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Benjamin Paul Miller

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**The Thesis Committee for Benjamin Paul Miller  
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**Drawn in Bloodlines: Blood, Pollution, Identity, and Vampires in  
Japanese Society**

**APPROVED BY  
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:**

**Supervisor:**

---

Kirsten C. Fischer

---

Patricia Maclachlan

**Drawn in Bloodlines: Blood, Pollution, Identity, and Vampires in  
Japanese Society**

**by**

**Benjamin Paul Miller, B.A.**

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis to Yule Brynner, who put it most aptly when he said, “So let it be written, so let it be done.”

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to acknowledge my graduate advisor, Dr. Kirsten C. Fischer, for her support and guidance in writing this thesis. I would also like to express my gratitude to my parents, Sherman and Victoria, for their unwavering support of my academic career.

## **Abstract**

# **Drawn in Bloodlines: Blood, Pollution, Identity, and Vampires in Japanese Society**

Benjamin Paul Miller, M.A.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2007

Supervisor: Kirsten C. Fischer

This thesis is an examination of the evolution of blood ideology, which is to say the use of blood as an organizing metaphor, in Japanese society. I begin with the development of blood as a substance of significant in the eighth century and trace its development into a metaphor for lineage in the Tokugawa period. I discuss in detail blood's conceptual and rhetorical utility throughout the post-Restoration period, first examining its role in establishing a national subjectivity in reference to both the native intellectual tradition of the National Learning and the foreign hegemony of race. I then discuss the rationalization of popular and national bloodlines under the auspices of the popular eugenics movement, and the National Eugenics Bill. Then, I discuss the racialization this conception of blood inflicted on the Tokugawa era Outcastes, and its persistent consequences. Through the incongruity of the Outcastes ability to "pass" despite popular expectations that their blood pollution was visibly demonstrative, I

introduce the notion of blood anxiety. Next, I address the conceptual and rhetorical role blood played in articulating Japan's empire and imperial ambitions, focusing on the Theory of Common Descent and the *Investigation of Global Policy with the Yamato Race as Nucleus* report. I follow this discussion with a detailed examination of the postwar reconceptualization of national subjectivity, which demands native bloodlines and orthodox cultural expressions, and which effectively de-legitimized minority populations. As illustration of this point, I describe the impact of this new subjectivity on both the *Zainichi* and the *Nikkeijin* in lengthy case studies. Finally, I conclude this examination with a consideration of blood ideology's representation in popular culture. I argue that the subgenre of vampire media allegorizes many of the assumptions and anxieties surrounding blood that have developed since the Restoration, and demonstrates the imprint of blood ideology on contemporary society.

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## Introduction

### BLOOD MATTERS

A diminutive Japanese schoolgirl confronts an outsized monster. She is injured, and it is dying. As she stands over its broken body, she raises her wounded arm over its face. Blood drips from the rivulets streaming over her proffered hand and into its gaping mouth. The beast looks frightened as it tries to catch the drops of blood. The girl looks mournful. This gesture is clearly meant to ease its passing, and this act of mercy is perhaps also an act of penance.

This is the climactic scene of a 2000 Japanese film titled, *Blood: The Last Vampire*. The girl is the film's protagonist, and the beast her prey. The film's narrative economy is sparse, and the audience learns little about either, save for the salient facts that both are vampires, and she is the "last original." The monster is, implicitly, something related but adulterated. Their precise relationship is never revealed, though we may infer that it is racial, even familial.

This conclusion is underscored by the somber mood and deliberate pacing of this scene, which stands in sharp contrast to the feverish violence of those that preceded it. The girl's mournful expression is disconcerting in light of the rage she has just vented on her foe. The blood we see here drips from her hand in measured droplets, where previously it sprayed, splattered, and stained. In this moment, the film's many ambiguities and mysteries are overshadowed by one visceral certainty; blood is the medium of communion between this girl and that beast.

It may be curious to assert that a scene from an animated film with so schlocky a title as *Blood: The Last Vampire* reveals something fundamental about Japanese society, but it does. Blood is a substance into which the Japanese have invested much. It is a physical, conceptual, and rhetorical device that has served, in anthropologist Jennifer Robertson's phrasing, as a principle "organizing metaphor" in Japanese society. From the eighth century at least, blood has defined a series of binary relationships, marking the dividing line between "us" and "them": between pure and impure, male and female, family and stranger, colonial master and subject, citizen and foreigner. Since the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the notion of pureblooded consanguinity has provided the basis of national subjectivity, and has supplied the ideological undergirding for a variety of legal and social inequities. It retains this function even today.

Blood is a useful organizing metaphor largely because the physicality it brings to potent abstractions is aesthetically appealing. It runs through us all, after all, just beneath the skin. Blood is not a substance that can be engaged with casually. It evokes the extremes of human experience - birth and death, injury and illness. It is visceral, immediate, and intimate. It was first conceived of as the locus of impurity, and impurity has since been variously, and simultaneously, defined as impiety, immorality, illness, and Otherness. It is also conceived of as the channel by which these impurities span one generation to another. Perhaps this is why, in Japanese eyes at least, the quality of one's blood has so persistently been presumed to manifest itself in one's physical appearance and outward behavior. It is certainly why it is seen as the source of all that is essential in an individual and a community.

## **THESIS ORGANIZATION**

This thesis will examine the evolution of blood ideology, which is to say the use of blood as an organizing metaphor, in Japanese society. In Chapter One, I will describe the how blood became invested with three distinct but significant meanings: pollution, femininity, and lineage. Through the Tokugawa era temple registration system, and the all but mandatory ritual calendars of sect Buddhism, these meanings were diffused among great swaths of the populace, along with the conviction that blood is determinative.

Chapter Two will cover blood's role in defining the boundaries of Japan's modern society. First, it provided the conceptual and rhetorical foundations for national subjectivity by rendering imperial ideology and the family-state comprehensible to the masses, and analogous to the contemporary hegemonies of race and nation. Second, it was the physical and conceptual object of the science of eugenics, and the language in which eugenic discipline sought to rationalize individual reproductive decisions and bind them to the national good. Third, it supplied the framework to codify and project the pre-modern caste prejudice against the Outcastes into a modern society formally free of caste distinctions. In the racialization of the Outcastes, Japanese society was obliged to confront a shortcoming of the blood metaphor; blood anxiety. For all its presumed determinativeness, blood does not in reality express much.

In Chapter Three, I will discuss the expansive interpretation of racial consanguinity, and its use in both justifying and organizing Japan's empire. At the

height of its imperial ambitions, the state articulated its present and future in sanguinary language.

Chapter Four will examine the aftermath of the war and Occupation and their impact on the centrality of blood to Japanese subjectivity. I will argue that the discrediting of the prewar regime's notion of inclusive consanguinity, and the aesthetics of postwar reconstruction, created a subjectivity that is supremely exclusive. Both blood *and* cultural orthodoxy are now required for legitimacy. This chapter will include lengthy case studies of two minority groups, the assimilated Koreans (*Zainichi*) and the foreign-born Japanese (*Nikkeijin*), and their problematic relationships with mainstream society.

I will conclude my discussion in Chapter Five, with an examination of blood ideology's representation in Japanese popular culture through the subgenre of vampire media. I argue that in the utilization of this imported media figure, the Japanese have allegorized many aspects of blood ideology and its attendant anxieties. As with the girl and the beast described above, this media reveals something essential about Japanese society.

## Chapter One: The Development of Blood as an Organizing Metaphor

Blood's utility as an organizing metaphor boasts a long pedigree, and originally marked the boundary between the polluted and the pure. The concepts of pollution (*kagare*) and purity (*hare*) bear strong religious connotations in Japanese culture. They are described in both of Japan's foundational documents, the *Kojiki* (A.D. 711) and the *Nihon Shoki* (720), and are central to Japan's native belief system, Shinto.<sup>1</sup> Many Shinto rituals are performed with the express aim of excising pollution from the individual.<sup>2</sup> Purity, or rather the absence of pollution, is required for communion with the gods, for their blessing and their protection. To be in a state of pollution, then, is to be repellant to the gods and outside their good graces.

Once introduced to Japan, both Buddhism and Confucianism were recast in this mold. Buddhist salvation was secured for the deceased by the performance of ritual by the deceased's survivors. These observances posthumously elevated the deceased to the status of *boddhisattva* or *hotoke*, dispelling the pollution associated with death and leaving the soul pure. Confucian ancestor worship also required the ritual purification of the deceased to cleanse them of death pollution, since only when the spirits of the dead were purified could they assume the task of protecting their survivors and fostering their

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<sup>1</sup> Emiko Namihara, "Pollution in the Folk Belief System," *Current Anthropology* 28, no. 4, *Supplement: An Anthropological Profile of Japan*, (Aug.-Oct., 1987): 65, Accessed Feb. 19, 2012 [Http://www.jstor.org/stable/2743440](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2743440).

<sup>2</sup> Cullen Tadao Hayashida, "Identity, Race and the Blood Ideology of Japan." (Dissertation, University of Washington, 1976), 130.

prosperity.<sup>3</sup> Maintaining purity, or dispelling pollution, was by the eighth century not only a preoccupation of the First Estate. The inevitability of death meant that the purity/pollution dichotomy touched everyone, high and low.

It was during the Heian period (794-1185), and because of the cultural inflow from Korea and China, that the state of pollution was explicitly tied to the substance of blood. Prior to this period, death was a polluting event because death was the point of transition from the temporal world to the spiritual one. This transition polluted not only the deceased, but also those associated with it, i.e. the immediate family, the clergy, and the undertakers. The pollution of death subjected all to social taboos.<sup>4</sup> For the clergy and the undertakers, these were manifested in their outcaste status. For the bereaved, this was reflected in a period of exclusion from social and ritual life.

Childbirth and, to a lesser extent, menstruation were likewise liminal states that blurred the boundaries between this world and the next. As with death, these events prompted periods of exclusion under precisely the same rationale. Neither was thought of as problematic because of their associations with bodily fluids. But with the inflow from the continent of new strains of Buddhist thought, of Taoist beliefs and rituals, and of Korean folk practices, the locus of pollution migrated from the liminality of these events

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<sup>3</sup> Emiko Namihara, "Pollution in the Folk Belief System," *Current Anthropology* 28, no. 4, *Supplement: An Anthropological Profile of Japan*, (Aug.-Oct., 1987): 65-6, Accessed Feb. 19, 2012 [Http://www.jstor.org/stable/2743440](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2743440).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 66-8.

to the blood let during them.<sup>5</sup> In this migration, the concept of pollution was embodied in a physical substance, its presence dispelling the state of purity.

This conceptualization took hold over the course of Heian persisted in the following centuries. By the ninth century both the imperial court and the Ise shrine system regarded the “red uncleanness” (*aka fujō*) of menstruation and childbirth much the same as the “black uncleanness” of death (*kuro fujō*), as is evidenced by ever-extending embargo on postpartum women’s participation in Shinto rituals, and their restricted access to certain sacred spaces such as shrines and holy mountains.<sup>6</sup> In the early tenth century the concept of blood pollution was widespread enough to warrant mention in the legal code, the *Engishiki*. In the code, use of the word “blood”, for example, is proscribed within the Ise temple precincts as a taboo word to be replaced by the euphemism “sweat,” an admonition issued three times within the code’s first ten books.<sup>7</sup> The embargo period over women’s access to sacred spaces and events tripled in length between the eleventh and twelfth centuries.<sup>8</sup>

By the early Kamakura period (1185-1333), blood signified pollution, and granted the ancient abstract distinction between purity and pollution a physicality and imagery it

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<sup>5</sup> Cullen Tadao Hayashida, “Identity, Race and the Blood Ideology of Japan.” (Dissertation, University of Washington, 1976), 131.

<sup>6</sup> Emiko Namihara, “Pollution in the Folk Belief System,” *Current Anthropology* 28, no. 4, *Supplement: An Anthropological Profile of Japan*, (Aug.-Oct., 1987): 68, Accessed Feb. 19, 2012 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2743440>.

<sup>7</sup> Delmer Brown, “Japanese Historical Text Initiative: Engi Shiki,” *University of California at Berkeley*, Sept. 3, 2010. <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/jhti/Engi%20shiki.html>.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

previously lacked. In addition to becoming corporeal and visual, pollution through the medium of blood also became increasingly gendered. Menstruation and childbirth, the sources of the pollution, are distinctly feminine biological processes, and like death are ubiquitous in the day to day live of both the high and low, the secular and the ecclesiastical. The association of womanhood with the “red uncleanness” was not lost on society, and as blood pollution became normalized, it justified women’s increasingly diminished status in both the social and ecclesiastical spheres.<sup>9</sup> In daily village life, the “red uncleanness” did not merely proscribe access to sacred spaces, but also impinged on physical organization of the home and community. Menstruating and birthing women were often expected to go into seclusion in purpose-built outbuildings, and so spare their families and neighbors contact with “uncleanness.” Even in regions where such cloistering was not practiced, or less strictly observed, food for postpartum women was prepared and consumed separately.<sup>10</sup>

#### **THE BLOOD BOWL SUTRA AND THE FEMINIZATION OF BLOOD POLLUTION**

Despite the social inequities, it seems that prior to the introduction of the Blood-Bowl Sutra (*Ketsubon Kyō*) sometime in the fourteenth century, women were conceived of as vessels for pollution, as opposed to being polluted entities per se. With the introduction and dissemination of the Sutra, this distinction became less and less clear,

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<sup>9</sup> Paul Groner, *Ryōgen and Mount Hiei: Japanese Tendai in the Tenth Century*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2002), 256-7.

<sup>10</sup> Emiko Namihara, “Pollution in the Folk Belief System,” *Current Anthropology* 28, no. 4, *Supplement: An Anthropological Profile of Japan*, (Aug.-Oct., 1987): 68, Accessed Feb. 19, 2012 [Http://www.jstor.org/stable/2743440](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2743440).

and pollution became increasingly cast as an intrinsic feature of femininity. Blood then assumed dual significance; it was both a polluting agent and a signifier of intrinsic pollution.

Originating in China in 1194, the Sutra seems to have entered circulation in Japan in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth centuries.<sup>11</sup> The sutra itself is an account of the Blood Pool Hell, a vast “pond” of blood into which women are cast after death, and where they are confined and subject to all manner of torture. According to the Sutra, all women have earned a place in this special hell because they have polluted both the environment and others with their bleeding. Women shed blood during childbirth/menstruation, and so pollute the Earth and the gods. They wash their bloody clothing in the local river, and so pollute the water holy men use to brew their tea. In the Blood Pool Hell, they are forced to wallow in their collective natal/menstrual blood, and to endure beatings from devils with iron rods.<sup>12</sup> In what is presumably a touch of Buddhist karma, they may only quench their thirst by drinking from the pool, and so imbibe the pollution they presumably inflicted on others.

There are sixteen known versions of the Sutra, composed at different points in the Muromachi and Edo periods, each differing somewhat in terms of motif and content. The older sutras emphasize that the women’s suffering is due to their loss of blood in

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<sup>11</sup> Takemi Momoko, “‘Menstruation Sutra’ Belief in Japan,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 10, no. 2/3 (Jun.-Sep., 1983): 237-8, accessed Feb. 19, 2012 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30233304>.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 230-2.

childbirth. Over time the locus of damnation shifts from childbirth alone to childbirth and menstruation, and eventually to menstruation alone.<sup>13</sup>

The Sutra is not unique in asserting a female-specific hell. Such an assertion is traced back to the Heian period, and the *Nihon Ryōiki* (787-824), a Buddhist-themed collection of myths and folktales.<sup>14</sup> However, it was the Blood Bowl Sutra that explicitly argued that damnation was rooted in blood pollution, and universalized damnation for women by rooting blood pollution in menstruation. As the textual emphasis shifted from childbirth alone to menstruation alone, damnation consequently became cast as an intrinsic feature of womanhood. Not all women give birth; women can be infertile, or conceivably opt out of their reproductive roles by joining the clergy. Menstruation, on the other hand, is a biological process that characterized all women after puberty regardless of fertility or class. All women are polluted and all women are damned, and the source of their damnation is their menstrual blood.

#### **SŌTŌ ZEN AND THE DISSEMINATION OF BLOOD DETERMINISM**

The misogynistic lessons of the Blood Bowl Sutra were not limited to exegetes or the literate classes, but rather penetrated the general public across caste and regional boundaries, backed by the force of institutional religion and the centralized state.

The consolidation of political power by the Tokugawas in the early 17th century had the collateral effect of exposing large segments of society to the Sutra. The

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 230-5.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 238.

Tokugawa were preoccupied with stamping out Christianity, especially after the Shimabara Rebellion of 1637, and demanded that the populace provide proof of their non-Christian status. This proof was secured by receipt of a Certificate of Temple Registration (*Tera-uke Shūmon*), which certified that the holder was a parishioner in good standing at a Buddhist temple.<sup>15</sup> Buddhist temples quickly found themselves in a seller's market. Large swaths of the populace, which had not previously affiliated with any particular temple or Buddhist sect, needed to do so in order to establish their non-Christian standing.

This policy not only granted institutional Buddhism new parishioners, but captive parishioners as well. The Tokugawa authorities throughout their tenure were unyielding in their demands for certification, but they were also very reluctant to permit changes of temple or sect affiliation.<sup>16</sup> Once registered, the parishioner had little choice but to engage with the sect's ritual beliefs and practices to the temple's satisfaction. Failure to attend sermons, or participate in increasingly elaborate ritual calendars, or finance the suite of funerary rituals required for salvation of the deceased had significant consequences. Noncompliance could result in the revocation of one's certification of good standing, and re-registration in the special Outcaste registry.<sup>17</sup> The offending individual and his family would consequently be denied access to the most efficacious

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<sup>15</sup> Duncan Ryuuken Williams, *The Other Side of Zen: A Social History of Soto Zen Buddhism in Tokugawa Japan*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 18.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 30-1.

funerary rites, effectively condemning their souls to longer terms of damnation, and succeeding generations would be marked as heretics.

