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Politics Shifts Right: The Rise of Nationalism in Millennial Japan

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement
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by

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Accepted for High Honors

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Introduction

In the 1990s, Japan experienced a series of devastating internal political, economic and social problems that changed the landscape irrevocably. A sense of national panic and crisis was ignited in 1995 when Japan experienced the Great Hanshin earthquake and the Aum Shinrikyō attack, the notorious sarin gas attack in the Tokyo subway. These disasters came on the heels of economic collapse, and the nation seemed to be falling into a downward spiral. The Japanese lamented the decline of traditional values, social hegemony, political awareness and engagement. In the midst of this crisis, nationalism rose to the fore as a solution to the myriad social ills. As we enter the second decade of this new century, many seem ready to put this, at times embarrassing, resurgence of nationalism behind them. However, this paper argues that the post-bubble resurgence of nationalism has radically changed political, juridical and social norms in Japan by normalizing expressions of nationalism previously considered taboo, such as historical revisionism, patriotic education, and the revision of Article 9 of the Constitution.

Since the end of Japan's defeat in World War II, nationalists in Japan have decried the government's "apologetic" attitude towards Asia and the United States. These nationalists have always been a right-wing segment on the fringe of the large Liberal Democratic Party in Japan, however recently they have grown in prominence and have taken center stage in LDP politics and ideology. For example, Tokyo's Governor Ishihara Shintarō, former Prime Minister (PM) Abe Shinzō, and professor Nobukatsu Fujioka, to name a few, have openly voiced their complaint that Japan is promoting a masochistic and western-derived view of history that has left a feeling of guilt among the Japanese

people. Therefore, nationalists promote a revisionist history that argues that the Japanese were victims of Western imperialism, and that the war in Asia was a war of liberation against the imperialist West. They argue that historical revisionism will allow “children [to] be freed from the ‘mind control’ of the ‘Tokyo War Tribunal view of history’ and sympathetically partake in the war experience as Japanese citizens.”¹

In post Cold War Japan, revisionist history has most notably been advanced through the New History Textbook (Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho, 2001), a conservative history textbook written by the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform (Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho o Tsukuru Kai). Although, this textbook promotes an ultra-conservative view of Japan, the Ministry of Education (MoE) approved the New History Textbook for the 2002 school year, making it one of eight history textbooks that the local school boards could choose for use in classrooms. Since the Japanese government’s acceptance of the New History Textbook, there has been a strong trend in all history textbooks towards ‘watered down’ coverage of the controversial events in the Asia-Pacific War, such as comfort women and Unit 731. While the New History Textbook is the most recognized form of historical revisionism, it can also be seen at the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo where fourteen Class-A war criminals are enshrined, and in Japanese museums that commemorate the Asia-Pacific War. The common war narrative presented throughout historical revisionism reveres the sacrifice, loyalty, and struggle of the Japanese military and citizens during World War II. Moreover, it chooses not to discuss the victims of Japanese aggression and the indoctrination of blind loyalty and patriotism that allowed the unnecessary sacrifice of so many Japanese lives.

Minoru Iwasaki and Steffi Richter argue that historical revision of the war and war

¹ Iwasaki and Richter, 508-509.

memory accidentally arose to fill the ideological void that occurred in post-bubble Japan. They explain that post-war Japan lacked a cohesive ideology because Shintoism and the Japanese belief in their own superiority had been invalidated with their surrender in World War II and the emperor's subsequent renunciation of divinity. During the early post-war era of high growth, the Japanese were able to substitute their economic success for a collective war memory. But when the economic bubble burst, the social and political changes that accompanied it in the late 1980s and early 1990s began unraveling the fabric of society. The “so-called readjustment and structural reform policies began to threaten the corporate, school, and family systems, which were important pillars of Japan's postwar community as well as the material basis of middle-class consciousness in its support of welfare-society and livelihood guarantees.”² As Iwasaki and Richter argue, the lack of a cohesive national ideology caused a resurgence of nationalism in Japan to fill the void left open by the economic crisis.

The post-war narrative of nationalism described above ascribes the rise of nationalism to the unstable environment of post-bubble Japan. But, I argue that the nationalist rhetoric that emerged in the 1990s has been purposely crafted by the government to imply that historical revisionism, patriotic education, and constitutional revision, particularly over Article 9, are necessary remedies for the supposed internal social collapse and emerging regional threat. According to William Kelly and Merry White, the 1990s undermined confidence in the idealized “family-nation” relationship that makes up the ideology behind the family emperor-state, the corporation as a family, and the family as social bedrock of the state.³ But, David Leheny argues that these

² Iwasaki and Richter, 525.

³ Kelly and White, 66.

conceptions of the Japanese state were powerful popular myths reinforced by the public rather than actual truths:

“The concept of ‘family’ used in this conception of the family-nation is a relatively recent and somewhat fragile construction, and Japan has been characterized by far less social mobility than a ‘meritocracy’ thesis might suggest. Japan’s employment relations have moreover been the long-ideal for only a subset of Japan’s workers, primarily those in large manufacturing firms rather than those working for the subcontractors on whom those firms rely. And Japan’s homogeneity has been a carefully constructed myth that has masked the reality of a country with significant minority and foreign populations.”⁴

Therefore, the social collapse that the conservatives point to as the justification for nationalist policies may not be that dramatic, yet it has been described as a national phenomenon and crisis.

Despite the validity of the conservative claims, the notion that the new social trends in Japan are a verifiable crisis has effectively permeated government agencies, such as the Ministry of Education. As stated in the Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education, the Ministry of Education seeks to promote patriotic and moral education as a way to correct the diminishing values of the nation’s youth and by extension restore order to society. Since the end of the 20th century, the Ministry of Education and the Japanese government have implemented reforms that are intended to forcefully inspire patriotism and loyalty to the state in students throughout Japan. In 1999, the Japanese government enacted a law that designated the *Hinomaru* and *Kimigayo* (the flag and anthem used in prewar and wartime Japan) as national symbols, even though they still represent imperialism and subjugation for many Asian nations. Moreover, in 2002, the Ministry of Education distributed “Notebooks for Moral Education” (*Kokoro no nōto*) to include moral education in the schools’ curriculum. “Notebooks for Moral Education” is seen as

⁴ Leheny, 28-29.

problematic because it implies that it is healthy and natural to feel the same love toward your family as you feel toward the entire country. This is reminiscent of the pre-war and wartime textbooks called *Shūshin* (National Moral Education) that instructed students in moral education and served as a tool to mobilize the students during wartime. Finally, in 2006 the Fundamental Law of Education, which was empowered by the Constitution and sets the standards of Japanese education, was revised to change the focus of education from educating citizens to educating national subjects. All references to the Constitution and individuality were removed, and the Ministry of Education was given significantly more direct control over curriculum and schools.

Similarly, the perceived imminent threat of North Korea has prompted drastic reforms in Japan's defense and counter-terrorist policies without a proper discussion of its actual threat. Since 9/11, the government has used the kidnappings of Japanese citizens by North Korea in the 1980s, North Korean test missile launches over Japan, and the appearance of suspicious boats (*fushinsen*) in Japanese waters to perpetuate widespread fear of a North Korean terrorist attack. In response to the domestic concerns over North Korea and the global culture of fear created after 9/11, the Japanese government has expanded the capabilities of the Self Defense Force outside the scope of Article 9. For example, three bills were passed in 2003 that allow the Cabinet to bring immediate military courses of action to the Diet for approval, which empowers the prime minister to exert executive power.⁵ In addition, in 2004 the Japanese Diet approved spending \$1 billion to begin work on a missile defense shield that will be part of the United States missile defense system, linking the continental US and its allies.⁶ These laws enable the

⁵ Cha, "Japan-Korea Relations."

⁶ Onishi, "Japan Support."

SDF to launch preemptive strikes if the threat is deemed imminent (with less chance of retaliation), which is a complete departure from Article 9 of the Constitution

The controversial education and security policies advocated by the conservative right were initially met with wide, vocal criticism from domestic liberals, special interest groups, and Asian nations. But over time domestic organized resistance has fallen away due to the lack of money, resources, and resolve. After the initial waves of protest against the law on the *Hinomaru* and *Kimigayo* and inclusion of the Self Defense Forces in the Iraq War failed, the momentum behind each resistance died away. Individual teachers were the only people left fighting the conservative educational reforms, and they were unable to garner success in the courts or among the general populous. On March 17th the Tokyo High Court rejected a lawsuit filed by 132 public school teachers in Kanagawa Prefecture who were contesting the constitutionality of the government instated obligation to sing the *Kimigayo*.⁷ The last case that was accepted by the High Court was in 2007 when they ruled that forcing music teachers to accompany the *Kimigayo* was not a violation of the Constitution. Similarly, the protests against the Iraq War initially created a mass movement primarily made up of *freeters*, a new social group in Japan characterized by their part-time employment and non-conformist ideals. But, by the end of 2004, almost all organized resistance had ended, due to the government's criminalization of the leftist activists and lack of political and intellectual support. Although, there are some nascent movements in Japan resisting the implementation of conservative policies, by and large their efforts have been unorganized and ineffective. This suggests that the political spectrum in Japan has been moved to the right and that the nationalist discourse is becoming a norm in society.

⁷ *Japan Today*, "High court reject suit."

From the late 1990s through the turn of the century, scholarly and popular domestic media voiced concern that the revision of war history, rise of patriotic education, and expansion of the Self Defense Forces were signs of the rebirth of Japanese militarism. However, as we approach the end of the first decade in the 21st century, the apprehension and resistance to new nationalism in Japan seems to have evaporated, despite the previous implementation and continuation of conservative policies that clearly support a nationalist agenda. Many people point to the election of Democratic Party Leader Prime Minister (PM) Hatoyama Yukio and the fall of radical LDP PM Abe Shinzō as clear indicators of the decline of the conservative right and the end to the neo-nationalist discourse in Japan. While the current party in power may not espouse the nationalist ideals of the previous prime ministers, the legacy of the LDP's radical policy changes and the support for right-wing civil society groups has remained strong in Japan. The conservative policies that were implemented under the LDP in the past decade have not yet been overturned and there is no reason to believe that they will be in the future. The concept of "returning to normalcy," usually associated with the expansion of Article 9, is in fact being expanded to encompass all nationalist policies.⁸ Yet, now these policies have been implemented under the guise of fears of domestic social collapse and external threats, and therefore lack a fruitful discussion of their political and social consequences in Japan.

⁸ A 'normal' Japan has a very ambiguous meaning, but it has often been associated with a military buildup that would allow them to maintain an official standing military like most nations. I have expanded this phrase to all the nationalist policies I discuss, suggesting that nationalist believe that patriotic education and historical revision will help Japan become normal and have become part of the debate. For more information on the concept of normalcy see: Andrew Oros, *Normalizing Japan: Politics, Identity, and Evolution of Security Practice* (Stanford University Press, 2008).

Section I: Historical Revisionism

The debate on historical revisionism in Japan has been at the forefront of domestic politics since the 1960s. Japan's defeat in World War II and the resulting occupation forcibly transformed it into a peaceful state where the education and government policies mirrored the ideals of a new Japan. However the controversial Tokyo Trials and the sudden emergence of the Cold War and economic boom that engulfed Japan moved the nation forward without a harmonized narrative of war memory. The abrupt transition in U.S-Japan relations from enemies to allies prompted the necessity for the formation of what historian Yoshikuni Igarashi describes in his book Bodies of Memory as the “foundational narrative” of U.S. Japanese postwar relations.⁹ The foundational narrative attributes the end of the war to the heroic decision by President Truman to use the atomic bomb in Japan, which supposedly saved millions of lives, and to Hirohito’s equally heroic “divine decision,” to surrender and save Japan from total destruction. This narrative justifies to the United States and Japan the use of the atomic bomb and the ensuing transformation of their post-war relationship.

The foundational narrative presented Japan as a victim, and neglects to acknowledge Japanese aggression against other Asian nations or assign guilt to anyone other than the highest echelons of the wartime Japanese military. In the years directly following the war, the American occupation authorities feared that discussing the Japanese war atrocities might incite a counter-campaign against the Allies for their “own atrocious policies,” the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.¹⁰ Therefore, Japan’s own actions abroad were never discussed and the dichotomy of the actors in

⁹ Igarashi, 19-28.

¹⁰ Dower, “The Bombed,” 116-117.

World War II became seen as purely American and Japanese. This narrative that focuses on America's role, particularly the remembering of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, has "easily become a way of forgetting Nanjing, Bataan, the Burma-Siam railway, Manila, and countless Japanese atrocities these and other place names signified to non Japanese."¹¹ The victim consciousness attributed to the atomic bombing continues to complicate Japan's war memory today.

The foundation narrative continued to define US-Japan relations until the late 1980s, when the Cold War political paradigm began to dissolve. "The breakdown of the Cold War political structure and its comforting story of good versus evil...has complicated the loss of the East West binary that undermined Japan's identity as the democratic front against Communism in Asia without providing new structures to supplant that."¹² With the national narrative on the Asia-Pacific War open to redefinition, the struggle between the right and left over the determination of war memory has persisted into the 21st century.

For the purpose of this section I have chosen to focus on textbook revision, the Yasukuni Shrine, and the major war museums that commemorate the Pacific War: Yūshūkan War Museum, Chiran Peace Museum for Kamikaze Pilots, and Showa Hall (Shōwakan), all of which present a right-wing revisionist historiography of Japan's past which is controversial both within Japan and among other Asian nations. Revisionist nationalism focuses on the 'benefits' that Japan's colonization brought to Asia; challenges the thesis that Japan is guilty of aggression; and denies the importance, significance, and even the validity of historical episodes like the Nanjing Massacre and other war crimes.

¹¹ Dower, "The Bombed," 123.

¹² Gerow, 79.

As we see in the case of textbook revision, Yasukuni Shrine, and the war museums, the discussion of suffering is carefully drawn around Japan's national borders, silencing the majority of the people (Asians and Allies) affected by the Asia-Pacific War.

Textbook Revision

In 2001, the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform (Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho o Tsukuru Kai) reignited the textbook controversy that began in the late 1940s, by introducing the New History Textbook. The society promotes an ultra-conservative view of Japan and is trying to popularize their pre-war, right wing philosophy, by removing “dark history” from Japanese textbooks in favor of a more positive view of Japan's past.¹³ The Ministry of Education (MoE) approved the New History Textbook for the 2002 school year, making it one of eight history textbooks that the local school boards could choose for use in classrooms. This action, along with the LDP's recent conservative stance towards Asia-Pacific War memory, has caused a general trend towards “white washing” history in average Japanese textbooks. Although, the content of the revised New History Textbook is not as radical as it has been construed to be by the media, it symbolizes to Japan's citizens and the international community the Japanese government's desire to shift to a more conservative policy when dealing with Japan's war memory.

Controversy over history textbooks has been seen in Japan since the beginning of the post-war era. In 1946, the Supreme Command for the Allied Powers (SCAP) imposed the first screening of history textbooks.¹⁴ The Americans forced the Japanese to blot out passages of their old textbooks to insure that they did not promote militarism or emperor

¹³ Kin, “Concerned Japanese.”

