the private exhibition alternative to the official government salon and which closely followed contemporary developments in French modern art.<sup>412</sup>

In *Blue Carpet*, executed in 1935, Miyamoto painted a fully naked reclining woman who gazes at the viewer. The woman's knees are bent to her left, while her torso and face are slightly twisted to the right. Her right arm is at her side and her left hand behind her head. The background being the patterns of the carpet on which she reclines, the pictorial space of the painting is narrow. The woman looks as though her neck and arm are twisted unnaturally, and she is located in an ambivalent, incoherent space. The broad

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<sup>411</sup> Hirota Ikuma, “Miyamoto Saburō no geijyutsu” [The Art of Miyamoto Saburō], in *Botsugo sanjūgonen Miyamoto Saburō ten* [Marking the 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Death: Miyamoto Saburō Exhibition] (Kobe: Koiso Ryōhei Memorial Museum, 2009), 7.

<sup>412</sup> Alicia Volk, “A Unified Rhythm: Past and Present in Japanese Modern Art,” in *Japan & Paris: Impressionism, Postimpressionism, and the Modern Era*, ed. Christine Guth et al. (Honolulu: Honolulu Academy of Arts, 2004), 49.

application of paint, rough brushstrokes, the clear outlining of the figure, and the abstracted, primitive qualities of the woman's face and body reveal the influence of canonical post-impressionist artists such as Cézanne, Gauguin, and Matisse. The woman's body rests on a carpet decorated with floral motifs and painted in deep navy blue and white, and her head is on a cushion of vivid primary colors of red, green and yellow. The graphic decoration that surrounds the woman makes her an exotic object for visual pleasure. Even in such a stylized form, however, the woman's body still looks more realistic than the female bodies in Japanese-style paintings, such as Uemura Shōen's *Sudden Blast* <Figure 2-4>. While Shoen's woman looks porcelain-like, her flat skin simply demarcated by thick black outlines, the woman in *Blue Carpet* is fleshy, with volume and fat to her body.

Their relative realism made Western-style paintings more suitable for depicting human bodies, soldiers' bodies in particular. In *Attack on Nanyuan, Beijing* (1941), one of the War Campaign Record Paintings, Miyamoto painted a group of male bodies. In this painting displayed in the Second Holy War Art Exhibition in 1941, the artist depicted the battle between Japan and China at Nanyuan in Beijing, July 1937. It shows eight Japanese soldiers who are fighting Chinese forces that are invisible but must exist beyond the picture frame to the right. Except for one soldier in the center, the men are on their hands and knees on the ground holding grenades and guns. One of them on the left side of the work is injured, and another one nearby is helping him. The standing soldier is trying to move toward the Chinese, raising his right hand with a bayonet attached to it. White, swirling smoke in the background is meant to dramatize the attack. Unlike *Blue*

*Carpet*, the visual space has depth with a distinguishable foreground, middle ground, and background, and the artist's rendering of the objects is detailed and realistic.

According to the exhibition catalogue, in the battle the Chinese forces shot two Japanese soldiers who tried to move forward, and the painting depicts the moment at which one soldier screamed out, "Do not leave our leaders in the lurch!" encouraging the others to fight.<sup>413</sup> The painting is thus a celebration of the courage of the Japanese soldiers. The similarity between Miyamoto's *Attack on Nanyuan, Beijing* and Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People* (1830) <Figure 3-4> is quite obvious. In Delacroix's allegorical painting, a goddess-like figure with a soft, fertile, curvy body and exposed breasts, which represents an ideal femininity, is treated as a symbol of civil liberty. With a French flag and a bayonet in her hand, she leads the people behind her and the historic revolution. Miyamoto travelled to France in 1938, seeing and copying many paintings of European masters at the Musée du Louvre.<sup>414</sup> Like Delacroix, Miyamoto uses a triangular composition, placing the focus on the leading/ standing figure in the center and making the scene dynamic. The French flag in Delacroix's work, however, is replaced in Miyamoto's by a Japanese flag, and the semi-nude female figure by a Japanese male soldier.

While the Western-style paintings were thought to suit representations of the physical reality of the war, the War Campaign Record Paintings do not idealize the bodies of Japanese soldiers. The body of the woman with the flag in Delacroix's painting

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<sup>413</sup> Originally in *Seisen bijutsu* [Holy War Art](Tokyo: Rikugun bijutsu kyōkai, 1942).

Quoted in Hariu et al., *Sensō to bijutsu*, 205.

<sup>414</sup> Hirota, "Miyamoto Saburō no geijyutsu," 10.

is fertile, curvy, and soft, and thus represents ideal female body, but the protagonist soldier in Miyamoto's painting has short arms and legs and looks like an adolescent boy. Speaking of Miyamoto's other painting, *The Meeting of General Yamashita and General Percival*, which I discussed above, Bert Winther-Tamaki makes a similar point. He states, "Miyamoto's 'Yamashita' is certainly a powerful figure, but the artist was not attempting to monumentalize this individual so much as depict the historical event for which he was known."<sup>415</sup> In other words, the War Campaign Record Paintings displayed a certain paradox. On the one hand, the medium of oil painting was considered appropriate for battle paintings because it could better represent human bodies. On the other hand, when Japanese soldiers' bodies appear in Western-style paintings, the physicality of their bodies seems to be strangely undercut; the Japanese soldiers do not look particularly strong, masculine, or virile.

As Winther-Tamaki compellingly argued in his 1997 groundbreaking essay "Embodiment/Disembodiment: Japanese Painting during the Fifteen-Year War," it is disembodiment—not embodiment—of the human body that characterizes the War Campaign Record Paintings. Unlike Greco-Roman Classical art, in which perfectly proportioned, muscular, idealized body played a central role, the Japanese propaganda

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<sup>415</sup> Winther-Tamaki, "Embodiment/Disembodiment," 166.

My discussion of the body in general is indebted to seminal theoretical works by such scholars as Michel Foucault and Judith Butler. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990).

paintings pivot on the disembodiment of individual bodies.<sup>416</sup> In so doing, the paintings not only distinguished Japanese bodies from those of Westerners, but also gave form to the idea of the *kokutai*, of Japan's collective, national body. The extraordinary disembodiment of individual Japanese that emerged in wartime Japanese painting can be seen most clearly in paintings executed by Fujita Tsuguharu in the last phase of the war.

### **Disembodiment of Individuals and Embodiment of *Kokutai***

On December 8, 1941 (Japan time), the Imperial Japanese Navy staged a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, killing more than two thousand Americans and sinking many battleships including the USS *Arizona*. The decision to attack the United States was based on four justifications: by helping Chiang Kai-shek's regime in China, the United States was disturbing Japan's effort to establish "peace" in Asia; the United States had placed a total embargo on Japan; the U.S. Navy seemed to be preparing for military advancement on Japan; and finally, diplomatic negotiations had fallen apart.<sup>417</sup> Japan's naval "victory" at Pearl Harbor and the war with the United States marked a historic moment. The *Asahi shinbun* stated that one million Japanese citizens had lived for this day: the citizens should devote all their materials, power, and energy to fight the United States to create a harmonious Asian community, and this effort was to be solely for the emperor.<sup>418</sup> Japan simultaneously declared war against the other Allied Nations, Britain

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<sup>416</sup> Ian Jenkins et al., *The Greek Body* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2010), 9.

<sup>417</sup> David C. Earhart, *Certain Victory* (New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc, 2009), 220.

<sup>418</sup> "Imakoso ookimi no mitate" [Now is the Time to Protect the Emperor], *Asahi shinbun*, December 9, 1941.

and Holland, and the subsequent few weeks were filled with news about Japan taking over the Allies' colonial territories in Asia: in Hong Kong, Singapore, Guam, and Manila, to name a few, Western powers surrendered to Japan's Imperial Army.

Japan's advancement, however, was to be short lived. Within six months of the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japan began suffering critical damage inflicted by the enemy. The Battle of Midway in June 1942 was crucial, and determined the course of the rest of the war: with aircraft carriers and airplanes destroyed, the Japanese Navy lost half of its power in this battle.<sup>419</sup> Under state censorship, however, the battle was interpreted positively as a "glorious victory" (*dai senka*), and America's claim that it did not suffer much from the battle was dismissed as false rumors and "self-consolatory" (*jii-teki*).<sup>420</sup> The battle in the Solomon Islands that took place two months later in August 1942 and lasted until February 1943 became the first Allies' victory against Japan. It was one of the fiercest and most prolonged battles, in which the Japanese forces fought in dense jungles and suffered from starvation.

The Battle of Attu, fought in May 1943 on Attu Island near Alaska, was especially important in that it changed the way Japan would fight for the rest of the war. In this battle, in which the U.S. Army tried to retake an area occupied by Japan since October 1942, the Japanese forces eventually ran out of food and weapons. Colonel Yamazaki Yasuyo, following "the path of the Japanese warrior," then decided to take death over life.

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<sup>419</sup> Earhart, *Certain Victory*, 246.

<sup>420</sup> "Taiheiyō o ōu daiseika"[The Victory That Prevails in the Pacific], *Asahi shinbun*, June 11, 1942; "Bei, jishin naki tsuyogari"[America's Bluff without Confidence], *Asahi shinbun*, June 17, 1942.

On the night of May 29, after performing a *banzai* salute to the emperor, the last forces waged an attack on the Americans, taking them by surprise. The remaining forces of injured soldiers who were unable to fight were asked to commit suicide, avoiding humiliating capture by the enemy. The conduct of the soldiers in the Attu battle—that they were determined to sacrifice themselves and that they did not ask for help from outside the island—was hailed by the mass media as heroic and righteous, and Yamazaki, who led the battle, was treated as a national hero. The Japanese newspapers reported that two thousand Japanese and fifteen hundred American soldiers died in the battle.<sup>421</sup> For the first time, in reporting this battle, the Japanese mass media used the word *gyokusai*, which literally means “smashed jewel” and refers to glorious self-destruction. The word *gyokusai*, according to Haruko Taya Cook, originates in a sixth-century Chinese story about “the morally superior man who would rather destroy his most precious possession than compromise his principles,” but in the context of wartime Japan, it came to represent determined soldiers dying beautifully like shattered jewels.<sup>422</sup>

Significantly, the battle changed the goal of the Japanese from “killing the enemy and returning alive” to “throwing one’s body onto the enemy whether or not it kills the

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<sup>421</sup> “Attsu tō ni kōgun no shinzui o hakki” [The Japanese Imperial Army Displays Its Spirit in Attu], *Asahi shinbun*, May 31, 1943; Attsu tō teki senshisha sengo hyaku amari to happyō” [The Enemy Announces Its Casualties at Attu Were Five Thousand], *Asahi shinbun*, June 6, 1943.

<sup>422</sup> Haruko Taya Cook, “Women’s Deaths as Weapons of War in Japan’s ‘Final Battle,’” *Gendering Modern Japanese History*, ed. Barbara Molony and Kathleen Uno (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005), 343.



enemy.” David Earhart explains that the benefit of *gyokusai* was supported by mathematical calculation:

the rationale for these banzai attacks was found partly in the high casualty rates inflicted upon a much larger enemy force at Attu... If Japanese suicide attacks always resulted in seventy enemy casualties per one hundred Japanese dead, then Japan would win the war through sheer numbers, provided that Japan drew upon a broader base of recruits than did the United States. This morbid algebra influenced strategy in the two final, desperate years of the war. The High Command believed that with over five million troops in the field, if every Japanese soldier killed or wounded one of the enemy before himself being killed, a mounting death toll would dim the American people’s enthusiasm for the war and that they would force their government to negotiate a settlement of the war favorable to Japan.<sup>423</sup>

In addition, the wounded who killed themselves rather than being captured by the enemy were considered loyal to the Japanese.

Many artists painted the Attu battle, but Fujita Tsuguharu’s *Honorable Death on Attu Island* (1943), displayed at the Art Exhibition for the Complete National Effort for the Decisive Battle (*Kokumin Sōryoku Kessen Bijutsuten*) in 1943, is arguably the most famous depiction. Fujita (1886-1968) is perhaps the most prolific and well-known war artist. Having graduated from the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, he studied in Paris, where he made friends with internationally acclaimed avant-garde artists including Pablo

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<sup>423</sup> Earhart, *Certain Victory*, 393.

Picasso, Amadeo Modigliani, and Henri Matisse and became the most famous Japanese artist in the city. After a few moves between France and Japan, he settled in Tokyo in 1940, actively participating in official war art production. He completed at least fifteen war paintings, including such works as *The Fall of Singapore* (1942) and *The Divine Soldier Is Here To Rescue* (1944).

In Fujita's *Honorable Death on Attu Island*, Japanese soldiers advance from the left, screaming and bayoneting American soldiers. Dark, earth-colored helmets, bayonets, and military uniforms emerge out of the mound in the foreground and form a solid, abstract pattern that echoes the high, rough, wave-like pattern of the mountain landscape, creating a dynamic composition. In the mound we also find the bodies and faces of already dead soldiers. Even if they are dead, they are imbued with energy, still participating in the battle. The man in the near center of the background, who raises his arm forward and looks directly at the viewers, screaming, is Colonel Yamazaki, who commanded the Japanese force. The two soldiers on either side of Yamazaki are stabbing the body of the enemy with their swords. Individual bodies are meshed together and difficult to distinguish from one another, which effectively conveys the collectiveness of this suicide attack.

As Kawata Akihisa argues, the faces of enemies rarely appeared on canvas before the beginning of the Pacific War. This reflected the fact that the purpose of the China-Japan War was never clear, which made it difficult for the artists and the public to despise the enemy or legitimize the Japanese soldiers' sacrifice.<sup>424</sup> The Pacific War,

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<sup>424</sup> Kawata, "Sensō bijutsu to sono jidai," 156; "'Sakusenkirokuga' shōshi" [The History of War Campaign Record Paintings], *Sensō to bijutsu*, 156.

however, in which Japan represented itself as the “savior of Asia,” allowed artists to paint the faces of the enemy and encounters between Japanese and enemy forces. Therefore, we do not see the Chinese soldiers in the above-mentioned *Japanese March through Niangzi-guan* by Koiso and *Attack on Nanyuan, Beijing* by Miyamoto. At the same time, although Ihara’s *Hong Kong Surrender: The Meeting of Governor Yong and General Sakai* and Miyamoto’s *The Meeting of General Yamashita and General Percival* show the enemy forces, the encounters between the Japanese and the Allied soldiers in those two paintings are not as violent as that in Fujita’s *Attu* painting.

Some art historians have questioned the propagandistic nature of Fujita’s *Attu* painting because of its excessive violence, but it is important to remember that wartime officials actively promoted depicting Japanese people’s suffering toward the end of the war.<sup>425</sup> State official Inoue Shirō, for example, contends in art magazine *Bijutsu* in 1944 that beauty does not only exist in beautiful environments; it can exist in ugliness, poverty, tempestuousness, and chaos.<sup>426</sup> In the same magazine a month later, Yamanouchi Ichirō states that it is absolutely necessary to portray tragic scenes as long as doing so will instill

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<sup>425</sup> For more on this painting and different interpretations around it, see Winther-Tamaki, “Embodiment/Disembodiment”; Aya Louisa McDonald, “Foujita Tsuguharu: A Painter of the Holy War Revisited,” in *Art and War in Japan and its Empire*, ed. Asato Ikeda, Ming Tiampo, and Aya Louisa McDonald (Brill, forthcoming).

<sup>426</sup> Inoue Shirō, “Kōkoku bijutsu kakuritsu no michi” [The Path to Establish Imperial Art], *Bijutsu*, March-April, 1944, 5

enmity against the Americans in the viewers.<sup>427</sup> The mass media was full of reports about the cruel nature of the Americans, which both legitimized Japan's violence against them and called for revenge. A 1943 article in magazine *Shashin Shūhō* edited by the Cabinet Information Bureau (*Naikaku jōhōbu*, which later became Army Information Bureau or *Rikugun jōhōkyoku*) reads,

The incomprehensibly cruel disservice done to our compatriots residing in America, the atrocity of brutally strafing to death innocent schoolchildren at the time of the [Doolittle] air raid, using tanks to crush to death the wounded heroes of our army on Guadalcanal—there are more incidents illustrating the demon-bastard nature of the enemy than we can count, absolutely more than can ever be forgiven.<sup>428</sup>

Listing examples of cruelty perpetrated by the Americans in a similar manner, the magazine *Asahi gurafu* concluded, “Shoot! The demon-bastard America!!”<sup>429</sup> In other words, the fierce fighting and death depicted in Fujita's *Attu* painting would have functioned to stir the viewers and was not intended to have a demoralizing effect. Furthermore, when exhibited, this painting was not only received positively by the

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<sup>427</sup> Yamanouchi Ichirō, “Sakusen kirokuga no arikata” [How War Campaign Record Paintings Ought to Be], *Bijutsu*, May 1944, 5.

<sup>428</sup> *Shashin shūhō*, May 19, 1943, 17. Translated and quoted in Earhart, *Certain Victory*, 364.

<sup>429</sup> *Asahi gurafu*, March 1, 1944, 3. Translated and quoted in Earhart, *Certain Victory*, 365.

public, but also literally became a religious icon: a donation box was placed in front of the painting, and visitors knelt before it to pray for the war dead.<sup>430</sup>

The disembodiment of individual soldiers in this painting furthermore amounts to the construction of the *kokutai*, the collective Japanese national body bound by the imperial family. Significantly, the word “*kokutai*” consists of two Chinese characters that mean “nation” and “body.” *Kokutai* was understood to be a sacred entity unified by the imperial household, and it was for the defense of this *kokutai* that, the state explained, the war against the West was fought. The most important text that articulates the concept of *kokutai* is *Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan*, published and disseminated in 1937.<sup>431</sup> It announces the unbroken link between the emperor and the legendary founder of Japan, the sun goddess Amaterasu Ōmikami, and the organic connection between emperor and subject. The book begins as follows:

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<sup>430</sup> This is Fujita’s postwar comment made in correspondence with Natsubori. Natsubori Masahiro, *Fujita Tsuguharu geijutsu shiron* [Fujita Tsuguharu Art Theory] (Tokyo: Miyoshi Art Publisher, 2004), 322-323.

<sup>431</sup> During the 1920s, the emperor was understood to be an “organ” of the state, an idea the law professor Mitobe Tatsukichi at Tokyo Imperial University espoused (*tennō kikansetsu*); however, this theory was increasingly challenged by right-wing politicians in the 1930s. *Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan* was an attempt on the part of the right-wing to announce that the emperor was a “sovereignty,” not an “organ,” of the state. Mitobe was forced to resign his position at the university, and his books were banned. 91-92. Walter Skya, *Japan’s Holy War: The Ideology of Radical Shinto Ultrationalism* (Duke University Press, 2009), 91-92.

The unbroken line of Emperors, receiving the Oracle of the Founder of the Nation, reign eternally over the Japanese Empire. This is our eternal and immutable national entity. Thus, founded on this great principle, all the people, united as one great family nation in heart and obeying the Imperial Will, enhance indeed the beautiful virtues of loyalty and filial piety. This is the glory of our national entity. This national entity is the eternal and unchanging basis of our nation and shines resplendent throughout our history. Moreover, its solidarity is proportionate to the growth of the nation and is, together with heaven and earth, without end. We must, to begin with, know with what active brilliance this fountainhead shines within the reality of the founding of our nation.<sup>432</sup>

In this ideological discourse of *kokutai*, the imagined collective entity of sacred Japan became the absolute principle, and the *kokutai* ideal virtually rendered the material body of individuals invisible and irrelevant.

While Fujita uses dynamic, energetic expressions to create the *kokutai*, a photograph published in American news magazine *Life* on April 3, 1944 reports the horrific reality of the event by capturing dying Japanese soldiers <**Figure 3-5**>. The soldiers in the photograph are essentially piles of corpses and simply appear as inert matter. Another photograph published in the issue <**Figure 3-6**> depicts the grotesque bodies of dead Japanese soldiers, their limbs blown off, faces unrecognizable, and internal organs exposed. These photographs appearing in US magazines elucidate the

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<sup>432</sup> *Kokutai no hongii/ Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan*, trans. John Owen Gauntlett (1937; repr., Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1949), 59.

degree to which disembodiment is idealized in Fujita's work. In other words, Fujita's painting maintains an intricate balance of defying the Western Classical discourse of idealized, perfectly proportioned male bodies *and* eulogizing death without representing the dead body as terribly abject.