Compliance, then, was more frequently the path taken, and this exposed the population at large to the rituals and beliefs of sect Buddhism by forcing it to participate in them regardless of personal conviction or interest. Among these rituals and beliefs were those pertaining to the Blood Bowl Sutra. The Sutra was a fetish of Sōtō Zen, the largest, and most widespread of the Buddhist sects.<sup>18</sup> It was also the most market savvy. Between 1620 and 1650, Soto Zen built thousands of new temples and upgraded otherwise defunct facilities, concentrating their resources on rural expansion, establishing a presence in as many villages as practicable. The widespread presence of sect facilities allowed it to scoop up a large and diffuse share of the parishioner market when the Tokugawa edicts came into effect. By the 1670's, when temple registration was all but universal, Sōtō Zen boasted an unrivaled archipelago-wide system of 17,500 temples.<sup>19</sup> This previously minor sect and its ritual cannon thus had significant influence over the spiritual affairs of a demographically and geographically diverse swath of pre-modern Japan. Chief among its ritual offerings was the Blood Bowl Sutra, to which the sect claimed a special connection.

To its captive parishioners, Sōtō Zen priests taught that their womenfolk were inherently polluted. They stressed the reality and horrors of the Blood Pool Hell and

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 18-22.

underscored its inevitability.<sup>20</sup> In light of the certainty, the sect also emphasized the necessity of priestly services to alleviate their eventual suffering. To that point, the efficacy of Sōtō Zen's Sutras was preached, and the parishioners could expect to witness them first hand. The survivors of every woman would be pressured to purchase a copy of the Sutra and finance the requisite ritual to lead her soul into salvation. Having firmly established the existence of the very special hell, Sōtō Zen also supplied an escape. The temple *Shōsenji* was asserted to be the origin of the sutra, and was promoted as a center of feminine salvation.<sup>21</sup>

Sōtō Zen was not alone among the Buddhist sects in plaguing its parishioners with visions of the Blood Pool Hell, but the sect's size and scope made it the most influential in the day-to-day lives of the Tokugawa period Japanese. Its vigor in promoting Hell, and providing an effective escape, meant that for large swaths of the population damnation was as much an intrinsic part of womanhood as was the menstrual cycle and pregnancy.

By the 19th century the Blood Pool Hell was firmly ensconced in the metaphysical fabric of society, and the gendering of pollution was complete. An illustrative example is found in a commentary on the Sutra, the *Random Stories about the Buddhist Ceremonies - the Origin and Transmission of the Ketsubon Kyō (Kaie Rakusōtan – Ketsubon Kyō Ūshitsu Enyu no Suishu)*, published between 1801-33:

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 52-3.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 50-6.

Because they are born as women, their aspirations to Buddhahood are weak, and their jealousy and evil character are strong. These sins compounded become menstrual blood, which flows in two streams each month, polluting not only the earth god but all the other deities as well. Thus after death they will certainly fall into this Hell, where they will undergo unlimited suffering.<sup>22</sup>

By this time, blood had become both the signifier and determinant of intrinsic difference, in this case between men and women. It is not simply that women are polluted by blood, or that they are vessels for the pollution of others and their surroundings, but that polluting blood is a manifestation of the intrinsic moral and spiritual failings of womanhood.

#### **LINEAGE AND A NEW VOCABULARY**

The gendering of pollution, through the substance of menstrual/natal blood, fused blood conceptually with broader notions of inherency. During the tenure of the Tokugawa Shogunate, the diffusion of the Blood Bowl Sutra, near compulsory participation in its rituals, the inferior status of women and their physical/spiritual segregation, based on menstrual/natal blood, gave this fusion the weight of tradition and religious injunction underscored by state power.

The concept of blood, as a signifier of inherent feminine qualities and the determinate of feminine damnation, lent itself to more positive imagery; during the Edo period, it began to develop a connotation with “life force [and] lineage”, separate from but concurrent with its traditional connotation with pollution. The traditional signifiers of paternity and maternity respectively were bone (*kotsu*) and flesh (*niku*), and an

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<sup>22</sup> Takemi Momoko, “‘Menstruation Sutra’ Belief in Japan,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 10, no. 2/3 (Jun.-Sep., 1983): 235, accessed Feb. 19, 2012 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30233304>.

individual's bone-flesh (*kotsuniku*) referred to his or her heredity or lineage. As blood took on its second connotation, it supplanted the bone-flesh metaphor. Mid-nineteenth century documents concerning heredity, lineage, and familial ties were replete with blood (*ketsu*)-stemmed neologisms. Words such as bloodline (*ketto*), blood-relation (*ketsuen*), and blood-relative (*ketsuzoku*) were coined at this time, as evidenced by their appearance in literature, family registers, and Jesuit dictionaries.<sup>23</sup>

The potency of this image in Japanese society at this time is demonstrated by the fate of an alternative metaphor for heredity: seed (*tane*). Seed, clearly a euphemism for sperm, could denote paternity, and was in use from the tenth century, but unlike bone-flesh its utility survived the Shogunate. As Jennifer Robertson notes, "from the late nineteenth century onward," presumably because of the influx of Western biology and anatomy, "the Japanese-style term *hitodane* (lit. person [*hito*]seed [*t(d)ane*] was used to denote heredity in the sense of 'germ plasm,' as then understood."<sup>24</sup> Seed's utility as a metaphor for paternity persisted in the context of modern biological explanations of heredity, while bone-flesh was supplanted by blood. Presumably the image of a paternal seed being planted was an aesthetically satisfying representation for sperm-ovum interaction, and it continued to be used. Likewise, the image of blood as the substance invested with inherent and determinative qualities was more potent, or more aesthetically

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<sup>23</sup> Jennifer Robertson, "Blood Talks: Eugenic Modernity and the Creation of New Japanese," *History and Anthropology* 13, no. 3, (2002): 192-3.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

pleasing, than bone-flesh. Consequently, the new words were built around the ideograph for blood while bone-flesh was discarded.

By becoming a metaphor for lineage, the language and image of blood was able to demarcate a third, floating binary in Japanese society. This is to say that the most basic distinctions between in-group and out-group, between one lineage and another, family and non-family, were conceived of in terms of consanguinity (*ketsuzoku*, *ketsuen*). The degree of familial relationship between one individual and another were of course articulated before this time, and in fact were critically important in informing marital and adoption decisions. With a shift in vocabulary these relationships were thereafter, and retroactively, conceived of as *blood* relationships. An already significant substance became the operative criterion that defined familial and community boundaries, “us” from “them” on the most basic level.

Tokugawa social organization consequently gave blood legal significance as well, implicitly defining consanguineous units (the individual household) as atoms of the state. All households were members of a *goningumi*, units of five households (sometimes more) that were the intermediary organizational units between political and legal authority and individual households. Considering the long physical isolation of many rural communities, even after the Restoration, it is reasonable to conclude that the *goningumi* were to greater and lesser degrees comprised of interrelated families.

## Chapter Two: Bloodlines in Modern Japanese Society

### A STATE WITHOUT A NATION

At the time of the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the realm lacked a unified, pan-archipelago identity around which to coalesce, and establishing the boundaries of such an identity became a principle preoccupation of the Meiji regime. The Meiji nation-builders found in blood a particularly useful tool for defining Self and Other on a national scale.

The modern national appellation, Japanese (*Nihonjin*), is a unitary descriptor signifying political citizenship (*kokumin*), race (*jinshu*), and ethnicity (*minzoku*).<sup>25</sup> This conflation, taken for granted today, is an artifact of Meiji era nation building.

“Citizenship”, “race” and “ethnicity” were all Meiji neologisms crafted to accommodate European concepts with no native analogues. The distinctions between these terms were ambiguous in Japan as they were abroad; in popular discourse they were used interchangeably, and in academic, they were constantly revised and refined. The semantics of self-identification in Japan are significant because the novelty and ambiguity of these terms reflected the novelty and ambiguity of a distinctly Japanese subjectivity.

Of course, there was some sense of shared identity relative to overseas peoples up to the Tokugawa period, but this was limited to the political and intellectual elite. At its most basic, it was rooted in the Sinocentric worldview that situated countries into either

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<sup>25</sup> John Lie, *Multiethnic Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 145.

Civilization or Barbary.<sup>26</sup> This was a fairly esoteric distinction that had little currency among the geographically widespread and socially fractured populace.

Prior to the Restoration, the principle modes of popular self-identification were based either on one's caste membership or feudal domain (*han*), and the Tokugawa military government (*bakufu*) positively cultivated these parochial identities throughout its tenure. A divided populace was less apt to find common cause and threaten the supremacy of the *bakufu*. Castes were theoretically endogamous and circumscribed who one could socialize, marry and reproduce with. But they also defined an individual's occupation, obligations, and privileges. Caste distinctions were expressed both spatially and visually, and Tokugawa regulations defined where and how one could be seen by others. The merchants, artisans, and peasants were prohibited from wearing certain colors and the most luxuriant materials. The samurai were not to be seen by the rest at the theater or without their swords. The Outcastes and their polluted industries were physically confined to their segregated villages and away from mainstream society.

The nearly 300 domains comprised a feudal web of statelets with varying degrees of autonomy, and were further divided by significant differences in custom and language. Restrictions on non-official, non-pilgrimage travel kept much of the population pinned in place. Regional endogamy was naturally high as opportunities for inter-domain marriages were low, and travelers from one domain regarded the peoples and customs of

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<sup>26</sup> Gary P. Leupp, *Interracial Intimacy in Japan: Western Men and Japanese Women, 1543-1900* (London: Continuum, 2003), 34-5.

a neighboring domain as foreign.<sup>27</sup> In point of fact the modern word for “country” (*kuni*), was in Tokugawa times used to describe domains. Between castes, domains, and Tokugawa self-interest, the development of a popular transnational identity was severely inhibited despite the negligible inflow of foreign influences.

Blood, as an image linked to heredity, became a principle conceptual tool in overcoming these parochial identities and in establishing the post-Restoration imagined community. As a metaphor and vocabulary for lineage, it developed in time for the encounter with the West and *its* conception of Selfdom and Otherness. Because it was amenable to both native ideology and the Western concept of race, blood was an ideal image around which to bind the castes and domains into a Japanese Self while setting them apart from the myriad of Others.

#### **THE FORMULATION OF THE FAMILY- STATE**

The concept of the family-state simply projected a natural and familiar set of power-relationships, the individual households and *goningumi*, onto a nation-wide canvas. The value of this concept to the Meiji oligarchs and nation-builders is clear. To conceive of the state as an extended family and the Meiji emperor as its father is to appeal to traditional and normative notions of filial piety and loyalty. The crux of the family-state was the emperor and the imperial line, which had a social position and history above and beyond the popular loci of identity, caste and domain. As Hozumi Yatsuka, a professor of law at Tokyo Imperial University in the 1890s put it, “to be

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<sup>27</sup> Michael Weiner, *Race and Migration in Imperial Japan* (London: Routledge, 1994), 13-4.

obedient to the family head is to be obedient to the spirits of the ancestors... [and] the present emperor sits on the throne in the place of the imperial ancestors.”<sup>28</sup>

Acknowledging the emperor as the national father necessitated loyalty to him analogous and superordinate to that owed to one’s own father and ancestors.

The family-state, as it would develop in the latter half of the nineteenth century, was not simply metaphorical. Its linchpin, the imperial lineage, was an unbroken bloodline that traced back to the first human emperor, Jimmu. This progenitor was a demi-god, the son of the sun goddess Amaterasu Okami, and a descendant of the creator deities. Just as the imperial line claimed divinity, so to did the Japanese populace, since all were ultimately descendant from Jimmu’s formative kingdom.<sup>29</sup> Aside from foregrounding lineage, this imperial ideology also evoked the more traditional blood-based binary of purity and pollution. The continuity of the imperial line, and the absence of any foreign invasion or mass migration since its inception, meant that both the emperor and his subjects remained *purely* Japanese.

The ideological underpinnings for the family-state, and the acceptance of the mythical history of the imperial line as more or less factual, were not fabricated from whole cloth. They were rooted in the intellectual-religious tradition of the National Learning (*Kokugaku*). This was a proto-nationalist discourse, dating from the seventeenth century, which sought to displace the cultural and intellectual supremacy of

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<sup>28</sup> W.G. Beasley, *The Rise of Modern Japan* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990), 80.

<sup>29</sup> Mark J. Hudson, *Ruins of Identity: Ethnogenesis in the Japanese Islands* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999), 35.

China by asserting the primacy of native values and cultural forms. Its leading figures, such as Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801) and Hirata Atsutane (1776-1842), asserted the literality of the mythical accounts in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon Shoki*, and sought to disentangle a superior native Shinto from Buddhism.<sup>30</sup> This disentanglement was often conceptualized as purification; foreign cultural traditions and ideologies were a form of pollution.<sup>31</sup>

Though the National Learning was limited in its audience to the literate elite, and so had little currency among the populace, it had its champions among the Meiji oligarchs. Elements of the National Learning were diffused among the general public in the Great Teaching campaign (*Taikyō*) of 1872, which conflated civic duty and dedication to the government's agenda with reverence for the emperor and Shinto.<sup>32</sup> This conflation became more explicit and more formal with the Imperial Rescript on Education (1890) and regulations controlling the content of the new compulsory education system. From 1903, students would be taught an "absolutist interpretation of the emperor's position in the state...[and] a 'family' concept of his relationship to his subjects."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Time to the Present*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 44-5.

<sup>31</sup> Helen Hardacre, *Shintō and the State 1868-1988* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 66-7.

<sup>32</sup> W.G. Beasley, *The Rise of Modern Japan* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 81-2.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

In what amounted to enforced popularization of previously esoteric mythology, all individual bloodlines, regardless of caste or domain, were understood to trace back to the formative Yamato people, Jimmu, and Amaterasu Okami. By emphasizing common descent from this pater and mater familias, and by proxy the contemporary Meiji Emperor, the newly minted citizens of Japan could conceive of themselves as members of an in-group writ large, an underlying and ancient blood-kin network that transcended parochial identities. By metaphorizing the state in terms of paternal consanguinity, the Japanese had a comprehensible focus for their transcendent loyalty.

The image of family was a useful one to differentiate a national Self from Other, aside from its comprehensibility, because the family that was postulated was a unique and exceptional one. The Japanese could take pride in it, notwithstanding the unequal treaties and Japan's semi-colonial status in the wake of the Restoration. It was ancient and divine, qualities that evoked communal purity. The promulgation of National Foundation Day in 1872 marked not the overthrow of the Shogunate, but the supposed ascension of Jimmu on February 11th, 660 B.C. By projecting the imagined continuity of the Japanese nation/blood-kin network backwards in time more than 2,500 years, the state established a community that was unique among the nations of the world. None of the Western empires could boast such a pedigree, and even the Chinese state, ancient as it was, had undergone numerous dynastic changes. In rooting their subjectivity in blood and lineage, the Japanese were able to project a positive image that embraced qualities inherent and unique to the Japan.

## CIVIL CODE AND CONSTITUTION

Blood's utility as an "organizing metaphor" extended beyond symbolism and ideology, and into the milieu of legal relationships that defined an individuals' legal status and rights in relation to others and to the State. The emperor's status, his divinity and his patriarchal relationship to his subjects, was formalized in the first chapter of the Meiji constitution.<sup>34</sup> The 1899 Meiji citizenship law established the principle of patrilineal *jus sanguinus* (right of blood) as the basic criterion for citizenship in the Japanese family-state.<sup>35</sup> The privileges and obligations of citizenship intersected with all three axes of blood-significance; purity, gender, and lineage.

The *goningumi* were dispensed with, and individual households, webs of blood and adoptive relationships, were deemed "the smallest legal unit of society."<sup>36</sup> While the nation was argued to be an expanded family, the family was conversely rendered a miniature component of the state. When recorded in the national registry (*koseki*) their composition became a matter of legal, public record.<sup>37</sup> In so far as this registry recorded instances of hereditary disease, mental illness, or Outcaste/foreign heritage in the family lineage, this record would play an important (and ongoing) role in circumscribing an individual's opportunities for marriage, housing, and employment. Regarding an

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>35</sup> Erin Aeran Chung, *Immigration and Citizenship in Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 61.

<sup>36</sup> Jennifer Robertson, "Blood Talks: Eugenic Modernity and the Creation of New Japanese," *History and Anthropology* 13, no. 3, (2002): 192.

<sup>37</sup> John Lie, *Multiethnic Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 120.

individual citizen's rights of succession and inheritance within the household, the civil code recognized biological "father-to-son succession as the most general, normative pattern of household continuity",<sup>38</sup> thus elevating blood relationships over adoptive ones. Blood was codified as the primary determinate of legal standing within all levels of the national community.

### **EUGENICS AND THE RATIONALIZATION OF BLOODLINES**

Eugenics was among the Western scientific disciplines imported into Japan after the Restoration, and it provided Japan the modern scientific framework to rationalize and manage these blood relationships. Coined in 1883 by British biologist (and cousin of Darwin) Francis Galton, the word simply means "good birth". As Galton stated it, the science of eugenics is that "which deals with all influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race; also with those that develop them to the utmost advantage."<sup>39</sup>

In many respects, the practice of eugenics in Japan long predates its coinage in the West. The Taihō Law Codes, promulgated in 701 A.D. and more or less in effect until the collapse of the Tokugawa regime, considered the manifestation of hereditary disease grounds for divorce.<sup>40</sup> The principle that biological and mental defects ought not to be

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<sup>38</sup> Jennifer Robertson, "Blood Talks: Eugenic Modernity and the Creation of New Japanese," *History and Anthropology* 13, no. 3, (2002): 192-3.

<sup>39</sup> Francis Galton, "Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope, and Aims," in *The American Journal of Sociology* X, no.1, (July 1904): n.p.