¹⁴ Masalski, *Japan Digest* (2001).

worship. Since then, the Ministry of Education screens all textbooks before making a list of seven or eight textbooks that the public and private schools may pick from. Professor Ienaga Saburō has played a pivotal role in Japan's debate over the representation of their history in textbooks. His high school history textbook that had been in circulation since 1952 was one of the three most used in early post-war Japan. When it came up for revision in 1962, the MoE demanded that Ienaga delete passages to tone down the description of Japan's wartime atrocities.¹⁵ In response, Professor Ienaga filed a lawsuit against the MoE's textbook certification system, alleging that his constitutional freedom of expression and academic freedom was violated. His lawsuit lasted thirty years, and even though Ienaga eventually lost in 1993, the court requested, in 1982, that the government refrain from intervening in educational content.¹⁶

In the early 1980s the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) embarked on a campaign to revise over 100 Japanese textbooks with a “thrust toward greater respect, in effect, for State Shinto, big business, duties instead of rights, and the militarism instead of pacifism.”¹⁷ In response, the MoE suggested that the history textbooks soften the horrors of the Asia-Pacific War and the pacifist requirements of the Constitution. However, the 1980s was also characterized by the economic and military rise of China and Korea. Prior to the 1980s, both China and Korea were developing nations, recovering from the Asia-Pacific war and internal struggles that emerged afterward. They did not have the resources or political clout to demand an apology or reparations from Japan. Sebastian

¹⁵ Ienaga, 125.

¹⁶ Ienaga Saburō filed another lawsuit in 1984 against the government of Japan for compensation for the result of textbook authorization in 1982 that rejected his draft textbook. He won at the Supreme Court on August 29, 1997 and was paid 400,000 yen. For more information on Japan's textbook controversy see: Nozaki Toshiko and Inokuchi Hiromitsu, “Japanese Education, Nationalism, and Ienaga Saburō's Textbook Lawsuits,” in *Censoring History: Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany, and the United States*, eds. Laura Hein and Mark Selden (Armonk, NY: East Gate Book, 2000): 96-126.

¹⁷ Ienaga, 113.

Conrad argues that the views of neighboring Asian nations barely contributed to the views taken on the wartime past because “the hegemonic role of the USA, undiminished after the end of the occupation as a result of the Cold War, also reinforced an ignorance of Chinese and Korean perspectives.”¹⁸ The lack of appropriate regional discourse on World War II until the 1980s allowed a skewed war memory to develop in Japan until the 1980s, when other Asian nations finally made their voices heard in Japan’s debate over its wartime legacy.¹⁹

In response to the international outcry in the early 1980s against the historical revisionist tendencies in Japanese history textbooks, the most widely circulated textbooks of the late ‘80s and early ‘90s discussed controversial issues such as the Nanjing Massacre, comfort women, forced suicide in Okinawa, and Unit 731.²⁰ The history textbooks that were approved by the MoE in 1996 accurately characterize the atrocities of Japanese imperialism and rule of their Asian neighbors in World War II. In comparison, a 1968 history textbook reference to the Nanjing Massacre claimed that “the Japanese killed 42,000 civilians, including women and children.”²¹ But in 1985 that same textbook was revised to say, “There were 70,000 to 80,000 deaths of citizens alone, including women and children. If soldiers who had thrown down their weapons are included, the total number of deaths is said to have reached 200,000.”²² The height of the “apologetic” textbooks occurred in the early 1990s, and since then there has been a conservative backlash advocated by Japanese nationalists who insist that “history stop being treated

¹⁸ Conrad, 92.

¹⁹ Conrad, 94.

²⁰ Masalski, 1.

²¹ Nathan, 142-143.

²² Nathan, 143.

like a court in which the figures and actions of the past are called to judgment.”²³

Prior to release, the New History Textbook was revised 137 times (compared to the 7 other textbooks which averaged 25 revisions) and many of the most controversial statements were removed. For example in the original draft of the textbook, the annexation of Korea in 1910 was described as “conducted in a legal manner based on commonly accepted principles of international relations.”²⁴ However after revision, that passage was changed to “was carried out after suppressing domestic opposition in Korea with the threat of military force.”²⁵ Admittedly, some very contentious statements were kept in the final version of the New History Textbook. For example, when discussing the Nanking Massacre it states, “Japanese military officials thought Chiang Kai-shek would surrender if they captured Nanking, the Nationalist capital; they occupied the city in December.”²⁶ Next to this sentence is an asterisk, which at the bottom of the page says “Note* At this time, many Chinese soldiers and civilians were killed or wounded by the Japanese troops (Nanking Incident). Documentary evidence has raised doubts about the actual number of victims claimed by the incident. The debate continues even today.”²⁷ In addition, the revised textbook covered the previously taboo subject of the Imperial Rescript on Education, “which outlined a Japanese nationalist world view [and] was required reading in schools until the end of World War II.”²⁸

The members and supporters of the Society for the Creation of Textbook Reform are all considered elite intellectuals, politicians, and business men. The Society was

²³ Masalski, 2.

²⁴ *The Nikkei Weekly*, “‘Revisionist’ history texts.”

²⁵ *The Nikkei Weekly*, “‘Revisionist’ history texts.”

²⁶ *New History Textbook*, page 49

²⁷ *New History Textbook*, page 49

²⁸ Fukuda, “Japan to approve.”

founded by Nishio Kanji, a professor of history at the University of Electro-Communications in Tokyo, in 1996, and has been supported by other elite university professors, like Nobukatsu Fujioka, a professor of education at Tokyo University.²⁹ The Society has strong endorsement from nationalist politicians in the LDP party, such as Ishihara Shintarō and former Prime Minister Abe Shinzō.³⁰ A few influential business leaders also backed the group, like Imai Takashi, chairman of Nippon Steel and chairman of the Keidanren.³¹ This small and elite distribution of interest in ultra-nationalist views implies that advocates of the New History Textbook are not representative of the general Japanese views. But their money and powerful positions give them the means to widely popularize their goal of historical revision. For example, in 2001, the society bought thousands of copies of their textbook to distribute as a gift to sympathizers, which helped propel the textbook onto the bestseller list.³² Due to the high profile and positions of the New History Textbook supporters, it can appear that the Japanese people are also in support of historical revision, but the actual use of the textbook suggests otherwise.

Initially, the Society hoped to have the New History Textbook used in 10% of the junior high schools in Japan.³³ However, only 0.03% of all junior high schools, about 1,300 students, adopted the New History Textbook in 2002.³⁴ Although the percentage of the junior high schools that adopted the textbook is small, the reception of the New History Textbook was not as negative as these numbers suggest. At first the Tochigi Prefecture's central school board voted to use the New History Textbook.³⁵ But, after the

²⁹ Nathan, 144.

³⁰ Kin, "Concerned Japanese."

³¹ Nathan, 147.

³² Kin, "Concerned Japanese."

³³ "School Board Votes to Use Book," *Associated Press Online* (Tokyo), August 8, 2001.

³⁴ *Kyodo News International*, "Government Industry."

³⁵ Nathan, 147.

announcement, there was uproar among the citizens of the Tochigi Prefecture and ten local school boards declared their intention to reject the textbook, so the central board reversed their decision. In many other towns and prefectures, school boards were not willing to rule out the New History Textbook, but the visible reaction from the public against the conservative textbook forced the decision against it. Four of the schools that did accept the textbook were special schools for “handicapped children.” In these cases the Tokyo metropolitan school board was allowed to pick the textbooks for these four schools; it must be noted that five board members were private citizens appointed by Ishihara Shintarō.³⁶

The real effect of the New History Textbook was not its circulation, but the impact that its acceptance had on all of the other history textbooks up for selection. In 1998, the education minister, Nobukata Michimura, reversed the 1982 law that called for respect of Japan’s neighbors in history textbooks. He explained that “history textbooks were in certain respects lacking in overall balance, tending to overemphasize the negative elements,” and that he wished to help publishers restore the needed balance.³⁷ This comment and the acceptance of the New History Textbook sent a message to editors and publishers that they needed to tone down discussions of Japanese wrong-doing and aggression. Therefore in a point-by-point analysis of all of the old history textbooks, two Japanese scholars, Hiro Inoguchi and Yoshiko Nozaki, found a strong trend towards ‘watered down’ coverage of the controversial events in the Pacific War. “The word ‘advancement’ had replaced ‘invasion,’ references to Unit 731 had been omitted, and

³⁶ Nathan, 148.

³⁷ Nathan, 151.

there were fewer references to Japanese colonization of other Asian countries.”³⁸ These changes have caused concern that the strides Japan's history textbooks made in the 1980s and 1990s to include an internationally accepted account of the Pacific War have been reversed.

Although, the actual content of the New History Textbook in its final format was not politically correct, it is unlikely to have a direct effect on junior high school students. However, when the Japanese government condoned the MoE's choice to adopt the New History Textbook as one of the eight textbooks junior high schools could pick from, they sent out a message to their citizens, the international community, and the ultra-nationalist circle that they condone historical revision. It is very likely that the MoE could have chosen an eighth textbook that only needed to be revised 25 times instead of the New History Textbook that had 137 revisions. Furthermore, the MoE could have chosen a textbook that did not contain sensitive chapters on the Pacific War written by controversial manga artist, Kobayashi Yoshinori. Kobayashi is also the author of the inflammatory manga, *On War* (Sensōron, 1998), in which he denies that the Nanjing Massacre and comfort women were real. But, the MOE's choice was symbolic. It showed that the government is willing to support the ultra-conservatives who have “develop[ed] a visible and well funded public presence, demanding a wholesale re-evaluation of what they describe as the nation's masochistic approach to its own history.”³⁹

Yasukuni Shrine

The Yasukuni Shrine was established in Kyoto at the end of the Tokugawa period

³⁸ Jeans, 188.

³⁹ Smith, “The Showa Hall,” 40.

to honor those who died defending the restoration of imperial rule in the Boshin War.⁴⁰ It was transferred to Tokyo after the Meiji restoration and in 1879 was designated a Special Government Shrine (*bekkaku kampeisha*). The Shrine has been strongly associated with State Shinto and the Imperial Family since its establishment in the Meiji Period. State-sponsored Shinto was a pre-war and wartime phenomena that emphasized emperor worship and was used as a tool to mobilize popular support for the war. Given that the Shrine was built as a memorial to those who gave their lives in service for the Emperor in past wars, it has remained a “potent symbol of militarism and veneration of the Emperor.”⁴¹

From the founding of the Yasukuni Shrine to the end of World War II, 2,500,000 spirits have been enshrined in Yasukuni.⁴² The enshrinement of an individual elevates them to the status of *kami*, or god. Thereafter the *kami* are worshipped and receive rituals from the Yasukuni priests and the approximately 8 million people that visit Yasukuni yearly. The purpose of worship is to “pacify the spirits of the war dead to prevent them from seeking retribution of the living.”⁴³

Following Japan's defeat in 1945, the American occupation forces disestablished the Shrine as a government institution. Furthermore, Article 20 of the Japanese constitution was added by the occupation authorities to provide for a clear separation of state and religious activities. However, since the Shrine separation's from the state there has been a strong push from military veterans and their families, most notably the Japan Association of War Bereaved Families (*Nihon Izokukai*), for the Shrine to retain an active

⁴⁰ “About Yasukuni Shrine,” Yasukuni Shrine.

⁴¹ Kingston, 303.

⁴² Jeans, 151.

⁴³ Rose, “Stalemate: The Yasukuni Shrine,” 25.

role as a place of memorial and remembrance. Tsukuba Fujimaro was the Chief Priest of Yasukuni from 1946-1977. His enduring legacy was the construction of the *Chinreisha*, a simple wooden structure that was dedicated to the war dead of Imperial Japan's enemies. Tsukuba believed that "the kami of Yasukuni are active even now as harbingers of peace, standing hand in hand with the spirit of the war dead of all the nations of the Earth."⁴⁴ Tsukuba resisted the Ministry of Health's pressure to enshrine the Class-A war criminals. However, when he died in 1977, the office of Chief Priest passed to former Imperial officer Matsudaira Nagayoshi. Matsudaira enshrined the war criminals, erected a steel fence around *Chinreisha* concealing it from the public and reopened the controversial Yūshūkan War Museum museum. The veneration of the Class-A war criminals as *kami* in turn suggests a reverence and concurrence of the war criminals actions in the Pacific War. The right-wing leanings of the post-1977 Yasukuni priests, and the Japan Association of War Bereaved Families ability to capture political and popular support for the shrine has resulted in Yasukuni continuing to operate as a conservative 'national' monument in the minds of many of the Japanese and foreigners.

The tensions over the high-level political visits to Yasukuni are rooted in the ambiguity over the Shrine's place in the private or public sphere. The practice of visiting Yasukuni was commonplace for both the Imperial family and government officials in the early post-war era, but it took on special significance in the 1978 following the enshrinement of Class-A war criminals.⁴⁵ The visits to Yasukuni ceased during Prime Minister (PM) Nakasone Yasuhiro's term in 1985 due to widespread international criticism of Japan. Aside from one visit by PM Hashimoto Ryūtarō in 1996, they did not

⁴⁴ Breen, "Introduction: A Yasukuni Genealogy," 8-9.

⁴⁵ The first visit in the post-war era was undertaken by PM Shidehara Kijuro in October 1945. Visits were then prevented by the Occupation authorities until 1951 when PM Yoshida Shigeru resumed them.

resume until PM Koizumi's first visit in 2001. A significant number of court cases have been brought concerning the constitutionality of the Prime Ministers' visits to Yasukuni. Some district courts (Fukuoka in 1991) have decided that the visits were unconstitutional declaring that the prime minister's visit to Yasukuni was a violation of Article 20, the separation of church and state. However, other high courts (Tokyo in 2006) have rejected the argument that the visits violate Article 20, stating that the prime minister visited Yasukuni in a private capacity.⁴⁶ The constitutionality of the visits still has no clear consensus. When a case was brought to the Japanese Supreme Court in 2006, the court rejected the lawsuit from opponents of Koizumi's visits who claim that the visits violated constitutional separation of church and state, and therefore chose not rule on the constitutionality of the visits.

Prior to Koizumi's visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, there were opposition groups to the shrine, but their resistance took on new meaning in light of his persistent visits. The Yasukuni Dismantlement Project (YDP), a leftist group that first surfaced in 1993 with thirteen members who oppose the Yasukuni shrine, is the clearest example of active resistance in Japan against Yasukuni. The Yasukuni Dismantlement Project has no formal leadership or hierarchy, they do not solicit politicians for support, and they only use word of mouth to organize their protests.⁴⁷ Like most anti-Yasukuni groups, the YDP seeks to promote pacifism and non-violence; however they are unique because they choose to protest illegally on the grounds of Yasukuni. The YDP makes sudden appearance son August 15th, the anniversary of Japan's surrender in World War II, at the Shrine at the

⁴⁶ *The People's Daily Online*, "Koizumi lashes out."

⁴⁷ Masshardt, 327.

moment of silence to loudly chant anti-Yasukuni slogans.⁴⁸ The last time that the YDP was able to get within earshot of the shrine's precincts was in 2002. Since then, the police have continued to expand the perimeter so that in 2006 the group was not even able to reach the Kudan station exit.