To American eyes, the suicides were wasteful and meaningless. With reproductions of gruesome pictures of dead Japanese soldiers, *Life* magazine reported,

On the morning of May 29, 1943 the Japanese on Attu charged out of the hills in their last attack...But after the first fury of the attack passed, a strange thing happened. Instead of fighting until they were killed in action or until their ammunition was gone, the Japanese began an orgy of self-destruction. Most of them held grenades to their chests, stomachs or heads and blasted themselves to death. When the thudding of Japanese grenades faded, more than 1,000 bodies lay in the two mile stretch between Massacre Bay and Chicago Harbor, of which probably half were suicides.<sup>433</sup>

The article ended with a quote by *Life* correspondent Robert Sherrod, who stated, "The Jap is not an easy soldier to conquer, but he does crack on the anvil of his own desperation. And as we learn more about the dark crevices of his thinking processes, we will find better means of fighting him."<sup>434</sup>

*Gyokusai* was practiced not only by soldiers, but also by civilians in the battle of Saipan between June and July of 1944. In this, yet another desperate battle, Japanese soldiers decided to kill themselves as had their compatriots in the Attu battle. In Saipan,

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<sup>433</sup> "Jap Suicides on Attu," *Life*, April 3, 1944, 36-7.

<sup>434</sup> "Jap Suicides on Attu," *Life*, 37.

however, along with the soldiers, Japanese citizens who had immigrated to Saipan decades before also committed suicide, blowing themselves up with hand grenades. Ten thousand civilians, men, women and children, fully one third of the island's population, died in this battle.<sup>435</sup> The Japanese mass media reported that all the Japanese soldiers died, and they glorified the settlers who chose the same path despite the fact that they no longer lived in mainland Japan.<sup>436</sup>

The battle had a significant impact on the role of women in the war. As Haruko Taya Cook observes, the mass media sensationalized the civilian women's suicides, and while women had been previously conceived as nurturers and caretakers, after this battle ideal femininity came to be associated with death: laudable women were willing to die for the nation.<sup>437</sup> The women's deaths, Cook suggests, functioned to further encourage Japanese men to sacrifice themselves for the nation. The wartime media's claim that all the Japanese soldiers died in this battle and that the civilians willingly destroyed themselves, however, was not entirely true, which came into light only after the war ended. A significant number of soldiers and civilians indeed chose life over death, and instead surrendered to the Americans, and those civilians who blasted themselves were *forced* to do so by the Japanese army.<sup>438</sup>

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<sup>435</sup> Earhart, *Certain Victory*, 399.

<sup>436</sup> *Asahi shinbun* published a number of stories and articles about the battle in July 1944.

<sup>437</sup> Haruko Taya Cook, "Women's Deaths as Weapons of War."

<sup>438</sup> Haruko Taya Cook, "Women's Death as Weapons of War," 331; Earhart, *Certain Victory*, 398.



Fujita painted this significant battle, too. Titled *Compatriots on Saipan Island Remain Faithful to the End*, his painting was displayed at the War Campaign Record Painting Exhibition (*Sensō Kirokugaten*) in April 1945, only four months before the end of the war. Unlike in *Honorable Death on Attu Island*, women and children are now present at the battlefield. A man in the right foreground is placing a gun into his mouth, and women in the right background are throwing themselves off what was later called “Banzai Cliff.” Though disembodiment is the subject of painting, these self-slaughtering Japanese do not look as abject as those in Attu in the photographs of the American *Life* magazine. Instead of a fierce, violent fight between the Japanese and American forces, in this painting Fujita focuses on the pathos seen in the aftermath of the battle and virtue in the act of accepting one’s destiny. The artist highlights the dignity of the women and children who gather in the center of the painting and who remain calm even in the face of their imminent deaths. Rather than accepting humiliating capture, they would choose to take their own lives: on the cliff in the far distance a Japanese flag waves proudly. Here again, Fujita materializes the *kokutai*, the collection of Japanese citizens who are determined to act as human shields for the sacred country of Japan and its ruler, the emperor.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I provided an overview of the production of War Campaign Record Paintings. As I have examined above, war artists, although most of them trained in France, turned their attention to contemporary art in Germany. They also relied to a significant degree on photographs in their production of the paintings. Furthermore, I

suggested that, despite the supposed realism of the human body in Western-style paintings, the Japanese propaganda paintings do not attend to the construction of the physical body of individual human beings. In the next two chapters I will investigate fascist discourses around the body, examining the practices of racial hygiene and eugenics and the idea of the human body as a mechanical weapon in both Japan and Germany. I ultimately conclude, however, that we do not see in the War Campaign Record Paintings the fascist bodily practices that existed in wartime Japan.

The relationship between paintings and photographs becomes important particularly in Chapter Four, in which I address the tension between the two media. The creation of the collective body of the *kokutai*, which we saw in Fujita's paintings, becomes a more prominent issue in Chapter Five, where I show that the medium of Japanese-style painting, capable of symbolic representation, was more suitable to communicate the metaphysical aspect of the *kokutai*. I argue that the disjuncture between German Nazi art and Japanese war art is where Japan could maintain its own national identity. In other words, instead of articulating individual bodies as in Western art, Japanese war art propagated the primacy of spirit, which the Japanese insisted that Westerners did not have, and drew on traditional aesthetics, in order to make their art their own.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Representing the Fascist Body I: Scientific Racism and the Japanese Concept of *Minzoku*

#### Introduction

In 1940, the Japanese government passed the National Eugenics Law (*Kokumin Yūsei Hō*). The law allowed doctors to sterilize the “inferior” in order to improve the genetic composition of the Japanese populace. While eliminating the undesirable from the population, the government simultaneously sought to strengthen the physical ability of its citizens, and passed in the same year the National Physical Strength Law (*Kokumin Tairyoku Hō*), which stipulated that young men should be tested on their physical ability. These government policies and measures were highly informed by the medical and scientific practices in Nazi Germany: the National Eugenics Law was in fact modeled on the infamous 1933 Nazi Sterilization Law. The wartime state-sanctioned control over the corporeal body of the citizens in Japan, historian Fujino Yutaka argues, is fascist. He states,

Fascism carried out extreme population policies in order to mobilize the populace as “human resources.” The citizens were required to possess a healthy, strong physique and mentality, and those who could not be “improved,” such as the sick and the disabled, were expelled from society. I understand this as the special feature that Germany, Italy, and Japan had in common.<sup>439</sup>

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<sup>439</sup> Fujino Yutaka, *Kyōsei sareta kenkō: nihon fashizumuka no seimei toshintai*, 4-5.

Reflecting fascist practice around citizens' bodies, photographs published in the *Asahi shinbun* invite what Jennifer Robertson calls the "eugenic gaze."<sup>440</sup> The newspaper, advocating the idea underlined by the National Physical Strength Law, regularly reproduced photographs of semi-naked men and women performing exercises (*taisō*). A photograph published on February 10, 1943 <**Figure 4-1**>, which depicts men exercising in a school yard is one example. Unable to show the entire crowd, the picture conveys the sense that the number of participants is enormous. Organized in rows, the young men pose in a side bend, displaying their strong, healthy bodies. Although it is true that some of the men look meager and thin, their poses nonetheless emphasize their physical ability. Power, virility, and energy fill the photograph. The sense of discipline, conformity, and regimentation that I discussed in Chapter One is also evident in this image. The accompanying text explains that this particular style of exercise was introduced to renowned schools such as Tokyo Imperial University and Chiba Imperial University, and claims that it contributed to increasing the lung capacity of the students.<sup>441</sup> In terms of its focus on the external appearance of the body, the *Asahi shinbun* photograph is perhaps comparable to Gerhard Keil's *Gymnasts* (1939) and Albert Janesch's *Water Sports* (c.1936), two paintings created in Nazi Germany. In addition to alluding to the physical beauty embodied in Greco-Roman sculptures, these paintings, which depict superman-

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<sup>440</sup> Jennifer Robertson, "Blood Talks: Eugenic Modernity and the Creation of New Japanese," *History and Anthropology* 13.3 (2002): 197.

<sup>441</sup> "Shimo o kudaite kokutetsu taisō"[National Railroad Exercise, Breaking Frost], *Asahi shinbun*, February 10, 1943.

like, gigantic, extremely muscular blond, blue-eyed men, propagate the ideas of Nazi eugenics and the ideal of Aryan racial purity.<sup>442</sup>

Perhaps surprisingly, it is difficult to find a similarly strong body in the War Campaign Record Paintings. Unlike photographs and graphic illustrations in eugenic discourses, the war paintings pay scant attention to the physical characteristics of material bodies. This lack of attention to the strong, healthy, disciplined body is evident in Miyamoto Saburō's *Attack on Nanyuan, Beijing*, which I discussed in the previous chapter: the protagonist, the standing soldier in the center who raises his bayonet high in the air, looks rather small compared to the women in *Liberty Leading the People* <Figure 3-4>, on which Miyamoto modeled his painting. The military uniforms that cover the entire bodies of the soldiers obscure the muscular body structures that might be beneath. As the action of the soldier in the center is frozen in time, the painting does not convey the same kind of dynamism and movement that is the focus of the *Asahi shinbun* photograph. This does not mean, however, that Japanese painters were incapable of painting individuals with large body frames. The body of a fisherman in Wada Sanzō's *South Wind*, executed in 1907, is as muscular as the bodies of Aryan athletes in the two Nazi paintings. In the center of the painting, a fisherman stands stripped to the waist in *contrapposto* on the wooden deck at a port, in a pose like a Classical sculpture. The individual muscles on his arms, abdomen, and calves are carefully drawn, which constructs an idealized, eight-head tall, European classical male body.

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<sup>442</sup> *The 1930s: The Making of "The New Man"* (Ottawa: The National Gallery of Canada, 2008), 50-51; J.A. Mangan, *Shaping the Superman: Fascist Body as Political Icon Aryan Fascism*. London: Frank Cass, 1999.

This chapter examines the rupture between the bodily discourse of racial hygiene and eugenics that permeated Japanese wartime society on the one hand, and the lack of visual representation of this discourse in War Campaign Record Painting on the other. I argue that the fact that we do not see physically strong, “superman” bodies in the propaganda paintings does not mean that Japanese wartime ideology was not influenced by the scientific racism developed in Germany, or that Japanese propaganda paintings were not fascist. On the contrary, as I will show, wartime Japanese policy-makers were highly aware of the Nazi ideas of eugenics and racial hygiene. Yet, the Eurocentric notion of eugenics and scientific racism, which placed Caucasians at the top of its hierarchy, ultimately did not work in Japan. Thus, rather than claiming the absence of fascist bodily practice, I will illuminate how the idea of racism was adopted in Japan, where the scientific notion of “race” (*jinsbu*) was modified into a relatively more flexible, “subjective” idea of “ethnicity” (*minzoku*). Through the concept of *minzoku*, the Japanese could claim superiority in terms of the spirit rather than the physical body, which consequently enabled them to justify their territorial expansion as “saving” other Asians from Western colonialism. It is within the framework of *minzoku*, modified scientific racism, that we must understand war propaganda paintings.

### **German Science and Eugenics in Japan**

Japan’s wartime regime carefully studied and integrated the German model of science: eugenics. The term was first used in 1883 by Sir Francis Galton, a British scholar and a half-cousin of Charles Darwin. Galton himself defined eugenics as

the science of improving [the inherited] stock [of a population], not only by judicious matings, but by any means which takes cognizance of all influences that tend in however remote degree to give the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable than they otherwise would have had.<sup>443</sup>

Eugenics sought to improve the human species by controlling reproduction and eliminating the “defective.” This was modeled on the breeding of livestock, as well as on the taxonomy of human beings and the medical knowledge that advanced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including Gregor Mendel’s discovery of hereditary diseases in 1910.<sup>444</sup> Eugenics not only aimed to eradicate the physically and mentally ill, but also to eliminate “social evils” such as alcoholism, homosexuality, and criminality. Based on the principle of “survival of the fittest,” eugenicists most often associated the fitness of citizens with the well-being of a nation. Eugenics was an international movement, supported not only in Germany, but also in many countries such as the United States, England, and France.

In Germany eugenics took a deadly turn and produced the most extreme results.<sup>445</sup> Although eugenic ideas about the mentally and physically ill existed before the rise of the

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<sup>443</sup> Anne Maxwell, *Picture Imperfect: Photography and Eugenics 1870-1940* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2007), 2.

<sup>444</sup> Nicholas Mirzoeff, *Bodyscape: Art, Modernity, and the Ideal Figure* (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), 146.

<sup>445</sup> See the excellent online exhibition, “Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race” by United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Nazi party in 1933, the Nazi party took them further. Under the 1933 Sterilization Law the regime sterilized 400,000 individuals who were mentally ill, physically deformed, or suffering from hereditary conditions such as Huntington's disease and epilepsy.<sup>446</sup> In the Nazis' Euthanasia Program, which lasted from 1939 to at least 1941, over 70,000 individuals with the same conditions were systematically murdered.<sup>447</sup>

Nazi racial policies, which sought to create a "racially superior" Germany, ultimately came to consider the existence of Jewish population as a medical problem that needed to be solved.<sup>448</sup> French aristocrat Arthur de Gobineau (1816-1882) invented the term "Aryans" in the 1850s to refer to "the allegedly superior strain of people who thousands of years before had emerged from the continent of Africa and settled in those northern parts of Europe that comprised modern-day Scandinavia, Britain, and northern Germany, gradually developing lighter hair and skin in the process."<sup>449</sup> Nazi leaders and high-ranking officials demanded that the Aryan population in Germany be increased to improve the racial standard of the country.<sup>450</sup> The infamous anti-Semitic Nuremberg Laws of 1935, defined a "Jew" as a person having at least one Jewish grandparent;

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<<http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/deadlymedicine/>> (accessed February 27, 2011).

<sup>446</sup> Maxwell, *Picture imperfect*, 148.

<sup>447</sup> Robert Proctor, *Racial Hygiene: Medicine under the Nazis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 191.

<sup>448</sup> Maxwell, *Picture Imperfect*, 148.

<sup>449</sup> Maxwell, *Picture Imperfect*, 148.

<sup>450</sup> Maxwell, *Picture Imperfect*, 148.



prohibited marriage and sexual intercourse between “Jews” and “non-Jews”; and deprived Jews of German citizenship. The Nazis had initially planned simply to deport Jewish people, but ultimately resorted to murdering them—six million European Jews—at concentration camps such as Auschwitz.

Eugenics had a great influence in Japan, and in fact, most of the scholars and doctors who introduced the idea to Japan studied in Germany. Fujikawa Yū, who studied there during the 1880s, published the journal *Jinsei* (Human Life) as early as 1905, in which he translated many articles about eugenics into Japanese.<sup>451</sup> In the 1920s, eugenics was popularized and disseminated to the general public by such figures as Ikeda Shigenori, who published the magazines *Yūsei Undō* (Eugenics Movement) and *Yūseigaku* (Eugenics).<sup>452</sup> Around that time, many exhibitions titled “eugenics exhibition” (*eisei tenrankai*) and “ethnicity hygiene exhibition” (*minzoku eisei tenrankai*) were organized. These explained diseases—especially sexually transmitted infections, tuberculosis, and mental illness—using Mendel’s principle. They encouraged marriage between healthy couples and recommended investigating the medical history of prospective spouses.<sup>453</sup>

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<sup>451</sup> Robertson, “Japan’s First Cyborg?” 7.

<sup>452</sup> Fujino, *Nihon fashizumu to yūsei shisō*, 80.

<sup>453</sup> Tanaka Satoshi, *Eisei tenrankai no yokubō* [The Desire of Eugenics Exhibitions] (Tokyo: Seitōsha, 1994).

## Wartime Japanese Eugenics

These eugenics movements were quickly appropriated by the wartime state. Ultimately, in 1940, the wartime government passed the National Eugenics Law (*Kokumin Yūsei Hō*). The law was modeled on the 1933 Nazi Sterilization Law. Nagai Hisomu—who studied in Germany from 1903 and 1906 and was influenced by eugenicist and Nazi party member Alfred Ploetz—had advocated such a law since 1934.<sup>454</sup> The National Eugenics Law stipulated “sterilization of so-called abnormal persons, namely, the mentally infirm, physically handicapped and sexually alternative,” even though the question of whether or not those “diseases” were hereditary was still in dispute.<sup>455</sup> On the occasion of the passing of the law, the Minister of Health further proposed that in the future the state should have total control over marriage, issuing certificates only to those who were healthy.<sup>456</sup>

Unlike in Germany, however, eugenics in Japan was largely oriented toward what is considered positive eugenics.<sup>457</sup> While negative eugenics is concerned with the segregation and sterilization of undesirable people, positive eugenics focuses on improving health through selective marriage, exercise, and hygiene. Thus, as Fujino Yutaka points out, under the Japanese National Eugenics Law only hundreds of people were sterilized (454, to be exact), rather than hundreds of thousands, and in that sense,

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<sup>454</sup> Fujino, *Nihon fashizumu to yūsei shisō*, 281; Tessa Morris-Suzuki, “Debating Racial Science in Wartime Japan,” *Osiris* 13 (1998): 362.

<sup>455</sup> Robertson, “Miss Nippon,” 24; Fujino Yutaka, Chapter 6.

<sup>456</sup> Fujino, *Nihon fashizumu to yūsei shisō*, 336-338.

<sup>457</sup> Robertson, “Japan’s First Cyborg?” 10.

the consequences of the law *cannot* be compared to the situation in Nazi Germany.<sup>458</sup>

Jennifer Robertson likewise reminds us that unlike the Holocaust in Germany, eugenics in Japan did not directly lead to the systematic slaughter of those deemed “unfit.”<sup>459</sup>

More pervasive than the National Eugenics Law was the National Physical Strength Law (*Kokumin Tairyoku Hō*), which was also promulgated in 1940 and which obliged young men to undergo state-controlled annual physical exams.<sup>460</sup> Those who were diagnosed with diseases were sent to appropriate medical institutions and those who were determined to be “weak” were considered “useless” and sent to health training centers (*kenmin shūrenjo*).<sup>461</sup> Michel Foucault has explained how modern nation states in

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<sup>458</sup> Fujino, *Nihon fashizumu to yūsei shisō*, 39; 369.

<sup>459</sup> Robertson, “Japan’s First Cyborg?” 22.

<sup>460</sup> Fujino, *Nihon fashizumu to yūsei shisō*, 319; Sakaue Yasuhiro and Takaoka Hiroshi, *Maboroshi no Tōkyō orinpikku to sono jidai: senjiki no supōtsu, toshi,shintai* [The Dreamed Tokyo Olympics and Its Era: Sports, City, and Body during the War] (Tokyo: Seitōsha, 2009), 181. Two million males (between seventeen and nineteen years of age) and almost four million males (between fifteen and nineteen) were examined in 1940 and 1941, respectively. Takai Masashi and Koga Atsushi, *Kenkō yūryōji to sono jidai: kenkō to iu media ibento* [Healthy Kids and Its Era: Health and Media Event] (Tokyo: Seitōsha, 2008), 26.

<sup>461</sup> Takai and Koga, *Kenkō yūryōji to sono jidai*, 26; Fujino Yutaka, *Nihon fashizumu to yūsei shisō*, 170; 265.

general have maintained power by controlling the physical bodies of citizens.<sup>462</sup> During the war, the state control of Japanese citizens through exercise had a specific goal: to create bodies that were strong and healthy enough to fight at the battlefield and sustain the labor power at home.<sup>463</sup>

Physical exercise was a part of the state program called *Kōsei Undō*, which was central to Japan's vision of a totalitarian state inspired by those of Italy and Germany. *Kōsei Undō*, which can be translated as "National Welfare Movement," is a Japanese translation of KdF (*Kraft durch Freude*, or Strength through Joy), the Nazi program that dealt with the nation's public health.<sup>464</sup> KdF was in turn modeled on the Italian Fascist program of *Dopolavoro* (After Work), which organized leisure activities for citizens including music concerts, libraries, and travel. In his 1942 book *The National Welfare Movement*, Hoshina Atsushi explains that *Kōsei Undō* was initiated in 1938. He defines the program as a movement that aimed to maintain the overall wellness of citizens by encouraging efficient time management, physical exercise, spiritual refinement, and appropriate leisure that was ethical, economical, and hygienic.<sup>465</sup> Hoshina provides detailed descriptions of KdF and *Dopolavoro*, and states that what allowed Germany and

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<sup>462</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977); *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

<sup>463</sup> Sakaue and Takaoka, *Maboroshi no Tōkyō orinpikku to sono jidai*, 181.

<sup>464</sup> Hoshina Atsushi, *Kokumin kōsei undō* [The National Welfare Movement] (Tokyo: Kurita shoten, 1942).

<sup>465</sup> Hoshina, *Kokumin kōsei undo*, 4.

