

**TEAM JAPAN: THEMES OF 'JAPANESENESS' IN MASS MEDIA SPORTS
NARRATIVES**

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Abstract

This dissertation concerns the reproduction and negotiation of Japanese national identity at the intersection between sports, media, and globalization. The research includes the analysis of newspaper coverage of the most significant sporting events in recent Japanese history, including the 2014 Koshien National High School Baseball Championships, the awarding of the People's Honor Award, the 2011 FIFA Women's World Cup, wrestler Hakuho's record breaking victories in the sumo ring, and the bidding process for the 2020 Olympic Games. 2054 Japanese language articles were examined by thematic analysis in order to identify the extent to which established themes of "Japaneseness" were reproduced or renegotiated in the coverage. The research contributes to a broader understanding of national identity negotiation by illustrating the manner in which established symbolic boundaries are reproduced in service of the nation, particularly via mass media. Furthermore, the manner in which change is negotiated through processes of assimilation and rejection was considered through the lens of hybridity theory.

To my wife, Ari, and my children, Hiroto and Mia.

Your love sustained me throughout this process.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 2012, while sitting on my sofa in Japan, I found myself watching a Japanese magazine program about a group of three men who had travelled to Europe to participate in the annual egg tossing championships. The three competitors had made a strong accounting of themselves, tossing eggs high into the air and catching them at a distance without breaking them in the process. The sparse, but enthusiastic, crowd cheered the teams as they competed for their home countries and the program built a sense of drama around the event that made it compelling television. In the end, the Japanese team managed to win one of the event's many contests. Upon receiving the winning egg cleanly, one of the Japanese members sprinted giddily along the sidelines, playing to the crowd, before eventually dropping to his knees and sliding along the grass in a crescendo of euphoria. At the peak of his excitement, the man shouted at the top of his lungs, in English, "I'm a soldier of Japan!"

The competitors in the annual egg tossing championships are neither rich nor famous. There are no major endorsements and, for the most part, there is no mass media coverage. The games they play do not appear in the Olympic Games, nor are they as high profile as the FIFA World Cup. Still, participants travel far and wide to compete in an event that, from the outside looking in, appears somewhat absurd. They train and practice and organize. They wear the marks of their respective countries on their uniforms and, with great enthusiasm, they demonstrate pride in bringing glory to their homelands. To

watch the display of skill, and the expressions of joy and national pride, is to be reminded that nationality matters. It certainly mattered a great deal to the egg tossers, and despite the absurdity of it all, a twinge of national pride may be inescapable to audiences at home vicariously sharing in the moment of glory. This small, peculiar example offers a clue to the importance of sport in the complex set of practices that constitute nationalism, and national identity, particularly as they intersect with mass media.

In the era of mass media, organized sports have not only served the public in a participatory capacity, but also as a form of narrative performance. At a local level, participation in sport has united communities, strengthened important bonds, and reinforced important values. At a national level, the performance of athletic events has offered a sense of connectedness that makes one out of many. Anderson (1991) attributed the rise of national consciousness, in part, to the effects of print-capitalism and the intensification of mass communication during the Reformation. The nation, as an imagined community, emerges out of a new consciousness that owes much to shared narratives and shifting scales of perception. Appadurai (1990, 1996, 2001) argues that the global emerges out of a similar shift in consciousness, as individuals imagine themselves increasingly interconnected, often independent of geography. Mass media play an important role in the articulation of such discourses. The narratives offered through mass media are grounds for the deliberation of culture and identity and sports play an integral role in that process.

In this research, I share Reissman's (2008) position that mass media stories "create possibilities for social identities, group belonging, and collective action" (p. 54).

The danger in foregrounding mass media in this way is in the suggestion that audiences receive messages uncritically, resulting in an essentialist view of identity. Nothing could be further from the truth, as I will describe later. I argue in this study that mass media narratives hold a dominant position in contemporary discourse, and as such, offer the possibility of both strong identification and contestation. This study illustrates the ways in which mass media narratives thematically construct understandings of the local, national, and global and the interaction between them. In particular, this study emphasizes the nation and its centrality to such discourse. Rather than a top-down approach to national identity, this study attempts to characterize a particular form of discourse central to Japanese culture, and identify the ways in which that discourse reflects historical themes. What can the example of Japan teach us about processes of national identity negotiation as they unfold across the globe? What can be understood about the role of mass media in these processes? How does this research contribute to the understanding of hybridity theory, particularly with respect to cultural assimilation?

Japan presents an important context for research of this kind. Horne (2005), adopting a political economy perspective, argues that the mediation of sport “needs to be understood in specific political, economic, and ideological contexts, such as the specific trajectories of and developments in the relationship between the media and sport in nonwestern societies” (p. 428). He suggests that Japan represents an important context for this sort of work, given the nation’s centrality to contemporary social, political, and economic power. Furthermore, he contends that Japan has been one of the world’s largest consumers of sports media for generations, and that the intersection of sports and media

in Japan is significant to an understanding of the phenomenon in general. An examination of how these particular discourses and their relationships to Japanese history serve as a useful entry point into questions about the reproduction and editing of Japanese national identity.

The modern history of Japan, beginning in the late-19th century, prominently features several periods of dynamic change. The Meiji Period, spanning the turn of the 20th century, is characterized by the reintroduction of Japan to the international community after a long period of self-imposed isolation. It was a period of intense public discourse, in which prominent intellectuals debated Japan's position in the international order, and proposed idealized notions of Japanese national character. Likewise, the reconstruction period following World War II represents a period of fundamental change. As Japan transitioned from an international colonial power to a nation defeated in war, public discourse again wrestled with issues of self-definition in the face of new circumstances. The intensification of social relations in the contemporary world, attributed to processes of globalization, characterize a new period of significant change. As Japan has increasingly found itself entangled in global economic and political events, national identity discourses have become salient once again. During each of these periods, sports narratives, communicated through mass media channels, have helped to provide a sense of togetherness within Japan, and have offered an image of Japanese character to the Japanese people and to the community of nations.

Japan is also an important case, given Ivy's (1995) assertion that there was no "discursively united nation of the 'Japanese' before the 18th century" (p. 8). Much of the

tradition that binds the Japanese into a nation was, in fact, invented in modern times. Vlastos (1998) compiles a wide variety of cases to support this assertion, ranging from the invention of Japanese-style labor movements, the Japanese village, the martial arts, and domesticity, to name a few. In each case, Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1983) *invented tradition* is evoked to demonstrate the many spheres of Japanese life touched by the concept. Authors such as Thompson (1998) and Frost (2010) have focused on the invention of sumo and the *yokozuna* system, working at the intersection of sports and culture to elaborate on Hobsbawm and Ranger's seminal work.