There are other, more established groups that also oppose and protest against Yasukuni Shrine; such as the Pacifist War Bereaved Society (*Heiwa Izokukai*) and the National Christian Council in Japan (NCCJ) (*Nihon kirisuto kyōkai*). These groups, unlike YDP, seem to have accepted their relegation to the outskirts of Yasukuni and their lack of voice in the Shrine's debate. What all of the anti-Yasukuni groups have in common is their lack of strong support or high number of participating members. YDP's highest turnout for a Yasukuni protest totaled fifty protestors, and a symbolic march from Chidorigafuchi National Cemetery to Yasukuni organized from NCCJ and the Pacifist War Bereaved Society only brought out 100 protesters.⁴⁹ The groups that oppose Yasukuni are pushed to the wayside by the pro-Yasukuni groups like the Japan Conference, Society to Repay the Heroic Spirits [of Dead Soldiers] (*Eirei non kotaeru*), and the Japan Association of Bereaved Families (*Nihon Izokukai*). These citizens groups have upwards of 100,000 members, publish literature on the conservative and nationalist agenda, effectively fundraise to support their missions, and have the support of many prominent politicians.⁵⁰ Furthermore, they are able to mobilize the masses, which became evident in the Japan Conference's "200,000 Visitor Campaign" to have 200,000 people attend Yasukuni on August 15, 2005, the 60th anniversary of the end of the Pacific War.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Masshardt, 331.

⁴⁹ Masshardt, 330.

⁵⁰ Masshardt, 323.

⁵¹ Masshardt, 329-330. The Shrine indicated that 205,000 individuals attended Yasukuni on August 15,

In many ways Yasukuni represents just another variation of a remembrance of the fallen, working in elements of Japan's religious tradition to explain loss and suffering. However, Yasukuni's rituals of enshrinement can also be seen as re-contextualizing social memories and attitudes that redeem the war dead that participated in the war and indirectly support their ideology and actions.⁵² While there are groups who oppose Yasukuni, they are small and ineffective compared to groups that are set up to defend the Shrine and its principles.

Pacific War Museums⁵³

Yūshūkan War Museum

The Yūshūkan War Museum is the controversial museum on the grounds of the Yasukuni Shrine, in which a revisionist reading of Japanese history is presented, that is deeply contested within and outside Japan. Critics argue that the Yūshūkan War Museum glorifies Japan's past, whitewashes the atrocities the Japanese military committed during World War II, and present a vision of Japanese history that is both absurd and offensive. On the other hand, supporters of the museum argue that the museum is a correct representation of Japan's past and its purpose is to counter the masochistic view of history, which many Japanese nationalists believe dominates the current historical narrative of Japan.

One of the oldest museums in Japan, the Yūshūkan War Museum was constructed in 1882, damaged in the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake, and then rebuilt and reopened in 1931. The Yūshūkan War Museum was closed after Japan's defeat in 1945 and was not

2005.

⁵² Nelson, 463.

⁵³ In addition to the three Pacific War museums discussed below there are also three renowned peace museums in Japan: Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, and Osaka International Peace Center. More information can be found on them in Jeans, 167-183.

reopened to the public until 1986 after extensive renovation. The first room contains an oil painting of Emperor Hirohito visiting the Yasukuni Shrine in the 1930s, immediately connecting the museum to the Imperial Family.⁵⁴ Relics, such as a sacred sword, a 'human torpedo,' battle flags, and blood stained and torn uniforms, are displayed throughout the museum to testify to the glorification of the war and the centrality of the emperor system. Throughout the exhibits, the Japanese army is depicted as Asian liberators; the most glaring example of this vindicating narrative is in the display of a Burmese flag that was presented to Japan by General Ne Win, the Burmese military dictator, who trained in Japan.⁵⁵ The caption explains that the flag was given by “one who owes the liberation of his country to Japan,” this flag only represents a one-sided version of Japan’s actions in Asia, yet at the Yūshūkan War Museum it is intended to symbolize the entirety of the war in Asia.⁵⁶

The Yūshūkan War Museum was renovated in 2002. Toward the end of 2006, historian Jeff Kingston was struck by “how terrorism is invoked to justify the Imperial Army's rampage through China back in the 1930s and 40s.” He argues: “this is a post 9/11 museum...we learn that Japan was fighting against Chinese ‘terrorists.’”⁵⁷

Unsurprisingly, there is no mention of the atrocities committed by Japanese troops.⁵⁸

Instead, the Yūshūkan War Museum asserts that the Japanese actions in the war were

⁵⁴ French, “Tokyo Journal.” The renovation cost 4 billion yen (\$33 million). Greimel, “From Kamikaze to Suicide Subs.”

⁵⁵ Jeans, 152.

⁵⁶ As John Dower points out, Japan only invaded colonial outposts in southern Asia that had been dominated by Westerners for generations. In November 1943 at the Assembly of the Greater East Asiatic Nations in Tokyo a succession of Asian leaders voiced support for Japan in the war against the West. However, soon after the support for Japan evaporated as other Asian nations discovered that Pan-Asian unity was a myth and they began to be brutally exploited by the Japanese. John Dower, War Without Mercy, 5-8.

⁵⁷ Kingston, 302.

⁵⁸ Kingston, 302.

noble, and developed out of a misunderstanding between the Japanese and Americans that eventually led the US to put an embargo on resource-poor Japan. This led to great suffering among the Japanese and forced them to defend themselves. Throughout the museum there is a noticeable absence of a discussion or acknowledgement of the Chinese, Korean, or Western victims of Japan's aggression. By not mentioning Japan's own victims, those at the Yūshūkan War Museum are furthering a narrative that justifies and glorifies the Asia-Pacific War.

In my own visit to Yasukuni in the spring of 2008, I was most struck by the monument to Justice Radhabinod Pal, who wrote the dissenting opinion at the Tokyo War Crimes Trials that argues for the innocence of the Japanese war criminals. The monument reads, “We hereby honour the courage and passion of Dr. Pal who remained true to legal justice and historical truth.” Justice Pal argued, “As a judicial tribunal we cannot behave in any manner which may justify the feeling that the setting up of the tribunal was only for the attainment of an objective which was essentially political, though cloaked by a juridical appearance.”⁵⁹ In this statement Justice Pal is asserting that no just ruling can be made at the Tokyo Trials because the trials were merely a means for the victors to achieve vengeance over the Japanese. But, this argument does not claim that the atrocities and crimes against humanity for which the defendants were being tried were untrue, in fact Justice Pal acknowledged the Nanjing massacre.⁶⁰ However, Justice Pal’s dissenting opinion has been warped by nationalists in Japan to assert that the real aggressors in the Asia-Pacific War were the Americans. Justice Pal’s true intent was to point out the hypocrisy in the trial not pass judgment on the

⁵⁹ Nandy, 47.

⁶⁰ Onishi, “Decades After War Trials.”

Americans. The caption beside Justice Pal's photograph in the Yūshūkan War Museum reads:

If you read my history, you will know that the Americans and British are the loathsome instigators of aggression against Asia. However many Japanese intellectuals do not read what I have to say. This is why they tell their students that Japan was guilty of war crimes and that Japan launched a war of aggression against Asia.⁶¹

Justice Radhabinod Pal's dissenting opinion at the Tokyo Trials, which victimizes Japan, has been paraded around by nationalists as the appropriate lens through which to view Japan's wartime history. The ideals of the same nationalists are embodied in the Yūshūkan War Museum, which attempts to evoke a "one sided, exculpatory narrative" that obscures any discussion of war guilt and is offensive to other Asians and the majority of Japanese citizens who do not agree with the nationalistic war narrative.⁶² In addition, by only discussing the victimized narrative, the nationalists are effectively blocking out any reasonable discourse over Japan's war memory that could result in a constructive move forward.

Chiran Peace Museum for Kamikaze Pilots

The Chiran Peace Museum opened in 1975 on the site of the former Chiran Air Base located on the southern tip of Kyushu in the Kagoshima Prefecture. Chiran served as the main kamikaze base for Japanese Army attacks on Allied ships around Okinawa.⁶³ On average over 2,000 people visit the museum per day. Although this museum is classified by the Japanese Network of Museums for Peace as a "peace museum," its purpose and content suggest that it is more concerned with glorifying the kamikaze pilots'

⁶¹ Breen, "Yasukuni and the Loss of Historical Memory," 154. I was unable to find out where or when Justice Pal made this statement.

⁶² Kingston, 302.

⁶³ Gordon, "Chiran Peace Museum for Kamikaze Pilots."

role in World War II than with promoting peace.

The museum is divided into four exhibition rooms. A museum guide gives a 30-minute talk several times a day in the main exhibition hall that is filled with individual photos and personal information of 1,036 kamikaze pilots arranged by date of death.⁶⁴ This area of the Chiran Peace Museum has letters, diaries, thousand-stitch sashes (*senninbari*), and other writings displayed throughout the rooms in 16 display cases. The other three exhibition rooms have less organization and many more miscellaneous items than the main hall. In addition the photos and items in other rooms are only indentified with a simply label, and much of the historical context of their use and purpose is lost. The museum contains an assortment of torn Army and Navy uniforms, numerous miscellaneous wartime items not directly connected to kamikaze pilots, and a wide variety of books, articles, photos, and models in no particular order.

Ian Buruma writes a powerful account of the Chiran Peace Museum in The Wages of Guilt, a book which uncovers and compares war memory in post-war Germany and Japan. Buruma explains that the museum is unbearably moving; the heart-wrenching farewell letters of young men going to their death, thousand-stitch sashes, and bits of blown up planes reveal “the tragedy of wasted life.”⁶⁵ However, as Buruma says, “What is so awful about the memory of their deaths is the cloying sentimentality that was meant to justify their self-immolation...It was the exploitation of their youthful idealism that has made it such a wicked enterprise.”⁶⁶ The horror of the exploitation of the young kamikaze pilots is lost in the Chiran Peace Museum.

The message of the Chiran Peace Museum for Kamikaze Pilots is that while war

⁶⁴ Gordon, “Chiran Peace Museum for Kamikaze Pilots.”

⁶⁵ Buruma, 226.

⁶⁶ Buruma, 227.

is bad, the sacrifice that these young men made for peace and prosperity was noble.

Buruma points to the caption of a photograph of a merry group of pilots ready for takeoff that reads, “There is great beauty in the laughing faces of these men just before facing certain death.”⁶⁷ The romanticized conception of suicide perpetuated throughout the Chiran Peace Museum takes away from its own assertion as a peace museum. Instead, it exemplifies the “faith in the ideals upon which was propaganda has always been based—sacrifice, sincerity, the sacred cause—was too deep to shake.”⁶⁸

*Showa Hall (Shōwakan)*⁶⁹

Showa Hall was completed in 1999; twenty years after the first proposals for its construction were made. The other museums already discussed are either run privately (Yūshūkan War Museum) or by local governments (Chiran Peace Museum). Showa Hall was the Japanese government's first attempt to officially memorialize the war; this distinction makes the Hall's construction, purpose and content all the more important. The Hall is located in Tokyo near the Diet, Supreme Court, most ministries, and the Imperial Palace. Furthermore, Showa Hall is only a few minutes' walk from the Yūshūkan War Museum; their “proximity creates a problematic set of overlapping narratives about the war and its legacy.”⁷⁰

The Hall originated from within the politically well-connected group, the Japan Association of Bereaved Families (*Nihon izokukai*), which lobbied the state in the 1980s to fund a national memorial for the Japanese war dead and their families. The initial planning, design and content development of the museum was done behind closed doors

⁶⁷ Buruma, 226.

⁶⁸ Buruma, 228.

⁶⁹ The section on Showa Hall comes from: Smith, “The Showa Hall,” 35-64.

⁷⁰ Smith, “The Showa Hall,” 38.

and overseen by the Ministry of Health and Welfare. A broad range of people participated in the development of the Hall, including representatives of each of Japan's major newspapers, executives in the corporate and non-profit sectors, academics, an architect, a graphic designer, and a library specialist, to name a few.⁷¹ However, the diverse backgrounds of the Hall's design and development committees could not prevent the Japan Association of Bereaved Families from maintaining a major role in deciding the overarching ideology of the new museum.

The Japan Association of Bereaved Families argued that “those orphans whose fathers were sacrificed for the nation have come this far through very trying circumstances without a single national institution [to support them]. Given that, the state should perform some act of consolation on their behalf.”⁷² In essence, they wanted the government to construct a museum to memorialize and instruct in the correct history of the war. The correct view of history for the Japan Association of Bereaved Families is that the Greater East Asian War was fought to liberate Asia, a war that Japan, due to their economic isolation, was forced to fight.

Although the Japan Association of Bereaved Families was clear about what they wanted the museum to be, it still took two decades to plan and construct Showa Hall during which time the design and content were altered many times. When the first designs of the present day Hall emerged in 1992 it was called the War Dead Peace Memorial Hall (*Senbotsusha Tsuitō Heiwa Kinen-kan*). This Hall was entirely focused on describing the hardship of war in terms of Japanese suffering. Kerry Smith quotes the planners of the War Dead Peace Memorial Hall, who noted that the “major goal was to

⁷¹ Smith, “The Showa Hall,” 42.

⁷² Smith, 42-43.

acknowledge 'the loss of some three million lives' during the war."⁷³ The Ministry of Health and Welfare estimated the number of deaths from the war to be about three million, this number only includes the Japanese who died at home and abroad, excluding the casualties experienced by all other nations. Public scrutiny of the plans for the Hall generated considerable criticism from those who were excluded from the official planning process. The concerns brought to the Ministry of Health and Welfare were fairly obvious; people demanded transparency in the planning and approval process, disapproved of the collusion between the Ministry and the Japan Association of Bereaved Families, and argued that a one-sided perspective of the war experience would diminish relations with neighbors and distort history.

The Showa Hall that opened in 1999 was very different than the one the Japan Association of Bereaved Families and the Ministry of Health had envisioned. In order to get past the public criticism and begin building, the planners of the Hall chose to drop any reference to the Japanese military and the war in Asia. Therefore, the exhibits in Showa Hall primarily focus on the hardship of the citizens (particularly women and children) during the war era through the display of clothing and household items, but there is no reference to the war or the origin of the peoples' suffering. The Hall's "failure to engage...questions about the war's causes, the conflict legacies, and Japan's conduct" has sparked wide criticism from the right and left.⁷⁴ The Ministry of Health created a museum that they thought was safe and not contentious; however in the process they have silenced the majority of the wartime narrative and squandered the opportunity to create a meaningful national museum to the war.

⁷³ Smith, 44-45.

⁷⁴ Smith, 54.

Conclusion

Ueyama Shumpei, an influential historian, argues “each historical perspective is linked with a particular national authority and reflects its interest, there is, accordingly, no overarching universal truth and justice beyond nationally circumscribed politico-legal systems,”⁷⁵ While there may never be an entirely agreed upon war narrative, it is imperative to at least attempt to learn from all sides of history, since the remembering (or forgetting) of the war experience shapes Japan's relationships with other nations. The national wartime narrative promulgated by conservatives and nationalists in the New History Textbook and War Museums is artfully constructed for domestic consumption. The museums, textbooks, and Shrine evoke themes of sacrifice, struggle, suffering, and citizenship to connect the wartime history with the present day. Within this narrative, the military and citizens are portrayed as noble and patriotic without a qualifying statement about why they all believed so strongly in the war. The indoctrination of loyalty and patriotism that began in the Meiji Era and continued until 1945 is not evaluated or questioned, which leaves out an integral lesson about the war in the collective narrative.

⁷⁵ Quoted in Iida, 139.