<sup>40</sup> Cullen Tadao Hayashida, "Identity, Race and the Blood Ideology of Japan." (Dissertation, University of Washington, 1976), 132.

passed into healthy lineages was codified by the state from its earliest incarnation. At the popular level, marriages (and ultimately reproduction) were arranged (*omiai kekkon*) and negotiations mediated by a community elder (*nakado*), whose function was to inquire into the family histories of the prospective couple. These inquiries were meant to discreetly establish the families' social statuses, and to discover the presences of pollution in the one or the other party's lineage; a history of "mental illness, physical deformity, leprosy, criminality, suicide, epilepsy, color-blindness, hemophilia, feeble-mindedness...[and] alcoholism" constituted such pollution.<sup>41</sup> The discovery of such pollution in one's lineage presumably inhibited the ability of individuals to marry and reproduce, and this reflected a concern with maintaining and refining the purity of one's familial lineage.

The international eugenics movement that developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries simply represented the scientific rationalization of such traditional considerations. Filtered through the hegemonies of race and social Darwinism, this rationalization became a matter of national importance in Japan as it did elsewhere. In Japan, however, the adoption of eugenic principles was further mediated by imperial ideology and the conception of the family-state. The focus of Japanese eugenics was often explicitly blood, and its goal the purification of blood. Blood was conceptually the substance being acted upon, physically the substance under scientific

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 138, 187.

scrutiny, and rhetorically the image that made eugenic discipline comprehensible to the public and to policy makers.

### **Race, Science, and the Introduction of Eugenic Thought**

Imperial ideology and the family-state were promulgated with the purpose of building a coherent and unified national identity. This nation-building project necessarily accommodated the foreign ideologies of race and scientific discipline. The European concept of race was a conflation of biological, physical, cultural, and moral characteristics of a given population. It was also recognized, especially in Europe, as the most legitimate basis for a state's political sovereignty, and for the unification (even by war) of populations with presumed racial affinities. In the context of Western imperialism, race was the rhetorical and conceptual basis undergirding the political, cultural, and economic domination of the West over much of Africa and Asia. In Japan Imperial Ideology, which asserted a common biological and spiritual lineage over the peoples of Japan, and a communal uniqueness often articulated as purebloodedness, served as a native analogue for the hegemonic concept of race. Race, then, became synonymous with communal blood, and pureblood became the signature distinction of the Japanese race.

The acceptance of the concept of race and the social Darwinian posture assumed by the West supplied external pressure on the Japanese to rationalize and manage the national blood-pool. Japan's traditional caste system furnished a salient domestic motivation as well. As described previously, the Tokugawa regime rendered the somewhat fluid caste system more static than it had previously been. Two and a half

centuries of stasis had produced the perception of discrete blood pools, particularly at the system's extremities. On one end were the Outcastes, whose long confinement to impure occupations rendered their polluted status intrinsic and heritable down bloodlines.<sup>42</sup> The violent response to the prospect of Outcaste liberation that followed the abolition of the caste system in 1871, reflected popular anxiety over the ability of the Outcastes' to mingle their polluted bloodlines into the pureblooded mainstream. On the other end were the samurai. The former aristocratic class, which supplied much of the country's leadership, was after 1871 free to intermarry with the often-wealthier lower castes. The inherent qualities that set the samurai above the mainstream were threatened by this potential mass miscegenation, and required measures to preserve them.

The national blood purity promulgated by imperial ideology, then, was acknowledged to be neither uniform nor inviolable. It was in this vein that Fukuzawa Yukichi introduced the mainline arguments of Galton's work (*Hereditary Genius*) into Japanese public discourse in his 1881 publication, *Comment on Current Affairs (Jiji Shōgen)*.<sup>43</sup> Fukuzawa was sympathetic to eugenic ideas, and elaborated on them further in his 1896 *One Hundred Essays of Mr. Fukuzawa (Fukuō hyakuwa)*, in which he agreed

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<sup>42</sup> Cullen Tadao Hayashida, "Identity, Race and the Blood Ideology of Japan." (Dissertation, University of Washington, 1976), 184.

<sup>43</sup> Yuehtsen Juliette Chung, *Struggle for National Survival: Eugenics in Sino-Japanese Contexts, 1896-1945*. (New York: Routledge, 2002), 13.

that the principles of animal husbandry could and should be applied to the human population in the interests of national development.<sup>44</sup>

While Fukuzawa began stressing the need for internal surveillance to maintain purity, his protégé Takahashi Yoshio addressed the problem of Japanese racial inferiority relative to the West. The concepts of race and science, though amenable to the imperial ideology and the nation-building program, also entailed a science-based racial hierarchy that needed to be negotiated. The Japanese were seemingly obliged to accept a functionally immutable order of races in which the Caucasians were ensconced at the top.<sup>45</sup> Though this inferiority was not accepted wholesale, there seems to have been a willingness to concede a few phenotypical points to the West; the Japanese, after all, were on average physically smaller than populations in the West, and insofar as this disparity impacted martial and economic capacity, it required correction. Takahashi argued in an 1884 essay, *A Treatise on the Betterment of the Japanese Race (Nippon Jinshu Kairyōn)*, that parity with the West could be achieved by the “mixed-marriage of yellows and whites” (*kōhaku zakkon*). Taller and more physically robust Western women, when paired with Japanese men, would impart their superior physical characteristics into the Japanese race, and thereby improve it.<sup>46</sup> This argument was

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>45</sup>James R. Bartholomew and Sumiko Otsubo, “Eugenics in Japan: Some Ironies of Modernity, 1883-1945,” *Science in Context* 11, no. 3-4 (1998): 546.

<sup>46</sup> Jennifer Robertson, “Blood Talks: Eugenic Modernity and the Creation of New Japanese,” *History and Anthropology* 13, no. 3, (2002): 197.

attacked, and defeated, two years later by intellectual heavyweight Katō Hiroyuki, whose critique was published in the *Tōkyō Nichinichi Shinbun*, and the academic *Oriental Arts and Sciences* (*Tōyō Gakugei*). His rebuttal summed up what would become the prevailing attitude towards racial purity among the Japanese:

Miscegenation...would result in race *transformation* and not race betterment, and would over the course of several generations, seriously dilute the pure blood – or racial and cultural essence - of the Japanese...whereas mixed-blood marriages between yellows and whites would insure the “complete defeat” (*zenpai*) of Japan by Westerners, pure-bloodedness would insure for eternity Japan’s distinctive racial history, culture, and social system.<sup>47</sup>

The Japanese incarnation of eugenics, then, conceived of racial improvement in two aspects. The first was the maintenance and refinement of blood purity. Purity was synonymous with the intrinsic characteristics of the Japanese, and purity was the most salient racial quality Japan could bring to the social Darwinian contest. As it was subject to adulteration from both external and internal sources of pollution, the external sources would be barred, and the internal sources isolated. The second was the body. The size, weight, and height of the average Japanese was a marker of racial fitness relative to the Caucasians. Only the conscientious management of internal bloodlines could achieve both these goals.

### **Popular Eugenics**

In pursuit of these goals, the eugenicists already had a ready audience. The Meiji Civil Code established bloodline the primary determinate of property inheritance,

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<sup>47</sup> Jennifer Robertson, “Blood Talks: Eugenic Modernity and the Creation of New Japanese,” *History and Anthropology* 13, no. 3, (2002): 197-8.

and the National Registry offered individuals (and private enterprise) a readily accessible record of bloodline purity when considering marriage (or employment). The period from 1900 to 1930 saw a proliferation of eugenics-themed journals, societies, research foundations, and initiatives. All were aimed at educating the public to view their bodies as malleable, and to invest their marriage decisions with national as well as personal significance.

Among these endeavors included The Greater Japan Eugenics Society in 1917 (Dai Nihon Yūseikai), and the Society of Eugenics in 1925 (Nihon Yūsei Gakkai) which would ultimately lead to the establishment of Japan's first eugenic research foundation, and its first eugenics-themed journal, *Eugenics* (*Yūseigaku*). These instruments served to educate the public and introduce it to both domestic and foreign eugenics research.<sup>48</sup>

The 1915 revision of the biology textbook *On Life* (*Seimeiron*), by Nagai Hisomu, included a lengthy discussion on eugenic science and became a best seller. *Human Heredity*, a work by biologist Yamanouchi Shigeo, followed up its success in 1916. Both *On Life* and *Human Heredity* were of the first serious works to articulate eugenic science for popular consumption,<sup>49</sup> and the ideas they put forward would have a formative impact on how eugenics was received in Japan. A physiologist by training, Nagai was also a philosopher, and among his philosophical influences was French

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<sup>48</sup> James R. Bartholomew and Sumiko Otsubo, "Eugenics in Japan: Some Ironies of Modernity, 1883-1945," *Science in Context* 11, no. 3-4 (1998): 554-6.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 553-7.

naturalist Jean Baptiste Lamarck.<sup>50</sup> This is significant because Lamarckism, which preceded Darwin by decades, advocated a theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics. This is to say that an organism's environment had an influence on the organism's body. This somatic adaptation to environment would then be transmitted to its offspring via blood. It was necessarily through the blood stream that updated genetic information traveled from the altered tissues to lodge in the body's germ cells (sperm and ovum).

From the perspective of contemporary genetic science, this conception of inheritance was no longer current. Gregor Mendel's theory of inheritance, validated experimentally in Japan and elsewhere, postulated that hereditary material was confined to the body's germ cells and not subject to somatic alteration. This was reinforced by the germ plasm theory of August Weismann, which held that the membrane surrounding the germ cells (germ plasm) was impermeable.<sup>51</sup> Yet, the form of inheritance disseminated among the public through the educational efforts and activism of the eugenics movement was "implicitly [and] explicitly Lamarckian."<sup>52</sup>

Lamarckian inheritance, visualized as acting through the physical medium of blood, was comprehensible to a public educated under the auspices of the Imperial Rescript on Education and a steady diet of imperial ideology. As Katō Hiroyuki argued

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 557.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 552.

<sup>52</sup> Jennifer Robertson, "Blood Talks: Eugenic Modernity and the Creation of New Japanese," *History and Anthropology* 13, no. 3, (2002): 196.

years previously, blood was the locus of the inherent cultural qualities that defined a unique Japanese subjectivity; it was only natural that blood conveyed more mundane information as well. More practically, Lamarckian inheritance circumvented the gloomy inefficacy of a strictly Mendelian approach to personal and racial betterment, by rendering participation in social programs and personal activism directly and immediately efficacious on the quality of one's bloodline. In the aggregate, social reforms not only improved the quality of the current generation, but collaterally the next as well.

The Lamarckian inflection of Japanese eugenics would reap dividends on the activist front, where eugenicists sponsored campaigns to establish basic eugenic discipline among the population, and forward an ideal physical type. The first of these campaigns was that against consanguineous marriage (*ketsuzoku kekkon*), which were unions between first and second-degree relations. Given the importance of status under the caste system, and often-profound geographic isolation, this phenomenon was particularly prevalent in the countryside. Such unions were understood to be deleterious on genetic grounds, and embarrassing on civilizational ones. Government statistics estimated the share of total marriages in Japan that were consanguineous to be sixteen percent in the 1920s, as opposed to three percent in England in the 1910s. They were argued to be unhygienic on the grounds that they could awake "latent defect[s]" hidden away in otherwise pure bloodlines. "Latent defect[s]" referred to maladies such as alcoholism, feeble-mindedness, physical and mental disabilities, leprosy, and

tuberculosis;<sup>53</sup> in other words, the traditional manifestations of lineage/bloodline pollution.

The eugenicists sponsored roving multimedia “hygiene exhibitions” (*eisei tenrankai*) that featured academic lectures on the dangers of “blood marriages”, provided by medical professionals and university professors. Visuals were provided to underscore these lectures, which included the display of grotesques to make tangible the possible outcomes of persistent un-eugenic behavior. The exhibitions were evidently quite popular, being attended by the public in their thousands.<sup>54</sup> Through such education-entertainment, the public was exposed to a digestible, and occasionally visceral, form of eugenic principles. It was also conditioned to modify otherwise traditional marriage practice on the grounds that it might introduce blood pollution into their bloodlines where it hadn’t existed before.

Eugenicists were not content that the public learn who not to marry, but rather that they should cast a more critical gaze on seemingly acceptable partners, and contextualize individual reproductive decisions in terms of national/racial betterment. One strategy to achieve these ends was to provide the public with the image of an ideal type. This would serve as an image for emulation, a physical manifestation of blood purity in counterpoint to the latent defects highlighted in the anti-consanguineous marriage campaigns.

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<sup>53</sup> Jennifer Robertson, “Blood Talks: Eugenic Modernity and the Creation of New Japanese,” *History and Anthropology* 13, no. 3, (2002): 200-1.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 201-2.

The Japan Eugenic Exercise/Movement Association, founded by the medically trained journalist-activist Ikeda Shigenori, established a series of “eugenic-marriage counseling centers” (*yūsei kekkon sōdansho*) in department stores in major cities in 1927. Ikeda’s mission with the Association was to further popularize eugenic principles among the urban classes, and to establish the parameters of the ideal physical type. These centers provided instruction on eugenics and basic racial hygiene. The centers’ matchmaking services utilized “autobiographical health certificates” to pair prospective couples together. These of course included personal lineage histories, but the data compiled was also used to establish an ideal type; such a woman was 154cm x 80cm, 51kg, and no more than 21 years old. A man should be 165cm x 84cm, 58kg and no more than 25. The ideal number of children for the ideal couple to produce, incidentally, was eight.<sup>55</sup>

The fruits of eugenic marriages were eugenic children, and quantifiably eugenic children were celebrated in the press and in public. For example, the *Tokyo* and *Osaka Asahi Shinbun*, prompted by the eugenicists, hosted a contest to identify the most “eugenically fit children in Japan”. Out of more than a quarter of a million entries, photographs of the champions and semi-finalists were published, “along with charts detailing their physical measurements, medical histories, educational backgrounds, and maternal and paternal genealogies.”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 202-3.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 199.

In a sense, this was all simply a more rationalized version of traditional reproductive considerations. The significant difference was that now these personal considerations had measurements, and significance to the national collective. The eugenicists worked to supplant the traditional marriage arrangers, and simply added new criteria for a desirable match to the old. In tabulating and projecting biometrically ideal types, and by combining these data with lineage history, the eugenicists allowed couples to view themselves in reference to a visualized national/racial average. Blood purity was quantifiable and comprehensible. Photographs of the biometrically ideal spouse and child, the implicit or explicit product of good genes, good education, and good behavior, gave blood quality a certain physicality. The path to both familial and racial betterment was realizable through individual life decisions in the here and now.

### **State Eugenics**

On March 8, 1940 the Diet passed into law the National Eugenic Bill (Kokumin Yūsei Hōan). The law had been introduced two years previously by the newly minted Ministry of Health and Welfare (Kōseishō). It identified a field of “genetic diseases and deformities requiring sterilization”, established the terms by which medical doctors could perform sterilizations on individuals suffering from venereal and chronic diseases, and granted the MHW the authority to order sterilization in cases it deemed appropriate. Earlier incarnations of the bill were even more liberal in their application of sterilization procedures. The individuals targeted for treatment included not only sufferers of genetic and venereal diseases, but also included the unintelligent, the alcoholic, the

hysterical, and perpetrators of “pathological crimes”;<sup>57</sup> in other words, “treatment” was prescribed for those marked with traditional blood pollution. The establishment of the Ministry of Health and Welfare and the passage of the National Eugenic Bill represented the extent to which the state would attempt to directly manage the purity of the national bloodlines.

The government would formally, if slowly, adopt a eugenic posture under the pressure of eugenics’ increasing ubiquity at home and abroad. The International Commission of Eugenics could boast fifteen full member states by 1924, including each of the major imperial powers (France, Germany, Great Britain, Russia, and the United States), and seven more “eligible for cooperation.”<sup>58</sup> The Lamarckian inflections of the eugenicists’ claims to public certainly helped endear them to the state. The notion of acquired characteristics conveyed through the bloodstream cast government initiatives such as universal male conscription (1873) as doubly efficacious towards national development. Throughout the 1920s and 30s the government became increasingly amenable to the eugenicists’ arguments, largely through the lobbying of the aforementioned Nagai Hisomu, as is evidenced by its willingness to co-sponsor the eugenicists’ campaigns; the Ministry of Education backed the eugenic children contest while the Home Ministry supported the anti-blood marriage exhibitions. Yet, the appeal of eugenics to the government was principally in terms of public health.

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<sup>57</sup> Yuehtsen Juliette Chung, *Struggle for National Survival: Eugenics in Sino-Japanese Contexts, 1896-1945*. (New York: Routledge, 2002), 93.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

Japan was faced with a tremendous number of public health problems in the wake of the Restoration, and these problems would in short order be framed in reference to blood purity. Despite the government's massive investment in training medical personnel, epidemic disease remained a festering sore for the state well into the twentieth century. Tuberculosis reached epidemic status in the years between 1880 and 1900, and did not subside until the postwar introduction of antibiotics. Mortality during this period was between two and three times higher than it was in Europe. Venereal disease and mental illness were also distressingly high. By 1930, cases of the latter were increasing by 3000 persons annually.<sup>59</sup> Leprosy was a particularly embarrassing problem simply because Japan compared so unfavorably to the West in its eradication. The recorded 30,359 lepers in 1900 did fall to 11,326 by 1940, but this was compared with the mere 1000 cases in the United States in 1930.

The persistence of such dreadful diseases was problematic for a number of practical reasons, beyond simply the wellbeing of the populace. High rates of debilitating illness reduced the manpower for the military and the productivity of the workforce. In the social Darwinian context, it marked Japan as less fit relative to its peer nations. However, the Japanese articulated their distress with these diseases in terms of blood pollution. Leprosy was one of the traditional blood pollutants, as were in fact all of these hereditary and epidemic diseases. Appeals to blood purity were repeatedly used in framing leprosy less as a human resource (or moral) problem, and more as a threat to

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 70.