Japan is frequently positioned as a bridge between East and West. The historical connection between Japan and its Asian neighbors constitutes one area of national identity construction. At the same time, the modern history of Japan is marked by the nation's relationship to Europe and the United States. Japanese national identity is constructed both in the desire to emulate the so-called "West," as well as in efforts to define something essentially Japanese. Darling-Wolf and Mendelson (2008) argue that Japan's example emphasizes the multidirectional nature of globalization, steering researchers away from the idea that globalization is equivalent to Americanization. Using the lens of hybridity to discuss the various tensions between the local, national, and global in Japan, new insights can be gained about a range of historical and cultural phenomena. Pieterse (2009) writes that hybridity thinking is a "more radical and penetrating angle that suggests not only that things are no longer the way they used to be but were never really the way they used to be, or used to be viewed" (p. 97). Citing Lowe (1991), he argues that hybridity theory is "the antidote to essentialist notions of identity

and ethnicity” (p. 77). The Japanese example is marked by its strict link between blood, culture, and nation. In modern times, Japanese national identity has largely relied on the essentialist perspective that people born of Japanese blood engage with an authentic Japanese culture and unite as a nation around the two. Over time, Japan has been forced to grapple with challenges to this understanding and perhaps today more so than ever. Iwabuchi’s (2002) notion of strategic hybridism is considered in understanding this feature of the Japanese context.

This study employs a narrative analysis approach, focusing on dominant themes of nationalism and national identity in Japan’s two largest circulation newspapers. Five distinct case studies were conducted to capture a range of sporting environments and narrative types. In each case study, narrative themes were identified and analyzed for their relationship to nationalism and national identity. The conclusion of the research suggests a number of key similarities between the individual cases, comprising an overview of the topic in general. The conclusion articulates the ways in which the newspaper coverage of sports thematically constructs a sense of nation and national identity. Furthermore, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of hybridity as the cultural logic of globalization (Kraidy, 2005), particularly as it relates to Iwabuchi’s (2002) description of Japanese strategic hybridism.

Chapter Three, focuses on the 2014 Koshien Summer High School Baseball Tournament coverage. The chapter emphasizes the reproduction of nation in the convergence of local schools on a national stage, and links the contemporary character of Koshien narratives to historical themes rooted in bushido. Chapter Four focuses on the

coverage of the People's Honor Award via the coverage of four individual recipients of the award. The chapter examines the way in which the state is legitimized in the symbolic gesture of a "people's" award, and the discourses of Japaneseness suggested in the treatment of the individual athletes. In Chapter Five, coverage of the Japanese women's national soccer team victory at the 2011 Women's World Cup is analyzed. Coverage of the team, nicknamed "Nadeshiko Japan," presents an image of gender in Japanese society as it interacts with the understanding of nation and national character. Chapter Six concentrates on the coverage of Mongolian sumo wrestler Hakuho's quest for the all time tournament championship record. The narratives surrounding the quest are examined for their treatment of Hakuho as a foreigner. The title of Grand Champion, or *yokozuna*, plays a particular role in Japan's historical understanding of the sport, and its role in Japanese spiritual life. The final chapter examines the coverage of Japan's bid to host the 2020 Summer Olympic Games in Tokyo 2020. The role of the state in the coverage is emphasized, and the significance of nation branding is proposed.

These cases represent the most significant sporting moments in recent Japanese history. The high profile of these events makes each stand out in the overall landscape of Japanese sporting life. It is the diversity of the sporting contexts examined in this study that gives strength to the findings. Across the body of research conducted in this study, a number of important patterns take shape. The close link between Japanese cultural and national identity is established. The interplay of local, national, and global contexts can be observed across the studies, offering an important contribution to the understanding of globalization and hybridity theory.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Nations and States

There is a wide range of literature on the subjects of nation and national identity. Across the many works on those subjects, researchers have used a variety of definitions, and have treated the concepts in a number of ways. In particular, the concepts of *nation* and *state* must be addressed, and some discussion of the competing ideas about *nationalism* and *national identity* must be undertaken as well.

Hobsbawm (1990) describes the elusive pursuit of “nation,” as “the national question,” which is a clever turn of phrase that effectively captures the trouble in pinning down an objective definition of the concept (p. 9). For many, the term “nation” is used interchangeably with the word “country,” without much consideration of either. In common parlance, both terms are frequently used to express a sense of geographically bound community. When pressed to differentiate the two terms, one might imagine recognition of countries as politically bounded territories, identifiable on a map of the world. The term “nation” can be found in other parts of familiar discourse, notably with respect to First Nations, the Nation of Islam, or even Red Sox Nation. At some level, these phrasings offer clues to a more useful concept of nation.

Morris (1995) defines nation as “a self-defined community of people who share a sense of solidarity based on a belief in a common heritage and who claim political rights that may include self-determination” (p. 12). Self-definition is a critical ingredient, as

Hobsbawm (1990) argues that nations do not make nationalism, but the other way around. Nationalism is a pre-condition for the nation from his perspective, as a particularly strong sense of belonging and identification bring about the conditions necessary for a nation (p. 10). Furthermore, belief in a common heritage is supported by various “objective” characteristics including a shared language and territory, not to mention commonly understood histories and culture. To this point, Hobsbawm (1990) notes that the modern nation is characterized by various forms of standardization, including the establishment of national languages through the development of printing, mass literacy, and mass schooling. These phenomena are typical of high order technical and administrative systems and, as such, are associated with a top-down approach to understanding nations.

Nations, however, do not require such a highly elaborated technical system to exhibit broad coherence. Language offers an easily identifiable connection as the tool by which individuals make themselves understood. A common language is often the first clue to some fundamental connection, even when used in disputes. Commonly shared stories are constructed in this language of the people, and give a sense of oneness. Both the form and content of such stories, then, solidify bonds and make a coherent whole out of many. The danger in relying too firmly on this concept of language and nation is that frequently nations are comprised of people from varying linguistic traditions. Language is a strong basis for self-definition, but many other factors may supersede language in importance.

Billig (2006) notes, for example, the complicated case of Belgium, a nation comprised of Flemish, French and German speakers. Switzerland is divided amongst speakers of French, German, Italian, and Romansh. One might also argue that the challenge of Canada's English and French speaking politics are as much a part of what *defines* that nation as threatens to tear it apart. Canadians, for example, understand the fragility of their politics, balancing the concerns of the English-speaking majority and the French-speaking minority. Much of the French-speaking population lives in a single province, Quebec, adding territorial differentiation to the confusion of national identity. Nevertheless, Canadian heritage is marked by this struggle and in some sense the nation is defined by its difficult quest to balance different parts into a whole. It is part of their shared story.

Smith's (2008) writing on the idea of "nation" includes reference to "ethnie" as a basis for identification, where "ethnie" are cultural communities organized around members' identification with an ethnicity of one sort or another. They are characterized by a myth of common ancestry, with significant ties to both culture and territory. The German term "volk" is frequently employed in literature about national identity, as it captures a sense of kinship rooted in the perception of shared ethnic origins. Like language, the perception of ethnic continuity can be a strong basis for national identification, but is not a universal characteristic of nations. The United States, for instance, is a nation of people who are bound by the story of immigration. The character of immigrant stories in the United States varies widely, but there is very little sense of

shared ethnic origin in the conceptualization of U.S. nationhood. There is no common blood that serves as the basis for belonging.

