SILVA IAPONICARUM 日林

FASC. LX/LXI

第六十・六十一号

SUMMER/AUTUMN 夏・秋

2019

SPECIAL EDITION

TRANSFORMING TABOOS IN JAPAN

edited by Marta E. Szczygiel

Posnaniae, Cracoviae, Varsoviae, Kuki MMXIX

ISSN (Online) 2543-4500

Drodzy Czytelnicy.

Sześćdziesiąty i sześćdziesiąty pierwszy zeszyt *Silva Iaponicarum* 日林 ukazują się łącznie jako zbiór tematyczny pod redakcją redaktora zewnętrznego. To nowa formuła, jaką mamy nadzieję realizować także w przyszłości. Zapraszamy do kontaktu z redakcją w sprawie współpracy w tym zakresie.

Przekazujemy czytelnikom nowy format zbiorku. Jednocześnie dziękujemy redaktorowi oraz autorom artykułów.

Kolegium redakcyjne

E-mail: silvajp@amu.edu.pl

Kraków – Poznań –Toruń – Warszawa – Kuki
wrzesień 2019

Dear Readers,

the sixtieth and the sixty first fascicle of *Silva Iaponicarum* 日林 are issued jointly as the theme collection edited by an external editor. This is a new format we hope to develop also in the future. Please feel free to contact us regarding details.

We deliver to the readers this new format of the collection. With special thanks to the editor and contributors.

The Editorial Board

E-mail: silvajp@amu.edu.pl

Cracow – Poznań –Toruń – Warsaw – Kuki
September 2019

読者のみなさまへ

「Silva Iaponicarum 日林」の第六十・第六十一合併号は、外部編集者による、テーマ別論文集として刊行されます。これは、私たちが今後も実現していくことを希望する、新しい編集形式です。この件に関しては、どうか編集部にご連絡ください。

読者のみなさまに、新形式の論文集をお届けいたしします。と同時に、編集者・投稿者諸氏にお礼申し上げます。

編集委員会　E-mail: silvajp@amu.edu.pl

2019 年 9 月 クラクフ・ポズナニ・トルン・ワルシャワ・久喜

Silva Iaponicarum *日林*

Kwartalnik japonistyczny / Quarterly on Japanology / 日本学季刊誌

ISSN (Online 2543-4500)

THE ELECTRONIC VERSION IS THE PRIMARY VERSION OF THIS PERIODICAL

Silva Iaponicarum
Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza
Katedra Orientalistyki, Zakład Japonistyki
ul. Grunwaldzka 6
60-780 Poznań, Poland
E-mail: silvajp@amu.edu.pl
www.silvajp.amu.edu.pl

SPIS TREŚCI / CONTENTS / 目次

Marta E. Szczygiel, Maura Stephens-Chu
Introduction
Transforming Taboos: Challenging Hegemonic Prohibitions in Japan's Past and Present 9

Juljan Biontino
Tabooization of Korean Funerary Culture during Japanese Rule – the Case of Yun Ch'i-ho (1865-1945) 15

Ioannis Gaitanidis
"Spiritual Apostasy" in Contemporary Japan: Religion, Taboos and The Ethics of Capitalism 41

Maura Stephens-Chu
From Sacred to Secret: Tracing Changes in Views of Menstruation in Japan 66

Marta E. Szczygiel
Understanding Relatively High Social Visibility of Excrement in Japan 94

PRACE NADSYŁANE /
FOR CONTRIBUTORS / 投稿 140

Marta E. Szczygiel, Maura Stephens-Chu
ORCID: 0000-0003-0736-3130, 0000-0003-0122-4121

Introduction
Transforming Taboos: Challenging Hegemonic Prohibitions in Japan's Past and Present

DOI: 10.12775/sijp.2019.60-61.1

Taboos – customary prohibitions against certain actions, places, or objects – exist in all cultures. The term was introduced to English in the late eighteenth century, after British explorer James Cook visited Tonga in 1777. In memoirs of his voyage, he relates a story of hosting the Polynesian leaders on his ship:

> *When dinner came upon table, not one of them would sit down, or eat a bit of any thing.... On expressing my surprise at this, they were all taboo, as they said; which word has a very comprehensive meaning; but, in general, signifies that a thing is forbidden* (Cook 1846: 110).

This traditional concept of *tapu* (or *tabu*) regulated every aspect of Polynesian society, usually by designating certain prohibitions ascribed to religion. Until this day, many taboos are of religious nature – strict regulation of the naming of God's name in Orthodox Judaism, or dietary restrictions like Halal and kosher diets for Muslims and Jewish people are some of the more well-known examples. The ways in which notions of sacred and profane shape each culture's understanding of the world, and how they are reflected in societal structures, was famously examined by Mary Douglas in her seminal work *Purity and Danger* (1966).

Douglas, as a Durkheim follower, believed that religion functions to support a certain worldview and to maintain social order and solidarity in complex societies. When she was analyzing purity laws of ancient Jews codified in Leviticus, she noticed they rather formulate distinctions between notions of clean and unclean, and not, as it had been assumed, enforce proper sanitation and hygienic standards. Thus, Douglas contended that humans' primal urge to separate clean from unclean reveals pollution symbols in each culture's "elaborate cosmologies" (Douglas 2003: 5) and not an unconscious pursuit of hygiene: "[i]f we can abstract pathogenicity and hygiene from our notion of dirt, we are left with the old definition of

dirt as matter out of place" (Ibid.: 35). In other words, cultures deem something dirty not because it essentially is, but because it functions as such in their cosmology; symbolic meanings of dirt are simply "part of the social system. They express it and provide institutions for manipulating it" (Ibid.: 114). Although what is clean and unclean is different across cultures, Douglas admits that there is a strong tendency to name bodily excretions as "a symbol of danger and of power" (Ibid.: 121). Douglas views the body as a bounded system, with the skin and orifices as vulnerable boundaries of the system; bodily fluids that can cross these boundaries or margins represent a threat to the system. This bodily system is a symbol of larger social systems: "[A]ll margins are dangerous" (Ibid.: 122) as they represent social boundaries and systems of segregation. "Spittle, blood, milk, urine, faeces or tears" (Ibid. 122) traverse the boundaries of the body and become matter that belongs neither to the inside, nor the outside – they stand in the middle as "the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter" (Ibid.: 35). Thus bodily excretions destroy inside/outside boundaries of the body, but they also metaphorically symbolize inside/outside of society, which is the key as to why they are often considered taboo. Similarly, *anything* that has the power to "confuse or contradict our cherished classifications" (Ibid.: 36) could potentially disrupt the hegemonic status quo. This is why it is most often those in positions of power who define and enforce what is taboo, and what is not (Gramsci 1971).

However, presently what we call "taboo" has expanded from the religious domain and is more often based on moral judgement and secular cultural norms. For example, most societies have taboos against incest (although these differ in rigidity); progressive objection to prejudice has led to the increase of politically correct euphemisms and avoidance of terms deemed offensive; it is unacceptable to point one's shoe/foot at another person in Thailand and in Arab countries, as these are considered unclean parts of the body.

Moreover, like many aspects of culture, taboos change over time, reflecting changes in societal norms and practices. For example, arguably most people would find the idea of eating cockroaches disgusting, even though they are high in protein and rationally speaking would be a great addition to our diet. What about lobsters, then? They are one of the most expensive seafood items and are considered a delicacy around the world. Interestingly, until the late nineteenth century, lobster was considered the "cockroach of the sea," and was used as fertilizer and fed only to prisoners, apprentices, and slaves (Willett 2013). This was because lobsters were so

plentiful and undesirable, much like cockroaches today. Thus, it is possible that in the near future we will consider roaches as a delicacy and wonder how it was possible to see them as dietary taboo.

Furthermore, what all taboos have in common is that if violated, they trigger social punishment: either penalization under the law, or attitudes and reactions of other members of society. Adopting a particular social identity requires accepting certain social taboos that become such an inherent part of one's morality that violating a taboo is something unthinkable (Tetlock et al. 2000). Therefore, whether a taboo is rooted in religion or cultural norms, it serves the purpose of regulating what is acceptable, and not, in a society.

This special issue touches upon the above-mentioned to examine various aspects of taboo in Japan. It is based on papers presented during the 2019 Asian Studies Conference Japan in Saitama (June 29-30), in a panel titled: *Transforming Taboos: Challenging Hegemonic Prohibitions in Japan's Past and Present*. Here authors would like to thank the conference organizers for creating a platform to share their findings, as well as participants of the panel for their suggestions and constructive critique. Thanks to that we present four papers highlighting that taboo themselves and their cultural significance in society – as well as systems of power and hegemony more broadly – are open to challenge and transformation. Authors, drawing on theories and methodologies from history, sociology, anthropology, and religious studies, examine how different actors have created, co-opted, and/or resisted cultural taboo throughout Japan's past and present.

Biontino outlines how Korean subjects of the Japanese empire resisted government attempts to change their funerary practices. Before Korea opened its ports in 1876, burial customs and practice had been thoroughly Confucian. But following Japan's annexation in 1910, burial practices were challenged in an attempt to align them with Japanese procedures. Korean funerary customs were considered superstitions and heavily criticized and ridiculed by the Japanese, but Korean society was not willing to accept changes requested by Japan, for these were perceived as taboo according to the Confucian rites. Biontino provides insights into the work of tabooization in colonial Korea based on the analysis of the diary of Yun Ch'i-ho (1864-1945), a famous and controversial figure in modern Korean history. His memoirs show a man who struggled between Confucianism and Christianity, Korean nationalism and Japanese collaboration, and shed light on the thoughts and feelings of Koreans living in that period.

Gaitanidis discusses the recent phenomenon of the anti-spirituality (*datsu-supi*) movement and its relation to "heretical" and "anti-cult" discourses. Like the so-called "cults" since the Aum affair, *supirichuariti*, the katakana word that refers to the concept of "spirituality," has been the target of attacks for its allegedly "dangerous" religiosity and fraudulent money transactions. Gaitanidis introduces a recent phenomenon that adds yet another layer of attacks on spirituality in Japan: in the last 5 years, criticism against *supirichuariti* (sometimes termed *datsu-supi*, "anti-spiritual," or spiritual apostasy) seems to have risen from among the ranks of the spirituality movement's most fervent followers, to attack an ideology that has become "too self-centered" as its critics argue. This type of rhetoric seems, at first glance, to reiterate the anti-cult, pseudo-nostalgic narrative that considers money transactions to be "taboo" in the case of "proper religion." Yet, Gaitanidis argues, the taboo-ization of spirituality as an object of business transactions by the spiritual apostates reveals a more subtle critique, which is centered on capitalism rather than on religion.

Stephens-Chu tracks a shift in societal views of menstruation, from a religious taboo to a hygiene issue. Menstruation, often called "the last taboo," was originally considered a mystical phenomenon in Japan. Then, however, it came to be seen as a source of pollution, surrounded by various proscriptions. Around the turn of the twentieth century, views of menstruation shifted again from a cause of spiritual defilement to an issue of hygiene that should be managed through proper bodily comportment and careful use of commercial menstrual products. After this time, while hypothetically 'free' of connotations of impurity and pollution, women still were not – and are not – free from stigma surrounding menstruation. Stephens-Chu concludes with testimonies of young women's experiences of compulsory swim class in grade school, as well as recent news articles discussing the topic, to highlight both the social and health issues currently surrounding young menstruators in Japan.

Szczygiel points to the relatively high social visibility of excrement in Japan. Defecation is arguably the most private bodily function: it is conducted behind closed doors, and any mentions of the body's excretory capacities have been largely eradicated from the public sphere. However, she argues that in Japan there is a relatively high social visibility of excrement, by which she means an abundance of symbolic manifestations of excrement, such as poop accessories or "poop talk" on television programs. This poses the question of exactly how big of a taboo is poop in Japan. To understand this phenomenon, Szczygiel conducted an online questionnaire with 185 non-Japanese participants who had been to Japan.

She argues that symbolic manifestations of excrement can be categorized into three realms: health, education, and commodity. Health and education realms stem from high health consciousness that assigns bowel movement as a health barometer, while the commodity realm emerged as an answer to the accepted presence of excretory experience in Japan and capitalizes on this phenomenon.

Is it appropriate to analyze "taboo" in the context of Japan? The authors of this issue acknowledge that the English term "taboo" is steeped in a history of Orientalism, in which white, Euro-American scholars and leaders depicted non-Western cultures as a foil to Western Civilization. Western Europe and America were the paragon of civilized society, while anywhere else was backwards, barbaric, or primitive. Taboos were amusing superstitions of "the natives" at best, and detrimental roadblocks to the "civilizing" process of colonial subjects, at worst. And of course, a blind eye was turned towards the West's own superstitions and "illogical" practices.

However, scholars like Mary Douglas attempted to explain the logic and significant symbolic meaning and purpose of taboos across the world. *Purity and Danger* helped to show that taboos can represent social systems and structures of power and identity. This leads to another important question – can Douglas' theoretical framework be applied to Japanese culture? After all, it is based on an analysis of Abrahamic religions. Moreover, social structures and cultural concepts of the body vary from society to society. Regardless, many Japanese scholars, such as Tanaka (2013), have invoked Douglas' work in their own analyses of Japanese traditions and Japanese culture, and the term "taboo" (tabū) is also frequently used to talk about both secular and religious proscriptions. The Japanese concepts of *uchi* and *soto* (inside and outside) can be argued to be an emic approach to delineating both bodily and social boundaries, which aligns closely with Douglas' argument in *Purity and Danger* (see, for example, Ohnuki-Tierney (1984) for a discussion of the *uchi-soto* binary).

For the authors in this issue, taboos, whether religious or secular, mark important social categories: sacred and profane, safe and dangerous, male and female, elite and non-elite, ordered and disordered, inside and outside. While taboos have been mischaracterized as immutable rules, we show that they are, in fact, neither immune to the passage of time nor universally followed by members of a society. Indeed, it is when rules are broken, boundaries are crossed, and lines are blurred, that we most clearly see a society's systems of power and hegemonies and the challenges to these hierarchies. For us, this is the cross-cultural significance of the concept of

taboo; not following cultural proscriptions disrupts the social order – but we must always keep in mind, *whose* order is "the social order"?

References

Cook, James. 1846. *The Voyages of Captain James Cook*. Vol. 2. London: William Smith.

Douglas, Mary. 2003. *Purity and danger: an analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo*. London, New York: Routledge.

Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. Edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith: International Publishers.

Ohnuki-Tierney, Emiko. 1984. *Illness and Culture in Contemporary Japan: An Anthropological View*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Tanaka Hikaru. 2013. *Seiri yōhin no shakaishi: tabū kara daibijinesu e* [social history of sanitary products: from taboo to big business]. Tokyo: Minerva Shobō (田中ひかる『生理用品の社会史：タブーから一大ビジネスへ』ミネルヴァ書房).

Tetlock, Philip E., Orie V. Kristel, S. Beth Elson, Melanie C. Green, and Jennifer S. Lerner. 2000. "The Psychology of the Unthinkable: Taboo Trade-offs, Forbidden Base Rates, and Heretical Counter factuals." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 78. 853-70.

Willett, Megan. 2013. The Remarkable Story Of How Lobster Went From Being Used As Fertilizer To A Beloved Delicacy. *Business Insider*. https://www.businessinsider.com/the-history-of-gourmet-lobster-2013-8. Accessed 2019.12.15.

Juljan Biontino
ORCID: 0000-0003-3653-1965

Tabooization of Korean Funerary Culture during Japanese Rule – The Case of Yun Ch'i-ho (1865-1945)

DOI: 10.12775/sijp.2019.60-61.2

ABSTRACT

With Confucianism as main ideology of the kingship that ruled in the Chosŏn period, Korean funerary culture was systematized and codified to a strong degree. Mourning periods were long, wailing underlay strict rules, and lavishness was prevailing to an extent that it could potentially ruin families financially. Burial was restricted to earth burial that was to be done in auspicious places, which had to be determined by geomancers following *feng shui* (kor. *p'ungsu*) principles.

With the opening of Korea to the West and Japan from 1876, Western missionaries started to challenge traditional ancestor rites, while Japan, slowly turning Korea into a colony, attempted to align the Korean funerary culture with that of Japan. With public graveyards and cremation, traditional Confucian practices were challenged by Buddhist practices that had been almost extinct in Korea since the 14th century.

This paper seeks to outline how, in the wake of all these changes, different actors created taboos that finally clashed to create a pluralism of rituals on the peninsula. Whilst Christians tabooized ancestor rites, Japanese authorities ridiculed Korean folk belief and traditional thought as superstition, all the while introducing Japanese Shintō as a non-religious ritual of state that then again clashed with Christian reasoning. The workings of taboos will be illuminated through the diary of Yun Ch'i-ho (1864-1945), a Korean who had embraced Christianity while studying in the US, but came from a traditional family that was keen to keep old traditions alive. His diary is a useful resource because, written over a period of more than fifty years, it gives insight into how Japanese changes affected the everyday of the Koreans and holds many instances where such influences are contemplated.

KEYWORDS: Yun Ch'i-ho, Korean funerary culture, Japanese colonial policy

1. Introduction

In premodern times, due to the undeveloped state of medicine and lacking conceptions of hygiene, life spans were shorter and death was a rather common sight. Caring for the dead, such as organizing the wake, holding the funeral and ensuing memorial ceremonies, was the task of the family

and took place in the homes of the local community (Richter 2010; Ariès 1991). Modernity brought along processes of secularization and rationalization that changed this situation. During the 20th century, death was pushed to the boundaries of human perception and turned into a societal taboo. Since the end of World War II, death and dying became less visible in the everyday for it became common practice that people died in care facilities or hospitals. At the same time, the handling of the dead came to be increasingly provided by the undertaking profession, which was evolving into a full-fledged industry (Elias 2002; Walter 1991).

As a consequence, people did not further confront themselves with their own demise, and death came to be widely accepted as a fact of life that cannot be changed. But now, in the first decades of the 21st century, as the phenomenon of aging societies grows into a global issue, mortality is moving back into the focus of personal and public interest. Preparing one's own funeral is gaining momentum in many parts of the world, and debates about euthanasia are non-abating. This arguably led to a de-tabooization of the topic of death, if not to a discussion about the validity of long-standing taboos concerning death in a wider sense.[1]

Thus, the concept of taboo is a useful tool to see how modern scientific views and traditional thought, often motivated by religious motifs, clashed and competed with each other.[2] It further can serve as a means to outline the impact of reform programs on the mindset of the people subjected to them. The modernization of the dealings with death and dying was not limited to the Euro-American context introduced above and can be applied to the East Asian case in order to verify if these changes in the perception

[1]The academic inquiry into taboos started from anthropology. In 1911, Frazer outlined issues of taboos including their role in Japanese Shintoism (1913: 19), categorizing taboos in acts, persons, things, and names. As the "highest form of superstition," taboos came to be understood as social mechanisms for obedience, their restricting power described by Steiner in his study on the Polynesian origin of the term (1956: 20, 60-61). George Bataille followed suit by connecting taboos to procreation and death (1957, Engl. Translation 1962), thematizing Christian tabooization of violence and incest. Mary Douglas' *Purity and Danger* (1st edition 1966) outlined the issue of pollution and ritual purity/impurity as formative powers of taboos, presenting ideas that are very applicable to the case of Japanese Shintō as it challenged Korean conceptions. Finally, the legislative power of taboo and tabooization and the political force that is created by their application was described by Abrar (2008), who argued that by tabooizing customs, modernity could be reinforced in terms of morality, leading up to legal measures to outlaw taboos.

[2]In this paper, taboos are understood in their wider connotations as normative rules accepted and unchallenged by most members of society. Culturally motivated, taboos control the actions of a human being to the extent of triggering or forbidding certain actions. Taboos are as strict and as unconditional as law, but stronger in their influence on the human being than the latter for they are not as explicit and often irrational. The Korean case actually shows that laws were often ignored in order to adhere to taboos. See also the introduction to this special issue.

of death are of a global character. Here, the case of Korea is of special importance because it shared Confucian values with its neighboring countries, but more than China and Japan came to embrace the Christian faith.

While Christian values obtained from the West challenged Korean funerary rites and burial practices from a moral standpoint, the incorporation into the Japanese Empire led to severe restrictions on Korean ritual life in terms of the law. Prior to Japanese reforms, funerary rites were held according to Confucian codex, and burial practice kept to the principles of geomancy (Horlyck & Pettid 2014). The foreign influence exerted by Christian missionaries and Japanese colonizers then challenged Korean traditional customs while creating sets of taboos concerning death and funerary culture that were ridiculing old Korean ways as superstitious, pagan, or heretic.[3]

This paper approaches the issue of taboos by considering the experience of Yun Ch'i-ho (1864-1945), a central figure in modern Korean history.[4] Yun, a stout Christian Methodist trained in the US, wrote his diary in English for nearly half a century.[5] In it, he gave witness of his struggles between

[3]Superstition was a potent label to Japanese authorities for contrasting Korean "savageness" and "backwardness" with Japanese "civilization" and "modernity." Everything not suitable for Japanese modernization efforts, and the Japanese belief/value system became ridiculed as superstition. Branding Korean folk religion, as well as newly rising alternative religions, as superstition was tantamount to tabooizing, with laws agains certain behaviors following suit. On the other hand, Korean arguments calling Japanese Shintō equally a superstition were always refuted. This shows the formative power that Japan held by reserving its right as colonizer to the definition of superstition. See Murayama, C. (1931, 1932).

[4]Yun (1865-1945) was born into a politically and financially well-established family. In 1881, he was a member of an early delegation to Japan. Afterwards, he advocated rapid modernization after the Japanese model and became invovled in an attempted coup d'état by pro-Japanese forces in 1884. Fearing for his life, he moved to Shanghai, attending the Methodist Anglo-Chinese College, where he was baptized two years later. He continued his education at Vanderbilt University from 1888 to 1891 and then pursued a doctorate at Emory University from 1891 to 1893. He then returned to Korea as an interpreter to US minister Lucius Foote (1826-1913). Active in politics, he became magistrate of Wonsan city. Due to his activity in the Korean Enlightenment movement (*aeguk kyemong undong* 愛國啓蒙運動) and the Independence Club (*tongnip hyŏphoe* 獨立協會), Yun was arrested after Korea became annexed to Japan, in the so-called incident of the 105, a roundup of supposedly anti-Japanese elements. He was found guilty of conspiracy. He served his sentence until 1917 and then started to work at the YMCA. Developing his personal ideas about Japanese rule, he stayed critical but also held welcoming views. Over time, his stance became more and more collaborative, which led him to adopt a Japanese name and made him participate in patriotic events to support the war cause. For more detailed biographical information, see Lee, E. (2012), and De Ceuster, K. (1994).

[5]Yun did not comment on why he chose to write his diary in English. It is argued Yun did first embark on writing in English in order to practice it during his education abroad. He then kept writing in English in order to not forget the language. He might have considered English also as

Confucianism and Christianity, and Korean nationalism and Japanese collaboration. By analyzing and contextualizing Yun's diary entries concerning death, funerals, graveyards and the afterlife, this paper aims to outline the clash of long-established traditional taboos with new, emerging taboos created by the spiritual and worldly restrictions created by Western and Japanese influence.[6]

2. Yun's Reaction to His Wives' Deaths and The Organization of Their Burials

Yun's parents arranged his first marriage according to Korean custom. This marriage ended in divorce in 1879 when Yun left for a self-imposed exile to Shanghai due to the political conditions in Korea. After finishing his doctorate in the US, he returned to Shanghai to teach, where he fell in love with a Chinese Christian named Ma Su-jin 馬秀珍. They married in 1894, but after only ten years, Yun lost her due to ectopic pregnancy.[7]

Feeling guilty because he had not been able to spend much time with his wife, his grief was immense. Yun at first set out to prepare a Korean funeral for his Chinese wife, with a gravesite close to his house, as custom demanded. When Horace Allen (1858-1932), an American missionary and diplomat, offered Yun a gravesite at Seoul's Yanghwajin Christian foreigner cemetery, Yun agreed to a funeral that was more in line to his personal beliefs, which he also had shared with his wife. Before the advent of Japanese influence in Korea, gravesites were nearly unrestricted by law. The Korean government allowed its people to build graves as they deemed fit according to Confucian and geomantic necessities. The government agreed to allow Yanghwajin's foreigner graveyard mainly out of remorse for the killing of Catholic missionaries back in 1866, disregarding Confucian requirements. The missionaries decided to limit Yanghwajin exclusively to foreigners, mostly out of mistrust of Korean policy toward Christianity. This meant that Yun, as Korean, was not eligible for a grave at

means of protecting his thoughts from the eyes of family and Japanese authorities. Yun's English was overall very proficient and came natural to him, with only a few remarks in either Japanese or Korean mixed into the text. See Lee, E. (2012), and De Ceuster, K. (1994).

[6] This paper made use of the online version of the diary, accessible at the Korean History Database (http://db.history.go.kr/). Diary entries are given in the format of YYYYDDMM throughout this paper. The database was last accessed on December 20th, 2019. All entries cited are direct citations. The style of noting down names in Chinese characters directly into the English text is kept in the same manner, as are transcriptions of Korean by the hand of Yun. Where necessary, alterations by the author to clarify the meaning are marked individually.

[7] See entries 18950102, 18940321, 18940822, 18940824, 18941223, 18941224, 18941225, 18950102, 18950117, 18950212, 19050210.

Yanghwajin, thus could not be laid to rest at the same site after his own death. Still, Yun accepted the offer, for it allowed him to completely adhere to the Christian ceremonial as well as Christian values such as decency and modesty, because the grave was incomparably cheaper than a Korean grave (19050210). The funeral service was held in Severance Hospital, with a Christian mass that only close, foreign friends attended. In his diary, sadness and depression are evident. Convinced that he could never love again, over the following year, he went on to describe Ma Su-jin as his guardian angel (19050210, 19050213). Together with his children, he regularly visited the grave, offering prayers, but refraining from Confucian ancestor ritual (19160827, 19180901, 19250412).

Christian conceptions of idolatry were tabooizing Confucian ancestor rites. When Yun chose a Christian-style funeral, he could avoid conflict with his personal consciousness concerning ancestor rites. While the funerary culture and remembrance of the dead were very different in Confucianism and Christianity, it is of interest to note that regarding burial practice itself, the freedom of burial Koreans had enjoyed during the Chosŏn dynasty extended to Christian custom, since it required earth burial as did Confucianism and geomancy. What is more, the very tone of the funerals was different. In the Confucian rite, crying and wailing had to occur at certain intervals. The actual funeral procession was rather a happy occasion that gave an impression of overall cheerfulness (Bishop 1897: 287-288). Yun despised these formalities. Given his state of mind after the death of his wife, the solemnity of a Christian funeral was helping him to cope with his situation.

Ma Su-jin's death in 1905 coincided with the time Japan turned Korea into a protectorate, a fact that further aggravated Yun's depression. Yun described this metaphorically as the death blow delivered to a country that already was on its deathbed. This "double loss" of wife and country drove him further into depression. In his diary, he confessed that he will always be comforted that after his own death, he would be reunited with his wife, professing his very Christian notions of the afterlife. He continued to contrast the afterlife in heaven with the "hell" of Korean reality. Upon his wife's death, Yun considered suicide but already had internalized that suicide was a taboo according to the Christian faith. After Min Yŏng-hwan 閔泳煥 (1861-1905), a government official who was also related to the late Korean Queen, had killed himself out of protest against the protectorate

treaty, Yun commented on Min's suicide as cowardice, an easy way out, but barring salvation.[8]

After the advent of Japanese rule, Korean graveyards were put under state control while Yanghwajin remained untouched by Japanese authorities. This was partly because Japan granted religious freedom to Korea, but mainly because leniency towards foreign missionaries was necessary in order not to upset Japan's allied Christian countries (Chŏn, U. 2009: 215-218; Ch'oe, Y. 2003: passim). Next, Yun married a Korean Christian named Baek "Mary" Maeryo 白梅麗 (1890-1943), who was around 30 years his junior. It was only when she was on her deathbed that Yun spared positive thoughts about her, even admitting that he had loved her (19430710, 19430727). Before that, he kept complaining about her at every instance: she was of bad character, extravagant and wasteful, lazy, a bad mother, uneducated, egoistic, unpleasant to be with.[9] Immediately after her death, Yun did not lament or wail for her, but expressed her death as welcome relief: She now was free from a world of worry about Hitler and war (19430410, 19430411, 19430414). As it was the case with his former wife, funeral and memorial services for Baek were held exclusively in a Christian manner. The burial took place at Yun's private graveyard in Asan, where his grave was later erected as well.[10] With her funeral, he decided to leave the bad memories of her behind, for she had blessed him with five sons and three daughters. He now described her as a self-sacrificing person but lacking any education or interest in the intellectual (19430426). Adhering to the Christian concept of not speaking ill of the dead (*de mortuis nil nisi bonum*), Yun, now in high age, obviously had forgotten about Ma.

3. Witnessing The "Death" of a Dynasty – State Funerals of Former Korean Rulers

Yun witnessed the deaths and state funerals of Queen Min (contemporary Korean title Myŏngsŏng hwanghu 明成皇后, 1851-1895), her husband, King and later Emperor Kojong 高宗 (1852-1919) as well as their son and last Korean emperor, Sunjong 純宗 (1874-1926). Due to his career, Yun had personally met the former King and his Queen on some occasions. He

[8] For his series of thoughts see diary entries 19050214, 19050310, 19050321, 19050420, 19050704, 19050725, 19050804, 19051130, 19051225.

[9] For criticism against Baek, see 19170719, 19180905, 19190203, 19251103, 19290103.

[10] Yun's grave is not marked with a name. According to his family, this was in order to prevent grave desecration, for many Koreans still consider him as a traitor to the nation.

also knew other members of the royal family as well as some of their personal staff. This is why he was able to know about their respective deaths before they were made public, and also the reason why he reacted intensely upon learning about their deaths.

Queen Min was killed in a Japanese coup after the end of the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895.[11] Yun heard about the events that led to the murder of the Queen in the early morning hours of October 8th, mere hours after the actual murder. He was shocked to hear that the Queen was stabbed and her body burned by Japanese assailants. Yun wrote that even though he had criticized her policies, he did not consider this a fair way to die for the Queen of a nation. He also condemned that it took the Japanese several attempts, and thus the lives of many of her attendants before they could make sure they indeed had killed the Queen (18951008). The next day, Yun continued that this act of violence against the Korean dynasty, at the hands of Japan, was a clear sign of the weakness of Korea but even more clearly showed the barbarism of the Japanese, extending their influences in Korea (18951009). This line of thought hardened further. In November, with the matter still unresolved, Yun wrote that Kojong and Sunjong had to fear for their lives as well. Japanese "civilization" just meant murder and assassination, and Korean society had learned that by murder, politics could be made (18951117). These diary entries show how the death of the Queen had rekindled his nationalism, while he despised Japan for this incident because it was an immoral break of the taboo to utilize violence and murder for political means. When Yun traveled to the US in the following year and experienced that the public held a very favorable image of Japan, he was disgusted that the Japanese crime against the Korean Queen had already been forgotten (18960509, 18960825).

It took two more years and the declaration of the Korean Empire in 1897 for Kojong to be in a position to finally hold the funeral for the Queen. Yun mused that one of the King's consorts, who wanted to use the occasion of the Queen's death to gain personal influence, was responsible for the delay of the funeral because it prevented the King from remarrying (18970110, 18970701). However, the reason was instead that Kojong first had to find a way to curb the political influence that his father Taewŏn'gun had regained after the assassination.[12]

[11] Japanese assailants entered the palace in the early morning, killed the Queen, and burnt her body. This action was clandestinely supported by elements in the Japanese government and never adequately resolved. The father of Kojong, prince regent Taewŏn'gun 大院君 (1820-1898) also had backed these plans and helped the assailants. For more detail, see Kim, M. (2009).

[12] One day after the murder, the Queen was demoted to commoner status (*pyein*) by Kojong's

The ashes of the Queen were lost, but her cut finger had remained intact and now was given the burial deemed for a deceased empress (Pratt & Rutt 1999: 289). On the day, Yun complained about the lavish spending for the funeral and expressed his anger about the disrespect shown by many onlookers of the funeral procession. Not only was there disrespectful talk, but even fruit offerings were stolen. Stealing was already a Christian taboo, stealing fruit offered to the deceased, an even bigger one in Confucianism. To Yun personally, the immense waste of money was against his conviction of austerity that stemmed from his faith (18971121).[13]

The actual funeral took place the following day at 7 am, with a "series of sacrifices and wailing up to 2 pm." (18971122). Only three weeks later, the King announced a reburial because his geomancers had found a more auspicious site. Yun was surprised that the King had intended the first grave to only be temporary and instead of waiting another few weeks had been willing to waste immense amounts of money. Yun was soon to find out that the primary court geomancer as well as his staff of more than a hundred men had not worked properly, choosing a stony site for the grave. This led to a series of tortures and the banishment of the erstwhile head geomancer (18971214).

Even though Yun, given his Christian conviction of austerity, was highly critical of the King, it has to be noted that the King was only acting in line with the geomantic and Confucian principles of Korean tradition. Kojong had always taken care of ritual and ceremonial procedures to present himself as a legitimate and virtuous ruler.[14] Furthermore, he and the Queen had a cordial relationship and were governing together (Simbritseva 1996: 52). While honoring his wife by giving her the closest attention according

---

father Taewŏn'gun, with Kojong only able to revoke this by elevating her to the rank of consort (*bin*), due to the pressure of his father. It was only after his and Sunjongs infamous "escape" to the Russian legation (*agwan p'ach'ŏn*) that he could curb the influence of Japan. Staying at the legation for a year, with Russian help a pro-Russian government could be established. In order to cement his newfound power, Kojong left the legation and announced the Korean Empire on the 12th of October 1897. Mere days later, a declaration followed to restore the Queen's honor by giving her the posthumous title of Empress Myŏngsŏng. The Taewŏn'gun retired and now on his deathbed, could no further prevent this. *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* (The Annals of the Chosŏn Dynasty), Kojong, book 33, year of Ŭlmi, 22nd day of the 8th month, sections 1-2 (Sillok 2019). Yun himself was skeptical about rumors telling of the denouncement of the Queen. Knowing their relationship, he did not believe that Kojong acted on his own behalf (18951914). *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* (The Annals of the Chosŏn Dynasty), Kojong, book 35, year of Chŏngyu, second day of the 3rd month, section 5. For details about the flight to the Russian legation and the establishment of the Korean Empire, see Han 2010: 68-72; Simbritseva 1996.