Japanese subjectivity. In 1923, while speaking before an international audience at the Third International Convention of Leprosy, an expert on disease in India named Mitsuda Kensuki argued that it was an “inconceivable disgrace” for leprosy to exist at all in the pureblooded nation. In 1928, a former leprosy missionary Mikami Chiyo framed his work against the disease as a movement towards racial purification.<sup>60</sup> For these impurities to persist in pureblooded nation, while they dwindled in mixed-blooded countries such as the United States and India, was an embarrassing incongruity with imperial ideology.

In 1927 the Diet approved a proposal by the Ministry of Home Affairs’ Hygiene Committee to establish a national leprosy asylum to segregate those lepers known to have raped, murdered, gambled, or who were otherwise troublemakers. These individuals, who considering their illness *and* criminality were from a traditional standpoint doubly polluted. From the government’s they were doubly undesirable, and were given the option of sterilization.<sup>61</sup> Despite the fact that leprosy was a non-hereditary disease, it was regarded as something to be attacked genetically, through sterilization, and on the grounds that it defiled the pure blood of the nation. Sterilization or the denial of marriage certificates, were also regarded as solutions for a variety of non-heritable diseases, including tuberculosis, syphilis, mental illness, alcoholism, and feeble-mindedness. A 1930 version of the 1940 National Eugenic Bill in fact *mandated*

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 86-7.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 86-7.

the sterilization of individuals so afflicted prior to marriage.<sup>62</sup> This posture clearly reflected society's long-standing aversion to pollution, and the contemporary desire to purify the national body of its traditional impurities.

With this view in mind, social problems such as epidemic disease and criminality could be excised from the national body at the source. This was an appealing prospect for the government because it rendered blood purification both comprehensible and quantifiable. Much as the hygiene exhibitions and eugenic marriage counseling centers provided the public with clear and efficacious paths towards blood purification, so to did sterilization offer the government a clear and efficacious path towards national racial betterment.

#### **FROM OUTCASTES TO BURAKUMIN**

By the Second World War, Japanese society at all levels was being increasingly conditioned to think of itself and its reproductive decisions in terms of bloodlines. Eugenic marriages for the betterment of individual families and the nation as a whole meant the conscientious isolation of impurities, signified by a host of visual criterion; traditional ones, such as illness, deformities, and behavioral pathologies, and newer ones such as the biometrically ideal physical type.

In a sense the racialization of the *Burakumin* was a natural outcome of imperial ideology and eugenic discipline. Given the preoccupation with blood purity in prewar society, a body of explicitly polluted individuals would be ostracized. What makes the

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 88.

*Burakumin* a special case is the fact that their historical status as Outcastes itself was perceived to be the pollutant and this was not manifested by visual signifiers. Blood does not in reality, and despite the wishful imaginings of eugenicists, project its purity or impurity outwardly. The *Burakumin*, as internal others, were particularly problematic because they represented an invisible threat to the ability of the eugenically conscious Japanese to police their own bloodlines.

### **Outcastness as Pollution**

The *Burakumin* were formerly the Tokugawa era *kawata*, *eta* and *himin*.<sup>63</sup> The outcastes were those individuals who worked in impure or polluted occupations, and who by association were deemed impure and polluted. These occupations involved contact with the dead and with blood, and so included midwives, undertakers, executioners, butchers, tanners, and leatherworkers.<sup>64</sup> Many of these industries were of strategic military importance and were essential to the day-to-day functioning of society.<sup>65</sup> Leather was a primary component in armor, and people the world over expire with distressing inevitability.

Precisely what constituted an impure occupation varied over time and from place to place. In certain places and at certain times, Outcaste occupation and its attendant status

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<sup>63</sup> June Gordon, *Japan's Outcaste Youth: Education for Liberation* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2008), 16-7.

<sup>64</sup> Gary P. Leupp, *Interracial Intimacy in Japan: Western Men and Japanese Women, 1543-1900* (London: Continuum, 2003), 91.

<sup>65</sup> Ian J. Neary, "Burakumin in Contemporary Japan," in *Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Michael Weiner (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 54.

could be a simple matter of fiat.<sup>66</sup> But in other times, such the “warring states” period of the 15th and 16th centuries, were rife with opportunities for physical and social mobility by which one might escape from or fall into Outcaste status.<sup>67</sup>

Though the castes during the long reign of the Tokugawa were theoretically endogamous, exogamy did regularly occur. Caste status was decoupled from wealth, with the samurai having all the status and power, and the economically productive peasants and merchants accumulating the wealth. Over time this disparity between birth status and wealth placed a pressure on the system in which limited caste jumping was a release valve. Wealthy peasants and merchants might buy or marry their way into samurai status, and impoverished samurai might forsake their swords and slide into peasantry. However, this was not a possibility for the majority of the population, least of all for the Outcastes.

Outcaste status was not simply a matter of occupying the lowest rung on the status hierarchy. It was circumscribed by legal, physical, and religious isolation. Outcastes were marked by clothing, and diet (they had access to meat), as well as their living space (the windows of their homes could not face the road). They were not permitted to enter mainstream towns after dark, or sacred spaces. Families who were forced to leave their land could find refuge in the Outcaste areas. One’s occupation ceased to be the factor,

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 53-4.

<sup>67</sup> Gary P. Leupp, *Interracial Intimacy in Japan: Western Men and Japanese Women, 1543-1900* (London: Continuum, 2003), 35.

which switched to bloodline about 1600.<sup>68</sup> They were not even permitted to own land. In line with the long-lived conceptions of pollution that segregated women and the bereaved, during their menstrual cycle or after the death of a family member, an individual who daily handled the bloody corpse of a deceased animal was subject to permanent exile from the mainstream community. Occupational pollution, logically, did not fade away with time, and the Outcaste's segregation in suburban villages signified this permanence.<sup>69</sup> It was also the source of their modern appellation, *buraku-min*, literally "people of the village".

The temple registration system hardened the lines between the Outcastes and mainstream society by casting Outcaste status as the conceptual antithesis of pious, Buddhist orthodoxy, and by threatening non-conformists with inscription onto the Outcaste registry. The Tokugawa required every individual to account for their non-Christian status by registering with a Buddhist temple and securing a certificate of good standing.<sup>70</sup> Though the registration system was originally conceived to extirpate Christianity from the population, it quickly evolved into a mechanism for enforcing orthodox belief and defining heretical behavior. Good standing effectively meant full participation in the temple's ritual calendar and compliance with its regulations.

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<sup>68</sup> Ian J. Neary, "Burakumin in Contemporary Japan," in *Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Michael Weiner (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 54-5.

<sup>69</sup> June Gordon, *Japan's Outcaste Youth: Education for Liberation* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2008), 2.

<sup>70</sup> Duncan Ryuuken Williams, *The Other Side of Zen: A Social History of Soto Zen Buddhism in Tokugawa Japan*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 14.

Non-participation meant expulsion from the mainstream registry and re-registration as an outcaste. Re-registration was a serious event that carried consequences both for the offender's soul and for his or her family. An outcaste was not entitled to the temple's full, and most efficacious, rituals for purifying the dead of the taint of death and securing their salvation. Outcastes were granted only insulting posthumous names, names which included the characters for "outcast" (Sanskrit, *sendara*), "leatherworker" (*kaku*), "servant" (*boku*), or "beast" (*chiku*). These names would then be recorded in the temple registry and on the family gravestone. Also included were the criminals, homeless, lepers, and the physically and mentally disabled.<sup>71</sup> What's more is that this stain was multi-generational because it brought the predictably negative consequences for the family's future marriage prospects.

In other words, Outcaste status was not simply a function of religious imperatives grinding into the essential demands of society. It was cast as the embodiment of impiety and unorthodoxy. It was something that could happen to an individual and condemn the fortunes of one's descendants. It was itself a pollution that could infect an individual and his lineage. The actual Outcastes were boogiemens, walking cautionary tales, warnings of the fate that could befall those who did not submit to demands of the clergy, and by extension the Tokugawa state.

### **The Racialization of the Outcastes**

As the vocabulary of blood proceeded to develop its second, positive meaning of

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 29-31.

lineage, the two centuries of physical and conceptual Otherness projected onto the Outcastes naturally became conceived of as an intrinsic Otherness, which was in turn validated by the scientific-racial discourse imported from abroad. Their bloodlines were polluted and potentially infectious, and they were understood to “inescapably carriers [of pollution] who can transmit to any offspring their blemished nature and hence contaminate a blood lineage into which they may marry.”<sup>72</sup> Consequently, intermarriage with an Outcaste was simply inconceivable, aside from the legal injunctions against caste intermarriage, and there was no incentive for the upper castes to circumvent the rules. Outcastes could not even contract for commercial sex with mainstream prostitutes.<sup>73</sup> In Tokugawa Nagasaki, Chinese, Korean, and even the goblin-like Europeans and their black and Indochinese servants were permitted access to the city’s brothels.<sup>74</sup> Prostitutes who serviced the Dutch traders on Dejima were not (officially) considered polluted by their intimate contact with these alien people. Nor were there any apparent negative long-term consequences for them, as evidenced by the ability of such women to complete their terms of service and secure good or advantageous marriages. Mixed-blooded children naturally, though rarely, arose from these transactions, and there were no legal sanctions in place to discriminate against them

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<sup>72</sup> Cullen Tadao Hayashida, “Identity, Race and the Blood Ideology of Japan.” (Dissertation, University of Washington, 1976), 121.

<sup>73</sup> Gary P. Leupp, *Interracial Intimacy in Japan: Western Men and Japanese Women, 1543-1900* (London: Continuum, 2003), 92.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 105-10.

or segregate them from mainstream society.<sup>75</sup> It says something about how repellant the presumed polluted nature of the Outcastes was that physical intimacy was strictly prohibited, and the possibility of inter-caste reproduction precluded.

The general public's immediate and violent reaction to the prospect of unfettered Outcaste mobility is understandable in this light. The Liberation Edict of 1871 lifted all caste restrictions on employment, residence, and even marriage.<sup>76</sup> The Edict was passed by the Meiji government in deference to the expectations of the West, who regarded such a social arrangement as anachronistic and unbecoming of a civilized nation. Thereafter individuals would be recorded in the national registry as "commoners" (*heimin*), regardless of their previous caste status, and carry on as newly minted citizens equal under the law. The *Burakumin* would be recorded in the national registry as "new commoners" (*shin heimin*),<sup>77</sup> a euphemism that institutionalized *Burakumin* difference thereafter.

### **Infiltration and Blood Anxiety**

But the specter of the Outcastes (hereafter the *Burakumin*) and their infiltration in good society troubled many. The passage of the Edict precipitated riots, directed principally against the *Burakumin* and their villages, resulting in a great deal of

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 119, 125.

<sup>76</sup> Ian J. Neary, "Burakumin in Contemporary Japan," in *Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Michael Weiner (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 56.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 2.

destruction.<sup>78</sup> Despite their new institutional difference, the *Burakumin* were no longer bound to the land and to polluted occupations, and there was no simple means for the public to identify and segregate them. The polluted Others were legally indistinguishable and in principle no different from the pure. The *Burakumin* could crop up anywhere, and anyone could be a *Burakumin*. In the language of the family state and in the metaphorical significance of bloodlines, *Burakumin* anonymity threatened to disseminate a clot of impurity into the otherwise pure and venerable national body. In the developing language of race, social Darwinism, and eugenics, it introduced a degenerative element into a society increasingly preoccupied with race betterment.

*Burakumin* difference would be underscored in their academic and literary treatments. The introduction of Western anthropology and historical discipline prompted scholarly interest in Japanese ethnogenesis in Japan and abroad.<sup>79</sup> With respect to the *Burakumin*, attempts were made to explain the *Burakumin*'s origins and situate them in relationship to the Japanese race and its divine Imperial core. A theme revisited in these inquiries was their explicit foreignness. The *Burakumin* were in fact not really Japanese at all. They were the descendants of prisoners of war or of pirates captured on the high seas, even shipwrecked sailors.<sup>80</sup> The source of difference

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<sup>78</sup> June Gordon, *Japan's Outcaste Youth: Education for Liberation* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2008), 18.

<sup>79</sup> Mark J. Hudson, *Ruins of Identity: Ethnogenesis in the Japanese Islands* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 34-4.

<sup>80</sup> Ian J. Neary, "Burakumin in Contemporary Japan," in *Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Michael Weiner (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 52-3.

consistently underscored was their racial/ethnic/blood difference. They weren't Japanese polluted by virtue of their occupations and trapped by circumstances in an inferior racialized subjectivity. They did the polluted work because they were foreigners in the first place.

Semi-anthropological accounts of encounters with *Burakumin* laborers and tours through *Burakumin* villages were eager to emphasize their physical distinctiveness as well as their unrefined behavior. They were easily identifiable because of their darker skin and their rough manners. Their portrayal in literature was also replete with attempts to affix the *Burakumin* with visual stigmata. In addition to darker skin, *Burakumin* characters were signified by illness, poverty, madness, and a propensity for incest. The emphasis on visual and behavioral signifiers was part and parcel of contemporary conceptions of race; race conflated phenotype, culture, and physical characteristics. The *Burakumin* looked and acted markedly different from mainstream Japanese because their blood was different. This was the same argument made by the anti-consanguineous marriage campaigns; that polluted blood manifested itself in their deviant behavior, their susceptibility to illness, and their poor economic performance.

This emphasis on the visible and the demonstrative in these writings suggests an anxiety that such physical markers were not reliable. In reality, and despite the fact that many *Burakumin* continued to live in de facto segregation and suffer exclusion from employment and marriage, they could and did "pass" into society. In doing so they could and did introduce their polluted blood into unsuspecting pure bloodlines. A court case from 1902 provides an excellent example. A woman brought a suit against her

husband charging him with fraud and petitioning the authorities for a divorce. The husband had presented himself to his prospective bride as being from a “wealthy peasant household and proper bloodline” (*kettō tadashiki kyūke gō nō*). Sometime after the marriage, however, his wife discovered that he was in fact of *Burakumin* ancestry. The court found merit in her complaint and duly granted the divorce.<sup>81</sup>

This case is demonstrative of three things. The first is that officialdom regarded the misrepresentation of one’s bloodline as a legally actionable offense and legitimate grounds for divorce. The second is the importance of blood in the marital decisions of some. Whatever the fraudulent husband’s virtues as a spouse, or for that matter whatever his faults as a spouse, his marriage was dissolved against his will explicitly because of his misrepresented bloodline. Both the plaintiff and the court, in fact, acted in accordance with ancient tradition. The Taihō legal code of 701 recognized that the introduction of pollution into one’s ancestral lineage, once discovered, was grounds for divorce.<sup>82</sup> The third is that supposed blood quality is not detectible even under the most intimate inspection. The account of this case does not indicate how the woman discovered her husbands’ blood status. Presumably, however, she spent considerable time living, eating, and sleeping with her husband, all the while unaware that he was a polluted Other and threat to her bloodline. The stigmata were not as reliable an indicator of bad blood as the literature would have it.

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<sup>81</sup> Mark Morris, “Passing: Paradoxes of Alterity in *The Broken Commandment*,” in *Representing the Other in Modern Japanese Literature: A Critical Approach*, eds. Rachael Hutchinson and Mark Williams (London: Routledge, 2007), 132.

<sup>82</sup> Cullen Tadao Hayashida, “Identity, Race and the Blood Ideology of Japan.” (Dissertation, University of Washington, 1976), 132.

That fact was implicitly recognized by the public in its demand for the services of private detectives. Such individuals were hired to investigate the background of potential spouses and employees to ensure that their bloodlines were free of mental illness, physical disability, or *Burakumin* ancestry. This industry is alive and well in Japan today, where many *Burakumin* still feel compelled to undergo the “performance of passing”. As late as 1979 “black books” were in circulation among Japan’s largest companies containing the personal information of thousands of *Burakumin*,<sup>83</sup> an expression of the continued need to identify and exclude the impure from the mainstream workforce. Considering the matchmaking roles many large companies actively played for their employees, it seems the corporate sector was doing its part to insure racial purity.

Blood proved to be a remarkably useful image around which to build a national subjectivity. As an image linked to heredity, it was useful conceptual tool for forging the post-Restoration imagined community from the myriad of parochial identities inherited from Tokugawa times. It made the previously esoteric imperial ideology comprehensible to the masses, and conflated it with the modern hegemony of race. It supplied a prism through which to define internal divisions within the newly minted citizenry, and to consider personal reproductive decisions in the age of eugenics. But as the case of the *Burakumin* demonstrates, blood had its conceptual drawbacks. On the

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<sup>83</sup> June Gordon, *Japan’s Outcaste Youth: Education for Liberation* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2008), 19.

one hand, the determinism of blood ideology defined the lives of modern populations in terms of their pre-modern ancestor's caste status. On the other, it provided fertile ground for anxiety over the infiltration of any of a number of impurities into one's familial lineage, which had potentially serious personal consequences. However, blood's utility as an organizing metaphor for the Japanese was not limited to defining the contours of the family-state; it also served to define Japan's relationships to its colonial subjects.

### Chapter Three: The Empire

Japanese empire building was in some ways a practical and necessary component of its nation-state building efforts in the decades following the Restoration. The acquisition of territories and peoples not traditionally ruled by either the Mikoto or the Shogun benefited Japan strategically, materially, and psychologically. The annexation of the Kingdom of Okinawa (1871), the Ainu lands of Hokkaido (1873), Taiwan (1894), and the Kingdom of Korea (1910) secured the flanks of the nascent state from encroachment by either China or Russia. The East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, the mid-twentieth century incarnation of the empire that would cover nearly one-fifth of the globe, was explicitly conceived of as a source of raw materials, agricultural surplus, and even *lebensraum* for the Japanese metropole.<sup>84</sup> <sup>85</sup> Furthermore, colonies marked Japan as “fit” in Darwinian international competition. By expanding its empire at the expense of other imperial powers through war Japan earned recognition as the leading power in East Asia, and as a Great Power (*Taikoku*) on the global stage;<sup>86</sup> in other words, status befitting the uniquely pureblooded nation.