In contrast to “nation,” the concept of the “state” is an institutional and legal arrangement that codifies life and organizes the affairs of its members. The typical nation-state can be said to exist on the foundation of national identification, accompanied by the administration of governing institutions. As Morris (1995) points out, however, nations and states do not always neatly overlap. Some nations are divided across several states—such as the Kurds, who exhibit all the characteristics of a nation, but who have been subjected to a political division between several Middle Eastern states. Significant populations of Kurds live in Turkey, Syria, and Iraq, for instance, and struggle against the established state institutions of those respective territories in an effort to attain formal self-determination.

The relationship between nation and state is complex. It is a rare case that the institutional and legal arrangement known as statehood has grown organically from a nation. Modern states are most often formed as the result of a coalescing of political and economic power. Boundaries are drawn and institutions are devised to protect and manage them. The business of states, in this understanding, is to foster identification and loyalty among the people within its borders. Hobsbawm (1990) argues that the national foundation is essential to the governance of states built on popular sovereignty. The legitimacy of the state is rooted in the understanding that it belongs to a “people.”

For the purpose of this research, two particular concepts inform the understanding of nation: imagined communities and invented traditions. Among the many processes related to defining nation, Anderson's (1990) *imagined communities* and Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1983) *invented traditions* stand out across the literature as both enduring and widely celebrated. These concepts give shape to the present research, both for the quality of the scholarship represented in their elaboration as well as their suitability for research on the intersection of media and the nation.

Imagined Communities and Invented Traditions

Anderson's (1990) argument that nations are a form of imagined community has been widely cited across literature of various kinds. He argues that the nation is an imagined community precisely because the coherence of the public known as a nation relies on perceived relations rather than intimate, local ones. Anderson sees the nation as an essentially modern phenomenon, largely due to the scale of public communication required to foster a sense of unity across such vast geographic territory, as is seen in the contemporary community of nations. His argument relies on the presence of a print-capitalism complex, which has given the modern word a particular character of mass communication. On one level, the ability to produce mass communication sparks the imagination of connectedness and, on another, specific messages contribute to a common discourse on a variety of subjects.

Nations, therefore, exist in a shared imagination of belonging, the imagination of a particular "we," differentiated from an ambiguous "them." Linguistic and ethnic roots

may offer a strong basis for this sense of belonging, but other forces are often in play.

One critical feature in the modern transition from the nation to the arrangement of nation-states is the ideological work required to imbue authority in the state, where once it had resided in the local associations between people. To this end, Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) describe the function of “invented traditions” in the evolution of modern nation-states, arguing:

’Invented tradition’ is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past. (p. 1)

The historic past, in this respect, is the shared common heritage described by Morris (1995) in her definition of “nation.” The newly established authority of the state may function most effectively if it is deemed to be a natural outgrowth of the people’s heritage, of their will. Surrendering local authority to a relatively distant administrative system is made easier when the said authority is seamlessly connected to established values, attitudes and rituals.

“Inventing traditions...is essentially a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition” (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983, p. 4). The authors point out that the invention of tradition is most closely associated with periods of rapid transformation, when the social patterns of a given society are threatened or disrupted. During these periods, societies replace or revise traditions that are no longer capable of facilitating adaptation to new circumstances, often

inventing new ones in the process. The example of Switzerland's modernization is raised to illustrate the important ties to traditional symbolic and ritual modes in state-supported patriotism. As the Swiss transitioned to a formal, modern federal state in the nineteenth century, a concerted effort was made by prominent members of the society to invent new national hymns in the idiom of traditional folksongs. A "powerful ritual complex" was built around the promotion of the songs and their messages of union and the ideology of freedom (p. 6). The new symbolic work was made to appear natural for its clear connection to traditional modes of Swiss folk culture, but it also helped to justify the rapid adoption of modern state apparatuses, common to the period.

Hobsbawm and Ranger, finally, offer a typology of invented traditions, characteristic of the period since the industrial revolution. First among invented traditions are "those establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities." Second are "those establishing or legitimizing institutions, status or relations of authority," and third are "those whose main purpose was socialization, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behavior" (p. 9). With respect to these descriptions, the authors note that the adoption of national flags, anthems, and emblems is one step towards the realization of a new tradition, but that the ritual behavior of standing before the flag and reciting an oath, or singing the anthem, reifies them in practice. The modern emergence of the nation is described as a novel turn, which has been treated as anything but. Despite the relatively recent appearance of nations and the community of nation-states, the invention of traditions has made them appear natural, having grown out of some natural process of evolution. The illusion of

continuity is largely a product of social construction, a figment of our imagination to some degree. Having established some groundwork for the concepts of “nation” and “state,” the next section is concerned with the concepts of “nationalism” and “national identity.”

Nationalism and National Identity

As mentioned, Hobsbawm (1990) argued that nationalism is the necessary condition for the nation. In this sense, nationalism can be defined as an ideological consciousness of nationhood. Billig (2006) elaborates on this idea, noting:

It embraces a complex set of themes about ‘us’, our ‘homeland’, ‘nations’ (‘ours’ and ‘theirs’), the ‘world’, as well as the morality of national duty and honour. Moreover, these themes are widely diffused as common sense. It is not the common sense of a particular nation, but this common sense is international, to be found across the globe in the nations of the so-called world order. (p. 4)

Nationalism is a way of imagining and representing community, particularly as the world has come to be organized in modernity. It is a mode of thought that suggests that a primary form of human association is found in the nation, as defined previously, and that the world is organized as a community of nations. Relying on the work of social psychologists, he argues that language plays a critical part in the operation of ideology, and that the creative work of “speech performances” is a fundamental aspect of ideological condition of nationalism.

Billig’s treatment of the subject is careful to distinguish the vernacular understanding of nationalism, and its negative connotations, for something he calls “banal nationalism.” Unlike the feverish, emotional crusade, conducted in the name of

the nation, banal nationalism is a subtle process of reproduction and maintenance. Billig takes care to establish that banal nationalism is a constant process of reminding, conducted in “ideological habits,” the association of practices and beliefs. He describes this process of reproduction in terms of “a complex of beliefs, assumptions, habits, representations, and practices” found in unobtrusive and mundane places. The process of reminding is called “flagging” in Billig’s thesis and it is through this flagging that reproduction occurs.

Billig (2006) enlists Social Identity Theory to get at the root of how people come to consider themselves members of a particular group or community. He argues that groups only exist insofar as individual members identify themselves with the other members of the group. Similarly, nations only exist insofar as individuals identify themselves with others according to the various characteristics typical of the nation: language, ethnicity, geography, and so on. Citing Hogg and Abrams (1988), Billig proposes three stages of group identification. In the first stage, individuals categorize themselves as members of an ingroup, setting the boundaries between themselves and those individuals identified as the outgroup. During the second stage individuals assume the identity of an “insider,” and learn the stereotypical norms associated with being part of the ingroup. They will, then, begin to embrace and “own” said norms as part of their everyday life. Becoming personally invested in the attitudes, behaviors and rituals of the ingroup constitutes the third, and final stage.