[13]Lavishness in funerals over time also became considered a problem in the Confucian discourse. See Hetmanczyk, Philipp (2018).

[14]For the king's reinforcement of ritual life in the Korean Empire, see Pak, Hŭi-yong (2010).

to Confucian rite, he showed the people what the Queen had meant not only to him but the whole nation. On the other hand, he did not visit his mother nor father when they were on their deathbeds and did not allow for funerals befitting their ranks. Here, Yun was shocked that the King did not adhere to the Confucian concept of filial piety, which was also rendered in the Christian ten commandments. Nevertheless, the masses had been affected as well. "This unnatural omission of duty on the part of H.M. has given rise to much of popular displeasure. People naturally contrast his devotion to his late Queen and the indifference to his mother." (18980115).[15]

Obviously, the King distanced himself from traditional behavior out of personal reservations toward his parents, who were responsible for much hardship during his life. Concerning the King's father, Yun stated his disappointment as follows: "H.M. is much and justly reproached for not having visited Tai Won Kun [Taewŏn'gun - Clarification by author] before or after his death. Nothing good can be hoped of him." (18980226). Upon the death of the Taewŏn'gun, Yun commented, "One of the disturbing elements in Korean politics gone." Although Yun understood the power relations, he was still amazed that the King did not heed traditional protocol (18980223). It is to be argued that the King behaved as such not only to take revenge upon those responsible for the demise of his wife and personal unhappiness but to show he had not forgiven those who, by their misrule and intrigue-ridden political ambitions, had turned Korea into such an unfavorable position. The King, by intentionally breaking a taboo, was employing the performative power of this act to show his stance toward his parents, but this „modern" behavior disgusted Yun and many of his peers.

Twenty years later, Kojong himself died in the morning hours of January 21st, 1919. Yun knew on the day due to his connections to the palace, but it took until the next day that the King's death was announced in the newspapers, a stroke being given as the cause. Yun was told that the King had been poisoned on behalf of the Japanese Governor-General, which he thought of as highly plausible, with the rumor gaining currency among the overall population as well (19190121).[16] Yun's diary is often cited as proof that Kojong indeed was poisoned by his medical attendant by secret orders from Japanese authorities, because it contains a witness account of how the

[15] H.M. is short for His Majesty.

[16] These and more rumors Yun discussed in his diary during the following days: 19190128, 19190210, 19190220, 19190224.

King died painfully of stomach ache after drinking his evening dessert tea and stomach medicine (19190211).[17]

At the time of the King's death, Korea had been a colony of Japan for ten years. Still, the death of Kojong held a symbolic power high enough to stir nationalist feelings, which had been subdued by harsh Japanese policies in the first decade of their rule (Robinson & Shin 1999: 7-8). Religious leaders in Seoul started to prepare a declaration of independence in order to use the opportunity of the funeral to start an independence movement. Many people, also from remote parts of the country, were expected to come to Seoul to witness the funeral, so leaders had hoped that news of the independence movement would spread to the countryside (Eckert 1990: 277-278). Out of respect for the King's funeral and Christian disapproved of using a Sunday to initiate the independence movement, March 1st was chosen (Baldwin 1969: 63-65). Yun also took part in the rehearsal for the funeral procession, complaining about the perceived necessity of keeping up with 2000-year-old rituals, somewhat ignoring the fact that the ceremonial was partly styled akin to a Japanese state funeral:

> The rituals and dresses used in the Funeral Ceremonies are picturesque but childish. These were formulated and fixed 20 or more centuries ago when the human society was in infancy or crawling stage. The idea of sticking to these absurd formalities when other people are flying—actually flying like birds—nay better than birds. How dare we speak about independance [*sic!*] when we only crawl while our neighbors fly? We who can't run a bathhouse talk about running a modern state! (19190228)

The funeral allowed Yun[?] to judge about the political state of the country. Yun here gives a rather negative verdict about his fellow countrymen. The actual funeral, held on March 3rd, occurred among the independence demonstrations, with the masses kept in line by arrays of Japanese soldiers. To Yun, this clearly showed the political realities of the country: next to all the soldiers, many Japanese onlookers did not draw their hats, some even laughed and joked when the hearse passed them (19190303).[18] Even

[17] 19201013 is also often cited as proof of poisoning at Japanese hands. If so, this means that Japan strengthened its government in Korea also through political murder. Yun, aware that Japan did not even care about such taboos as murder, was now convinced the Japanese would do everything necessary in order to gain a foothold in Korea.

[18] Drawing hats as a sign of respect was custom in the West, but not in Korea, where, for the

though Koreans were demonstrating for their independence, to Yun the farce-like funeral clearly showed that Japanese had no respect for the Koreans. Given the mood of the funeral, Yun was inclined to think that Koreans did not earn any from the beginning.

Yun's tone intensified when the last ruler of the Yi Dynasty, Sunjong, son of Kojong, died of heart failure in April 1926. Ousted from political power because of the annexation in 1910, and with a republican exile government active in Shanghai since 1919, Sunjong had not been a political, unifying symbol for Korean resistance comparable to his father, neither had he been a symbol of resistance as his father was. Nevertheless, Sunjong's death led to a final realization that there was no going back to a Korean monarchy. Yun went to the funeral procession aware that it was the last of its kind in Korea. He also noted that because of this, "every Korean seems to manifest special interest in the event." (19260607).

Heavily guarded by Japanese police and military, the actual funeral procession took place on the 10th of June 1926. "The Japanese authorities left no loophole for an attempt at a disturbance on the part of the Korean agitators," Yun wrote after attending the ceremony. Korean students had been giving out handbills while shouting for independence but were on the spot rounded up by police. Yun further remarked he had to cry when the bier passed by him (19260610, 19260611). Attending the actual burial on the following day, it took him another day to realize in his diary that "(...) whether a Korean emperor lives or dies, the Japanese are the only people benefitted while the Koreans only are the losers" (19260612). When reviewing Yun's stance at those state funerals, it becomes evident that, on the one hand, he dismissed such lavish and overdone ceremonies for their cost and perceived meaninglessness. His Christian convictions backed such thought; still, he clung to the nationalist element of these ceremonies, well aware of how it was a staged reminder by the Japanese that Korea had ceased to exist.

4. Experiencing The Changes in Funerary Customs under Japanese Rule

Colonizing Korea, Japanese authorities followed a practical reasoning. Due to the spatial importance of graves, many lawsuits about gravesites and land ownership rights were jamming the colonial legal system. Because most good burial spots had already been taken, the practice of illegally burying somebody in another family's graveyard (*milyang*) was also

longest time, the traditional Korean hat called *kat* was binding the hair of the bearer, which according to Korean custom, could not be cut.

commonplace. Another phenomenon created by Confucian order was the emergence of abductions of corpses and bones – a lucrative crime for those without piety. Taboos created by Confucianism and geomancy enticed to criminal offense – either in order to conform to the rules or in order to gain benefit out of those who complied. Next to such issues, problems of deforestation, shortage of space, public health, and general hygiene also gave rise to the necessity of reform in the eyes of the Japanese authorities (Chŏng 2014: iix-ix, 120; Lee, Hyang Ah, 2014: 408).

In Korea, with graves everywhere, it was hard for Japanese authorities to build roads and rails, impossible to mine on mountains rich in resources. Be this as it may, the Japanese did neither properly prepare their law, nor did they heed the culture of the Koreans in any respect when enforcing it (Chŏng 2015: 10). In 1912, the "Ordinance to control graves, crematories, burial and cremation" (*bochi, kasōjō, maisō oyobi kasō torishimari kisoku*, 墓地、火葬場、埋葬及火葬取締規則) was announced by the Japanese General-Government (Order No. 123), introducing public cemeteries and legalizing cremation. Cremation had been forbidden since the early years of the Chosŏn period but hence became a common practice among the Japanese living in Korea. The fact that cremation was now legal did not mean that Koreans considered it as an option for themselves. During the colonial period, which saw steady growth in population, only three more crematories were built in the Seoul area, with demand staying low (Lee, Hyang Ah, 2014: 405-407; Maeil sinbo 19100916; Chŏng 2014). In short, the new burial law foremost gave a legal basis to the realities Japanese settlers had created.

What is more, the emphasis on public cemeteries and cremation was a Japanese effort to extend their funerary culture to the colony, unifying the system with that of the mainland. In effect, by forbidding the use of private graveyards, the new law stood in direct opposition to the established Confucian values deeply rooted in Korean society and was another reminder to Koreans that Japan was the unquestioned ruler. Because of this cultural clash, Korean non-acceptance of the 1912 ordinance was stronger than the colonial authorities had anticipated. Yanaihara Tadao 矢内原忠雄 (1893-1961), a Christian Professor of Colonial Studies at the Imperial University of Tōkyō, understood that Japanese policy was incompatible with the Korean mindset. Koreans themselves were aware that the modernization that Japan was promising had not been established for a long time in Japan proper. Japan had been a thoroughly Confucian society during the Edo period, but during the Meiji Restoration rid itself of Confucianism in a more consequent fashion than in Korea. Yanaihara went

as far as claiming that Korean non-acceptance of burial practices was so immense that it became one of the main issues of the independence movement (Yanaihara 1937: 392-393).

The law was amended twice in reaction to the discontent voiced by Koreans, once in January 1918, and once again in September 1919. Nevertheless, amendments were only an improvement in as much as they now aimed at winning the sympathies of old Korean elites. Japanese authorities did not acknowledge that Koreans would never bow to Japanese rules in this respect. Therefore, they styled the change as a favor to the people, a benevolent act towards the old elite. With the September 1919 amendment, it became legal to uphold private graveyards on one's own ground if they did not exceed 3000 *pyŏng* (approx. 9930 m²) of space. For those who had not already owned a private graveyard and those without substantial land holdings, nothing changed: the masses still had to be content with a lot in a public graveyard that in no sense adhered to geomantic or Confucian principles, let alone requirements of Korean aesthetics (Yi 2007: 59-62; Takamura 2007: 246; Chŏng 2014b: 119-120). In a sense, there was no independence from Japanese rule even after death. The law meddled deep into the everyday of individuals, which is why Korean non-acceptance continued. Every year, between 3000 and 4000 cases of violations of the law occurred (Chŏng 2015: 11-13). According to the newspapers of the time, the only positive reason a Korean could find in the new way of fire burial was the relative cheapness of it, but it remained considered the highest taboo according to Confucian rite (Tonga Ilbo 19200602).

The case of Yun Ch'i-ho shows how these laws exerted influence on the everyday. Concerning ownership rights and the upkeep of a graveyard, Yun came into conflict with Japanese interest despite the law being on his side. Close to the clan elder (*munjang*), Yun was responsible for most dealings with burial in his family. While, as shown above, Yun on a personal level despised these old customs, for the sake of his family and its reputation, he gladly adhered to them. He justified this by arguing that there were also shared values between Confucianism and Christianity, such as filial piety. Fulfilling his role as chief mourner on many occasions, and as the planner of graveyards and burials, he was often confronted with different opinions among fellow clan members. Considering his official business concerning the wider clan, Yun behaved Confucian-conservative. However, from a Christian standpoint, he argued against lavishness to himself and complained about the noisy and extravagant Korean traditional burials in all the occasions he had to deal with death or burial.

It was because of his father's gravesite that Yun came into conflict with Japanese policy and laws. In 1916, the Japanese Government-General gave close-by mining rights to a Japanese entrepreneur who mostly ignored the existence of the grave of Yun's father. Yun had to fight to exert his legal rights in instances that show that Japanese bureaucracy did not care about the personal rights of Koreans. When Yun inquired what he could do about the disrespectful neighbor, authorities made it clear to him that next to a letter formally asking the favor to respect the grave, there was nothing he could do. This enraged Yun, but seeking help from his connections in the government was of no avail either. Persuaded that the Japanese would do nothing as long as no violation of the space was found, he had a worker of the mining agency inspect the ground. The Japanese inspector told Yun that nothing could be done just because of the old Korean superstitions. All the more infuriated, Yun then filed complaints through all of his possible channels, including his connections to the staff of the Governor-General (19160824, 19170303, 19171212, 19171215, 19171220, 19171221).
This, for the time being, solved the issue, but seven years later, the mining license next to the grave came into Korean possession. The Korean owner (Yi Hŭi-jae) went even closer to the grave of Yun's father than the prior Japanese owner had done. In the meantime, Yun's connections to the Japanese authorities had improved as well. He personally presented his case in front of the Governor-General, Saitō Makoto (1858-1936), mere days after he was informed that the mining license had been given to a Korean (19241220).

> (...) Called on Baron Saito and Mr. Shimooka to beg them to rescind the mining licence granted to 李希宰 [Yi Hŭi-jae - Addition by the author]. The Governor General was exceedingly amiable while the Administrative Chief was inclined to be naughty. Great God I hate to kotow to these men, for begging as favors what Koreans should have as rights. (19241224)

Yun visited his father's grave on Christmas Eve, a mere three days after the meeting mentioned above. There he found that Yi Hŭi-jae had his men dig close to the house of the grave keeper. Yun was very aware that their encroachment was against the mining law, which angered him even more:

> They had violated the very letter of the mining law; but the local police wouldn't do anything against them. Had the hill

> belonged to a Japanese, the Japanese police would have punished the 李希宰 [Yi Hŭi-jae - Addition by the author] crowd to the fullest extent of law. (19241227)

After Christmas, the men of Yi Hŭi-jae had "attempted to reopen the pit around which I had placed a barbed wire fence," Yun found, and with the help of his friends, "succeeded in fighting the scamps off the hill" (19241228). The following day, he reported this to the police. Still, he had to wait for the new year to start until authorities made another move – none against Yi, but against Yun, who was interviewed by an investigation committee the Governor-General had sent to look into the conflicting interests. In the afternoon, Yun brought the committee to the gravesite to show how far Yi's men had gone (19241229, 19250109). Two days later, he was interviewed again in the Governor-General building about his demands concerning the graveyard, which he answered as follows:

> I said my demands and hopes are: 1. The preservation of my brother's rights as the owner of the hill. 2. The preservation of the sacredness of my father's tomb and of its precincts—which means the entire hill. 3. The preservation of the entire hill from violation as our intention is to locate our family cemetery on the hill—the exact location to be decided by specialists. (19250110)

With "specialists," Yun referred to geomancers, whose profession was despised by the Japanese and whose "specialism" was in times also doubted by Yun himself. Still, he mentioned these "specialists" in front of the Japanese authorities who at the same time were cracking down on them. He tried to exert his right to hold a private family graveyard as it was according to size rules and had been in possession of his family since long before the 1912 graveyard regulations. Anyway, a solution could only be found by private consultation of the mining concession managing officer from the Governor-General and Yun's family. When Yun agreed to give up 3000 *pyŏng* on the other side of the hill, Yi was content to not bother the gravesite anymore (19250323). Even though the resolution of this issue is not further mentioned in the diary, it becomes obvious that Japanese authorities did not bother about old Korean customs, and while the Japanese miners had given up, the authorities did not hesitate to reissue mining licenses to Koreans as to having the Koreans quarrel among each other. Here it becomes evident that some Koreans would stick to Confucian

rite and taboo, while others would ignore these for personal gain. In sum, the situation stayed un-changed. Instead of properly resolving the issue, the authorities made the Koreans compromise, basically preventing both from seeking out their respective rights in a lawsuit. Yun, even though the rightful owner of the grounds, in the end lost much in order to get his rights. In short, the issue concerning his father's gravesite shows that even the rich who abided by the law were tried about the ownership and usage of their legally owned land.

Yun celebrated the solution of the issue with a renewal of his father's grave in 1929. Whilst he professed that he would not even pay 100 yen for his own grave, he was not reluctant at all to spend 1000 yen to improve his father's gravesite, all the while he kept professing to himself that he was as frugal enough to still be content that his father's grave was the only land that he owned (19180606). Here again, Christian values came first to Yun, but he gave in to traditional expectations as a filial son, always trying to justify himself for his actions (19290407, 19290410, 19290411). His defense of his father's grave shows that he had not yet overcome Confucian values if it was in terms of the importance of the grave of one's own father. Also, the fact that he had hired a constant guard (*myojigi*) for the grave, which had been common to prevent crimes targeted at graves during the Chosŏn period, is further proof of this. He readily kept the Confucian tradition of two grave visits a year to pay his respects to his father – these respects however were Christian in form. Yun refrained from ancestor worship because this was tabooed by the Christian belief, but with his own grave, in the end, he would adhere to Confucian practices of being buried spatially below his father. Also, he observed the anniversary of his father's death meticulously, but, instead of offering ancestor rites, he simply prayed.[19]

5. Experiencing Funerals, Working around Taboos

The above case showed the vagueness of logic which protected Yun from having to come to terms with the taboos his own belief system and the traditional Korean system were causing upon the further tabooization of funerary culture in the hands of the Japanese empire. Dividing private from official obligations, Yun managed to create a logic of ritual pluralism that allowed his consciousness to stay clear of putative taboo clashes. The following analysis of Yun's experiences concerning funerals will further illuminate this.

[19] Instances of which are: 19201122, 19270212, 19190219, 19190921, 19250508, 19251512, 19260220, 19270922, 19281226.

In 1927, in his function as the leader of the Korean YMCA, Yun was asked to plan and lead the funeral of another popular Christian leader with dissident background, Yi Sang-jae 李商在 (1850-1927), who had a past as an anti-Japanese activist. He was not only a Christian figurehead but also a symbol of resistance. Yun, a childhood friend of the deceased, was the obvious choice for planning and presiding over the funeral. The planning of the funeral had started while Yi was still alive on his deathbed, which was the conventional method in Confucian terms. It was only after his demise that Japanese authorities started to meddle with the plans of Yun by personal pressure because they did not want the funeral to escalate into another demonstration for independence. Yun's plan was scaled down to up to 800 guests and a maximum cost of 1200 Yen. Yun later argued that the overall atmosphere as well as the stance of the innumerable onlookers of the procession was more amicable and sincere in mourning than compared to the funeral of Yi Wan-yong 李完用 (1858-1926), who was widely considered a traitor for his involvement in the protectorate treaty of 1905 and annexation treaty of 1910 (19270325, 19270330, 19270407, 19270408).

Yun also organized the funeral of Yi Sŭng-hun 李昇薰 (1864-1930), an educator, former independence activist and one of the 33 representatives who signed the Declaration of Independence on March 1st, 1919. As old comrades, they had shared their time in prison. Yun was made the main organizer without his prior consent and only got to know of the honor when intercepted by the police, who asked why he had not obtained permission before agreeing to the task. Professing his innocence and explaining the fact that he was not aware of being put down as committee leader, he was let go under the condition that he informally agreed that only three representatives per club or society were to be invited to the funeral and that the procession was to be comprised of ten cars at most. Dismayed with Japanese surveillance, Yun was more afraid of this ceremony than the one for Yi Sang-je three years earlier, for he had to fear for his personal freedom in case something would go wrong. This not only shows that Japanese authorities were afraid that funerals of former independence activists had the latent potential to develop into anti-Japanese rallies. Equally, Japanese authorities were employing peculiar measures of unofficial pressure to exert control over funerals that had the potential to spark public interest (19300509, 19300512, 19300517). Both Yi Sang-je and Yi Sŭng-hun had been Christians like Yun. Styling their funerals in a Christian framework was unproblematic and almost welcome

to the colonizer, for it did refrain from showcasing "old superstitions" the Japanese authorities were tabooizing and cracking down upon.

Considering the other two private family graveyards the Yun clan upheld, Yun was not as understanding as with his father's grave. Another family graveyard was located in Pyŏngtaek as the final resting place of the Yun Yŏng-ryŏl family line. Having personal issues with this side of the family, Yun would express his sadness upon the demise of Yŏng-ryŏl's wife, but upon the death of his cousins, Yŏng-ryŏl himself and cousin Ch'i-byŏng, Yun instead mentioned their faults, such as highlighting the latter's opium addiction (19400129-30). As with many other burials he attended, during his final personal reckonings with the deceased, he did only rarely consider the courtesy not to speak badly of the dead. This he reserved for his own wife, about whom in life he always had only complaints.

When Yun's cousin Taek-yŏng (b. 1876) died in Shanghai in 1935, his younger brother spent vast amounts of money to get the body to Korea to give it a proper burial at the family graveyard. The costly service of the geomancers resulted in burying Taek-yŏng in the family graveyard, but at a higher spatial position than his grandfathers, which was unacceptable according to Confucian custom and met massive resistance in family meetings. In the end, it was decided to follow the geomancer's advice rather than to heed completely to Confucian custom, which shows that both traditional Korean ways were not always compatible. Yun commented on the whole ceremonial as noisy, unrefined, and expensive (19350915, 19351102, 19351104). This event clearly shows that not only grave-related quarrels were occurring inside the same family clan, but that geomancy, although heavily discredited as superstition by Japanese authorities, by then held more currency than Confucianism, which had been the ideological foundation of Korea.

What is more, Japanese authorities under the leadership of General Ugaki Kazushige 宇垣一成 (or Issei, 1868-1956), General-Governor of Korea between 1931 and 1936, had reinforced inspections of graveyards and gravestones. The government even checked gravesites built according to the law for whether they complied with the rules or if they showed anti-Japanese sentiments. Disregarding whether such acts were intentional or not, the government considered it as anti-Japanese if birth and death years marked on gravestones were made in the old Korean way of noting the year according to the Chinese calendar and did not feature Japanese era names. Ugaki had those tombstones destroyed on the spot, which in Yun's eyes was everything but the behavior to be expected from a "civilizer" (19341916). Such a view stemmed from the fact that desecrating a grave

was considered taboo in both Christian and Confucian culture. In case of reburial for geomantic purposes, Confucian concepts were reinterpreted as fit: in 1934, Yun got to know that the Japanese city planners under Ugaki had designated the Itaewon area of Yongsan, now a famous district in Seoul, to be turned into a residential area. This necessitated the removal of Itaewon graveyard, a "shared holy mountain" (*pungmangsan*) located in this hilly area, dating back to the Chosŏn dynasty (Lee, H. 2014: 407-408). Because of this, the grave of his wife's mother had to be moved. Considering this a large breach of the Christian belief to not disturb the dead in their final rest, Yun was instead infuriated at the high cost this undertaking required. He described in his diary the gruesome sight of exhuming his mother-in-law who had t died nine years before. In this state, Yun did not see another possibility than o bring the body to the crematory, which was another breach of Christian custom and also meant a give-in to Japanese cremation policy, which Yun described as the cleanest method (19351121). Whilst Yun was steadfast in his Confucian conviction of filial piety considering his father's grave and equally steadfast in his Christian conviction for his close family, seeing the decayed body of his mother-in-law, his "modern" mind equating death with filth, Yun now opted for the clean and sanitized methods the colonizer had provided (19340428, 19351121).

This shows that the Japanese city planners had, in a bid to create more residential areas in downtown Seoul, did not hesitate to remove graveyards that were earlier sanctioned by them. This was an additional method to further push the sight of death out from the daily city life, as it is a common tendency in modern societies. Before the period after the Manchurian incident, Japanese authorities did not touch upon these *pungmangsan*, sticking to the policy already in place during their land surveys in the 1910s. The removal of Itaewon marked the beginning of the next step of removing sites of death out of sight - now it was not single graves anymore, but whole cemeteries (Takamura 2000: 135-137).

6. Conclusion

Yun Ch'i-ho, during his long life, encountered death many times. His family owned three private graveyards that adhered to Japanese policy. As a convinced Christian, Yun had a distinct consciousness of religion and was not afraid to voice it in his diary, where he also wrote extensively on his reservations against the Japanese, their laws and what he conceived as lavish and dull Buddhist and Shintōist customs. In the same vein, he was also highly critical of Confucianism or geomancy, but could not quite get

over long-established traditional thought himself (19271019, 19290409, 19390430, 19390929).

During his lifetime, traditional taboos established by Confucianism and geomancy were challenged first by Christian influx, then by a Buddhist funeral style reminiscent of the situation in medieval Korea. Tabooizing and outlawing Korean funerary customs, the colonizer attempted to "modernize" the Korean mindset in order to solve key problems for society that were deemed to originate from funerary culture. By doing so, they challenged the Confucian conceptions of death and dying that were widespread in Korea. To Koreans, Japanese modernity only hurt the memory of their ancestors. To the Japanese, Koreans was savage, but to the Koreans, the Japanese were even more so for they broke with the foundations of Confucian civilization. In Korea, what Miyajima Hiroshi (2004) had termed "Confucian modernity" was already in place as an alternative design for a Korean modernity without foreign intrusion. Japanese control over Korean burial customs and graves in the name of civilization and modernity could only be suspicious to Koreans. Korean intellectuals such as Yun were aware that this "modernity" had not yet been established in Japan for a long time. Problems concerning modern hygiene were, of course, also discussed in Korea, but while the Japanese understood earth burial as unhygienic because of tropical weather and frequent earthquakes, this was less an issue in Korea with its cold climate, with earthquakes also being much rarer than in Japan or Taiwan (Chŏng 2014b: 83-85).

Tabooizing and outlawing Korean funerary customs began as a policy aiming to bring order into the chaotic state that Korean burial practices had created on the peninsula: deforestation, the sight of graves on nearly every mountain in the country (Bishop 1898: 62-64), legal issues and so on. But when implementing and enforcing changes, Japanese authorities had to see that "old" Korean customs and beliefs were ineradicable. Indeed, the overall number of infringements of the Graveyard Ordinance was rising continuously in Korea, showing that the fear of taboo was stronger than the fear of Japanese repression (Han 2017: 63-66). Christianity, which could establish itself in Korea for its relative compatibility with Confucianism, also became a powerful counterforce to the ideology of the Japanese Empire fostered by State Shintō. During the war years, Japanese authorities, while claiming religious freedom, pushed state-Shintōism as a pillar of Japanese ideology upon all subjects of the Empire (Hardacre 2017). In time, not only funerary customs but the whole ritual life of Koreans was challenged. By enforcing the participation in Shintō ceremonial, ritual

pluralism as it was possible until then also became impossible. Certain Christian denominations chose to resist against Japanese repressions up to martyrdom (An 1956: 19-29, passim). But Yun, as a Methodist, could overcome these challenges simply because Methodism was lax when it came to ancestor worship, be it that of the Japanese imperial ancestors or the Korean Confucian rite. By citing the Golden Rule (Matthew 7,12), he as a Christian felt empowered enough to take part in any religious ritual, however always discrediting them from the Christian standpoint that he perceived as superior to anything else (19251014). When it came to imagining his own death, Yun did not wish for Confucian ideals nor begged for resurrection, but showed values commonly shared in contemporary times: "All I pray for is that, when the time comes for me to leave this world, I may do so without any physical and mental pains with gratitude for the past and cheer for the future. Amen!" (19260614).

References

Abrar, Ali M. 2008. “Into the Breach: The Legislative Function of Taboo.” *Socio-Legal Review* (4). 110-125.

An, Yong-jun. 1956. *Taeyangsin kwa ssaun idŭl* [those who fought against the sun diety]. Seoul: K'albin munhwa ch'ulp'ansa.

Aveline-Dubach, Natacha (ed.). 2012. *Invisible Population. The Place of the Dead in East Asian Megacities*, Lanham: Lexington.

Ariès, Piere. 1991. *The hour of our death*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Baldwin, Frank P. 1969. *The March First Movement. Korean Challenge and Japanese Response.* New York: Columbia University Doctoral Dissertation.

Bataille, Georges. 1962. *Death and sensuality: A study of Eroticism and the Taboo*. New York: Walker

Bishop, Isabella. 1897. *Korea & her Neighbours. A Narrative of Travel, with an Account of the Recent Vicissitudes and present position of the Country* (One volume edition). London: Fleming.

Bishop, Isabella. 1898. *Korea & her Neighbours. A Narrative of Travel, with an Account of the Recent Vicissitudes and present position of the Country* Vol. 1 (Two volume edition). London: John Murray.

Ch'oe, Yŏng-jun. 2003. "Yanghwajin irwŏnŭi yŏksa chirijŏk koch'al [considerations about history and location of Yanghwajin]." *Kyohŭisa yŏn'gu* [Journal of Church History] Vol. 20, No. 6, 19-37.

Ch'oe, Young Ching. 1972. *The rule of the Taewŏn'gun, 1864-1873. Restoration in Yi Korea*. Harvard University: Distributed by Harvard University Press.

Chon, U-yong. 2009. "The memory of modernity on Yanghwajin in Seoul." *The Journal of Seoul Studies* Vol. 36, No. 8. 193-228.

Chŏng, Il-yŏng. 2014a. *Ilje singminjigi changmyojedoŭi pyŏnhwawa 'kŭndaesŏng' ŭi imyŏn* [changes of the burial system in the times of Japanese colonialism and the dark side of civilisation]. Seoul: Sogang University Doctoral Dissertation.

Chŏng, Il-yŏng. 2014b. "1910nyŏndae myoji t'ongjee tamgin ilje singminjibaeŭi nolli [the logic of colonial adminstration in the Japanese control of graves in the 1910s]." *Han'gungminjogundongsa yŏn'gu* [Journal for the History of Korean Movements] Vol. 80. 79-124.

Chŏng, Il-yŏng. 2015. "Iljegangjŏmgi myojigyuch'igŭl t'onghae pon singminjawa p'isingminjaŭi kan'gŭk – Han'guginŭi panŭnggwa chedosangŭi munjejŏmŭl chungsimŭro. [seeing the gap between colonizer and the colonized through the regulations of graveyards in the period of Korea under Japanese rule. Focusing on the Korean reactions and the problems of the system]." *Hanguk kŭnhyŏndaesa yŏn'gu* [journal of modern and contemporary Korean history] Vol. 72.

Sillok 2019. *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* [the annals of the Chosŏn dynasty]. sillok.history.go.kr. Accessed 2019.12.20.

De Ceuster, Koen. 1994. *From Modernization to Collaboration, the Dilemma of Korean Cultural Nationalism: the Case of Yun Ch'i-ho. 1865-1945*. Leuven: Doctoral Dissertation.

Douglas, Mary. 2001 [1966]. *Purity and Danger. An analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo.* London: Routledge.

Eckert, Carter (et al., eds.). 1990. *Korea Old and New. A History.* Seoul: Ilchokak.

Elias, Norbert. 2002. *Über die Einsamkeit der Sterbenden in unseren Tagen.* Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

Frazer, James. 1911. *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*. London: Macmillan.

Han, Young Woo. 2010. *A Review of Korean History* Vol. *3*, Seoul: Kyongsaewon.

Han, Ri-hye. 2017. *Shokuminchi Chōsen ni okeru bochi hanzai to minshū* [crimes concerning graves and the masses in colonial Korea]. Chiba University Master thesis (韓梨恵『植民地朝鮮における墓地犯罪と民衆』千葉大学).

Hardacre, Helen. 2017. *Shinto. A History.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Henry, Todd. 2016. *Assimilating Seoul. Japanese Rule and the Politics of Public Space in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hetmanczyk, Philipp. 2018. "Frugal Deaths: Socialist Imaginations of Death and Burial in China". In Jakub Beneš, Stefan Arvidsson; Anja Kirsch (eds.). *Socialist Imaginations. Utopias, Myths, and the Masses*. London: Routledge.

Horlyck, Charlotte; Pettid, Michael (eds.). 2014. *Death, mourning and the afterlife in Korea. From ancient to contemporary times.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Kim, Mun-ja. 2009. *Chōsen ōhi satsugai to Nihonjin* [the murder of the Korean queen and the Japanese]. Tōkyō: Kōbunken (金文子『朝鮮王妃殺害と日本人』高文研).

Lee, Eun-jeung. 2012. *Yun Ch'i-ho. Ein Intellektueller in einer Transformationszeit* [Yun Ch'i-ho. An intellectual in times of transformations]. Munich: Iudicium.

Lee, Hyang Ah. 2014. "Managing the Living through the Dead. Colonial Governmentality and the 1912 Burial Rules in Colonial Korea." *Journal of Historical Sociology* Vol 24, No. 3. 402-422.

Lee, Sang-uk. 2007. "Shokuminchi Chōsen to bochi no keifugaku. Shisetsu bocchi mondai no bunseki o chūshin ni [colonial Korea and the genealogy of graveyards. An analysis of the private graveyard problem]". *Bulletin of the Korean Scholarship Foundation*, No. 26. 58-71 (李相旭『植民地朝鮮と墓の系譜学—私設墓地問題の分析を中心に—』朝鮮奨学会学術論文集).

Murayama, Chijun. 1931. *Chōsen no fūsui* [geomancy of Korea], Keijō:

Chōsen sōtokufu (村山智順『朝鮮の風水』京城：總督府).

Murayama, Chijun. 1932. *Chōsen no fugeki* [the shamanists of Korea], Keijō: Chōsen sōtokufu (村山智順『朝鮮の巫覡』京城：總督府).

Mitsui, Takashi. 2012. “Raising the Issue of ’Modernity’ – ’Colonial modernity’ theory as advanced by Japanese Korean Studies scholars and the background thereof.” *International Journal of Korean History* Vol 17. No 2. 159-186.

Miyajima, Hiroshi (ed.) 2004. *Shokuminchi kindai no shiza: Chōsen to Nihon* [the gaze of colonial modernity. Korea and Japan]. Tōkyō: Iwanami (宮嶋博史　編『植民地近代の視座：朝鮮と日本』岩波書店).