Japan’s motives for imperial aggrandizement are clear and unsurprising. Empires, however, are conspicuously multi-ethnic, and inevitably prompt cultural and

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<sup>84</sup> John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race & Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 277-8.

<sup>85</sup> Michael Weiner, *Race and Migration in Imperial Japan* (London: Routledge, 1994), 24.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

biological communication between the metropole and the colonies. For a nation erected on the foundations of its racial purity, this would seem to produce an exceptionally problematic tension. The Japanese negotiated their colonial relationships through the medium of blood. As with imagined national community, the empire was conceived of in the same organic metaphors, and articulated in the same sanguine vocabulary. The empire was simply the nationally body stretched to encompass the continent, an extended family state, and an exceptionally diffuse blood-kin network. The metaphors and vocabulary of blood, and even pureblood, served to organize the empire and its hierarchy.

#### **BLOOD-KINSHIP AND OVERSEAS EXPANSION**

Racial affinity, or an underlying blood-kinship, was the basis of Japanese imperial expansion, as it was in consolidating the state. Based on contemporary anthropological accounts of Japanese ethno-genesis, the modern Japanese were originally an amalgamation of three stem races; the continental Asians, the Malay, and the Ainu.<sup>87 88</sup> From this perspective, the annexation the Okinawans and the Ainu were justified as the reclamation of divergent branches of a larger pre-historic family. Their forcible assimilation into mainstream Japanese culture and economy was likewise justified on racial grounds;<sup>89</sup> just as the persistence of Lamarkism allowed for eugenic ideologues to

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<sup>87</sup> John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race & Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 268.

<sup>88</sup> Mark J. Hudson, *Ruins of Identity: Ethnogenesis in the Japanese Islands* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 39-44.

<sup>89</sup> Peter Duss, *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895-*

cast social reforms as genetically efficacious, the projection of blood-kinship onto peripheral peoples cast their cultural/linguistic difference as soluble and, with sufficient effort and resources, temporary. The absorption of ethnic minorities by the Japanese state then did not undermine the principles of blood purity that it was simultaneously promulgating.

The government initiatives directed at the Ainu, whose population was miniscule even in their bastion of Hokkaido, promoted forced assimilation and mass intermarriage with Japanese (*wajin*) in an effort to eliminate them as a coherent racial group.<sup>90 91</sup> These positive efforts at racial miscegenation are curious, considering the prevailing discourse that insisted on purebloodedness, and the ideological and rhetorical resistance to such miscegenation espoused by the likes of Katō Hiroyuki and Ikeda Shigenori. Presumably, official blessing of such unions reflected this drive towards racial reclamation. By 1900, there were only about 17,000 Ainu,<sup>92</sup> so perhaps the assurance that the Ainu were too few to dilute the pureblooded race allowed space to doublethink.

The Japanese also asserted racial affinities towards the Koreans in what was formally known as the Theory of Common Descent (*Dōsōron*).<sup>93</sup> Such claims were

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1910 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 422.

<sup>90</sup> Richard Siddle, "Ainu: Japan's Hidden People." *Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Michael Weiner, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 23-4.

<sup>91</sup> John Lie, *Multiethnic Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 91-2.

<sup>92</sup> See note 92 above.

<sup>93</sup> Michael Weiner, *Race and Migration in Imperial Japan* (London: Routledge, 1994), 23.

grounded in contemporary anthropology and racial science. In fact, it was determined through careful study that the whole of East Asia derived from one original stem race, and thus could be conceived of as one large, if diluted, racial group. The racial similarities between Japan and Korea, however, were deemed especially close. Anthropologists noted that the physical similarities between the respective populations made them virtually indistinguishable. The long history of commerce and cultural intercourse, and the consequent similarities in language, culture, and religion between the two peoples also buttressed the argument for consanguinity.<sup>94</sup> Appeals were even made to the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon Shoki*, which seemed to indicate that during the Age of the Gods, Japan and Korea shared a common language and culture, indicating common blood. The Empress Jingū, a member of the semi-divine imperial line from which the Japanese derived their subjectivity, purportedly invaded Korea and brought it under the rule of the Chrysanthemum Throne.<sup>95</sup> This supplied a precedent for political unification, and a spiritual link between the Japan and Korea through rule by the Imperial line. Between the sober assessments of contemporary anthropology and the mytho-historical relations between the two lands, it was commonly accepted that the Koreans and Japanese, if not of the same race, were closely enough related as to make little difference.

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 417-8.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 418.

On the one hand, this offered a clear and reasonable impetus for political and cultural unification. The political divergence of the two lands in the centuries since the rule of Empress Jingū was “unnatural”. If Japan proper had coalesced around the bonds of common blood, as in fact had the European nations, Korea could be conceived of as a natural extension of the family-state. This was certainly reflected in the language used to denote Koreans during the colonial period. They were typically referred to as *Hantō no Hito* (people of the peninsula), as opposed to *Chosenjin* (Korea-person) or *gaijin* (foreign-person), a semantic distinction that emphasized geography over political identity. The pronunciation of the character for person (人) as *hito* rather than *jin* is also telling. *Jin* denotes racial-national identities, while *hito* denotes regional ones.<sup>96</sup> By labeling the Koreans with *hito*, implying regional distinctiveness and racial affinity, the Japanese encoded Korean subjectivity as a component part of their own.

On the other hand, if the Koreans and Japanese derived from the same stem race, Korean cultural difference and political degeneracy needed explanation. Again, a mixture of anthropology and mytho-historicism provided an explanation and a remedy. It was argued that modern Koreans, like the Japanese, were the product of racial amalgamation in the prehistoric era. Unlike Japan, the Korean agglomeration did not benefit from the tempering effects of prolonged isolation and Imperial rule. Japan certainly benefited from a particularly vigorous branch of the continental race, the Yamato people under Jimmu. Under the leadership of the Yamato, and absent foreign

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<sup>96</sup> John Lie, *Multiethnic Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 146.

conquerors and migrants, the best qualities of Japan's constituent races merged, producing the pureblooded Japanese. Though Korea shared a stem race with the Japanese, this component was not as vigorous as the Yamato had been.<sup>97</sup> Furthermore Korea was never so isolated as Japan, and its proximity to China allowed steady and substantial inflows of culture and foreign blood to seep in and degrade the Korean bloodlines. Differential outcomes reflected differential degrees of blood purity. Korea was a weak and decrepit state. Japan was a bona fide Great Power. It was incumbent upon the latter to include the former in its drive towards racial betterment.

The pureblood of the Japanese proved to be an inclusive, rather than exclusive, determinant within an expanded family state. Common blood provided legitimate and intelligible grounds for the annexation of Korea at home and abroad; consanguinity was a central concept in the formulation of the National Polity described above, as well as a key argument in the prevailing discourse on nationalism. It also blended racial science with the "white man's burden" quite nicely, by establishing Korean racial inferiority conterminously with its racial affinity. Within the hierarchical structure of the patriarchal racial family, Japanese paternalism was rooted in the purity of its blood, both absolutely and relative to the mixed-blood of the Koreans. The multifarious and manifest material superiority of the Japanese could be cast as an expression of this purity, rather than as simply brute coercive power. The imposition of Japanese language and

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<sup>97</sup> Peter Duss, *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 418-21.

culture at the expense of indigenous forms was not only a civilizing mission analogous to that pursued by the European empires, but an exercise in racial betterment analogous to the eugenic and social reforms being undertaken in Japan proper.

Korea was the closest and arguably most important of Japan's colonies, and along with Taiwan was a core possession from which to physically and conceptually expand. Before its collapse in 1945, the Empire would grow to include successively Micronesia (1919), Manchuria (1932), Northern and Coastal China (1937), Indochina (1940), the Philippines (1942), Malaysia (1942), and Indonesia (1942). While distant consanguinity with China was taken for granted from at least the 1890's, and the degeneracy of Chinese bloodlines demonstrated by the outcome of the first Sino-Japanese War, the rapid influx of new peoples into the empire after 1932 needed to be fit into the organic organization of the empire.

### **IMPERIAL MANIFESTO**

In 1943, the Ministry of Health and Welfare published a 4000+ page report entitled, *An Investigation of Global Policy with the Yamato Race as Nucleus (Yamato Minzoku wo Chūkaku to Suru Sekai Seisaku no Kentō*, hereafter the Yamato Report). The report put forward the ideal organization of the empire, which in 1940 had been rhetorically reconstituted as the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (Daitōa Kyōeiken).<sup>98</sup> It detailed the post-war disposition of the empire, its peoples and its resources, and explained its theoretical underpinnings. In much the same way that the

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<sup>98</sup> John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race & Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 280.

1940 National Eugenics Law represented the degree to which eugenic thought and blood ideology had penetrated social consciousness, and had become orthodoxy among the highest spheres of officialdom, so to did the Yamato Report demonstrate the penetration of blood ideology in colonial affairs. It was not simply rhetoric and imagery, but was an official, tangible component of Imperial organization.

The Yamato Report stressed the concept of “proper place”, and stated that Japan’s goal in consolidating the empire was to bring first Asia, then the world together “under one roof” (*hakkō ichi*). This phrase was an allusion to Jimmu’s purported unification of the disparate tribes of ancient Japan “under one [Yamato] roof.”<sup>99</sup> The allusion projected the on-going world war as a reenactment of Japan’s ancestral unification. Japan proper stood as the original Yamato people, the Showa emperor as his ancestor Jimmu, and the various Asian peoples as the prehistoric Japanese barbarians.

With the exception of China, Japan had little scientific or historical basis to assert either blood-kinship or cultural affinity with the diverse people of Asia. While the Japanese courted colonial collaborators, notably Burma’s Ba Maw who expressed his eagerness with appeals to “the common blood of Asia”,<sup>100</sup> the willingness of such people to collaborate was more of a reaction to the harshness of European rule, and less an genuine belief in the call of some diffuse blood-kinship. The growing imperial family,

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 274.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 286

then, necessarily evolved to be more metaphorical than biological.<sup>101</sup> The emperor was father to all his subjects, whether or not they could trace their bloodlines back to him.

Still, blood played a critical part in the Yamato Report's organization of the empire. Japan's ensconcement as metaphorical patriarch still rested on the purity of its blood, established on scientific and historic grounds, and expressed by its industrial and military might. Korean and Taiwan assumed the roles of elder brothers by virtue of their assimilation and their established blood-kinship to the Japanese.<sup>102</sup> The remainder of the empire was populated by the younger children, and was expected to submit to the wisdom of their elders.

Blood served another function in the Yamato Report, beyond laying the foundation for the extended family metaphor and undergirding its hierarchy; it acted as a physical binding agent for the empire. Japanese blood was to be "planted in the soil" of the new conquests. This phrase, which historian John Dower notes was lifted from the lexicon of Nazi rhetoric, referred to the large-scale settlement of Japanese in the post-war empire.<sup>103</sup> These settlements would absorb Japan's projected population surplus, and provide centers of expertise and leadership for the colonials. In this way the pureblooded metropole would project its virtues physically into the empire, as it had already done in Manchuria.

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 283.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 283.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 274.

Stating that Japanese blood would be “planted in the [colonial] soil” through future settlement of Japanese civilians was a phrase loaded with significance considering that the Yamato Report was written at the height of the Second World War. Wartime rhetoric employed a similar phrase in exalting the Japanese soldiers who had spilt their blood while fighting in the empire.<sup>104</sup> Perhaps the Ministry’s use of the phrase was meant as more than a nod to their like-minded German allies. The planting of Japanese blood in colonial soil certainly conveys the physical presence of the Japanese in Asia, but it also evokes the image of ongoing military sacrifice. In doing so it adds a more visceral physicality to blood’s once and future role in the empire. Settlers can leave. Once the colonial soil is watered with the pureblood of the Japanese, it is bound to Japan.

According to the Yamato Report, blood would continue to mediate the relationship between Japan and its empire well into the distant future. Though the imperial assimilation programs would continue apace, and the colonials would be conditioned to assume their proper place within the empire, the racial improvement of the colonials was expected to take a great deal of time. Furthermore, the racial purity of future Japanese settlers was expected to remain a state preoccupation. The metaphor of planting blood in the soil was evocative of an alternative metaphor for genetic paternity, *hitodane* (person-seed), suggesting that Japanese blood would play a direct eugenic role in colonial development. Yet, the Yamato Report was clear that this language was not to be taken as license for miscegenation. On the contrary, mixed-race colonials were

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 276.

undesirable on two counts; in the first case, and echoing Katō Hiroyuki's arguments from a half-century before, they would dilute the pure blood of the Japanese settlements abroad. In the second, and based on Japanese experience with mixed-race populations during the war, they would be problematic to categorize and monitor.<sup>105</sup> Japanese settlements were to be discrete blood pools, and extensive measures would be taken to ensure their integrity.

It is of course an open question how tightly these recommendations would have been enforced had Japan won the war and secured its empire. But the content of the Yamato Report and its clear preoccupation with blood and blood purity was in continuity with both contemporary domestic utilizations of the substance, and with pre-modern attitudes towards consanguinity and purity. In the official guidebook for the empire, published at the height of its hubris and self-consciousness, blood binds and blood divides.

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<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 277.

## **Chapter Four – Postwar Reconceptualization and the De-legitimization of Minority Populations**

The centrality of blood to Japanese subjectivity was not undone by Japan's defeat in the Second World War, though it did undergo a certain reconceptualization. As the Yamato Report demonstrates, Japanese subjectivity prior to and during the war was tied to its place atop a larger racial unit, the concept and vocabulary of blood supplying the ideological underpinnings for the empire. With the Allied Occupation and the imposition of a pacifist constitution, the nation that had been founded by samurai was forced to legally repudiate both its empire and the means of acquiring a new one.<sup>106</sup> Wartime propaganda claimed that the spiritual superiority of Japanese blood would overcome the technological and material superiority of the racial Others arrayed against Japan. The unconditional surrender compelled by this technological and material superiority demonstrated the paucity of this rhetoric. The shame and humiliation of such a comprehensive defeat utterly discredited the prewar regime and much that was associated with it.

This included the multiethnic ethos, which is to say that willingness to stretch the blood metaphor well beyond the borders of traditional Japan. It was now ideologically untenable for its association with imperialism and militarism, and was discarded with

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<sup>106</sup> John Lie, *Multiethnic Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 153.

State Shinto.<sup>107</sup> Yet the concepts of national consanguinity and pureblood, which were central to the Meiji period nation building and which had become synonymous with the hegemonic concept of race, remained potent and reliable ones. The emperor's repudiation of his divinity did not diminish the imperial line's symbolic value as a signifier of the "homogeneity of the people and the unbroken unity of its polity."<sup>108</sup> It certainly didn't undermine the sense of national blood-kinship that had developed since the Restoration. Blood remained the principle legal and conceptual determinate of Japanese subjectivity, and its function as an organizing metaphor was actually enhanced by the crucible of the War and Occupation. Absent the need or desire to situate itself within a multiethnic community, the boundaries of what constituted Japanese subjectivity coalesced into an inelastic and homogenous union of blood and culture.

#### **THE AESTHETICS OF ETHNIC HOMOGENEITY**

The formation of this union was supported by the aesthetics of reduction and uniformity that developed during the Occupation and reconstruction. The image of a new normative Japaneseness, which is to say of urban, egalitarian, and nuclear families united by the shared experience of wartime loss and sacrifice, overlaid the image of a state reduced to its territorial and racial core.

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<sup>107</sup> Michael Weiner, "The Invention of Identity: 'Self' and 'Other' in pre-war Japan," *Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Michael Weiner (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), xv.

<sup>108</sup> Cullen Tadao Hayashida, "Identity, Race and the Blood Ideology of Japan." (Dissertation, University of Washington, 1976), 133.

The empire was completely dismantled, and its component territories either granted their independence or returned to their former colonial masters (or in the case of Okinawa, a new master). The family state was reduced to Japan proper, which occupied essentially the same territory claimed by the Tokugawa in the previous century. The population exchange that followed capitulation was substantial. Between 1945 and 1947, approximately six million Japanese soldiers, civilians, and colonial administrators repatriated to Japan. The same period of time saw a mass exodus of former colonial subjects, with well over one million Koreans, Chinese, and Taiwanese returning to their respective countries.<sup>109</sup> Those who stayed behind generally did not do so by choice, and busied themselves with reversing the effects of Japan's assimilation programs.<sup>110</sup> This rapid geographic and demographic reduction during the Occupation can be read as racial purification; the disentanglement of cynically conflated bloodlines that restored Japan's territorial and racial integrity to that of an era not yet corrupted by empire and militarism.

With the image of territorial and racial reduction came an image of uniformity, which is to say the uniformity of experience and circumstance. The war by some reckonings began with the Manchurian Incident in 1932, and didn't meaningfully end in August 1945. The personal and material sacrifices of the Japanese public to the war in China had already taken their toll before they were magnified by total mobilization in

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<sup>109</sup> John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 54.

<sup>110</sup> Jeffery T. Hester, "Datsu Zainichi-ron: An Emerging Discourse on Belonging Among Ethnic Koreans in Japan," *Multiculturalism in the New Japan: Crossing the Boundaries Within*, eds. Nelson H.H. Graburn, John Ertl, and R. Kenji Tierney (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), 141.

1942. The most telling demonstration of the toll exacted on the public, aside from approximately three million war dead,<sup>111</sup> was in the bodies of their children. The average size of school-aged children had shrunk since 1937.<sup>112</sup> The allied bombing campaign in 1945 reduced sixty-one Japanese cities to ashes and utterly devastated Japan's economic capacity, plunging the survivors into poverty and hunger.<sup>113</sup> Economic stagnation and widespread hunger continued to plague the Japanese several years into the Occupation.<sup>114</sup> This prolonged period of shared sacrifice engendered a wide spread egalitarianism and shared suffering among the population, which did much to cement together class and regional identities.