Italy to implement such wonderful programs was totalitarianism, state-controlled economies, and the hierarchal structure of their political parties.<sup>466</sup> He simultaneously criticized the United States, the country of liberalism and democracy, for not having a systematized program to maintain public health.<sup>467</sup>

To improve the physical health of Japanese citizens, a large number of sports events were organized both nationally and locally by state-sanctioned organizations such as the Japan Sports Association (*Zen Nippon Taisō Renmei*), established in 1930.<sup>468</sup> These events, called *taisō taikai* (exercise conventions) or *taisō sai* (exercise festivals), were supported and sponsored by the Ministry of Education, local governments and schools, and mass media.<sup>469</sup> School children, teachers, and factory workers participated in the events, and in 1934 alone, over three million people in 7520 different organizations in thirty-five prefectures were involved.<sup>470</sup> It was advocated that exercise (*taisō*) was best done by millions of people rather than by individuals, and numerous styles of exercise were created—*kokumin taisō* (national exercise), *kenkoku taisō*, (nation foundation exercise) *kōkoku shinmin taisō* (imperial citizen exercise), *kokutetsu undō* (national railroad exercise), *sumō taisō* (sumo exercise), and *Kumamoto ken taisō* (Kumamoto prefecture exercise), to name a few.<sup>471</sup>

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<sup>466</sup> Hoshina, *Kokumin kōsei undō*, 19.

<sup>467</sup> Hoshina, *Kokumin kōsei undō*, 9.

<sup>468</sup> Sakaue and Takaoka, *Maboroshi no Tōkyō orinpikku to sono jidai*, 409.

<sup>469</sup> Sakaue and Takaoka, *Maboroshi no Tōkyō orinpikku to sono jidai*, 409.

<sup>470</sup> Sakaue and Takaoka, *Maboroshi no Tōkyō orinpikku to sono jidai*, 409.

<sup>471</sup> Sakaue and Takaoka, *Maboroshi no Tōkyō orinpikku to sono jidai*, 414-429.

These different styles of exercise were often disseminated by drawings in pamphlets, and exercise events were constantly reported by news media. A pamphlet published in Ibaragi Prefecture <Figure 4-2>, for example, features a drawing of a man wearing shorts demonstrating different poses including side-bending, stretching, and squatting . It seems that each pose was to be performed with corresponding verses that describe the pose, such as “paddling” and “climbing.” It is important to note that, according to Tanaka Satoshi, nudity was encouraged during the war as an embrace of nature. A photograph published in *Asahi shinbun* on June 26, 1943 <Figure 4-3>, shows young school girls demonstrating exercises in the schoolyard. The children are all in the same pose, their arms raised up in a V-shape. Like the photograph of the semi-naked exercising men which I described at the beginning of this chapter, the girls in the *Asahi shinbun* photograph are half-naked: they appear to be wearing black shorts or skirts, but are exposed from the waist up. The benefit of being naked was introduced from Weimar Germany, and there was even a “naked exercise” (*hadaka taisō*).<sup>472</sup>

Wartime Japanese policies concerning exercise and sports also had an influence in Japan’s colonies. Imperial citizen exercise, for example, was performed in wartime Korea.<sup>473</sup> Furthermore, in 1940, the year the Olympics were scheduled to be held in Tokyo (the games were ultimately cancelled), the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere Sports Festival (*Daitōa Kyōgi Taikai*) was held, with athletes from China, Mongolia,

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<sup>472</sup> Tanaka, *Eisei tenrankai no yokubō*, 182-190.

<sup>473</sup> Sakaue and Takaoka, *Maboroshi no Tōkyō orinpikku to sono jidai*, 422.

Manchuria, the Philippines, Korea, Taiwan and others, to celebrate the 2600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Imperial reign.<sup>474</sup>

### **Eugenic Photography**

The mass media fully participated in this wartime discourse of eugenics. One of the most important annual events was the competition for “the healthiest child in Japan” organized by the *Asahi shinbun*. The competition and the Healthy Children Award (*Kenkō Yūryōji Hyōshō*) were started in 1930; in 1934, nineteen thousand children participated.<sup>475</sup> The applicants submitted to the selection committee a “card” (*kādo*) recording their physical information (weight, height, medical background, time for a fifty-meter run, etc.).<sup>476</sup> Importantly, they were required to attach photos taken in the “lightest possible clothes.”<sup>477</sup> Their cards were first considered on the local level, and then on the national level.<sup>478</sup>

Photographs were essential in disseminating what a perfectly healthy person looked like: from the newspaper reports, it seems that the winners were chosen on the basis of

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<sup>474</sup> Sakaue and Takaoka, *Maboroshi no Tōkyō orinpikku to sono jidai*, 162-170.

<sup>475</sup> “Kagayaku Nippon Kenkōji” [Shining Healthy Kids of Japan], *Asahi shinbun*, July 5, 1934.

<sup>476</sup> “Kagayaku Nippon Kenkoji.”

<sup>477</sup> “Zenkoku kara sagasu Nihon ichi no kenkōji” [The Healthiest Kid in Japan], *Asahi shinbun*, Feb 11, 1930

<sup>478</sup> “Kagayaku Nippon kenkōji.”

the textual and photographic documents alone.<sup>479</sup> After the competition, the newspaper released the physical information as well as the pictures of the winner and of several runners up.<sup>480</sup> The *Asahi shinbun* of July 5, 1934 published a full body shot of that year's winner, Hasegawa Keizō, in white shorts. The competition was not only for male youth: the newspaper also announced the thirteen-year-old female winner Nakamura Kie with a full body, semi-naked picture <Figure 4-4>. The newspaper photographs show the two young students standing against a gridded background. They stand still, with straight backs and neutral, but serious expressions. Their hands are placed precisely at their sides, their legs close together, and their feet at forty-five degrees. The newspaper also reproduced portrait photographs of the runners-up <Figure 4-5>. Although only their faces appear, as in the pictures of the winners, the backgrounds of these photographs also consist of grids.

The *Asahi shinbun* pictures of healthy children use this gridded background for measurement, elevating the photographs to the status of neutral scientific records. The black background with a two-inch square grid marked off with white string is known as a Lamprey grid, and was invented by J.H. Lamprey, secretary of the London Ethnographical Society, and was used to measure the physical features of human bodies at a glance in the context of anthropometry and colonial anthropology.<sup>481</sup> These

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<sup>479</sup> *Asahi shinbun* in July 5, 1934 published a photo of national committees, looking at the applicants' cards and their photos.

<sup>480</sup> “Kagayaku nippon kenkōji.”

<sup>481</sup> Anne Maxwell, *Colonial Photography and Exhibitions: Representations of the 'Native' and the Making of European Identities* (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), 41;



photographs were thus entrenched in the nineteenth-century discourse in which photography was “open to a whole range of scientific and technical applications and supplied a ready instrumentation to a number of reformed or emerging medical, legal and municipal apparatuses in which photographs functioned as a means of record and a source of evidence.”<sup>482</sup> Contributing to the means of surveillance and control, according to John Tagg, photography in the latter half of the nineteenth century was complicit in spreading the network of state power.<sup>483</sup> Unlike the nineteenth-century medical and anthropological photographs of the insane, the criminal, and the colonized, which recorded the “inferior” *other*, however, the photographs in *Asahi shinbun* documented the healthy, ideal, perfect body of the “superior” *self*.

Wartime Japan’s human typology based on visual documentation clearly resonates with the use of photography in Nazi Germany. Japanese and German eugenicists shared the notion that the ideal physical body could be recorded visually and that in addition photographs could be used in a screening process to distinguish the ideal body from other, less desirable forms. In Germany, prominent Nazi racial theorist Hans Günther made photographs one of the bases on which applicants to the SS were screened <Figure 4-

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Allen Hockley, “John Thomson’s China,” *MIT Visualizing Cultures*

<[http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/john\\_thomson\\_china\\_01/ct\\_essay03.html](http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/john_thomson_china_01/ct_essay03.html)>(accessed Dec 10, 2011).

<sup>482</sup> John Tagg, *Burdon of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 60.

<sup>483</sup> Tagg, *Burdon of Representation*, 74.

6>. <sup>484</sup> Like the Japanese newspaper photographs of the runners-up in the “healthiest child” competition, photographs reproduced in Günther’s book titled *Racial Science of the German People* published in 1930 are frontal and three-quarter portraits of Aryan men and women. Although portraiture in Western practice has historically been associated with individualism, these pictures are not meant to convey the personality of the sitter: their physical features—the shapes of their eyes and noses, the color of their hair—are the main focus of the photographs, and the subjects are treated not as individuals but merely as scientific specimens.

Despite the pervasiveness of such beliefs, wartime medical and scientific discourses did not influence the representations of bodies in the field of propaganda paintings, however: strong, healthy, naked bodies do not appear in the paintings; on the contrary, the soldiers in the paintings are almost always dressed in their Japanese military uniforms. Although, as I explained in Chapter Three, propaganda paintings and photography maintained a strong connection, there was therefore nevertheless a tension between the two media. Even though painters turned to photographs in their art creation, the role of paintings was clearly distinguished from that of photographs. In *Bijutsu* 1944, General Akiyama Kunio provided the definition of War Campaign Record Paintings:

War Campaign Record Paintings are paintings that have the significant historical purpose of recording and preserving the state’s war campaign forever. They are the paintings that would celebrate the Imperial army’s spirit to defend the nation, defeat the enemy, and fight for victory. They are

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<sup>484</sup> Maxwell, *Picture Imperfect*, 150.

paintings that would preserve when, how, and why we fight for our posterity a hundred, thousand years later.<sup>485</sup>

Unlike photographs, art critic Egawa Kazuhiko argued, war paintings could be preserved for a long time.<sup>486</sup> Furthermore, it was thought that paintings could express things that photographs could not. Army official Yamanouchi Ichirō stated, “Photographic technologies have rapidly advanced by now. Some people argue that photographs do a better job of recording events. Yet, photographs are impotent at evoking emotions and embodying ideologies.”<sup>487</sup> Paintings were much more highly regarded and considered a privileged site wherein lofty ideals were visually articulated, whereas photography tended to be associated with medical science and journalism because of its supposed ability to capture the Truth.<sup>488</sup>

Furthermore, although both media had been introduced from the West, oil paintings (or “Western-style paintings”) had a much stronger association with the West than photography. In other words, representing perfectly proportioned, anatomically studied

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<sup>485</sup> Akiyama Kunio, “Honnendo kirokuga ni tsuite” [About This Year’s War Campaign Record Painting], *Bijutsu*, May 1944, 2.

<sup>486</sup> “Sensō-ga to geijutsu sei” [War Painting and Its Artistic Value], *Bijutsu*, September 1944, 11.

<sup>487</sup> Yamanouchi Ichirō, “Sakusen kirokuga no arikata” [How War Campaign Record Paintings Ought to Be], *Bijutsu*, May 1944, 3.

<sup>488</sup> This is not to say that artistic aspects of photography were not explored during this period. Many European-trained photographers sought artistic expressions in photography in the prewar period.

bodies in oil, as in European classical works, carried the risk of making Japanese bodies look “too Western.” For example, the muscular fisherman in Wada Sanzō’s *South Wind*, which I discussed above, immediately calls to mind Michelangelo’s *David*. Thus, during the war, when the “uniqueness of the Japanese” was constantly emphasized, there was a need to distinguish the Japanese body from the Western one, particularly in the medium of oil paintings.

Art historians Tsuruya Mayu and Bert Winther-Tamaki have commented on the lack of rigor and virility in Japanese war paintings. Tsuruya argues that the paintings allude to Japan’s traditional cultural values of inconspicuousness, unobtrusiveness, and self-effacement.<sup>489</sup> Similarly, Winther-Tamaki points to Japan’s religious tradition to account for the characteristics of the paintings. He writes that the religious system “reserved greater honor for mortal sacrifice than physical accomplishment, an ideology not conducive to the strong physical embodiment of heroes in portraiture.”<sup>490</sup>

I agree with both Tsuruya and Winther-Tamaki that the paintings’ conscious diversion from the importance of body was manifestation of an alternative worldview that gave the Japanese a distinct national identity, but I want to investigate the concept of *minzoku* to elucidate this alternative world view. In particular I suggest that eugenics, which after all stemmed from Western scientific racism, did not perfectly suit Japan, a “non-white” country. In order to claim superiority over the West, Japan instead advanced a Japan-centric worldview of ethnicity (*minzoku*) by modifying the concept of race (*jinsu*). I argue that paintings, considered “higher” in the hierarchy of art, needed to

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<sup>489</sup> Tsuruya, “Sensō Sakusen Kirokuga,” 157.

<sup>490</sup> Winther-Tamaki, “Embodiment/Disembodiment,” 166.

materialize this ideology, which privileged the internal rather than external characteristics of the Japanese.

### **The Japanese Concept of *Minzoku***

Kevin Doak has suggested that although it is often considered that Japan's war was a "race war," understanding Japan's ideology only in terms of race is insufficient. Doak calls for attention to the related framework of *minzoku* (ethnicity). Stating that "race coexisted with ethnicity in Japanese imperialist ideology, but race and ethnicity were used to signify distinct levels of identity," Doak argues that it is *minzoku*, rather than race, that formed the wartime identity of the Japanese.<sup>491</sup> Historian John Dower has made a similar point. He writes, "references to 'white people' did not dominate the rhetoric of wartime Japan, and color did not play the same role in Japanese perceptions of the conflict in Asia that it did in the West. The grand white-yellow-black schema which so dominated Western racist thinking simply did not work very well as a means by which to mobilize the Japanese and Asian sense of solidarity."<sup>492</sup> Although scholars now most often translate the term *minzoku* as race—for example, Yamato *minzoku* as Yamato race and *minzoku eisei* as racial hygiene—the word *jinshu* (race) was seldom used during the war.

When the Social Darwinist thinking of racial science was introduced to Japan in the 1870s, the Japanese embraced with great excitement the new classification system of the

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<sup>491</sup> Kevin Doak, "Building National Identity through Ethnicity: Ethnology in Wartime Japan and After," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 27.1 (Winter, 2001): 4.

<sup>492</sup> Dower, *War without Mercy*, 208.

human species and the principle of selective breeding.<sup>493</sup> In the process of the Meiji government's Westernization of Japan, many Japanese scholars and government authorities accepted the idea that they were physically "inferior." They therefore wanted to strengthen the nation by improving their genes, considering this process one of the necessary steps to modernize the country.<sup>494</sup> Some radical scholars even advocated the crossbreeding of Japanese with "superior" Caucasian women, though this idea was largely opposed.<sup>495</sup> This Western racial science, which categorized Japanese among the "inferior" yellow race, however, was clearly both disadvantageous and inconvenient for the Japanese, and was especially problematic for Japan's quest to be treated on equal terms by the West and to make differentiations *among* the yellow race.<sup>496</sup> In this context, according to Doak, "During the 1920s and 1930s, ethnicity (*minzoku*) was explicitly offered as a replacement for what was widely perceived as the failure of the nineteenth-century biological concept of race."<sup>497</sup> Doak continues, "this new approach [*minzoku*]

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<sup>493</sup> Morris-Suzuki, "Debating Racial Science," 357-8.

<sup>494</sup> Sabine Frühstück, *Colonizing Sex: Sexology and Social Control in Modern Japan* (University of California Press, 2003), 334.

<sup>495</sup> Robertson, "Japan's First Cyborg?" 4; Morris-Suzuki, "Debating Racial Science," 338.

<sup>496</sup> Yuki Terazawa, "Racializing Bodies Through Science in Meiji Japan: The Rise of Race-Based Research in Gynecology," in *Building A Modern Japan: Science, Technology, and Medicine in the Meiji Era and Beyond*, Ed. Morris Low (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 87.

<sup>497</sup> Doak, "Building National Identity," 4. According to Doak, the word *minzoku* was used only after the Treaty of Versailles in 1919.

challenged the legitimacy of purely biological or other natural scientific understanding of ‘race’ as a legitimate, sufficient explanation for social identity.”<sup>498</sup>

Distinguished from “race,” which was understood as dealing with purely scientific, biological physical attributes, *minzoku* referred to “subjective” characteristics, such as social consciousness and cultural identity.<sup>499</sup> The concept of *minzoku* was closely associated with a form of cultural anthropology called *minzokugaku* (ethnology) developed by Japanese scholars in the 1920s, which studied the languages, customs, and religions of Japanese and non-Japanese (such as the Ainu, Taiwanese, and Koreans) in Japan and its colonies.<sup>500</sup> The discourse of *minzoku* was also inspired by the German concept of *Volk*, which was introduced to Japan by scholars like Oka Masao who studied Nazi-influenced German ethnology in Vienna.<sup>501</sup> In the 1940s Oka became a key figure

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<sup>498</sup> Doak, “Building National Identity,” 9.

<sup>499</sup> Doak, “Building National Identity,” 14. This distinction was made by wartime scholars themselves. Dower, *War without Mercy*, 267.

<sup>500</sup> Doak, “Building National Identity,” 9.

<sup>501</sup> Doak, “Building National Identity,” 19. According to Christopher M. Hutton, members of a German *Volk* were understood to be “members of a historically united organic collective, a descent group with its own territory, language, culture and world-view.” The concept of *Volk* was essential to academic disciplines like history, linguistics, and folklore. Meanwhile, the idea of *Rasse* (race) stemmed from modern scientific understanding of the natural world and was more concerned with external bodily appearance. Christopher M. Hutton, in *Race and the Third Reich: Linguistics, Racial*

in the government-funded Ethnic Research Institute and called for “the development of a *particularly Japanese* ethnology” (my emphasis).<sup>502</sup> While wartime Japan was heavily informed by Nazi eugenic discourse, as I demonstrated above, scholars such as sociologist Shimei Masamichi and economic historian Kada Tetsuji (one of the prolific contributors on the issue of race during the war) specifically rejected the aspect of white supremacy in Nazi racial theorizing and Social Darwinism in their 1940 publications.<sup>503</sup>

The paradigm of *minzoku* enabled Japan to claim superiority vis-à-vis the West. By shifting attention from external to internal qualities, Japanese propaganda reiterated that Japanese were superior to Westerners not in terms of their *physique*, but in terms of their *spirit*: the Japanese are the most excellent people in the world because they are moralistic and possess the supreme virtues of filial piety and loyalty.<sup>504</sup> Although the British and

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*Anthropology and Genetics in the Dialectic of Volk* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 18-19; 21-22.

<sup>502</sup> Doak, “Building National Identity,” 23. Oka Masato, the key figure in ethnology, for example studied in Vienna from 1929 and 1935 under Nazi influence. See Doak, “Building National Identity,” 19.

<sup>503</sup> Morris-Suzuki, “Debating Racial Science,” 367-368.

<sup>504</sup> Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 205;211. It is important to note this spiritual superiority over physically strong Caucasians had been expressed already in the Meiji period and Taishō period. Okakura Tenshin’s definition of Asia as spiritual entity also entails similar rhetoric. See Unoura Hiroshi, “Samurai Darwinism: Hiroyuki Katō and the Reception of Darwin’s Theory in Modern Japan from the 1880s and the 1900s,” *History and*



Americans might be physically more powerful and technologically more advanced, the Japanese have what they do not: *Yamato-damashii* (the spirit of Yamato): courage, strength, and the capacity of devotion to the emperor.<sup>505</sup> Pitted against the “morally superior” Japanese were the Americans and British, who were considered not to have human qualities and who were referred to as “devils” (*kichiku*).<sup>506</sup> The alleged cruelty, bestiality, and greediness of the British and Americans were emphasized and ascribed to the countries’ individualism, liberalism, and capitalism.<sup>507</sup> Also, Anglo-Saxon leaders such as Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt were often portrayed as cowardly, sickly, or sly in public discourse.<sup>508</sup>

### **War Campaign Record Painting and *Minzoku***

Miyamoto Saburō’s *Meeting of Generals Yamashita and Percival* (1942), which I discussed in the previous chapter as an example of a painting that idealizes a photograph taken of the event, can be understood as contrasting the Japanese officer’s moral superiority against the Westerners. The painting, which won the Imperial Art Award, is

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*Anthropology* 11.2 (1999): 235-255; Okakura Tenshin, *The Ideal of the East* (London: Murray, 1920 [1903])

<sup>505</sup> “Yamato-damashii,” *Japan Encyclopedia*, ed. Louis Frédéric, (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2005), 1046.

<sup>506</sup> Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 248.

<sup>507</sup> Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 243; 248.