Pak, Hŭi-yong. 2010. “A Study on the Symbolic Spatial Representation of the Daehan Empire, Wongudan”. *Seoulhak yŏn’gu* [the Journal of Seoul studies] No. 40. 107-157.

Pak, Tae-ho. 2006. *Changrye ŭi yŏksa* [the history of burials]. Seoul: Sahaemunjip.

Park, JK. 2014. “Bodies for Empire. Biopolitics, Reproduction and Sexual Knowledge Late Colonial Korea.” *Korean Journal of Medical History* Vol. 23, No. 2. 203-238.

Pratt, Keith. & Rutt, Richard. 1999. *Korea. A historical and cultural dictionary*, Richmond: Curzon.

Richter, Isabel. 2010. *Der Phantasierte Tod. Bilder und Vorstellungen vom Lebensende im 19. Jahrhundert* [the imagined death. Pictures and images about the end of life in the 19th century]. Frankfurt: Campus.

Robinson, Michael; Shin, Gi-wook (eds.). 1999. *Colonial Modernity in Korea*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Simbritseva, Tatiana. 1996. “Queen Min of Korea: Coming to Power.” *Transactions of the British Royal Asiatic Society of Korea* Vol. 71. 41-53.

Song, Hyŏn-dong. 2012. *Sŏulsaramdŭrŭi chugŭm, kŭrigo sam* [the death and life of people in Seoul]. Seoul: Committee for the Compilation of the History of Seoul.

Steiner, Franz. 1956. *Taboo*. London: Cohen & West.

Takamura Ryūhei. 2000. “Kongtongmyochirŭl t’onghaesŏ pon singminchisidae Seoul – 1910nyŏndae rŭl chungsimŭro [Seoul in colonial

period from the view of public cemetery in 1910s].” *Seoulhak yŏn’gu* [The Journal of Seoul Studies] Vol. 15. 131-165.

Takamura Ryūhei. 2007. “Sōhō no bunmeiron. Shokuminchi Chōsen ni okeru dosō to kasō [the civilisation of burial practices. Earth burial and fire burial in Colonial Korea].” (In:) Ikeda Hiroshi (ed.) *Daitōa kyōeiken no bunka kensetsu* [Establishing the culture of the Greater East-Asian Prosperity Sphere]. Tōkyō: Jinbun Shoin. 241-291 (高村竜平「葬法の文明論—植民地朝鮮における土葬と火葬—」池田浩士編『大東亜共栄圏の文化建設』人文書院).

Walter, Tony. 1991. “Modern Death: Taboo or not Taboo?”. *Sociology*, 25(2). 293-310.

Yanaihara Tadao. 1937 [1926]. *Shokuminchi oyobi Shokumin seisaku* [Colonies and Colonial Policy]. Tōkyō: Yūhikaku (矢内原忠雄『植民地及び植民策』有斐閣).

Yun, Ch’i-ho. 1969. *Yun Ch’i-ho ilgi.* db.history.go.kr. Accessed 2019.12.20.

AUTHOR'S PROFILE

Juljan Biontino

Juljan Biontino pursued his undergraduate studies at Heidelberg university, completing with Magister degree in 2010. His magister thesis concerned the Japanese reaction to the March First Movement of Korea. Having developed a strong interest in Korean non-acceptance of Japanese rule, he continued his studies in the doctorate programme of Seoul National University, Department of History Education. After graduation in 2016, he became assistant professor at the Department of Liberal Arts and Sciences. His PhD Dissertation on ritual spaces in Seoul under Japanese rule will be published in German by Nomos in 2020.

Ioannis Gaitanidis
ORCID: 0000-0003-2164-6161

"Spiritual Apostasy" in Contemporary Japan: Religion, Taboos and The Ethics of Capitalism[1]

DOI: 10.12775/sijp.2019.60-61.3

ABSTRACT

In the last decades, *supirichuariti*, the katakana word that refers to the concept of "spirituality," which is generally understood as a post-1970s phenomenon in Japan, has been used to argue for the return of religiosity in domains outside "traditional religions." The first decade of the twenty first century even saw what was termed a "spiritual boom" which was mostly fuelled by an increased visibility on television and popular magazines of alternative therapies and self-development theories, resembling the spiritual-but-not-religious (SBNR) interests in other parts of the world, but basing themselves on an explicit boundary work with established religious practice. The spiritual, however, has, like the so-called "cults" since the Aum affair, been the target of attacks by media and scholarly discourse for its allegedly "dangerous" religiosity and fraudulent money transactions. The religion vs spirituality debate seems therefore to hide another debate, good spirituality vs bad spirituality, where taboo-discourse in relation to religion thrives. This paper introduces a recent phenomenon that adds yet another layer of attacks on spirituality in Japan. In the last 5 years, criticism against *supirichuariti* (sometimes termed *datsu-supi*, "ditching spirituality") seems to have risen from among the ranks of the spiritual's most fervent followers, to attack an ideology that has become "too self-centred" as its critics argue. This type of rhetoric seems, at first glance, to reiterate the anti-cult, pseudo-nostalgic narrative that considers money transactions to be "taboo" in the case of "proper religion." Yet, I argue, that the taboo-ization of spirituality as object of business transactions by those whom I call "spiritual apostates", reveals a more subtle critique, which is centred on capitalism rather than on religion. Spiritual apostasy, contrary to the anti-cult rhetoric, is, first and foremost, about what "good" capitalism is; not what "good" spirituality is.

KEYWORDS: spiritual apostasy, taboo, capitalist ethics, consumer fraud

In this paper, I look into secularist meta-narratives of taboo that are associated with the "pitfalls" of alternative and holistic spiritualities and

[1] I sincerely thank the two anonymous reviewers. The final version owes a lot to their thorough comments for improvement, although I am entirely to blame for any remaining shortcomings. This research was supported by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS), Grant-in-Aid for Early-Career Scientists (18K12205: 2018-2022).

produced by people who used to embrace such practices, but who have since turned against them. More specifically, I introduce the concept of *spiritual apostasy* to make sense of an emergent set of norms surrounding religion, spirituality, and capitalist consumption. Whereas scholarly critics of spirituality have sometimes exhibited nostalgia for an authentic religious past that was purportedly not characterized by crass consumerism, recent advocates of "ditching spirituality" (*datsu-supi* 脱スピ) have instead argued within the frame of market logic, critiquing predatory marketing while assuming that spiritual striving and self-transformation will take place in a capitalist frame. Building on the notion of "anxious secularity" (in which stakeholders are uncertain about how to draw the line between religion and non-religion), I argue that these critics mobilize a set of taboos concerning the ethics of spiritual capitalist consumption in a secular society. Consider the following example: M is one of the few people who has tweeted regularly using the tag *datsu-supi* from early 2015 to mid-2017. He also has consistently blogged using the same keyword from late 2014 to late 2018. M is perhaps a typical example of someone presenting himself as a "survivor" of the spiritual market. His Twitter profile stresses the importance of having failed entirely in life but having managed to get back on his feet. Single and broke at 40, M says to have managed to spin things around by changing his personality *on his own*. From then it was the road to success with money, a marriage and lots of advice to share with others who have tried (but have failed) to change themselves by seeking the advice of spiritual therapists, self-development workshops and life-advising books. M's argument is that one can achieve the same results, with more "realistic" (*genjitsuteki*, 現実的) means, in a more personalized way that is more "normal," "ethical" and "true." His criticism of the "spiritual" is in fact rather fierce: "the spiritual makes people dependent, like a drug […] I was one of them, spending money to become a better person, but it did not work […] the spiritual is a necessary evil […] it is there for us to realize that that is what we do not need."

M and others produce highly personalized accounts that appeal to a privatized sense of self-authority, which is common among the "spiritual, but not religious" populace. However, such discourse reveals also a highly developed secularist argumentation based on what is the proper way to spend money to maximize benefits, and to achieve what M would call "realistic" everyday life goals. Some even propose that if one is to continue this type of business one should give one fourth of their income to charities, or one should adopt a proper refund policy for unsatisfied clients. Some even claim that spiritual therapies should be free. At first glance, all this

often sounds like the warnings of a consumer protection body, which, does not necessarily criticize the product, but the way the product is being advertised, and how this may lead to customer dissatisfaction.

Of course, most of these debates happen online, often anonymously, on internet blogs and SNS platforms; and the word taboo is almost never explicitly used. Taboo, in this paper, is rather used as a descriptive for a meta-narrative linking "religion/spirituality" and "money" negatively. I employ "taboo" as a way to understand how a fierce critique of a practice associated with religion (=consumption) serves at the same time to claim for a "pure" religion *and* as an attack on contemporary social ethics, not necessarily confined to religious practice. In fact, in his critique of the concept of "taboo," Talal Asad often refers to the work of Franz Steiner (1950) who famously claimed: "we can thus call Polynesian taboo customs a Protestant discovery […] a Victorian invention" (Steiner 2004: 50). As Steiner explains, the emergence of the concept of "taboo" was the result of a rationalist approach to religion: socio-religious thoughts and behaviour that could be not absorbed into theories of rational ethics were put under the headings of "magic" and "taboo": the odd 'do's' and the odder 'don't's' that were favoured by those calling themselves "scientists" (Steiner 1950: 51). In a similar way, the critique by people like M stems from not knowing where (rational, legal and "normal") religion stops, and where commerce and money transactions ruled by capitalist ethics start. In this, they express secularity in the way Jolyon Baraka Thomas has recently described it in his analysis of the secularist Meiji constitutional regime, which tried to distinguish between religion/non-religion and then, sometimes quite arbitrarily, acted on such distinction to dictate social, legal and political life.

> Secularity is therefore not the mere absence of religion, nor is it the progressive diminution of religion in public life ("secularization"), nor it is simply a state of affairs characterized by the assumption that mundane concerns supersede transcendent ones. Secularity is, rather, the state of being uncertain about what counts as religion and what does not. Secularity is anxious (Thomas 2019: 26).

According to Thomas, it is precisely this situation where the question of how to define religion remains always unresolved that made the Meiji regime repressive towards marginal movements labelled "heresies", but

supportive, for example, of shrine rites described as nonreligious civic duties (Thomas 2019: 28).

To put it in a contemporary context, is paying a spiritual counsellor to read my aura (see Gaitanidis 2019), the same as paying a Shinto priest to bless me? Both transactions, even if not officially regulated, respond to some sort of market price. One, in fact, has only to look on the web to find numerous pages dedicated to the proper amount of money that should be given in either of those occasions. Both the spiritual counsellor and the Shinto priest make a living, at least partly, from these transactions. Yet, contrary to the Shinto priest who acts within the framework of the public benefit corporation (*kōeki hōjin* 公益法人) that a religious corporation (*shūkyō hōjin* 宗教法人) such as a shrine is (see Horii 2018: 201), the "reading" of halos of different colours that allegedly surround every living being (i.e. auras), would be classified, like the practice of divination, as "entertainment business" rather than "religion" (Horii 2018: 229). Religion is the superstition that secular scientism could not expel (Josephson 2012: 260) is perhaps here the most apt observation to make.

And, here lies also what I see as the most significant difference between the anti-cult movement and the recent *datsu-supi* movement: while the first has, since its beginnings in 1970s North America (see Shupe and Darnell 2006), been concerned with attacking New Religious Movements, New Age and holistic spiritualities and therapies, self-development seminars and the like, because they do not offer "proper" religious alternatives, the second, more recent movement, is rather attacking these same organisations and services for what I can simply summarize as "consumer fraud."[2] Indeed, for the most fervent "ditchers of spirituality," anything related with the *supirichuaru* should be consumed with care, because there is nothing/no one that can help an individual grow more spiritually than themselves. In this paper, I show that in doing this, they join critiques of neo-liberalism that have recently paid attention to "[t]he economization of everything and every sphere, including political life, [which] desensitizes us to the bold contradiction between an allegedly free-market and a state now wholly in service to and controlled by it" (Brown 2015: 40).

From Byung-Chul Han's "psycho-politics" (2017) to Shoshanna Zuboff's "surveillance capitalism" (2019), social critique has, indeed, recently stepped up its warnings against a capitalist regime that harnesses the

[2] The negative and popular use of the word "cult" to designate religious groups entered Japanese media discourse in 1991 and was later strongly associated with the NRM Aum Shinrikyō (Sakurai 2014: 102).

psyche as a productive force, and that prospers on behaviour modification based on the large-scale gathering of private information.

> Surveillance capitalism's products and services are not the objects of a value exchange. They do not establish constructive producer-consumer reciprocities. Instead, they are the "hooks" that lure users into their extractive operations in which our personal experiences are scraped and packaged as the means to others' ends. We are not surveillance capitalism's "customers." […] We are the sources of surveillance capitalism's crucial surplus: the objects of a technologically advanced and increasingly inescapable raw-material-extraction operation (Zuboff 2019: 10).

In this paper, I argue therefore that people like M seem to try to counter the degree to which self-searching could escape individual control and become not a commercial product (as some may imagine this critique to be leading to), but a source of patterned information that allows some spiritual therapists to strengthen their techniques of attracting more clients and continue living off people's anxieties.

Spirituality and *Supirichuariti*

In a general sense, M's critique concerns the market surrounding "21st century spiritualities": "[a]s new generations of believers are taught to question the tenets of religious authorities, more and more people are attempting to establish their own personal beliefs rather than affiliate themselves with an established dogma. This has led to the emergence and growth of subjectivized forms of religion in the non-institutional field" (Possamai 2019). Research on these 21st century spiritualities was originally strongly associated with studies of the New Age Movement (Heelas 1996; Hanegraaff 1996), which later came to be used as an alternative referent to talk about the active and fervent core of a larger section of the (mostly) American, Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian populace that called itself "spiritual, but not religious" (Fueller 2001).

It is clear today, however, that definitions of the New Age, contemporary spiritualities, holistic spiritualities and similar concepts often suffer from trying to essentialize very complex phenomena that are by no means distinct from "mainstream" religious groups or from the otherwise "secular" society (see, for example, Bender 2010). Yet, a fundamental characteristic of these subjectivized forms of religion seems to be a

generalized focus on "techniques" that can be learned out of books or by attending workshops, and which are supposed to lead the individual towards the discovery and cultivation of an inner self (Pike 2004: 23).
Indeed, when I started my fieldwork in the Japanese spiritual business in 2009, I used an online inventory listing approximately 1,000 practitioners and offering more than 150 "spiritual therapies" (Gaitanidis 2011): past-life therapy, rose healing, DNA activation, spiritual counselling, and the like. The word therapy here is perhaps misleading, since these "techniques" frequently claim to go beyond a simple recovery from trauma (more often psychological than physical); they are rather presented as hints, tools towards self-awareness and a better, worry-free life. They foster therefore "emotional management" and seem, at least in the short term, to empower the self (Riis and Woodhead 2010: 163).
In Japan, *supirichuariti* is often discussed as a religiosity that is an alternative to what organized religion and especially the so-called "cults" have to offer. The two, in fact, cults and the spiritual, have been visually pitted one against the other, like these two magazines in Figure 1, both published in February 2013.

Figure1. Covers of two magazines published in February 2013.

The magazine on the left explicitly titled "Darkside report on Religion" deals with allegedly "dangerous groups and how people get drawn into them." While the magazine on the right, with a more "pop"-styled cover, shows a shrine gate and tells us how we can feel better by visiting "power spots." Simply put, journalists present "religion" as bad, but they present

power spots and the like, summarized under the term "spirituality," as good. This sort of taboo-ization of "religion" has been a convenient way to explain the rise of spirituality in Japan in the 21st century. Scholars, such as Horie (2009), have often advanced the Aum affair and subsequent rise of the anti-cult rhetoric (see Watanabe 1997) as the reason for which the word *supirichuariti*[3] came to be used as an alternative to express religious activity outside religious organizations.

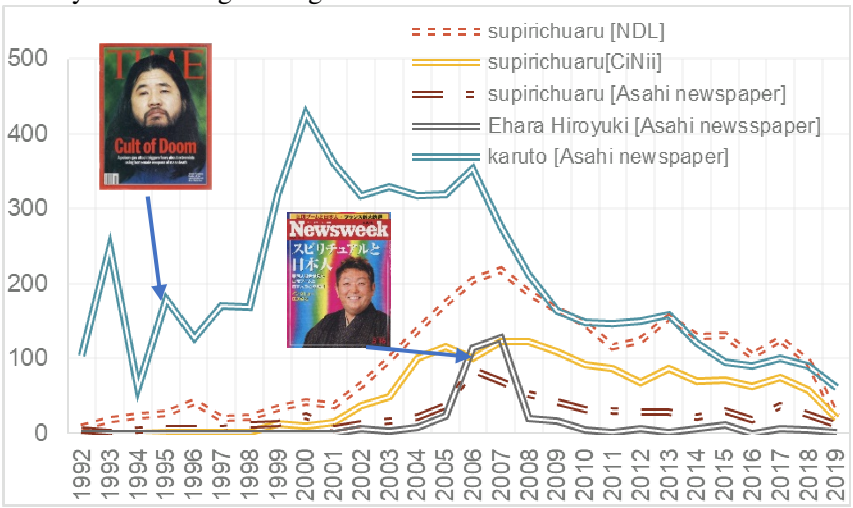


Figure 2. Number of hits of "supirichuaru", "*karuto*" and "Ehara Hiroyuki" in several databases.

Indeed, in the first decade of the 21st century, the term *supirichuaru* or *supirichuariti* caused something of a media (and by extension scholarly) boom, as can be seen in Figure 2, which summarizes the number of hits for these terms on the databases of the Asahi newspaper, the National Library Catalogue (NDL) and the bibliographic database of academic libraries (CiNii). The term has undoubtedly been associated with Ehara Hiroyuki (pictured on the cover of Newsweek), a self-proclaimed spiritual counsellor, whose televised presence reached a peak of audience rates around 2006-2007. The associated market of alternative therapy sessions, products and the like was estimated to be approximately 1 trillion yen, which is the size of the pet market or half the size of the cosmetics market in Japan (Arimoto 2011: 52).

[3]The word first entered the Japanese publishing market through the Japanese translations of works belonging to the Human Potential Movement and its psychological theoretical wing of "Transpersonal Psychology" (Horie 2003: 15-17).

According to Itō, "the spirituality that was experienced inside religious systems, has "spilled out" of those frames and is now practiced, narrated and sought after by individuals in various settings" (Itō 2003: iii). Shimazono Susumu, the foremost scholar of spirituality in Japan, argued that

> "healing, self-transformation, reincarnation, near-death experience, qiqong, yoga, meditation, shamanism, animism, consciousness development, mystical experiences, holistic medicine, new science etc. (…) People reading such books gain some kind of consolation by being on a path of spiritual search, and are conscious of being members of a contemporary cultural space called *seishinsekai* 精神世界 [the spiritual world] (Shimazono 2013: 20).

Mirroring Euro-American scholarly debates on the so-called spiritual revolution (Heelas and Woodhead 2005), some researchers in Japan seemed therefore to have "discovered" that lived religion (Hall 1997; McGuire 2008) has always been more varied, complex and eclectic than the formal religion that they had been used to study until then. *Supirichuariti* was conceived as a new phenomenon, a new site where religious innovation could be observed and studied, and where, spirituality became conceived as social capital (see, for example, Itō, Kashio, Yumiyama 2004) or the characteristic expression of new social movements surrounding notions of a "weak self" (see Koike 2007). This, however, does not mean that the anti-cult rhetoric only focused on organized religion, as scholarly interpretations of what *supirichuariti* refers to may seem to suggest. The public image of bad religion versus good spirituality describes only one part of the discourse surrounding the spiritual in Japan today. In other words, "bad spirituality" exists too.

"Bad" Spirituality and The Anti-Cult Rhetoric

Spiritual narratives surrounding the labelling of certain locations as "power spots," for example, have been attacked both by official religious organizations, such as the Association for Shinto Shrines, who are driven by orthodoxy and orthopraxy of religious belief and practices (see Carter 2018: 163), and by local stakeholders who fear the loss or misinterpretations of local tradition and community life (see Rots 2019: 173). On the other hand, some intellectuals and scholars have also tended to attack the behaviour of the clients of the spiritual business, often linking

it to a discourse about the decline of rationalism, of the quality of education and/or social welfare, and also the rise of materialism and the consumer culture.

Psychologist and popular author Kayama Rika, for example, has accused clients of spiritual therapy salons to suffer from that same emptiness (*munashisa-byō* むなしさ病) that led well-educated youth to join Aum (Kayama 2006: 134). Sociologist of religion Sakurai Yoshihide concludes his analysis of the "spiritual business" by blaming the popularity of holistic spiritualities on the lack of socio-economic stability and vision for a future, which are coupled with the loosening of human relationships. He argues that this situation drives young individuals to seek solutions to their problems and to their crisis of identity in new forms of community, such as healing networks and "cults" whose value they judge based on their feelings, rather on rational knowledge (Sakurai 2009: 241-242). In a more recent study of colour therapy in Japan, Yukiko Katō groups all kinds of self-development, spirituality and New Age activities under a single term: "kitsch culture of a hyper-consumer society" (Katō 2016: 20).

This criticism mirrors earlier attacks by scholars writing in English. Carrette and King, for example, argue that "'spirituality' has […] become the brand name for the act of selling off the assets of 'old time' religion. Religious artefacts and language have 'cachet value' for a society of isolated individuals, hungry for packaged meaning" (Carrette and King, 2005: 125). Steve Bruce claims that the New Age fits well with a society which is short on authority and long on consumer rights, and in which individualistic epistemology, consumerist ethos and therapeutic focus resonate with the rest of our modern capitalist culture (2000: 231, 234). Both English and Japanese counter-spiritual rhetoric seem to espouse a (pseudo-)nostalgic perspective according to which "the break with traditional forms of religion, culture and community amounts to a loss of social and moral substance" (Gauthier, Martikainen and Woodhead 2013: 5). "Money corrupts religion" is the fundamental element of this secularist meta-narrative that I discuss in this paper. But the majority of the authors, including lawyers and activists who are at the forefront of the so-called "cult issue" (*karuto mondai* カルト問), are not really (neo-)Marxists blaming capitalism for the social alienation of consumers of the spiritual. Their arguments stop earlier, and their emphasis is rather on the ethics of religion in public life.

Let us look, for example, at how the "cult issue" is described in a 2-page section of an introductory textbook targeting student of religious studies (Sakurai 2015: 168-169)[4]. The author starts by noting that the boundary between the use of the concept of "cult" to designate illegal behaviour and its employment to point the finger at behaviour that goes against the status quo and common sense is not clear, so the concept expresses sometimes no more than an act of labelling by a powerful majority onto minority religions, or a tool to criticize society in general. But, his relativization of the "problem" ("the Japanese public has become more sensitive to the publicness of acts of religious organisations that it used to overlook" [ibid. 169]) does not deny its existence: he rather emphasizes the fact that there are indeed religious groups who, through various manipulative methods, defraud, abuse and sometimes commit violence against their members. Although, therefore, there may be social and consumerist circumstances that lead individuals to join such groups or use spiritual therapies, ultimately the blame is put on the religious practitioners/organisations, not on society. It is *they* who drag people into re-structuring their self-narratives so as to only accept as solutions to their problems what they are suggested to do by religious practitioners (Sakurai 2008: 156) and it is *they* who commit the unethical act of making people lose trust in their communities (Sakurai 2014: 93).

Sakurai's explanation seems to point to a development in the "cult" narrative that is similar to what occurred in the United States much earlier (see Shupe and Darnell 2006: 34-39), namely the secularization of the anti-cult rhetoric. Indeed, it can be said, that since the early 20th century, the distinction between orthodoxy and heresy was turned into a distinction between "bad religion" and "good religion" based on the normative assumption pointed out by Horii (2018: 204-205) that religious corporations ought to contribute to "public benefit." This has, in return, allowed public authorities and the general populace to counter arguments of infringement of religious freedom advanced by the "cults" themselves, by simply labelling them as "bad" religion. Like in the United States, therefore, and partly as a result of this secularization, the use of the word "cult" in Japan expanded to cover other activities, including spiritual therapy salons and multi-level marketing businesses offering self-development seminars and workshops. These are attacked because they are, *a priori*, associated with "bad" religion, not because they are "religious" per se. We are not very far, therefore, from what Thomas describes in the

[4] The author, Sakurai Yoshihide, has also written the same section for a sociology of religion textbook in the same series (Sakurai 2007: 120-121).

case of the Meiji state's anxious separation of "religion" and "non-religion".

The Rhetoric of Spiritual Apostates

Previous research on the anti-cult movement, and, in general, on those who leave religious groups has singled out the particularities of those who leave groups that are active in an already socially inhospitable context, such as NRMs (Wright 2014: 708). As I have shown in this paper, 21st century spiritualities remain situated in a socially inhospitable context too, although perhaps with much less distinctive boundaries. In the case of those who leave "the spiritual," narratives of change, like that of M described above, are expressed in the form of role exiting/passage and embrace "a posture of confrontation through public claims making activities" (Wright 2014: 710), which qualifies them in scholarly terms as *apostates*. However, in this paper, I use the term *apostasy* not in its normative sense of accusation by religious authorities against those who have strayed. I call M a "spiritual apostate" because of his rhetorical positioning as someone who used to be part of what he claims to be an authoritative "community" of consumers but has now turned against it. I argue, in fact, that this kind of tactic, an act of "exclusive similarity" (see Josephson 2012: 29-38), allows spiritual apostates to claim for a distinction between "real" spirituality (one could call it the "orthodox spiritual") and "consumer fraud"-spirituality (the "heretical spiritual"). I am aware, of course, of the methodological issues associated with the analysis of such narratives, which are not only limited to text found on SNS and internet blogs, but are also in majority retrospective, temporally variable and, most of all, very difficult to assess, especially considering the lack of specific targets and anonymity of the content. Nevertheless, I argue that there are certain common characteristics that can unite these disparate testimonies centred around the keyword *datsu-supi* (lit. "ditching the spiritual").

This movement of highly expressive spiritual apostates appeared sometime in late 2011-early 2012, when a series of blogs and other SNS conversations started criticizing someone offering meditation sessions for a price that was "too high".

One conversation led to another, and criticism arose towards the "commodification" of the spiritual and the people who are "in it for the money". An analysis of 504 blog entries with the tag *datsu-supi* published on the ameba blog platform (one of the most popular blogging platforms in Japan), revealed that the second most used word (after the word

"spiritual") is "commerce/business" (*shōbai* 商売)[5]. In the interviews of owners of spiritual therapy salons offering all sorts of sessions that I have conducted in the last decade (see Gaitanidis 2011), money has always been expressed as a sort of no-brainer. Prices depend on how much the regular price of similar sessions is, how much the expenses of the salon's owner are, and of course how famous they are in the business. There did not seem to be any surprise as to why people would spend money for a service that is meant to make them feel better, although the majority of these practitioners say that they warn clients against over-priced sessions by people who cash on their visibility in mind-body-spirit fairs and on the internet. This observation confirms earlier studies, in which, for example, American channelers of the early 1990s show similarly pragmatic attitudes towards money (Brown 1997: 144-152).

Figure 3. The very first tweets with the hashtag *datsu-supi*

So, what are the spiritual apostates complaining about? At first glance: profit-driven practices. Nori, a blogger, claims for example that "the *datsu-*

[5] On 7 July 2019, I used the software EKWords (a software developed by and freely accessible on the website of DJ SOFT) to copy in the text of blog entries listed on the *ameba* server with the hashtag *datsu-supi* and extract the list of words by frequency of appearance.

supi movement is basically a ditching-people-who-make-money-out-of-the-spiritual movement" (Nori 2018). "Same with the self-development seminars that have profited from Japan's economic downturn, the spiritual took the wrong direction when it started promising money to those who did not have it" argues another blogger (Tomotoheaven 2019), while a third blogger is even more critical: "I want to raise the alarm against those who use the spiritual to make business" (Raku-hapi 2019).

As is the case of online trends in general, most of the 504 blog posts come out of only a dozen blogs by spiritual apostates whose criticism can be divided into three types of arguments: 1) a critique of the turning of "spirituality" into a fashionable and income-earning market (Raku-hapi 2019); 2) a critique against the conceptualization of the spiritual as "mysterious (*fushigi-na* 不思議な)", "religious (*shūkyō-teki* 宗教的)", rather than "ordinary(*nichijō-teki* 日常的)" (Takizawa 2017); and 3) a critique of those who do not decide on their lives by themselves but choose to rely on "gurus (*kyōso* 教祖)" and "spiritual leaders (*shidōsha* 指導者)" (Takehisa 2018). In sum, arguments found on *datsu-supi* blogs by former spirituality fans, do not call for the disappearance of this type of activities, but for a more "normal" interaction with them; more "ordinary," more "responsible," "less dependent."

As an illustration of spiritual apostasy narratives, I will describe in the rest of this section the arguments of one of the most expressive (and sometimes extreme) *datsu-supi* blogs, which ran from November 2015 to April 2019 and has now moved to a new website, in which the previous four years-worth of blog entries have been turned into a sort of manual of why and how to get out of the spiritual. The blogger, whom I will call K, defines the spiritual as "a behaviour principle (*kōdō genri* 行動原理) that leads to the fulfilment of one's wishes and to happiness […] it is our life and energy, and like everyone else, to polish our spiritual [selves] based on our own feelings without being disturbed by others, is, I think, a wonderful thing." The spiritual is here conceived as something essentially personal and private and that is why "it should not be turned into a business method (a networking business) by people to profit from those who are weak and end up being spiritual believers (*shinja* 信者)." The spiritual therefore is not something people ought to believe in; it is not an object of faith, for K, since it corresponds to a part of every human being: "the spiritual cannot become business, because the spiritual is something entirely individual." And to convince his readers, K gives us an example: "imagine that we translate the spiritual as "soul" (*tamashii* 魂). In that case, it would mean that it is possible for the soul to become object of a transaction (*tamashii*

ga shōbai ni naru 魂が商売になる). Do you understand what this means? The soul cannot be sold. It is part of its owner. My soul is only mine. Your soul is only yours. It should not be handled by someone else."

For K, the spiritual business has lived on the social anxieties experienced by the Japanese in the post-war period. Using a graph summarizing key events of the second half of the 20th century, especially related to the United States and Japan, such as the Vietnam War or the burst of the economic bubble in Japan, K argues that social changes shake up human values, and, as a result, people seeking a way out of these anxieties are attracted to various ideologies (*shisō* 思想). Echoing previously mentioned critiques of the spiritual, K argues, in fact, that "the spiritual boom is a symbol of the Heisei era," but he also blames the media which "should have been more cautious" with leaving vague messages about the possible existence of an "invisible realm." In the end, however, it is all a problem of the fact that such social changes and larger historical trends have prevented the fostering of self-esteem in the Japanese people: "when your self-esteem is low, you cannot bear responsibility for your ideas, decisions and lifestyle. So, you end up clinging to others."

K follows up on this by explaining how this lack of self-esteem draws people who are not sure yet (*kakuritsu sarete inai* 確立されていない) of their identity and who experience harsh lives (precisely because of their lack of self-esteem) to a message that is common among people making a business out of the spiritual: "be the way you are (*ari no mama no jibun de* ありのままの自分で)." "But why would you pay money for such an obvious thing?" exclaims K. "It is only your low self-esteem that is praised through such messages […] and, instead of touching your feet to the ground and get on with your life, you are sucked in the spiritual shopping of 'self-searching' […] and like a wandering ghost, lose yourself. Then soon, you mistake your acts for doing something spiritually noble, and start craving for easy money. […] you become addicted to spiritual goods […] and travel around the country to acquire 'licenses' and, eventually, put up your own advertising sign: 'how about healing yourself?'."

K's message is clear: this is a personal problem of the clients of spiritual therapies, because as he writes in red letters in the prologue of his online manual: "there should not exist a business living off the *kokoro*." In this way, K's critique seems to support at least one argument that refutes the association of consumerism with superficial religion. Indeed, as Véronique Altglas aptly demonstrated in her study of participants of "spiritual" courses and workshops in Europe (Altglas 2014), the imperative of self-improvement (that K does not deny but criticizes only when people pay

others to do it for them), "pre-exists the act of consumption itself and is not defined by 'consumers' from their own self-authority, outside a framework of social norms about the self" (Altglas 2014: 268). Spiritual therapies are consumed because they bear meaning and have a certain value, even if K argues that the same can be basically achieved through one's own efforts.
However, the most significant aspect of K's argument is the way that the "orthodox spiritual" is conceived as a part of the individual that cannot be subjected to money transactions. The taboo here is not the money (although K is an exception in claiming that ideally all spiritual seminars and sessions should be free). The taboo is here the fact that one entrusts their "spiritual" to someone else, who then makes a profit out of the dispositions that bring this client to their doorstep. Ultimately, it is that disposition (=low self-esteem) that K criticizes, not the self-searching or the fact that one perhaps could pay *temporarily* for spiritual products.

Capitalism, Religion and Ethics

Since Mary Douglas' seminal study, we know that the use of the concept of taboo signifies the otherwise prohibited crossing of certain classificatory boundaries, which in this case of the anxious secularity in contemporary Japan originally seemed to concern the boundaries between bad spirituality and good religion, or more precisely: a boundary between what is good or bad about money-spending for religious purposes. In other words, the original problematic surrounding "money corrupts religion," is based on an implicit, religionist[6] ideal in which "good religiosity" is associated with money as donation or as a symbol of gratitude towards the time the other has spent listening and advising/treating the client; whereas in cases of "bad spirituality", money becomes economic possession, personal fortune and assets that the client is hoaxed into giving away in exchange of false promises of cure and salvation.
Scholars who have tried to explicate what is "modern" about contemporary economics of religious organizations have tended to reify a pejorative image of the "sacred" being "commercialized." Shimazono Susumu, for example, has argued that "oblation," is (and, implicitly, ought to be) an essentially communal activity, which "continues to be further trampled by the stampede of mass media and efficiency-maximizing organizations"

[6] Here I use the term "religionist" in the same way as Wouter J. Hanegraaff (2013: 11-12) uses it, namely to refer to a stance regarding religion that seems to care only about an experiential dimension that is considered as transcending history and as always remaining inaccessible to scholarly research.