Section II: Patriotic Education

Since the mid 1990s, right wing members of the LDP have successfully implemented reforms in the Japanese educational system that have increased its focus on patriotism. The LDP has argued that there has been a deterioration of Japanese traditional society and an increase in social problems that have resulted from a lack of solidarity and shared identity among Japanese students. In order to fix these issues, the LDP has prescribed patriotic education in primary and secondary schools. Although the Japanese left wing has tried to oppose these policies, the widespread anxiety over Japan's social problems and the rise of a new generation that is entirely detached from the consequences of patriotic education has rendered the opposition ineffective. The content of Japan's late 20th century patriotic education can be seen as parallel to the moral-political foundations of the Imperial Rescript on Education of 1890, and the pre-war and wartime ideology on education.

The Rescript on Education was an edict that came down directly from Emperor Meiji. It states that "our subjects" should "advance public good and promote common interests; always respect the Constitution and observe the laws; should emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth."⁷⁶ The Rescript was read aloud at all important school events and students were required to study and memorize it. The purpose of the Rescript was to reinforce the bond between the emperor and the citizens by promoting loyalty and filial piety through education. Although, the Rescript on Education was rescinded by the Diet in 1948 at the insistence of the American occupying

⁷⁶ Arrington III, "Translation – Imperial Rescript on Education or the Emperor Meiji."

forces, its ability to mobilize the masses and inspire fervent loyalty in the Japanese toward the emperor shows the strength of its legacy and ideology.⁷⁷

It is commonly assumed that from the end of World War II to the mid 1990s, Japan accepted its new pacifist stance as a result of the total destruction inflicted on the Japanese during the war and their subsequent antiwar constitution. The recent emergence of “neo-nationalism” is generally recognized as a reaction to the failing economy and the lack of purpose in Japan’s consumer-driven society. However, many of the alarming reforms recently altering the Japanese educational system have been advocated by conservative and neo-nationalists since the end of the American occupation in 1952. This section argues that the sudden success of conservative reform in education, including the changing of the Fundamental Law of Education (2006), the implementation of “Notebooks for Moral Education” (Kokoro no nōto, 2002), and the enactment of the law officially recognizing the *Hinomaru* and *Kimigayo* as national symbols (1999), have arisen due to the widespread fear of social collapse that has been perpetuated by right-wing conservatives and nationalists within the LDP since the mid 1990s.

Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education (MoE) has taken a decisive role in supporting the implementation of patriotic education in Japanese primary and secondary schools. Their website offers a statement on the current status of education in Japan and the challenges they face in the future.⁷⁸ The opening section summarizes the official rationale behind patriotic education. It alludes to the deterioration of Japanese traditional society and alleges that there is a dramatic increase in social problems that can only be fixed by

⁷⁷ For more information on Japan’s wartime education see: Thomas R. H. Havens, Valley of Darkness: The Japanese People and World War Two (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1978).

⁷⁸ Chapter 1: (1) Current Status of Education in Japan and the Challenges of the Future.

focusing on moral education. Although most people would acknowledge that Japanese society is transforming, the assumption that these social changes are a new phenomena or the sign of true problems is open for debate. The MoE statement on the current education in Japan cites “weakened educational functions of families and local communities,” “children's declining motivation to learn,” “falling academic performance,” and “increasing problem behaviors” as the primary problems in Japanese schools.⁷⁹ The conservative ideology behind the MoE’s statement blames these problems in primary and secondary education for broader societal issue such as the “falling birth rates,” “excessive pursuit of economic efficiency or convenience, weakened social ties and spread of undesirable 'individualism' or 'me-ism.’”⁸⁰ The MoE argues that the only way to correct the present social crisis in Japan is to “turn to inner values, such as the pleasure of living in harmony with other people and the importance of morals for such harmonization.”⁸¹ Moral education, they believe, will recover Japanese youths' sense of responsibility, justice, and ambition.

Although the Ministry of Education's explanation of problems in primary and secondary education is very general, they hint at a few specific issues seen in schools and among youth in Japan. The phenomena of classroom collapse (*gakkyū hōkai*), school refusal (*tōkō kyōhi*), and the increase of violence (*kōnai bōryoku*), and bullying (*ijime*) in schools have become increasingly alarming to the public over the past two decades.⁸² The anxiety over these incidents is characterized best by the *Sakakibara Seito* murders in 1997, when a 14-year-old student from Kobe beheaded an 11-year-old mentally

⁷⁹ Chapter 1: (1) Current Status of Education in Japan and the Challenges of the Future.

⁸⁰ Chapter 1: (2) Mission of Education.

⁸¹ Chapter 1: (1) Current Status of Education in Japan and the Challenges of the Future.

⁸² Lebowitz and McNeill, “Hammering Down the Educational Nail.”

handicapped boy with a handsaw and left the head at the entrance to his special school, and then confessed to another murder of a 10-year-old girl. In addition, the media frenzy over the supposedly large number of middle and high school girls engaged in *enjo kōsai* (compensated dating) in order to buy high end consumer products, has highlighted the fear of moral degradation.⁸³ These dissolute behaviors among youths are seen as the catalyst for the breakup of post-war societal values.

As stated on the MoE website, the broader social currents that they are trying to reverse are the declining population/birth rates, the increase in part-time and freelance jobs, and the declining motivation of youths in higher education. The declining population can be attributed to women delaying marriage, couples waiting longer to have children, and couples only having one child. These new trends have been blamed on selfish Japanese singles who live with their parents past the normal marrying age and hence have perpetuated the decline in family values.⁸⁴ Many conservatives accuse the new generation of *freeters* of refusing to accept responsibility for themselves and their lack of motivation in seeking regular employment.⁸⁵ Although these trends in Japanese society may cause broader social and educational problems, the MoE offers no explanation of how they will be fixed by a moral education, and refuses to explore other possible causes of these issues.

The MoE's only answer for the shift in values, such as loyalty and respect, from the state/family to the individual is the perceived lack of morals in the nation's youth. However, there are other explanations for Japan's transforming society that do not revolve around specific social groups but rather focus on the big-picture institutions and

⁸³ Leheny, 17.

⁸⁴ Kelly and White, 66-67.

⁸⁵ Kelly and White, 72.

ideology within Japan. Kelly and White argue that the concept of family has played an especially strategic role in modern Japan. The recent critiques on Japanese society “often tend to ignore the family unit itself as a social force and focus on the elements of families – youth, women and the elderly in particular – as paradoxically putting the families to which they belong at risk.”⁸⁶ Instead of taking a look at institutions and ideas that make up the family unit that is Japan, politicians and institutions are focused on the students, singles, and slackers who deviate from the standard model.

The MoE overlooks other institutions and social prejudices, such as the intense competition in elite schools and emphasis on conformity that may contribute to the increasing problems in school. The “educational arms race,” described by Kelly and White, puts an extraordinary amount of emphasis on gaining admission into a limited number of prestigious educational institutes.⁸⁷ In Japan the only avenue to the upper echelons of business and professional society is graduation from one of the few high-status universities, which can only be achieved by passing rigorous entrance examinations.⁸⁸ This system has forced out students who don't have the ability to pay for private secondary education, additional classes, or tutoring from the best universities, creating apathy among many youth who might have had the potential to be successful members of society. Additionally, the pressure of examinations dominates family life; it limits the time that families can spend together, children can play, and forces parents to push their children hard if they want them to succeed.⁸⁹ This could be another cause of broken family ties and changing importance of the family unit in society. Furthermore,

⁸⁶ Kelly and White, 66.

⁸⁷ Kelly and White, 64.

⁸⁸ Khan, 32.

⁸⁹ Khan, 33.

school violence and bullying (*ijime*) can be attributed to a lack of understanding and acceptance of people who are different.⁹⁰ Rather than blaming the youth for Japan's problems, conservative might be better served by correcting a corrupt political system, ensuring equal opportunities in education and careers, and encouraging the acceptance of differences among the nation's citizens.

Fundamental Law of Education

The Fundamental Law of Education (FLE) was designed by the U.S. occupation forces and became law on March 31, 1947. Its purpose was to clearly state the goals of Japanese education and the basic principles that should govern the educational institutions. The American occupational authorities were concerned with the militaristic and nationalistic overtones in the pre-war Japanese education system. Therefore they created the FLE in an effort to democratize Japan by instituting a democratic and individual centered ideology in education. The original FLE makes an explicit reference to the Constitution in its Preamble, connecting it with the Constitution and asserting that it has the same authority in the realm of education. Furthermore, the original FLE states that the aim of education is “the full development of personality, striving for the rearing of the people, sound in mind and body, who shall love truth and justice, esteem individual value, respect labor and have a deep sense of responsibility, and be imbued with an independent spirit, as builders of the peaceful state and society.”⁹¹ The statement above is focused heavily on individuality, which was removed from the revised FLE that came into effect in 2006. Another key provision of the original FLE is in Article 10: “education should not be subject to improper control, but it shall be directly responsible

⁹⁰ Khan, 35-36.

⁹¹ Young, 162.

to the whole people.”⁹² This was added to ensure that the Japanese education system could not be used abusively or controlled by ultra-nationalist or militarist factions. The Fundamental Law of Education was intended by the occupational authorities to instill an irrevocable departure from the educational tradition of pre-war Japan and to mold the emerging values and ideology of a new Japan.

Throughout the post-war era many conservative Japanese politicians have pushed for revision of the FLE, most notably Prime Minister Nakasone in the 1980s, but it was not a top item on the LDP political agenda until the election of Prime Minister Obuchi Keizō in 1998. He viewed the educational system as a foreign imposition on Japan that failed to champion traditional Japanese values.⁹³ Furthermore, the foreign educational system seemed to place too much emphasis on individuality and lacked an assertion of the importance of Japanese traditional morality and values; such as filial piety and loyalty to the State.⁹⁴ Therefore PM Obuchi set up the Education Reform National Conference (ERNC, Kyōiku kaikaku kokumin kaigi) to quickly develop a reform agenda. Although the problems discussed above, such as the examination competition, school refusals, and bullying, should have been the foremost concerns, the panel chose to focus its efforts on a proposal for revising the FLE. On December 22, 2000, the panel released its core recommendations for education reform. They were 1) Revision of the FLE; 2) re-examination of history textbooks and the introduction of 'new perspectives' into Japanese history; 3) Introduction of 'voluntary activities' for all students from elementary to high school; 4) an increased emphasis on moral education; 5) reform of the 6-3-3-4 system and establishment of a diversified education system which is suited to each individuals'

⁹² Young, 162.

⁹³ Okada, 425-426.

⁹⁴ Okada, 429.

different abilities; 6) recommendation of 'special education measures' that would allow gifted upper secondary school students to experience university-level education research in a scientific field.⁹⁵ The first four recommendations clearly represent the patriotic educational aims of neo-nationalists, where as the last two suggestions are more focused on maintaining Japanese power through identifying and developing potential in Japanese students at a young age.

In 2006 the Fundamental Law of Education was revised and it transformed the previous notion of “education for citizens” to “education of national subjects.” The reference to the Constitution was taken out of the Preamble and replaced by “public spirit” and “inheritance of tradition,” which critics argue disassociates the new law from the post-war Constitution.⁹⁶ The wording of the Aims of Education was changed to “Education shall aim for the total development of personality and strive to nurture people sound in mind and body who are imbued with the qualities necessary for the builders of a peaceful and democratic state and society.”⁹⁷ The removal of any allusion to individuality in the revised aims can be regarded as the LDP attempting to promote tradition and patriotism at the expense of freedom and individual rights. The last significant revision is of Article 10 that said education “shall be directly responsible to the whole people,” but has been changed to “on the basis of what this law and other laws stipulate.”⁹⁸ The previous wording of Article 10 alluded to the state's potential improper control over the education system, whereas the revised article has changed the agent of improper control to “those who engage in teaching in violation of the revised FLE and related education

⁹⁵ Okada, 427.

⁹⁶ Takayama, 138.

⁹⁷ Lebowitz and McNeill, “Hammering Down the Educational Nail.”

⁹⁸ Young, 163.

laws.”⁹⁹ The revisions in the 2006 Fundamental Law of Education mandated that the FLE is not empowered by the Constitution, the importance of individualism should be removed from the classroom, and that the teachers and administrators, rather than the state, are seen as a vehicle of improper control in education. This stems back to the MoE’s long standing, combative relationship between the teacher’s union over the union’s leftist views and criticism of the LDP’s education policies. These reforms give the ruling party and the MoE more direct power over the ideologies, values, and beliefs taught in Japanese schools, which may be instrumental in forming the next generation’s political views.

The revision of the FLE may also be an indicator of other constitutional revisions in the future. Since the FLE was a legacy of World War II and imposed by the occupation authorities, the LDP claimed that it was outdated, not in the interest of the Japanese people, and invalid. This is a short step away from suggesting that the Japanese constitution should also be revised. The revision of Article 9, as I discuss in the following section, is the most controversial aspect of the Japanese constitution and would undo the policy of pacifism that has been at a foundation of Japanese society for the past 50 years.

Notebooks for Moral Education

In 2002 the national Study Course, the MoE’s regular review of the national curriculum standards, added the cultivation of *kuni o aisuru shinjō*, or “feelings of love for the nation,” to the 6th grade social studies objectives.¹⁰⁰ In order to meet the course objective the MoE produced “Notebooks for Moral Education” (*Kokoro no nōto*, literally “Notebook for the Heart”, but translated by the Ministry of Education as “Notebooks for

⁹⁹ Takayama, 138.

¹⁰⁰ Takayama, 135.

Moral Education”) as a teaching aid for moral education in primary and middle schools.¹⁰¹ There are 4 levels of moral education books; three for the primary grades and one for the middle schools. The books all have the same four sections, but their complexity increases as the students advance through the grades. “Notebooks for Moral Education” “discusses four moral issues; self reflection, relationships with other people, respect to nature and religious-like values, and obligations to society.”¹⁰² This supplement suggests that patriotism is not only important for proper cultivation of one's own life, but it is necessary to be a productive member of society.

Although these books have been well received in some areas, there are many controversial aspects to “Notebooks for Moral Education’s” distribution and content. First, the MoE was careful not to classify “Notebooks for Moral Education” as a textbook since then it would be required to go through the regular screening process and the local school boards would have control over whether to include it in their curriculum.¹⁰³ As of now, the supplement is being distributed without going through the democratic process required for all textbooks. Secondly, the section that deals with groups and society is seen as problematic because it argues that the love of one’s family expands to encompass the entire country. This implies that it is healthy and natural to feel the same love toward your parents, siblings, and children, as you feel toward the state. The extension of familial love can be seen as an attempt to revive a pre-war era of blind devotion to the nation. Thirdly, “Notebooks for Moral Education” is reminiscent of the pre-war and wartime textbooks called *Shūshin* that instructed students in moral education. Although the alleged purpose of *Shūshin* was to teach the “way of being human,” through the cultivation of conscience

¹⁰¹ Rose, “The battle for hearts and minds,” 144-145.

¹⁰² Ide, 447.

¹⁰³ Rose, “The battle for hearts and minds,” 145.

and virtue, in actuality the textbooks focused on “enthusiastic reverence for the emperor, patriotism, and responsibility to the state.”¹⁰⁴ The fear among critics is that, like *Shūshin*, “Notebooks for Moral Education” will eventually be used to subtly indoctrinate children with patriotic values that will justify the state's growing control over the private side of people’s lives.