The unifying egalitarianism of the war years persisted into the reconstruction period, which saw a redistribution of the population to urban areas. The many in the rebuilt urban centers considered themselves “newcomers”.<sup>115</sup> The mass dislocation from the traditional rural family home coincided with a reorganization of the normative family unit. The office of patriarch, which legally dominated the samurai-style families, was abolished, and multigenerational extended families were discouraged in favor of

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<sup>111</sup> John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 22.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>113</sup> Richard B. Frank, *Downfall: The End of the Imperial Japanese Empire* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), 19.

<sup>114</sup> John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 89-90.

<sup>115</sup> John Lie, *Multiethnic Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 126-7.

American-style nuclear families. In this more compact configuration, the adult male could dedicate himself fully to his work in the reconstruction economy, while his wife dedicated herself to unpaid reproductive labor and schoolwork.<sup>116</sup> This egalitarian urban nuclear family, dedicated to peace and bent on economic progress, became the ideal national norm. The development of a vibrant mass media-consuming culture provided effective channels for this image of homogeneity to diffuse among the populace.<sup>117</sup>

The notion of blood purity, despite its conceptual centrality in the discredited prewar regime, took on greater resonance among the postwar community because the collective experiences of the war and the demographic upheavals of the Occupation made it aesthetically appealing. Japan was left to the Japanese, and Asia to the Asians. The uniformity of experience and circumstance among the Japanese citizenry added new substance to the imagined community of Japanese, which more than any time since the Restoration was defined by blood.

### **BLOOD AND CULTURE**

Whereas blood was once a flexible enough metaphor to be simultaneously inclusive *and* exclusive, this was no long the case after the war. The consequences of this reconceptualization are felt most strongly by Japan's still extant ethnic minority

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<sup>116</sup> Nobue Suzuki, "Triparte Desires: Filipina-Japanese Marriages and Fantasies of Transnational Traversal," *Cross-Border Marriages: Gender and Mobility in Transnational Asia*, ed. Nicole Constable (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 41-2.

<sup>117</sup> John Lie, *Multiethnic Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 128.

populations. The postwar Civil Code retains its predecessor's requirement for blood, and the principle of *jus sanguinis* remains the principle claim to Japanese citizenship.<sup>118</sup> Without its former imperial ambitions there is no impetus or justification to push at the conceptual boundaries of national consanguinity. And just as in the heyday of prewar eugenic discourse, blood remains the repository of racial and cultural attributes and potential.

To be sure, the course of Japan's recovery in the latter half of the twentieth century has given some superficial credence to this view, much as Japan's rapid modernization and military victories during the Meiji period gave credence to the presumed superiority of its pureblood. Japan was sufficiently recovered from the destruction of the war to host the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo. By the 1980s, it ranked as an economic superpower second only to the United States. Over the same period, Japan's seemingly homogenous character wasn't challenged. It was capable of supplying its labor requirements domestically, and so required no influx of migrant labor. It was also resistant to accepting either refugee populations, or asylum seekers. By 2006, Japan's foreign population constituted 1.57 percent of its total population, which was double what it was in the mid-1980s.<sup>119</sup> Though this number is misleadingly high for reasons discussed below, it marks a high for Japan and a low among industrialized

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<sup>118</sup> Apichai W. Shipper, *Fighting for Foreigners: Immigration and its Impact on Japanese Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 5.

<sup>119</sup> Christopher J. Frey and Deobra Hinderliter Ortolff, "Blood Relatives: Language, Immigration, and Education of Ethnic Returnees in Germany and Japan," *Comparative Education Review* 51, no.4, (November 2007): 452, accessed Feb. 15, 2011, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/520856>.

nations. Many credited Japanese economic success to its cultural qualities, and the inherent character of the Japanese people. In a purportedly homogeneous state, this can be and was read as the fruits of racial purity.

Despite the presumption of ethnic homogeneity, Japan does have its racial minorities, and blood ideology mediates their relationship to the Japanese state and to mainstream society. The inelastic conflation of Japanese blood, culture, and citizenship rendered their racial and cultural difference illegitimate. Ironically, under the imperial regime Japanese subjectivity possessed conceptual space for legitimate difference; the Japanese themselves were members of a larger familial unit, and the colonial peoples, though mixed-blooded and culturally distinct, all had their “proper place” within it. Even though assimilation programs targeted this cultural difference for erasure, this was understood to be long-term project. In the meantime, Koreans could be Japanese citizens, and Micronesians subjects of the Emperor.

The less flexible postwar view of Japanese subjectivity, which demanded both the possession of Japanese blood and the exclusive expression of Japanese culture, presented minority groups with a no-win scenario, which in turn left them in a persistent liminal state. No minority suffered a greater shift in their subjective status than the Koreans residing in Japan at war’s end. Colloquially referred to as the *Zainichi*, literally meaning, “those existing in Japan”, their legal and social relationship to mainstream Japanese society since the War demonstrates the exclusiveness of Japanese subjectivity and its consequences.

## **ZAINICHI**

The *Zainichi* are an artificial minority in Japan. In their appearance, language, and culture, they are all but indistinguishable from the mainstream population. Yet, the *Zainichi* are legally and socially regarded as foreigners. While this was understandable in aftermath of the war and Korean independence, the *Zainichi* are currently on their fourth generation in Japan. Hundreds of thousands of individuals are born and raised in Japan, participate in its economy, invest in its society, and identify with its values and traditions, and are still not regarded as Japanese. The legal and social liminality of the *Zainichi* is a function of the inflexible postwar conception of Japanese subjectivity that requires both blood *and* culture for legitimacy. The *Zainichi* possess the culture, but not the blood, required to be authentically Japanese.

## **Colonial Koreans and Their Subjective Shift**

In 1910, the protectorate Kingdom of Korea was formally annexed by Japan, and its population granted Japanese citizenship. Many Koreans took advantage of superior economic conditions in the imperial center and filled lower-paid economic niches in the Japanese mainland. With the outbreak of war, the demand of for cheap labor exploded and the inflow of Korean labor, voluntary and conscripted, increased dramatically. The ethnic Korean population reached a high of more than two million by war's end.<sup>120</sup>

During the subsequent U.S. Occupation, Korean subjectivity shifted. The Korean peninsula ceased to be an organic extension of the National Polity, and via a joint

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<sup>120</sup> Takashi Oka, *Prying Open the Door: Foreign Workers in Japan* (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1994), 12.

occupation by Soviet and U.S forces, became the independent states of South Korea (Kankoku) and North Korea (Kitachōsen) in 1948. The former colonial subjects residing in Japan no longer had a “proper place” within the family-state, and the great majority repatriated to the peninsula. However, the massive influx of returnees into the peninsula (3.5 million by 1946) put a significant strain on the country’s economic and housing infrastructure,<sup>121</sup> and strict limitations on the amount of property and currency returnees were allowed to take from Japan meant the loss of all the property and wealth they had accumulated in their sojourn abroad. With these considerations in mind, approximately 600,000 Koreans decided to delay repatriation.<sup>122</sup>

Until the Korea-Japan Normalization Treaty in 1965, these Koreans had an uncertain legal status. With the hardening of boundaries of Japanese subjectivity after the war, Korean blood and Korean culture had no space in the Japanese state. The Diet revoked their franchise in 1949, and formally stripped them of their citizenship in 1951. Though many subsequently registered as citizens of South Korea, most had no passports, and so no right of reentry. This rendered them supremely vulnerable, with only tenuous rights to employment and residence in Japan.

In the postwar period, their presence in Japan was an unpleasant reminder of empire that inspired resentment. In the context of the Korean and Cold Wars, it inspired

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<sup>121</sup> Mark E. Caprio and Yu Jia, “Occupations of Korea and Japan and the Origins of the Korean Diaspora in Japan,” in *Diaspora Without Homeland*, eds. Sonia Ryang and John Lie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 21, 36-7.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

fear of communist infiltration.<sup>123</sup> Consequently, Koreans in Japan were objects of severe discrimination and distrust. Japanese state policy towards the Koreans was effectively to “maintain the subordinate status of Koreans...subject them to rigorous surveillance and control.”<sup>124</sup> Within a decade, the Koreans position had degraded from the *hantō no hito*, blood brothers of the Japanese, to pariah foreigners, suspect and despised, and shunted into the social and economic margins of society.

Most Koreans at that time anticipated an ultimate return to Korea, and immediately set about creating a Japan-wide network of ethnic schools for Korean youth. The explicit goal of these schools was to reverse the Japanese acculturation imposed on them during the prewar period, and to prepare Japan-born Koreans for their eventual repatriation.<sup>125</sup> But by 1970s, the Japan-born generations began to supplant the Korea-born from the center of the *Zainichi* community, and the expectation of an ultimate return to the motherland faded.

The Japanese government, for its part, made gradual concessions to the reality of the situation, and arranged to situate this persistent minority into a new “proper place” in society. The blood requirements for Japanese citizenship, and the antipathy towards the relics of empire, meant that this “proper place” was necessarily outside the national body. The 1965 Normalization Treaty granted Japan-resident Koreans with South

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<sup>123</sup> Takashi Oka, *Prying Open the Door: Foreign Workers in Japan* (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1994), 13.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

Korean citizenship formal status as resident aliens, which was extended to North Korean nationals in 1982. In 1991, the *Zainichi* were granted “special” status that permits them and their descendants to live and work permanently in Japan without fear of deportation, and an “expedited” path to naturalization.<sup>126</sup> These concessions, which recognized the permanence of this ethnic minority in Japan, and secured for them the unfettered rights to residence and employment that might enable them to prosper in society, institutionalized them as hereditary foreigners.

### **Hereditary Foreigners**

This structural foreignness was rooted in their lack of Japanese blood and culture, the postwar tenants of Japanese subjectivity. This is more than a little incongruous with the realities *Zainichi* subjectivity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The *Zainichi* are presently on their fourth generation in Japan, and have integrated to the maximum possible extent any body of foreigners can. Most have only lived in Japan, and are completely fluent in Japanese language and culture. Most *Zainichi* marriages are to Japanese citizens.<sup>127</sup>

Phenotypically, linguistically, and culturally they blend in seamlessly. They are Japanese in all but name. Many can’t even claim biculturalism, and have little knowledge of or interest their Korean cultural heritage. As one third-generation *Zainichi* man put it, “...I was born here, Japanese is my first language, and I don’t know

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 142.

<sup>127</sup> Sonia Ryang, “Introduction: Between the Nations, Diaspora and Koreans in Japan,” in *Diaspora Without Homeland*, eds. Sonia Ryang and John Lie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 10.

anything about Korea, and I am legally (South) Korean. Don't you think that's very strange?"<sup>128</sup> Yet, their Korean blood continues to mediate the circumstances of their lives.

As colonial citizens they enjoyed voting rights.<sup>129</sup> As permanent residents, the *Zainichi* have no right to vote even in local elections, and no standing to run for political office or enlist in the bureaucracy.<sup>130</sup> In other words, they have no direct influence over the state they are subject to, and no voice in the disposition of their taxes. Aside from denying the *Zainichi* political representation, it inflicts on them a legal stigma; like all legal foreigners, *Zainichi* are required to carry foreign registration cards at all times, and present them to the authorities upon demand. The cards are required to secure housing, employment, and access to education. Until the 1990's *Zainichi* reentering Japan were subject to fingerprinting. The stigma even survives naturalization, as the family's foreign origin is recorded in their *koseki*.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Youngmi Lim, "Reinventing Korean Roots and *Zainichi* Routes: The Invisible Diaspora Among Naturalized Japanese of Korean Descent," in *Diaspora Without Homeland*, eds. Sonia Ryang and John Lie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 89.

<sup>129</sup> Christopher J. Frey and Deobra Hinderliter Ortolff, "Blood Relatives: Language, Immigration, and Education of Ethnic Returnees in Germany and Japan," *Comparative Education Review* 51, no.4, (November 2007): 452, accessed Feb. 15, 2011, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/520856>.

<sup>130</sup> Sonia Ryang, "Introduction: Between the Nations, Diaspora and Koreans in Japan," in *Diaspora Without Homeland*, eds. Sonia Ryang and John Lie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 14.

<sup>131</sup> Cullen Tadao Hayashida, "Identity, Race and the Blood Ideology of Japan." (Dissertation, University of Washington, 1976), 210.

The naturalization process is the legal mechanism that otherwise obviates the *jus sanguinus* principle. The reforms of 1991 in fact allow for an “expedited” naturalization process for the *Zainichi*, though it should be noted that “expedited” means an eleven-month application process, as opposed to the twelve-month standard for other nationalities. Yet, even though naturalization provides the means to erase the legal stigma and secure the full slate of rights that come with citizenship, it does not erase the social stigma of foreign blood. Regardless of one’s cultural capital and legal credentials, without Japanese blood, one is simply not legitimately Japanese in the eyes of society.

Many *Zainichi* have consequently been obliged to undergo the “performance of passing.” Even if they are naturalized citizens, the *Zainichi* are still regarded as racial Others. As with the Outcastes, their foreign blood is an impurity in the otherwise pureblooded society. Indistinguishable in all other respects though they maybe, bloodline remains the overriding determinant for social inclusion. *Zainichi* identified as such have consistently been excluded from opportunities for employment, education, and marriage,<sup>132</sup> and Korean ancestry is an object of inquiry for private investigators.<sup>133</sup>

The acclaimed 2001 Japanese film *GO*, adapted from the popular novel by *Zainichi* author Kazuki Kaneshiro, famously addressed the social prejudice towards the

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<sup>132</sup> John Lie, *Multiethnic Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 108, 171, 181.

<sup>133</sup> Cullen Tadao Hayashida, “Identity, Race and the Blood Ideology of Japan.” (Dissertation, University of Washington, 1976), 194, 210.

*Zainichi*, and was one of the first major Japanese films to feature an explicitly *Zainichi* protagonist. In a demonstrative scene, a young *Zainichi* man, Sugihara, decides to reveal his Korean ancestry to his girlfriend, Tsubaki, to whom he is about to make love. The revelation precipitates the immediate collapse of their romance. Tsubaki explains that she is too uncomfortable with the notion of being penetrated by a foreigner, despite her previous affection for Sugihara.<sup>134</sup> Though a work of fiction, it is an expression of the *Zainichi* author's personal experiences, and demonstrates the personal price *Zainichi* Koreans pay for exposure.

Those who succeed in concealing their foreign bloodline can and do pass unnoticed and even rise to the greatest heights of fame and popularity. *Zainichi* participation in the sports and entertainment industries has been disproportionate to their share of the population. Many of the most famous and popular singers and early television personalities were *Zainichi*, though most took great care to conceal the fact, as exposure did destroy careers.<sup>135</sup> Many of these celebrities succeeded by projecting an image of authentic or ideal Japaneseness, qualities to be admired and emulated by their fans. The Korean bloodlines of these celebrities, then, directly undermined the prevalent postwar assumptions about the unity of Japanese blood with Japanese culture,

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<sup>134</sup> Ichiro Kuraishi, "Pacchigi! and *GO*: Representing *Zainichi* in Recent Cinema," in *Diaspora Without Homeland*, eds. Sonia Ryang and John Lie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 114-5.

<sup>135</sup> John Lie, *Multiethnic Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 81.

which perhaps explains the willingness of fans to abandon the objects of their emulation once they were discovered to be foreign.

For example, the first symbol of national pride to demoralized post-war Japan was a professional wrestling (*puro resu*) star named Rikidōzan, who unbeknownst to his fans was a *Zainichi*. Despite a spectacular career that earned him legions of fans, and praise as Japan's "greatest postwar hero" and "the most famous person after the emperor", Rikidōzan found it essential to conceal his heritage. As he put it, "I became a star because people think that I am Japanese. If they know I am Korean...my popularity would end."<sup>136</sup> The 1960s development of *Enka*, or Japanese folk music, into the quintessentially Japanese musical genre, was prompted by the popularity of its two greatest performers, Harumi Miyako and Hibari Misora. Though both women were *Zainichi*, this was not public knowledge during their careers, and much of their popularity stemmed from the public's projection onto their persons of ethnic authenticity. Harumi cultivated stories of her childhood poverty in Kyoto, that ancient locus of Japanese civilization and culture, and always performed in a traditional Japanese kimono. Hibari was the prototypical teen idol, and she came to "[personify] what was 'authentically' Japanese" to her fans. So much so that Hibari's "funeral was described in a language 'normally reserved for imperial funerals.'"<sup>137</sup> These performers and others like them succeeded in passing, and came to embody Japanese authenticity, despite their Korean

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 62-3.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 56-6.

blood. Yet this was an unacceptable incongruity in the eyes of the public, who were expected to withdraw their previously enthusiastic fandom once these exemplars of Japanese culture were revealed to be Korean by blood.

Passing is an understandable preoccupation with many *Zainichi*, as it is with *Burakumin*, even those who have naturalized and become Japanese citizens.<sup>138</sup> Coming out as a Korean has much the same significance in Japan as coming out as a homosexual had only recently in the United States,<sup>139</sup> and incurs much the same risk. Many *Zainichi* take care to monitor their social relationships for signs of prejudice, and only reveal their bloodlines to those few close friends they feel can be trusted.<sup>140</sup>

The widespread necessity of the *Zainichi* to keep their heritage in the closet despite their outward Japaneseness, or even Japanese citizenship, reflects the prevailing popular expectations of what constitutes Japanese subjectivity in the post-war period. Namely, that authentic Japanese subjectivity requires Japanese blood as well as Japanese culture. This conflation legally and socially sustains the boundaries of an otherwise artificial minority, and confines it in a persistent liminal state.

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<sup>138</sup> Apichai W. Shipper, *Fighting for Foreigners: Immigration and its Impact on Japanese Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 34.

<sup>139</sup> John Lie, *Multiethnic Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 180-1.

<sup>140</sup> Youngmi Lim, "Reinventing Korean Roots and *Zainichi* Routes: The Invisible Diaspora Among Naturalized Japanese of Korean Descent," in *Diaspora Without Homeland*, eds. Sonia Ryang and John Lie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 95.