(Shimazono 1998: 187). Shimazono, in fact, calls Japan "a 'super-power' when it comes to the ways of commercializing the sacred" (ibid.)

Now, since it becomes difficult to argue for "good donation" vs "bad donation" on religious grounds in a society where secularist ideals of religious freedom reign, the rhetoric has shifted into judging the above issue on capitalist ethical grounds. It is not whether the money is given to a good religion or to a bad religion. It is about whether that money is sought after by religions ethically or not, in capitalist terms. Yet, in these debates, the link between capitalist society and religion remains strongly influenced by early sociological theory which saw the rise of capitalism at the expense of religion. Indeed, the shadows of both Durkheim, who argued that religion had lost most of its power in the modern capitalist society ruled by unlimited desires (Durkheim 1955: 255), and Weber, who saw the gradual loss of the religious meaning that he had originally associated with the capitalist ethic (Weber 2002: 124), are still strongly felt.

However, criticizing today the commodification of spirituality by mindless youth consumers, as both popular and scholarly discourse sometimes claim, seems to miss the point because they reduce religion to economic activity. While, undoubtedly, the consumer capitalist society is inseparable of contemporary religiosity (Redden 2005), religion is also not *just* economic activity. Religion and consumption inform one another, feed one another, rationalize one another. This means that consumption is in these spiritual therapy settings a common experience, blending materialistic and spiritual elements, and often resembling other, albeit non-spiritual/religious, types of pro(duction-con)sumption. "Modern society is in toto a consumer culture, and not just in its specifically consuming activities (136) […] the act of spiritual prosumption is only fully consummated by the self's consumptive experience of itself as that which both produces and is produced through the transformative dynamics of the alternative religious repertoire" (Dawson 2013: 141).

Assuming that fraudulence in religious recruiting or donations is related to the capitalist commodification of religion is therefore as wrong as presuming that capital exchanges between members and religious leaders are solely regulated by "rational" capitalist behaviour. In fact, all aspects of our consumerist lives, including religion, are embedded in a liberal capitalist secularism that makes it difficult to argue for "pure" altruistic motives, even if scholars and the media have increasingly tended to talk about religious organisations' "social contributions" (Inaba and Sakurai 2012). The secularist distinction between altruistic/non-profit work and for-profit work exacerbates the false assumption that religious corporations

are tax-exempt because they are supposed to provide public benefit (Horii 2018: 205), and creates the illusion that "religious fraud" is essentially different from other types of fraud. In other words, critics of unequal and *unproductive* capitalist exchanges occurring in religious settings act on an impossible wish that "religion/spirituality" is separated from "rational" mistakes/crimes perpetrated by either the providers of religious services (=anti-cult movement's argument) or their client-members (=ditching spirituality-argument).

To summarize my argument: anti-cultists use a critique of capitalism to emphasize the essential purity of "good religion" and point the finger at the essentially rationally-structured (criminal and unethical) manipulation of innocent members by religious organisations. For spiritual apostates, the approach is, however, slightly different: spiritual apostates do not criticize the commodification of the spiritual to draw attention to some "traditional" (albeit, foregone) religiosity[7]; they are or have been after all part of the 21st century spiritualities which selectively reject established religions. Spiritual apostates rather point the finger at "irresponsible" consumerism and at those who employ people's naïve spiritual seekership to enrich their bank accounts. Spiritual apostates' main target of criticism are the consumers of the spiritual, who, in this case, are not blamed for being duped by "bad religion;" on the contrary, they are blamed for not understanding what this new spirituality is *really* about: which is not paying someone else to do it. It is doing it yourself.

Horie Norichika has recently argued that there has been a return to using the Chinese characters of *rei* (霊) to talk about spirituality (*reisei* 霊性) in Japan, especially after 2011, and that the *datsu-supi* trend is no more than the moving away from a trendy word to the next, but that it still expresses the counter-materialistic ethics of post-industrialized (post-1970s) societies (Horie 2018: 136). I agree that we are maybe witnessing only the disappearance of a trendy word, but I disagree with the interpretation that this is a counter-materialist expression of a highly privatized type of religiosity that has dominated the world since the second half of the 20th century. As illustrated in this paper, the implicit taboos of the spiritual apostates' discourse reveal an argumentation about what is the proper way

[7] Of course, there are alternative and holistic spirituality apostates who have returned (sometimes very publicly) to established religion. A recent case is that of Doreen Virtue, famous author of the New Age (with over 50 books published in the last 30 years) and producer of various sets of oracle cards often used by fortune tellers, spiritual counselors and other professional of the spiritual business. Nevertheless, in 2017, Doreen Virtue decided to stop everything and reject her previous ideas to convert, as she says, to Christianity. Her experience is described in the self-published text, *The Joy of Jesus* (2018).

to spend money to maximize benefits, and to achieve what M called "realistic" everyday life goals. They are not counter-materialist. They seek better ethics in the business of the spiritual, and it is precisely in this way that they best express the ethics of contemporary society.

In fact, one could claim that K's rhetoric allows us to get a glimpse of what "orthodox spirituality" is alleged to be in practice: good spirituality seems to be related to good consuming practices, namely ethical, conscious, reasonable consumption that asks from the client to assess the claims of the services she buys. More importantly, spiritual apostates do not, like the anti-cult movement, offer any religious alternative: they only offer messages of restraint. If all the answers are in you, as K ironically points out, then why would you pay someone else to find them? Ultimately, you are the producer of the best product for you, and that should be free.

The right of choice that is assumed in every act of consumption is automatically also a moral act because individuals experience it as an exercise of their responsibility (Wuthnow 1989: 88). In that sense, "[n]eoliberalism represents a highly efficient, indeed an intelligent, system for exploiting freedom. Everything that belongs to practices and expressive forms of liberty – emotion, play and communication – comes to be exploited (Han 2017: 3). Under these circumstances, the ethics regarding what is a good or bad consumer behaviour take an insidious turn, and an *economy of moral judgement* arises.

> When people are presumptively rational, behavioural failure comes primarily from the lack of sufficient information, from noise, poor signalling or limited information-processing abilities. But when information is plentiful, and the focus is on behaviour, all that is left are concrete, practical actions, often recast as good or bad 'choices' by the agentic perspective dominant in common sense and economic discourse. The vast amounts of concrete data about actual 'decisions' people make offer many possibilities of judgement, especially when the end product is an individual score or rating. Outcomes are thus likely to be experienced as morally deserved positions, based on one's prior good actions and good taste. […] [T]he principle by which people become economically qualified or disqualified appears to be located purely within them. Everyone seems to get what they deserve (Fourcade and Healy 2017: 24-25).

Spiritual apostates, in this sense, exhibit more comfort with the explicit linkages between religious/spiritual striving and capitalist consumption, than the anti-cult critics. They do not try to argue outside the capitalist consumerism with which all our daily actions remain associated. If anti-cult rhetoric is framed as a critique, albeit obsolete, of the commodification of religion, the spiritual apostates, in their critique of "the commodification of spirituality," seem to rather be positioned against this economy of moral judgement, as critics of how neoliberal capitalism is not empowering (anymore) its consumers as it should have. Although all spiritual apostates may not espouse such a message and may often stop at simply attacking exorbitant prices, their critique seems to be neither counter-materialist nor counter-religious; it is more about what they consider the "proper" way that the two, capitalism and religion, are and should be entangled.

References

Altglas, Véronique. 2014. *From Yoga to Kabbalah: Religious Exoticism and the Logics of Bricolage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Asad, Talal. 2008. "Reflections on Blasphemy and Secular Criticism." (In:) H. de Vries (ed.) *Religion: Beyond a Concept*. New York: Fordham University Press. 580-609.

Bender, Courtney. 2010. *The New Metaphysicals: Spirituality and the American Religious Imagination*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Brown, Michael F. 1997. *The Channeling Zone: American Spirituality in an Anxious Age*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Brown, Wendy. 2015. *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*. New York: Zone Books.

Bruce, Steve. 2000. "The New Age and Secularisation." (In:) S. Sutcliffe and M. Bowman (eds.) *Beyond New Age: Exploring Alternative Spirituality*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 220-36.

Carrette, Jeremy, and Richard King. 2005. *Selling Spirituality: The Silent Takeover of Religion*. London: Routledge.

Carter, Caleb. 2018. "Power Spots and the Charged Landscape of Shinto." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 45(1). 145-173.

Dawson, Andrew 2013. "Entagled Modernity and Commodified Religion: Alternative Spirituality and the 'New Middle Class'." (In:) F. Gauthier and

T. Martikainen (eds.) *Religion in Consumer Society: Brands, Consumers and Markets*. London: Routledge. 127-142.

Durkheim, Emile. 1951 [1897]. *Suicide: A Study in Sociology* (J. A. Spaulding, & G. Simpson, Trans.). London: Routledge.

Fourcade, Marion and Kieran Healy. 2017. Seeing Like a Market. *Socio-Economic Review*. 15(1). 9–29.

Gaitanidis, Ioannis. 2011. "At the Forefront of a 'Spiritual Business': Independent Professional Spiritual Therapists of Japan." *Japan Forum* 23(2). 185-206.

Gaitanidis, Ioannis. 2019. "More than just a photo? Aura photography in digital Japan." *Asian Ethnology* 78(1). 101-125.

Gauthier, François, Tuomas Martikainen and Linda Woodhead. 2013. "Introduction: Religion in Market Society." (In:) F. Gauthier and T. Martikainen (eds.) *Religion in the Neoliberal Age: Political Economy and Modes of Governance*. New York: Ashgate. 1-20.

Hall, David. Ed. 1997. *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Han, Buyng-Chul. 2017. *Psychopolitics: Neoliberalism and New Technologies of Power* (transl. Erik Butler). London: Verso.

Hanegraaff, Wouter J. 1998. *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought*. New York: SUNY Press.

Hanegraaff, Wouter J. 2013. *Western Esotericism: A Guide for the Perplexed*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Heelas, Paul. 1996. *The New Age Movement: The Celebration of the Self and the Sacralisation of Modernity*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Heelas, Paul and Linda Woodhead. 2005. *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality*. Oxford, Blackwell.

Horie Norichika. 2003. "Reisei kara supirichuariti e [from reisei to spirituality]." *Newsletter of the International Institute for the Study of Religions* 38, 14–22 (堀江宗正「霊性からスピリチュアリティへ」『国際宗教研究所ニュースレター』).

Horie, Norichika. 2009. "Spirituality and the spiritual in Japan: Translation and transformation." *Journal of Alternative Spiritualities and New Age Studies* 5. 1-15.

Horie Norichika. 2018. "Supirichuaru būmu wa ikkasei no mono datta no ka? [was the spiritual boom a transient phenomeon?]" (In:) N. Horie (ed.) *Ima shūkyō ni mukiau 1: Gendai nihon shūkyō jijō (kokunai-hen I)* [facing religion now 1: religion in contemporary Japan (domestic situation vol. 1)]. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten. 127-146 (堀江宗正 「【争点３】スピリチュアル・ブームは一過性のものだったのか？」『いま宗教に向きあう１：現代日本宗教事情〈国内編Ｉ〉』堀江宗正 編 岩波書店).

Horii, Mitsutoshi. 2018. *The Category of 'Religion' in Contemporary Japan: Shūkyō & Temple Buddhism*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

Josephson, Jason. A. 2012. *The Invention of Religion in Japan*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Inaba Keishin, Sakurai Yoshihide (eds.) 2012. *Shakai kōken suru shūkyō* [religion's contribution to the society]. Kyoto: Sekaishisōsha (稲場圭信 櫻井義秀 編『社会貢献する宗教』世界思想社).

Itō Masayuki. 2003. *Gendai shakai to supirichuariti: Gendaijin no shūkyō ishiki no shakaigakuteki kenkyū* [spirituality in contemporary society: sociology of contemporary religious awareness]. Hiroshima: Keisuisha (伊藤雅之『現代社会とスピリチュアリティ: 現代人の宗教意識の社会学的研究』 溪水社).

Itō Masayuki, Kashio Naoki, Yumiyama Tatsuya (eds.) 2004. Supirichuariti no shakaigaku: *Gendai sekai no shūkyō no tankyū* [the sociology of spirituality: the search for religiosity in the modern world]. Kyoto: Sekaishisōsha (伊藤 雅之　樫尾 直樹　弓山 達也『スピリチュアリティの社会学―現代世界の宗教性の探求』世界思想社).

Katō Yukiko. 2015. *Karā serapii to kōdō shōhi shakai no shinkō: Nyū eiji, supirichuaru, jiko keihatsu to wa nani ka*? [color therapy and faith in hyper-consumer society: what are the New Age, spiritual, and self-development about?]. Tokyo: Sanga (加藤有希子『カラーセラピーと高度消費社会の信仰―ニューエイジ、スピリチュアル、自己啓発とは何か?』サンガ).

Koike Yasushi. 2007. *Serapii bunka no shakaigaku* [a sociology of therapeutic culture]. Tokyo: Keisō Shobō. 小池靖『セラピー文化の社会学』勁草書房).

McGuire, Meredith B. 2008. *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nori. 2018. “Kakō ni atta ‘datsu-supi sōdō’ de no hihan to konpon gen’in ni tsuite ima sara boku ga omou koto. [what I now think about the basic reasons behind the ‘ditching supi uproar’ of a few years ago.]” *Jinsei to wa moraimono*. [life is a gift] (「過去にあった【脱スピ騒動】での批判と根本原因について今さら僕が思うこと」『人生とはもらいもの』). https://nori-blog.com/chat/de-spirituality/ Accessed 2019.08.04.

Pike, Sarah M. 2004. *New Age and Neopagan Religions in America*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Possamai, Adam. 2019. “New Spiritualities in Western Society.” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*.
DOI: 10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.013.217. Accessed 2019.07.27.

Raku-hapi. 2019. “Datsu supirichuaru: Ese supirichuaru ni damasarenai ! [ditching the spiritual: essays on avoiding being tricked by the spiritual].” (『脱スピリチュアル：エセ　スピリチュアルに騙されない！』) https://ameblo.jp/raku-hapi/ Accessed 2019.08.04.

Redden, Guy. 2005. “The New Age: Towards a Market Model.” *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 20(2). 231-46.

Riis, Ole and Linda Woodhead. 2012. *A Sociology of Religious Emotion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rots, Aike P. 2019. “This Is Not a Powerspot. Heritage Tourism, Sacred Space, and Conflicts of Authority at Sēfa Utaki.” *Asian Ethnology* 78(1). 155-180.

Sakurai Yoshihide. 2007. “Karuto-mondai” [the cult issue] In Y. Sakurai and H. Miki, eds. *Yoku wakaru shūkyō shakaigaku* [understanding the sociology of religion]. Tokyo: Minerva Shobō.120-121 (櫻井義秀「カルト問題」櫻井義秀 三木英 編『よくわかる宗教社会学』ミネルヴァ書房).

Sakurai Yoshihide. 2008. “Wakamono to karuto: Kakikaerareru kioku no yukue” [cults and the youth: rewritten memories]. *Gendai no esupuri* [the mood of today] 490. 150-159 (櫻井義秀「若者とカルト：書きかえられる記憶のゆくえ」『現代のエスプリ』).

Sakurai Yoshihide. 2009. *Rei to kane: Supirichuaru bijinesu no kōzō* [money and spirits: the structure of the spiritual business]. Tokyo: Shinchōsha (櫻井義秀『霊と金ースピリチュアル・ビジネスの構造』新潮社).

Sakurai Yoshihide. 2014. *Karuto mondai to kōkyōsei* [the cult issue and publicness]. Sapporo: University of Hokkaido Press (櫻井義秀『カルト問題と公共性』北海道大学出版).

Sakurai Yoshihide. 2015. "Karuto-mondai" [the cult issue]. In Y. Sakurai and K. Hirahuji, eds. *Yoku wakaru shūkyōgaku* [understanding religious studies]. Tokyo: Minerva Shobō. pp.168-169 (櫻井義秀「カルト問題」櫻井義秀,平藤喜久子 編『よくわかる宗教学』ミネルヴァ書房).

Shimazono, Susumu. 1998. "The Commercializatin of the Sacred: The Structural Evolution of Religious Communities in Japan." *Social Science Japan Journal* 1(2). 181-198.

Shimazono Susumu. 2013. *Gendai shūkyō to supirichuariti* [contemporary religion and spirituality]. Tokyo: Kōbundō (島薗進 『現代宗教とスピリチュアリティ』 弘文堂).

Shupe, Anson and Susan E. Darnell. 2006. *Agents of Discord: Deprogramming, Pseudo-Science, and the American Anticult Movement*. London: Transaction Publishers.

Steiner Franz. 2004 [1956]. *Taboo*. London: Routledge.

Takehisa Yuriko. 2018. "'Datsu supi' dōshitemo kyōso ga hoshii kata e no teian [ditching spi: suggestions for those who want a guru no matter what]." *Parupunte*.「【脱スピ】どうしても教祖が欲しい方への提案」『パルプンテ』) https://takehisayuriko.tokyo/2018/02/06/1093/ Accessed 2019.08.04.

Takizawa Taihei. 2017. "Datsu supirichuaru [ditching the spiritual]." *Tenka Taihei*. [great peace throughout the realm] (「脱スピリチュアル」『天下泰平』) http://tenkataihei.xxxblog.jp/archives/51955906.html Accessed 2019.08.04.

Thomas, Jolyon B. 2019. *Faking Liberties: Religious Freedom in American-Occupied Japan*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Tomotomoheaven. 2019. "Datsu supirichuaru joshi! Hontō ni kaiun suru teppan no hōhō wa? [women ditching the spiritual! here is a cast-iron way

to really open your luck?]" *Dorinku katate ni chotto hitoiki*. [having a drink and catching a breath] (「脱スピリチュアル女子！本当に開運するテッパンの方法は」『ドリンク片手にちょっとひといき』). https://dricho.com/20181223/ Accessed 2019.08.04.

Watanabe, Manabu. 1997. "Reactions to the Aum Affair: the Rise of the 'Anti-Cult' Movement." *Bulletin of the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture* 21. 32-48.

Weber, Max. 2002 [1905]. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. London: Penguin.

Wright, Stuart A. 2014. "Disengagement and Apostasy in New Religious Movements." (In:) L. R. Rambo and C. E. Farhadian (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 706-735.

Wuthnow, Robert. 1989. *Meaning and Moral Order: Explorations in Cultural Analysis*. Berkeley, University of California Press.

Zuboff, Shoshana. 2019. *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. New York: Public Affairs.

AUTHOR'S PROFILE

Ioannis Gaitanidis
Assistant professor at the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Chiba University, Japan. His research focusses on contemporary crossings between therapy and religion. His most recent publications include "New Religious Movements, the Media, and 'Japanese Animism'" (in F. Rambelli, ed. *Spirits and Animism in Contemporary Japan: The Invisible Empire*, 2019) and "More than Just a Photo? Aura Photography in Digital Japan" (*Asian Ethnology* 78(1) 2019).

Maura Stephens-Chu
ORCID: 0000-0003-0122-4121

From Sacred to Secret: Tracing Changes in Views of Menstruation in Japan

DOI: 10.12775/sijp.2019.60-61.4

ABSTRACT

This paper examines understandings and experiences of menstruation in Japan, by tracing shifts in views of menstruation throughout Japanese history and analyzing ethnographic interviews conducted with college-aged Japanese women in 2018. Once considered a mystical phenomenon, menstruation came to be seen as a source of pollution, surrounded by various taboos and proscriptions. Then, around the turn of the twentieth century, views of menstruation shifted again; menstruation was no longer a cause of spiritual defilement. Instead, ideologies of moral and physical hygiene that dominated education and public health discourse in twentieth-century Japan positioned menstruation as an issue of hygiene that should be managed through proper bodily comportment and careful use of commercial menstrual products. While hypothetically 'free' of connotations of impurity and pollution, women still were not – and are not – free from stigma surrounding menstruation. Today, public discourse on menstruation is virtually nonexistent outside of menstrual product commercials, and menstruating women carry out vigilant routines of concealing their menstrual status, creating an illusion of absence. Young women's reported experiences of compulsory swim class in grade school, as well as recent news articles discussing the topic, are used in this paper to highlight both the social and health issues currently surrounding young menstruators in Japan

KEYWORDS: menstruation, Japanese history, taboo, anthropology, Japanese women

Introduction

For many women, everyday adult life is marked by the menstrual cycle – a monthly pattern of rising and falling hormone levels, ovulation, and the build-up and release of endometrial tissue and blood. Over the course of Japanese history, however, another cycle has emerged: cultural views and treatment of menstruation. Similar to how Frühstück posits that there have been repeated cycles of "liberation" and "repression" of sexual behaviors and discourses on sexuality throughout Japanese history (Frühstück 2003: 5), I argue that there have been cycles of "openness" and "concealment" of menstruation in Japan. Views and experiences of menstruation are quite complex and multifaceted, and they can tell us much about transformations

of concepts such as gender and sexuality. This paper will trace changes in views of menstruation in Japan from early historical periods to the modern day.

Before discussing these historical shifts, I will provide an overview of existing literature on menstruation in anthropology. Over the past few decades, anthropological research on menstruation has expanded greatly, with investigations into the diverse and subjective experiences of menstruating women, as well as into how cultural beliefs about menstruation impact different spheres of society, from institutional religion to family life. Next, I will cover early beliefs and traditions relating to menstruation, which were largely influenced by religious doctrines, mainly that of Shinto and Buddhism, and their ideas of divinity, purity, and pollution. Following that, I will discuss changes in the Meiji Period and the twentieth century, which saw menstruation reframed as an issue of hygiene that should be concealed. Additionally, it was at the turn of the twentieth century that commercial menstrual management products, as alternatives to homemade products, entered the market and appeared in magazine advertisements, an influential form of media in women's lives. These products evolved in effectiveness and comfort over the proceeding decades. Now, the menstrual product industry is huge, with several hundred million products being manufactured each and every year. However, as I will explain in a discussion of my recent ethnographic research in Japan, secrecy and taboo still linger around the phenomenon of menstruation. Public discourse on menstruation is virtually nonexistent outside of menstrual product commercials, which emphasize how their products help the user conceal any and all signs of menstruation. Interviews with female university students in Tokyo show the prevalence of this view of menstruation – something that should be hidden at all costs. The paper concludes with a discussion of the practice of (semi)compulsory swim class, where girls are often forced into the uncomfortable situation of revealing their menstrual status. This investigation of historical views of menstruation will help towards a better understanding of the treatment of menstruation in modern-day Japan.

Why Study Menstruation: Sexed Bodies and Taboo

Cultural beliefs and practices surrounding menstruation are not just informative about this one – important – aspect of women's lives; they have an impact across societal institutions, affecting gender relations and even socioeconomic status (Gottlieb 2002). Many studies have been done on this topic; however, they tend to focus on non-industrial communities

and what may be considered 'traditional' practices. Therefore, research on the current cultural attitudes about menstruation and women's bodies in industrial nations such as Japan is lacking. Moreover, while Japanese scholars have examined practices revolving around birth and menstruation from the viewpoint of Shinto and Buddhist beliefs, everyday women's experiences in the past, rather than theoretical analysis of doctrines, are somewhat difficult to find.

In many societies around the world, menstrual blood is seen as one of the most powerful and dangerous bodily fluids. Numerous scholarly works mention, if not solely focus on, the polluting qualities of menstrual blood, and, by extension, the female body. For example, Dan (1986) and Hardacre (1999) both discuss the ritual pollution of menstrual blood in Shinto practices, and Yoshida (1990) discusses it in the context of Okinawan religious traditions. These researchers, and many others outside of Japan as well, draw upon the work of Mary Douglas as the foundation for their argument of menstrual blood as polluting. In *Purity and Danger*, Douglas (1984) analyzes the classificatory system for edible and non-edible animals in the Old Testament. Categories are most vulnerable at their margins, the boundary between one discrete thing and another. Ambiguous things that do not belong explicitly to one category or another exist at these margins, and their ability to permeate and flow through boundaries poses a danger to the classificatory – and the social – system. Douglas extends her analysis to the body as a bounded system, with the skin and orifices as the boundaries of the system: "We should expect the orifices of the body to symbolize its specially vulnerable points. Matter issuing from them is marginal stuff of the most obvious kind. Spittle, blood, milk, urine, feces or tears simply by issuing forth have traversed the boundary of the body" (Douglas 1984: 121). "Marginal stuff" is that which has passed through the boundaries of the body, and this transgression of bodily boundaries by ambiguous substances existing at the margins is an act of defilement and pollution. Through this act of transgression, the "marginal stuff" becomes dirt, "that which upsets or befuddles order" (Grosz 1994: 192). No object (or person) is inherently 'dirt' or 'dirty'; it is only through its relation to defined boundaries and categories that an object becomes 'dirty', a source of impurity and pollution (Grosz 1994: 192; Warin 2009: 109-110). For Douglas, the marginal body fluids that are the most dangerous and the most defiling are those related to digestion and reproduction – including menstrual blood (Douglas 1984: 125).

However, although the contributions Douglas brought to the field have been significant and long-lasting, the analytical focus on menstruation

through the lens of pollution and impurity has recently been criticized as simplistic and lacking consideration of the agency and subjective experiences of menstruating women themselves (Buckley and Gottlieb 1988; Gottlieb 2002). Gottlieb argues that the menstruation-as-pollution argument is a "patriarchal ideology" and that "[w]omen's own views…can offer alternative readings of that ideology, sometimes affording women a form of personal resistance to a degrading cultural script, or allowing them to reinterpret it entirely" (Gottlieb 2002: 383-384). More recent work highlights the empowering capabilities of menstruation ignored or missed by previous researchers. Pedersen (2002) and Hoskins (2002) discuss the powers of menstrual blood in women's performance of magic in Bali and Sumba, Indonesia, respectively; and Morrow (2002) describes the social power grasped by women through menstruation among the Yupik of Alaska. Many works have also challenged the notion that usage of menstrual huts is a misogynistic and isolating practice (e.g. Maggi 2001). Martin (1992), Freidenfelds (2009), and Stoltzman (1986) are among those researchers who have also interviewed American women for their individual perspectives on menstruation; these works serve as examples of the necessity to talk with Japanese women themselves about their experiences with and ideas of menstruation in order to better understand its place in their lives and in Japanese society today. While I have been able to do so, to a limited extent, through my ethnographic research with university students in Tokyo, it is much more challenging to piece together what Japanese women's experiences with menstruation were like in the past. However, while this paper will explore notions of menstruation as polluting, I aim to provide a more nuanced picture that shows the complexity and variability of menstrual experiences throughout Japanese history.

Beliefs about Menstruation in Early Japanese History

In ancient times, menstruation was understood to be connected to nature and to gods *kami* (神). This is evident even in the Japanese word for menstruation *gekkei* (月経), which can be glossed as 'going around the moon.' Other former terms for menstruation also follow this theme of menstruation being connected to the moon: *getsuji* (月事) and *tsuki no mono* (月の物, both meaning 'the moon thing'), *gassui* (月水 'moon water'), and *tsuki no sawari* (月の障り 'moon sickness') are a few examples. This section outlines the beliefs and social treatment of menstruation from (roughly) the Heian Period (794-1185 CE) through the

Edo Period (1600-1868), with an emphasis on the emergence of the belief of menstrual impurity.

Ono (2009) and Tanaka (2013) discuss two different accounts of menstruation in the *Kojiki*, which purportedly represent not only the views of menstruation held by those in the ancient past about whom the stories are written, but also the views of the stories' writers/compilers. In the first account in which menstruation is mentioned, in the first half of the second century, the twelfth emperor's son, Yamato Takeru, and his fiancée, Princess Miyazu, composed and exchanged poems in which allusions were made to menstruation. Yamato Takeru's song is on the left, and Princess Miyazu's reply is on the right:

Across the heavenly	O high-shining
Kagu Mountain	Sun-Prince,
Flies like a sharp sickle	O my great lord
The long-necked swan	Ruling in peace!
Your arm slender and delicate	As the years one by one
Like the bird's neck –	Pass by,
Although I wish to clasp	The moons also one by one
It in my embrace;	Elapse.
Although I desire	It is no wonder that
To sleep with you,	While waiting in vain for you
	On the cloak
On the hem	I am wearing
Of the cloak you are wearing	The moon should rise
The moon has risen.	(Philippi 1968: 244-245).

The sight of menstrual blood on the hem of Princess Miyazu's clothing inspires Yamato Takeru to sing this song. Here in these poems, we see again a linguistic and symbolic connection between menstruation and the moon: the rising of the moon is a euphemism for the appearance of menstruation. Yamato Takeru had been absent for a lengthy amount of time, and so as Princess Miyazu says, "It is no wonder that…[t]he moon should rise." At this time, menstruation was viewed as something sacred and which had the "mark of the *kami*". Menstruation had a mystical quality to it, since it involved bleeding without dying, which was only a feat the *kami* were capable of, and so this granted menstruation a kind of divinity (Ono 2009: 152) and "religious consecration" (Philippi 1968: 245). Since the prince did have intercourse with the princess, regardless of her menstrual

status, this shows that menstruation was not considered polluting at the time (Tanaka 2013: 68).[1]

The other account of menstruation in the *Kojiki*, however, shows a slightly different view. The story goes that the twenty-first emperor (during the fifth century), Emperor Yūryaku, held a banquet. During the banquet, the emperor was served by a maid-in-waiting a wine glass that had a fallen leaf *tsuki* (槻) floating in it, which greatly angered him. The servant, facing execution at the emperor's hands, begged his forgiveness for her offense through the performance of a song which praised the emperor and his palace and reframed the *tsuki* leaf incident as a good omen rather than an offense (Philippi 1968, 362-366). The significance in this story is that the *tsuki* leaf is a symbol for menstruation.[2] Therefore, the actual events portrayed in the story can be interpreted as the woman polluting or defiling the ceremonial banquet, but the act of pollution was subsequently absolved by the emperor. Ono argues that this story reflects the views held by Heian nobility that menstruation was polluting (*kegare* 穢れ) (Ono 2009: 152). However, Tanaka points out that interpretations of this story are divided, and that the *tsuki* leaf may not necessarily be a symbol of menstruation after all (Tanaka 2013: 68).

The idea that certain women's bodily actions (birth, menstruation) were sources of pollution arose among the court society of the Heian period (Faure 2003: 68-71; Tanaka 2013: 61). Birth especially had strong connections to *kami*, spirits, and pollution. At the time, the nobility would call upon female shamans, priests, and mountain ascetics to offer magical prayers to ensure a safe and smooth birth. During parts of pregnancy as well as childbirth, as it was a special, vulnerable time, women were isolated in birth huts in order to keep away evil spirits. This practice is considered to be the beginning of the view of childbirth as polluting, and as an extension, the birth hut as a "polluted space." Beliefs about pollution, as well as purity and impurity, were also influenced by the religious teachings of esoteric Buddhism (mainly of the Shingon sect), which were promulgated during the Heian Period. These teachings included the

[1] The practices of the Yayoi Period state of Yamatai-koku also display connections between menstruation and the divine. Women were the rulers because they were more closely connected to the divine and could practice shamanism/spirit possession. It was widely believed that menstruation could cause mental/emotional turmoil or abnormalities; this was seen as divine will (*shin'i*) and a marker of those women's strong connection to the divine (Tanaka 2013: 64).

[2] In the past, women secluded themselves during menstruation in a special hut constructed near a *tsuki* [zelkova tree], and these huts were thus called *tsukiya* ('zelkova tree hut') (Ono 2009: 152). Therefore, the *tsuki* leaf was closely associated with menstruation. More discussion on seclusion huts is below.

practice of "isolating and removing" impurity in order to protect and maintain purity, as well as the concepts of pollution arising from death, birth, and blood (Ono 2009: 152). In Buddhist teachings, women were considered morally inferior to men and incapable of rebirth as a buddha (Faure 2003: 62-23). In his discussion of the view found in Buddhist beliefs and teachings of menstrual blood as polluting, Faure writes, "Menstrual blood is especially impure inasmuch as it bears the mark of exclusively female powers. The biological phenomenon of menstruation led to the view that the female body is essentially porous, and that its 'outflowing' is practically beyond control" (Faure 2003: 68-69). Pollution and power are often closely tied together, along with taboos or other practices meant to contain such power; something that is polluted (or someone who is polluted) has power in that the pollution can spread to other objects, spaces, or people (Douglas 1984, Buckley and Gottlieb 1988). In the case of medieval Japan, menstrual or birth pollution can interfere with the actions of *kami* as well as humans' relations with *kami*. We can see this with the beliefs about the birth hut; due to its polluting quality, *kami* would not or could not approach it, since they only appear "under conditions of extreme purity, the exact opposite of pollution" (Namihira 1987: S65). Menstrual pollution was equally offensive to Buddhist deities and disruptive to the rites of Buddhist priests; this manifested itself in restrictions on entering temples or other sacred spaces during times of pollution (Faure 2003: 62-63).

Still, the historical origin of the notion of menstrual blood as polluting is difficult to pinpoint, and many researchers have different opinions and theories on the topic. As discussed in Tanaka (2013), Mieda purports that the phenomenon of menstruation, in which women bled profusely but did not die, was difficult to explain logically, so it was considered part of a "mysterious/mystical domain". Since only women experienced birth and menstruation, these also served as clear displays of the difference between the sexes. Men were in awe or afraid of menstruation, and thus they had a special view of it, which then evolved to taboos. Kunugi theorizes that menstruation may have been disliked or feared because it is different from other forms of blood: it is a mix of solids and liquids, and it may be brown or blackish instead of red. It also comes out near the anus, and it may happen suddenly and cannot be controlled. Moreover, it is likely that due to malnutrition and high birth rates (because of high infant mortality and lack of contraceptives), women in the past did not get their period very often, which may have added to women's fear of it.[3] Another theory is that people

[3] This idea that menstruation was scary to women is refuted by Toda (Tanaka 2013: 58-62).

learned from experience that contact with sick and dying individuals' blood was dangerous and could lead to their own sickness and death; this then contributed to the idea that menstrual blood could be dangerous and polluting (Tanaka 2013: 58-62).