Since its inclusion in the education curriculum, “Notebooks for Moral Education” has been revamped and revised to reflect the new guidelines stipulated in the revised Fundamental Law of Education. The new exercise books have been expanded from an average of 8 pages to 16 pages to include a new topic focusing on the virtue of diligence and to give students more room to take notes.¹⁰⁵ Overall, this supplemental text, whose merits and purpose have yet to be openly debated, is clearly an attempt by the LDP and other nationalists to encourage patriotic thinking, along conservative guidelines, among Japanese students.

Hinomaru and Kimigayo

On August 13, 1999, the Japanese government enacted a Law Concerning the National Flag and National Anthem (Proclamation No. 127, 1999) that designated the *Hinomaru* and *Kimigayo* as national symbols. The law was introduced in March 1999 and was debated in the Diet for six months before its enactment. Although doubts about this law were voiced strongly, it ended up receiving an overwhelming majority, passing with a vote of 403 to 86 (with the LDP, CGP, and Liberal Party voting unanimously for it and the Communists Party and Social Party voting unanimously against it).¹⁰⁶ This law was precipitated by the suicide of a Hiroshima high school principal in February 1999, who

¹⁰⁴ Khan, 74-75.

¹⁰⁵ *The Daily Yomiuri*, “Moral Education to stress following rule.”

¹⁰⁶ Itoh, “Japan’s Neo-Nationalism.”

was “caught between the Ministry of Education, steadily increasing pressure to makes schools structure their ceremonies around the flag and anthem, and the teachers, students, and parents who resisted.”¹⁰⁷ This act represents a definitive step towards unifying the Japanese people via national symbols that have represented Japan in official and unofficial capacities since the late 19th century.

At the end of World War II, the American occupiers forbid Japan from flying its flag or singing the national anthem. But after the occupation ended in 1952, the *Hinomaru* was displayed on public building and at public ceremonies and the melody of *Kimigayo* was often played, even though the words were not always sung.¹⁰⁸ By 1958, the MoE was already encouraging teachers to use the *Hinomaru* and *Kimigayo* in public school ceremonies. Until 1999, the MoE continued to strongly advise the use of these unofficial national symbols in school ceremonies, but since there was no legal basis for their use and the Japan Teachers Union was strongly opposed, there were many incidents of non-observance and acts of defiance in schools. Conservative politicians and school administrators believe that incorporating the *Kimigayo* and *Hinomaru* into school rituals will teach students patriotism and respect for their country. But, left-leaning teachers associate the flag with the extreme nationalism and militarism experienced in pre-war and wartime Japan.

The *Hinomaru* unmistakably represents the centrality of the Rising Sun and the lyrics of *Kimigayo* celebrate the longevity and everlasting reign of the emperor.¹⁰⁹ These imperial references bring up serious concerns about the ability of these symbols to

¹⁰⁷ McCormack, 258.

¹⁰⁸ Itoh, “Japan’s Neo-Nationalism.”

¹⁰⁹ The English translation of the *Kimigayo* lyrics is: May your reign/Continue for a thousand/Eight thousand generations/Until the pebbles/Grow into boulders/Lush with moss.

appropriately represent Japan as a democratic nation. Some Japanese nationalists, and a few unaffiliated citizens, argue that it is absurd to associate these symbols with militarism and that the reintroduction of the *Hinomaru* and *Kimigayo* is merely an attempt to create a normal and patriotic Japan.¹¹⁰ However, it is important to recognize that the debate over the national flag and anthem is not just a national debate between conservatives and liberals, but extends internationally, especially among other East Asian countries. Since Japan, unlike Italy and Germany, did not change their flag after World War II, the *Hinomaru* remains for many people in the neighboring countries (Korea, China, Taiwan, Indonesia, and the Philippines) a reminder of many painful years of repression, subjugation, and forced Japanization.¹¹¹ Additionally, this act is reminiscent of the Meiji government's policies of patriotic education that encouraged the devotion of the Japanese people to these national symbols.¹¹²

The bill that passed in 1999 designated the *Hinomaru* and *Kimigayo* as official national symbols, but it failed to specify that observance of the national flag and anthem was mandatory or when they should be used.¹¹³ The lack of specificity of the law allowed school boards and individual institutions to use their own discretion when implementing the use of the national flag and anthem. Therefore, in October 2003 the Tokyo municipal government made respecting these national symbols compulsory at commencement and graduation ceremonies. This law was undoubtedly influenced by Tokyo governor, Ishihara Shintarō, an outspoken nationalist who hoped to encourage other districts to mandate the singing of *Kimigayo*. The regulation pronounced that the national flag must

¹¹⁰ Onishi, "Tokyo's Flag Law." Chino, "Views 2: Reporting on Japan."

¹¹¹ Oba, 90-91.

¹¹² Takahashi, 106.

¹¹³ Itoh. "Japan's Neo-Nationalism."

be raised in front of the stage and the students and teachers must rise to face the flag and sing the anthem. Any teacher that refused to stand for the anthem was noted and could be punished with a transfer to new schools, pay cut, fine, or suspension.

Resistance

Resistance to patriotic education has been primarily taken up by individual educators and the teachers' unions, whose membership (and influence) has decreased by half since the 1950s.¹¹⁴ Hiroshima and Okinawa experienced the strongest resistance to the incorporation of the *Hinomaru* and *Kimigayo* in school ceremonies. In March 2000 the entire graduating class of a high school in Hiroshima sat silently protesting the performance of *Kimigayo* only to explode into a great applause when it finished.¹¹⁵ In 1998 the MoE released a survey showing that 84% of public schools in Tokyo raised the *Hinomaru*, but only 3.9% of them sung *Kimigayo*; this was the lowest rate of compliance in all of Japan.¹¹⁶ Although the percentage of Tokyo public schools that used the *Hinomaru* in school ceremonies in 1999 may seem high, the low percentage of schools that sang *Kimigayo* is striking. The action of singing *Kimigayo* was transformed into a platform for the Japanese to express their opinion on the law publically, whereas hanging the *Hinomaru* did not represent an individuals' belief. Therefore, the small number of people that sang the *Kimigayo* in Tokyo indicates that most people were uncomfortable with the anthem's implementation. By 2001, after the formation of the Metropolitan School Graduation and Entrance Ceremony Countermeasures Section, the Metropolitan Board of Education notified all principals of the expectations surrounding school ceremonies, and the flag was raised and the anthem was sung at every public school in

¹¹⁴ Nathan, 159.

¹¹⁵ McCormack, 258.

¹¹⁶ Young, 158.

Tokyo. Additionally, since 2000, the Japanese courts have almost unanimously supported the school administration's power to force teachers and staff members to sing *Kimigayo* and discipline them if they refuse. From 2000 to 2005, 875 teachers throughout Japan were disciplined for refusing to stand and sing the national anthem.¹¹⁷ While 875 teachers may seem like a significant number of protesters it is only .001% of all the teachers in Japan, suggesting that their support was very limited.¹¹⁸

The one exception to these rulings came in 2006 when a Tokyo District Court judge ruled that 401 teachers in Tokyo public schools were not required by duty to stand up and sing the national anthem at public school ceremonies.¹¹⁹ This decision argued that the Tokyo municipal government's order to make teachers stand and sing violated their freedom of conscience, which is guaranteed by Article 19 of the Japanese Constitution. The basis for all the rulings against teachers and staff members is that Japanese public employees are subject to more restraints on their constitutional rights than ordinary citizens, due to the public welfare doctrine.¹²⁰ This principle asserts that public servants must seem to be politically neutral to benefit the whole community. Last year, the Tokyo High Court ruled against 172 teachers and staff members who were demanding compensation in damages and a reversal of their 2004 punishments for refusing to sing the national anthem.¹²¹ This suggest that the Tokyo High Court is following the precedent set by the Supreme Court's decision in 2007 against a music teacher who refused to accompany the anthem on the piano.¹²² The ruling of the Tokyo High Court is particularly

¹¹⁷ Young, 168.

¹¹⁸ Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication, "School Teachers Survey (Designated Statistical Survey)." The number of teachers in Japan was approximated to 720,000 from 2004 statistical data.

¹¹⁹ Young, 158.

¹²⁰ Young, 167.

¹²¹ Tabuchi, "Tokyo Court Rejects Case of Teachers and Anthem."

¹²² Young, 170-171.

significant because it was the first time that they have ruled on a case that debated the right to freedom of conscience of Japanese government employees. This suggests, based on the decision against the Tokyo school teachers in 2009, that the Tokyo High Court will not uphold the 2006 ruling by the Tokyo District Court in favor of the teachers.

In the wake of this definitive ruling against the much celebrated fight by the left wing in support of a teacher's right to freedom of conscious, articles have appeared which are searching for other acts of protests against patriotic education.¹²³ But, thus far there has been no other successful continued resistance among Japanese people. Mostly what scholars are finding is a soft undercurrent of discomfort with conservative education policies that is manifested in fairly inconsequential forms of protest. The students who will graduate this year have stood in front of the *Hinomaru* and sung *Kimigayo* in school since they were eight years old and the teachers and administrators who in the past protested have either left, been forced out, or submitted to the Japanese government's increased control over education. Therefore, the current trends actually suggest that patriotic education is becoming widely accepted as a societal norm, with little indication of being overturned in the near future.

As educators began to realize that their refusal to stand and sing during the national anthem would only result in personal injury, they began to search for other means of protest. Many teachers and students began to stand and move their mouths to the *Kimigayo* during school ceremonies but refused to actively sing. This led the MoE to measure the volume of the national anthem at schools and reprimanding those schools who sang too softly. In 2006 an English parody of *Kimigayo* called "Kiss Me" emerged on the internet and spread rapidly across Japan. It was reportedly sung by students and

¹²³ Oba, 85-124.

teachers at school ceremonies in late May 2006. This new song takes the syllables of the Japanese lyrics and turns them into phonetically similar English words, allowing dissenting singers to escape punishment. The lyrics of the parodied anthem are “Kiss me, girl, your old one/ Till you’re near, it is years till you’re near / Sound of the dead will she know?/ She wants all told, now retained,/ For cold caves know the moon’s seeing the mad and dead.”¹²⁴ It has been theorized that these lyrics refer to comfort women who were forced into prostitution by the Japanese during World War II.¹²⁵

Furthermore, another scholar argues that more covert signs of resistance in the deviation from the traditional military band renditions of *Kimigayo* may serve to change the tone, reception, and, to some, the meaning of Japan's national anthem. Oba Junko asserts that unisonous collective singing (*seishō*) in Japanese schools, court music ensemble (*gagaku*) played in the 1999 Nagano Olympics' opening ceremony, and solo performances (*dokushō*) by celebrities “undid' *Kimigayo* and the collective voice it embodied in its sonority.”¹²⁶ The forced unisonous collective singing of *Kimigayo* has become a ritual at school ceremonies, therefore the singers are not regarded as endorsing the historical views and political stands that are associated with the song. At the Nagano Winter Olympics, the anthem was performed using a *gagaku* ensemble that was live onstage with a prerecorded Western orchestra. This arrangement “liberated people’s auditory system from the political charged reception of the song, to the new ear-opening experience of appreciating aesthetic values of *Kimigayo*.”¹²⁷ In addition to the new arrangement of the anthem at the Olympics, the idea of *Kimigayo* as a performance to

¹²⁴ Nakamura, “Foes give ‘Kimigayo’ sarcastic spin.”

¹²⁵ McCurry, “Japan’s rebels sing out.”

¹²⁶ Oba, 92.

¹²⁷ Oba, 108-109.

watch allowed the audience to remain passive listeners without getting involved in the collective singing. Similarly, the solo performances (*dokushō*) by celebrities at sporting events are primarily done to highlight the singer. Therefore, the incentive behind these solo acts are not patriotic or nationalist, but rather commercial. This process of “undoing,” which implies changing the meaning of the song for its singers and listeners, is not as progressive as constructing a new national anthem or rewriting the lyrics. But, in very specific situations, it does attempt to cancel or reverse the wartime connotation that *Kimigayo* carries for many Japanese.

These less public forms of protest have sparked some discussion over Japan’s new space and forms of resistance. While these less overt forms of protest do exist, scholars’ focus on them merely serves as a way to find resistance in a nation where formal protests and demonstration against the government have ceased to be part of the mainstream national culture. The enactment of the Law Concerning the National Flag and National Anthem forced the usually apathetic majority in Japan (with the exception of the mass mobilization in 2003 Iraq War protests that I will discuss in the next section) to express their opinions on the appropriateness of the *Hinomaru* and *Kimigayo*. Unfortunately the re-institutionalizing of pre-war and wartime national symbols did not inspire resistance against conservatives, who are slowly expanding the government’s control over the lives of individual Japanese citizens. Instead, the law was commonly accepted and effectively moved the political spectrum to the right. The Law Concerning the National Flag and National Anthem, the distribution of “Notebooks for Moral Education,” and the revision of the Fundamental Law of Education are attempts to inspire nationalism in students who have no connection to World War II, in order to create a unified national identity and, as I

will discuss in the next section, push through policies on rearmament.

Conclusion

Patrick Smith, a correspondent for The New Yorker, says that since Japan has made their national symbols official “the rest of us are challenged to distinguish between the aggressive hubris of wartime nationalists and ordinary national pride. These lines were blurred after Japan’s defeat when the U.S. occupation condemned the nationalist impulse.”¹²⁸ Since the end of World War II, nationalism has become an illegitimate point of identity in Japan, except for the right-wing and nationalist fringe. While proper national pride, especially in a nation’s symbols, should be respected, Japan’s government seems to have mandated patriotism for the people. The changes in the FLE, the introduction of “Notebooks for Moral Education,” and the reinstatement of the national flag and anthem have been implemented in Japan forcefully and without a proper discussion of their broader social and political implications.

These policies have fundamentally limited the freedom of speech within schools and have exponentially expanded the government’s role in education. The movie *"Against Coercion: Refusing to Stand for Kimigayo*, produced by Video Press Of Tokyo in 2006, shows the repression against Japanese teachers who refused to sing and stand for the *Kimigayo* at school ceremonies. One of the dissenting teachers, Ms. Nezu, discusses the treatment she received when trying to teach her classes about comfort women. She said that parents and students “jeered and shouted at me, reminding me of traitor-bashing during World War II. It was that terrible.”¹²⁹ Moreover, in describing her experiences resisting *Kimigayo* she explains that, “my professional pride has been taken away. I can’t

¹²⁸ Smith, “Three Views of the Hinomaru and Kimigayo Vote.”

¹²⁹ *Against Coercion: Refusing to Stand for Kimigayo*. Can be view at: <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-8192232362666209686#>

refuse to stand up unless I am ready to accept prejudice from students and parents.” Although only the teachers are punished for not participating in the anthem, the government opposition against them is so overt that it is essentially indoctrinating students to stand and sing *Kimigayo*. These policies are furthering the Japanese construction of an ethnically and ideologically homogenous nation. The principles of national solidarity that a patriotic education encourages have little regard for individuality, which stamps out the possibility of widespread protest and by extension effective resistance.