<sup>508</sup> See, for example, portrayals of Roosevelt and Churchill in Edogawa Rampo’s *Idainaru Yume* published in the magazine *Hinode* in 1943.

about Japan's victory over colonial Britain in Malay and Singapore in the Battle of Malaya, which started in December 1941 and ended with Britain's unconditional surrender in February 1942. It depicts the meeting between the generals that took place in a Ford factory in Singapore. The four officials sitting closest to the viewer are British, and the second from the left, his face in profile, is General Percival. Eleven Japanese officials sit across the table; the one with his left arm on a sword is General Yamashita. The juxtaposition of the gallant Yamashita and the indecisive Percival was exemplified in an exchange between the two that was repeatedly reported in the mass media.<sup>509</sup>

Yamashita: "Are you willing to surrender? Yes or no?"

Percival: "Would you give me until tomorrow morning?"

Yamashita: "Tomorrow? Absolutely not. Otherwise, Japanese troops will carry out a night attack. Do you understand?"

Percival: "Could you wait till eleven thirty tonight?"

Yamashita: "Eleven thirty? We might well engage in an attack before that time"

Percival: (no answer)

Yamashita: "Do you accept the proposition? Let me ask you. Will you accept unconditional surrender, yes or no?"

Percival: "Yes."<sup>510</sup>

That juxtaposition is also articulated visually. The Japanese officials might not be giant "supermen," but their spiritual refinement is expressed through their determination, calmness, and solemnity. While Yamashita sits upright and gazes directly at Percival,

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<sup>509</sup> *Asahi shinbun*, Feb 17, 1942.

<sup>510</sup> Originally in *Asahi shinbun*, February 15, 1942. Quoted in Tsuruya, 171.

Percival in a crumpled uniform, stooping over and talking to the person next to him, appears cowardly, as though he cannot make a decision by himself. The expression of dread and anxiety perceived in his face is similar to that of Governor Yong in Ihara Usaburō's painting discussed in Chapter Three. Yanagi Ryō praises the composition of this painting, that "the roles of two generals naturally surface."<sup>511</sup>

Examining nationalism in post-colonial regions, India in particular, historian Partha Chatterjee has argued that non-Western nations imagined their political communities differently from Western nations.<sup>512</sup> Struggling against Western colonialism, the non-Western nations divided the world into two spheres, "outer" and "inner": the "outer" sphere stands for the Western, the public, the modern, and the material, while the "inner" sphere signifies the traditional, the private, and the spiritual. Chatterjee claims that it was the "inner" sphere upon which the formation of non-Western (more specifically anti-colonial) nationalism centered, where states could claim their autonomy, authenticity, and sovereignty.<sup>513</sup> Although the situations of wartime Japan and India under British colonialism are clearly different, Chatterjee's argument that it is in the "inner" realm (which could not be measured or evaluated in Western systems) that non-Westerners could claim their autonomy is relevant here. Unlike Chatterjee's focus, it was the

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<sup>511</sup> Yanagi Ryō, "Sensō bijutsu no romansei to shashin sei" [Romanticism and Realism in War Art], *Bijutsu*, February 1943, 8.

<sup>512</sup> Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 10.

<sup>513</sup> Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments*, 121.

imagined political community of the Empire, not the nation, that wartime Japan sought to establish, as I discuss below.

The idea of *minzoku* was not only useful for Japan to undermine Western scientific racism; it was also useful to justify Japan's colonialism in Asia and the establishment of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (*Daitōa Kyōeiken*), a system in which Asia would live under Japan's control free from Western exploitation. Recent postcolonial studies, by Homi Bhabha in particular, have made significant contributions to the understanding of colonialism, problematizing the way in which colonial cultures had been overdetermined as the West's monotonous, total domination of the non-West. Drawing on Lacanian psychoanalytic theories, Bhabha has demonstrated how relationships between colonizer and colonized, which develop through identifications, were in fact much more ambivalent and complex.<sup>514</sup>

As is the case with colonialism everywhere, Japan's colonialism was haunted by vacillation between desire and fear as well as the rhetorical contradictions of assimilation and discrimination. This colonial ambivalence was, Tessa Morris-Suzuki suggests, even stronger in Japan's case. She writes, "Japan colonized the regions with which it had the deepest and most ancient cultural ties. Japanese colonization, therefore, evoked no allusion to 'empires on which the sun never set' but instead provoked an almost obsessive

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<sup>514</sup> Homi Bhabha, "The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism," *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).

concern with similarity and difference.”<sup>515</sup> The malleable and flexible concept of *minzoku* seems to have provided a solution to the contradictory rhetoric of Japan’s colonialism.<sup>516</sup> On the one hand, the rhetoric of *minzoku*—“Asian ethnicity” (*daitōa minzoku, kōa minzoku, ajiaminzoku*)—was deployed to refer to the union among Asians. By using this broader category of ethnicity, it could be claimed that Asians had the same cultural, religious, and linguistic roots. Japan’s cultural ties to China and Korea were emphasized, and the Prosperity Sphere was envisioned as an organic entity.<sup>517</sup> On the other hand, Japan’s Empire was envisioned as a multi-ethnic one, shared by different *ethnicities* including Japanese, Korean, and Chinese (*Yamato minzoku, Chōsen minzoku, and Chūka minzoku*).<sup>518</sup> In this way, the Japanese legitimized their territorial expansion on the grounds of cultural ties while simultaneously distinguishing themselves from other Asian people.

Furthermore, the Japanese did not simply distinguish themselves as different from but equal to other Asians; instead they positioned themselves as “superior” to them. Koyama Eizō, a prominent wartime anthropologist, theorized how the Japanese assimilated other people over long periods of time and became, paradoxically, pure and

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<sup>515</sup> Tessa Morris-Suzuki, “Becoming Japanese: Imperial Expansion and Identity Crises in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Japan’s Competing Modernities: Issues in Culture and Democracy 1900-1930* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 162.

<sup>516</sup> Doak, “Building National Identity,” 5.

<sup>517</sup> Doak, “Building National Identity,” 16-17.

<sup>518</sup> Doak, “Building National Identity,” 5.

homogeneous.<sup>519</sup> Sociologist Shimei Masamichi, who was active during the war, also claimed that the Japanese were superior because of their advanced cultural development, and for that reason, he claimed, Japan was in a position to lead Asia.<sup>520</sup>

Neither was the notion of Japan's superiority among Asians new to this period. Okakura Tenshin, who instigated the Pan-Asianist movement in the 1900s against the backdrop of Western colonization of India and China, was already pointing to the special position Japan was thought to occupy in Asia as early as 1903. Okakura wrote,

India, crippled in her power to give, shrank back upon herself, and China, self-absorbed in recovery from the shock of Mongol tyranny, lost her intellectual hospitality... The unique blessing of unbroken sovereignty, the proud self-reliance of an unconquered race, and the insular isolation which protected ancestral ideas and instincts at the cost of expansion, made Japan the real repository of the trust of Asiatic thought and culture... It is *in Japan alone* that the historic wealth of Asiatic culture can be consecutively studied through its treasured specimens (my emphasis).<sup>521</sup>

Thus, the Prosperity Sphere was envisioned as a necessarily hierarchical community. "An Investigation of Global Policy with the Yamato Race as Nucleus," a government document written in 1942, reveals Japan's attitude toward ethnic (in)equality: "to view

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<sup>519</sup> Morris-Suzuki, "Debating Racial Science," 364.

<sup>520</sup> Morris-Suzuki, "Debating Racial Science," 368.

<sup>521</sup> Okakura, *The Ideal of the East*, 2;6.

those who are in essence unequal as if they were equal is in itself inequitable. To treat those who are unequal unequally is to realize equality.”<sup>522</sup>

As John Dower argues, the concept of *minzoku* was understood in terms of the Confucian concept of the patriarchal family (*ie*). In this concept, each individual within the family is assumed to have a “proper place,” and no family member can oppose the authority of the husband/father.<sup>523</sup> Japan’s relationship with other Asians was thus conceptualized as familial: Japan as the parent, and non-Japanese Asians as brothers or children. Specifically, as Dower reveals, people in China, Manchukuo, Korea, and Formosa were regarded as “elder brothers” whereas people in Southeast Asia were seen as “younger brothers.”<sup>524</sup> By utilizing the concept of family in the context of colonialism, Japan could claim the “organic” quality of the imperial community while assuring its hierarchical structure and the privilege of the Japanese.

Like Miyamoto’s *Meeting of Generals Yamashita and Percival*, Fujita Tsuguharu’s *The Divine Soldier Is Here To Rescue*, completed a year before the end of the war, highlights the moral virtue of the Japanese. In *The Divine Soldier Is Here To Rescue*, Fujita painted a Japanese soldier entering the luxurious house of a Westerner, where a female Indonesian civilian is held captive. The house is lavishly decorated with Western paintings and Western-style furniture (chair, table, lamp, candles), and a dark-skinned woman, wearing a white dress and a turban, is tied up near the center of the painting. Yanagi Ryō praised this work as a poignant critique of Western egoism and extravagant

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<sup>522</sup> Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 264.

<sup>523</sup> Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 279.

<sup>524</sup> Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 283-284.

lifestyle and suggested that Fujita's work reached the next stage of war art.<sup>525</sup> The Japanese soldier in the painting does not look extraordinary. Placed in the large doorway that is built to fit the size of a "white imperialist", he appears short and small. Yet, by illuminating him with a shaft of light the artist underscores the moral virtue of the Japanese "rescuing" helpless Asians tormented by selfish, imperialist Westerners. Here, the Japanese soldier and the Indonesian woman are both contrasted against the materialist culture of the West. At the same time, the Japanese is clearly distinguished from the Indonesian, as the woman has remarkably dark skin and an excessively curvy, sexualized body.<sup>526</sup> While creating a "Japanese" system of human categorization based on ethnicity, however, this painting with the "black" Indonesian makes it clear that when the Japanese viewed "inferior," non-Japanese Asian people, they participated in the color coding and racial representations promoted in the West.

## Conclusion

This chapter examined Japanese official war paintings, considering the complex ways in which Japan translated ideas from Germany. Nazi science informed wartime Japanese policies regarding health and photographic practices, but as I have shown, Japanese artists did not produce paintings that represented ideal bodies defined by eugenics. This was because, I argued, photography and paintings had different

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<sup>525</sup> Yanagi Ryō, "Ōinaru yashin o mote" [Be Ambitious!]" *Bijutsu*, May 1944, 14.

<sup>526</sup> Although, as Dower suggested, people in Southeast Asia were considered Japan's "younger brothers," paintings about Southeast Asian men are rare; artists most often depicted children and women.



discourses and some ideas about scientific racism ultimately did not/could not apply to Japan. Instead, the Japanese War Campaign Record Paintings embodied the idea of *minzoku*, a modified form of scientific racism, which enabled the Japanese to maintain a worldview in which they could claim superiority and their place at the top of the human hierarchy.

Articulating the superior spirit of the Japanese on canvas in oil paintings was inevitably an impossible project. How could one express the superiority of the Japanese in an artistic medium that was so imbued with and embedded within the tradition of the West, the enemy? Japanese soldiers, who were supposedly internally virtuous, simply look small, mediocre even, compared to the heroes depicted in European paintings. This is perhaps why War Campaign Record Paintings were never without criticism. In 1941, assessing *Miyamoto's Attack on Nanyuan, Beijing*, art critic Ogawa Takei pointed out that the painting exposed Miyamoto's interest in classicism too much and the painting overall looked "unnatural."<sup>527</sup> In regard to Fujita's *The Divine Soldier Is Here To Rescue*, art critic Imaizumi Atsuo reasonably argued that the Indonesian woman received more attention than the Japanese soldier and implied that the presence of the soldier was too understated.<sup>528</sup>

Meanwhile, although it emphasized their internal rather than external qualities, the Japanese discourse of ethnicity was after all not so different from Western racism. *Minzoku* was about stereotyping the "other" and legitimizing cultural and political

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<sup>527</sup> Ogawa Takei, "Tenrankai geppyō" [Monthly Exhibition Review], *Mizue*, August 1941.

<sup>528</sup> "Rikugun sakusen kirokuga yūshūhyō" [Review of Excellent War Campaign Record Paintings], *Bijutsu*, May 1944, 24.

hierarchy. It is on this ground that John Dower argues that although Japanese wartime colonialism significantly differs from Western models, the country's wartime supremacism is analogous to Western models of racism.<sup>529</sup>

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<sup>529</sup> Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 265.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Representing the Fascist Body II: Human Weapons and Japanese Traditional Aesthetics

#### Introduction

In October 1944, after series of suicidal battles in Attu, Iwo Jima, and Saipan, the Japanese state employed a new and extraordinary tactic. It formed the so-called Kamikaze Special Attack Forces, suicide forces that deliberately crashed their planes into the enemy.<sup>530</sup> Departing with only enough fuel for a one-way journey, Kamikaze pilots flew their planes into enemy targets at high speed, theoretically increasing the odds of inflicting damage but requiring the certain death of the pilots. The Kamikaze operation was unprecedented and unique in that it necessitated the pilot to physically unite with the airplane, a machine. This bodily practice exemplified what Klaus Theweleit has claimed is fascism, that is, the male subject's identification of his body as a weapon.

There are at least two War Campaign Record Painting that treat the subject of the Kamikaze Special Attack Forces. Miyamoto Saburō's *Banda Unit Fighting Fiercely Off the Philippines*, displayed at the Army Art Exhibition (*Rikugun Bijutsuten*) in 1945, is a dynamic painting that shows Japanese airplanes "body-ramming" (*taiatari*) an enemy ship in the sea of Leyte. The enemy vessel painted near the center of the work is being attacked by the Japanese forces and is aflame. Black and white smoke billowing from the

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<sup>530</sup> While the term Kamikaze usually refers to suicide attacks by airplane, it is less well known that the Japanese also planned or implemented suicide attacks using submarines and other water craft, divers, and human bullets and torpedoes. I discuss some of these below.

vessel attests to the damage it has sustained. The vapor trails of the airplanes that swirl in the grey, cloudy sky and the undulating seawater in the foreground communicate the speed and fierceness of the attack. The imagery is so vivid that it is easy to imagine the loud sounds of crashing and explosions.

Though not about the Kamikaze, another painting about a body-ramming suicide attack is Nakamura Ken'ichi's *Sergeant Nobe's Suicide Attack on Two B-29s Over Kitakyūshū* (1945), which was also displayed at the Army Art Exhibition. Nakamura captures Sergeant Nobe crashing his plane into an enemy plane in Kitakyūshū, Japan. The painting was evidently modeled on a rare photograph <Figure 5-1> that seized the moment of the airplane crash and which was published in *Asahi shinbun* in September, 1944. The painting's focus is on the airplane that is being smashed to pieces and producing a cloud of smoke. Unlike Miyamoto, Nakamura depicts a daytime operation and uses bright colors. The background sky is painted in bright pastel colors of blue mixed with dotted white, yellow, and pink with short, visible, unquestionably impressionist brushstrokes. While Miyamoto's painting conveys the destructive power and vigor of the Japanese forces, Nakamura's work seems to explore the potential of visual pleasure to be found in the violent collision of two machines.

Although the two paintings portray Kamikaze operations, they do not seem to represent the union between human body and machine, that particularly fascist practice. In fact, War Campaign Record Paintings are characterized by the *absence* of such visual representation. Just as the lack of racialized fascist bodies in the War Campaign Record Paintings does not evidence the absence of fascism, however, I argue that the lack of the visual representation of the mechanized human body does not indicate that fascist bodily

discourse did not exist in Japan. Rather, I contend that the bodies of the Kamikaze pilots took on a different visual form, one that is symbolic and traditional. Furthermore, this mode of representation was highly entrenched in the larger politicized cultural discourse wherein the individual bodies of the Japanese populace were abstracted and considered to constitute the metaphysical, collective “national” body of *kokutai*.

This chapter examines Japan’s fascist practices around the bodies of Kamikaze pilots and the way they were (not) represented in the wartime paintings. First, I will discuss the development of the Special Forces. I will then demonstrate how the cultural practices around the suicide forces resonate with Klaus Theweleit’s analysis of the fascist body. Acknowledging that the mechanized human body was not visualized in War Campaign Record Paintings, I will investigate its alternative form of representation in Japanese-style paintings, analyzing works by Ikegami Shūho (1874-1944) and Yokoyama Taikan (1868-1958). In so doing, this chapter, like Chapter Three, considers how fascism was modified as it was manifested and translated in Japan.

### **Kamikaze Special Attack Forces**

After the fall of Saipan, and realizing that its previous tactics had become ineffective, the Japanese state introduced an unprecedented strategy in the Battle of Leyte Gulf in the sea of the Philippines. The Battle of Leyte Gulf, the largest naval battle in World War II, was fought between Japan and the combined forces of the United States and Australia and began in October 1944. It was in this battle that Japan for the first time employed Kamikaze Special Attack Forces (*Kamikaze Tokubetsu Kōgekintai*, or *tokkōtai*), which were conceived by Ōnishi Takijirō (1891-1945) and consisted of pilots who set off

to crash their airplanes into enemy airplanes and vessels. As the suicide operation did not require much technical skill, the Kamikaze attackers were mostly young university students.

The Kamikaze strategy seemed the next logical step after the collective suicide attacks in battles including those in Attu and Saipan. The Kamikaze Forces, however, made suicide fighting much more organized and systematic.<sup>531</sup> Special Attack Forces had existed before this time: the first were the midget submarine squadrons that attacked the American battleships at Pearl Harbor. Yet, the Kamikaze Forces differed from these in one significant way: while the midget submarine attacks did not necessitate the death of the operator, the Kamikaze attacks did. The Kamikaze attack was explicitly a suicide mission, summed up in the phrase “certain-death, certain-kill body-ramming” (*hisshi hicchū no taiatari*).<sup>532</sup> In this way, in theory, the Kamikaze pilot could have a higher certainty of killing the enemy.

The fundamental concept of using the human body as a weapon originated in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. It was Sakurai Tadayoshi (1879-1965), a military general and writer who fought in the war, who came up with the expression “human bullets” (*nikudan*), which is the title of his 1907 book. The book, which is based on the author’s experience in the war, contains highly graphic descriptions of battles, evoking the new, totally destructive nature of modern war. In the Russo-Japanese War, the

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<sup>531</sup> Morris, *The Nobility of Failure*, 283.

<sup>532</sup> Earhart, *Certain Victory*, 414; 430. “Hisshi hicchū no taiatari” [Certain-Death, Certain-Kill Body Ramming], *Asahi shinbun*, October 29, 1944.

Japanese army formed *kesshitai* (certain-death bands) consisting of “human bullets” who would charge towards the Russians, knowing they would be killed.<sup>533</sup> Sakurai writes,

Somehow, we must damage the enemy’s machine-guns, otherwise all our efforts would end only in adding to our already long list of dead and wounded. This we well understood, but if we could not utilize our firearms, our only and last resource was to *shoot off human beings*, to attack with *the bullets of human flesh*. With such unique weapons, human bullets, the consolidated essence of Yamato spirit—how could we fail to rout the enemy! (emphasis mine).<sup>534</sup>

Using the human body as weapon, in other words, was not a new idea when the Kamikaze Forces were conceived.

The word Kamikaze literally means “divine wind,” and derives from the typhoons that are believed to have twice thwarted sea-based invasion attempts by the Mongols in the thirteenth century. It was hoped that the Kamikaze Special Attack Forces would change the tide of the war. When the forces were launched, the mass media celebrated the Kamikaze pilots as the ultimate manifestation of the Yamato spirit.<sup>535</sup> The *Asahi*

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<sup>533</sup> Sakurai’s book was translated into many languages, including German, and Kaiser Wilhelm II evidently assigned the book to his soldiers. It would be interesting to see if Sakurai’s book had any impact on German soldiers’ perception of their body as “iron” as discussed by Theweleit.

<sup>534</sup> Sakurai Tadayoshi, *Human Bullets (Niku-dan): A Soldier’s Story of Port Arthur*, trans. Masujirō Honda and Alice M. Bacon, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (Tokyo: Teibi Publishing, 1907), 133.

<sup>535</sup> It is important to note that the Kamikaze pilots included a number of Koreans.