Regardless of *how* beliefs of pollution and impurity came to be, notions of pollution were in fact codified into law during the Heian Period, with the enactment of the Engi Code in 967. Included in its regulations were specific prohibitions against certain activities for a person who was polluted or in close contact with a polluted person. For example, a person affected by birth pollution could not visit a shrine or temple for seven days. Additionally, a person affected by death pollution could not make such a visitation for thirty days, while someone touched by or closely connected to the former sort of person (i.e. a person affected by death pollution) was prohibited from shrine/temple visitation for twenty days (Ono 2009: 152).

Originally circulated among the nobility of the Heian Period, these notions of pollution spread throughout the populace during the Muromachi Period (1336-1573). At the same time, teaching of the Blood Bowl Sutra, originating from China around the 10th century, also spread throughout the land. Those who committed sins of blood would fall into the Blood Pool Hell after death; however, they could be saved if they read the Blood Bowl Sutra, carried a copy with them, and followed certain rites. While in China, both men and women could potentially suffer the fate of the Blood Pool Hell, in Japan, the emphasis was on women and their polluting blood at birth and during menstruation, which would defile the land and water and offend the gods. There were variations on these teachings throughout the country, including explanations that menstrual blood was a physical manifestation of women's jealousy, lust, or other sins (Tanaka 2013: 70-71).

Birth huts, at first used for the purpose of isolating the pollution derived from childbirth and parturition blood, came to be used by menstruating women as well. This is reflected in the various alternative names for these huts that developed, one of which was 'moon hut' (*tsuki-goya* 月小屋) (Ono 2009, 152). These would also be called *taya* (他屋, 'other house'), *hima-ya* (暇屋, 'rest house') (Namihira 1987: S68), *fujō-goya* (不浄小屋, 'filth hut'), or *yogore-ya* (汚れ屋, 'filth house') (Tanaka 2013: 74). Sometimes, villages or communities would not have constructed seclusion huts[4]; however, there were still taboos that women followed to separate themselves from others in their activities. This included preparing their

[4] In this paper, 'seclusion hut' is a term used to encompass all huts used by women to seclude themselves from the rest of the community, for various reasons including childbirth and menstruation.

own food using a separate cooking fire and eating separately from their family (Ono 2009: 153; Namihira 1987: S68). Additionally, menstruating women were not supposed to touch the *kamidana* (神棚, 'household altar/shrine') or pass through *torī* gates (鳥居), as these objects were associated with *kami* (Ono 2009: 153). They also should not have approached boats, or fishing or hunting tools, lest their pollution ruin the efforts of the food-gathering tasks associated with those objects (Tanaka 2013: 76).

However, just because such restrictions existed and menstruation was viewed as polluting, this does not mean that menstruation was such a terrible or negative thing in people's lives. In fact, it is thought that the women who isolated themselves in huts during menstruation did not necessarily see menstruation as a source of impurity, and their sojourn in the huts was potentially an enjoyable and important part of their lives. Since all women of a community would share the same seclusion hut, bonding and sharing of experiences could easily occur. Additionally, women could use their time in the seclusion huts to rest their bodies and minds from the usual daily physical labor and work. This was especially beneficial to the health of women who had recently given birth, it is believed (Tanaka 2013: 77). Moreover, menarche was treated as a celebratory occasion because it represented the transition of a girl into a woman who now had the ability to create new members of the community, vital for the community's prosperity and survival. People's participation in celebrations of menarche, as well as their ability to ascertain who in a community was menstruating by observing who was secluding themselves or following menstruation taboos, shows that menstruation was actually an integral aspect of a community's social life (Ono 2009: 153). Although it was viewed as something polluting, it was still recognized and accepted by people as a part of day-to-day life. Whether life while using seclusion huts and operating under these taboos was pleasant or unpleasant is really up for debate though; experiences vary from region to region, time period to time period, and woman to woman (Tanaka 2013: 77).

Views of Menstruation from the Meiji Period through the Late Twentieth Century

In Japan's past, although menstruation was viewed as having polluting aspects and menstruating women often removed themselves to a separate – physical and/or symbolic – space, it was still integrated into people's daily lives. However, the Meiji government made explicit steps to erase the notion of menstruation as polluting; at the same time, efforts were also

made to make menstruation "invisible" (Ono 2009: 153). This section explores the details of these societal changes during the Meiji Period (1868-1912), the Taishō Period (1912-1926), and up to the early postwar period of the mid-twentieth century.

One of the main driving forces behind the Meiji government's attempted eradication of 'folk' beliefs surrounding menstruation was influence and pressure from Western nations. Taking a stance alongside these 'advanced' Westerners, the Meiji government declared that the idea of menstruation and childbirth as polluting and the practices stemming from this idea were "uncivilized" (Tanaka 2013: 73). In 1872, the government issued an edict whose purpose was to completely abolish these 'backwards' ideas through the removal of any and all official codes that had once institutionalized the concept of pollution, such as the aforementioned Engi Code (Ono 2009: 153). In addition, the practice of using seclusion huts for birth or menstruation was banned, and in some cases, these huts were even forcibly dismantled or burned down by government officials (Namihira 1987: S68). However, enforcement of this was uneven, and some areas of the country still used seclusion huts up until the 1960s and had women who practiced other taboos, like eating separately, even after that (Tanaka 2013: 74-83).

One of the most influential ideas of this time period adopted from the West was the modern concept of 'hygiene', knowledge of which, along with that of modern Western medicine, was spread by the Japanese government for the sake of 'enlightening' Japanese doctors, bureaucrats, and even women (Ono 2009: 153). Through public lectures, magazine articles, and school curricula, (mostly male) scientists and instructors 'standardized' the experience of menstruation for women. That is, they set forth parameters of what would be considered the medically 'normal' age at menarche, length of menstrual cycle and menstrual bleeding, and amount of menstrual discharge. By following the "principles of hygiene" (Nakayama 2017), women and girls purportedly could ensure they would meet the standards of normality, which were required to fulfill their reproductive duty to the nation. As evidenced below, menstruation was reframed as an issue of personal hygiene that should be dealt with using proper products and behavior; and, due to its connection to (reproductive) sex, it should only be discussed when necessary with medical professionals or teachers.

The Ideology of Hygiene and Women's Bodies

As part of Japan's nation-state-making processes that took root in the early years of the Meiji Period, concepts of the "national body" of Japan were developed, whereby the goal of the government was to create optimally

healthy citizens in order to have the strongest military – and nation – possible. Of this, Frühstück writes, "Calling upon an increasingly complex configuration of bureaucrats, military officials, police, physicians, pedagogues, and other men and women in public office, these concepts [of the 'national body'] focused on a populace to be regulated, protected, nurtured, and improved in order to establish…a modern 'health regime'" (Frühstück 2003: 17). The concept of hygiene was part and parcel of these ideologies of imperialist Japan. However, for government officials, doctors, teachers, and others, hygiene soon became something that represented not just the health of the body, but that of the mind as well. Cleanliness and morality became closely linked, and "[p]roper care and maintenance was declared the basis of a 'moral person'; in fact, the care and maintenance of the whole self was to be recognized as both 'a virtue and a duty'" (Frühstück 2003: 25).

This concept of hygiene and its accompanying moral prescripts, as well as Japanese imperialist ideology as a whole, had a profound influence on Japanese women's and girls' lives as their bodies came under the control of the state. As Japan's government was striving to build up a national population and a military that was as large and as strong as possible, women were told that the best way for them to serve the state was to be mothers. "Good wife, wise mother" (*ryōsai kenbo* 良妻賢母) was the slogan promulgated by the Ministry of Education (Ono 2009: 153). Women were supposed to serve their husbands and families by taking care of the household. They were also supposed to serve "as educators who instilled proper Japanese values in their children…[placing] themselves in loyal service to the state" (Kondo 1990: 267). This also meant that, at least for women, any non-reproductive sexual activities were – from the official standpoint of government officials and doctors – frowned upon as pointless and even "abnormal", as compared to reproductive sex that resulted in childbirth, which was "natural" (Narita 1999: 358).

Although women's main roles and occupations were supposed to be in the home (and for many upper-class women, this was the case), women workers played a crucial role in the industrialization process of Japan. Between 1894 and 1912, about sixty percent of the nation's industrial workforce was comprised of women, many of whom worked in the textile industries (Kondo 1990: 269). Working conditions for these young factory women, though, were notoriously bad, with long hours, dangerous machinery, inadequate food, and a lack of sanitary facilities (Kondo 1990: 269-270; Dan 1986: 7-8). This spurred demand for menstruation leave (*seiri kyūka* 生理休暇) from both women and doctors. They argued that

menstruation was "a 'barometer' for reproductive ability" and so women "ought to take leave to protect their future motherhood" (Dan 1986: 8). The reproductive health of these young women was considered extremely important, and resting from strenuous work was believed to help prevent complications later in life, such as miscarriage and premature labor (Dan 1986: 2). The right to take menstruation leave was enforced after World War II[5]. Here we see acknowledgement and understanding of menstrual health framed around childbirth and motherhood, a strong connection that continues today.

The slogan of "good wife, wise mother" was not only recited at adult Japanese women, but it was also a large part of the rhetoric of government officials and teachers that was aimed at schoolgirls. In 1872, the Meiji government issued an education conscription which required all boys and girls of a certain age to attend school; before this time many girls did not receive any formal education (Kondo 1990: 265). However, for the girls who did now attend school, this standardized education was focused predominantly on home economics and thus the production of a new generation of "good wives, wise mothers". In terms of sex education, again, stress was put on the importance of becoming a mother, as reflected in this hypothetical sex education lecture a mother would give to her daughter:

> You have come so far that you can produce the spring from which a human arises in your body…You will bleed for two or three days…That will happen once every four weeks and is only proof that you have grown up. However, *it is important that you do not overwork*, and that you wash yourself carefully and take better care of yourself during these days. This is not simply an experience but the preparation for you to become a mother one day. Therefore you must take proper care of yourself. You might worry about when it will happen and it is indeed an important time but please *be pleased with yourself that one day you will be a mother* (quoted in Frühstück 2003: 69; emphasis added).

Higher education was considered unnecessary for the girls' future roles as wives and mothers, as well as potentially taxing on their minds and bodies, which were believed to be weaker than males' (this belief is also found among Victorian intellectuals of the same era) (Frühstück 2003: 69). In

[5] See Taguchi 2003 for a detailed history of menstruation leave in Japan. While companies do still offer menstruation leave, it varies depending on employment contracts and is often unpaid.

1900, the Ministry of Education, following the same vein of thought that led to menstruation leave for workers, called for female students to limit or refrain from active movement during menstruation (Nakayama 2007: 57). Thus, since physical exercise was part of the school regimen, it was necessary for girls to notify their teachers when they were menstruating so they could be excused from such activities. Ono argues that this reflects the idea generated during this time period that menstruation was a personal issue that "should be concealed" (*kakusu beki* 隠すべき) and was "an embarrassing thing that disrupted everyday life" (Ono 2009: 154). She sees these practices and ideologies of the state as contributing to the medicalization of women's bodies: "In this way, female bodies in relation to menstruation, pregnancy, and birth came to be controlled by school teachers and doctors and became objects that should be [medically] examined and treated. In other words, women's bodily physiological functions relating to reproduction became objects of medicalization" (Ono 2009: 153-154).

Magazines and journals focusing on hygiene and sex abounded during the first few decades of the twentieth century (Frühstück 2003: Narita 1999). Found in popular women's magazines like *Fujin Kōron* (婦人公論, 'women's public opinion') and *Shufu no Tomo* (主婦の友, 'housewife's friend'), articles and special issues that discussed sex mostly focused on procreative sex, although non-reproductive sex was written about to an extent (Narita 1999: 349, 357-358). These magazines often ran advice columns written by doctors, as well as advertisements for medicines and other "cures" for infertility, frigidity, and hysteria. About this, Frühstück says, "In these magazines at least, medical doctors were preoccupied with married women's sexual functioning almost exclusively in the context of ensuring their reproductive capabilities, thus reinforcing earlier claims of the uterus as a vehicle of empire building" (Frühstück 2003: 174). Indeed, many articles in *Fujin Eisei Zasshi* (婦人衛生雑誌, 'women's hygiene magazine') and the other-above mentioned magazines focused on how to achieve and protect a healthy "mother's body" (*botai* 母体). During menstruation, one should not ride horses, rickshaws, or bicycles; one should not dance, exercise, stand or walk for long periods of time, carry heavy bags, use sewing machines, or drink alcohol or coffee; one should also avoid mentally taxing activities like reading novels. Failure to follow these proscriptions could lead to reproductive diseases or lifelong ailments, according to many doctors writing in these magazines. Of course, the target audience was upper-class women who actually had a chance at avoiding these actions, unlike working women who could not rest or take time off

(Tanaka 2013: 6-8, 17-19). In addition, the fact that women would write in to doctors' advice columns about their menstrual troubles and other health issues shows again the extent to which menstruation had become something to be concealed. Rather than talking face-to-face with family members or friends about menstruation, women would write to total strangers, thus contributing to the invisibility of menstruation outside the pages of magazines (Ono 2009: 154).

The Introduction of Commercial Menstrual Management Products

Because of the spread of the concept of hygiene, there was a shift in the mode of production of menstrual management products beginning in the Meiji Period. Before this time, women would mainly use certain plant fibers or old cloth to absorb their menstrual blood. Although many women in the early twentieth century continued to make and modify their own menstrual products at home, commercial menstrual products began to be marketed at this time. These products were often considered to be more sterile and hygienic by doctors and writers of women's magazine articles. Such public backing of commercially produced menstrual products and condemnation of 'unhygienic' homemade products marked the beginning of women's menstruation management being directly tied to the market (Ono 2009: 154). As the twentieth century progressed, commercial menstrual products improved in absorbency, comfort, ease-of-use, and style. Magazines continued to be an important platform for advertising and discussion of these products. What was considered a hygienic practice or product and what was considered unhygienic would continue to pop up as an evaluation tool to judge the quality and acceptability of menstrual management methods and products throughout the twentieth century.

The modern menstrual napkin as it is known today became widespread during the 1960s, due to the manufacturing and marketing success of the Anne Corporation and its 'Anne napkin' introduced in 1961. The napkin also purportedly provided women more comfort and greater freedom of movement than previous products; this increase in mobility thus led to increased ability or desire to actively participate in the working world (Sakai 2014: 69). Moreover, since many women felt buying menstrual management products to be embarrassing, Anne Corporation, through its advertising, worked to change this way of thinking, for the sake of market expansion and economic success. It is in part to the publicity efforts of the company that menstrual napkins came to be treated like other commercial goods (Ono 2009: 155). However, even though these menstrual products were on display in stores, they were often hidden when being carried out of

stores by customers. Even today, it is customary to put such products in opaque, black plastic bags when purchased, rather than the usual thin, translucent shopping bags.

How did the Anne napkin and its groundbreaking advertising campaigns impact views of menstruation during the 1960s and onward? Although some scholars have argued that Anne Corporation's advertising played a large role in influencing women and shifting notions of menstruation, Sakai (2014) argues that these assertions are over-generalizing and lacking actual supporting evidence, that is, testimony from women who were the receivers of mass media messages. Through her interviews with women who grew up around the middle of the twentieth century, she found that hardly any of the women said that mass media or advertising had an effect on them (Sakai 2014: 72). In fact, for the older women born in the 1930s and 1940s, the way menstrual management products are discussed so brazenly and openly in advertisements gives them a feeling of discomfort (*iwakan* 違和感) (Sakai 2014: 76). While the introduction of television commercials for menstrual products in the late twentieth century is significant in its own right, any changes in views of menstruation during this time may be more easily explained by looking at changes in sex education in school curricula, rather than at the messages of advertisements.

Changes in Sex Education in the Mid- to Late-Twentieth Century

Sex education in schools during the 1930s was unstandardized or non-existent in some areas. It was not until after World War II that sex education was systematically put in place in the Japanese school system. The goal of the 1947 "Basic Guidelines for Purity Education" (*junketsu kyōiku kihon yōkō* 純潔教育基本要項) was to promote proper "sexual morality" (*seidōtoku* 性道徳), that is, abstinence until marriage and then reproductive sex. Sex education at this time was also referred to as "menstruation guidance" (*gekkei shidō* 月経指導), since its teachings focused on menstruation, pregnancy, and childbirth, things that only happen to females. However, in the 1949 "Junior High School Health Plan Procedures" (*chūgakkō gakkō hoken keikaku jisshi yōryō* 中学校学校保健計画実施要領), there was no mention of specific guidance on how to deal with menstrual blood, and so there were many girls who never had a chance to learn how to properly deal with menstrual blood, even though they had "menstruation guidance" class. Compounding the lack of menstrual management education in schools, during the 1940s and into the 1950s, there was a stigma around talking about menstruation among family and friends. Many of the women that Sakai (2014) interviewed who were

born in the 1930s and 1940s, and even in 1950, reported that they could not talk to their friends or family about menstruation or sex, as it was "taboo". This is reflected in statements such as, "'When I got my first period, I didn't tell anyone and dealt with it on my own'", "'I never talked to my parent(s)/mother about menstruation'", and "'When I got my first period, my mother stealthily taught me how to use cloth for dealing with menstrual blood'" (Sakai 2014: 75). These feelings of secrecy, concealment, and taboo stuck with them as they grew older, as evidenced by their shock and unease at how frankly menstruation is talked about in advertising today.

In contrast, the next generation of women born after the early 1950s received better education about menstruation in schools. In 1965, "the Ministry of Education replaced 'purity education' with 'guidance in sexual matters' (*sei ni kan suru shidō* 性に関する指導 [*kanji* added by the author]) or 'sex education' (*seikyōiku* 性教育)…" (Frühstück 2003: 193). Before or around the time of menarche, girls at school were taught about the biological functioning of menstruation as well as methods for dealing with menstrual blood. Paper napkin companies would also give samples of their products to schools, which girls could then take home. This way, they would be prepared for their first menstruation. Overall, these women were able to receive a better education and to talk more freely about menstruation than the preceding generation (Sakai 2014: 76). This difference in education is reflected in the older generation of women's feelings of discomfort in terms of their own daughters' school sex education, who would have been in grade school around the 1960s or 1970s. One woman said, "'My daughter learned about menstruation at school, so at home we pretty much never talked about it. I'm glad I didn't have to teach her myself…but when I imagine her talking to her teachers and friends so casually about paper napkins, I get a weird feeling'" (Sakai 2014: 74).

Menstruation Today

Themes of embarrassment and concealment continue today, as I found in my recent ethnographic fieldwork. In an interview[6], I asked a young woman if she would talk to someone she was dating about her period. She replied, "No, definitely not. [*Why?*] Well, I guess it's embarrassing, it's not

[6] I conducted ethnographic interviews with twenty-three young women who were attending universities in the Tokyo area in 2018. These were qualitative, semi-structured interviews; I had a list of interview questions but allowed the order of the questions and the general topics of conversation to flow naturally. Interviewees were asked about their (formal and informal) education on menstruation, their experience of menarche, the characteristics of their typical menstrual cycle, and their menstrual product preferences, among other things.

a nice image – blood coming out, it's dirty, embarrassing." In Japan today, menstruation has a complex and almost contradictory status. While menstrual product advertisements on television and in women's magazines are not uncommon, rarely is menstruation brought up in public discourse outside of these platforms. Even when women do talk about it with friends or female relatives, they use euphemisms like *seiri* (生理, literally 'physiology,' commonly meaning 'period/menstruation'), *ano hi* (あの日, 'that day'), and *are* (あれ, 'that'), rather than *gekkei* 'menstruation', which is now almost exclusively used in the field of medicine. Much like in the recent past, menstruation is strongly connected to reproduction and sex, and it is a hygiene issue that must be dealt with in private, never to be revealed to unfamiliar others. This is discussed below, with a focus on the relationship between sex and menstruation, how menstrual product usage and advertising helps to conceal menstruation, and women's negative and ambivalent experiences with menstruation. Menstruation is an often burdensome and unpleasant experience, but one that is necessary for having children, which many of the women I interviewed planned for in their future.

Tampons and Sexuality

While guidance in schools helped better prepare girls for their first period and for using napkins, discussion of tampons is rarely on the agenda. By far the majority of Japanese women use menstrual napkins as their primary menstrual product, while a small number of women use tampons.[7] Usually, a mother or a friend will introduce them to the product. Only three of the twenty-three women I formally interviewed regularly use tampons, having first tried them out in college. One of the young women said that she started using tampons because she was fed up with feeling uncomfortable and getting stains on her bedding at night; she now uses tampons while she sleeps and during heavy flow days. It is likely easier to judge, visually, when a sanitary napkin is reaching its fluid capacity than when a tampon is, and it is this learning curve, among other reasons, that steers many women away from the product. Several of the women I talked with were interested in tampons, but they were worried they would not be "good at using them,"

[7] The Japan Hygiene Products Industry Association (JHPIA) reports that ninety-four percent of women use disposable napkins, with six percent using tampons (JHPIA 2008). The low rates of tampon use are partly due to fear of toxic shock syndrome (Ono 2009, 157; Ono 1985, 37); I have heard this as a reason for not using tampons during my interviews and discussions with Japanese women. It is also telling that the famous toxic shock syndrome outbreak in the United States in the late 1970s and early 1980s is often referred to as the 'tampon shock incident' (*tanpon shokku jiken* タンポンショック事件) in Japan.

potentially resulting in a dreaded 'failure' (*shippai* 失敗: in this context 'menstrual blood leaks/stains').

Reluctance to use tampons is in part due to not wanting to touch one's genitals or menstrual blood directly. Even women who do use tampons may view this aspect of them quite negatively. One of the tampon users I interviewed recounted a time when she traveled to New Zealand and discovered that a common type of tampon there had no applicator; she viewed this as "dirty" and refused to use them. Additionally, several women said that inserting tampons seemed scary (*kowai* 怖い) and expressed concern that it would hurt, with one saying, "I *definitely* do not want to use them (*sekkyokutekini tsukaitakunai* 積極的に使いたくない)." This fear or reluctance to insert something into the vagina may reflect beliefs picked up from sex education classes and societal views on appropriate expressions of female sexuality. The focus of sex education for a long time was on 'purity', abstinence, and repression of 'unhealthy' sexual desires; sex was, at least for girls, something to be done after marriage with one's husband and for the purpose of producing children. Although, now, methods for preventing transmission of STDs and HIV/AIDS is taught to junior high and high school students, the underlying message is that sex is, first and foremost, for reproduction (Frühstück 2003: 193).[8] Sexuality and masturbation are not discussed in a positive light, if they are discussed at all. Education on menstrual products can be potentially lacking as well; if menstrual management methods *are* taught, it is extremely rare for girls to be taught about tampons and how to use them (Ono 1984: 56). This is because educators did not want young girls to use tampons, since their use requires touching the vagina. Such physical familiarity with the vagina could be a gateway to masturbation and reckless and 'unhealthy' sexuality. In fact, the first commercial tampons in Japan were marketed toward married women only, in order to protect unmarried women's hymens and thus their chastity. The Japan Hygiene Products Industry Association (JHPIA) made it obligatory in 1951 for menstrual product manufacturers to discourage unmarried women from using tampons.[9] This continued until 1970, when the JHPIA relented and allowed for tampons to be targeted at unmarried women, with the

[8] Sex education in high schools has also been called "education for the prevention of AIDS" (*eizu yobō kyōiku*) since the late 1980s (Frühstück 2003: 193).

[9] The Japan Hygiene Products Industry Association (JHPIA, Nippon Eisei Zairyō Kōgyō Rengōgai 日本衛生材料工業連合会) was established by the Ministry of Health and Welfare in 1950. It deals with domestic products such as absorbent cotton, gauze, diapers (both baby and adult), and menstrual products (including napkins and tampons) (Ono 2006: 44).

stipulations that "unmarried women should use [tampons] with extreme caution and should use them according to doctors' directions" and that "first-time users and uneasy women should consult with a medical specialist before using them" (Ono 2006: 18-19). However, use of tampons does seem to be slowly on the rise over recent years, with even tampon commercials making it to television broadcast. They are popular among athletes and other women who lead active lifestyles or do sports (Ono 1985: 37; Ono 1984: 55). So although education on tampons may not be present in schools, through word-of-mouth and television commercials, knowledge and use of tampons in Japan is indeed spreading. It is possible that the slow rise in tampon usage reflects changing personal views on sexuality and sexual behavior.

Using Menstrual Products to Conceal Menstruation

If menstruation is connected to sex and reproduction and thus should be concealed, then it is modern commercial menstrual products that make it possible for women to hide signs of menstruation from others. The most obvious sign of menstruation is a bloody stain on clothing or furniture. The women I spoke to referred to these stains or leaks, literally, as failures – *shippai*. When I asked interviewees if they had strong or lasting memories related to menstruation, several recounted embarrassing stories of public failures, leaving bloody splotches on chairs in libraries and restaurants. Moreover, while most of the women I spoke with experienced menstrual cramps of varying intensity, almost half of them said that leaks were one of the worst, if not *the* worst, aspect of their period.

Women constantly have to be aware of their flow in order to avoid failures. One interviewee told me, "The worst thing about my period is having to be conscious of it all the time. I worry about being able to change my napkin in time. Will I be too late, or will I make it? You have to think about it constantly. It disrupts your normal routine." This creates a lot of worry (*shinpai* 心配) and unease (*fuan* 不安) for women, who make frequent bathroom trips, avoid sitting for long stretches of time, and abstain from exercise and sports during their periods, all in order to reduce their chance of failures. And, of course, these women make strategic use of various menstrual products to prevent leaks. The main ways that leaks happen are that the menstrual product is not absorbent enough or it slips out of place. It makes sense, then, that the two main characteristics of menstrual products desired by the women I interviewed were sufficient absorbency and wings that keep the menstrual napkin secured to their underwear. Comfort, price, brand name, and aesthetic design were all secondary to the

need to conceal one's menstrual status from others. This emphasis on concealing signs of menstruation is (re)enforced through advertising for menstrual products. Besides highlighting the fluid- and odor-absorbing powers of their products, advertisements themselves conceal menstruation by using linguistic euphemisms (previously mentioned) and by using 'sanitized' visual imagery of menstrual experiences, such as blue liquid in place of menstrual blood and happy, beautiful models representing customers.

Negative and Ambivalent Views of Menstruation

Unlike the smiling models in menstrual product ads, all of the women I interviewed deal with unpredictable menstrual cycles, painful menstrual cramps, and/or uncomfortable menstrual flows. Irregular cycles can cause worries about possible unplanned pregnancy or general concern about one's health, especially the ability to have a family in the future. A sudden, unexpected period can ruin special plans or interrupt daily activities like work and school. Menstrual pain is such an ingrained part of the menstrual experience that common euphemisms for menstruating are "my stomach hurts" (*onaka ga itai* お腹が痛い) and "I don't feel well" (*taichō ga warui* 体調が悪い). Pain is unavoidable but manageable to an extent, with over-the-counter medication as well as heating pads. Because it can be painful, messy, and difficult to track, menstruation is often thought of as an annoyance or inconvenience. Many of the women I talked to expressed that they disliked or even hated their period, but it is necessary for them to go through it because it is the key to having children. One woman told me, "I don't like it. I'd rather not have my period, if that were possible. Changing napkins is annoying, stains are annoying, and so is when the napkin slips out of place. I am *mendokusagariya* (面倒くさがり屋 'a person who tends to find most things bothersome or annoying')…But it's necessary for having children." She was far from the only one to express this sentiment.

Despite the overall negative views of menstruation and its annoyances and associated worries, many women told me that menstruation is good for one's body and health. One young woman described it as like a "detox" for her body, and another woman, mirroring the menstruation leave advocates of the previous century, said her period was like "a barometer for my body…I can objectively surmise my health from it". For many of my interviewees, irregularity, along with menstrual cramps and blood stains, is just an expected aspect of their menstrual experiences that they have to deal with – but maybe just not every month. And yet, despite the view that regular menstruation was necessary for future reproduction, most of the

women who experienced irregularity, including missed periods, have not gone to a doctor, because seeing a doctor/gynecologist is "embarrassing" (*hazukashii* 恥ずかしい).

Rite of Passage: Swim Class

Indeed, these young women hardly ever talked about menstruation with *anyone*, not just doctors. Among my interviewees, even those who attended all-girls schools rarely talked with their peers about menstruation, except occasionally asking for a spare napkin or commiserating about menstrual cramps. One exception was a situation that often forced girls to acknowledge menstruation to others: swim class. Getting one's period meant that one could not participate. However, telling the teacher was sometimes a tricky and embarrassing task, especially if it was a male teacher. Parents would write a note for their daughter, or the child would say something vague like "*taichō ga warui*" or "*onaka ga itai*", to avoid directly admitting their menstrual status. About half of the young women I talked to had memories of their menstrual cycle conflicting with swim class in either elementary or middle school. These memories showcased two recurring themes: bonding with other female students and conflicting feelings over not participating in the class. One interviewee had a whole strategizing session with her friends about how to tell – but not tell – their male teacher that she had her period and needed to sit out class. Another recounted to me how she made friends with another girl who had to skip the lesson; the two bonded over the fact that they both had heavy menstrual flows.

While in the early twentieth century, girls would not participate in physical education classes during their period because physical activity was believed to be bad for their own physical and mental health, girls today often do not participate in swim class because it is believed to be bad for possibly *other* people's health. There are worries of menstrual fluid contaminating the swimming pool. If it were not for this mistaken notion, then all girls could purportedly participate in school swim lessons. Indeed, some of the women I interviewed were ambivalent or unhappy about having to sit out of swim class; they talked about how they "had to" or were "forced to" sit on the sidelines. On the other hand, there have been reports lately that schools, citing that it is not in fact unsanitary or unsafe, are rejecting menstruation as an excuse to not participate, which has caused problems for girls with menstrual pain or heavy flows (Tamaki 2018). Either way, figuring out what to do during swim class when they have their period seems to be a rite of passage for many girls.

Discussion and Conclusion

Frühstück theorizes that throughout Japanese history, there have been repeated cycles of "liberation" and "repression" of sexuality by different actors (Frühstück 2003: 5). I argue that, looking at Japanese history, one can find similar cycles in regard to menstruation, as well as periods of simultaneous liberation and repression, or rather, openness and concealment. After the powerful mysticism of menstruation in ancient Japan gave way to more negative notions of pollution around the ninth century, women, from a particularly religious as well as social standpoint, were seen as sinful, dangerous, and unclean. Powerful yet dangerous, women's bodies were cast as uncontrollable and a threat to male authority and connection to *kami* and Buddhist deities. Although beliefs of menstrual and birth pollution were present among the populace during the Muromachi and Edo Periods and women practiced various taboos to separate themselves during their time of the month, menstruation was a strong symbol of fertility and vitality of the community. The use of seclusion huts and other practices relating to the polluting qualities of menstruation were then wiped out by the Meiji Period government which deemed them backwards and uncivilized traditions. However, menstruation as a symbol of fertility and health continued, especially in the context of early twentieth century state ideology that called for Japanese women to "be fruitful and multiply" and help build up the strength of the "national body." It could even be argued that menstruation was perhaps more respected as a phenomenon during this time since it was a necessary function for procreation. However, due to various practices put in place in schools and workplaces, menstruation came to be seen as something that was incompatible with strenuous movement, exercise, and work; disruptive to everyday life; and something to be hidden.

Although the middle of the twentieth century and beyond saw increased mass media discourses relating to menstruation, in the form of menstrual product advertisements, concealment of menstruation still occurs on a day-to-day basis. Although women do not view it as something that is polluting, some do regard it as "troublesome", "annoying", or "dirty" and express a desire to hide it (e.g., Ono 1985: 36). Cashiers still provide opaque shopping bags to put menstrual products in for customers, advertisements continue to use linguistic and visual euphemisms in their messages (Ono 2009: 157), and informal education on menstruation focuses on how to conceal signs of menstruation. Beliefs about menstrual pollution do still crop up from time to time though. For instance, in 2000, Ōta Fusae became

the first female governor in Japan when she was elected as governor of Osaka Prefecture. Each year, one of Japan's three major sumo tournaments is hosted in Osaka, and traditionally the governor is supposed to present a prize at the tournament. However, the Japan Sumo Association barred Ōta from entering the ring, claiming that a woman entering the ring would pollute it. She remained governor for eight years, but she was never allowed to present the prize in the tournament ring (Hindell 2000). Even in 2018, a referee at a sumo match ordered women to exit the sumo ring, which they had entered in order to provide first aid to a politician who had collapsed (Tarrant 2018).

I will conclude here with a brief look ahead at some of the potential practical applications of this research. One of the most important things to take away from this investigation into the treatment of menstruation throughout Japanese history is that specific views of menstruation reflect general views of women in society. These beliefs often have negative connotations and put women in an inferior position to men. Views of women's bodies are extremely important to understand; as long as women are continuously essentialized into reproductive beings, then recent scandals, like the Tokyo Medical University rigging exams against female applicants, may continue to happen (Tanaka 2019). Moving forward, it is important to consider how the climate surrounding discourses on menstruation and menstrual products can improve. If negative views of menstruation reflect negative views of women, then perhaps positive thoughts and experiences in relation to menstruation could lead to more positive treatment and positioning of women (and vice versa). As discussed above, the content of sex education classes can have an impact on views of menstruation and sexuality, as well as what kinds of menstrual products girls choose to use. Changes in sex education curricula that include information about tampons and healthy discussion of female sexuality beyond marital procreative activities have the potential to improve young women's self-image and experiences with menstruation. Lastly, creating more mainstream public formats (beyond menstrual product advertising) that allow women to express their own personal menstruation experiences – both good and bad – is another avenue for developing more positive and complex views of menstruation in Japanese society as a whole. The story of menstruation in Japan is one of religion and politics, foreign conceptions and domestic adaptations, and innovations and traditions.