Section III: Article 9 and the Post-War Constitution

Article 9 of the post-war Constitution, demilitarizing Japan and placing it under the U.S. security umbrella, has provided the Japanese with decades of peace and prosperity that have come to be central to Japanese national identity. However, to many nationalists, this Constitution serves as a reminder of Japan's defeat in the Asia-Pacific War and the foreign occupation and forced restructuring that followed. On the 60th anniversary of the promulgation of the Constitution, Prime Minister Abe stated that “while we continue to uphold the fundamental principles of the present Constitution as abiding values, a bold review of the postwar regime all the way back to its origins and an in-depth discussion of the Constitution toward realizing a new Japan will lead to a spirit of laying the path to a new era.”¹³⁰ This speech showed PM Abe's definitive support for constitutional revision, an idea that has been on the LDP agenda since its formation, and continues to be central to their platform. In May 2007, the government moved closer to Abe's goal of constitutional revision by approving Abe's National Referendum Bill that set down the procedures for a referendum on constitutional amendments.¹³¹ This law does not come into force for 3 years, meaning Japan could be in the process of amending its post-war constitution in May 2010, with unknown effects on Japan's domestic and foreign relations.

The impetus for constitutional revision has been in Japan since the end of the American occupation in 1952. Almost immediately, right-wing conservatives and

¹³⁰ Prime Minister's Office, “Statement by Prime Minister Shinzō Abe on the Occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the Enactment of the Constitution of Japan.”

¹³¹ Akaha, 174. For more information on the National Referendum Bill see: Foreign Press Center Japan, “National Referendum Law Enacted; Sets Legal Procedures for Constitutional Revision,” Retrieved on October 6, 2008; http://www.fpcj.jp/old/e/mres/japanbrief/jb_741.html

nationalists argued for constitutional revision, but their attempts were unsuccessful because amendments require approval by two-thirds of the Diet before they can be presented to the people in a referendum. In the early postwar years, not only did the leftist parties support the pacifist Constitution but most members of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party saw the constitution as advantageous to securing their political power, making it nearly impossible for nationalists to secure a two-thirds vote. Yet, as the postwar political and economic system declined at the end of the 1980s, the support for constitutional revision grew. During the first Gulf War of 1991, there was a strong push from the conservatives in the Diet to overstep the bounds of the Constitution to send troops abroad. This movement was quickly stopped by the left-wing political groups and influential intellectuals in Japan. But at the onset of the Iraq war in 2003, the LDP was able to swiftly pass legislation to allow the SDF to provide support to US troops. During the twelve years that separated the two wars, the conservatives in Japan exploited a sense of fear among the Japanese people that arose from a perceived internal threat of foreigners and external threat of North Korea. These fears enabled the government to expand the scope of Article 9 and delegitimize any opposition to their radical new policies.

Creation and Expansion of Article 9

Japan's post-war Constitution was drafted in seven days by the Supreme Command for the Allied Powers (SCAP), who oversaw the U.S. occupation of Japan.¹³² In the Constitution, SCAP focused on demilitarizing and democratizing Japan, and included Article 9 that forever renounced war by the Japanese. The Japanese government had no choice but to accept the SCAP Constitution, which was approved in May 1947.

¹³² Itoh, "Japanese Constitution Revision," 313.

Due to the SCAP's integral involvement in the development of Japan's current Constitution and its strict policy on demilitarization, conservatives have argued that this Constitution was imposed, does not represent Japan's desires, and should therefore be revised.

Since the United States had essentially deprived Japan of any military capabilities, their security and defense was guaranteed through the occupation by the U.S. forces and afterward by the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty signed in 1951. Beginning in the late 1940s, with the Communist victory in China in 1949 and the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, the U.S. preoccupation with and desire to contain Communism grew. Therefore, the United States initiated a reverse course in Japan and began to encourage the Japanese to build up defenses and create the Self Defense Force (SDF) in 1954.¹³³ The SDF was supposed to be an exclusively defense-oriented force that would only be used if an attack was made on Japan, but over the years the scope of its operations has increased. The formation of the SDF caused liberals in the Diet to argue that the SDF was unconstitutional, a stance that was strongly supported by the majority of the Japanese public who had become hostile toward war.¹³⁴ Additionally, the revision of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty in 1960 extended the U.S. military's sphere of defense from Japan to all of the Far East. Since the treaty's revision in 1960, the role of the SDF in domestic and international conflicts remained limited and essentially the same until the 1990s.

The reaction of the international community to Japan's lack of military personnel support in the 1991 Persian Gulf War set the stage for changing the role of the SDF. When President Bush condemned the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the Japanese government

¹³³ Kawasaki, "Article 9's Global Impact."

¹³⁴ Itoh, "Japanese Constitution Revision," 313-314.

was swift to announce a policy of sanctions against Iraq, and froze Kuwaiti assets, trade credit, and economic cooperation.¹³⁵ But the LDP was unable to pass any legislation that would allow the Self-Defense Forces to contribute to the coalition due to the polarization of the right and left parties in the Diet. Additionally, the Japanese participation in the Gulf War incited strong resistance from prominent intellectuals and the majority of Japanese citizens.¹³⁶ Although Japan ended up contributing almost \$13 billion to the war (through a new tax), their lack of ground troops ended up excluding them from any recognition in the liberation of Kuwait.¹³⁷ Japan's participation in the Persian Gulf War opened up a Constitutional debate over the legality of participating in war at any level. This factor, coupled with increased resentment of U.S. international policies, “opened up the question of Japan's postwar relations with the US, Japan's responsibility to Asian nations, and the overall meaning of World War II.”¹³⁸ These questions triggered discussion over Japan's current position in the international system and anxiety over their status in the future multilateral international order. This led to conservative politicians speaking openly of Japan's need to become a “normal nation” (*futsū no kuni*) by taking a more active role in international security; the following year the SDF participated in its first UN peacekeeping mission to Cambodia.¹³⁹ The role of the SDF has continued to evolve, arguably outside the limits of Article 9.

In September 1997, largely as a result of Japan's lack of military support in the Gulf War, Japan and the U.S adopted new guidelines for a U.S.-Japan Security Pact that authorized Japanese logistical support for U.S. military operations in areas surrounding

¹³⁵ Catalinac, 60.

¹³⁶ These incidents will be discussed later in the section.

¹³⁷ Iida, 220; Catalinac, 62-63.

¹³⁸ Iida, 220.

¹³⁹ Szechenyi, 140.

Japan.¹⁴⁰ The problem with these new guidelines is that they are very ambiguous. Neither the situations in which Japan may support U.S. operations nor the boundaries of “areas surrounding Japan” have been defined.¹⁴¹ The revised guidelines represent a new distribution of responsibility for defense and security between the U.S. and Japan. The U.S. is no longer just a protector of Japan. The security relationship between the two powers is changing to force the Japanese to take a more active role in their own defense and in the defense of U.S. policies and interests abroad. The expansion of the U.S.-Japan Security Pact may have broader effects on the possibility of amending the Japanese Constitution.

By expanding the scope of the SDF forces, through the passage of the revised U.S.-Japan Security Pact, the LDP found a way to change the meaning of the Constitution without amending it, which effectively opened the floor for constitutional revision. Such sentiment has been expressed even by moderates like Hatoyama Yukio, the leader of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) and the current Prime Minister. After the revision of the U.S.-Japan Security Pact in 1997, Hatoyama argued that since Japan did maintain armed forces for defense (despite Article 9) that they should make it explicit in the Constitution.¹⁴² Hatoyama's stance on Article 9 exemplifies the shift in the mainstream opinion of the moderate parties of Japan, who previously opposed constitutional revision. This move towards the right has alienated the left-wing Communist and Socialist Parties, and primed the stage for constitutional revisionism. Furthermore, the critical point in this discussion is that even if Article 9 is not formally amended, the LDP has effectively changed its meaning without following the appropriate procedures for constitutional

¹⁴⁰ Nathan, 167.

¹⁴¹ Fisher, 405-406.

¹⁴² Itoh, “Japanese Constitution Revision,” 311.

revision. Hence the power and authority of the state to wage war has been immeasurably enhanced without going through the proper procedures.

Emerging Fear

According to polls conducted by the national press, support for the constitution has consistently outweighed dissatisfaction from the mid 1950s to 1990.¹⁴³ But in the 1990s, a shift occurred in the national perception of Japan's vulnerability to international and domestic threats that created a sense of fear and urgency among Japanese citizens. On the domestic level, the Japanese saw illegal immigration and illicit drug trafficking as the foremost problem in maintaining safety and the social order.¹⁴⁴ Internationally, the spread of weapons of mass destruction and the aggression of North Korea were identified as the greatest threat to Japan's security.¹⁴⁵ Japan's domestic security policies remain deeply rooted in the notion of Japanese homogeneity and uniqueness that should be defended in distinct ways. Many Japanese still see Japan as a society that can guarantee an exceptional amount of security to its citizens based on the homogeneity of its population.

However in the early 1990s Japan experienced a series of devastating political, economic, and social shocks to the Japanese perception of their government and society. The culmination of these internal problems transpired in 1995 when Japan experienced the Great Hanshin earthquake and the Aum Shinrikyō attack. The earthquake occurred in January and laid waste to the city of Kobe, killing over 6,000 people and leaving another 300,000 homeless.¹⁴⁶ It also caused major damage to the city's infrastructure, destroying

¹⁴³ Nathan, 165.

¹⁴⁴ Friman, et al, 85.

¹⁴⁵ Friman, et al, 85.

¹⁴⁶ Iida, 237.

railroads, communications and the city's clean water supply. This all came as a shock to Japan, since Kobe was considered a no-risk zone for earthquakes. Perhaps because of the unexpectedness of the earthquake, the government response to the disaster was slow and ineffective. Additionally the Japanese government turned down foreign aid to maintain “national autonomy” at the expense of its citizens, and was so disorganized that the relief effort eventually fell to citizen groups and the Japanese organized crime (*yakuza*).

Before Japan had fully recovered from the Great Hanshin earthquake, in March the religious cult Aum Shinrikyō released the chemical agent sarin into the Tokyo subway system, injuring over 5,000 people. Aum Shinrikyō was founded in 1987 as an idealistic and optimistic religious organization, in which its members shared the belief that they needed to save society from the morally corrupt world to achieve enlightenment.¹⁴⁷ Eventually the group developed an explicitly apocalyptic vision in which a third world war breaks out between Japan and the United States, making the world a nuclear wasteland.

Aum Shinrikyō was legally registered as a religious movement in Japan, which meant that it enjoyed tax breaks and legal protection. As the Aum affair continued to unfold, it became clear that the authorities had avoided investigating this organization, even though there was ample evidence of its criminal behavior (such as holding cult members, forced donations, and kidnapping).¹⁴⁸ This is due to the negligence of the Public Security Intelligence Agency that is responsible for investigations connected with the Anti-Subversive Activities Law. With their focus on left-wing movements, they

¹⁴⁷ Lannstrom, 93.

¹⁴⁸ Lannstrom, 93-99.

lacked experience surveying religious groups.¹⁴⁹ The attacks provoked the revising of the Religious Corporations Law to increase the Ministry of Education's power to collect financial data on religious groups. Defenders of religious freedom worried that these new laws would erode civil liberties for the sake of public safety. But, the changes in actuality only effected Aum, as we can see in the legislations title "Law to Control Organizations That Have Committed Acts of Indiscriminate Violence."¹⁵⁰ Given that this law was only aimed at curtailing Aum's activities, which were already verging on total collapse, the Japanese government did not fix the problem of dangerous religious cults in Japan.

This legislation typifies the Japanese government's view of Aum as an anomaly: a bizarre religious cult whose rise and attacks were the result of unique circumstances that have no bearing on the current system in Japan. This attitude sidesteps the discussion on what has caused highly educated Japanese citizens to want to perpetrate violence on their own country. Although it was argued that "March 20, 1995, is a critical date in modern Japanese history, and it had the same sort of psychological impact that September 11, 2001, has had in the United States," the resulting counter-terrorist policies in Japan would suggest otherwise.¹⁵¹ Following the reasoning of Friman, Katzenstein, Leheny and Okawara, I argue that rather than being used as a justification for strengthening domestic surveillance and policing, the Aum Shinrikyō attacks were down-played as a singular event because they ran counter to the idea of Japan as a homogeneous, safe state. The downing of the twin towers, unlike the Aum Shinrikyō attacks, were perpetrated by foreigners, and therefore were used as a justification for the counter-terrorist policies implemented at home and the intelligence and military operations abroad. In contrast,

¹⁴⁹ Friman, et al, 100.

¹⁵⁰ Reader, 225; Friman, et al, 100.

¹⁵¹ Lannstrom, 87.

rather than emphasize the dangerous elements within its own citizens in order to prevent another tragedy like Aum, the Japanese government chose to use the counter-terrorist policies to focus on and exaggerate the threat of foreign crime.

Friman, Katzenstein, Leheny and Okawara argue that Japan has ensured domestic order by embedding the police in society, who then rely heavily on the concept of Japan's ethnic homogeneity to maintain social order.¹⁵² The police have furthered this image with the help of Japanese organized crime (*yakuza*) who provide "socioeconomic opportunity" for some foreign residents and marginalized youth in Japanese society.¹⁵³ During the 1990s, the economic downturn hurt the *yakuza* and they were unable to maintain the same reach they had a decade earlier. This led to a sudden rise in gang related violence, and subsequent legislation to reduce organized crime. This new legislation forced the *yakuza* to diversify their industries and lessen their public profile, which destroyed their ability to regulate public order and opened the market for foreign organized crime. However, the foreign crime syndicates that did enter Japan did not establish new illegal industries but merely took over illegal activities that had been carried out by the *yakuza*.

In 2003 crime rates were rising to post-war highs but arrests were at post-war lows, focusing public and political attention on the erosion of social order. Organized foreign crime emerged as the primary threat in the official government rhetoric, with the need for protection of homogeneity and the embedding of police in Japanese society as the solution. In August 2003, the National Police Agency (NPA) announced it would be adding 10,000 more police officers to ensure public safety by 2006. A month later, Ishihara Shintarō pledged to deploy Tokyo police and immigration authorities to seven

¹⁵² The following argument on the Japanese authorities blaming crime on foreigners in order to maintain the perception of a homogeneous society primarily comes from: Friman, 85-107.

¹⁵³ Friman, et al, 92.

area prefectures to help decrease crime by foreigners. Foreign crime was a central theme in the September 2003 internal LDP elections. This carefully orchestrated campaign drew attention away from the relative small role played by foreigners in overall crime statistics and the declining numbers of illegal immigrants.

The national perception of soaring foreign crimes, “result[ed] in increasing attention to systems that enable the criminalization of noncitizen Korean residents of Japan and broader categories of foreigners.”¹⁵⁴ This sentiment can be seen in the passing of a wiretapping law in 1999 and the nationally accessible online resident registry called JUKI-NET launched in 2002.¹⁵⁵ Organized crime has been a growing problem in the last two decades in Japan; from 1993 to 2003 the number of cases grew by 52% and the number of arrests increased by 38%.¹⁵⁶ However, foreign crime only made up 3.2% of all Japanese crime in 2004.¹⁵⁷ Foreign crime has been overemphasized as the primary risk to domestic security, because it strengthens the perception of Japan as a homogeneous, safe nation.

Similarly, North Korea has been pegged as the main threat to Japan’s national security, especially with their recent development of nuclear and missile technology. Japan's focus on North Korea as an external threat has increased exponentially since 1998, due to the publicity of North Korea’s abductions, missile launches/nuclear weapons, and the discovery of unauthorized North Korean boats (*fushinsen*) in Japanese waters. These threats have been incorrectly construed as terrorist activities by Japanese

¹⁵⁴ Hayashi, 95.