Group, or collective identity is, thus, a relational concept. Identity work of this kind is rooted in the understanding and imagination of relationships that include an “us”

and a “them,” and which are constantly challenged and reproduced in act of communication. Tilly (2006) writes, “Social life consists of relationally and culturally channeled, error-filled and error-correcting transactions among social sites that continuously modify the relations and culture within which they occur” (p. xi). The social sites in question are described as the loci in which organized human action occurs, and include individuals, organizations, networks, and places. Transactions, described as “transfers of energy organized by people,” link social sites and constitute relations when repeated.

These transactions are limited by previously set boundaries between the sites in question, such as “shared understandings and their representations in objects and practices” (Tilly, 2006, p. xii). The transactions in question are generally characterized by errors and the process of correction. Each transaction alters the relationship between sites, including their shared understandings and their representations. Tilly claims, “Identities are social arrangements reinforced by socially constructed and continuously renegotiated stories” (p. xiii). As the identity work described in Tilly’s writing is a continuous, dynamic process, involving individuals in communication, it represents a non-essentialist perspective. To Tilly, as with Billig (2006), identities are not core aspects of individual personalities, to be retrieved and put in action in times of need. Rather, they are ways of understanding relations. They are underlying assumptions about the various associations between individuals: their boundaries, characteristics, and significance.

To this point, Billig (2006) argues that individuals have different ways to describe and categorize themselves, shifting as situations demand. In some situations particular

definitions become “salient,” meaning the individual will assume behaviors and attitudes deemed appropriate to those situations. The identity assumed under particular conditions exists in a state of “constant latency,” according to Billig, only emerging as situational cues demand. It is part of an internalized cognitive schema, although identity is hardly a matter of individual memory. National identity, to this point, is characterized by the underlying assumption that one is a member of a particular nation, and that the world is organized around a community of nations. As there is nothing natural about this arrangement, and considering the very dynamic character of social construction, as noted in Tilly (2006), the process of reproduction must make nation a salient feature of daily life. Banal nationalism and the concept of flagging are the interplay of salient representations of the nation, which reproduce and reinforce the latent experience of the phenomenon. Where stories are constantly renegotiated, familiar constraints must appear to be natural in order for them to remain viable. Billig (2006) argues:

The ‘salient situation’ does not suddenly occur, as if out of nothing, for it is part of a wider rhythm of banal life in the world of nations. What this means is that national identity is more than an inner psychological state or an individual self-definition: it is a form of life, which is daily lived in the world of nations. (p. 69)

Appadurai (1996) argues a similar perspective with respect to globalization and the experience of locality. He notes that locality is a situation, an experience of relations and contexts that structures and reinforces a sense of belonging or community. Historically, locality has coincided with geographic and territorial boundaries in which individuals shape and maintain their environment through a system of rituals. The ritual maintenance of these boundaries is necessary to reproduce locality against forces that

threaten change. Appadurai calls the production of locality a “structure of feeling,” which manifests in various sorts of intentional activities and yields particular types of material effects. The experience of locality is the experience of boundaries. As a contextual phenomenon, members of a community identify an inside and an outside. In doing so, members of a locality will imagine others organized in the same way. A shared logic of localities defines the situation, and offers a way in which to imagine the relation between localities. This understanding resembles the arguments made by Billig (2006), Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983), and Anderson (1990), who note that the imagination of nation is part of a broader understanding that the world is organized as a community of other nations.

Appadurai (1996) makes a particularly important observation when he states, “Drawn into the very localization they seek to document, most ethnographic descriptions have taken locality as ground not figure” (p. 182). He reminds us that locality is not only the context that produces social life, but the product of social life itself. He uses the word “neighborhood” to describe the site of social action and argues, “Neighborhoods seems paradoxical because they both constitute and require contexts” (p. 186). The relationship between the local, national, and global can be studied through this lens.

Sports are part of the ritual mix involved in reproducing locality. Communities create spatial and temporal boundaries through the practice of sports when they construct playing fields and training grounds, and establish schedules and routines around their various games. When teams wear the names of their communities on their uniforms they evoke a sense of belonging. Teams locked in competition with one another reproduce the

shared logic of locality, and the structure of feeling that Appadurai describes. The nation-state plays an important role in this ritual process, sponsoring and nurturing a sporting environment in which distinct localities are situated within a larger context. The state is legitimized in this process, as the benefactor of a national program. When teams wear the name of their nation across their uniforms it is the shared logic of nationhood that becomes salient. The context of nationhood as locality depends on a different ground. Nationhood as figure is understood against the ground of the global.

Our lives are full of stories. In any community, large or small, individuals may share hundreds of stories. We tell stories about the mundane occurrences of our daily life. We tell stories about how we came to know our friends. We tell larger stories of existential truths when practicing our religion, sharing time with our children before bed, or in our schools. Stories are the stuff of news and entertainment. They instruct, inform, and interact with our emotions. In particular, this research is concerned with the type of stories that make the nation salient in our daily lives, the type of stories that flag nationalism. These stories are often presented in mass media, experienced on a daily basis by millions, and constitute a running account of national history to be celebrated or disputed by the various audiences they reach. To the extent the institutional media offer the public a running account of national history, it is important to characterize the way these national histories are being written and re-written, reflecting current balances of hegemony, to paraphrase Billig (2006). He continues by arguing, “National histories tell of a people passing through time – ‘our’ people, with ‘our’ ways of life, and ‘our’ culture.

Stereotypes of character and temperament can be mobilized to tell the tale of ‘our’ uniqueness and ‘our’ common fate” (p. 71).

These national histories take various forms and interact with various aspects of national life. One might speak of the national histories of politics, economics, art and culture. In the United States, stories of national history are told about immigration, civil rights, and presidents. They are told about literature, and film, and advertising. We learn ‘our’ national histories, and the ways they express ‘our’ way of life and ‘our’ culture, in many places. They may be shared at home, as parents situate their children in a larger world to empower and guide them. These histories are taught in schools, developed by teachers and administrators. They’re experienced in museums, organized by curators and patrons of the arts. They are also promoted through mass media as part of our news and entertainment. In this way, mass media play an integral role in the construction of a shared imagination and in the invention of traditions, and therefore it becomes critical to describe, analyze, interpret and evaluate the role of media and their messages in the process.