## **THE NIKKEIJIN**

The experience of the *Zainichi* in postwar Japan highlights the importance of blood in claiming Japanese subjectivity, since it is clear that culture alone is not enough. However, the experience of the *Nikkeijin* complicates this by demonstrating that blood too is insufficient. The possession of both blood *and* culture is required for legitimacy.

The *Nikkeijin* are co-ethnics, the descendants of Japanese who emigrated overseas over the course of the twentieth century. Individual Japanese found their way into many countries of course, but the principle destinations for Japanese migration were the Americas, where the largest bodies of ethnic Japanese are located in Brazil, the United States, and Peru. In the context of Japanese minorities, the *Nikkeijin* are Brazilians (and to a much lesser extent, Peruvians) of Japanese descent who have returned to Japan since 1990.

## **Immigration and the Racially Homogenous State**

The principle of co-ethnic return, which led to the establishment of the *Nikkeijin* as a coherent minority population, is a relatively recent occurrence in Japan, developing only in the late 1980s. It is rooted in the public debates over immigration prompted by a highly visible, if numerically modest, rise in the foreign population during the early 1980s. Unlike the rest of the industrialized world, Japan was able to sustain admirable levels of economic growth without recourse to unskilled labor immigration. As the economy grew and reindustrialized after the war, a steady stream of migrants from the countryside supplied urban demand for labor. When rural supplies ran dry the economy compensated for labor shortfalls with increased mechanization, and by tapping the

underexploited potential of women and the elderly. By the 1980's, however, even these measures were insufficient and demand for labor now outstripped its supply.<sup>141</sup>

This disparity, it should be noted, was especially acute in rural areas, and in certain sectors of the economy. Sustained economic growth produced a very high level of affluence in society, and younger generations were reluctant to take jobs that were difficult (*kitsui*), dirty (*kitanai*), or dangerous (*kiken*). Indeed, labor shortfalls were especially acute in such “3D” industries as construction and factory work.<sup>142</sup>

The demand for labor in general, and in 3K industries in particular, coupled with the sharp appreciation of the yen following the 1985 Plaza Accords, made Japan an enticing destination for unskilled labor migrants from less affluent economies.<sup>143</sup> The late 1970s and early 1980s saw a relatively quick and visible increase in the number of Southeast Asians, Filipinos, and Middle Easterners who took advantage of the government's relatively lax attitude to overstay their student or tourist visas and seek unskilled work. Though their numbers were small (especially compared to other industrial nations), they were highly visible; they worked in large numbers on construction sites in full view of government offices, and congregated in Tokyo's

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<sup>141</sup> Wayne A. Cornelius and Takeyuki Tsuda, “Japan: Government Policy, Immigrant Reality,” in *Controlling Immigration: A Global Perspective*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., eds. Wayne A. Cornelius, et al (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 439.

<sup>142</sup> Leonard J. Schoppa, *Race for the Exits: The Unraveling of Japan's System of Social Protection* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 77.

<sup>143</sup> Wayne A. Cornelius and Takeyuki Tsuda, “Japan: Government Policy, Immigrant Reality,” in *Controlling Immigration: A Global Perspective*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., eds. Wayne A. Cornelius, et al (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 447.

parks.<sup>144</sup> The disparity between government policy, which prohibited the entry of foreign unskilled labor, and industry's demand for such labor prompted a debate about how to society should and could respond.

### **The Sakoku-Kaikoku Debate**

The anxiety provoked by these foreigners touched the foundation of Japanese subjectivity. Post-War Japan fashioned itself as an explicitly homogenous state. Though legal mechanisms were in place to naturalize foreigners, there had been no need to employ this mechanism on a large scale. The only sizable body of foreigners up to this point was the *Zainichi*, and they had been situated into their "proper place" as assimilated and institutional foreigners. Highly skilled foreigners were eligible to live and work in Japan through a very limited number of visas categories. All such visas were of course temporary, and their numbers were negligible at any rate. Unskilled workers were not permitted even that limited access to the economy.<sup>145</sup> The prospect of a large and growing population of unassimilated foreigners was troubling because it forced Japan to openly examine the implications of its purebloodedness in relation to its status as a first-world, industrial economic super power.

The relatively new phenomena of unskilled labor immigration prompted a public debate in the press that mirrored rhetorically that which followed the arrival of Perry's

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 458.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 449.

black ships in 1853; this was the *sakoku-kaikoku* debate.<sup>146</sup> Those in the *sakoku* (closed country) camp argued that the highly exclusive policies were right and proper. Japan's economic miracle was a consequence of unique Japanese cultural traits and the absence of the ethnic-based ruptures in social harmony that seemed endemic to multi-ethnic states like the U.S. or the U.K. Large numbers of foreign laborers, with no knowledge of the Japanese language or customs, would be unable and unwilling to assimilate into Japanese society. To open the country to immigration would undermine the racially and culturally homogenous state by adulterating the values and qualities that had hitherto made Japan a preeminent economy. It would also ensure the disruption of social harmony with increased crime and ethnic conflict.

Those in the *kaikoku* (open country) camp countered that the status quo with respect to domestic labor demand and supply was unsustainable, and in any case the presence of unskilled foreign laborers in country was a fait accompli. Domestic industry would find a way to supply its demand for labor regardless of policy. The continuation of current policies that render such laborers illegal would ensure their exploitation, impoverishment, and ghettoization. Such conditions, aside from being immoral, would ensure the crime and conflict *sakoku* advocates feared. Furthermore, they argued, Japan was a first world nation, and so should act like other first world nations by

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<sup>146</sup> Dietrich Thranhardt, "Closed Doors, Back Doors, Side Doors: Japan's Nonimmigration Policy in Comparative Perspective" in *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 1 (1999): 211.

accommodating impoverished immigrants and adopting a more internationalist posture.<sup>147</sup>

The allusion to Japan's forced opening to foreign trade and diplomacy in 1853 is telling. So framed, Japan was subjectively cast as its traditional, pre-Imperial, racially pure self. The numerically insignificant migrant labors likewise were cast as pernicious foreigners forcing their way in for their own material benefit. Though this rhetorical framing slanted the argument towards the *sakoku* camp, since the *kaikoku* camp implied capitulation to foreign demands *and* Japan's own imperial pretensions, Japan's response need to be more nuanced than the rhetorical binary allowed. If Japan refused to accommodate a foreign work force, it would face difficulties in maintaining its economic growth and standing as an economic super power. If it did, Japan would host populations of racial and cultural Others, who would need to be settled in their "proper place", as would the fruits of the inevitable miscegenation that would occur. This was a daunting question, especially since the settling of the *Zainichi* into their "proper place" was so problematic notwithstanding their cultural capital and investment in society.

The *Nikkeijin* offered up an elegant short-term solution to the immigration debate, and permitted the government to delay resolving such a difficult existential question. The *Nikkeijin*, particularly those from Brazil, are a prosperous, middle-class, ethnically conscious Japanese minority. They have high rates of education and deep roots in their

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<sup>147</sup> Krister Bjorklund, "Migration in the Interest of the Nation: Population Movements to and from Japan Since the Meiji Era," *Institute of Migration - Siirtolaisuusinstituutti*, accessed Feb. 30, 2011, <http://www.migrationinstitute.fi/pdf/webreports25.pdf>, 24.

adopted community. The value differential between Japanese and Brazilian currency at that time meant that a few years earning income in Japan was a lucrative prospect, enough to entice affluent *Nikkeijin* to supply the 3D labor Japan required. Yet, their high social status in Brazil meant that they would not come to Japan in poverty or desperation, and so they would be willing to return home. Most importantly, as an ethnically conscious minority, they had taken pains to preserve their ancestral culture and language. Their Japanese cultural and linguistic capital meant that they could integrate into Japanese society and the workplace without much difficulty, and they would possess all of the intrinsic qualities that made the Japanese such efficient workers.<sup>148</sup> Because they were ethnic Japanese their admittance would supply the economy with cheap labor without threatening Japan's ethnic homogeneity or stoking ethnic conflict.

Of course this reasoning was overly optimistic, and saturated with the traditional assumptions about blood and its capacity to transmit cultural qualities from one generation to the next. This over confidence in the significance of blood-kinship would have uncomfortable consequences for this elegant solution.

### **1990 Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act**

Initially, however, this faith in Japanese blood was written into law. The government's response to the *sakoku-kaikoku* debate was to amend the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act (*Shunyukokukanri Oyobi Nanmin Ninteiho*). The revised act (hereafter the Immigration Act) was formulated in 1989 and enacted in 1990.

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<sup>148</sup> Takeyuki Tsuda, *Strangers in the Ethnic Homeland* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 92.

The revision favors the *sakoku* camp by reaffirming the racially homogeneous state and continuing the prohibition of unskilled labor immigration. The final and most important provision for the purposes of this discussion is the *Nikkeijin* provision. This provision grants any individual, regardless of nationality, who can prove Japanese ancestry rights to live and work in Japan without restriction or quota. A second generation *Nikkeijin* who can furnish documents that at least one parent is a Japanese citizen (birth certificates, copy of family registry), is eligible for a three-year “Spouse or child of Japanese national” visa with unlimited renewals. Third generation *Nikkeijin* are eligible for a one-year “Long-term” visa, also with unlimited renewals, provided they supplied proof that one grandparent was a Japanese citizen (the above documents plus parent’s and grandparent’s marriage certificate).<sup>149</sup> This marked an unprecedented degree of openness, particularly when one considers that at the time of the bill’s passage, the *Nikkeijin* were only a coherent minority *in theory*, while the more than half-million *Zainichi* were only granted similar rights in 1991.

The official ministerial rationale for this openness, however, was not articulated in terms of facilitating limited labor migration, but rather family migration. Decades of emigration had produced a sizable population of Japanese co-ethnics abroad, and it was only natural that these individuals would wish to return for a time to visit relatives and experience the culture of their ethnic homeland. The cost of living in Japan was notoriously high, and so difficult for a sojourning Nikkei to bear with Brazilian or

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<sup>149</sup> Joshua Hotaka Roth, *Brokered Homeland: Japanese Brazilian Migrants in Japan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 25-7.

Ecuadorian currency. On the other hand the cost of supporting a relative from abroad would strain the resources of most Japanese families.<sup>150</sup> In recognition of these points, the co-ethnic foreigners were granted the liberal rights necessary to support themselves solely on the basis of their Japanese blood.

The immediate consequence of the Immigration Act was that the previously inconsequential *Nikkeijin* population in Japan exploded. Their numbers grew from 2,475 in 1985 to 342,307 in 2004.<sup>151</sup> Japan instituted an open-door policy for co-ethnics, cleverly balancing demands for labor with a preference for racial purity.<sup>152</sup> In a sense, the Immigration Act simply maintained the status quo and deferred a difficult decision for another time. In another, it demonstrated ideological continuity with prewar assumptions about blood, assuming as it did that on balance Japanese blood counted for more than several decades of Brazilian cultural influence.

### **Culture Clash**

The economic downturn in 2008 hit Japan's manufacturing sector hard, which in turn brought about the first significant net decline in the *Nikkeijin* population since the 1991. For two decades the *Nikkeijin* filled the economic niche they were intended to,

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<sup>150</sup> Takeyuki Tsuda, *Strangers in the Ethnic Homeland* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 92.

<sup>151</sup> Michael Orlando Sharp, "What Does Blood Membership Mean in Political Terms?: The Political Incorporation of Latin American *Nikkeijin* (Japanese Descendants) (LAN) in Japan 1990-2004," *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 12, no. 1 (2011): 114, accessed Mar. 15 2011.

<sup>152</sup> Christopher J. Frey and Deobra Hinderliter Ortolff, "Blood Relatives: Language, Immigration, and Education of Ethnic Returnees in Germany and Japan," *Comparative Education Review* 51, no.4, (November 2007): 453, accessed Feb. 15, 2011, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/520856>.

supplying labor shortfalls principally in small and medium-sized manufacturing firms. Employed in large numbers by labor brokerage firms and “dispatched” on short term contracts to augment a client firm’s workforce, economic contraction meant that their niche had now become superfluous. *Nikkeijin* dispatch workers were the first to be laid off and the last to be rehired. As much as 40% of the adult *Nikkeijin* population became unemployed at some point during the recession. This mass unemployment is reflected by the eleven-fold increase in number of *Nikkeijins* seeking welfare and job-placement assistance from the government in late 2008 and early 2009.<sup>153</sup> Brokerage firms failed en masse and the *Nikkeijin*’s primary infrastructure for entering and navigating Japanese society collapsed. The persistent recession and its consequent unemployment made continued residence in Japan untenable for many of these co-ethnics.

Among the state’s responses to the economic plight of the *Nikkeijin* was a program initiated in 2010 that demonstrates society’s disillusionment with their co-ethnics, and perhaps with the assumptions that undergirded their invitation into society. This offered *Nikkeijin* a lump sum, ¥300,000 per adult and ¥200,000 per child, to repatriate. The money was meant to cover the cost of relocation, but participants in the program were not expected to repay any excess, meaning that the government was effectively bribing *Nikkeijin* to leave. The funds came with one condition; acceptance meant forfeiture of all future rights of residence and employment. In other words,

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<sup>153</sup> Junichi Akashi and Masao Kobayashi, “Impacts of the Global Economic Crisis on Migrant Workers in Japan,” Scalabrini Migration Center, accessed Feb. 28, 2011, [http://www.smc.org.ph/misa/uploads/country\\_reports/1285918119.pdf](http://www.smc.org.ph/misa/uploads/country_reports/1285918119.pdf), 8-10.

forfeiture of the rights previously granted them on the basis of their blood. Curiously, the Immigration Act was not amended to repeal the *Nikkeijin*'s rights of residence and employment, and the rights of blood remained institutionalized. The government, at least until March 2010, was in the awkward position of barring co-ethnics with experience living in Japanese society and the desire to continue doing so from reentry while leaving the door open for continued Nikkei immigration. This was an absurdity not lost on the *Nikkeijin* population, many of whom protested, and the government reversed course somewhat, reducing the bar to three years. Many took advantage of the initiative, compelled by the harsh economic conditions, but left Japan with a bitter taste in their mouths.<sup>154 155</sup>

The bitterness is somewhat mutual, and its source lies in the failure of the assumptions on blood ties to meet expectations. The circumstances of *Nikkeijin* immigration and employment contributed significantly to their social marginalization in society, and inhibited their ability to assimilate. But the most salient circumstance for the purposes of this discussion is that of the interpersonal interactions between the two communities, which provoked polarization rather than reunion.

The culture clash that followed large-scale immigration was particularly disturbing to the Japanese. It upset prevailing expectations that the blood and culture of

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>155</sup> Hiroko Tabuchi, "Goodbye, Honored Guest," *New York Times* (New York City, NY), Apr. 23, 2009, accessed Feb. 27, 2011, [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/23/business/global/23immigrant.html?\\_r=1&pagewanted=all](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/23/business/global/23immigrant.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all).

the unique and homogeneous Japanese race were somehow intertwined. The assumptions of most Japanese were that the *Nikkeijin* were essentially transplanted Japanese. If they didn't more or less behave conventionally, their heritage would surely make them willing and able to adapt to their ethnic homeland quickly and painlessly. The fact was that despite the phenotypically Japanese appearance of many *Nikkeijin*, most were two or three generations removed from Japan, and so thoroughly Brazilian in culture and habit. The Japanese customs they maintained abroad were not necessarily recognizable as such to their hosts. Contrary to expectations, few were native speakers of Japanese and most didn't speak the language at all.<sup>156</sup> For someone to look Japanese, but not act or speak as a Japanese, created an uncomfortable incongruence with the received dogma on the intrinsic qualities of Japanese blood. This incongruence led many to view the *Nikkeijin* with a mixture of disappointment and confusion.<sup>157</sup>

Anthropologist Tsuda Takeyuki reports the feelings of his Japanese informants towards the *Nikkeijin*:

It all depends on how much the *nikkeijin* know the Japanese language and cultural customs. Despite the high expectations we initially have of them, we become very disappointed with we meet them because they can't speak Japanese. It is all a personal attitude problem of the *nikkeijin*. If they are trying hard to learn the Japanese language here, I respect them for it and see it as admirable. Unfortunately, such *nikkeijin* are very few. With those who make no effort to

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<sup>156</sup> Christopher J. Frey and Deobra Hinderliter Ortolff, "Blood Relatives: Language, Immigration, and Education of Ethnic Returnees in Germany and Japan," *Comparative Education Review* 51, no.4, (November 2007): 453, accessed Feb. 15, 2011, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/520856>.

<sup>157</sup> Takeyuki Tsuda, "When Minorities Migrate: The Racialization of the Japanese Brazilians in Brazil and Japan," in *Asian Diasporas: New Formation, New Conceptions*, edited by Rachael S. Parrenas and Lok C.D. Siu (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 238-40.

learn Japanese, we say, *nanda* (“What the hell?”). Although they are *nikkeijin*, they are *darashiganai* (lazy and not disciplined), and I start to wonder if they really want to work hard and begin to doubt their way of living. We feel they are lazy people (*namakemono*) and look down on them.<sup>158</sup>

The *Nikkeijin* for their part were also disappointed. They expected to be accepted as Japanese, yet they were promptly interpolated as foreigners and looked down upon as 3D laborers.<sup>159</sup> Social interaction with the Japanese subjected them to constant demands to explain their difference from racial expectations, and a relentless pressure to correct that difference. They discovered that the cultural forms they had maintained abroad, and which were central to their subjectivity as a Japanese minority, were not considered authentic in the homeland after all. As Tsuda reported of the attitude of his Japanese Brazilian informants:

In Brazil, we are considered Japanese because we speak some Japanese, eat Japanese food, and maintain some Japanese customs from our parents. This is Japanese enough for Brazilians, but for the Japanese, it means nothing. We appear quite Brazilian to them and are seen as foreigners.<sup>160</sup>

Consequently, many *Nikkeijin*, particularly the fourth generation children of the migrants, became frustrated with their ethnic homeland’s “disappointment” in them, and responded by rebelliously embracing their Brazilian difference. Naturally, this only served to underscore their foreignness and make them more problematic to Japanese observers.