¹⁵⁵ This registry was declared constitutional by the Supreme Court on March 6, 2008 because “data to be stored in the Juki Net database are out of the scope of confidential information involving personal moralities.” *Associated Press*, “Supreme Court declares 'Juki Net'.”

¹⁵⁶ *Wa-pedia*, “How Bad is Foreign Crime in Japan?”

¹⁵⁷ *Wa-pedia*, “How Bad is Foreign Crime in Japan?”

conservatives, in order to use the events of 9/11 to justify legislation that gives the SDF greater ability to contain North Korea.

On September 17, 2002 at a meeting between North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il and Prime Minister Koizumi, Kim admitted to kidnapping around a dozen Japanese citizens from the 1970s through the 1980s. Although this apology, as well as the return of five abductees, stunned many angry Japanese citizens, it initially served as a promising springboard for eventually normalized relations between Japan and North Korea. But the Japanese government's anger at the North Korean's inability to give a credible account for the remainder of the abducted Japanese citizens, and the overwhelming media coverage referring to the incidents as a “national tragedy” has stunted the progress in diplomatic relations.¹⁵⁸ Additionally, North Korea's test missile launches in August 1998 and July 2006, along with a nuclear missile test in October 2006, have all caused alarm and anxiety in Japan. Lastly, in 1999 the Japanese Coast Guard fired warning shots at a *fushinsen* in Japanese waters; this suspicious boat was able to get away, but the frequent appearance of them caused widespread concern. The kidnapping of Japanese citizens, test missile launches over Japan, and the appearance of *fushinsen* have contributed to the perceived constant threat of North Korea in Japan. However, previous threats, in particular the Chinese missile tests in the Taiwan Strait in 1996, did not lead to similar foreign policy changes as have happened in a post 9/11 Japan.

Starting in the 1990s, Japan politicians have exploited this external threat of North Korea to pass legislation to expand their military and legitimize constitutional revision, and similarly they have used the internal challenges of rising crime rates to regulate and track foreigners. By insisting that both internal and external threats to Japan are caused

¹⁵⁸ Akaha, 179; Iwasaki and Richter, 512.

by foreigners, the government promotes a policy of intolerance and homogeneity that at times verges on xenophobia. This state of fear in Japan has led to new domestic policies and a heightened sense of crisis, which combined with the threat of an external attack, has weakened the long-held pacifist stance regarding the domestic debate over Japan's security. Furthermore, the concept of an external enemy has been used in post 9/11 Japan to justify the expanding scope of the Self-Defense Forces and hostility toward those who protest Japan's military involvement.

Post-9/11

Japan's foreign policy in relation to national security changed after the September 11th attacks on the United States. The counter-terrorism policy prior to the attacks had been assessed on a case by case basis. But 9/11 created a strong sense that the threat to the international community was comprised of shadowy terrorist groups instead of specific states.¹⁵⁹ The policies that the Japanese government initiated were not direct counter-terrorism measures; most of the laws were implemented to support the U.S. and their efforts in the Middle East. But PM Koizumi and the LDP used the fear created in the wake of 9/11 to push through "counterterrorism" policies that gave the executive branch and the SDF more control over national security.¹⁶⁰

In response to the September 11th attacks, Japan passed the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law in October 2001 that permitted the SDF to be dispatched to the Indian Ocean and support U.S. combat troops in Afghanistan. Although, this law was only effective until 2003 it was extended for an additional two years, and is expected to

¹⁵⁹ Ogoura, 114.

¹⁶⁰ Friman, et al, 103.

represent Japan's future international military policy.¹⁶¹ Furthermore, the Diet revised the Coast Guard Law (Kaijō Hoanchō) to allow the use of weapons in Japanese waters on suspicious or unknown vessels.¹⁶² This law was used on December 22, 2001, six weeks after the legislation was passed, by four Coast Guard vessels that pursued a North Korean *fishinsen* from Japanese waters into Chinese waters before they were able to sink it. The new anti-terrorist laws that were passed in the wake of 9/11 set the stage for Japanese troop participation in the Iraq War.

The United States began their attack on Iraq on March 20, 2003. The Japanese government chose to verbally support US unilateral action; however, due to constitutional restraints they were unable to send any troops. By May 1, 2003 President Bush declared the end of the war in Iraq and called upon other nations to help with the reconstruction effort by sending troops, as opposed to financial aid. In July 2003, the Iraq Special Measures Law was passed by the Diet. It authorized the SDF to provide humanitarian relief to Iraq and logistical support to the U.S. as well as other militaries operating in the country for the next four years. This law limits the SDF to special noncombat zones, but allows them to transport arms for other militaries. These two laws that have been issued in response to the global threat of terrorism have expanded the geographic scope of the U.S.-Japan military alliance beyond what was thought possible prior to 9/11.

In addition to the laws described above, the Diet also passed legislation on June 6, 2003 that gave the prime minister and the SDF greater authority to respond to security threats. The three bills, The Bill to Respond to Armed Attacks, Bill for Revision on the Self-Defense Forces Law, and Bill for Revision on the Law Governing the Security

¹⁶¹ Southgate, 1637.

¹⁶² Leheny, 156.

Council of Japan allows the Cabinet to bring immediate military courses of action to the Diet for approval, which would then empower the prime minister to exert executive power.¹⁶³ In addition, in 2004 the Japanese Diet approved spending \$1 billion to begin work on a missile defense shield that will be part of the United States missile defense system, linking the continental US and its allies.¹⁶⁴ These laws enable the SDF to launch preemptive strikes if the threat is deemed imminent (with less chance of retaliation), which is a complete departure from Article 9 of the Constitution. Since 9/11, the LDP has successfully mobilized domestic fear, especially of North Korea, in order to justify an expanded role in antiterrorist activities and push through policies to legitimize rearmament.

David Leheny has argued that “since the September 11th attacks, Japan has moved close to the global norms on counterterrorism, through arguably more as an afterthought than by initial design.”¹⁶⁵ However, it is clear that the Japanese government has actively sought to change the parameters of the SDF to accommodate current global standards on counterterrorism in order to expand their military role in the international arena. The U.S. demands for Japanese cooperation in American-led attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq after 9/11, served as a catalyst for expanding Japan's defensive role in the U.S.-Japan security alliance. The shift to the right in foreign policy toward a more assertive military role overseas has been justified as part of the strategy against global terrorism, most commonly associated with North Korea. But, North Korea's actions after the 1980s kidnappings, through obviously meant to intimidate Japan, cannot be construed as acts of terrorism, like the attacks on the Twin Towers. Yet, the LDP has effectively connected the

¹⁶³ Cha, “Japan-Korea Relations.”

¹⁶⁴ Onishi, “Japan Support.”

¹⁶⁵ Leheny, 149.

broader notion of terrorism with the domestic fear of the threat of North Korea and foreign criminals to justify Japan's changing security policies.

Resistance to Militarization

The protest against the Gulf War occurred both politically in the Diet and academically through statements and critiques, but was not evident in the public sphere. At a symposium in Tokyo held on February 9th, 1991, a collective statement against the war, written by a group of highly successful and influential, young writers and critics, including Karatani Kōjin, Kawamura Minato, Nakagami Kenji, Shimada Masakiho and Tanaka Yasuo, was “issued, signed and publicized in the *New York Times*.”¹⁶⁶ This statement was divided in two parts; the first part read “I oppose the participation of the Japanese state in the Gulf War.”¹⁶⁷ The second part gave an explanation for opposition to participation in the war. It argued that the Japanese people had chosen to renounce war based on the regret they feel for their actions in WWII. It continued to assert that Article 9 makes the Japanese constitution the most universal and radical constitution, and it embodies the hope of those in the West who experienced two world wars. This statement, though prepared by intellectuals, also characterizes the ideology of the Japanese Socialist Party and other leftist political parties’ who were active in blocking legislation that would increase Japan's involvement in the Persian Gulf War.¹⁶⁸ Opposition to the Gulf War in the political and intellectual spheres was so organized and effective that there was arguably no need for comparable public resistance.

In contrast, the 2003 Iraq War did not mobilize the intellectual and political figures of society as did the Gulf War; instead, the opposition came from traditional protesters:

¹⁶⁶ Iida, 221.

¹⁶⁷ Iida, 221.

¹⁶⁸ Catalinac, 62.

trade unionists, socialists, communists, anarchists, ecologists, antiwar activists, but also newly invigorated *freeters*, students, and families.¹⁶⁹ Despite the overwhelming public opposition to the Iraq War, especially compared to the Gulf War, PM Koizumi decided to dispatch 550 soldiers to Iraq. The public outcry against Koizumi's actions had roots in anti-U.S. imperialism, antiwar sentiment, and concern over Japan's ability to finance participation in the war. The lack of effective public response from the intellectuals and leftist political parties to the Iraq War was obviously detrimental to the goal of the protesters. But, it did open up a void in political action that was quickly filled by the marginalized and non-conforming members of society, the *freeters*.

On March 21, 2003, just after the US/UK coalition forces began their attack on Iraq, 500,000 people gathered in Hibiya Park for an anti-war rally, this represented a significant shift in anti-war protests towards a rebirth of the left-wing street activism. The rally was not a traditional political demonstration, but rather took the form of a street art performance. Three hundred young people at the front were dressed in colorful costumes, carrying contemporary art and boom boxes, and playing music, while others were dancing.¹⁷⁰ These young people are members of the *Korosuna* group that carries signs at demonstrations saying “*Korosuna*, Do Not Kill.” This is just one of the many new political groups that formed out of the anti-Iraq movement and exists clearly in both the political and cultural realm.

The second major street rave occurred in Shibuya on July 7, 2003 and was organized by a group called Anti-Street Control; it included about two to four thousand

¹⁶⁹ Driscoll, “Debt and Denunciation in Post-Bubble Japan,” 178.

¹⁷⁰ Mōri, 17.

people and attracted an extraordinary level of media attention.¹⁷¹ This street rally denounced the military agendas of the United States and Japan, and featured the theme of anti-Bush/ anti-Koizumi/ anti-Ishihara. Initially the focus was more on Bush and Koizumi, but as the rally progressed it shifted to Ishihara, who had been the largest critic of *freeters* participating in anti-war demonstrations. It is estimated that the percentage of *freeters* at the rally was 85-90 percent. The street protests continue to be symbolic because they were the first time that the *freeters* chose to involve themselves in politics, and could represent a new politicized group.

The new wave of activism among *freeters* continued throughout 2004 when *freeteer* activists chose to go to Iraq to help the Iraqis and promote peace. These activities were highly publicized because five Japanese *freeters* were taken hostage in early spring 2004. The three most famous incidents involved thirty-four year old Takato Naoko, who started a NPO to aid homeless Iraqi children; twenty-six year old freelance photographer Koriyama Soichiro; and eighteen year old Imai Noriaki, who was investigating damage caused by depleted uranium munitions.¹⁷² The ensuing hostage crisis resulted in a public turn against these youths and a new perception of the *freeteer* as troublemakers and dissidents.

These three young Japanese were abducted from Baghdad in the first week of April 2004. The insurgency demanded that Japan withdraw their troops and financial support from the US invasion of Iraq, or they would slit the throats of the hostages. The Japanese government adamantly refused to negotiate or consider the terrorist demands. The families of the hostages therefore became publicly critical of the government and

¹⁷¹ Driscoll, "Debt and Denunciation in Post-Bubble Japan," 179.

¹⁷² Driscoll, "Debt and Denunciation in Post-Bubble Japan," 177.

pleaded that they consider opening a dialogue with the insurgents; this evoked a negative response from the public that was quickly capitalized on by the government.¹⁷³

Astonishingly, the hostages were blamed for their irresponsibility and, according to government spokesman and future Prime Minister, Fukuda Yasuo, “causing Japan so much trouble.”¹⁷⁴ The initial attack by the Koizumi administration against the hostages “mobilized a mix of neoliberal (“personal responsibility”) and nationalist (“shameful to the nation”) codes” that were picked up and used by the mass media.¹⁷⁵ The media, like the conservatives, chose to blame the situation on the young *freeters*, and diverted any blame from Koizumi's government for supporting an unconstitutional and unpopular invasion. The blame for the hostages themselves became so widespread that upon their return they received hate mail for having shamed Japan and were maliciously billed by the Japanese government for their medical examination and return airfare.¹⁷⁶ These events were manipulated by the Koizumi administration to depoliticize the situation and deflect criticism of the Iraq War onto the Japanese youth.

While the emergence of the *freeteer* as a new political force is reminiscent of the student element of the 1960s protests, the organization and effectiveness of their protests leads one to question their message and intent. The *Korosuna* group is much more culture-oriented and anonymous than their Vietnam era counterpart, *Beheiren*.¹⁷⁷ Similarly their protests and other anti-war rallies are more fragmented and atomized, where participants show up last minute on a whim and don't know one another. This has elicited criticism from the political activists of the 1960s and 1970s, about the new

¹⁷³ Leheny, 175.

¹⁷⁴ Driscoll, “Debt and Denunciation in Post-Bubble Japan,” 181.

¹⁷⁵ Driscoll, “Debt and Denunciation in Post-Bubble Japan,” 181.

¹⁷⁶ Leheny, 177.

¹⁷⁷ Mōri, 19.

protest movement's lack of recognition of real conflict, anger, and message in their protest.¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, this political mobilization of the *freeters* was very short-lived. By 2004, the troop dispatch was an established fact and regardless of what decisions came to the Diet afterwards, they were not radical enough to remobilize the population.¹⁷⁹ People had become accustomed to the troops being stationed in Iraq and many lost interest in the protest. Additionally, the disgrace of the *freeter* hostages turned many people away from the anti-war opposition. Therefore, the peace activists were forced not only to keep the interest of their supporters, but also re-convince them to share their opinions. The failure of the new protest movements to retain their audience, given the initial widespread support suggests that the protesters lack of message or passion and their refusal to organize have made them inadequate vehicles for political change.

In the early 1990s an anti-war movement arose from established literary critics and novelists, yet there was no equivalent mass mobilization. But in 2003 most of the intellectuals remained silent during the deliberations on involvement in Iraq, and resistance was taken up by the younger generation.¹⁸⁰ Mōri argues that the lack of protest from intellectuals during the start of the Iraq War is a result of a changing relationship between the intellectuals and the masses, high culture and popular culture.¹⁸¹ While this might be true, it is evident that the lack of intellectual support in the protest against the Iraq War in 2003 has had a negative effect on the protest's outcome. It is clear that the masses, *freeters*, students, families, etc, need the support of the intellectual and political

¹⁷⁸ Mōri, 20. Taken from quotes of Yoshikawa Yuichi, leading political activist during Vietnam, and Henmi Yo, non fiction writer. Hayashi, 97-98. Taken from quote of Tomoya Takaishi, activist in Folk Guerillas in 1970s.

¹⁷⁹ Ducke, 136.

¹⁸⁰ The resistance in 2003 by new political actors did not come close to the protests of the 1970s that involved 16 million people. See: Kelman, 79.