Media and Nation

Carey’s (1989) seminal work on communication and culture emphasizes the ritual character of communication processes, and the socializing function of media discourses. Carey describes communication as “a process by which reality is constituted, maintained, and transformed,” rejecting essentialism and stressing the dynamic quality of the human lifeworld (p. 84). As he writes, “Communication simply constitutes a set of historically

varying practices and reflections upon them. These practices bring together human conceptions and purposes with technological forms in sedimented social relations” (p. 84). Carey borrows from Heidegger in describing the human condition as a conversation aimed at constituting reality in such a way that it becomes durable enough to support our actions, but malleable enough to suit our ever-changing circumstances. To this point, he argued:

It is the great power of symbols to portray that which they pretend to describe...It is this dual nature that allows us to produce the world by symbolic work and then take up residence in the world so produced. This is a ritual view of communication emphasizing the production of a coherent world that is then presumed, for all practical purposes, to exist. It is to emphasize the construction and maintenance of paradigms rather than experiments; presuppositions rather than propositions; the frame, not the picture. (p. 85)

In this sense, Carey is arguing that the study of communication is most valuable, not in the search for the representation of reality, but for its social construction. His argument is an acknowledgment of the power of people to give shape to their own realities, to alter their circumstances if they are perceived to be deficient, and to make sacred the aspects of the human experience deemed crucial, in order to preserve them. Even in this acknowledgment of individual agency, and the power of collective action, Carey recognizes the role of mass media in producing a common symbolic environment, shared across the public as a means by which to focus communication around a particular set of ideas.

Schmandt-Besserat (1996) offers one of the earliest examples of social arrangement produced in symbolic work. The Uruk period of roughly 3500 B.C.E. Sumer

saw the advent of early writing systems used for the accounting of property of various types. The agrarian surplus of local communities was offered in tribute to the temple, where an economy of redistribution was managed. The components of this economy included, “ (1) a temple which conferred meaning and pomp on the act of giving; (2) an elite who administered the communal property; and commoners who produced surplus goods and surrendered them to the temple” (p. 107). While it would certainly be a stretch to suggest that this arrangement is sufficient to constitute a nation, the centrality of writing as a symbolic environment is evident. The character of this ancient social arrangement is profoundly influenced by the medium of writing. The presence of a center and periphery are codified in the practices made possible by writing.

Innis (2007) produced one of the most compelling works on the subject of communication and socio-political arrangement, placing media at the center of his thesis. Like Schmandt-Besserat, Innis describes various societies organized around communication technology prior to the printing press, including the example of China in the period around 105 C.E.. Early forms of paper were used with ink brushes to produce a standardized form of communication used in the administration of the empire. Scholars were the early adopters of this method, and therefore engaged in education related to Confucian ethics and the administration of various social, economic, and military functions. Again, a powerful medium of communication dictates the boundaries of a center and periphery, based on the accessibility and mastery of a symbol system. Oral tradition remained the primary mode of communication and social relations throughout the empire until such time as formal systems of common education were introduced to

unite far reaches of territory under one language. Wood block printing played a prominent role in the standardization of language during that period (pp. 146-147).

Still, it seems Eisenstein's (1979) work on the role of Gutenberg's mechanical printing press stands out most prominently in the discourse on nation. In part, the intensity of nationalism promoted by the character of Gutenberg's print is responsible for this fascination. Likewise, the relative proximity of the system produced under this dominant mode of communication to our own bears mentioning. Eisenstein writes, "Typography arrested linguistic drift, enriched as well as standardized vernaculars, and paved the way for more deliberative purification and codification of all major European languages" (p. 117). Language learned at home by spoken word was fixed in place and standardized by the experience of print. Furthermore, the availability of uniform texts produced a standardized school experience that rooted literacy in the authority of the state, as it once had the Church.

Appadurai places a special emphasis on the role of electronic media in the imagination of contemporary social relations. The disjuncture of cultural flows from geography is partly accomplished by the network of radio, telecommunication, television, and Internet technologies that stretch across the globe and connect peoples in most corners of the world. When distant localities are brought into direct communication with one another a creative dialogue is established whereby both localities are transformed. A sudden recognition of interconnectedness prompts the imagination of the global context, and a new structure of relations that shapes our understanding of local and national

environments as well. Individuals engaged with electronic media are not only passive consumers of messages, but also participants in a dynamic process of identity work.

Carey (1989), famously, offers a contrast in the study of communication between the transmission and ritual views. He argues that the study of communication under the transmission view of communication focuses on audience effects, representation, and the nature of cultivation. Recognizing the value of these contributions, he proposes that the ritual view approaches communication from a dramatic perspective. Examining a newspaper, from his point of view, a researcher understands his or her work less in terms of sending or receiving information, and more as a ritual act over time. Readers of a newspaper, in his ritual view, become engaged in an unfolding drama in which one assumes different roles with respect to the text. He argues that the writers of news engage in the same type of behavior. He remarks, “A story on the monetary crisis salutes them as American patriots fighting those ancient enemies Germany and Japan; a story on the meeting of a women’s political caucus casts them into the liberation movement as a supporter or opponent; a tale of violence on the campus evokes their class antagonisms and resentments” (pp. 20-21).

This treatment of news, in particular, offers a perspective on the role of mass media in focusing national histories, offering audiences a dramatic experience to negotiate. Taking the point further, Carey writes, “[News] does not describe the world but portrays an arena of dramatic forces and action; it exists solely in historical time; and it invites our participation on the basis of our assuming, often vicariously, social roles within it” (p. 21). It is from this point of view that I argue, along with Riessman (2008)

that mass media stories “create possibilities for social identities, group belonging, and collective action” (p. 54).

With respect to national identity, news points to issues and events that are important to the ingroup, situating and defining current affairs as significant. Billig (2006) argues, for example, that news presents a deixis by pointing to nation, ours and theirs:

[F]lagging has other locations, as the mass media daily bring the flags home to the citizenry. A case study, which examines one nation’s newspapers on one day, shows that the deixis of homeland is embedded in the very fabric of the newspapers. Beyond conscious awareness, like the hum of distant traffic, this deixis of little words makes the world of nations familiar, even homely. (p. 94)

What’s more, news communicates more than the mere existence of nations, but also builds an account of their character. Situating and defining current affairs for members of a nation posits a position relative to the positive or negative aspects of the account. This process often builds on traditional understandings of national identity, treating current events through the lens of national histories. The process of contextualizing news involves evoking histories as they’re commonly understood. This has a heuristic effect, where the new is situated with respect to the past. The nation continues unbroken in accounts of this nature, a feature of news that becomes more important when events are particularly confusing or chaotic.

The Role of Sports Media

In their treatment of invented traditions, Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) note the importance of sports in the consciousness of class and nation. The authors describe the

process by which football (soccer) achieved a particular ritual and institutional characteristic in late-19th century United Kingdom. The professionalization of football during that period took place on both the local and national scale, “so the topic of the day’s matches would provide common ground for conversation between virtually any two male workers in England and Scotland, and a few score celebrated players provided a point of common reference for all” (p. 289). Furthermore, they note that this institutionalization of sport made a broader public showcase for leisure activities previously restricted to the aristocracy. The extension of this social arena to the middle class “provided a mechanism for bringing together persons of an equivalent social status otherwise lacking organic social or economic links,” and opened new public roles for bourgeois women in the process (p. 299).

Sports, and the discourse orbiting sports, create possibilities for social identities, group belonging, and collective action. On one hand, sports serve as a vehicle for new expressions of nationalism, and on the other as a “concrete demonstration of the links which [bind] all inhabitants together, irrespective of local and regional differences,” or as a subject of national identification in the realm of international competitions (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983, p. 301).