*shinbun* of October 29, 1944, which reported the first attack by the Kamikaze Forces, hailed the operations for their effectiveness. During the battle in Leyte, 355 Allied ships were damaged, fifty-seven of which were sunk.<sup>536</sup> At the same time, Japan's losses were also considerable: three thousand airplanes and four thousand pilots and crew members were lost.<sup>537</sup>

The Kamikaze Special Attack Forces spurred the introduction of other "human weapons" (*ningen heiki*). Navy officer Ōta Shōichi (1912-1994) developed the idea of the manned missiles called Ōka (cherry blossom) in 1944, which were first put into use in March 1945. The Ōka was carried to the site of the attack, and hurled into an enemy ship after being discharged by the mother plane. It looked like a missile, except that it had a cockpit and wings. It was not, however, as effective as Kamikaze planes: in Ivan Morris's words, "not a single Ōka craft had even approached its target, let alone caused any damage."<sup>538</sup> Because of its absurdity and wastefulness, Americans called it *baka* (meaning idiot in Japanese). Human torpedoes, called Kaiten (often translated as "return to the sky" or "the turn toward heaven"), were a similar manned weapon invented by Captain Kuroki Hiroshi (1921-1944): they were carried by submarines and then launched into enemy vessels.<sup>539</sup> Unlike the Ōka, however, the human pilot of the Kaiten was located inside the torpedo and thus invisible from the outside. Over a thousand Japanese

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<sup>536</sup> Earhart, *Certain Victory*, 432.

<sup>537</sup> Earhart, *Certain Victory*, 432.

<sup>538</sup> Morris, *The Nobility of Failure*, 280.

<sup>539</sup> Albert Axell and Hideaki Kase, "Exotic Weapons," *Kamikaze: Japan's Suicide Gods* (London: Pearson Education, 2002).



men were trained to maneuver Kaiten, and approximately 150 of them died in missions.<sup>540</sup> Shinyō (ocean shaker) was yet another human weapon. It was a body-ramming boat, having a function similar to the Kamikaze planes. Unlike Kamikaze planes, however, the tip of the Shinyō contained 250 kilograms of explosives. Over a thousand soldiers died manning these suicide boats.<sup>541</sup>

### **The Mechanized Human Body**

The concept of the human body as an industrial machine permeated wartime cultural production and anticipated the invention of the Kamikaze Forces. Likening the male body to industrial products (steel, iron) was ubiquitous. For example, the June 26, 1944 edition of the same newspaper published a photograph of a group of young men at a swimming pool <Figure 5-2>. The image of a row of adolescent males, almost fully naked, lying face-down in the foreground immediately seizes the eye. The image focuses on their sun-tanned backs and legs, which are glittering, reflecting the sunlight. The article refers to them as “black steel bodies” (*kurogane no nikutai*), making a connection between their smooth skin and the glow of metal.<sup>542</sup> In the July 29, 1942 edition of the magazine *Shashin shūhō*, a man wearing a *fundoshi* or traditional loincloth, stands straight on a mound, with his feet shoulder-length apart <Figure 5-3>. He shows his back to the viewer and opens his chest by pulling his bent arms back. The image

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<sup>540</sup> Tokkō saigo no shōgen seisaku iinkai, ed. *Tokkō saigo no shōgen* [The Special Attack: The Last Testimony] (Tokyo: Asupekuto, 2006), 45; Morris, *The Nobility of Failure*, 300.

<sup>541</sup> *Tokkō saigo no shōgen*, 81; Morris, *The Nobility of Failure*, 300.

<sup>542</sup> “Umi e”[To the Sea], *Asahi shinbun*, June 26, 1944.

highlights the healthy, sturdy, muscular structure of his body, which the text placed to his left explicitly links to war weaponry. It reads: “Above all else, the body is a resource. With a chest like a tank, legs that can avoid a landmine, and a spirit like a steel-cased bullet, let us, from this time forward, on a wide, vast stage, forge ahead.”<sup>543</sup>

There are also visual images that allude to the mechanized human body. The cover of the photographic magazine *Shashin shūhō* of October 4, 1944 <**Figure 5-4**> compares human body with machine in a visual form. In the photograph, an adolescent boy stands in the hatch of a tank, looking straight ahead to the viewer’s right. Since only his shoulders and head are exposed, the body of the tank becomes an extension of the body of the boy. The low angle shot underscores the magnificence of the unity between the human body and the weapon. This mechanized body is clearly marked as “Japanese” by the presence of Mt. Fuji on the low horizon in the background. The text at the lower right of the cover reinforces the steeliness of the body and its power. It reads, “Wings that soar to heaven. Iron bulls [*tetsugyū*] that kick up a hot wind. Compare our deeds to Fuji’s lofty peak, and we grin. We rise to the national crisis. Army junior soldiers. Off we go. We boys, too.”<sup>544</sup>

Wartime science magazines often introduced ideas of mechanical suits for future battles, which would require a close connection between the organic body and the mechanical. The November 1941 edition of *Kikaika (Mechanization)*, national defense science magazine for young students, has an article on how future science could allow

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<sup>543</sup> *Shashin shūhō*, July 29, 1942. Translated and quoted in Earhart, *Certain Victory*, 251.

<sup>544</sup> *Shashin shūhō*, October 4, 1944. Translated and quoted in Earhart, *Certain Victory*, 210.

Japanese pilots to fly in the stratosphere, which would give them considerable advantages in attacking the enemies.<sup>545</sup> The April 1944 edition of *Gakusei no kagaku*, a science magazine for young students, has an article on the same topic. It explains that in the stratosphere the pilot would need to secure oxygen as well as maintain his own body temperature.<sup>546</sup> While *Kikaika* only published an illustration, *Gakusei no kagaku* features a photograph that depicts a man wearing a protective one-piece suit, goggles, helmet and gloves <**Figure 5-5**>. The mechanical suit covers the entire body of the pilot, supplies him with oxygen through a mask and tube, and warms his body by electricity. It is made of “electric shirt” (*denki shatsu*) and further reinforced by a thick, waterproofed twill textile. Interestingly, the *Gakusei no kagaku* article suggests that Germans have already been experimenting with this suit and speculates that they might have already succeeded in flying into the stratosphere.

The same edition of *Gakusei no kagaku* has an article on an idea for a future diving suit. It states that Japan needs a new, more advanced diving suit so that a diver could stay underwater for a long period of time primarily to construct and fix battleships.<sup>547</sup> As of the pilot who seeks to fly at a high altitude, the question for the diver is how to receive

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<sup>545</sup> “Shōrai no kūchūsen to seisōken hikō” [Future Air Battle and Flying in the Stratosphere], *Kikaika*, November 1941, 14-15.

<sup>546</sup> “Kūchūsen wa kōkū e nobiru: seisōken hikō ni chōsensuru kagaku” [The Air Battle Will Expand Higher: Science That Will Make Flying in the Stratosphere Possible], *Gakusei no kagaku*, April 1944, 24- 28.

<sup>547</sup> “Shinkai no suiatsu ni taishite kantōsuru shinkai no seinshi” [The Warrior of the Deep Sea Who Bravely Battles with Water Pressure], *Gakusei no kagaku*, April 1944, 32-35.

sufficient oxygen and how to work efficiently under high water pressure. An illustration published in the article <Figure 5-6> shows well-equipped “diving armor” (*sensui kabuto*) made of heavy, impenetrable bronze, which has an oxygen tube, electric light, and a telephone device to communicate with an operator on the ground. A pair of nippers made of metal is connected to each of the diver’s hands inside the suit. The shoes are also made of metal, the article explains, and weigh as much as eighteen pounds, and in addition, two forty-pound weights will be attached to the diver for him to balance in the sea. The article reproduces two photographs of Italian divers, though it is unclear what their purposes are here. As with the pilot’s mechanical suit, this diving suit, if successfully put into use, was supposed to buttress, reinforce, and extend human power and contribute to victory in war.

Literary expressions and visual images that associated the male body with iron, steel, and the mechanical prepared the way for the Kamikaze forces, who perceived their bodies as industrial weapons. A photograph of the first Kamikaze attacker, Saki Yukio, was published in *Shashin shūhō* on November 15, 1944, with the following caption: “We are not members of a bomber squadron. We ourselves are bombs. Got it? Then follow me!”<sup>548</sup> Sakurai Tadayoshi, whom I discussed above, was still alive during the Fifteen-Year War and introduced a comment made by one of the Kamikaze attackers in May 1945: “We are human bullets (*nikudan*), as we share our bodies with the airplanes. The airplanes truly understand our feelings. They are not mere machines. They will answer

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<sup>548</sup> *Shashin shūhō*, November 15, 1944. Translated and quoted in Earhart, *Certain Victory*, 431.

if we talk to them.”<sup>549</sup> Sakurai’s commentary follows: “The airplanes are not cold-surfaced machines any longer. We pat their bodies and propellers, as if we tell them ‘you did well today.’ We give them a loving look. Kid Airplane (*hikōki kun*) then looks back to us as if saying, ‘the battle has barely begun!’”<sup>550</sup> Thus the soldiers identified themselves with their weapons, and the weapons were often personified.

Klaus Theweleit’s controversial yet influential work *Male Fantasies* is instructive here to understand the Kamikaze attackers’ perception of their bodies. In this monumental two-volume book written in German in 1977 and translated into English in 1987, Theweleit analyzes memoirs and novels written by the German *Freikorps* immediately after the Great War, developing his own highly complex psychoanalytic theory to understand fascism. His study shows how fascist writers gendered communists and Jews as female and associated them with floods, dirt, and bloody masses that needed to be annihilated. Theweleit argues that fascism cannot be explained by the Freudian psychoanalytic theory of the Oedipus complex. Turning instead to psychoanalytic theorists including Michael Balint, Melanie Klein, and Margaret Mahler, Theweleit contends that what characterizes the fascist subject is a disturbed pre-Oedipal process, or the “separation-individuation” in which the child recognizes his mother as an object distinct from himself.<sup>551</sup> When the child is not separated from the mother in a proper way, a bodily boundary needs to be created in order for an ego to form: the fascist’s

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<sup>549</sup> Sakurai Tadayoshi, “Nikudan” [Human Bullets], *Asahi shinbun*, May 8, 1945.

<sup>550</sup> Sakurai, “Nikudan,” *Asahi shinbun*, May 8, 1945.

<sup>551</sup> Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, Vol. 1 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1987), 207.

bodily boundary is consequently formed from outside, and this subject grows a strong, steely, and controlling body armor.<sup>552</sup> At the same time, because of the disturbed process of separation, the subject negatively perceives its interior as something feminine that should be controlled by its exterior armor. Thus, whereas the male subject wants to have sex with his mother in the Oedipal fantasy, the fascist subject wants to kill her: the fascist associates the feminine only with negativity. For Theweleit, both the disturbance in the “separation-individuation” and the inadequate formation of the ego were grounded in history: the militarist discipline of the Wilhelm Era (1888-1918). Theweleit writes, toward the end of the nineteenth century, “lack of affection during infancy” became the norm, and the child’s body was molded from the outside by military drills and torture at school.<sup>553</sup> In times of peace, the bodily armor functions to control its “feminine” interior; during war, the armor is targeted toward the “feminine” other: Jews and communists. Annihilating the “feminine” other would allow for the discharge of the fascist subject’s internal pressure, and thus, for fascists, “war is the condition of its being.”<sup>554</sup>

Theweleit’s study is not unproblematic. Using psychoanalysis to reduce human experience to a single theory is questionable. Furthermore, his theory of fascism focuses on the interwar period and does not provide insight on how it is applicable to the time after Hitler came into power. Despite those problems, Theweleit should be credited for identifying an important characteristic of fascism, that is, that a fascist subject perceives

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<sup>552</sup> Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, Vol. 2, 164.

<sup>553</sup> Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, Vol. 1, 421; Vol. 2, 164.

<sup>554</sup> Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, Vol. 2, 155.

his own body as having a strong, steel armor.<sup>555</sup> In fact, psychoanalysis and modern warfare maintain a close historical connection, and it is important to remember that it was in response to the psychological devastation of shell shock during the Great War that Freud advanced the theory of death drive. Furthermore, Theweleit's discussion of the psychological as well as physical "hardening" of a subject can be supported by recent theories of trauma, which posit that a traumatised subject often grows a sense of hyper-strength and exercises violence and aggression toward others, being unable to work through traumatic memories in an appropriate way.<sup>556</sup> Here, the origin of the collective trauma can be located in the Great War, and in the context of Japan, the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese War, the first modern wars Japan experienced.

Scholars such as Hal Foster and Elena Gomel have found the main concept of Theweleit's theory useful, and Jeffrey Schnapp, who has examined Italian Fascist theater, came to a similar conclusion about fascism.<sup>557</sup> Schnapp argues that although both

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<sup>555</sup> For the cyborg culture in prewar and wartime Germany, see Matthew Biro, "The New Man as Cyborg: Figures of Technology in Weimar Visual Culture," *New German Critique* 62 (Spring-Summer, 1994): 71-110; Andreas Huyssen, "Fortifying the Heart: Totally Ernest Jünger's Armored Texts," *New German Critique* 59 (Spring-Summer, 1993): 3-23.

<sup>556</sup> Kirby Farrell, *Post-Traumatic Culture: Injury and Interpretation in the Nineties*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 6.

<sup>557</sup> Hal Foster, "Armor Fou"; Gomel, "Hard and Wet: Luce Irigaray and the Fascist Body"; Schnapp, "18BL: Fascist Mass Spectacle." For Italian futurism and fascist "metallization," see Christine Poggi, *Inventing Futurism: The Art and Politics of*

socialist and fascist ideals involve machines, socialists use machines while fascists become or identify with them. Studying a play called *18 BL*, which features a tank as a protagonist, Schnapp writes,

Like their human counterparts, machines are treated as irreducible entities in *18BL*. They are mechanical “individuals” who can be organized into larger collective groupings or totalities (or placed in the service of a totality as prosthetic devices), but who cannot be broken down into a series of interchangeable functions or parts. This principle of irreducibility permits fascist machinery to take on human attributes such as age, gender, will-power, and courage. It also ensures that any mingling of man and machine will assume the form of “identification” and not the exchange of parts or function.<sup>558</sup>

Hubert Lanzinger’s *The Standard Bearer* (ca. 1935), which was produced under Nazi Germany and exhibited in the Great German Art Exhibition, Munich in 1938, perhaps most convincingly points to Theweleit’s observation. The painting shows Hitler in profile, wearing metallic silver armor, holding a swastika flag in his right hand. The statements made by the Kamikaze attacker Seki Yukio and the other Kamikaze pilot whom Sakurai quoted—that they themselves were bombs, that they shared feeling with machines, and that machines could talk to them—resonate well with

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*Artificial Optimism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), especially the fifth chapter “Dreams of Metallized Flesh: Futurism and the Masculine Body.”

<sup>558</sup> Schnapp, “18 BL,” 115.



Theweleit's theory of fascists who consider their bodies as armor and Schnapp's observation that the fascist identifies with machines.

The concept of unity between human and machine existed before the war, but there was always a sense of anxiety expressed against it. Japanese interest in machines began in the Meiji period when the government started modernizing/Westernizing the country, and it often appeared in science fiction.<sup>559</sup> As I discussed in Chapter One, Japanese artists and intellectuals in the 1920s advocated the beauty and benefit of machines most prominently in the context of proletariat art. While actual incorporation of artificial parts into the human body to create a cyborg was not realized until after the Second World War (thus cyborgs before this period could only be imaginary), the idea began to appear in public discourses around the 1920s all over the world.<sup>560</sup> In 1926, the year in which the robotic incarnation of female character Maria in the German film *Metropolis* fascinated the international audiences (technically speaking, she is a robot whose body and intelligence is fully artificial, not a cyborg), Japanese science fiction writer Kosakai Fuboku (1890-1929) wrote a story titled *Artificial Heart (Jinkō shinzō)*,<sup>561</sup> which is about

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<sup>559</sup> Sharalyn Orbaugh, "The Genealogy of the Cyborg in Japanese Popular Culture," in *World Weavers: Globalization, Science Fiction, and the Cybernetic Revolution*, ed. Wong Kin Yuen, Gary Westfahl, and Amy Kit-sze Chan (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005), 58.

<sup>560</sup> Bruce Grenville, "The Uncanny: Experiments in Cyborg Culture," in *The Uncanny: Experiments in Cyborg Culture* (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 2001), 24-5. The term "cyborg" was coined only in 1960.

<sup>561</sup> The story was published in the magazine *Taishū bungei*.

a scientist who develops an artificial heart and uses it on his wife. In the same year, a diving suit made of metal and operated by electricity—just like the one in the *Gakusei no kagaku* magazine described earlier—was featured as a new scientific invention in the Japanese magazine targeted at young girls called *Shōjo kurabu*.<sup>562</sup>

As Maria in *Metropolis* embodies ambivalence between dystopian and optimistic views toward technology,<sup>563</sup> Kosakai's story ends with a realization that even if the artificial heart can make humans immortal, it is death that makes life precious and valuable: the artificial heart he created did not have human emotions and feelings. Likewise, the article in the magazine *Shōjo kurabu* describes the diving suit as “ghost-like” (*obake mitai*) and “bizarre” (*hen*), seeing it as an object of curiosity, rather than taking it seriously. We can find the same feeling of anxiety expressed toward the mechanized human body as late as 1935 in Yumeno Kyūsaku's story *Dogura magura*, which analogizes the blurred boundary between machine and human to a Japanese body being invaded by “foreign” elements, namely Chinese and “Western.”<sup>564</sup>

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<sup>562</sup> Kosakai's story was published in *Taishū mingei* in January, 1926. The article about the diving suit can be found in *Shōjo kurabu*, May 1926, 141.

<sup>563</sup> Biro, “The New Man as Cyborg: Figures of Technology in Weimar Visual Culture”: 83.

<sup>564</sup> Miri Nakamura, “Horror and Machines in Prewar Japan: The Mechanical Uncanny in Yumeno Kyūsaku's *Dogura magura*,” in *Robot Ghosts and Wired Dreams: Japanese Science Fiction from Origins to Anime*, ed. Christopher Bolton, Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr. and Takayuki Tatsumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

American psychologist Bruno Bettelheim's 1959 statement most succinctly articulates the reason for the mixed feelings about cyborgs: "A human body that functions as if it were a machine and a machine that duplicates human functions are equally fascinating and frightening. Perhaps they are so uncanny because they remind us that the human body can operate without a human spirit, that a body can exist without a soul."<sup>565</sup> During the war, however, this anxiety seems to have disappeared, and the mechanized human body was touted as beneficial for national defense as it would significantly enhance human (military) power. Investigating a new human type that appears in right-wing German writer Ernst Jünger's novels such as *The Storm of Steel* (1920) and *The Worker* (1932), Matthew Biro states that Jünger's fascist cyborg is "characterized by a certain hard-edged uniformity and replaceable nature, which made it easy for the cyborg to repress its individual functions and become part of a larger, hierarchically-organized whole."<sup>566</sup> As with Jünger's cyborg, even if they were (and are still) celebrated as imbued with Japanese and samurai "spirit," the Kamikaze pilots were replaceable weapons, objects that could be (ab)used, not human subjects that thought critically for themselves, and they remind us of Bettelheim's words about the soulless body.

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<sup>565</sup> Bruno Bettelheim, "Joy; A Mechanical Boy," *Scientific American* (March 1959), 117. Quoted in Grenville, "The Uncanny," 28.

<sup>566</sup> Matthew Biro, "The New Man as Cyborg: Figures of Technology in Weimar Visual Culture," *New German Critique* 62 (Spring-Summer, 1994): 100.

## Eagles, Cherry Blossoms, the Sun, and Mt. Fuji

We do not see the bodily unification between human and machine described by Theweleit and practiced in the Kamikaze operation in War Campaign Record Paintings. As we have seen, the paintings by Miyamoto and Nakamura, which depict the clash of airplanes in the distance, pay little attention to the construction of the human body which is unique to fascism. Instead, I suggest, the bodies of Kamikaze attackers were represented symbolically, and Japanese-style paintings, more than Western-style oil paintings, played an important role in this regard.

Historical photographs that record the Kamikaze pilots and the departure of their planes illuminate the role of symbols in the Kamikaze discourse. The pilot Umezawa Kazuyo had a portrait taken <Figure 5-7> to commemorate his departure before his noble action. It shows the upper half of his body and conveys the pride and dignity of a young pilot who is determined to sacrifice his own life for the nation. In the photograph, Umezawa wears cherry blossoms pinned to his jacket which bears Japan's national flag—the image of the rising sun. Another photograph taken at the base <Figure 5-8> shows a crowd of schoolgirls who came to send off the Kamikaze attackers. In their hands are branches of cherry blossoms. The image of the sun appears again in this photograph, painted on the body of the airplane. These two images reveal the use of symbolism in the Kamikaze discourse. Eagles, cherry blossoms, the sun, and Mt. Fuji, in particular, I argue, were crucial in Japan's wartime practice of symbolic representation.