References

Buckley, Thomas, Alma Gottlieb. 1988. "A Critical Appraisal of Theories of Menstrual Symbolism." (In:) *Blood Magic: The Anthropology of Menstruation*. Thomas Buckley and Alma Gottlieb (eds.) Berkeley: University of California Press. 3-53.

Dan, Alice. 1986. "The Law and Women's Bodies: The Case of Menstruation Leave in Japan." (In:) *Culture, Society, and Menstruation*. Virginia Olesen and Nancy Woods (eds.) Washington: Hemisphere Publishing Corporation. 1-14.

Douglas, Mary. 1984. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. London: Ark.

Faure, Bernard. 2003. *The Power of Denial: Buddhism, Purity, and Gender*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Freidenfelds, Lara. 2009. *The Modern Period: Menstruation in Twentieth-Century America*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Frühstück, Sabine. 2003. *Colonizing Sex: Sexology and Social Control in Modern Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Fujime, Yuki. 1999. "One Midwife's Life: Shibahara Urako, Birth Control, and Early Showa Reproductive Activism." Transl. Jonathan Mark Hall. (In:) *Gender and Japanese History, vol. 1: Religion and Customs / The Body and Sexuality*. Haruko Wakita, Anne Bouchy and Chizuko Ueno (eds.) Osaka: Osaka University Press. 297-325.

Gottlieb, Alma. 2002. "Afterward." *Ethnology* 41 (4). 381-390.

Grosz, Elizabeth. 1994. *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Hardacre, Helen. 1999. "The Shaman and Her Transformations: The Construction of Gender in Motifs of Religious Action." (In:) *Gender and Japanese History, vol. 1: Religion and Customs / The Body and Sexuality*. Haruko Wakita, Anne Bouchy and Chizuko Ueno (eds.) Osaka: Osaka University Press. 87-119.

Hindell, Juliet. 2000. "Sumo Excludes Woman Governor." *BBC News*, March 1, 2000. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/662040.stm Accessed 2019.12.20.

Hoskins, Janet. 2002. "The Menstrual Hut and the Witch's Lair in Two Eastern Indonesian Societies." *Ethnology* 41 (4). 317-333.

JHPIA 2008. http://www.jhpia.or.jp/product/napkin/index.html. Accessed 2017.04.10.

Kondo, Dorinne. 1990. *Crafting Selves: Power, Gender, and Discourses of Identity in a Japanese Workplace*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Maggi, Wynne. 2001. *Our Women Are Free: Gender and Ethnicity in the Hindukush*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Martin, Emily. 1992. *The Woman in the Body: A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Moony, Sean. 2000. *5,110 Days in Tokyo and Everything's Hunky Dory: The Marketer's Guide to Advertising in Japan*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Morrow, Phyllis. 2002. "A Woman's Vapor: Yupik Bodily Powers in Southwest Alaska." *Ethnology* 41 (4). 335-348.

Nakayama, Izumi. 2007. "Periodic Struggles: Menstruation Leave in Modern Japan." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University.

Nakayama, Izumi. 2017. "Gender, Health, and the Problem of 'Precocious Puberty' in Meiji Japan." (In:) *Gender, Health, and History in Modern East Asia*. Qizi Liang and Izumi Nakayama (eds.) Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press. 37-60.

Namihira, Emiko. 1987. "Pollution in the Folk Belief System." Supplement: "An Anthropological Profile of Japan," *Current Anthropology 28*(4): S65-S74.

Narita, Ryūichi. 1999. "The Overflourishing of Sexuality in 1920s Japan." Transl. Sarah Teasley. (In:) *Gender and Japanese History, vol. 1: Religion and Customs / The Body and Sexuality*. Haruko Wakita, Anne Bouchy and Chizuko Ueno (eds.) Osaka: Osaka University Press. 345-370.

Ochiai, Emiko. 1999. "Modern Japan through the Eyes of an Old Midwife: From an Oral Life History to Social History." Transl. Mio Neuse. (In:) *Gender and Japanese History, vol. 1: Religion and Customs/The Body and Sexuality*. Haruko Wakita, Anne Bouchy and Chizuko Ueno (eds.) Osaka: Osaka University Press. 235-296.

Olesen, Virginia. 1986. "Analyzing Emergent Issues in Women's Health: The Case of the Toxic-Shock Syndrome." In *Culture, Society, and*

Menstruation, edited by Virginia Olesen and Nancy Woods. Washington: Hemisphere Publishing Corporation. 51-62.

Ono Chisako. 2009. “Nuno napukin o tsūjita gekkeikan no hen’yō ni kan suru kenkyū – “sonzai suru gekkei” e no sentakushi o motomete [a study on transformation of attitudes toward menstruation through the use of cloth sanitary napkins: seeking alternatives to "visibilify menstruation"].” *Doshisha University Policy & Management* 11 (2). 149-162 (小野千佐子「布ナプキンを通じた月経観の変容に関する研究―「存在する月経」への選択肢を求めて」『同志社政策科学研究』).

Ono Kiyomi. 1984. “Joshi gakusei to seiri yōhin (dai 2 hō) – hongaku gakusei o taishō toshita jittai chōsa [female students and menstrual products (part 2) – a factual investigation of students of this university].” *Chiba kenritsu eisei tanki daigaku kiyō* 3 (1). 55-60 (小野清美「女子学生と生理用品（第 2 報）― 本学学生を対象とした実態調査」『千葉県立衛生短期大学紀要』).

Ono Kiyomi. 1985. “Joshi gakusei to seiri yōhin (dai 3 hō) – hongaku gakusei o taishō toshita jittai chōsa [female students and menstrual products (part 3) – a factual investigation of students of this university].” *Chiba kenritsu eisei tanki daigaku kiyō* 4 (1). 33-37 (小野清美「女子学生と生理用品（第 3 報）― 本学学生を対象とした実態調査」『千葉県立衛生短期大学紀要』).

Ono Kiyomi. 2006. *Seiri yōhin no 45 nen no kiseki* [tracks of sanitary items of 45 years]. Okayama, Japan: Fukurō shuppan (小野清美『生理用品の 45 年の軌跡 』岡山：ふくろう出版).

Pedersen, Lene. 2002. “Ambiguous Bleeding: Purity and Sacrifice in Bali.” *Ethnology* 41 (4). 303-315.

Philippi, Donald L. (Transl.) 1969. *Kojiki*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Sakai Motoko. 2014. “Kami napukin no tanjō ni yoru gekkei keiken no henka – anne sedai no shōgen kara saguru [changes in menstrual experiences due to the creation of the paper sanitary napkin – investigations of testimony from the “*Anne* Generation”].” *Bunka kankyō kenkyū* 7. 68-78 (坂井 素子「紙ナプキンの誕生による月経経験の変化 : アンネ世代の証言からさぐる」『文化環境研究』).

Stoltzman, Susan Marie. 1986. “Menstrual Attitudes, Beliefs, and Symptom Experiences of Adolescent Females, Their Peers, and Their Mothers.” (In:) *Culture, Society, and Menstruation*. Virginia Olesen and Nancy Woods (eds.) Washington: Hemisphere Publishing Corporation. 97-114.

Taguchi Asa. 2003. *Seiri kyūka no tanjō* [the creation of menstruation leave]. Tokyo: Seikyūsha (田口亜紗『生理休暇の誕生』青弓社).

Tamaki Eriko. 2018. “Seirichū no pūru jugyō: igaku, jinkenjō mondai wa? fukudokuhon ni ‘daijōbu’ no hyōki de hankyōseiteki ni ‘yasumu’ sentakushi hitsuyō [swim class during menstruation: medical, human rights problems? Becoming semi-compulsory after supplementary reader declares ‘okay’, but option of sitting out is necessary].” *Ryūkyū shimpō* (玉木恵理子「生理中のプール授業　医学、人権上問題は?　副読本に「大丈夫」の表記で半強制的に「休む」選択肢必要」『琉球新報』). https://ryukyushimpo.jp/news/entry-787226.html. Accessed 2019.06.10.

Tanaka, Chisato. 2019. “Women Pass Scandal-Hit Tokyo Medical University's Entrance Exam at Higher Rate Than Men.” *Japan Times*. https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/05/21/national/women-pass-scandal-hit-tokyo-medical-universitys-entrance-exam-higher-rate-men/#.XUFcqehKg2w Accessed 2019.12.20.

Tanaka Hikaru. 2013. *Seiri yōhin no shakaishi: tabū kara daibijinesu e* [social history of sanitary goods: from taboo to big business]. Kyoto: Minerva shobō (田中ひかる『生理用品の社会史：タブーから一大ビジネスへ』ミネルヴァ書房).

Tarrant, Jack. 2018. “Japan Sumo Chief Apologizes After Female Medics Asked to Leave Ring.” *Reuters*, April 4, 2018. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-sumo-japan/japan-sumo-chief-apologizes-after-female-medics-asked-to-leave-ring-idUSKCN1HC05X Accessed 2019.12.20.

Warin, Megan. 2009. *Abject Relations: Everyday Worlds of Anorexia*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Yoshida, Teigo. 1990. “The Feminine in Japanese Folk Religion: Polluted or Divine?” In *Unwrapping Japan: Society and Culture in Anthropological Perspective*, edited by Eyal Ben-Ari, Brian Moeran, and James Valentine, 58-77. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

AUTHOR'S PROFILE

Maura Stephens-Chu
A medical anthropologist specializing in women's reproductive health and the anthropology of Japan. She earned her M.A. in Anthropology in 2016 and is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.

Marta E. Szczygiel
ORCID: 0000-0003-0736-3130

Understanding Relatively High Social Visibility of Excrement in Japan

DOI: 10.12775/sijp.2019.60-61.5

ABSTRACT

Excretory experience is one of the modern-day social taboos. Toilets are designed so that we evacuate behind closed doors, water is used to conceal any foul smell, and we rely on euphemisms whenever we are forced to mention it in any social situation. Consequently, in the Western cultures, defecation has been largely eradicated from the public sphere: we generally do not talk about "it," as it is not acceptable to remind others, as well as ourselves, of the body's excretory capacity. If this unspoken agreement is broken, one is in danger of facing social sanctions such as embarrassment. In Japan, however, there is a relatively high social visibility of excrement. By this, I do not mean that material excrement is in abundance on the streets, but that there are many symbolic manifestations of excrement, namely things that remind us of our bodies' defecatory capacities, such as poop accessories or "poop talk" on TV. Does Japan, country famous for its high-tech toilets, not see poop as taboo? This paper aims to understand the phenomenon of relatively high social visibility of excrement in Japan from a comparative perspective. Based on answers obtained from an online questionnaire with 185 non-Japanese participants who had been to Japan, I categorized various symbolic manifestations of excrement into three realms: health, education, and commodity. I argue the main reason why excretory experience is relatively accepted in Japan is a high health consciousness that sees bowel movement as a health barometer. In turn, Japanese are educated about the body's excretory capacities, often in a fun way so that it appeals to children. Finally, because health and educational realms sanitized excretory experience, it became just another aspect of everyday life ready to be commodified. This, I conclude, is the ultimate example of relatively high social visibility of excrement in Japan.

KEYWORDS: Japanese toilet culture, defecation, comparative analysis

Acknowledgments

I thank two anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions.
This work was supported by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science grant number 18F18775.

Social norms inform us how to behave in any given situation. For example, attending a funeral in flashy clothes would likely be seen as disrespectful

to those mourning, incestuous behavior is generally not accepted, and taking someone's life is considered an ultimate violation of accepted norms, thus it usually results in the most severe legal punishment. There are four types of social norms: folkways (often referred to as "customs"; standards of behavior that are socially approved but not morally significant), mores (strict norms that control moral and ethical behavior), taboos (very strong negative norms; prohibitions of certain behavior that are so strict that violating them results in extreme disgust and risks expulsion from the group or society), and laws (norms written down and enforced by an official law enforcement agency) (Anderson and Taylor 2009, Goode 2016). Although these norms vary across time, cultures and place, what they have in common is that dominant norms in a society become so deeply ingrained through the process of socialization, that people feel they must follow them, or they will face social sanctions. One of those sanctions regulating our behavior is the feeling we get when we fail to project an acceptable self in the social situation: embarrassment (Goffman 1967, Gross and Stone 1964, Weinberg 1968). And what is arguably the biggest threat to the most favorable impression of oneself? Excretory experience.

Sigmund Freud in a 1913 foreword to the German translation of John G. Bourke's *Scatalogic Rites of All Nations* argued that for "civilized men" defecation became a "trace of the Earth embarrassing to bear" (Freud 1958). This statement finds support in Norbert Elias' seminal *The Civilizing Process* (1939). Elias traced how post-medieval European standards of good manners were gradually transformed by increasing thresholds of shame and repugnance and concluded that at the forefront of most negatively charged bodily practices were sexual and defecatory capacities of the body (Elias 1995).[1] Moreover, David Inglis (2001) pointed out that the standardization of a water closet is "the sine qua non of a society that denies the existence of the human body's excreta-making capacities" (243): one defecates behind closed doors so that nobody can see the act, water conceals any foul smell, and the sole name – water closet – is a euphemism that has nothing to do with the action taking place inside. As Ervin Goffman (1973) aptly summarized our problem with defecation, it "involves an individual in activity which is defined as inconsistent with the cleanliness and purity standards expressed in many of our performances" (121). This gap between embarrassing and presentable bodies created our modern excretory stigma: evacuation is something to be conducted only behind closed doors, and any public reminder of this

[1] For more examples on how Western attitudes toward excretory experience changed throughout time see Inglis 2001, Corbin 1986, Vigarello 1988.

particular bodily function goes against accepted notions of good manners, civility and modernity.

In Japan, however, symbolic manifestations of excreta, meaning things that remind us of bodies' defecatory capacities, are relatively present in the public sphere. *Unko Kanji Drill* (うんこ漢字ドリル) (Furuya 2017), a series of kanji learning books that incorporate poop and potty humor into learning, sold 630,000 copies within the first two weeks (Kaneko 2017). *Oshiri Tantei* (おしりたんてい) "The Butt Detective," is a popular children's book series about a butt-headed detective that farts in the faces of culprits. It was first published in 2012 as a manga comic (Tanaka, Fukazawa and Tororu 2012), but became so popular that it was turned into anime in 2018, and got a movie release in April 2019 (Tororu 2018). Riding the Tokyo Metro in December 2018, one could see *Oshiri shawa shawa* (お尻シャワシャワ) commercial of portable rear-cleaning device, which features dancing women wearing hats reminiscent of pink butts/peaches that cheerfully sing "I want to make my bottom clean" (*Oshiri o kirei ni shitai no yo.* お尻をきれいにしたいのよ。) In Yokohama, a temporary exhibition (March 15-September 30 2019) *Unko Museum* (うんこミュージアム), literally Poop Museum, managed to draw 10,000 visitors just in the first week of its opening (Akatsuki Live Enterntainment 2019). This highly Instagrammable pop-up museum dedicated to poop proved so popular that its counterpart was opened in Tokyo in August 2019. There are dozens of examples, and the ones above are just some of the more recent instances of what some netizens call "Japanese poop obsession."[2] Hence, one might ask: how big of taboo is poop in Japan?

In this article I analyze the results of my online questionnaire on what I call, borrowing from Inglis (2001), high social visibility of excreta in Japan. The survey was conducted between July 13, 2016, and December 15, 2016, with a total of 185 non-Japanese participants who had been to Japan.[3] Based on my preliminary findings, I had selected symbolic manifestations of excrement and categorized them into three realms: health, education, and commodity. Each set of questions first presented visual materials (pictures or videos), then asked general questions using the Likert scale, and ended with open-ended questions to obtain further comments. In addition to the questionnaire, I present supporting material from interviews with Japanese nationals. Here, two questions arise: why ask foreigners, and

[2] See Hubbard 2006, BlogIssues 2007, Herb 2009, Mari 2009, Dayman 2017, Kei 2018.
[3] The questionnaire is available in Szczygiel 2016b.

not Japanese, to examine Japanese attitude towards excretory experience, and what scientific value does material obtained online have?

First, with this article, I aim to highlight the relatively high social visibility of excreta in Japan. As it is relative, a source for reference is needed. Most people brought up in a culture take its norms for granted, and as such do not realize any distinctive characteristics until confronted with a different set of values. The first step of comparative research is the identification of these possible differences, and for this reason, I turn to the testimonies of non-Japanese nationals. Moreover, as mentioned above, when necessary, I will present data from interviews with Japanese nationals to provide a more comprehensive examination of Japanese toilet culture.

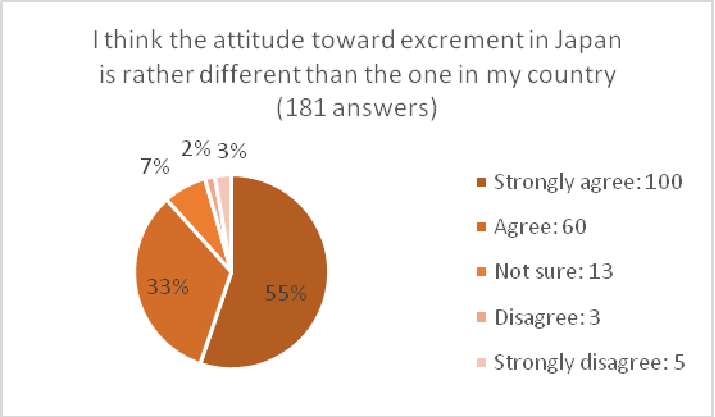
Second, data analyzed in this paper comes from an online questionnaire, which was partly anonymous, thus indeed there is a question of how genuine the answers are. Nonetheless, for many, defecation remains a taboo subject, and this anonymity might be the only way for them to openly express their opinions regarding excretory experience. This is the main reason I decided to conduct my questionnaire online. Furthermore, as obtained testimonies are consistent with the ones I frequently hear in private conversations, I contend they are a valid source to use in this study. Finally, I cite these without any edits, thus some of them contain grammatical mistakes or ignore capital letters, which is an unfortunate side effect of online communication.

Analysis of Questionnaire Results

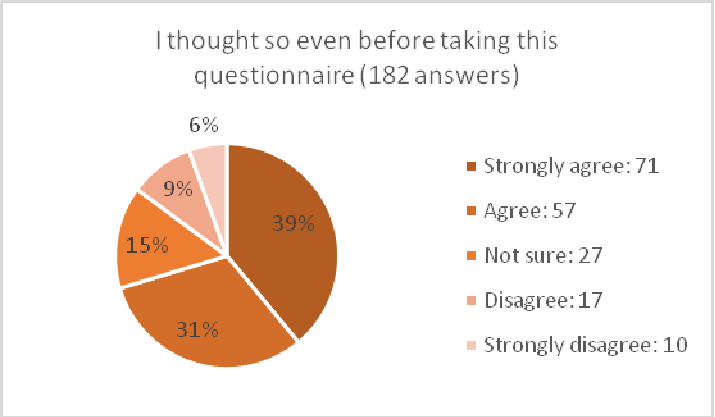
First, the essential question is: do non-Japanese think that attitude toward excrement is in any way different from the one in their countries?

As Graph 1 indicates, a definite majority of my respondents, 88%, answered they either agree or strongly agree with the statement. Since the question was asked at the end of the survey in which I presented various symbolic manifestations of excrement in Japan, I asked whether respondents had thought so even before taking the survey. Although the majority stated they had, the negative responses, together with the "not sure" ones, constitute more than a quarter of all answers, which is a significant number (Graph 2). Some bluntly commented that "when I visited I didn't see any of this pop culture that was shown in this survey" (male, 39, Philippines). Therefore, it poses a question as to exactly how representative are presented materials. Nonetheless, 71% of the participants agreeing that they had been aware of some differences before taking the survey is an overwhelming result. I surmise that Japanese ability plays a role in the identification of the manifestations, as most of the

examples require some comprehension of Japanese. For example, when I was living in Osaka, a nearby drug store would play advertising material asking customers if they had confidence in their bowel movement (*Jibun no otsūji ni jishin arimasu ka.* 自分のお通じに自身ありますか。) Of course, if a customer did not know Japanese, they could not understand the message. I did not include the question regarding Japanese ability in the analyzed survey, which is one of the things to be improved in further research.



Graph 1. "I think the attitude toward excrement in Japan is rather different than the one in my country"

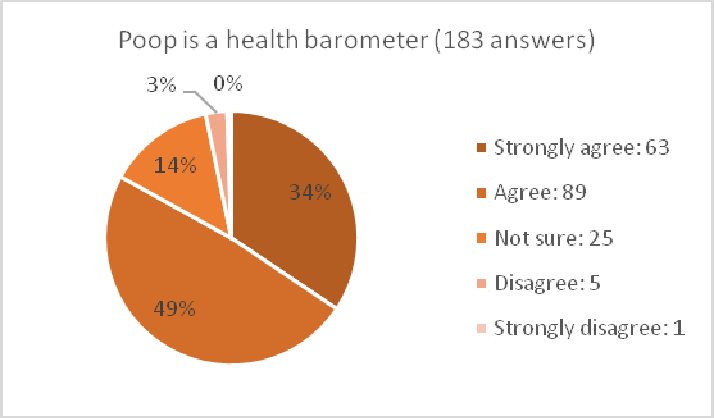


Graph 2. "I thought so even before taking this questionnaire"

Next, I will examine the symbolic manifestations of excrement organized into three provisional realms of health, education, and commodity.

Health Realm

Although defecation is one of the basic mechanisms of the human body and an important element of our health, excremental stigma may make it quite difficult to discuss this topic openly. In Japan, however, bowel movement is often called a health barometer and a lot of attention is paid to monitoring one's stool.



Graph 3. "Poop is a health barometer"

There is an overall consensus that excrement indicates one's health: 83% of the respondents agreed that poop is a health barometer (Graph 3). When it comes to monitoring one's stool, however, people tend to skip this practice.

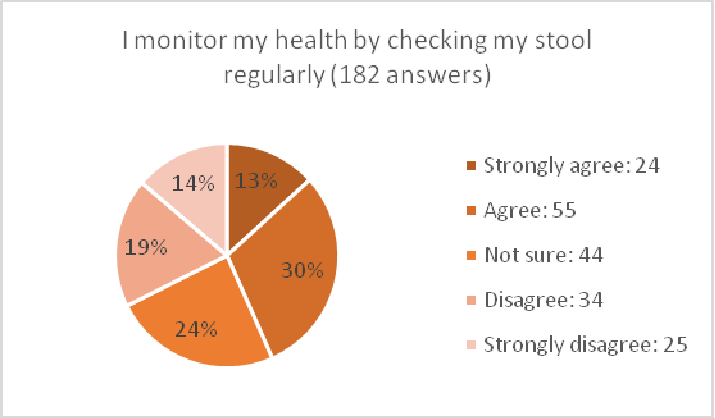
The next question (Graph 4) leaves to interpretation what is understood by monitoring one's stool, thus some of my respondents elaborated on the practice:

> *For me it is important to go to the toilet every day. If that is not possible I feel bad and know, that I have to change something. But to figure out, what that is, isn't always easy. I don't examine the poop itself, though.* (female, 30, Germany)

importance as health barometer shouldn't be overstated, but checking for signs of haemorrhaging, parasites etc. is important. (male, 33, Germany)

You can tell how it is by how it feels when you defecate--you don't need to go poking it around or anything, if it's too hard--eat more fiber. Checking your poop every day seems silly. (male, 22, USA)

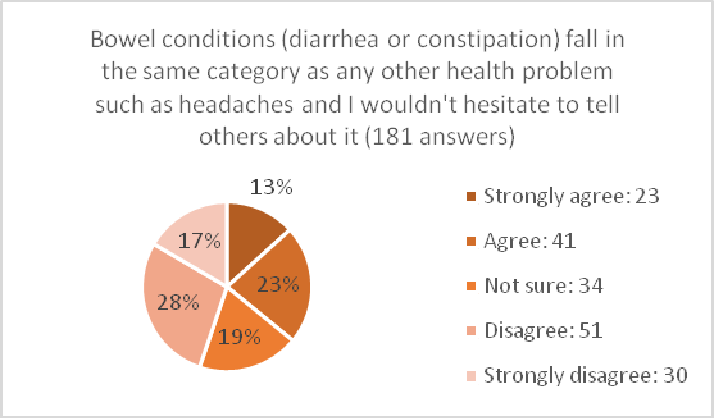
I generally don't notice unless there's something unusual, but I do think it can be a good thing to indicate if you need more or less of something. (male, 35, USA)



Graph 4. "I monitor my health by checking my stool regularly"

Based on the above testimonies, visual inspection of excrement is not a common practice, and more importance is placed on smooth evacuation and noticing anomalies such as bloody stools. Although there is no comparative data analyzing how common visual inspection of feces in Japan is, the idea that one should check their stool seems to be common sense: children are taught that "banana shape" is the healthiest poop and such information is reinforced in the media. More interesting for this study, however, is the fact that healthy bowel movement is often placed in the same category as any other health condition, for example, a headache.
Comparisons of bowel movement irregularities to headaches have frequently appeared in interviews with the Japanese, as well as in private conversations. Putting these two in the same category suggests it is equally acceptable to complain about both. Indeed, I recall a story about one of my

Japanese teachers' confession that became a sensation in our department. The teacher embodied all good stereotypes about women from Kyoto: she was beautiful, elegant and sophisticated. One day, she looked a little bit under the weather, so a student asked her if she was alright. When she responded, with her usual smile, "oh, I have diarrhea," the class fell silent. To her it seemed like saying "I have a headache," but for us, Polish students, it was not socially acceptable to openly mention one's bowel condition. Such experiences prompted me to ask what participants thought about putting bowel condition in the same category as a headache (Graph 5).



Graph 5. "Bowel conditions fall in the same category as any other health problem such as headackes and I wouldn't hesitate to tell others about it"

The majority of answers, 45%, were negative, but 36% of participants answered they saw bowel movement in the same category as a headache, while 19% were not sure. Results indicate varied take on the issue and are not conclusive. I surmise further analysis of participants' backgrounds might shed more light on the issue. As the above-mentioned anecdote suggests, in Poland, for example, bowel conditions and headaches are generally not considered in the same category. Moreover, working part-time as an English teacher in Japan, there were many times when a student would ask me how to say they had diarrhea because they wanted to explain why they were not feeling well. On such occasions, I would explain how to say it in English, but always add it might be seen as "too much information." Talking with other teachers at work, I realized questions on how to describe problems with bowel movement were quite common,

which used to perplex my coworkers. Although the company employed people from different countries, most of the employees could be described as coming from the so-called Western cultural sphere – Europe, USA or Australia. This indicates that the difference in attitudes towards excretory experience is cultural, with Japanese being more likely to talk about one's bowel condition than Westerners. Similar suggestion appeared in one of my interviews:

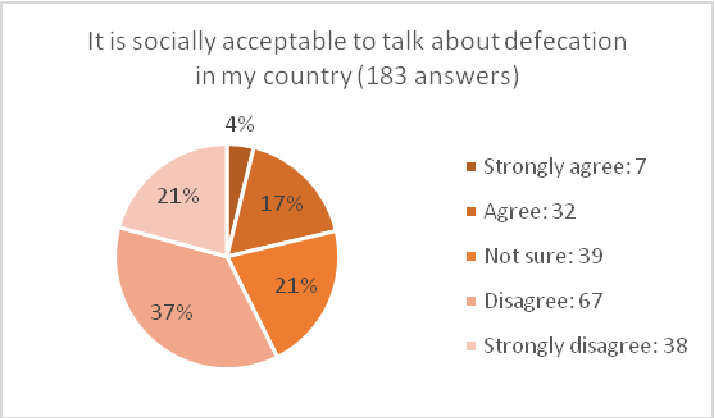
> *It was 30 years ago, when I just started to teach Japanese in Kyoto. In a beginner class, when we would teach* [vocabulary] *"at the hospital" or "body condition," my senior colleague told me I should not use words like "diarrhea." … We normally use such words in Japanese. From that time, I hesitate to use such words even with Japanese, and if I have to say it, I use something like "my stomach is not so good." But now most of the students who learn Japanese at the school are not from the West, but from China, Korea or other Asian countries. Maybe that's why I feel that more teachers use "diarrhea" normally and no one reprimands them.* (female, 60s, Kyoto)

Although my respondent found teaching her students how to say they have diarrhea a normal thing, she was cautioned by senior staff not to do it, because in other cultures it might not be accepted. Moreover, she added that when the number of "students from China, Korea, or other Asian countries" increased, she felt that the language could be used again. Hence, it is clear she meant that vocabulary concerning bowel condition might be seen as improper particularly to the Western students. This becomes more clear in further analysis.

So, how acceptable is it to talk about defecation outside Japan? As one can see in Graph 6, more than half of the respondents, 58%, answered it was not socially acceptable. Respondents identified specific situations in which defecation becomes a legitimate topic: at the doctor's office (but "even then it is highly uncomfortable topic" (female, 27, UK)); among the elderly (often regular evacuation becomes a problem with age); among parents of toddlers, especially mothers (constant contact with their children's waste); between children (before they master the know-how of a society they live in); and crude males ("when one is drunk and joking with friends" (male, 64, USA)).[4] Based on these answers, for excretion to become a socially

[4] Needless to say, women also use foul language and are no strangers to vulgar mentions of excrement in conversations. However, as participants clearly stated that "crude males" were the ones to talk about excretory topics, I leave it as it is.

acceptable topic, there has to be either material (e.g. parents of toddler changing diapers), or nonmaterial (e.g. describing one's bowel movement to a doctor) proximity to excrement. Another possibility for excretory topics to appear in conversations an antithesis to the socially acceptable mention of excreta. This is the case with children talking about poop or vulgar use of excretory language. With children, such situations are usually forgiven, as they still have time to understand social norms. When it comes to vulgar mentions though, people use excretory language precisely because it violates these norms.[5] Thus, many languages use the equivalent of shit to express negative emotions: think of German *Scheiße,* French *merde*, or Japanese *kuso* (クソ or 糞).



Graph 6. "It is socially acceptable to talk about defecation in my country"

Thus, any mention of defecation in a conversation tends to be regulated by assigning it to one of the accepted categories. In the Japanese context, however, bowel movement can become a topic of a conversation outside of the above categories and still be socially acceptable. Below are comments to follow-up questions regarding public mentions of bowel movement in Japan:

[5] See Bakhtin's (1984) study of *The Life of Gargantua and of Pantagruel* by François Rabelais for his argument on the carnivalesque. This social phenomenon refers to actions that temporarily invert accepted social norms, notably through the use of grotesque realism, where emphasis is placed on the "lower stratum" of the body, such as anus or vagina.

There are so many ocassions! I was asked how my bowel movement changed after eating rice regularly, for example. (female, 33, Germany)

I've lived here for 15 years, but when I first came I was surprised at how open people are about poop as compared to the US. (female, USA)

You talk about it to colleagues and teachers. in Russia, you don't do it that openly - it's private business. (female, 25, Russia)

Openly talking about having problems with bowel movements (and hemorrhoids). (female, 28, Poland)

People are completly ok talking about constipation with their boss at work or even with their mother in law. Maybe this is better but still I find it completely alien. (male, 26, Italy)

The above testimonies express surprise with mentions of excreta outside the categories accepted by the respondents. I argue this is because for my respondents, excretory experience is too taboo to fit in the everyday health category. It is not that some Japanese ask about one's bowel movement out of some particular interest in excrement,[6] but because in Japanese context defecation is considered one of the important health barometers, thus this topic can appear in everyday conversation regarding health. It is, after all, a perfectly normal biological function, and a vital signifier of human health.[7] Therefore, rather than asking why is it that in Japan lavatorial matters make for a relatively acceptable topic of conversation, it might be more interesting to pose a corollary question as to why for some people, notably Westerners, any mention of excretion is a social taboo? However, as this paper analyzes Japanese attitude toward excretion, let us briefly explore the origins of the country's health consciousness.[8]

[6] Comparative analysis of differences of disgust experiences between American and Japanese students found no differences in regard to categories of body products or hygiene, meaning feces are elicitor of disgust both in American and Japanese cultures (Imada, Yamada, and Haidt 1993).

[7] Recent studies indicate guts might play even bigger role in the overall health condition than it has been assumed. Gut-brain axis is a communication network that connects gut and brain (Cryan and Dinan 2012, Mayer, Tillisch, and Gupta 2015), and we are just starting to understand how the gut microbiome affects mental health (Kelly et al. 2015, Yang et al. 2019, Valles-Colomer et al. 2019) or neurodegenerative diseases (Kowalski and Mulak 2019, Felice et al. 2016). Moreover, there is a great potential in fecal material transplantation (Filip, Tzaneva, and Dumitrascu 2018).

[8] For discussion on origins of Christian condemnation of excrement see Bayless 2013.

Health and hygiene were extremely important factors in Japanese nation building from the latter half of the nineteenth century. In the Meiji period (1868-1912), the concept of hygiene (*eisei* 衛生) reached Japan with the government believing that it was the key to equality with the West, and promoting health became the people's responsibility. The government's stance was aptly summarized in a 1900 "hygiene anthem" (*eisei shōka* 衛生唱歌), according to which "the people's body and mind had to be healthy to observe loyalty to the Emperor and filial piety to ancestors" (Lee 2008: 8). Intellectuals were also involved in the discourse. For example, Natsume Sōseki, one of the greatest writers in modern Japanese history, criticized the strong national interference in people's everyday lives:

> *But what a horror if we had to… eat for the nation, wash our faces for the nation, go to the toilet for the nation!* (cited in Bellah 2003: 43)

Hygiene also became crucial for the Japanese military. Probably the most influential advocate of the state's military power and the health of its populace was Gotō Shinpei. In 1889 he classified national hygiene into two types: ordinary hygiene, referring to civil life, and emergency hygiene, which belonged to war. His concept of the hygienic body was clearly influenced by Herbert Spencer's theory of a "social organism," that saw the nation along with its social structure as an organic body (Frühstück 2003). These were the beginnings of the *kokutai* (国体) ideology, literally "national body," which considered the Japanese nation as one superior entity with the emperor at its head. However, the new hygienic ordinance did not ignore the lower part of the body.