At the community level, many localities with sizable *Nikkeijin* populations established

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<sup>158</sup> Takeyuki Tsuda, *Strangers in the Ethnic Homeland* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 118.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 105-6.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

language education and cultural training classes aimed at the *Nikkeijin*, providing practical lessons on how to prepare Japanese food as well as instruction on some traditional cultural activities, such as flower arrangement.<sup>161</sup> <sup>162</sup> While these are well meaning and even helpful efforts, they subtly underscore the expectation of homogeneity, which from the *Nikkeijin*'s perspective means the correction of their difference.

If nothing else, the example of the *Nikkeijin* serves to demonstrate the continued importance of blood as an organizing metaphor in Japanese society. This importance in the formal sphere was expressed in the immigration debate, and in its stopgap measure, the Immigration Act. It was also expressed on the interpersonal level, in the culture clash between the Japanese and the co-ethnic returnees. Modern Japanese subjectivity is rooted in both the possession of Japanese blood, and in the expression of identifiably Japanese culture. The initial openness displayed to the *Nikkeijin*, and the subsequent “disappointment” they provoked, shows that decades after the heyday of the eugenics movement and its sanguinary appeals blood remains something more than a metaphor.

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<sup>161</sup> Takeyuki, Tsuda, “Crossing Ethnic Boundaries: Japanese Brazilian Return Migrants and the Ethnic Challenge of Japan’s Newest Immigrant Minority,” in *Multiculturalism in the New Japan: Crossing the Boundaries Within*, eds. Nelson H.H. Graburn, John Ertl, and R. Kenji Tierney (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), 121-3.

<sup>162</sup> Takeyuki Tsuda, “When Minorities Migrate: The Racialization of the Japanese Brazilians in Brazil and Japan,” in *Asian Diasporas: New Formation, New Conceptions*, edited by Rachael S. Parrenas and Lok C.D. Siu (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 239-41.

## **Chapter Five – Blood Ideology in the Popular Media**

Blood ideology has played a tremendously important conceptual and rhetorical role in Japanese history. A traditional preoccupation in pre-modern times, blood marked the dividing line between “us” and “them” along an axis of binary relationships. In the modern period its importance increased by magnitudes, defining both the national-imperial subjectivity and its internal gradations. By way of conclusion, I’d like to examine blood ideology’s expression in a niche of Japanese popular culture; vampire media. The vampire is a fictional creature conjured up for popular consumption, and boasts an explicit relationship with blood. The Japanese word *kyūketsuki* literally means “blood-drinking demon.” It is perhaps much to regard this subgenre as a channel by which blood ideology penetrates and replicates itself in contemporary Japanese society. However, the themes prominent among its texts allegorize many of the assumptions and anxieties of blood that have developed in the modern period. At the very least, the existence of the Japanese vampire and its genre conventions reflects the imprint of blood ideology on society.

### **THE VAMPIRE BOOM**

The vampire penetrated Japanese consciousness in 1929, appearing first in the then popular “erotic-grotesque” publications, and then in Edogawa Ranpo’s novel

*Vampire (Kyūketsuki)* in 1930.<sup>163</sup> Universal Studios’ adaptation of Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* was released domestically in 1931 under the title *Demon Dracula (Majin Dorakyura)*. The public was evidently quite taken with the vampire both as a media character and metaphor because the 1930’s subsequently experienced a “boom in Japanese vampire fiction”,<sup>164</sup> and critic Sunaga Asahiko described the period as one “dominated by... ‘vampire eroticism’.”<sup>165</sup> The “boom” culminated in the publication in 1939 of the “most successful” adaptation of Bram Stoker’s novel in Japanese, the *Death’s Head Stranger (Dokuro Kengyo)*, by Yokomizo Seishi.<sup>166</sup>

Since the success of the *Death’s Head Stranger*, the vampire has been well represented across all mediums of Japanese popular culture. Table 1 includes a by no means exhaustive list of domestically produced vampire-themed media from the postwar period. Though the vampire may lack the ubiquity it currently enjoys in the contemporary United States, it is clearly an entrenched feature of the pop culture landscape in Japan.

<i>Kyūketsuki Ga</i>	1956	Vampire Wars	1982	<i>Kurozuka</i>	2003
<i>Onna Kyūketsuki</i>	1956	Vampire Hunter D	1985	<i>Tsukihime</i> Lunar Legend	2003
<i>Kuroneko</i>	1968	Vampire Princess Miyu	1988	Rosario + Vampire	2004
The Night of the Vampire	1970	Ephemera the Vampire	1992	<i>Tsukuyomi</i> Moon Phase	2004

<sup>163</sup> Mark Driscoll, *Absolute Erotic, Absolute Grotesque: The Living, Dead, and Undead in Japan’s Imperialism, 1895-1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 205.

<sup>164</sup> Mari Kotani, “Techno-Gothic Japan: From Seishi Yokomizo’s *The Death’s-Head Stranger* to Mariko Ohara’s *Ephemera the Vampire*,” in *Blood Read*, eds. Joan Gordon and Veronica Hollinger (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 189.

<sup>165</sup> See note 163 above, 203.

<sup>166</sup> See note 164 above.

The Lake of Dracula	1971	Hellsing	1997	Blood +	2005
The Clan of Poe	1972	Blood: The Last Vampire	2000	Vampire Knight	2005
Vampire Dracula Come to Kobe	1979	Trinity Blood	2001	Black Blood Brothers	2006
Dracula	1980	Karin	2003	Dance in the Vampire Bund	2010

Table 1: Vampire Media in Postwar Japan.

It is curious that the Japanese appropriated the vampire considering the wealth of supernatural images available from their rich folkloric tradition. It is, after all, a relic of East European folklore filtered through Austrian ethnography, Anglo-Victorian literature, and Anglo-American horror cinema.<sup>167</sup> It is even more curious that this appropriation of a Western media construction came at a time of increasing ambivalence towards the West.

This is perhaps explicable when one considers that the vampire is above all an image tied to blood and infiltration, two issues relevant to Japanese society at the time of Yokomizo's adaptation. His version of Stoker's tale is completely indigenized and set in Edo. Yokomizo's vampire is also modeled on a historical figure, though it is the notable Japanese Christian Amakusa Shiro, rather than the Wallachian prince Vlad III Tepes. Amakusa, is depicted as a Japanese man warped into a predatory monster through his contact with Western culture. The vampire infiltrates the Shogun's

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<sup>167</sup> Bruce A. McClelland, *Slayers and Their Vampires: A Cultural History of Killing the Dead* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2006), 87-90.

household and preys on his daughter, converting her to vampirism as part of an attempt to overthrow the military government.<sup>168</sup>

What is significant is the casting of Amakusa, the Christian leader of the 1639 Shimabara Rebellion, as the vampire antagonist. Christianity was long regarded by the Japanese authorities as a pernicious ideology, and Shimabara was a spectacularly violent demonstration of its incompatibility with Japanese society. This event, in fact, was the proximate cause of the Tokugawa seclusion edicts, which inaugurated Japan's long period of isolation.<sup>169</sup> Vampire Amakusa invokes this bloody episode, and the history of hostility and suspicion associated with foreigners and Christians. This is Amakusa's most salient quality; he isn't simply a Christian, but a *Japanese* Christian. He is not an external Other, as were the foreign priests who could be easily identified and eliminated. He is an internal Other, as were the peasants provoked to impious rebellion against their rightful lords by the influence of a foreign and corrupting ideology. The use of Amakusa contextualizes the vampiric threat, that of infiltration and death from within, as the historical menace posed by internal others such as the hidden-Christians (*kakure kirishitan*).

By the 1930s, with the ascension of the eugenics movement and of imperial fascism, Japanese society had been conditioned to consider the quality and purity of their

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<sup>168</sup> Mari Kotani, "Techno-Gothic Japan: From Seishi Yokomizo's *The Death's-Head Stranger* to Mariko Ohara's *Ephemera the Vampire*," in *Blood Read*, eds. Joan Gordon and Veronica Hollinger (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 190.

<sup>169</sup> George Feifer, *Breaking Open Japan: Commodore Perry, Lord Abe, and American Imperialism in 1853* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2006), 23-5.

individual bloodlines as determinative of both individual and national success. Impurity meant a number of things, most of which were expressed through the body and in behavior, and all of which were conveyable through bloodlines into familial lineages and the National Body: the quasi-spiritual pollution of pre-modern occupations, mental illness, genetic disease, a weak constitution and susceptibility to illness, criminality, vice, and even less than ideal biometric specifications. Blood purity was the core of Japanese subjectivity, and the foundation of its imperium. Consciousness of this purity at an individual level was cultivated so that through individual considerations the purity of the aggregate blood pool would be preserved and refined.

The corollary of this blood consciousness is blood anxiety. Impure bloodlines must be prevented from mingling with the pure. This was a matter of official state policy, as the sterilization provisions of the National Eugenics Bill and the anti-miscegenation requirements of the *Global Policy with the Yamato Race as Nucleus* report attest. It was also normative public practice, as the use of private detectives to investigate the hygienic backgrounds of potential spouses, and the use of the courts to dissolve fraudulent marriages, can also attest. Yet, as this last point suggests, there was at least a subconscious realization that for all of the significance and expectations invested in the substance, blood was in fact an unexpressive marker of difference. Impure bloodlines could and did penetrate. This is the basis of a persistent social anxiety, and perhaps the appeal of an otherwise esoteric foreign media image.

## THE VAMPIRE AS BLOOD ALLEGORY

Despite their varied representations, vampire narratives in Japan are fairly uniform in their depictions of blood, and a number of familiar themes predominate. First and foremost, evoking the difficulties of identifying *Burakumin* and *Zainichi*, is the invisibility of its Otherness. “Blood-drinking demons” tend to look like everyone else, and move about freely. Their racial difference, and all that it implies, is invisible to their host societies and potential victims, unless they come out of the coffin, so to speak.

Recalling the more extreme claims of the eugenics movement, blood, as opposed to individual will, is portrayed as deterministic of individual behavior and group character. This is best exemplified by converted or mixed-blooded vampire characters, which fight often-losing battles with the urges demanded by their blood, and live in constant tension between the mores of their host society and their blood-driven imperatives. The principle dramatic arc of the 2005 anime serial *Vampire Knight* is centered on the gradual metamorphosis of its protagonist, Zero, from civilized human into feral vampire. Infected by a vampire in his youth, Zero is condemned to lose all trace of his humanity as he succumbs to violent bloodlust.<sup>170</sup> Much of the series’ narrative is devoted to Zero’s increasingly futile “performance of passing”, as he attempts to conceal his condition from his peers and suppress his violent urges towards them. The protagonist of *Blood+*, Saya, is a vampire initially unaware of her racial heritage. She conceives of herself as a typical Japanese girl, unique only in that she must

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<sup>170</sup> Hino Matsuri, *Vampire Knight*, Television. Kiyoko Sayama (2008; Tokyo: Studio Deen.), web streaming.

periodically undergo blood transfusions. When the transfusions stop she is subject to involuntary blackouts, during which her vampirism reasserts itself through displays of super-human strength and indiscriminate violence.<sup>171</sup> The character's true nature is only suppressed once her blood is removed in totality.

Blood is also the site of immutable, intrinsic difference, a fact of life in Japan well understood by both the *Burakumin* and the *Zainichi*. Vampires are simply *not* human, despite their human appearance. Sometimes this Otherness is demonstrated by a literal inhumanity, as in the case of Mariko Ohara's 1992 novel *Vampire Ephemera* (*Kyūketsuki Efemera*). The Ephemera vampires are parasites that burrow into their human victims and replace the host's heart with their own bodies.<sup>172</sup> Supplanting the organ responsible for pumping and filtering human blood, human life is terminated and the body is simply a vessel for something alien. Other times they are simply racial Others, such as the above mentioned Zero and Saya, indistinguishable in appearance and in their day-to-day behavior from humans, but intrinsically different from those around them.

Echoing the prewar eugenics discourse, blood is a medium of infection and metamorphosis. Vampires impose their vampirism on humans through the blood stream. The infection or mixing of blood precipitates a fundamental, racial change that results in a loss of humanity. Infection spreads in the traditional vampire way, via the

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<sup>171</sup> Asuka Katsura, *Blood+*, Television, Junichi Fujisaku (2005; Tokyo: Animax.), web streaming.

<sup>172</sup> Mari Kotani, "Techno-Gothic Japan: From Seishi Yokomizo's *The Death's-Head Stranger* to Mariko Ohara's *Ephemera the Vampire*," in *Blood Read*, eds. Joan Gordon and Veronica Hollinger (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 195.

fangs, and mixing in the traditional human way, via sex. The *Ephemera* vampires literally assume the central filtering position in their victim's circulatory system, and Zero's fate was precipitated by an infectious bite. The 1971 Ryo Hammura novel *The Blood Vessel of Stone (Ishi no Ketsumyaku)* portrays vampirism as the symptom of a sexually transmitted virus, catalyzed in the bloodstream of its host.<sup>173</sup>

The anti-miscegenation position advocated by Katō Hiroyuki at the turn of the twentieth century and ultimately embraced by the wartime government a half-century later, is also allegorized. Pure-bloodedness is generally portrayed as superior to mixed-bloodedness. Mixed-blooded characters consistently occupy an unenviable liminal state between vampire and human society. They are subject to social isolation, existential angst, moral conflict, and are unable to integrate comfortably into either society. When Zero is obliged to interact with other humans, he is brooding and anti-social, a product of both his anxiety and profound inner rage. Saya's principle antagonists are mixed-blood vampires who, as they first appear in her story, are violently incompatible with human society. When not on a violent rampage, however, these characters are depicted as rather wretched creatures, disoriented, miserable, and deserving of sympathy. The protagonist of the 2001 serial *Hellsing (Herushingu)*, likewise often finds her mixed-blooded status unpalatable. An important dramatic arc in her story is her refusal to accept the inhumanity imposed on her, and for much of the first season of *Hellsing* she

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 190-1.

starves herself rather than drink the blood she biologically requires.<sup>174</sup> Edgar, the antihero of the 1974 manga, *The Clan of Poe* (*Poe no Ichizoku*), likewise was born human but became a vampire through infection. Though he enjoys immortality it is as an adolescent boy.<sup>175</sup> The discrepancy between his childish physical appearance and his advanced mental age defines his life as one of profound social isolation and resentment.

Hero or villain, human or vampire, the pureblooded are the superior breed. The superiority of this state is expressed psychologically and physically. In the first case, they are free of the existential and moral qualms that beset the mixed-blooded. In the second, it is a near universal trope of vampire narratives that vampire characters are superhuman in terms of speed, strength and longevity, and typically outmatch their half-blood counterparts.

The superiority of pureblood over mixed-blood is often made explicit, as in the aforementioned *Blood+*. Saya's principle weapon, in her many battles with the mixed-blooded, is in fact her own blood. She wields a stylized Japanese *katana* with shallow channels carved into the length of the blade. Before going into battle Saya slices open her thumb, allowing her blood to pour into these channels. When she lands a blow, her pureblood is introduced directly into her opponent's bloodstream, destroying them from the inside out.

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<sup>174</sup> Yōsuke Kurodo and Hideyuki Kurata, *Hellsing*, Television, Tomokazu Tokoro and Hiroyuki Tanaka (2001; Tokyo: Gonzo.), web Streaming.

<sup>175</sup> Moto Hagio, *The Clan of Poe Volume 1* (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 1998).

In the fictional world it inhabits, the vampire's menace is that it's a racial Other, in many ways undetectable to its host society. With respect to blood, however, the danger in this infiltration is not merely from exsanguinations. Blood is the root of one's humanity and racial identity, determinative yet vulnerable to adulteration. The vampire is threatening in that it can mix and pollute its victim's blood, undermining the purity of the substance that defines him racially and individually, and condemning them to an inferior quality of life.

Given the significance of blood in the non-fictional world, as the biological and metaphorical determinant of Japanese subjectivity, it is no great surprise that the vampire has enjoyed a steady audience from the 1920's up to the present. It is an image that, through its association with blood, blood mixing, infiltration and menace, readily symbolizes real-world blood anxiety. This anxiety was sown by the promulgation of imperial ideology and the eugenics movement, and provoked by internal others such as the *Burakumin*, and the *Zainichi*.

Interestingly, a 2010 anime serial titled *Dance in the Vampire Bund*, suggests another confluence of the vampire's metaphorical powers with Japanese blood-based racial anxieties. The premise of *Dance in the Vampire Bund* is that the small, but previously unknown vampire community reveals itself suddenly and in spectacular fashion on live Japanese television. The vampires subsequently use their tremendous economic clout to demand a Shanghai-style Bund in an economically vulnerable

Tokyo.<sup>176</sup> Japanese society suddenly, and uneasily, shares the world with a sizable population of physically indistinguishable but racially different Others, who exploited economic weakness to carve out a colony within Japan's borders. The allusion to contemporary blood anxieties is clear; the tension between the economic necessity of immigrant labor and the state's preference for racial homogeneity, which *Nikkeijin* immigration simply failed to resolve.

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<sup>176</sup> Tamaki Nozomu, *Dance in the Vampire Bund*, television, Akiyuki Shinbo (2010; Tokyo: AT-X and Chiba TV.), web streaming.

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## **Vita**

Benjamin Paul Miller was born in Fayetteville, North Carolina. He received his Bachelor of Arts in History and Anthropology in May 2004 from Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. He was a member of the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program from 2004 until 2009, and he received his Master of Arts in Asian Studies in May 2012 from the University of Texas at Austin.

Permanent email: [reticentben@gmail.com](mailto:reticentben@gmail.com)

This thesis was typed by Benjamin Paul Miller.