Individual sports may act as a vehicle for nationalist expression, such as sumo wrestling in Japan, American football, Irish hurling, or Finnish pesapallo. Archetti (1996) argues that the narratives surrounding the practice of sports play an important role in self-definition. The national character of a particular sport evolves according to a distinct set of values and styles, mirroring the national and cultural context. In this way, the sport

becomes “our” sport, and the games become an articulation of “our” identity. Arbena (1996) describes this process in the context of late-19th century Latin America, as modern European social, political, and economic structures were imposed and adopted at the time. The adoption of European sports was an important part of this period, as the play of particular games fit neatly with the new social order introduced to the region. The development of sporting institutions was thought to promote nationalism as an aid to nation-building efforts by the state. The author is careful to point out that such cohesive national identity can result from national sporting programs, but that sports can also be the grounds for contested politics as well.

The institutionalization and professionalization of sports, generally, alters the scale and reach of sports and their associated narratives, often reaching “the people” via mass media channels. The national history, as communicated through sports, runs parallel to other “national histories,” and provides fans, both feverish and casual, with a means by which to experience the gratification of living in history as it unfolds. Each play, each game, each season function heuristically to build an account of time passing and people performing heroic deeds.

Allison (2000) argues that a shared sense of national identity adds an intense meaning to watching a team or individual perform. She argues that this aspect of the sporting experience leads officials of the state to invest heavily in the sports sector. Likewise, the commercial potential of sport has been realized in the expansion of international games. The author notes that television transformed the nature of the sporting experience, where local games were superseded by games of a greater scale.

Allison notes that in 1970 an English soccer match netted a television audience of approximately 10 million viewers, while the England-Brazil World Cup match expanded to an audience of 32 million (p. 346). When sports make national identity salient they are most powerful and profitable.

Parente (1977) wrote, “[sports spectating] is perhaps the most stylized and widely participant ritual of contemporary society and therefore a major vehicle through which meanings are developed and communicated” (p. 128). Parente made this statement prefacing his arguments about the influences of the corporate entertainment industries on contemporary sports, particularly through television. Jhally (1989) evokes this argument in his own assertion that the sports-media complex exerts an important ideological influence on culture. Jhally argues, among other things, that mass media sports narratives run the risk of overemphasizing the “us” vs. “them” frame, strongly influencing political attitudes.

Our common language is often peppered with the language of sports. We speak of “political footballs,” and “knocking one out of the park.” We complain that our colleagues “dropped the ball,” or that our children need a “time out.” Sports also offer a safe environment for the exercise of power, and the struggles associated with acquiring and maintaining power. Bineham (1991) argues that football’s emphasis on team play is useful to those who wish to reinforce hierarchy. The language of sports borrows heavily from the military, where football is played on a “gridiron,” and teams “battle for supremacy.” Football quarterbacks “execute precision strikes,” and powerful baseball pitchers are often referred to as “flame throwers.” Our politics are covered on television,

with increasing frequency, in the terms of sporting events. Contenders are ranked, public polling determines who's "up" and who's "down," and pundits wonder aloud if candidates can "take a punch." In fact, critics of this brand of political news have dubbed it "horserace journalism" (Segrave, 2000).

Games are dramatic. It's the drama of play, the assumption of roles, which makes them compelling. Newspapers have afforded a large portion of their column space to sports over the years, suggesting a level of importance that approaches or exceeds the public affairs of politics, economics, or art. The encroachment of sports language and metaphor into a host of important discourses also suggests its significant position in culture. It ought to be no surprise, then, to find important national themes reflected in the narratives surrounding sport. Sports are nothing, after all, if not invented traditions. Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) have argued this point of view with some compelling examples in tow.

This research shares the view expressed by Darling-Wolf (2005) who argues, "Historically, nations have symbolically negotiated their position as powerful—or at least visible—participants in international geopolitics through their involvement in sporting events. Fans' engagement in such events contributes to the creation of the kind of imagined communities B. Anderson...considers essential to the development of cultural and national identity" (p. 184). One need look no further than the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia to see the importance of mass media narratives in the construction of national histories.

Of the opening ceremonies, Herszenhorn (2014) writes:

If there were any traces of national self-consciousness lingering nearly a quarter-century after the collapse of communism and the loss of superpower status, they were put aside for the evening. Also set aside, however briefly, were the many political controversies of late...that prompted some Western leaders not to attend the Games.

Instead, what unfolded in the Fisht Olympic Stadium...was sheer pageantry and national pride, with all of the homespun promotionalism, mythmaking and self-aggrandizement that are the modern trademark of such ceremonies. (n.p.)

This *New York Times* account of the Sochi opening ceremonies is an example of the coverage of Russia's nationalist presentation, as well as an example of its reception in the international media. Myers (2014), also of the *New York Times*, attaches the spectacle of the Olympics to the Russian army's involvement in Crimea, noting:

Two days later Mr. Putin attended the closing ceremony of an Olympics that he hoped would be a showcase of Russia's revival as a modern, powerful nation. He then ordered the swift, furtive seizure of a region that has loomed large in Russia's history since Catherine the Great's conquest. (n.p.)

This is a dramatic account of sports' intimate relationship with national identity and geo-political power. Most sporting events lack the drama evident in this example. However, when taken collectively, over a period of time, sports narratives play an important role in the promotion of nationalist themes to hegemonic ideologies, legitimizing and reinforcing the policies of the state. At the very least, they offer a significant reminder to the public that there is a nation, and that 'our' nation is characterized by a particular set of ideas.

Miller, Lawrence, McKay and Rowe (2001) take on the intersection of sports and globalization. In doing so, the authors choose to focus primarily on the intensification of economic relations that characterize the cultural industries of sports. Culture is a significant area of concern, as they deftly take on the corporate and state apparatuses that control sports at the highest levels. However, the authors limit their contribution to the study of sports and globalization to the economic dimension. Appadurai (1996) treats culture in a more comprehensive way, offering a broader view of the subject. In his treatment of cultural flows, he distinguishes the global financial flow from other dimensions of cultural production, such as migration, media, and technology to name a few.

Taking Appadurai's lead, it becomes apparent that the movement of players between professional leagues is much more than a financial or political concern. When David Beckham leaves his native England to play in the professional ranks in the US, Ichiro Suzuki leaves Japan for the Major Leagues, or a host of Mongolian wrestlers migrate to Japan to compete in the sumo ranks, processes of cultural production begin. Nativism bubbles to the surface when local and national identities are threatened by the participation of outsiders. At the same time, a process of negotiation ensues, in which members of a community must find a way to accommodate change. The coverage of athletes' exploits on the field, through mass media, brings people of different nations closer, in the same way that Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) described the professionalization of soccer in the United Kingdom. This is the shared imagination of the global through sports.