Japan had a long history of dependence on night soil, which is a euphemism for human excreta used as fertilizer.[9] Consequently, excrement had been an integral part of Japanese everyday life, and by the end of the Edo period (1603-1868), it was considered valuable to the point that incidents of theft appear in records (Hanley 1987). However, besides the economic value of excrement, the Japanese were aware of the importance the bowel movement had on the overall health condition. For example, from the second part of the nineteenth century, ukiyo-e prints representing medical understanding of the body begin to appear. Among them is the "Mirror of the physiology of drinking and eating" (*Inshoku yōjō kagami* 飲

[9] For a detailed account of Japan's history of night soil, see for example Hanley 1987, 1999, Walthall 1988, Tajima 2007, Howell 2013, Szczygiel 2016a.

食養生鑑) by Utagawa Kunisada, dated back to the mid-nineteenth century (Figure 1). It depicts a male sitting in front of a meal and drinking alcohol with his organs and different stages of the digestive process visible. The print was meant to caution that overindulging in food and drink could lead to illness.

Figure 1. *Inshoku yōjō kagami* by Utagawa Kunisada, mid-nineteenth century (Sotheby's 2005)

Moreover, in 1928 hemorrhoids were classified as a "national disease" by the Asahi newspaper and, around the same time, reports of politicians, including Prime Minister Katō Tomosaburō, suffering from them hit the news (Bay 2012). The army even imposed strict regulations for rectal inspection. Alexander R. Bay estimates that "in 1925… over 55,000 army workdays were lost to haemorrhoid treatment" (ibid.: 155), with some blaming Japanese-style toilets for the disease. Dr. Hirano Kōdō, for

example, declared that "squatting over the latrine and exerting all one's strength blocked circulation and caused blood congestion around the anus" (ibid.: 148).

Therefore, the new health regime was interested in every part of the body, bowels included. It was because the government, with Gotō as the representative, deemed hygiene as the basis of colonial power, arguing that "the degree of civilization attained by a people [might] be measured by the success of its sanitary administration" (Takekoshi 1907: 283). Describing the new hygienic modernity in Meiji Japan, Ruth Rogaski (2004) even concludes that "Japanese elites successfully avoided Western colonization in part by acquiring the ability to colonialize themselves" (163). Consequently, the hygienic governance gave root to the idea that "the Meiji society was clean [not] because of its morality, but that it was moral because of cleanliness" (Lee 2008: 22).

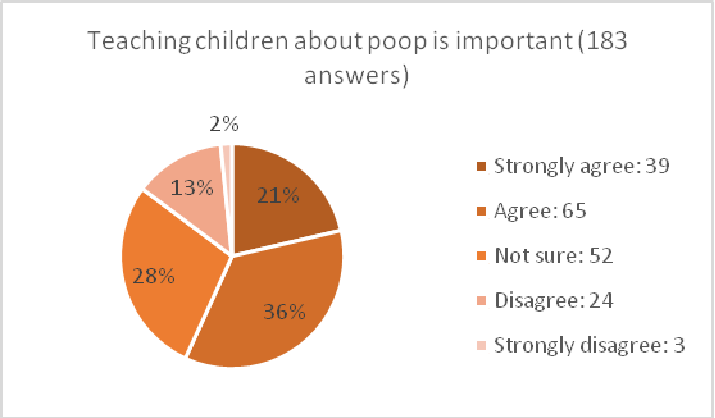
I do not suggest that Meiji standards regarding health are a common belief until this day, but I argue that the importance of "staying healthy" is that ideology's legacy. Hence, the Japanese pay much attention to their health in general, and bowel movement is one of its indicators – a health barometer. This is one of the reasons[10] defecation became sanitized and is now a relatively acceptable topic of conversation in everyday life.

Education Realm

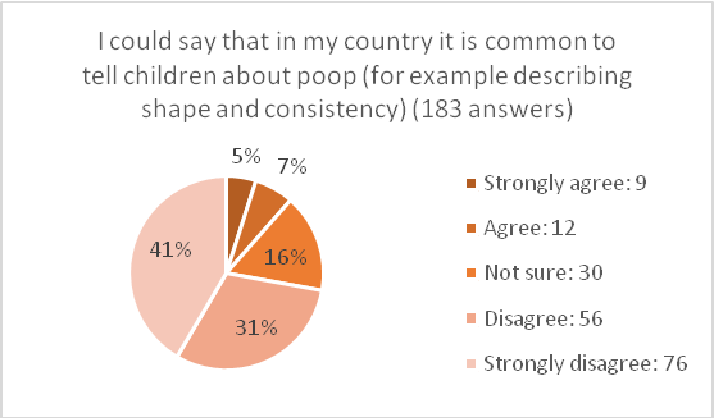
The second category of manifestations of excrement in Japan is the education realm. Here I categorized all phenomena that are connected with toilet training and educating children about the importance of defecation.

Asked whether it was important to teach children about poop, most of my respondents answered positively: 57% either agree or strongly agree with the statement (Graph 7). It is surprising, then, that a definite majority, 72%, stated it was not common in their countries to educate children about bowel movement (Graph 8). Therefore, although the importance of "poop education" is acknowledged, it generally ends with basic toilet training – once a child learns to use the potty alone, it is over. In Japan, however, more significance is put on understanding what waste tells one about their health condition, thus children are taught about consistency etc. of excrement. I will elaborate on this further in this section.

[10] Another important, yet falling beyond the scope of this paper, reason is traditional attitude toward defecation based on Japanese cosmology. For a preliminary discussion see Szczygiel 2017, while this topic will be further analyzed in my forthcoming paper on cultural origins of waste management to be published in *Worldwide Waste Journal* in 2020.



Graph 7. "Teaching children about poop is important"



Graph 8. "I could say that in my country it is common to tell children about poop"

Furthermore, participants who have experienced parenthood in Japan pointed out the following:

> *Books and anime, childrens TV, toilet training treated in a straightforward and pragmatic manner. Like teeth brushing or putting on clothing.* (male, 50, Australia)

> *I remember my family in Australia being shocked at how publicly my (Japanese) wife used to toilet train our children. She*

> *would give them lots of verbal encouragement as she held them over the public toilet.* (male, 48, Australia)

The second comment mentions surprise at how openly the respondent's wife toilet trained their children. His Australian family's reaction implies some level of discomfort regarding excretory experience, even if it is about teaching children how to use a toilet. Most probably what the family found especially "shocking" was verbal encouragement to defecate in public, as "these things" should not be discussed outside. The following testimony supports this assumption:

> *Talking about stool is generally not a comfortable subject and children being children can bring up these at inappropriate situations so perhaps it's better to educate the children when they are old enough to understand the situation around them while just lightly touch on the topic with the younger children for the more important symptoms.* (female, 35, Iran)

For this respondent, talking about stool is "uncomfortable," so she suggests not to mention the topic until the child is older – otherwise they might bring it up at "inappropriate situations," by which she probably means in public. It means that talking about excreta, even by children, is not exactly acceptable, or at least not a preferred behavior. As another participant states:

> *Kids seem especially obsessed with poop in Japan... While I think it's important to be informed about things like this, kids here seem obsessed with it in some regards. A 4-year-old's proclamation of "unchi!" is a surefire way to derail the classroom into a fit of giggles. … Even by the time they're 7 or 8 they still often draw "poop piles" on their notebooks or homework.* (male, 35, USA)

Children often become fascinated with excreta. Freud theorized this is a manifestation of the "anal stage," second stage of psychosexual development, which lasts from 18 months to 3 years of age (Freud 1991). Here, however, we are talking about older children mentioning poop. What my informant finds especially indicative of an "obsession" is when 7 or 8-year-old children "still often draw 'poop piles' on their notebooks or homework." Such comments clearly show that, according to his cultural programing, poop is not an acceptable topic even among children. Again,

the fact that elementary school children (and arguably even older ones) can say *unchi* (うんち) for poop or draw "poop piles" on their notebooks, indicates bowel movement is not negatively charged in Japan. To reiterate, Japanese children are not particularly obsessed with feces, they just live in a society that is more accepting of mentions of bowel movement in public, because it is considered a health barometer. Although it is unlikely 7 or 8-year-old children mention poop in the health context, they are educated from an early age to pay attention to their bowel movement. Surrounded by educational materials that present the topic in an attractive way for children, such as picture books or games, they see it as something normal. I surmise if a child reads a picture book with different animals and no one scolds them for saying "lion," they would assume it is exactly acceptable to say "poop" after reading a related book. The connection between bowel movement and health condition is rooted, among others, in materials on poop education, however, it becomes apparent to the child only when they grow older.

The topic of books on poop education came up with one of my younger interviewees, a 25-year-old female from Osaka. She emphasized that bowel movement helped her control her health condition. Upon asking where she learned about this connection, she mentioned one particular book that influenced her view:

> *In a book that I read as a child, it was written that we can judge our health by the color or shape and I believe in it. Also, you can see that in your everyday life: before period I tend to get constipated, but when it starts I get diarrhea. There are such changes, that's why.* (female, 25, Toyama)

The name of the book was *Unpi, Un'nyo, Unchi, Ungo – Unko no Ehon* (うんぴ・うんにょ・うんち・うんご―うんこのえほん, the names are supposed to express different kinds of stools). In the book, Professor Stool (*Daiben hakase* 大便はかせ) explains what kind of poop one makes when they eat a particular food. For example, if you eat too cold things, your poop will be yellowish and smell like a rotten egg, but if you eat a lot

of vegetables and exercise daily, you will make a spiral pile or a banana of "pretty brown" which does not smell too bad.[11]

The book is quite visual and informative – it gives children a basic knowledge of defecation in a fun way. Such visual materials, however, are relatively new on the market. None of my older interviewees was familiar with similar educational materials, and most of them did not deem such materials particularly important:

> *When I was a child, there were no such materials. This was something you would learn from your parent. … Stool reflects your health condition, so it is important to know such things, but … We would simply learn it from parents.* (male, 66, Osaka)

The first book about poop in Japan, to my knowledge, was Gomi Tarō's *Everyone Poops* (*Minna unchi* みんなうんち), published in 1977. It was released in the US in 1993 and is still one of the most recommended books for children on toilet issues. I contacted the author to inquire about what motivated him to draw a book with illustrations of defecating animals.

> Everyone Poops*, like my other works, is a completely original creation. I thought about drawing this picture book when I saw steaming poops of various animals on one early morning in winter at a zoo. Somehow. That's all there is to the story. From then, all reactions or appraisals have no direct connection with me, but thankfully* [the book] *seems to be quite loved.* (…) *In the end, even if it became used in what you call "toilet training," is analyzed as a book on excretory problems, or oriental perspective on nature (indeed, there has been research like that in America), the author only stays quiet and smiles.*

Gomi Tarō states his only motivation was amusement at "steaming poops" at a zoo in winter and seems quite amused that his book came to be used in toilet training, or that somebody would be interested in it from an academic point of view. However, I argue nobody would even think about drawing a picture book of pooping animals if they thought defecation was taboo.

[11] Although there is no doubt that diet impacts stool shape or color, I cannot confirm scientific value of such statements. Similarly, another folk wisdom I often encountered during my interviews is that it is good to wear extra clothing around one's belly, because when it gets cold, one might get diarrhea. Finally, assumptions that Japanese's intestines are longer that the Westerners', and that is why they suffer from constipations, is also a widely repeated "common sense," which was proven false (Nagata et al. 2013).

Moreover, the fact that the book was published, and even became a bestseller, implies the topic was relatively accepted in the society at the time.

Figure 2. Fragment of *Unpi, Un'nyo, Unchi, Ungo – Unko no Ehon* by Murakami Yachiyo and Sebe Masayuki (2007)

Nowadays, books on poop-related subjects are gaining more popularity also outside Japan. Some of them, however, are faced with a strong backlash. Ann Curry (2012) in her examination of reactions to books with scatological content in children books notes that back in the late 1980s, Canada's king of children's books, Robert Munsch, had trouble selling tale of a little girl whose parents think that people in good families, like theirs, do not fart. Eventually, he was approached by a publisher who agreed to publish the book on condition they would leave the word "fart" out of the cover title, thus the book was titled simply *Good Families Don't* (1990) (Boesveld 2012). Other examples include *Walter the Farting Dog* (Kotzwinkle and Murray 2011), which in 2004 made a former school board trustee in Wisconsin so upset over the word "fart" in the story about an old, fat dog with incurable flatulence, that he wanted the book banned from the state's school system (the book was also challenged in a number of libraries in America when it first came out in 2001), or *Captain Underpants* (Pilkey 1997) book series receiving the most complaints from libraries due to offensive content in the United States in 2012 and 2013 (it made a comeback at third place in 2018) (American Library Association 2018). Analyzing interviews with 16 children's librarians from across Canada, Curry argues one of the main reasons why librarians defended books with scatological content is they realize children go through a

difficult stage right after potty training. "[I]t's been the entire focus of the child's life and focus of much of the interaction between parent and child. But as soon as the child is potty trained, then all of a sudden you're not supposed to talk about it. A child yelling in the library, 'Mommy, mom I need to poo poo' is met with a shhhh…. That's why kids are enjoying this. They're trying to figure out what is taboo and what isn't," she concludes (Boesveld 2012).

Here I would like to point out one difference between Western and Japanese children's books on poop-related topics: Western ones use excretory topics mainly to show children that defecation or flatulence is nothing to be ashamed of or to draw some laughs. Japanese books, on the other hand, accomplish the same, but the focus is more on the health aspect of bowel movement – consider Professor Stool who urges children to eat a lot of vegetables and exercise daily, so they will make a spiral pile or a banana-shaped poop. A similar conclusion can be drawn from the analysis of toilet educational events.

Events like *Toire? Ittoire* (トイレ？行っトイレ) (Tokyo, National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation, 7/2-10/5/2014; Osaka, Grand Front Osaka, 8/15-8/30/2015), or *Karada no fushigi daibōken* (からだのふしぎ大冒険) (Saitama, Saitama Super Arena, 7/27-8/22/2015) are not common in Japan, but once held, they receive great media attention and become instant hits.[12] During such events children can wear a poop-shaped hat and slide down the toilet into the sewer, make their own poop from clay, see, touch and smell different types of excrement, or enter through a gigantic anus to see what is inside their bowels. For children it is mainly about having fun, but the educational aspect is very much present – some of the panels included "how the urge to defecate is triggered?" or "the softness of feces." It is safe to assume that children who participated in these events would be more conscious of their bowel movement and see how it is connected to one's health.

Inquiry into what my participants thought about educational events on excretory issues shows that even though they have not heard of similar events in their countries, they are generally open to the idea – 53% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that poop is not something to be talked about, thus such events are unnecessary (Graph 10). As one informant stated: "I cannot recall there being dedicated 'events' about toilet usage or poop, but it is not a taboo in general" (male, 26, Denmark).

[12] The most recent example is *Unko Museum* that was mentioned in the introduction. However, this event falls into the commodity realm, thus it will not be analyzed here.

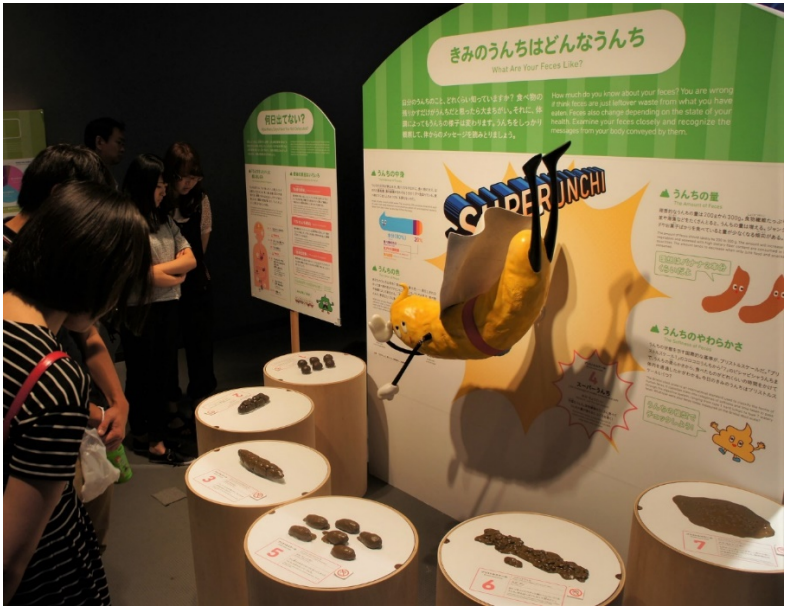
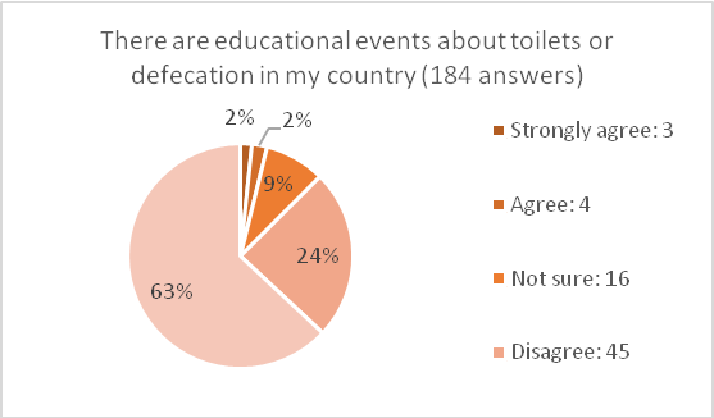
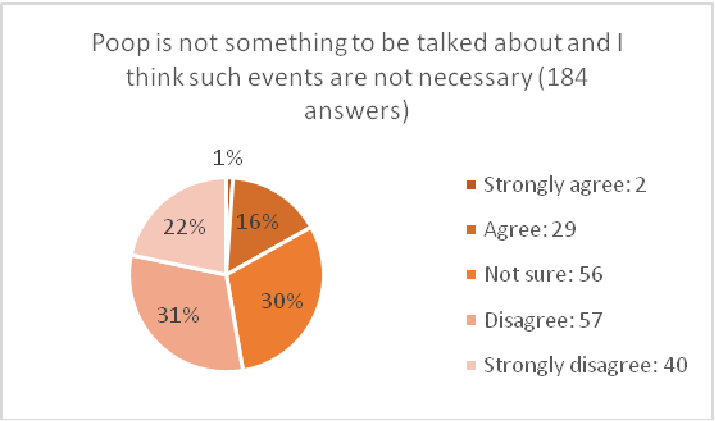


Figure 3. Picture taken at the *Toire? Ittoire* event in Tokyo (Author's collection)



Graph 9. "There are educational events about toilets or defecation in my country"



Graph 10. "Poop is not something to be talked about and I think such events are not necessary"

It is worth noticing, however, that in the same question a significant number of participants, 30%, answered they were not sure whether excreta should be discussed in public on not. Even among positive answers, some admitted finding poop-related events "a bit shocking," but such "natural things are not to be ashamed of" (female, 25, Russia). The following comment summarized this attitude:

> *Where I am from (the western hemisphere) poop is to embarrassing to talk about openly. I am generalizing of course but there seems to be a distaste to talking about it openly. Seeing as it is a normal bodily function that everyone has to perform, I think it is healthy to talk and educate especially children about poop and pooping. Probably adults as well.* (male, 27, Sweden)

Therefore, I surmise the reason for the high percentage of "not sure" answers lies in an internal contradiction: the first reaction to seeing pictures of children playing with poop is not positive. It comes from the cultural background, where any mention of defecation is stigmatized. However, rationally thinking, it helps children understand the connection between the shape of feces and their health condition, thus it is not negative per se. One informant answered that "educational events are good, however making it ridiculous by wearing poop hats is not what it is meant to be" (male, 30, Germany), and this might be why some felt puzzled when evaluating such events in Japan. The more we see something as taboo, the

stricter regulations regarding it are: one should learn about defecation, but it should not be fun.
As for respondents who answered similar events should not be held, they were much more opinionated:

> *This would definitely not even get through the approval stage of a project screening in Canada.* (female, 22, Canada)
>
> *I have had little to no poop education. Honestly I think it's disgusting and I try not to think about it.* (male, 28, USA)
>
> *It's fucking childish how they do it here (Japan). Leave that stupid stuff in schools.* (male, 38, England)
>
> *I was a junior high school science teacher in the USA, and these "events" are NOT educational except at the pre-school level---- Waste of time and educational resources.* (male, 64, USA)

Strong language such as "disgusting," "waste of time," or cursing imply highly negative emotions associated with mentioning excretion in public. Interestingly, in this case, also the most negative answers come from respondents from the Western cultural background: United States, Canada, England. However, as participants were not required to answer open-ended questions, I can rely on very limited data – only 29 participants answered follow-up questions regarding toilet education events. Thus, it is not sufficient to draw a definite conclusion.
Above I have argued that what characterizes Japanese poop-related events is the focus on the educational aspect. However, as some participants pointed out, there are also events which serve a different purpose:

> *I saw a TV show where a comedian visited an elementary school dressed in a poop superhero costume and taught them not to be embarassed about using the toilet. I think this would be less likely to happen in other countries.* (male, 39, UK)

Visit to a school to teach children that using the toilet is nothing to be embarrassed by is definitely an example of high social visibility of excreta (especially when it includes a TV host dressed as a poop superhero), yet it is not of the same nature as other events discussed in this section. Its purpose is not to teach children about the health aspect of bowel movement, but to destigmatize the practice of defecation.

Recently, constipation in children has become a problem in Japan, and the squat toilets in schools are thought to be the reason. The Japanese-style toilets (*washiki* 和式), are rarely seen in private houses, thus children do not know how to use them. Yet, according to a survey on toilets in public elementary and middle schools conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 56.7% of lavatories are the *washiki* type (MEXT 2016). Thus, even if a child has to use the toilet at school, they tend to hold up because they are not familiar with the Japanese-style toilets, and only use the bathroom when they get back home. Consequently, parents demand schools to renovate school lavatories described as 3K: dirty (*kitanai* 汚い), dark (*kurai* 暗い), scary (*kowai* 怖い), so there would only be the Western-style ones (J-Cast News 2016).[13] This is the official version, which I was also told in an interview with Katō Atsushi, the representative of Japan Toilet Labo (official English version of *Nihon toire kenkyūjo* 日本トイレ研究所), an NPO organization aiming, amongst other things, to improve the toilet environment at schools so children can use them whenever they need. To destigmatize the process of defecation, the organization holds "Toilet lessons" (*Toire kyōshitsu* トイレ教室), where a poop prince visits schools to talk with children.

Indeed, some children might find it hard to use a squat toilet at first, as do many foreigners when they encounter it for the first time. A survey conducted by Japan Toilet Labo with elementary school children found that 12% of participants could not use the squat toilet at all, while 38% answered they could, but did not like it (Katō 2015).[14] Moreover, 46% stated they refrained from using a school privy, while 35% responded the reason for doing so was their dislike of the Japanese-style toilet. It definitely is a big problem; however, I would like to highlight that 54% of children who said they tried to not use the toilet at school, answered it was because they were embarrassed. This suggests the issue is not as much in the type of toilet, but rather in the fact that children are embarrassed to use it in general. Although the survey provides no data about respondents' sex, based on my interviews with Japanese nationals, I surmise most of those embarrassed to use the toilet at school could be boys.

[13] Old school lavatories indeed have a bad reputation. For example, they are the setting of a popular Japanese urban legend about Hanako san. It is a story about the spirit of a young girl who haunts school bathrooms and drags people into the toilet to kill them.

[14] Unfortunately, the survey does not state the participant pool, thus it is impossible to judge the scale of this problem. However, Japan Toilet Labo repeated the survey in March 2017, obtaining very similar results. The second survey interviewed 4777 elementary school students (Katō 2018).

Defecating at school in Japan, especially when one has to use the men's restroom, can be problematic. The design of the men's facilities divides urinals and cabins, thus usually when a man enters a bathroom stall, it is equal with them going to defecate. At schools, if boys are seen by others entering the cabin, they are called the poop boy (*unchi kun* うんちくん) and publicly made fun of. Some of my informants admitted that in fear of being ridiculed, they would not defecate at school:

> *In elementary school, boys pee, but are embarrassed to poo. They don't want to get inside* [a toilet cabin]. *That's why they do it at home. Middle school was the same. Everyone's embarrassed they might be seen by someone from their class when they get out* [of the stall]. *"You pooped!," they would say.* (male, 66, Osaka)

> *Oh, yes, in my times* [children] *would make fun of you if you pooped at school. Even if you tried to hide it, they would start saying "he pooped, he pooped." Personally, I didn't care too much about it… well, my stomach condition was like that, so I often had to go to the toilet.* (male, 56, Kyoto)

> *Peeing was still OK, but pooping at school was very embarrassing. In the boy's toilet, there are both urinals and normal toilets, so when one goes to the normal toilet, everybody knows* [that he's going to defecate]. *Then you become a laughing stock. Also, it smells. So in elementary school, you either hold it in or do it at home. I learned to hold it in. … At school, your status depends on how long you control yourself. There are school trips. Then, I would hold it in for three days.* (male, 45, Osaka)

Above testimonies come from male informants, but this "inability" of men to defecate in public places seems to be common sense in Japan, which became apparent in another interview with a mother of two:

> *I heard that, well, men go to work in the morning, right? At work, they have to go to the bathroom, but peeing takes only a minute, while poop, well, there aren't many men who can do it quickly. That's why boys are always told to leave home after doing it. It's their habit from their young days. … I would tell my son that. He* [probably] *hesitated to go inside when he was at school. So I would always ask "did you poop?" … I think that every boy*

> *poops before he leaves home. Their moms must ask that.* (female, 77, Nagoya)

The respondent, based on the "common knowledge" assumed her son would hesitate to defecate at school, so she would urge him to go to the bathroom before he left home. As my interviewee also had a daughter, I asked if she used to ask her the same questions, to which she replied: "now that I think about it, no, I didn't. Well, girls can go whenever they want to, can't they?". Moreover, she insisted it was common sense and other mothers surely continue this practice even now (informant was talking about the situation in the 1960s-70s).

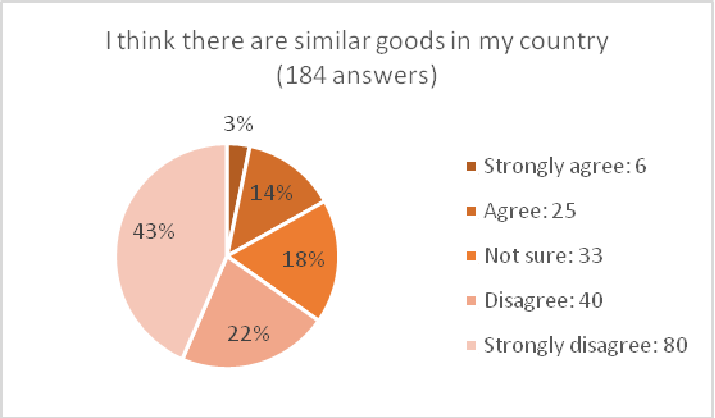
Arguably, the design of men's restrooms with shared urinals and private cabins has become ubiquitous. Therefore, a similar phenomenon could possibly exist in other countries as well, but as there is no data on it, we cannot be sure. What this issue in Japanese context brings to attention though, is the following paradox: on one hand, there is relatively little stigma regarding asking people about their bowel movement, while on the other, actually using the toilet to defecate is considered a social taboo. I argue it is because of a dichotomy between the notion and practice of defecation. Usually, if a culture sees excrement in a negative way, then the practice will be equally negatively charged, ergo will become a social taboo. In Japan, however, the notion of defecation, meaning the concept of excrement and bowel movement, is not particularly stigmatized – this is why it is relatively acceptable to talk about bowel movement. When it comes to the practice, however, progressive adaptation of Western sanitary technology and mores from the Meiji period on, made it a source of embarrassment on par with the Western prototype. The dichotomy between notion and practice of defecation goes beyond the scope of this paper, thus here I only signal the issue and direct the reader to my future publications.

Commodity Realm

The last category identified in this study is the commodity realm. Here I examine symbolic manifestations of excrement that serve no strictly health-oriented, nor educational purposes, but commodify excrement in popular culture.

First, I presented my participants with some poop accessories available in Japan. Among them were telephone straps, bath salts or toys, all looking like a Japanese-style poop. The majority, 65%, stated there were no similar accessories in their countries (Graph 11).[15]

[15] Analyzed questionnaire was conducted in 2016, and it is possible that now answers especially to



Graph 11. "I think there are similar goods in my country"

Interestingly, some of the opinions on poop accessories were quite negative: "[p]eople just don't think poop is gross, which is weird to me because I definitely do" (male, 28, USA). Words like "gross" or disgusting" often appeared in the comments, showing a highly negative attitude towards this particular form of manifestation of excrement. On the other hand, many respondents pointed out that Japanese poops are not exactly realistic:

> *Weird. So many people I know think they're "soft cream" and not poop piles. It's gross.* [I find strange a]*ll of the poop merchandise, and the fact that trendy, cute girls sometimes wear it... But honestly, I don't feel like it is particularly connected to poop when they do. It's moved into the "cute"/funny category. It's very strange.* (male, 35, USA)

> *Depends on the product. I think kawaii poop things are cool - but more realistic ones are more dubious.* (male, 50, Australia)

> *If it does not look like actual poop, but like a comic version I can't see any problem with it, even if it is presented as a dessert or something to eat in general.* (female, 31 Korea)

this question would be different. In 2017 *Emoji Movie* was released, and although it got rather negative reviews, poop toys shaped after one of the characters, the poop emoji, flooded international markets.

> *To me the poop goods on display here don't look much like poop to me. Of course there is the cultural understanding that they represent poop, but (perhaps luckily) they don't resemble the real thing that much. If they did, I would have a harder time swallowing them.* (male, 27, Sweden)

Indeed, Japanese take on poop does not look like actual feces. It is in the shape of a spiral pile, reminiscent of a soft serve ice cream. It is unknown when depicting feces in such way actually started, but we can see similarly shaped excrement in *Gaki-zōshi* (餓鬼草子), a Buddhist painting from the second half of the twelfth century, while in a toilet-themed 2006 calendar released by a probiotic drinks company, it is claimed that spiral poop dates back to the Edo period (1603-1868), where it was used to parody a snake (Yakult 2006).[16]

In popular culture, probably the first depiction of spiral pile poop appeared in *Toiretto Hakase*, "The Toilet Professor," a comedy manga by Torii Kazuyoshi (1978) that ran in Weekly Shōnen Jump from 1970 to 1977. However, at that time it was not exactly cute – "kawaii" poop became the norm thanks to Arale chan, but I will discuss this later. Eventually, the image has become ingrained in Japanese culture, and more poop accessories would be released. For example, a golden poop lucky charm was created in 1999, and it became a hit in 2000 when high-school girls began buying them as "silly souvenirs" – in Japanese *unko* (うんこ) starts from the morpheme *un* (運 as in luck), thus because of this wordplay golden poop became a lucky charm (Gordenker 2007).

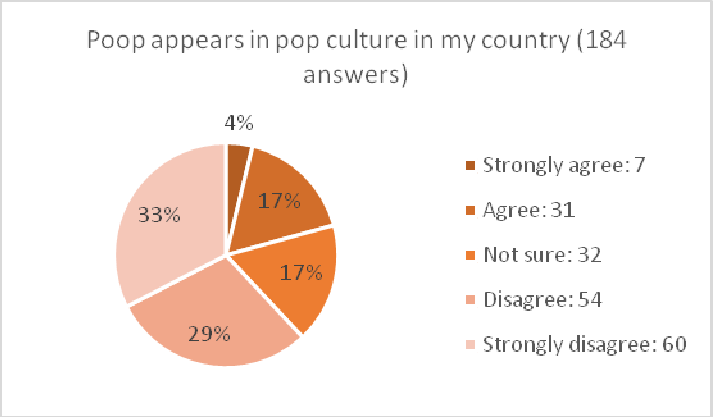
In the same year poop charms were released, Japan's three major telecom carriers – KDDI AU, SoftBank, and NTT-DoCoMo – created first emoji, ideograms and smileys used in electronic messages, and, poop was among them. In 2007 Google partnered with KDDI AU and decided to adopt emoji for Gmail, and from then spiral poop symbol has become the default image for feces (Schwartzberg 2014).[17]

Another example of the commodification of excrement is its use in popular culture. I showed my participants scatological pictures from manga and

[16] Interestingly, feces presented in this "Japanese way" can be found in a painting of Bernard Picart (1673-1733) titled *Le Perfumeur*.

[17] It was not an easy endeavor though – although the Japanese side wanted to have the poop sign in the first cut of Gmail emoji, American headquarters found an animated turd offensive. This episode supports the argument made in this paper that relatively high social visibility of excrement in Japan becomes especially apparent when compared with Western countries. For more information on how poop emoji made its way to America see *The Oral History Of The Poop Emoji* (Schwartzberg 2014).

anime, as well as presented two videos: opening of *Unko san* (うんこさん) (Iya 2009), an anime series about a poop family, and a fragment of *Mottainairando* (もったいないとらんど, Mottai Nightland), a music video of a popular singer Kyary Pamyu Pamyu (2013), in which she defecates a pink poop. As one can see in Graph 12, the majority of respondents, 62%, answered excrement was not used in pop culture in their countries.