One of the symbols most connected with the Kamikaze pilot was the eagle. *Asahi shinbun* of October 29, 1944, reported the result of the first Kamikaze operation, that by Seki Yukio. The headline reads, “The Loyalty of the God Eagle [*miwashi*], Shining for

Eternity.”<sup>567</sup> Seki was referred to not only as “war god” (*gunshin*) but also as “god eagle,” which likened the airplane and its pilot to the bird of prey. Another expression that was used often was literally “fierce eagle” (*arawashi*), which became a euphemism for “ace pilot.” Another article in the same newspaper three days later reads, “Kamikaze Special Attack Forces, Rough Eagle Fierce Attack: Destroy Half of The Enemy Vessel.”<sup>568</sup> Since the Kamikaze pilots were often young, they were also regularly described as “young eagles” (*wakawashi*). The December 2, 1933 edition of the *Asahi shinbun* reads, “Young Eagle Applies for the Kamikaze Forces.”<sup>569</sup> These expressions began to appear around 1937, and Katō Tateo (1903-1942), a Japanese ace pilot who achieved some eighteen aerial victories and was finally killed in 1942, was most famously described as the “god eagle” before the formation of the Kamikaze Forces. Katō’s legend even became the subject of a 1944 propaganda movie called *Colonel Kato Tateo Flying Squadron*, which was the top grossing film in that year. In addition, a military song was written about Katō’s success. The lyrics of *The Kato Flying Squadron* clearly compare the pilots to eagles:

With the loud sound of the engines

The Hayabusa go to the end of the clouds

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<sup>567</sup> “Miwashi no chūretsu mansei ni santari” [The Loyalty of the God Eagle, Shining for Eternity], *Asahi shinbun*, October 29, 1944.

<sup>568</sup> “Kesshi: Reite wan kōgeki ni mukau arawashi” [Decisive Battle: Fierce Eagle Heading to the Leyte Gulf], *Asahi shinbun*, November 1, 1944.

<sup>569</sup> “Wakawashi wa tokkōtai shigan” [Young Eagle Applies for the Special Forces], *Asahi shinbun*, December 23, 1944.

The Rising Sun shining on our wings and the Red Eagles [an ace pilot] drawn on our chests are the symbols of our fighters  
Coldness, winds and intense heats are nothing for us  
We can bear with trials and tribulations  
Expert aircraftmen maintain the airplanes, and they pray that their airplanes can do well with parental feelings for their lovely airplanes  
With experiencing many air combats in the roaring sounds of the bullets  
With the faith in our ultimate victory and the cooperative spirit to die together if we die  
We sincerely grab our sticks  
After years of fighting, we received seven testimonials but there were tears in the shadows of our feats  
Ah, samurais were gone, with the spirit to die with a smile  
We are proud of our tough eagles [ace pilots] to the world  
Their wings go through thousands of miles with observing shining traditions  
We will create the new Great Asia  
We are the fighter wings of the Imperial Army

Another military song, *The Song of the Fierce Eagle* (1940) also likens the Japanese fighting airplane to an eagle, comparing that of the enemies to a dragonfly:

Can you see the silvery wings? Look at the brave warriors

The airplanes that Japanese men produced with great spirit

We will protect the sky

Bring it on, red dragonfly

Go! Go! Fierce eagle [ace pilot]!

Look at this power that is perfect for the name fierce eagle [ace pilot]

Fog and storms are nothing to us

Carrying heavy weapons, we can easily fly to Nanjing

Go! Go! Fierce eagle [ace pilot]!

Crossing over the sea of shining waves

My heart is not clouded

Think of the justice of Japan

Fierce eagle [ace pilot] fly again tonight

We ask for your best

Go! Go! Fierce eagle [ace pilot] !

The pilot of this plane with the picture of the sun on it must be one with the

Japanese spirit

We have destroyed all of the enemy planes

But if there are more, bring them on

The propeller is working, I can't wait to fight

Go! Go! Fierce eagle [ace pilot]!

As the newspaper articles and the popular military songs reveal, the analogy between the airplanes and eagles was ubiquitous.

The analogy did not remain solely textual, however. Ikegami Shūho, a Japanese-style painter who produced a series of twelve works to dedicate to various shrines, painted an eagle in the work titled *The Image of an Angry Fierce Eagle* in 1942.<sup>570</sup> Ikegami painted the series to commemorate the first anniversary of the Pacific War and pray for “the annihilation of England and the United States.”<sup>571</sup> Dedicated to religious sites, the works are also assumed to soothe the souls of the war dead. Although the location of the original work is now unknown, a report on the solo exhibition of the artist in the *Asahi shinbun* in February 1943 shows a photograph of a painting that seems to be *The Image of an Angry Fierce Eagle* <**Figure 5-9**>.<sup>572</sup> Seeing the details in the newspaper photograph is difficult, but the painting, which is framed and hung vertically, appears to portray a large eagle, occupying half of the visual field, spreading its wings wide and flying over what look like mountains. Proceeds from sales at the exhibition were, the article reports, donated to the military for the purpose of national defense.

In addition to eagles, another symbol that appeared almost ubiquitously in Kamikaze discourse was the cherry blossom. The Kamikaze pilots were regularly

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<sup>570</sup> “Shingan ni irodoru eibei gekimetsu” [Painting and Praying for the Annihilation of the United States and Britain], *Asahi shinbun*, January 7, 1942.

<sup>571</sup> “Shingan ni irodoru eibei gekimetsu,” *Asahi shinbun*, January 7, 1942.

<sup>572</sup> “Shinkon kometa saikan” [Serving the Nation with Art and True Heart], *Asahi shinbun*, February 1, 1943.



described as “young cherry blossoms” (*waka-zakura*) in newspaper reports. Because of the flower’s short life, the cherry blossom is linked both to the ephemeral nature of life and to immortality. By extension, the flowers were associated with the deaths, not the lives, of the soldiers, and dead soldiers were analogized to fallen cherry petals, their deaths described as *sange* (“scattered like flowers”), which originally referred to the Buddhist practice of offering flowers in praise of Buddha.<sup>573</sup> Thus, it is not surprising that the Kamikaze pilots, who were sure to die, were represented by cherry blossoms.

The Kamikaze discourse in particular was firmly embedded within theories developed by Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801), a nativist scholar of the Edo period who is credited for exploring the supposedly “uniquely Japanese” sensitivity in literature, trying to distinguish it from that of China and claiming Japan’s cultural superiority.<sup>574</sup> Norinaga is known particularly for relating the Japanese cultural identity to cherry blossoms. The names of the four squadrons in the first Kamikaze operation—Shikishima squadron, Yamato squadron, Asahi squadron, and Yamazakura squadron—derived from Motoori’s famous poem *The Spirit of Japan* (*yamato-gokoro*). The poem reads: “If we are to ask about the spirit of the Japanese, it is mountain cherry blossoms that bloom fragrantly in the morning sun” (*shikishima no yamatogokoro o hito towaba asahi ni niofu yamazakurabana*).<sup>575</sup> A sake cup <Figure 5-10> called *heitai sakazuki*, that has

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<sup>573</sup> Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms*, 111-112.

<sup>574</sup> Peter Nosco, *Remembering Paradise: Nativism and Nostalgia in Eighteenth-Century Japan* (Boston: Harvard University Asia Center, 1990), 9; 13.

<sup>575</sup> Translated and quoted in Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms*, 106.

Motoori's poem inscribed on it along with an image of a cherry blossom, was produced as a memorial gift, which was most likely carried by a soldier or distributed to his family, relatives, or friends on the occasion of a celebratory event.<sup>576</sup>

The death symbolism of cherry blossoms did not suddenly emerge when the Kamikaze Forces were formed: the connection between the cherry blossoms and soldiers was established much earlier. Yasukuni Shrine, which was created to house the spirits of the war dead in 1879 and which is known even now for its large number of cherry trees, developed the association of the military spirit and the flower.<sup>577</sup> In 1941, Yamada Yoshio (1873-1958), a linguist, discussed in his article titled "the Japanese spirit and Motoori Norinaga" the beauty of cherry blossoms, which he argues transcends any philosophy and can only be intuitively felt by heart.<sup>578</sup> As with the case of the eagle, the cultural significance of the cherry blossom can be gleaned from examining popular military songs. "Cherry Blossoms in the Same Class" (*Dōkino sakura*), written by Saijō Yaso in 1938, epitomizes the link between cherry blossoms, soldiers, and death:

You and I are two cherry blossoms. We bloom in the ground of the same  
army school. Since we are flowers, we are doomed to fall. Let us fall  
magnificently for the country.

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<sup>576</sup> I express my gratitude to Joshua Mostow and Sharalyn Orbaugh for showing this precious *sake* cup to me. This particular *sake* cup is for the infantry.

<sup>577</sup> Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms*, 108.

<sup>578</sup> Yamada Yoshio, "Nihon seishin to Motoori Norinaga" [Japanese Spirit and Motoori Norinaga], *Asahi shinbun*, January 7, 1941.

You and I are two cherry blossoms. We bloom on the branch of the same  
army school. Though not brothers, we became good friends and cannot forget  
each other.

You and I are two cherry blossoms. We bloom on the ground of the same  
flying squadron. We look at the sunset in the southern sky, from which the  
first plane hasn't come back.

You and I are two cherry blossoms. We bloom on the ground of the same  
flying squadron. Why did you die without waiting for the day we promised to  
meet?

You and I are two cherry blossoms. Even if we fall separately, the capital of  
flowers is Yasukuni Shrine. We will meet each other in the treetops in  
spring.<sup>579</sup>

The song was widely known by citizens throughout the war, but it was especially popular  
among the Kamikaze pilots, who would sing this song before their departure.

Ikegami Shūho, who produced the painting of an eagle, completed in 1943 a work  
titled *The Image of Mountain Cherry Blossoms* <Figure 5-11>. This painting, now stored  
at the Museum of Modern Art in Shiga Prefecture, portrays two trunks of blooming  
mountain cherry, the kind that was believed to be native to Japan.<sup>580</sup> The clusters of  
blossoms painted in pinkish white dominate the lower two-thirds of the painting. Ink wash

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<sup>579</sup> Translated and quoted in Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and  
Nationalisms*, 140.

<sup>580</sup> *Shōwa no bijutsu* [Art of the Showa Period] (Niigata, Japan: Niigata Prefectural  
Museum of Modern Art, 2005), 90.

technique is used to darken the area around the roots of the trees to indicate shadow. With no contextual information, the blossoms, the sole subject of the painting, are represented as an abstract idea that stands for beauty. Although the painting could be seen simply as a bird-and-flower painting, a traditional genre of painting that originated in China, Ikegami's *The Image of Mountain Cherry Blossoms* is in fact a highly political work that promoted the war by eulogizing dying soldiers as beautiful flowers: next to his signature in the right bottom corner of the painting the artist wrote "Pray for victory" (*senshō kigan*).

The rendering of the physical body of individual Kamikaze pilots into symbols of eagles and cherry blossoms was in fact entrenched in the broader cultural discourse, which I discussed in Chapter Three and which sought to erase the material bodies of the Japanese and replace them with the metaphysical, collective body of the *kokutai*.<sup>581</sup> As the Kamikaze pilots became eagles and cherry blossoms, the Japanese populace as *kokutai* was represented with traditional, natural symbols, the sun and Mt. Fuji in particular.

The association of Japan and the sun originates in legend and ancient history. Prince Shōtoku (574-622) called Japan "the place where the sun rises," in contrast to China, where "the sun sets."<sup>582</sup> The sun is also highly important in Shinto mythology, as recorded in the eighth-century *Record of Ancient Matters (Kojiki)* and *The Chronicle of Japan (Nihon shoki)*, which document stories of the origin of Japan and which claim that

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<sup>581</sup> My discussion of disembodiment of the human body is highly indebted to Winther-Tamaki, "Embodiment/Disembodiment": 145-80.

<sup>582</sup> Kevin Doak, *A History of Nationalism in Modern Japan: Placing the People* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 37.

the imperial family are direct descendants of the sun goddess Amaterasu, daughter of Izanagi and Izanami, the creator-god and -goddess who brought Japan into existence. In modern Japan, the image of the red sun on a pure white background became the national flag. The importance of this symbolism was reiterated during the war, and Japanese citizens were expected to be deeply moved by the awe of the image of the rising sun.<sup>583</sup>

Another symbol for the *kokutai* that persisted during the war was that of Mt. Fuji. Akiyama Kenzō (1903-1978), a scholar of Japanese history, stated in 1940 that the heart (*kokoro*) that revered the sun was the heart that grew out of the *kokutai*. It was the same heart, he wrote, that worshiped Mt. Fuji and made Japanese soldiers bravely plunge into the enemy.<sup>584</sup> He claimed that even though *ukiyo-e* artist Katsushika Hokusai famously produced the image of Mt. Fuji, his Fuji existed only as a form, and that Hokusai, who had lived in the Edo period, did not understand the concept of *kokutai*. Akiyama declared that Mt. Fuji should be worshipped as the absolute deity and its loftiness should be felt by the heart. His ideal of Mt. Fuji is to be found in the paintings of Yokoyama Taikan, the Japanese-style painter who obsessively produced paintings of the mountain during the war.

Yokoyama Taikan was one of the most ardent war advocates. He regularly donated the proceeds from sales of his paintings to the state, enough to name several fighter planes “patriotic Taikan planes” (*aikoku Taikan gō*) in his honor.<sup>585</sup> He

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<sup>583</sup> “Nihon no kokki” [The National Flag of Japan], *Asahi shinbun*, October 9, 1938.

<sup>584</sup> Akiyama Kenzō, “Fujio aogu kokoro” [The Heart that Worships Mt. Fuji], *Asahi shinbun*, October 30, 1940.

<sup>585</sup> “Taikan dono ni hōkoku” [Report to Taikan], *Asahi shinbun*, April 13, 1941.

maintained particularly strong ties with Nazi Germany, giving a lecture to a Hitler Youth group that visited Japan in 1938, and offering a painting of Mt. Fuji as a gift to Hitler to celebrate the eleventh Nazi Nuremberg Congress in 1939.<sup>586</sup> He produced hundreds of paintings of Mt. Fuji. For the exhibition that commemorated the 2600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the imperial reign, for example, Taikan painted *Japan, Where The Sun Rises* <Figure 5-12>, which depicts Fuji looming large on the left and the corresponding red sun on the right. The misty clouds that cover the foot of the mountain convey a heavenly quality and express the supernatural, mystical energy and power of Fuji. Taikan's Fuji painting was reproduced as a poster and distributed with newspapers <Figure 5-13>, which made the general public familiar with his work.<sup>587</sup> Although he also painted Mt. Fuji after the war, it is important to note the political implication of the titles of his wartime Fuji paintings.<sup>588</sup> He gave his Fuji paintings names such as "The Sacred Nation, Japan" (*shinkoku Nippon*), comparing the mystical appearance of the mountain and the holy nature of the nation that maintains its *kokutai*.

The newspaper article titled "The Spirit of Fuji," which Taikan wrote in 1942, elucidates his intention to connect Mt. Fuji, the imperial system, and the war.<sup>589</sup> The

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<sup>586</sup> "Bijutsu no gogo" [Art in the Afternoon], *Asahi shinbun*, September 28, 1938;

"Bijutsu no iki o omiyage" [Fashionable Art as a Gift], *Asahi shinbun*, July 27, 1939.

<sup>587</sup> *Yomiuri shinbun* distributed a poster of Taikan's Fuji to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of their company in April 1933.

<sup>588</sup> I would like to thank Reiko Tomii for her insight.

<sup>589</sup> Yokoyama Taikan, "Fuji no Tamashii" [The Spirit of Mt. Fuji], *Yomiuri shinbun*, February 15, 1942.

article starts with the poem from *The Song of the Correct Spirit (Seiki no uta)* written by Fujita Tōko (1806-1855), a scholar who advocated the overthrow of the Edo shogunate in order to restore the emperor as the political ruler. The poem reads:

The sublime “spirit” of the universe  
Gathers pure over this Land of the Gods  
Rising high, it forms the Peak of Fuji,  
Towering aloft, it kisses the skies to a thousand autumns  
Pouring itself forth out of rivers, it flows as waters of the great deep;  
And boundless it courses around our Land  
It blossoms forth as countless clusters of cherry flowers,  
And naught there is compares to their clustered beauty and scent<sup>590</sup>

The same poem, importantly, was cited in *Cardinal Principle of the National Entity of Japan*, the text that presents the core ideas of *kokutai*. Yokoyama further writes that he seeks to paint Fuji with the “sublime spirit” as portrayed in Fujita’s poem but that he has not been able to produce one. The “sublime spirit,” he asserts, is the spirit that led Japan to the victory at Pearl Harbor and the recent fall of Singapore. At the end of the article, illuminating the wartime titles of his Fuji paintings, he states, “There are no two suns; there are no two Fujis in this sacred country. The sun that reveres the emperor ever radiates, as Fuji stands taller and taller.” Yokoyama Taikan’s paintings of Mt. Fuji are analogous to Fujita Tsuguharu’s *gyokusai* paintings. Both artists abstracted Japanese

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<sup>590</sup> The translation of the poem is taken from *Kokutai no hongji/ Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan*, 130.

individuals and visualized the collective body of *kokutai*. To this end, Fujita used material bodies, while Taikan employed visual symbols.

### **Shinto, Buddhism, and Bushido: Reactionary Modernism**

Analogous to the way representations of the mechanized human body of the Kamikaze attackers borrow from traditional symbols, the Kamikaze operation, which capitalized on the highly developed technology of modern weaponry, was understood in terms of traditional Japanese virtues. Shinto, Buddhism, and bushidō in particular, I argue, played an important role. The suicidal attacks of the Kamikaze operation were important from the perspective of the Shinto ritual of *misogi* (purification by water). *Misogi* was associated with the significance of the war as a cleansing of impurities (Western individualism, liberalism, and democracy), and this purification process was ultimately associated with death.<sup>591</sup> Historian John Dower writes, “once war and dying well became established as honorable practices, death assumed connotations of purity and transcendence, and the ablution that purified could be the bath of blood itself.”<sup>592</sup> As much as Shinto, some understood the Kamikaze operation as related to the religious teachings of Buddhism. The most radical conceptual manipulation of Buddhism can be found in the words of Sōtō Zen priest Matsunaga Reihō (1902-1981), who wrote specifically about the Special Attack Forces in the Buddhist newspaper *Chūgai Nippō* in 1945: “The source of the spirit of the Kamikaze Special Attack Forces lies in the denial of the individual self and the rebirth of the soul, which takes upon itself the burden of history.

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<sup>591</sup> Dower, *War without Mercy*, 212-231.

<sup>592</sup> Dower, *War without Mercy*, 231.



From ancient times Zen has described this conversion of mind as the achievement of complete enlightenment.”<sup>593</sup>

The Kamikaze pilots were often referred to as samurai warriors. Bushido, often translated as “the way of warrior/samurai,” thus played a major role. Bushido, as Nitobe Inazō (1862-1933) defined it in his book published in 1900, “is the code of moral principles which the knights were required or instructed to observe...it is a code unuttered and unwritten, possessing all the more the powerful sanction of veritable deed, and of a law written on the fleshly tablets of the heart.”<sup>594</sup> Nitobe’s book, first published in English, introduced bushido to Euro-American audiences as a form of Japanese chivalry and consequently popularized the concept in Meiji Japan as well.<sup>595</sup> Nitobe emphasizes how

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<sup>593</sup> *Chūgai Nippō* in 1945. Quoted in Brian Daizen Victoria, *Zen at War* (New York: Weatherhill, 1997), 139. Also, see Robert Sharf, “The Zen of Japanese Nationalism,” *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*, edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

<sup>594</sup> Nitobe Inazo, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* (Tokyo: The Student Company, 1905) 4.

<sup>595</sup> Thus bushidō is essentially an “invented tradition” of modern Japan. Stephen Vlastos, “Tradition: Past/Present Culture and Modern Japanese History,” *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*. For critical work on how the concept of bushido was developed in the context of Meiji nationalism and was employed in the Fifteen-Year War, see Oleg Benesch, “Bushido: The Creation of a Martial Ethic in Late Meiji Japan,” Ph.D. diss. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2011); Cameron G., III. Hurst, “Death, Honor, and Loyalty: The Bushidō Ideal,” *Philosophy East and West* 40.4 (October 1990): 511-527. For more on the invented tradition of female self-sacrifice, see

polite, dutiful, honest, and self-disciplined samurai were and claims that bushido represents the spirit of Japan, or *Yamato-damashii*. Arguably the single most influential text in the bushido discourse, which Nitobe might have consulted, is *Hagakure* (“hidden by the leaves”). *Hagakure* is a collection of episodes and moral lessons told by Yamamoto Tsunetomo (1659-1719) and compiled by his students in 1716. A pocket version of the book was produced and given to soldiers in the 1940s.<sup>596</sup> *Hagakure* clearly notes the centrality of death to the spirit of Japanese warriors, but in much more forcible language than Nitobe’s. It reads:

The Way of the Samurai is found in death. When it comes to either/or, there is only the quick choice of death. It is not particularly difficult. Be determined and advance.