Japanese National Identity

In the early-2000s, a popular Japanese television program subjected a rotating cast of guests to a silly experiment. Each celebrity guest was asked to phone a relative in his or her hometown to hold a brief conversation. A panel of Japanese language educators would observe the phone call and ring a bell for each time the guest used their local dialect rather than the standard Japanese taught in schools. The humor of the situation was the impossibility of the task. Inevitably, the powerful linguistic roots would exert themselves and the bell would ring and ring and ring. Japanese television programs frequently highlight and celebrate the great cultural diversity of the nation. There are programs that celebrate local cuisine, programs that poke fun at the oddities of local dialects, and programs that showcase the *meibutsu*, or local specialties, of particular corners of Japan. Frequently, these programs use a host, or hosts, to navigate the terrain of specific locations, acting as proxies for the general public in the quest for the particular. The programs send the message, “although we are diverse, we are one.” Of course, this sentiment is not unique to Japan. The Latin expression *e pluribus unum* has expressed the same idea on behalf of the United States since its inception.

How do the Japanese understand themselves? Chiba, Ebihara and Morino (2001), citing Fukuoka, map a spectrum of identification, following the concepts of blood, culture, and nationality. The strongest indicator of belonging is, unsurprisingly, the presence of all three components. The combination of birth to Japanese parents, socialization in the Japanese culture, and Japanese citizenship is the strongest indicator of belonging. The second strongest indicator is the combination of blood and culture, even

in the absence of citizenship. This illustrates the distinction between *nation* and *state*, as mentioned previously. Overall, blood indicates strongest on the spectrum, while citizenship factors weakest of the three. The relative strength of blood in Japanese self-definition suggests some conception of race in the understanding of national identity.

Although the common wisdom about Japan, from within and without, is that Japan is a homogeneous society, it is important to recognize that people of various ethnic origins call Japan home. In recent years, a great deal of research has been conducted to dispute the homogeneity of Japan, and to promote a more complex understanding of Japan as a multiethnic society. Lie (2001) offers one of the most well-devised and convincing arguments to this end. Despite the rhetoric of homogeneity, and the common perception of blood as a determiner of belonging, Japan's ethnic and racial origins are far from certain. Lie relies on Durkheim's classic distinction of mechanical and organic solidarity to frame the discussion of Japanese national identity, noting that preindustrial social solidarity, or mechanical solidarity, was rooted in homology. Complex societies base solidarity on interdependence, rather than the perceived connection of ethnic origin. Despite Japan's relative complexity and the diversity of lifestyle, gender differences, regional identities, and other important dimensions of social life, "discourses of Japaneseness" construct a sense of homogeneity across a population of more than 125 million people (p. 50). He further argues that these discourses equate class, nation, and ethnicity producing a mechanical solidarity of the sort described by Durkheim. Equating nation and ethnicity with the state, discourses of Japaneseness set the boundaries between insiders (*uchi*) and outsiders (*soto*) as coinciding political and ethnic terms. Despite the

fact that the internal discourse of Japanese identity has long reflected an awareness of diversity across many dimensions, the persistent belief in homogeneity persists.

Lie (2001) argues that the myth of Japanese homogeneity finds roots in the Meiji period, spanning the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Japan, seeking to remake itself in the image of modern nation-states, set out on a conscious mission to produce solidarity across the peoples of Japan in order to grow a robust domestic agenda and mobilize the populace in the cause of independence and protectionism. Japan had been subject to a century of Russian encroachment and the muscular arrival of Commodore Perry and recognized the need to embark on a mission of nation building. Prominent intellectuals and political figures created an agenda to connect the country via modern modes of transportation, mass media, and a system of mass schooling. During the first half of the 20th century, the discourses of Japaneseness were inflected with the ideology of “one nation, one people,” and evolved across a particularly imperialist path, culminating in the Second World War. During the imperial era of the early-20th century, discourses of Japaneseness reflected the understanding that the Japanese empire included colonized people of various ethnic backgrounds. The legitimacy of Japan’s colonial footprint was rooted in a sense of racial and cultural superiority over other Asian peoples, but a persistent undercurrent of a multiethnic Japanese empire was present.

The Meiji period began as Japan recognized itself as “backward” in comparison to the so-called West. As Japan more frequently encountered the technological and cultural progress of the Western powers, a movement was undertaken to emerge from isolation and adopt the direction set out by Europe and the United States. Duus (1998) describes

this process as “self-Westernization,” noting that the Japanese chose to adapt to Western political, cultural, and economic systems in order to avoid a more direct colonization by the American and European powers turning their eyes towards Japan during the late-19th century. Tipton (2002) points out that the early Meiji enthusiasm for all things Western was soon replaced by a more measured approach. In the late-1860s, the Tokugawa administration set out a number of progressive measures designed to move away from tradition and embrace Western-style progress. By the late-1880s, prominent intellectuals and administrators recommended the reinforcement of Confucian values and the promotion of Shinto myths of Japan’s Imperial origins in order to counter the effects of rapid Westernization. Tipton further relates, however, that these developments should not be seen as a return to the isolationist policies of the pre-Meiji era. The same individuals arguing for a more muscular “Japaneseness” in the face of change, were also vocal advocates of Western-style institutions and practices. The process favored by these Meiji administrators was adaptation rather than mimicry (Boyle, 1993). At that time, the decision was made to adopt a Prussian-style constitution, emphasizing the centrality of the emperor as sovereign. Further, the central administration embarked on a campaign to institutionalize the local Shinto shrines across the country in order to use them as officiators of Shinto as the state religion.

It was also during this time that prominent writers and intellectuals began to turn towards Japanese culture as the essence of Japanese national identity. Gordon (2008) notes that while Meiji administrators were turning to Western technology to exert political and economic power, the intellectual class was hard at work defining a Japanese

national identity through the aesthetics of traditional culture. He argues that this obsession with “Japaneseness” began in the late-nineteenth century and persists in the present. Yuval-Davis (1997) argues that the cultural dimension of nationalist projects finds the essence of belonging in shared symbolic heritage (p. 21). The close link between Japanese cultural identity and Japanese national identity was established during the fragile years of the Meiji Restoration, and has been frequently revisited during the radical periods of change that followed in the 20th century. Japan had a great deal of experience assimilating foreign cultural symbols by the Meiji period, but it had never been forced to define itself as a nation until confronted by the nations of the West. It was quite natural, therefore, that the mission to establish a cultural program of Japaneseness was also a program to mark Japan, the nation, as a particular sort of collective. The historical link between Japanese cultural identity and Japanese national identity begins during this time when nationhood was suddenly a salient feature of the public imagination.