Graph 12. "Poop appears in pop culture in my country"

When excrement is used in pop culture, though, it is usually vulgarized. Many compared presented material with *South Park* (Parker and Stone 1997), an adult animated TV series, and pointed to the difference in how excreta are depicted in the series and in Japan. *South Park* is famous for its crude language and dark humor. For example, in the ninth episode of the first season, Mr. Hankey the Christmas Poop appears to comfort Kyle, a Jewish boy, who feels excluded when the rest of the town celebrates Christmas. In the end, Mr. Hankey saves the day, but leaves poop stains as he does. Such vulgar/funny usage is in contrast with how poop tends to be depicted in Japanese media. For example, if we compare it with the *Unko san* cartoon we see that, although it is also on the humorous side, characters look and act very differently. Mr. Hankey looks relatively realistic, while Unko san, although there is no doubt he is a living turd, looks somehow softer; Mr. Hankey leaves brown stains wherever he goes, while Unko san floats having a good time with his friends and family. In follow-up questions on excrement in popular culture my respondents point

out again that the Japanese version of poop looks nothing like the real thing:

> *On the one hand, everyone poops. So it's a common theme that people can identify with. But on the other hand, it's rarely depicted in a realistic way... The poops shown are usually pink or gold and in spiral piles unlike how a human would actually defecate. I've never seen the Unko-san series before, but even that isn't really depicted like an actual poop.* (male, 35, USA)

> *Since poop is more "taboo" in my country, it's mostly used to shock, or for humorous purposes. I suppose the use here is also a bit on the humorous side, but the more it is used the more desensitized people become to it and it loses some of the "edge" if that makes sense.* (male, 27, Sweden)

> *The trend appears to link the desire to "cute-ize" everything to make it more marketable, although to what end beyond that is unclear.* (female, 40, USA)

> *When poop is used in western pop culture it is often used to evoke disgust. I haven't seen any depictions of poop as cute outside Japan.* (male, 39, UK)

This cute makeover seems to be the key to why scatological images are accepted in the country. However, even in Japan, excreta used to be depicted in a more realistic way. Probably the first time poop was used in Japanese pop culture was the already mentioned *Toiretto Hakase* by Torii Kazuyoshi (1978 [1971]). It was about the adventures of the Toilet Professor, who, together with his team, researched excreta. Feces in the comic were in the spiral pile form, but there was nothing cute about them – they were dark, coming out of anuses, and stank. Similar, of even slightly more grotesque, is the excretory image found in another manga, *Makoto chan* (まことちゃん) by Umezu Kazuo (1999). The series ran in Shōnen Sunday from 1976 to 1981 and later returned as *Heisei-ban Makoto chan* (平成版まことちゃん) from 1988 to 1989. The plot is about the life of a kindergartener Makoto Sawada and his family, who often gets into toilet humor.

In contrast with these realistic turds is the pink poop from Toriyama Akira's *Dr. Slump* (Dr.スランプ) (1980) that ran in Weekly Shōnen Jump from 1980 to 1984. *Dr. Slump* is about endeavors of a girl robot Arale chan, who would often play with a cute poop that could talk with her. Japanese usually point to Arale chan as the prototype of "kawaii" poop, thus it is plausible to assume the image was established thanks to this manga. But why exactly has poop become so cute in Japan? I suggest it is a result of the progressive adaptation of Western excretory mores.

When excrement started to appear in manga in the 1970s, it still had some attributes of real feces – it was drawn as dark and smelly. Then it changed into a pink poop in 1980 with *Dr. Slump*. This decade is a crucial time for the development of sanitation in Japan: diffusion of the sewer pipes progressed only following revision of the Sewage Law in 1970, which in turn led to the increase of households installing western style privies – their sales suppressed sales of Japanese-style toilets for the first time in 1977 (Hayashi 2011). Following Inglis' (2001) theory, the development of toilet technology and popularization of private toilets removes excrement from the public sphere. Therefore, in order for depictions of excrement to remain in public, these had to be changed into something deemed acceptable, thus a cute poop was created.

The last example of excreta in the commodity realm is "poop talk" in the media. *Chōkatsu* (腸活) is a term used to describe efforts to keep one's bowel movement regular. Many TV programs broadcast segments on *chōkatsu* with diet suggestions and commentaries from physicians, examples of exercise stimulating bowel movement, but also footage from colonoscopy or detailed descriptions of one's stool. Usually, participants of talk shows are celebrities, and it is the same in the case of "poop talk," but sometimes even high-profile personalities, such as Wada Akiko, a popular Japanese singer, appear to talk about their bowel movement.

In response to whether "poop talk" was a suitable topic for TV, 47% of the participants answered positively (Graph 13). Thus, it appears that talking about defecation on television is not especially negatively charged. Nonetheless, in the next question, 71% answered discussions on poop did not appear in the media in their countries (Graph 14).

Analyzing additional comments regarding toilet content in the media, rather large amount of discomfort is clearly present:

> *Sometimes you can find the topic of poop in so many programs, that it gets hard to avoid. If it comes up too often that is also a little uncomfortable. I don't feel like hearing about other peoples*

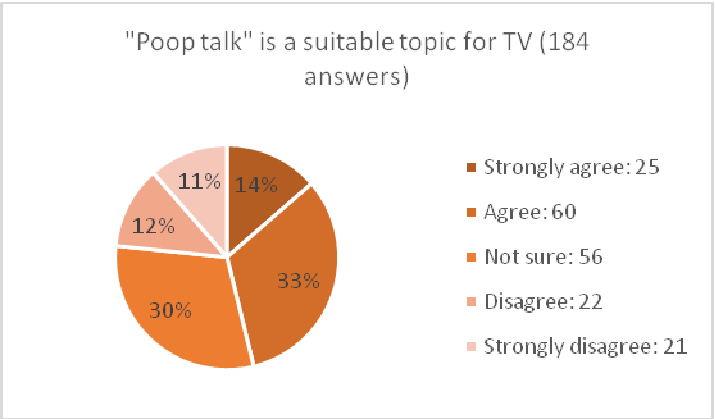
> *digestion early in the morning while having my breakfast.* (female, 31 Korea)

> **I* think it's pretty gross. I understand poop and awareness is important but still I don't want to see it when I'm eating or talking with my coworkers.* (male, 26, Italy)

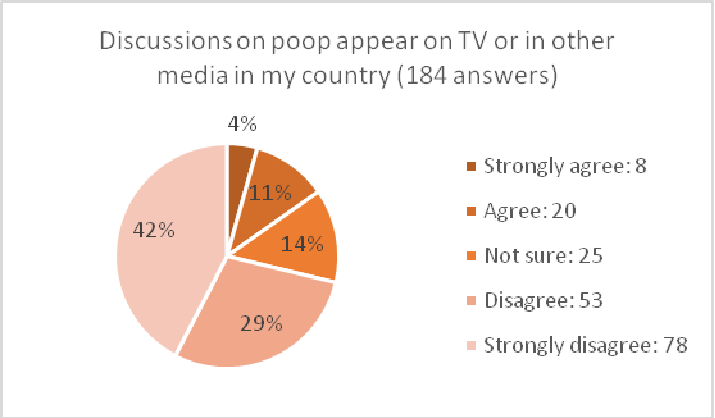
> *On cable TV, they have these endless commercials for various laxative products, teas and what not, I find them quite annoying. The woman coming out of the toilet and happily declaring 'dekita!' while I'm eating really bugs me.* (male, 45, USA)

What especially triggers discomfort is seeing scatological content while eating. People tend to dissociate eating and defecating, starting and end functions of the digestive system, while what we eat strictly influences our evacuation. One respondent pointed out Japanese low in fiber diet might be the reason for such a high demand for such programs:

> *Considering how constipated I get after staying at my inlaws' home eating their minimal-vegetables minimal-fiber white-rice washoku diet* [Japanese-style diet]*, I am /not surprised by this in the least/. I think the reason we don't talk about poop in American media is because fiber supplementation and laxatives are heavily advertised instead.* (female, 26, USA)



Graph 13. "'Poop talk' is a suitable topic for TV"



Graph 14. "Discussions on poop appear on TV or in other media in my country"

The suggestion that "poop talk" is popular in Japanese media because there is no or little advertisement of laxatives is not true – on the contrary, medications regulating bowel movement are heavily advertised and have separate sections at drug stores. However, the idea that Japanese diet might lead to constipation is sound and explains why there are so many programs on the topic. Nevertheless, what is of more importance for this study is the way topics such as constipation are handled. For example, in one program three women suffering from severe constipation talk about their problems. One had not had a bowel movement for one month and was taken by an ambulance, another admits she has to scrape out feces with her finger, while the last one drinks laxatives at the weekend and evacuates one-week worth of excreta (footage from this program was presented to the respondents). Celebrities in the studio listen to these confessions and open up about their own problems so that at the end all can practice how to stimulate bowel movement, which must be working, as one participant starts yelling "it's about to get out!" (*dechau* 出ちゃう).
Therefore, although programs on *chōkatsu* deal with problems of bowel movement irregularities, they do it to produce entertaining content, rather than provide medical advice. This quality makes Japanese "poop talk" programs stand out from the ones my respondents were used to:

> *I feel it's only acceptable in a medical context. Popularising poop any other way seems childish and immature.* (male, 39, Australia)

In my country, it might appear on a medical show, or possibly in stand up comedy. Nothing like the aforementioned examples. But I can't help but feel like the examples above are taking it a bit too far and are sensationalizing it or using poop because of public interest. I mean, normalizing it and talking about health issues is good, but milking it for entertainment is, at least to me, not an interesting topic (though I am not explicitly against it per se). (male, 27, Sweden)

In UK it's either comedy or more serious medical programming with real science, not pop science with celebrities trying to entertain and inform at the same time. (male, 49, UK)

The only place that I think this sort of thing would be acceptable are on medical style shows, and definitely not in the fun, silly way these are depicted. It would likely be serious and discussed as so by a doctor. They'd probably also use a lot of euphemisms to avoid saying poop/fecal matter, such as "blockage" or "mass". (male, 35, USA)

Figure 4. Examples of "poop talk" from Japanese TV.[18]

[18] Snapshots from the following programs: 1) *Yoyaku sattō! Sugowaza no senmongairai SP* (予約

Informants deem the way defecation is presented on Japanese TV as "childish," "silly" or "immature."[19] For them, the only acceptable way to talk about defecation on television is from a medical perspective. Moreover, it is embarrassing to appear on such shows as "anyone apart from a doctor who would dare to talk about their stool on TV would be forever: 'the person who talked about poop on TV'" (female, 30, Germany). Such comments indicate that for the respondents, excrement is acceptable only in the health realm, and even then its mentions are regulated by euphemisms. In Japan, on the other hand, poop is used to make entertaining content for viewers – it is commodified.

As I have argued in this paper, in Japan the correlation between excrement and health is deeply ingrained. This is the reason why people relatively freely discuss bowel movement, and why there are so many educational materials regarding defecation. Consequently, the notion of defecation has become sanitized by the health paradigm, and as such is present in everyday imagination. Without particularly negative charging, excrement became a material ready to be commodified as poop charms, manga characters, or "poop talk" on television. These examples in the commodity realm show how various actors capitalize on scatological imaginary, thus are the farthest from the original health aspect that made poop relatively socially accepted in Japan in the first place. Nevertheless, the fact that the image of feces is present outside of the health realm, and could even be commodified, is the ultimate evidence that, from a comparative perspective, the notion of excrement is not particularly stigmatized in Japan.

Conclusion

This paper examined relatively high social visibility of excrement in Japan and categorized symbolic manifestations of excrement into three realms of health, education, and commodity. I contend that health consciousness is the main reason behind this phenomenon – the correlation between regular bowel movement and health condition is common sense and has become one of the health barometers. Thus, the health aspect of excrement sanitizes it, to some degree, of possible negative charging, making bowel

---

殺到！スゴ腕の専門外来スペシャル), TBS, 7/1/2016; 2) *Sono gen'in, chō ni ari!* (その原因、腸にあり！), Fuji TV, 29/3/2016; 3) *Nakai Masahiro no kinyōbi no sumairu tachi e*. (中居正広の金曜日のスマイルたちへ) TBS, 4/9/2015; 4) *Sekai ichi uketai jugyō* (世界一受けたい授業), Nihon TV, 2/15/2014.

[19] It is important to note that all material on "poop talk" used in the questionnaire comes from programs aired on private TV stations. There are many programs on similar topics on NHK, the national public broadcasting organization, and these are designed from a more medical perspective.

movement on par with any other health indicators, such as headaches. Because of the accepted connection between regular evacuation and health conditions, much importance is put into educating (mainly) children about their bowel movement. Examples of educational manifestations of excrement constitute the education realm, which is a natural outgrowth of the health one. The third category, the commodity realm, does not stem directly from the health aspect. Indeed, what originally enabled manifestations of excrement in public was its health connotations, but examples categorized in the last group use scatological concepts for profit. I argue this is the utmost example of high social visibility of excrement in Japan.

Moreover, this paper indicates some issues that need further investigation:

1) majority of the negative comments regarding manifestations of excrement in Japan come from respondents from the so-called Western cultural sphere;

2) difference between notion and practice of defecation – scatological concepts are generally accepted, while the actual practice is more stigmatized;

3) cute makeover of the poop image and its possible relation to the development of sanitation technology in the 1970s-80s.

A thorough examination of these questions was beyond the scope of the paper, but they will orientate the direction of my future research.

Finally, it is important to note that Japan is not the only country with symbolic manifestations of excrement: Taipei has a "Modern Toilet" restaurant in the popular Ximending district where clients eat dishes from mini toilet bowls; similar toilet-themed restaurant called "Poop Cafe Dessert Bar," inspired by the Taiwanese original, is in Toronto; South Korea houses many poop-related attractions[20], such as "Poopoo Land" in Seoul; and Prague Zoo opened a new permanent exhibition on the world of animal excrement in May 2019. Recently, *The Guardian* article even argued that poo is no longer taboo (Robinson 2019). Nonetheless, it is Japan that gained a reputation as the country obsessed with poop and toilets. Why?

First, I suggest orientalism is to blame. The way Japan has been represented in the West tends to be problematic: West is considered the norm, and Japan is the weird Other. What adds to such comparisons is the fact that Japan is arguably one of the most Westernized countries in Asia,

[20] For a list of poop-related attractions in South Korea see *In South Korea, People Are Going Crazy for These Poop-Centric Attractions* (Ladner 2018).

thus any differences in Westerner's eyes might become even more apparent.

Second, Japan's high-tech toilets are the paragon of hygienic modernity. As it was mentioned throughout the paper, Western-style toilets embody negative attitudes toward defecation. Consequently, the more advanced a country's toilets are, the lower social visibility of excrement becomes. Japan, however, has probably the most advanced toilets in the world, but, as this paper highlighted, symbolic manifestations of excrement are in abundance. I contend this ambiguity plays a significant role in why it is Japan that got the "poop-obsessed country" label. With this in mind, however, I suggest that instead of wondering why poo doesn't really fall into any of the taboo categories here in Japan, it may be just as, or even more, valid to ask why poo has been forever locked inside those "Do Not Touch / Do Not Talk About" taboo boxes in other, notably Western, countries.

References

Akatsuki Live Entertainment. 2019. "Ōpun yori 1 shūkan de raijōsha 1 man'nin toppa! [one week from the opening number of visitors hits 10.000 people!]" (Akatsuki Live Entertainment 『オープンより 1 週間で来場者 1 万人突破！』).
https://ale.tokyo/%E3%82%A2%E3%82%BD%E3%83%93%E3%83%AB/2601/ Accessed 2019.07.14.

American Library Association. 2018. "Top Ten Most Challenged Books Lists." Accessed 2019.07.07.
http://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks/frequentlychallengedbooks/top10.

Anderson, Margaret L. and Howard F. Taylor. 2009. *Sociology: The Essentials*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Asamiya Unga. 2017. "Reibun ni 'unko' ga haitta kanji doriru, hatsubai 2 shūkan de 63 man bu [Kanji drill with 'poop' in example sentences sold 630.000 copies in two weeks since release]." *LINE News* (朝宮うん河『例文に「うんこ」が入った漢字ドリル、発売 2 週間で 63 万部』LINE NEWS).
http://news.line.me/issue/oa-davincinews/sl3gq3p4tqnq?utm_source=Twitter&utm_medium=share&utm_campaign=none&share_id=Fzg92226123269. Accessed 2019.07.13.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. 1984. *Rabelais and His World*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Bay, Alexander R. 2012. "Nation from the Bottom Up: Disease, Toilets and Waste Management in Prewar Japan (Social History of Medicine in Modern Japan)." *Historia scientiarum. Second series: international journal of the History of Science Society of Japan* 22 (2).142-158.

Bayless, Martha. 2013. *Sin and Filth in Medieval Culture: The Devil in the Latrine*. New Tork: Routledge.

Bellah, Robert N. 2003. *Imagining Japan: the Japanese tradition and its modern interpretation*: University of California Press.

BlogIssues. 2007. "The Japanese And Poo... Still Going Strong." http://www.blogissues.com/2007/11/19/the-japanese-%20and-poo-%20still-going-%20strong/ Accessed 2019.07.17.

Boesveld, Sarah. 2012. “Oh, The Humanities!: The poop on the kids' book debate.” *National Post*.
http://www.blogissues.com/2007/11/19/the-japanese-%20and-poo-%20still-going-%20strong/ Accessed 2019.07.15.

Corbin, Alain. 1986. *The foul and the fragrant: odor and the French social imagination*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Cryan, John F. and Timothy G. Dinan. 2012. "Mind-altering microorganisms: the impact of the gut microbiota on brain and behaviour." *Nat Rev Neurosci* 13 (10):701-12. DOI: 10.1038/nrn3346.

Curry, Ann. 2012. "Bums, Poops, and Pees: A Scholarly Examination of Why Children Love and Adults Censor the Scatological in Children’s Books." Information in a Local and Global Context, Waterloo.

Dayman, Lucy. 2017. "Inside Japan's Toilet Obsessed Culture." *culturetrip*. https://theculturetrip.com/asia/japan/articles/inside-japans-toilet-obsessed-culture/ Accessed 2019.07.12.

Elias, Norbert. 1995. *The Civilising Process*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Felice, Valeria D., Eamonn M. Quigley, Aideen M. Sullivan, Gerard W. O'Keeffe and Siobhain M. O'Mahony. 2016. "Microbiota-gut-brain signalling in Parkinson's disease: Implications for non-motor symptoms." *Parkinsonism & Related Disorders* 27.1-8.

Filip, Mihaela, Valentina Tzaneva and Dan L. Dumitrascu. 2018. "Fecal transplantation: digestive and extradigestive clinical applications." *Clujul Med* 91 (3):259-265. DOI: 10.15386/cjmed-946.

Freud, Sigmund. 1958. "Preface to Bourke's Scatologic Rites of All Nations (1913)." In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, edited by James Strachey, 333-338. London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis.

Freud, Sigmund. 1991. *On Sexuality: Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality and Other Works*. Edited by Angela Richards.

Frühstück, Sabine. 2003. *Colonizing sex: sexology and social control in modern Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Furuya Yūsaku. 2017. *Unko kanji doriru: nihon'ichi tanoshii kanji doriru 1* [poop kanji drill: number one fun drill in Japan 1]. Tokyo: B□kyōsha (古屋雄作『うんこ漢字ドリル：日本一楽しい漢字ドリル１』文響社).

Goffman, Erving. 1967. *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.

Goffman, Erving. 1973. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press.

Gomi T□rō. 1977. *Minna unchi* [everyone poops]. Tokyo: Kane/Miller Book Publishers (五味太郎『みんなうんち』Kane/Miller Book Publishers).

Goode, Erich. 2016. *Deviant Behavior*. London: Routledge.

Gordenker, Alice. 2007. "Gold poop." The Japan Times. http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2007/03/20/reference/gold-poop/#.WFDS7PmLTIW. Accessed 2016.12.14.

Gross, Edward and Gregory P. Stone. 1964. “Embarrassment and the Analysis of Role Requirements." *American Journal of Sociology* 70 (1):1-15.

Hanley, Susan B. 1987. "Urban Sanitation in Preindustrial Japan." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18 (1):1-26. DOI: 10.2307/204726.

Hanley, Susan B. 1999. *Everyday things in premodern Japan : the hidden legacy of material culture*: University of California Press.

Hayashi Ryōsuke. 2011. *Sekai ichi no toire. Uoshuretto kaihatsu monogatari* [number one toilet in the world. Story of how the Washlet was

developed]. Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun Shuppan (林良祐『世界一のトイレウォシュレット開発物語』朝日新聞出版).

Herb. 2009. "Japan's Obsessed with Poop." https://myparentswerepotheads.wordpress.com/2009/11/17/japans-obsessed-with-poop/. Accessed 2016.12.15.

Howell, David L. 2013. "Fecal Matters: Prolegomenon to a History of Shit in Japan." In *Japan at Nature's Edge: The Environmental Context of a Global Power*, edited by Ian J. Miller, Julia Adney Thomas and Brett L. Walker, 137-151. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Hubbard, L Wrong. 2006. "Santa's gift and the Japanese poop obsession." Poop Report. http://www.poopreport.com/BMnewswire/santas_japanese_poop.html. Accessed 2016.12.15.

Imada, Sumio, Yuichiro Yamada and Jon Haidt. 1993. "The differences of ken'o (disgust) eperiences for Japanese and American students." *Studies in The Humanities and Sciences* 34. 155-173.

Inglis, David. 2001. *A sociological history of excretory experience : defecatory manners and toiletry technologies*. Lewiston N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press.

Iya Sakota. 2009. *Unko san* [mr. Poop]. Iya Sakado Film (伊屋迫汰『うんこさん』弥栄堂フキルム).

J-Cast News. 2016. "Gakkō toire "washiki toire zenpai shiro" sonna giron no mondaiten to wa [the problem with 'abolish all Japanese-style toilets' in school lavatories]." J-Cast News (J-Cast ニュース『学校トイレ「和式は全廃しろ」そんな議論の問題点とは』). http://www.j-cast.com/2016/11/12283256.html Accessed 2019.12.14.

Katō Atsushi. 2015. *Toire ga kawareba, kurashi ga kawaru* [if the toilets change, the everyday life will, too]. Tokyo: Japan Toilet Labo (加藤篤『トイレが変われば、暮らしが変わる』日本トイレ研究所).

Katō Atsushi. 2018. *Unchi wa sugoi* [poop is great]. Tokyo: East Press (加藤篤『うんちはすごい』イースト新書).

Kei. 2018. "Unko: Japan's weird obsession with poop-themed stuff." *DeJapan Blog*. http://blog.dejapan.com/2018/11/29/unko-japan-poop-themed-items-kanji-curry-squishies/ Accessed 2019.07.19.

Kelly, John R., Paul J. Kennedy, John F. Cryan, Timothy G. Dinan, Gerard Clarke and Niall P. Hyland. 2015. "Breaking down the barriers: the gut microbiome, intestinal permeability and stress-related psychiatric disorders." *Front Cell Neurosci* (9). 392.

Kotzwinkle, William, Glenn Murray. 2011. *Walter the Farting Dog*. New York: Random House Publisher Services.

Kowalski, Karol and Agata Mulak. 2019. "Brain-Gut-Microbiota Axis in Alzheimer's Disease." *J Neurogastroenterol Motil* 25 (1). 48-60.

Kyary Pamyu Pamyu. 2013. *Mottainaitorando* [mottai nightland]. Directed by Tamukai Jun (きゃりーぱみゅぱみゅ『もったいないとらんど』田向潤監督). https://youtu.be/7bFHzDa9U9w Accessed 2019.12.15.

Ladner, Mimsie. 2018. "In South Korea, People Are Going Crazy for These Poop-Centric Attractions." https://theculturetrip.com/asia/south-korea/articles/in-south-korea-people-are-going-crazy-for-these-poop-centric-attractions/ Accessed July 12, 2019.

Lee, Jong-Chan. 2008. "Hygienic Governance and Military Hygiene in the Making of Imperial Japan, 1868-1912." *Historia scientiarum. Second series: international journal of the History of Science Society of Japan* 18 (1):1-23.

Leondis, Tony. 2017. *The Emoji Movie*. Columbia Pictures, Sony Pictures Animation.

Mari. 2009. "How serious our Poop Obsession is." http://smt.blogs.com/mari_diary/2009/08/how-much-we-are-the-poop-obsession.html Accessed 2019.12.15.

Mayer, Emeran A., Kirsten Tillisch and Arpana Gupta. 2015. "Gut/brain axis and the microbiota." *J Clin Invest* 125 (3):926-38. DOI: 10.1172/JCI76304.

MEXT. 2016. Kōritsu shōchūgakkō shisetsu no toire no jōkyō chōsa no kekka ni tsuite [survey on the condition of toilets in public elementary and middle schools]. Tokyo: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan (文部科学省『公立小中学校施設のトイレの状況調査の結果について』).

Munsch, Robert N., Alan Daniel. 1990. *Good Families Don't*. New York: Dell.

Murakami Yachiyo, Sebe Masayuki. 2007. *Unpi un'nyo unchi ungo: unko no ehon* [poop picture book]. Tokyo: Horupu Shuppan (村上八千世、せべまさゆき『もうんぴ・うんにょ・うんち・うんご：うんこのえほん』ほるぷ出版).

Nagata Koichi, Hisao Tajiri, Toru Mitsushima, Kenichi Utano, Ken Takabayashi, Naoki Watanabe, Asana Akabane, Takashi Kato, and Michiaki Hirayama. 2013. "Nihonjin to amerikajin no daichō no nagasa wa chigau no ka?: daichō 3D-CT (kasō naishikyō) ni yoru 1,3000 mei no kentō [colorectal length in Japanese and American asymptomatic adults based on ct colonography]." *Gastroenterological Endoscopy* 55 (3):435-444 (永田浩一　田尻久雄　光島徹　歌野健一　高林健　渡辺直輝　赤羽麻奈　加藤貴司　平山眞章「日本人とアメリカ人の大腸の長さは違うのか?：大腸 3D-CT(仮想内視鏡) による 1,300 名の検討」『日本消化器内視鏡学会雑誌』).

Parker, Trey, Matt Stone. 1997. *South Park*. Celluloid Studios.

Pilkey, Dav. 1997. *The Adventures of Captain Underpants.* New York, NY : Scholastic Inc.

Robinson, Peter. 2019. "From the joke shop to the high street: why poo is no longer taboo." *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2019/apr/10/poo-taboo-emojis-party-bags-board-games-museum Accessed 2019.12.01.

Rogaski, Ruth. 2004. *Hygienic modernity: meanings of health and disease in treaty-port China*: University of California Press.

Schwartzberg, Lauren. 2014. "The Oral History Of The Poop Emoji (Or, How Google Brought Poop To America)." *Fast Company*. https://www.fastcompany.com/3037803/the-oral-history-of-the-poop-emoji-or-how-google-brought-poop-to-america Accessed 2019.07.15.

Sotheby's. 2005. "131 Japanese medical prints." http://www.sothebys.com/es/auctions/ecatalogue/2015/music-continental-books-manuscripts-l15406/lot.131.html Accessed 2019.11.30.

Szczygiel, Marta E. 2016a. From Night Soil to Washlet: The Material Culture of Japanese Toilets. *Electronic journal of contemporary japanese studies* 16 (3). http://www.japanesestudies.org.uk/ejcjs/vol16/iss3/szczygiel.html. Accessed 2019.07.15.

Szczygiel, Marta E. 2016b. "Questionnaire: Discovery of Embarrassment: Social and Cultural Construction of Excrement in Japan. Foreigners' Attitudes Toward Manifestations of Excrement in Japan." https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfSQaJeBwFavP7V_nyfhbYFk-LuBSrBlk0glhzoG_Tu29yGUg/viewform. Accessed 2019.12.20.

Szczygiel, Marta E. 2017. "Sociology of Waste in Christian Europe and Japan: Comparative Analysis of the Notion of Human Waste in Both Contexts." *Journal of International and Advanced Japanese Studies* 9 (3):237-250.

Tajima, Kayo. 2007. "The Marketing of Urban Human Waste in the Early Edo/Tokyo Metropolitan Area." *Environnement Urbain/Urban Environment* 1:13-30.

Takekoshi, Yosaburō. 1907. *Japanese rule in Formosa*. London, New York, Bombay and Calcutta: Longmans, Green, and Co.

Torii Kazuyoshi. 1978. *Toiretto hakase* [the toilet professor]. Tokyo: Shūeisha (とりいかずよし『トイレット博士』集英社).

Toriyama Akira. 1980. *Dr. Slump*. Tokyo: □hūeisha (鳥山明『Dr.スランプ』集英社).

Tororu. 2018. *Oshiri tantei* [butt detective]. Tokyo: Toei Animation (トロル『おしりたんてい』東映アニメーション).

Umezu Kazuo. 1999. *Makoto chan volume 1*. Tokyo: □hōgakukan (楳図 かずお『まことちゃん』小学館).

Valles-Colomer, Mireia, Gwen Falony, Youssef Darzi, Ettje F. Tigchelaar, Jun Wang, Raul Y. Tito, Carmen Schiweck, Alexander Kurilshikov, Marie Joossens, Cisca Wijmenga, Stephan Claes, Lukas Van Oudenhove, Alexandra Zhernakova, Sara Vieira-Silva, and Jeroen Raes. 2019. "The neuroactive potential of the human gut microbiota in quality of life and depression." *Nat Microbiol* 4 (4):623-632. DOI: 10.1038/s41564-018-0337-x.

Vigarello, Georges. 1988. *Concepts of cleanliness: Changing Attitudes in France since the Middle Ages*. Translated by Jean Birrell, *Past and present publications*. Cambridge; New York;: Cambridge University Press.

Walthall, Anne. 1988. "Village Networks. Sōdai and the Sale of Edo Nightsoil." *Monumenta Nipponica* 43 (3):279-303.

Weinberg, Martin S. 1968. "Embarrassment: Its Variable and Invariable Aspects." *Social Forces* 46:382–88.

Yakult. 2006. Kai-un Toire Karendā [good fortune toilet calendar] (YAKULT『快ウン　トイレカレンダー』).

Yang, Beibei, Jinbao Wei, Peijun Ju, and Jinghong Chen. 2019. "Effects of regulating intestinal microbiota on anxiety symptoms: A systematic review." *Gen Psychiatr* 32 (2):e100056. DOI: 10.1136/gpsych-2019-100056.

Tanaka Yōko, Masahide Fukazawa and Tororu. 2012. *Oshiri tantei* [butt detective]. Tokyo: Popurasha (田中陽子 深澤雅秀 トロル『おしりたんてい』ポプラ社).

AUTHOR'S PROFILE

Marta E. Szczygiel

Marta Szczygiel is a Japan Society for the Promotion of Science postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Sociology at Tokyo University. She received her M.A. in Japanese Studies from the Adam Mickiewicz University in 2012, and after being awarded the MEXT scholarship, she pursued further studies at the Graduate School of Human Sciences at Osaka University. In 2017 Szczygiel earned her doctorate in Human Sciences from said university. Szczygiel's research examines overlooked phenomena from everyday life in Japan and analyzes them from a comparative perspective. Her doctoral dissertation is the first to explore Japanese attitudes toward excretion, compare them with those of the West, and analyze the socio-cultural origins of Japan's advanced toilets. She is currently developing her dissertation into a book tentatively entitled *Flushed with Embarrassment: Evolution of Japanese Toilet Culture and Technology*.

PRACE NADSYŁANE / FOR CONTRIBUTORS / 投稿

1. Przyjmujemy niepublikowane gdzie indziej dokumenty w formacie MS Word, w objętości do ok. 40 000 znaków z włączeniem spacji. Wymagany język dokumentów do publikacji to angielski lub japoński. W innych językach przyjmowane są wyłącznie tłumaczenia japońskich tekstów.
2. Prosimy dostosować transkrypcję wyrazów japońskich do standardu Hepburna lub Kunrei, przy użyciu dostępnych czcionek. Transkrypcja wyrazów niejapońskich powinna być zgodna ze standardem *de facto* dla danego języka. Redakcja może zasugerować zmianę systemu transkrypcji tekstu.
3. Przypisy powinny znajdować się na dole strony.
4. Do tekstu głównego powinno zostać załączone krótkie streszczenie oraz informacja o autorze w języku angielskim.
5. Komitet redakcyjny decyduje o dopuszczeniu tekstu do publikacji i powiadamia o tym fakcie autora.
6. Nadesłanie tekstu oznacza zgodę na jego publikację drukiem i na wprowadzenie do tekstu niezbędnych zmian edytorskich.
7. Teksty prosimy nadsyłać pocztą elektroniczną.

1. We accept documents unpublished elsewhere in MS Word format, not longer than 40 000 characters including spaces. Documents should be in English or Japanese. Only translations from Japanese may be accepted in other languages.
2. Use available fonts to adjust the romanization of to the Hepburn or Kunrei standard. Words other than Japanese should be romanized according to the *de facto* standard for a given language. We may recommend the change of romanization system.
3. Footnotes should be included on the bottom of the page.
4. Main text should come with short summary and information on the contributor in English.
5. The editorial board qualifies a text for publication and notifies the author of this fact.
6. It is understood that by submitting the text the contributors give their consent to its publication in print and to making necessary editorial changes.
7. We await your e-mail (computer file) contributions.

１．MS Word を用いて書かれた４万字以内の未刊行の文章を受領する。用いられるべき言語は英語または日本語である。ただし、日本語テキストからの翻訳については、他言語の文章も受領される。
２．日本語語彙のローマ字表記は、ヘボン式または訓令式とし標準フォントを使用すること。日本語以外の語彙のローマ字表記は、各言語の標準に従う。編集委員会は、ローマ字表記規則の変更を求める場合もある。
３．注釈はページ下に載せる。
４．本文に要約と著者紹介を英語で付記すること。
５．編集委員会は、投稿原稿の掲載の可否を決定し、その旨投稿者に通知する。
６．論文は、投稿された段階で、委員会がそれを公刊し、編集上不可避の変更を行うことを許可したものと見なされる。
７．原稿は、電子メール（電子文書版）で、下記に送付すること。

Silva Iaponicarum
Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza
Katedra Orientalistyki, Zakład Japonistyki
ul. Grunwaldzka 6
60-780 Poznań, Poland
E-mail: silvajp@amu.edu.pl