To say that dying without reaching one’s aim is to die a dog’s death is the frivolous

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Joshua S. Mostow, “Iron Butterfly: Cio-Cio-San and Japanese Imperialism,” in *A Vision of the Orient: Texts, Intertexts, and Contexts of Madame Butterfly*, ed. Jonathan Wisenthal, Sherrill Grace, Melinda Boyd, Brian McIlroy, and Vera Micznik (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006); Theodore F. Cook Jr. explains how the modern Meiji army was different from the medieval warriors. Theodore F. Cook Jr., “Making ‘Soldiers’: The Imperial Army and the Japanese Man in Meiji Society and State,” in *Gendering Modern Japanese History*, ed. Barbara Molony and Kathleen Uno (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005).

<sup>596</sup> Benesch, “Bushido: The Creation of a Martial Ethic in Late Meiji Japan,” 297.

way of sophisticates. When pressed with the choice of life or death, it is not necessary to gain one's aim.<sup>597</sup>

These bushido principles can be found in *The Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors* (Gunjin chokuyu, 1882) and *The Instructions for the Battlefield* (Senjinkun, 1941), both of which were thoroughly read by soldiers and stated, “duty is heavier than a mountain; death is lighter than a feather.”<sup>598</sup>

Despite the rhetoric of traditional ethics and aesthetics, the Kamikaze Special Attack Forces were made possible by the highly advanced technology of the time. The Kamikaze operation's use of high technology indeed distinguishes itself from the “human bullets” of the Russo-Japanese War. In that war, even though the human body was treated as a bullet, the expression remained largely metaphorical: some of the soldiers hurled themselves at the Russians as “human bullets” without even carrying guns.<sup>599</sup> In order for a human body to be united with a weapon in a more literal sense, as it was with the Kamikaze, Ōka, Kaiten, and Shinyō, a certain degree of technological development was necessary, and Japan's technology had not yet reached that level in 1904 -1905. In 1945, Sakurai, the author of *Human Bullets*, wrote that the soldiers in the Russo-Japanese War could not have done better with the technology they had at that time; now that Japan had airplanes, tanks, and artillery as good as those of the Allies,

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<sup>597</sup> Yamamoto Tsunetomo, *Hagakure: The Book of the Samurai*. Trans. William Scott Wilson (New York: Avon Books, 1981 [1716]), 17.

<sup>598</sup> Christopher Ives, *Imperial-Way Zen: Ichikawa Hakugen's Critique and Lingering Questions for Buddhist Ethics* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), 48.

<sup>599</sup> Sakurai, “Nikudan” [Human Bullets], *Asahi shinbun*, May 9, 1945.

however, suicide attacks would cause greater damage.<sup>600</sup> Simply put, considering the level of technology, the fascist practice of body-as-weapon could not have obtained at the turn of the century.

The technological development that was crucial to the birth of the Kamikaze Forces was the so-called second industrial revolution that Japan experienced during and after the Great War (1914 -1919). The second industrial revolution took place in Western Europe between the 1880s and 1920s, and it was characterized by “new metallurgical and chemical technologies, the widespread diffusion of electrical power, the introduction of the automobile and the aeroplane, and the elaboration of the techniques of mass production.”<sup>601</sup> The second industrial revolution significantly changed the way wars could be fought; an entirely new level of destruction became possible, as was demonstrated in the Great War. The introduction of tanks, airplanes, torpedoes, submarines and poison gases changed the scale and speed of destruction and damage that war could bring about.<sup>602</sup> In the Great War, technological superiority more than military tactics became the determining factor in winning: as Morris-Suzuki succinctly puts it, “survival in the total wars of the twentieth century would require the capacity to produce—at high speed and in vast quantities—a wide range of complex machines of destruction.”<sup>603</sup>

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<sup>600</sup> Sakurai, “Nikudan,” *Asahi shinbun*, May 9, 1945.

<sup>601</sup> Morris-Suzuki, *The Technological Transformation of Japan*, 106-107.

<sup>602</sup> Walter E. Gruden, *Secret Weapons and World War II: Japan in the Shadow of Big Science* (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2005), 2; Morris-Suzuki, *The Technological Transformation of Japan*, 124.

<sup>603</sup> Morris-Suzuki, *The Technological Transformation of Japan*, 124.

The Kamikaze Special Attack Forces deployed the even higher technology that was advanced during the Second World War. They flew the Mitsubishi Zero, a fighter aircraft invented in 1939 at the request of the Imperial Navy. The Zero could fly at more than 500 kilometers per hour at four thousand meters and was the world's fastest plane when it first appeared.<sup>604</sup> It used an existing model of engine but with a significantly reduced body weight. It was through the invention of such an airplane that suicide attacks were, as David Earhart writes, “accomplished at a much higher and more destructive speed as man and machine were fused in a sublime, near-sacred union.”<sup>605</sup>

Jeff Herf's concept of “reactionary modernism” is useful to understand the use of both tradition and high technology in the Kamikaze discourse. He has observed that a similar paradox existed in the German Nazi culture: supposedly conservative, backward-looking Nazis paradoxically embraced technologies such as fast cars, *Autobahns*, airplanes, and radio, and Nazi intellectuals who rejected the Enlightenment and reason celebrated modern technology. In order to understand this paradox, Herf develops the concept of “reactionary modernism,” and explains how the Nazis incorporated a certain *aspect* of the modern—technology, not materialism—into their romantic nationalism. According to Herf, Nazi culture manifested reconciliation between the irrationalist ideas of German nationalism and the rationality that was the underlying principle of modernity.<sup>606</sup> The Nazis claimed that Germany “could be *both* technologically advanced

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<sup>604</sup> Morris-Suzuki, *The Technological Transformation of Japan*, 153.

<sup>605</sup> Earhart, *Certain Victory*, 431

<sup>606</sup> Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984),

and true to its soul.”<sup>607</sup> Joseph Goebbels’ concept of “steely romanticism” (*stahlernde Romantik*) epitomizes the Nazi attitude toward technocratic spiritualism, and his rather long statement of 1939 is worth quoting in full:

We live in an era of technology. The racing tempo of our century affects all areas of our life. There is scarcely an endeavor that can escape its powerful influence. Therefore, the danger unquestionably arises that modern technology will make men soulless. National Socialism never rejected or struggled against technology. Rather, one of its main tasks was to consciously affirm it, to fill it inwardly with soul, to discipline it and to place it in the service of our people and their cultural level.

National Socialist public statements used to refer to the steely romanticism of our century. Today this phrase has attained its full meaning. We live in an age that is both romantic and steel-like, that has not lost its depth of feeling. On the contrary, it has discovered a new romanticism in the results of modern inventions and technology...National Socialism understood how to take the soulless framework of technology and fill it with the rhythm and hot impulses of our time.<sup>608</sup>

Technology and romantic spiritualism also coexisted in wartime Japan. The creation of the Kamikaze Special Attack Force, which employed the highest level of Japanese

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<sup>607</sup> Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*, 3.

<sup>608</sup> Joseph Gobbels, “Deutsche Technik,” Speech at the opening of the Berlin Auto Show, Feb 17, 1939. Quoted in Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*, 196.

technology at the time, was accompanied by mythicizing language. Despite the degree of technology deployed for the war, the Kamikaze were understood in terms of Japanese indigenous religion and tradition: Shinto, Buddhism, and bushido.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has examined the fascist bodily discourse, specifically, the relationship between technology and the body that is unique to fascism. Although, as I have demonstrated, the formation of the Kamikaze Special Attack Forces was based on a practice that regarded the human body as weapon/machine and wartime newspapers and magazines linked human bodies with steely machines, the War Campaign Record Paintings, which supposedly represented the ideal human body, paid scant attention to this formation. When represented visually, the bodies of Kamikaze pilots became an image of nature. Just as the War Campaign Record Paintings attended to the inner characteristics of Japanese ethnicity or *minzoku* (as discussed in Chapter Three), Japanese-style paintings, which portrayed soldiers only metaphorically, focused on their spirit, not their material bodies. These paintings, which employed the symbols of eagles, cherry blossoms, the sun, and Mt. Fuji, certainly downplayed the highly advanced technological aspect of the Kamikaze operation. Yet, they perhaps made the Kamikaze Special Attack Forces more appealing to the public, as they draw on already established Japanese indigenous artistic and cultural lexicons.

## CONCLUSION

This dissertation is the first systematic attempt to investigate the issue of fascism in the field of Japanese art. Examining prominent paintings produced during the Fifteen-Year War, I have shown how Japanese art envisioned space, time, and bodies in relation to the specific fascist discourses of social regimentation, new classicism, eugenics, and the mechanized human. As a whole, I have demonstrated how fascism was manifested in Japan, if differently from the way it developed in Italy and Germany.

Chapter One looked at Japanese-style machine-ist paintings produced between 1935 and 1940 and explained how the visual representation of space in those paintings echoes the regimented fascist social space of the last half of the 1930s. Chapter Two focused on the fascist vision of the future, which can be seen in Japanese new classicist works such as those by Uemura Shōen. Chapters Four and Five considered the way in which War Campaign Record Paintings either represented modified fascist ideas or did not reflect the fascist bodily practices prevalent in Japan. Chapter Four investigated the issue of eugenics, while Chapter Five looked at the corporeal formation of the fascist subject.

Although, as I explained in the Introduction, the applicability of fascism to wartime Japan has been debated by Japanese and non-Japanese scholars alike, I have shown in this dissertation that the presence of “the modern” justified on the grounds of “tradition” exemplified in the state ideology of wartime Japan is best understood in the framework of fascism. As I have demonstrated, through its contact with Europe from the Meiji period, Japan closely followed the development of international modern art and modern scientific and technological advancements. However, the sign of “the modern”



was disguised in the rhetoric of tradition, spirituality, and pre-modern collectivism during the war: the rationalist regimented space was understood as reflecting the simplicity and functionality of Japanese traditional architecture and the Confucianist idea of “proper place”; works informed by European new classicists were praised as “purely Japanese” for their two-dimensionality; a human taxonomy based on scientific racism was modified into a system in which moral virtue and the internal superiority of the Japanese could be assessed and positioned as superior; and the mechanized human bodies of the Kamikaze were represented by traditional, natural symbols of eagles and cherry blossoms. Furthermore, the framework of fascism highlights the flow of ideas and materials between Italy, Germany, and Japan and close ties maintained among the three nations in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

My study has a significant implication for the concept of modernism, which was one of the two “meta-themes” of this dissertation and which surfaced in Chapters One and Two. Modernism is conventionally understood as a cultural movement that emerged as a result of the historical process of modernization, which challenges convention, and seeks to break away from tradition and the past, often questioning the power of existing political and cultural authorities. By demonstrating how machine-ist and new classicist works, which initially developed in the context of international modernism and political liberalism, ultimately came to be employed by the state in fascist nations, I called into question the previous, positive view of modernism, and showed that modernism could and did exist under political systems of totalitarianism, such as fascism. Machine-ism might have developed out of the optimism that machines would liberate and improve human lives, but it could also mirror a social condition in which human individuals are

controlled by a state that employs machines. New classicism, which is essentially modernist in its style, advocated the ideal of the nation's cultural tradition, defying the modernist principle of breaking away from the past. In other words, modernism could transform its most basic politics.

The other "meta-theme" of this dissertation was cultural translation. Rather than easily dismissing or claiming the presence of fascism, I attended to the *process* by which fascist ideas and art forms were imported to, modified in, or discarded by Japan. By so doing, I reached a conclusion that I had not expected, that is, that Japanese-style paintings adopted fascism much more readily than Western-style paintings, or the infamous War Campaign Record Paintings. Two reasons account for this. First, the medium of Japanese-style paintings was considered "traditional," and this quality of cultural authenticity was more accommodating to the xenophobic aspect of fascist ideology, which was important especially in the discourse of the new classicism that called for a return to the (nation's own) cultural past. Second, the two-dimensional, non-naturalistic tendency of Japanese-style painting lends itself more readily to fascist art, which is, stylistically speaking, modernist art. As European modernist art was inspired by "Oriental" art in the non-West, it is unsurprising that Japanese-style painters could create works that were stylistically much more comparable to European fascist art. In terms of subject matter, however, Japanese and German/Italian new classicist works could not look more different: artists from each country found inspiration in their own cultural traditions, whether the beautiful women of Edo or Greco-Roman classical statues. Meanwhile, Western-style painters in Japan struggled to create art that would be

authentic to their cultural tradition and history, because of the medium's association with the West, that is, the enemy.

In addition, the reason why War Campaign Record Paintings circumvented fascism is because, although fascism places so much emphasis on the articulation of the human body, Japanese propaganda painters refused to depict individuals' bodies as exemplified in German and Italian—or more generally “Western”—paintings. As I showed in Chapters Four and Five, fascist corporeal practices did exist in Japan: the state implemented eugenics policies inspired by those of the Nazis, and Japanese Kamikaze pilots identified their bodies as war machinery. However, the material body in the war paintings became a site of contestation and ambivalence. Japanese artists implicitly subverted the primacy of the human body in the “Western” art epitomized by Greco-Roman Classical sculptures. Fujita Tsuguharu, for example, painted disembodied Japanese soldiers in order to convey the idea of the collective Japanese body. Other war painters, including Miyamoto Saburō, diverted attention away from the physicality of the body to highlight the inner moral virtue of the Japanese. Kamikaze attackers' identification of their bodies as metallic, industrial material was never visualized in the paintings, and the pilots were most often represented by/as eagles or falling cherry blossoms. The human body was an extremely important medium for the political subjugation of fascism, but at the same time it was also a thing and an idea on which the Japanese wanted to inscribe their cultural difference from the West.

The fascist practices I have scrutinized in this dissertation did not suddenly disappear when the war ended in August 1945. Amemiya Shōichi claims that 1960s Japan, a time of rapid, dramatic economic growth, is another example of

*Gleichschaltung*—the over-hegemonized, regimented society of pyramid like-structure and conformist values.<sup>609</sup> *Sararī-man* (salaryman) culture, in which Japanese businessmen (known as “corporate warriors”) worked unceasingly and unquestioningly under the leadership of corporate authority, sacrificing their private lives and families, exemplifies a postwar variation of social regimentation. Japanese novelist and ultranationalist Mishima Yukio’s dream to restore the power of the emperor and return to “the real Japan” in the 1960s resonates with the 1942 “overcoming the modern” discussion.<sup>610</sup> The Healthy Children Award (*Kenkō Yūryōji Hyōshō*), which the *Asahi shinbun* began in 1930 in the context of wartime eugenics, lasted until 1996.<sup>611</sup> The term *minzoku* has never been interrogated and it is still treated as a valid concept, most notably in the discourse of the so-called “theory of the Japanese” (*Nihonjinron*), which seeks to account for the supposed “uniqueness” of the Japanese people. In her essay tracing the genealogy of the cyborg in Japanese culture, Sharalyn Orbaugh writes, “Flying mecha-suits are clearly an evolved form of the prewar submarines and ‘flying battleships’ that could extend human powers beyond the limits of the body, as well as providing an

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<sup>609</sup> Amemiya, “Self-Renovation of Existing Social Forces and *Gleichschaltung*: The Total-War System and the Middle Classes,” in *Total War and “Modernization,”* 232.

<sup>610</sup> For more on Mishima Yukio and fascism, see Roy Starrs, “The Road to Violent Action: Mishima Yukio,” *Fascism: Critical Concepts in Political Science*, Vol..5 ed. Roger Griffin (London: Routledge, 2004).

<sup>611</sup> Takai and Koga, *Kenkō yūryōji to sono jidai: kenkō to iu media ibento*, 59.

armored shell to protect its fragility.”<sup>612</sup> Although Orbaugh does not discuss the wartime culture of the cyborg, the Kamikaze attackers’ perception of their bodies as being armored by industrial material must have made some contribution to the remarkable ubiquity of the cyborg in Japanese postwar and contemporary popular culture, especially in manga and anime. Thus, the social and political influence that wartime Japan had and still has on postwar and contemporary Japan is immense.

It must be noted, however, that those remnants of fascist ideologies and culture exist under a political system that is very different from that of the war years. The Occupation of Japan, under Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers General Douglas MacArthur, began in 1945 and lasted until 1952 and implemented sweeping political and social reforms. The emperor, formerly the absolute political authority and a sacred god, was made into a “symbol,” and hundreds of Japanese war criminals were tried at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (or the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal) and executed. Although the goal of the Occupation was considerably undermined by the so-called “reverse course,” in which the reconstruction of the country was arrested by Cold War politics, Japan ultimately joined the forces of democratic liberalism, discarding its previously held anti-individualism, anti-capitalism, and anti-materialism. Furthermore, fascist ideas may still exist today, but they are not shared and embraced by the public and the state alike as they were during the war. Susan Buck-Morss writes as follows about twentieth century capitalism and socialism:

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<sup>612</sup> Sharalyn Orbaugh, “The Genealogy of the Cyborg in Japanese Popular Culture,” in *World Weavers: Globalization, Science Fiction, and the Cybernetic Revolution* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005), 60.

The construction of mass utopia was the dream of the twentieth century. It was the driving ideological force of industrial modernization in both its capitalist and socialist forms. The dream was itself an immense material power that transformed the natural world, investing industrially produced objects and built environments with collective, political desire. Whereas the night dreams of individuals express desires thwarted by the social order and pushed backward into regressive childhood forms, this collective dream dared to imagine a social world in alliance with personal happiness, and promised to adults that its realization would be in harmony with the overcoming of scarcity for all.<sup>613</sup>

The collective dream of capitalism and socialism might not have disappeared until the end of the Cold War in the 1980s, but that of fascism was shuttered by 1945, at least in Italy, Germany, and Japan. When Mishima Yukio marched into the Ichigaya headquarters of the Japan Self-Defense Forces on November 25, 1970 to restore the emperor to power by urging the soldiers at the headquarters to join him in a coup d'état they merely scorned him. The anachronism of his gesture could not have been more evident, and his fascist dream remained a personal one, its appeal to the Japanese public lost.

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<sup>613</sup> Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2002), ix.

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## Figures



Figure 1-1. Saeki Shunkō (1909-1942), *Tearoom*, 1936



Figure 1-2. Kobori Tomoto (1886-1931), *Abolition of the Han System*, 1871



Figure 1-3. Tsuchida Bakusen (1887-1936), *Maiko in Landscape*, 1924



Figure 1-4. Yamakawa Shūhō (1898-1944), *Three Sisters*, 1936



Figure 1-5. Shibata Suiha (?-?), *Biwa Concert*, 1930s



Figure 1-6. Ōta Chōu (1896-1958), *Women Observing the Stars*, 1936





Figure 1-7. Kobayashi Kokei (1883-1957), *Bath*, 1921

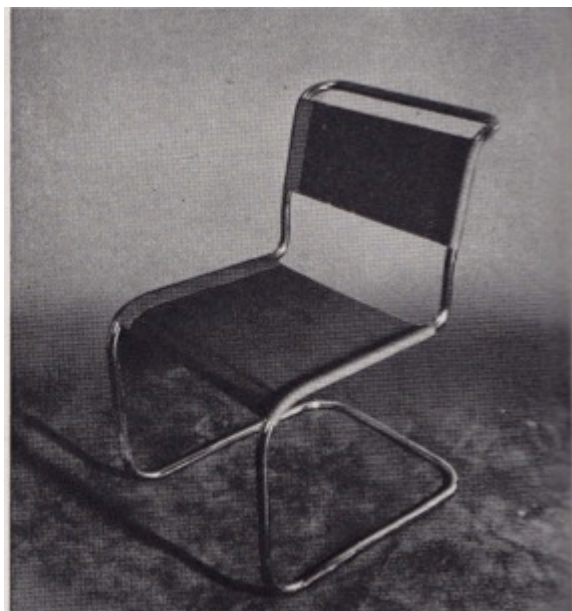


Figure 1-8. *Chair*, from *Machine Art* Exhibition, 1934.