¹⁸¹ Mōri, 26.

elites in order to maintain legitimacy and effect change. The fact that by 2004 there were no more anti-war demonstrations indicates that the mass protests against the Iraq War were trendy and ephemeral movements rather than an intrinsic belief for the new generation of protesters.¹⁸²

The question remains as to why the intellectuals chose to remain silent in 2003, when there was large support and many opportunities to condemn Japan's involvement in the Iraq War. This phenomenon can be attributed to the gradual shift to the political right in all segments of Japanese society. The government's ability, as illustrated above, to manipulate foreign and domestic events to justify and necessitate its expanded military powers and troop deployment abroad has made society's conventional majority wary of protesting. Furthermore, the LDP's ability to criticize the demonstrators, mostly *freeter*, has turned public and media opinion against protest. This has left the LDP with free reign to implement policies that enhanced Japan's military and national security abilities, without an open forum for discussion of their lasting repercussions.

¹⁸² Mōri, 26.

Conclusion

After the collapse of the bubble economy in the early 1990s, Japan experienced a series of overwhelming internal political, economic, and social problems that have continued to afflict society today. The utter destruction of the post-war boom in Japan ignited a sense of national panic and crisis, which was only further justified by the devastation of the Great Hanshin earthquake and the Aum Shinrikyō attack. In wake of these disasters the people and government of Japan searched for a way to halt the economic collapse and the decline of the traditional family. In the midst of this crisis, nationalism rose to the fore as a solution to the widespread social malaise. The conservatives took control of the nationalist discourse and blamed the nation's problems on Japanese lack of patriotism and masochistic view of their own history. They singled out the youth, which seems to characterize the most non-traditional members of society, who simultaneously became the consequence and cause of the social problems. The implementation of policies that support historical revisionism, patriotic education, and constitutional revisionism, particularly over Article 9, have been crafted and marketed by the Japanese government as necessary remedies for the supposed internal social collapse and emerging regional threat. However, since the early 90's the political, economic, and social situation in Japan has arguably only deteriorated further, which suggests that the LDP's conservative reforms that were intended to reaffirm a national identity and inspire patriotism cannot, in fact, fix Japan's current crisis.

Since the conception of this paper, Japan's central political forces and actors have entirely changed. The Liberal Democratic Party was thrown out of power in the fall of 2009 for only the second time since 1955. The new ruling party, the Democratic Party of

Japan, and the current prime minister, Hatoyama Yukio, are charged with the task of fixing the failing political, economic, and social systems of Japan. The expulsion of the LDP has sparked debate over Japan's new direction, and whether it will deviate from the LDP model of bureaucratic politics and nationalist rhetoric. We are starting to hear voices proclaiming an end to the cultural nationalism of the post-bubble era. Mark Driscoll argues that the resignation of PM Abe Shinzō after only one year in power “allegorizes a fall of sorts for the ultranationalist positions espoused by Abe, Kobayashi, and the Japan Conference.”¹⁸³ But, even with the fall of PM Abe Shinzō and the rise of the DPJ, it is premature to proclaim the death of conservatism and nationalist policies. The LDP fell from power primarily because the economic collapse of 2008 further highlighted the political and social problems in Japan. The DPJ, though it at times has formed coalitions with small liberal groups, is essentially conservative. A large part of the party is made up of ex-LDP politicians who continue to support the LDP implemented status quo of historical revisionism, patriotic education, and constitutional revision.

The LDP's dramatic ousting was due to a string of poor, unreliable politicians; the failing economic system (that can be largely attributed to the collapse of sub-prime mortgages in the United States); and the myriad social ills that have been exacerbated by the financial crisis. The global financial crisis that began in 2008 caused Japan's 2008 fourth-quarter GDP to shrink 3.5%, a trend that continued into 2009. In addition, unemployment rose to a historic high of 5.7% in July 2009, the month before the election in the lower house was called.¹⁸⁴ In 2007, LDP party leaders chose Abe Shinzō to replace

¹⁸³ Mark Driscoll, “Kobayashi Yoshinori Is Dead,” 294. Kobayashi Yoshinori is a notorious nationalist manga artist who wrote the chapters on the Pacific War for the New History Textbook. The Japan Conference is an influential pro-Yasukuni group that also supports a nationalist political agenda.

¹⁸⁴ *The Economist*, “Japan's election: Lost in transition.”

the popular PM Koizumi after he retired. However, Abe only lasted a year before having to step down due to lack of public and intra-party support. Abe was replaced by the equally lackluster Fukuda Yasuo who also only lasted a year, before being replaced by Asō Tarō. PM Asō continued with traditional LDP policies; to placate the population's growing social concerns, he passed a stimulus bill in March 2009 to hand out 12,000 yen (\$130) in cash to every adult and 8,000 yen (\$88) to children and elderly.¹⁸⁵ This stimulus bill illustrated the LDP's lack of understanding of the structural reforms needed in Japan, and the fact that handing out money would not begin to solve the myriad social problems of the past two decades. The public had no role in the elevation of these three LDP politicians to the post of prime minister, who were all voted in by the lower house of the Diet that had a LDP majority.

The Economist described the election of the Democratic Party of Japan, one that broke the half-century lock of the Liberal Democratic Party, as an “earth-shattering event.” The LDP was only able to retain 119 of 400 seats (down from 300), whereas the DPJ garnered 308 seats, up from 115 seats.¹⁸⁶ During the election, the DPJ campaigned on a series of radical reforms to change the problems that plagued the LDP's reign. At the onset of PM Hatoyama's term in October, his approval rating stood above 70%.¹⁸⁷ This vote has been seen as monumental due to the scale of the DPJ victory, the implication of big changes in Japan's political culture, and the dismantling of the entire “iron triangle” system.¹⁸⁸ Although I agree that “the voters reject[ed] the old system in favor of something unfamiliar in Japan,” this does not imply that the nationalist policies and

¹⁸⁵ Arase, 41.

¹⁸⁶ *The Economist*, “The vote that changed Japan.”

¹⁸⁷ Rathus, “Japan: Hatoyama remains popular.”

¹⁸⁸ The “iron triangle” refers to the relationship between the Liberal Democratic Party, the business sector (*keiretsu*), and the bureaucracy in post-World War II Japan.

rhetoric in Japan have been moderated.¹⁸⁹

PM Hatoyama promised to reduce government spending and bureaucracy, improve the social safety net, and redefine the power dynamic with the United States. However, only a few months into office, Japan's political and economic realities have already hindered his efforts to keep campaign promises. Japan has the highest public-debt-to-GPD ratio among the world's developed economies.¹⁹⁰ PM Hatoyama has cut back on infrastructure spending, but these cutbacks are being replaced with increases in social spending. He has pledged to reduce the economy's reliance on export industries, yet does not have a clear plan outlined. He is trying to break the hold of the bureaucracy, but these reforms will probably take a matter of years. Six months into his appointment, PM Hatoyama's initially strong public support has already fallen; as of March 9, 2010 his cabinet's approval rate was 37.7%.¹⁹¹ While still far above the previous LDP prime minister's ratings, it is still almost a 50% drop from his approval rating last fall. Although, PM Hatoyama is trying to avoid the mistake of the previous non-LDP prime minister, Hosokawa, of "advocating political reform but then, once in office, following traditional policies for fear that voters were not ready for real change," it is questionable whether he can implement reforms quick enough to satisfy the public.¹⁹²

In addition, the corruption scandals that plagued the LDP have already begun to besiege the DPJ. The former president of the DPJ, Ozawa Ichirō, resigned because of a scandal involving his close aide, Okubo Takanori, who was indicted on March 24, 2009

¹⁸⁹ *The Economist*, "The vote that changed Japan."

¹⁹⁰ Clouse, "Japan: New Premier Charts A Difficult Course,"

¹⁹¹ M Data TV Watch – Tokyo, "Hatoyama Cabinet, Approval rating continuing to fall."

¹⁹² Funabashi, 117.

for taking illegal political contributions from a construction company.¹⁹³ Furthermore, PM Hatoyama has recently been caught up in a political donation scandal, where he allegedly falsified the political donation reports covering up a huge sum of money that he was receiving from his mother.¹⁹⁴

The lack of change and emergence of scandals during the DPJ's short time in power have left Japanese doubting their ability to implement much needed reforms in Japan. I argue that the DPJ is not left or progressive; essentially the shift of power was from one conservative party to another, the only difference is that the DPJ was not an entrenched institutional ruling machine. According to the *Defence Journal*, over half of the people who voted for the DPJ did not even support their main platform or policies.¹⁹⁵ Although, this clearly articulates the utter rejection of the LDP, it also shows the tenuous hold that the DPJ has over Japan. Unlike Barack Obama in the United States, there was no following or personal adoration for Hatoyama Yukio. If at any time the voters believe that the LDP would be better for them than the DPJ, it is hard to imagine they will have any trouble switching allegiance.

Of PM Hatoyama's accomplishments, his decisive role in curtailing Japan's military and security relationship with the United States is most relevant to my study. Japan's defense minister ordered the nation's naval ships to return from the Indian Ocean in January, fulfilling a pledge by PM Hatoyama to end an eight-year refueling mission in Afghanistan and Japan's military involvement abroad.¹⁹⁶ This is symbolic of the DPJ's efforts to reduce Japan's dependence on the United States, and create an East Asian

¹⁹³ Yamaguchi, "Takanori Okubo Indicted."

¹⁹⁴ Maeki, "Political Pulse."

¹⁹⁵ Sirgana, "The Rise of Political Dynamism."

¹⁹⁶ Fackler, "Japan Ends Naval Support."

Community that limits the United States' involvement.¹⁹⁷ At first glance, one might expect that these reforms are repealing previous conservative policies on the Self Defense Forces. However, by limiting the security relationship between Japan and the United States, the DPJ is actually forcing the SDF to expand since Japan will no longer be under the American security umbrella. Moreover, PM Hatoyama has explicitly expressed that he firmly believes that the Article 9 should be revised, which would then allow for an official standing military that would not be dependent on the U.S.¹⁹⁸

Since the DPJ rose to power there has been little actual change in the Japanese political, economic, and social structures. But, it has allowed many people to hope for the rise of a new, more moderate Japan in the near future. In the midst of the post-1990s crisis, the LDP has marketed itself as a party of experience and has promised constitutional reform, patriotic education, and fiscal austerity.¹⁹⁹ In contrast, the DPJ's platform has promised to rein in irresponsible bureaucrats, end corporate giving to political parties (pork-barrel politics), and squarely address the dire social issues. Moreover, in the realm of foreign policy, the DPJ pledged to seek a more equal relationship with the U.S. and closer relations with their Asian neighbors. Although the DPJ's campaign goals have not yet been realized, their fresh take on how to solve Japan's problems suggests that they might be able to address some of Japan's post-bubble ills, while shifting away from the current nationalist, conservative political paradigm.

The DPJ has already claimed that they will take decisive steps away from the trend of historical revisionism that emerged in the 1990s. PM Hatoyama has called for a non-controversial secular World War II memorial to be built to replace the Yasukuni

¹⁹⁷ Glosserman, "Portents of a shift."

¹⁹⁸ Funabashi, 112

¹⁹⁹ Arase, 43.

shrine as the place to honor the war dead.²⁰⁰ Furthermore, Foreign Minister Okada Katsuya has called for the publication of history textbooks jointly written with South Korea and the Chinese.²⁰¹ These gestures to other Asian nations are setting the stage to realize PM Hatoyama's desire for an East Asian community that could eventually turn into an East Asian free trade zone. A free trade zone would link the great East Asian nations tightly together economically and their perpetual cooperation and goodwill would be vital to each nation's success. These reforms suggest that the DPJ is moving away from the policies of historical revisionism that the LDP used as a tool to rally the Japanese. As a non-Japanese, it is difficult to position myself within this debate over nationalism. However, the nationalist rhetoric that has pervaded Japan in the past two decades seems to have only antagonized potential allies and has not yet succeeded in providing the Japanese with a constructive war narrative. The creation of an East Asian community could effectively allow Japan to recast wartime relations with its Asian neighbors and move forward in the future.

To deal with the emerging social problems in post-bubble Japan, the DPJ has emphasized the need to foster a domestic-demand driven economy based on higher wages and social benefits. In the "DPJ Financial Crisis Access Plan" they advocate for equal treatment for part-time and limited term contact employees.²⁰² This would ban employment agencies from dispatching employees for periods of less than two months and require companies to provide equal treatment for all employees regardless of employment status. Additionally they pledge to provide support for young people who are not in stable employment, by providing job-training, housing allowances, and

²⁰⁰ Kang and Lee, "Japan-Korea Relations."

²⁰¹ Arase, 51-52.

²⁰² The Democratic Party of Japan, "Economic and Financial Crisis Measures."

monthly stipends.²⁰³ The DPJ is also trying to prevent bankruptcies in order to sustain employment and consumer spending until the recovery kicks in. Unlike the LDP who blamed society's ills on the youth and *freeter*, the DPJ recognizes the need to help reintegrate this generation back into society and address their very real social and economic problems. Similarly to historical revisionism, the advent of patriotic education as a way to correct Japan's social problems has not seemed to work. The DPJ has chosen to advocate reforms that could directly impact Japanese society, instead of following the status quo that blamed the decline of traditional family values and by extension the nation's social problems on the lack of patriotism in students, singles, and slackers (*freeters*). Hopefully, the DPJ will be able to reform or at least liberalize many of the conservative policies that have been forced on Japanese education since the 1990s.

As explained above, PM Hatoyama is attempting to change Japan's security relationship with the United States. In addition to PM Hatoyama's refusal to renew the SDF's refueling mission to Afghanistan, the DPJ is attempting to remove the Futenma base facilities from Okinawa. Although the DPJ still favors joint missile defense and anti-terrorism cooperation with the U.S., it is firmly opposed to nuclear weapons and a stronger overseas military role for the SDF.²⁰⁴ Given that the DPJ is not trying to rearm Japan, they might be able to delink the discussion of the revision of Article 9 from extreme nationalist rhetoric. Since the discussion of Article 9 has been so wrapped up in a nationalist rhetoric, any debate over its revision has set off warning bells of militarism. But, perhaps since the DPJ does not have members that vocally espouse the nationalist ideology of the LDP, they will be able to shape a nuanced discussion of constitutional

²⁰³ The Democratic Party of Japan, "Economic and Financial Crisis Measures."

²⁰⁴ Arase, 50.

revision and its long-term effects on issues such as Japan's ability to contribute troops to international crises.

It is imperative that Japan move past the ideology of post-war Japan that flourished under the cold-war paradigm, and instead become a normal nation that is able to have a military and express national pride in a way that is not threatening.²⁰⁵ LDP conservatives tried to move Japan forward using a nationalist discourse that has only complicated their progress by making it more controversial. The DPJ is offering a new path for Japan to move beyond defining their relations with other Asian nations by World War II, correct the post-bubble social malaise, and revise the pacifist constitution in a way that disassociates the debate from nationalism. The DPJ is making it a priority to build good relationships with Japan's Asian neighbors, looking for solutions beyond patriotic education to fix society's ills, and striving to change the constitution without appearing threatening or militaristic. If the DPJ is able to stay in power, they could in fact moderate the political, judicial, and social norms that were forced to the right through implementation of conservative policies and bring Japan out of their decades of political, social, and economic malaise.

²⁰⁵ Kevin Doak refers to this nationalism in Japan as *kokuminshugi* (civic nationalism) or healthy nationalism that is essential to the enhancement of Japan. Unlike *minzokushugi* (ethnic nationalism), healthy nationalism places "the nation in an ethnic free context and emphasizes individual freedom." Doak uses healthy nationalism to describe Abe Shinzō's view on nationalism, which I entirely disagree with; however the DPJ could use healthy nationalism to promote Japan as a normal nation. Doak, 270-271.

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