Figure 1-9. *Telescope*, from *Machine Art* Exhibition, 1934



Figure 1-10. *Laboratory Microscope*, from *Machine Art* exhibition, 1934

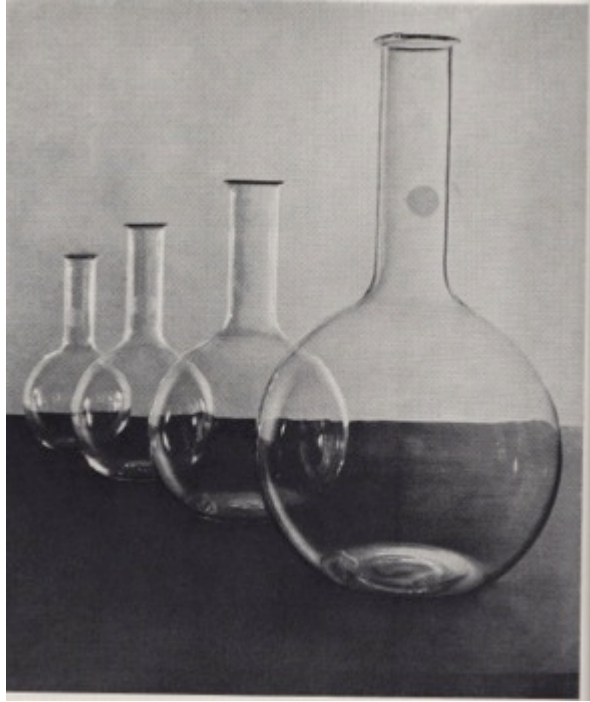


Figure 1-11. *Boiling Flasks*, from Machine Art Exhibition, 1934.



Figure 1-12. Koga Harue (1895-1933), *Sea*, 1929

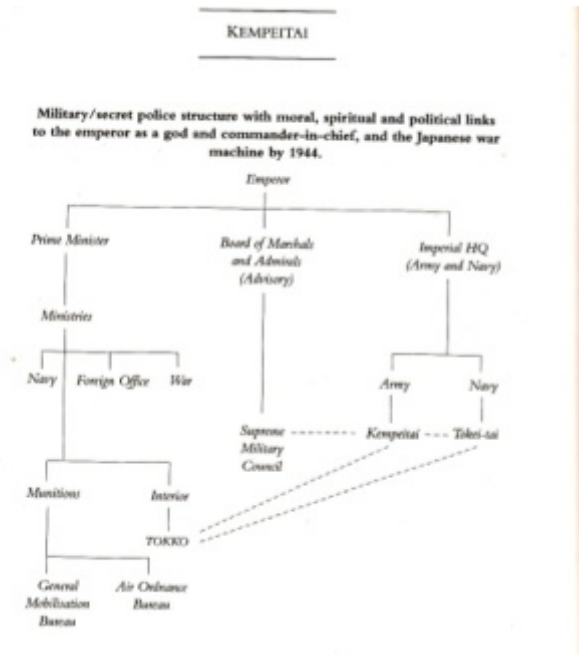


Figure 1-13. A diagram showing the structure of the Military Police



Figure 1-14. National Daily Product Exhibition, 1941

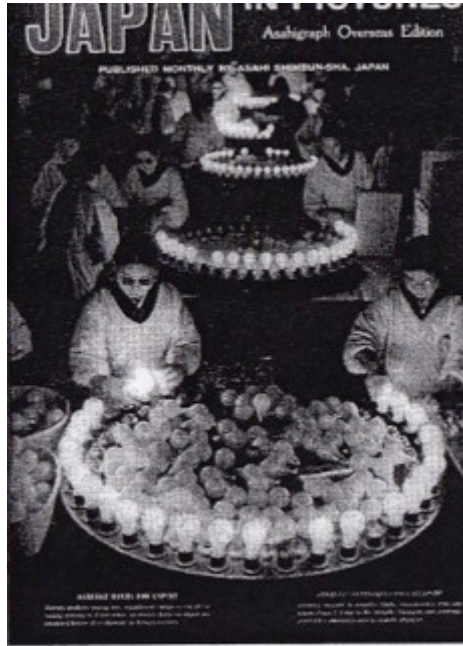


Figure 1-15. *Asahi Graph*, March 1936



Figure 1-16. *Katsura Rikyū*, built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century



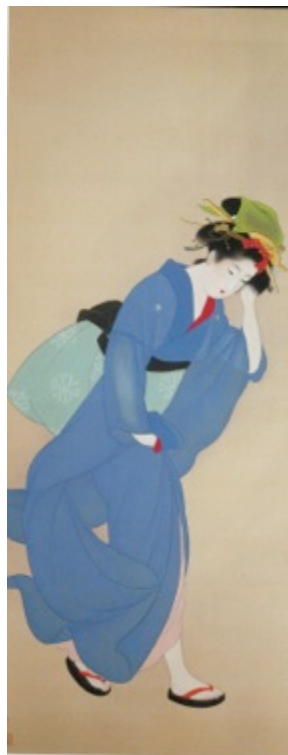
Figure2-1. Uemura Shōen (1875-1949), *A Long Autumn Night*, 1907



Figure 2-2. Nishikawa Sukenobu,  
*One Hundred Women Classified According to Their Rank*, 1723



Figure 2-3. Suzuki Harunobu, *Three Evenings: Reading on an Autumn Evening*, ca. 1768



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Figure 2-4 Uemura Shōen, *Sudden Blast*, 1939



Figure 2-5. Teisai Hokuba (1771-1844), *Shunpū Bijin-zu*



Figure 2-6. Suzuki Harunobu (1725?-1770), *Wind*



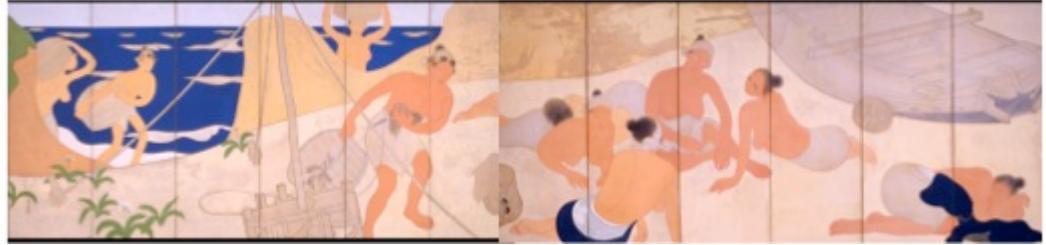


Figure 2-7. Tsuchida Bakusen, *Fisherwomen*, 1913



Figure 2-8. Paul Gauguin (1848-1903), *Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?* 1897-1898



Figure 2-9. Kitagawa Utamaro, *Fisherwomen*, 1790-1800



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Figure 2-11. Uemura Shōen, *Flames*, 1918



Figure 2-12. Kaburaki Kiyotaka, *Saikaku's Five Women, Oman*, 1911



Figure 2-13. Uemura Shōen, *Oman in the Costume of the Youth*, 1915



Figure 2-14. Uemura Shōen, *Maiden*, 1942



Figure 2-15. Uemura Shōen, *Late Autumn*, 1943



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Figure 2-17. Kobayashi Kokei, *Hair Combing*, 1931



Figure 2-18. Kobayashi Kokei, *Cave in Kanzaki*, 1907



Figure 2-19. Yanagi Ryō's analysis of Seurat's painting, 1941



Figure 2-20. Yanagi's analysis of Fujita's painting, 1944

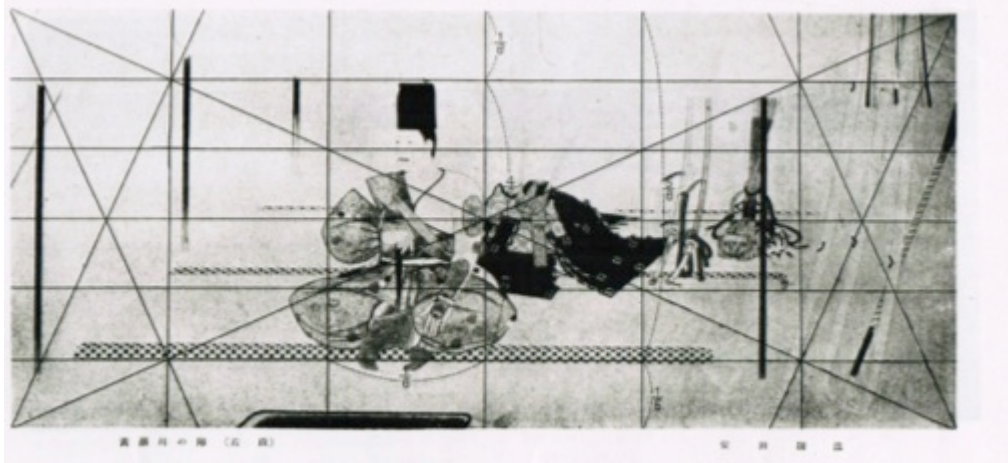


Figure 2-21. Yanagi's analysis of Yasuda's painting, 1944



Figure 2-22. Yanagi's analysis of Shōen's painting, 1944





Figure 2-23. Itō Shinsui's *The Image of Contemporary Women* as reproduced in Yanagi's article, 1944



Figure 2-24. Uemura Shōen, *Lady Kusunoki*, 1944



Figure 2-25. The Recipients of the Order of Culture, 1948



Figure 3-1. Pablo Picasso, *Three Women at the Spring*, 1921



Figure 3-2. *Asahi shinbun*, October 30, 1937



Figure 3-3. *Asahi shinbun*, February 20, 1942



Figure 3-4. Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People*, 1830



Figure 3-5. "Jap Suicides on Attu," *Life*, April 3, 1944



Figure 3-6. "Jap Suicides on Attu," *Life*, April 3, 1944



Figure 4-1. "National Railroad Exercise," *Asahi shinbun*, February 10, 1943



Figure 4-2. Illustration explaining “Japan Exercise”



Figure 4-3. *Asahi shinbun*, June 26, 1943

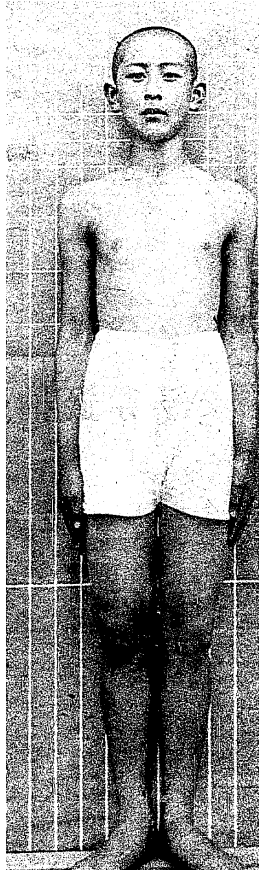


Figure 4-4. Male and female winners of “The Healthiest Child in Japan,”  
*Asahi shinbun*, July 5, 1934

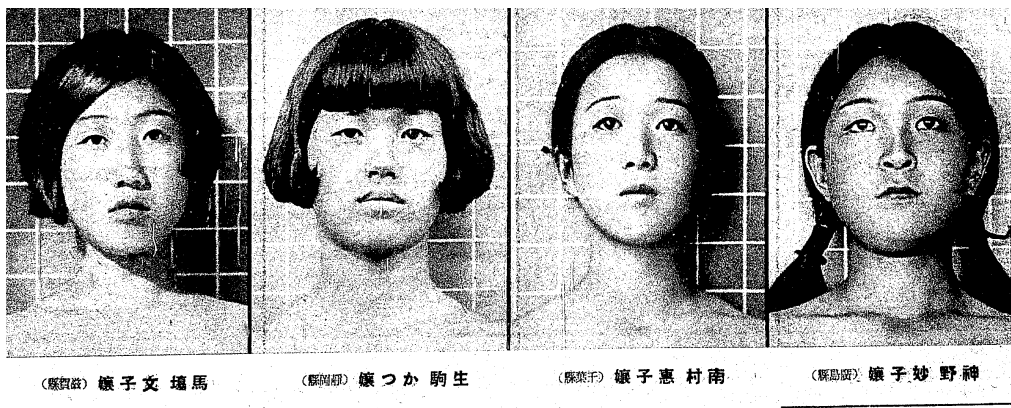


Figure 4-5. *Asahi shinbun*, July 5, 1934



Figure 4-6. “Nordic Types” in Hans Günther’s *Racial Science of the German People*, 1930



Figure 5-1. *Asahi shinbun*, September 20, 1944



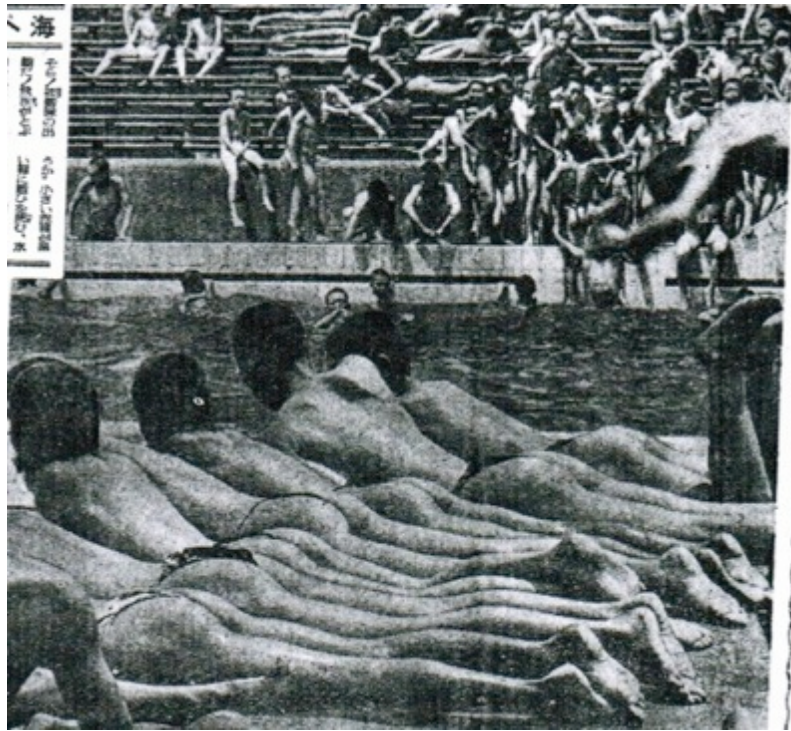


Figure 5-2. *Asahi shinbun*, June 26, 1944

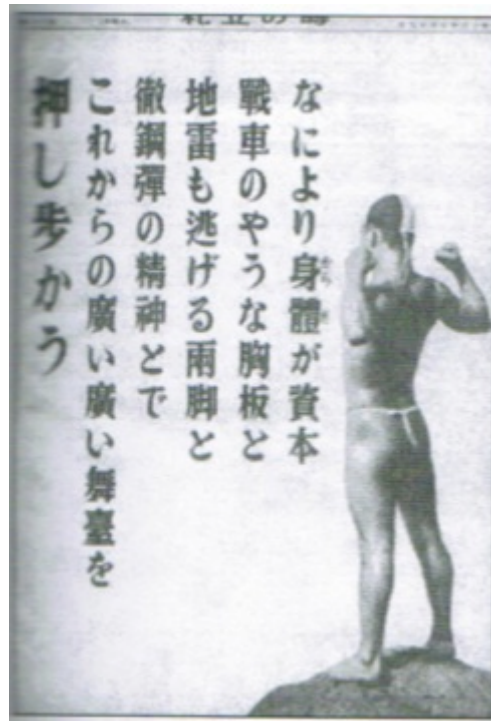


Figure 5-3. *Shashin shūhō*, July 29, 1942



Figure 5-4. *Shashin shūhō*, October 4, 1944



Figure 5-5. *Gakusei no kagaku*, April 1944

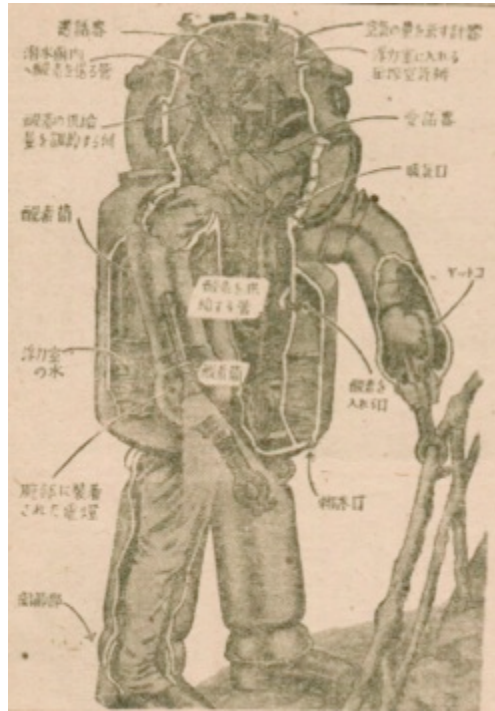


Figure 5-6. *Gakusei no kagaku*, April 1944



Figure 5-7. Umezawa Kazuyo, Kamikaze pilots with branches of cherry blossoms

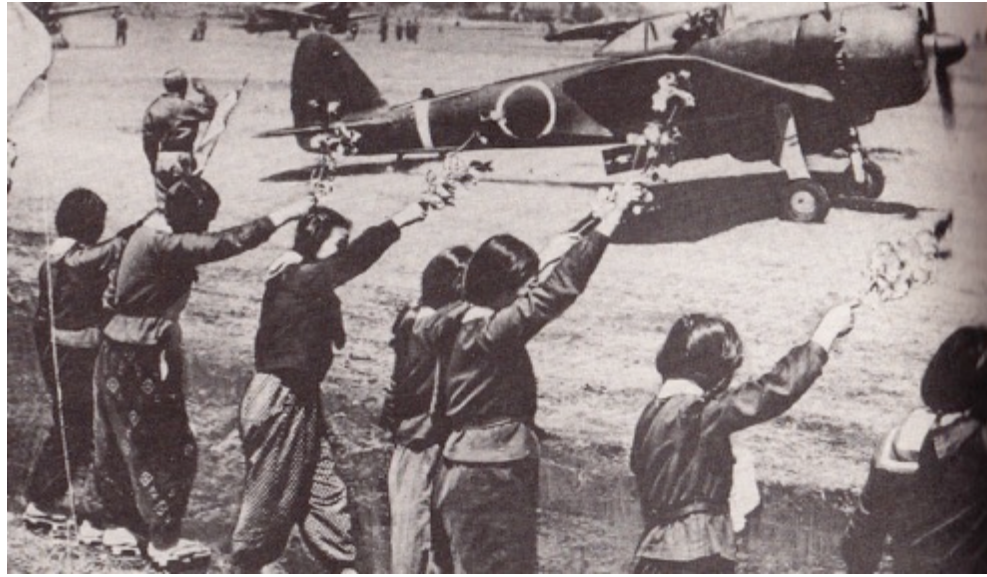
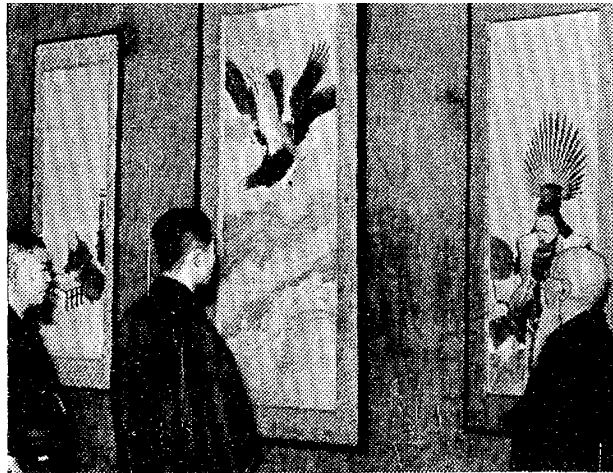


Figure 5-8. Chiran High School female students waving cherry blossom branches.  
April 1945



『題二十神精本日』管彩ためこ魂心

く開展個の伯畫畝秀すあ

畫畝の菅池上秀畝  
伯が、昨年二月から大  
膽に『大和心』より『大  
内山』の十二点に陸軍  
に献納する『怒濤』も  
特に出品されるが、こ  
れは縦十八尺の大作、  
筆勢に鋭ゆる秀麗は神  
州の雄氣を漲らせ、彩  
管畫國の氣韻は會場を  
漂ひてゐる。この展  
覽に金は全部國防資金  
とする。菅池上は、早く  
個展に右端が秀畝畫  
伯

Figure 5-9. Ikegami Shūho, *The Image of Angry Rough Eagle*,  
from *Asahi shinbun* January 7, 1942



Figure 5-10. Sake cup from the war years



Figure 5-11. Ikegami Shūho (1874-1944), *The Image of Mountain Cherry Blossoms*, 1943



Figure 5-12. Yokoyama Taikan (1868-1958), *Japan, Where the Sun Rises*, 1940



Figure 5-13. Yokoyama Taikan, *Painting of Fuji* reproduced as poster