The rupture of the Second World War produced a breakdown in a number of key obstacles to the myth of homogeneity. Japan’s legal system was reinvented after the war, dissolving the link between established codes of morality and the law. Urbanization saw the center of local and regional life fade away, ending centuries of social tradition related to harmony, cooperation, and interdependence. The Emperor was stripped of his traditional significance, shifting the focal point of Japanese solidarity away from the symbolic center. In response to these disconcerting changes, a form of nostalgia emerged in Japanese popular culture, and Lie (2001) argues the mass media played an increasingly

important role in uniting the people. As the postwar period evolved, discourses of Japaneseness increasingly focused on the ethnic solidarity of the Japanese people, economic recovery, and pro-Westernism, particularly with respect to America. Lie (2001) writes:

The myth of monoethnic Japan is fundamentally a post-World War II construct. The recent vintage of monoethnic ideology does not prevent the imagined present from transforming the misty past in its image. Nationalist historiography and the nationalist imagination impose a vision of Japan that has been monoethnic from the beginning to the present. (p. 141)

The myth of monoethnic Japan flies in the face of all available facts. Most Japanese are aware that ethnic minorities live among them, and have for a very long time. The Ainu, for instance, are said to have occupied the territories constituting present day Hokkaido and the Russian Sakhalin islands in pre-modern times. Over time, the Ainu population has dropped significantly due to both violent conflict and intermarriage with the Japanese. In Japan's Meiji period, during the late 19th century, the Ainu were systematically excluded from public affairs and the Japanese appropriated much of their land. Official deliberations over Ainu issues were characterized by the assumption that the Ainu were of an inferior race to the Japanese (Siddle, R & Kitahara, K., 1995, p. 152).

Likewise, generations of Korean immigrants have experienced discrimination at the hands of the Japanese. Despite efforts to assimilate, the *Zainichi Kankokujin*, ethnic Koreans residing in Japan, have encountered difficulty finding a place in Japanese society. The term "zainichi" suggests a temporary residency, although much of the Zainichi community has resided in Japan for several generations at this point. The specific classification "zainichi" is related to the Korean people who found themselves in

Japan during the period starting in the early-20th century and extending through the Second World War, in particular. Japan's occupation of the Korean peninsula, and subsequent geopolitical entanglements in continental Asia, resulted in a flow of Korean immigration to the Japanese islands. Many of the Koreans who established themselves in Japan began as migrant workers and laborers. Over successive generations, the families of many Zainichi Koreans assimilated by identifying strongly with Japanese language and culture, frequently taking Japanese names in the process. Their exclusion on racial grounds illustrates the strength of blood in the terms of belonging, or at least the perception of racial difference (Hester, J. T., 2008).

Another layer of complexity can be observed in the negotiation of identity for those individuals born to a Japanese parent and a parent of other national origin. Historically, the mixing of races in Japan was forbidden. People born of mixed parentage were long referred to as *konketsu*, or mixed blood. The term carried with it a negative connotation, mirroring the English word *mongrel*. Contemporary understandings of intermarriage in Japan include the term "hafu" to describe children born under such circumstances. "Hafu" is the Japanese language interpretation of the word "half," and indicates being half Japanese, although the descriptor is necessarily vague with respect to the nature of the differentiation. It is a safe assumption that the Japanese half in question is related to the dominant terms of self-definition and that blood is the primary factor at play. Nonetheless, "hafu" individuals report a great deal of conflict with respect to how Japanese people relate to them. For "hafu," a range of identity issues stem from the complicated landscape of Japanese self-definition and the "one foot in, one foot out"

position they hold with respect to that understanding (Nishikura, M. & Takagi, L. P., 2013).

The Japanese language features simple terms to distinguish ingroup and outgroup boundaries. In addition to the term *nihonjin*, or Japanese person or people, the term *Yamatominzoku* has been associated with the race of people who belong to the Japanese ingroup. The term *minzoku* carries the connotation of race, people, and nation. It is similar in many ways to the term *volk*, expressing a natural belonging rooted in ethnicity. The term *Yamato* has evolved over several centuries to represent the particular race of people understood to be Japanese. The construction of Chinese characters used to represent the term *Yamato* includes the character for “great,” in the sense of size or stature, and the character for harmony or unity. Built into this linguistic formula are the ideological underpinnings of Japanese self-definition. At once, the term calls into existence a race of people, connected to a particular homeland, and functions to naturalize said race as the foundation for Japanese society.

On the other hand, the Japanese word for foreigner is *gaikokujin*, or “foreign national.” The term has been truncated in common parlance to *gaijin*, or “outsider.” Nothing could be more straightforward. In recent years, the term *gaijin* has become a focal point for critical discourse on race in Japan. The term carries with it the connotation, not only of outsider status, but also of savage or uncivilized character. Dialectically, the language used to express ingroup and outgroup status has also served as the basis for naturalizing unequal social status based, frequently, in racial and cultural superiority. Whatever the common discourse about Japanese national identity may be,

several assumptions are always lying just beneath the surface. This point has complicated the scientific pursuit of Japanese heritage, as historical discourse about the Japanese people has been characterized by the same ideological underpinnings.

Nanta (2008) describes the historical challenge of identifying the ethnic origin of the Japanese people, noting the various arguments in the scientific community and the ideological battles that characterized them. At the start of the 20th century, the prevailing belief about Japanese ethnic origins was the assertion that a mixture of East Asian people had largely displaced native peoples of the Japanese archipelago. The Korean and Japanese people were believed to be of the same ethnic origin at the time. It wasn't until about 1940, as Japan was engaged in its colonial period, that anthropologists began to emphasize the homogeneity of the Japanese people and the historical continuity of their presence on the archipelago. As the colonial period came to an end, and ideological rejection of colonial intellectualizing came into full swing, the ethnographic basis for the one race theory was also questioned. Debates swelled between the architects of the colonial era theorizing on racial identity and a new intellectual class, who returned to pre-colonial ideas about mixed-race origins. Nanta describes the problematic nature of the debates, as the basis for argumentation was rooted as much in the ideological disagreement of separate nationalisms as in scientific evidence. The questions being asked of ethnic origin were complicated by ideological agendas rooted in politics. The framing of the debates suggested an outcome, no matter the science, that was based in an assumption that "Japanese" constituted a racial identity of some sort, which set the foundation for the Japanese nation-state as a matter of racial identification. The debates

ceased to be about the geographic origins of the Japanese people, focusing instead on the ethnogenesis of a racial type. Even the leftist sector of the Japanese scientific community accepted the biological paradigm as the primary mode of discourse. Nanta argues that this paradigm persists in contemporary discourse, lamenting the intrusion of the sentimental quality of national discourses into scientific exploration.

To this point, he offers an important caution, writing:

Scholars pursue specific issues at a given moment in time because they too are members of that society, rather than influences upon it. Thus a two-way interaction between scientific discourses and the national community is born, an interaction which shows conclusively that scholars do not live in ivory towers but rather at the heart of society: they are active actors in its definition and self-image by supplying models to confirm already accepted ideas. In these debates about ethnogenesis, the problem does not lie with the method, but with the question itself. (Nanta, 2008, p. 44)

Hobsbawm (1990) echoes this warning against such conflicts of interest, noting, “no serious historian of nations and nationalism can be a committed nationalist” (p. 11). To be absorbed so completely in the stories of national origin that one cannot step away to consider the issue objectively is to surrender science to sentiment.

Over time, a number of philosophical themes have accompanied the understanding of the Japanese as a people, or race, many of which can be found at the crossroads of significant change. These themes have served not only to reproduce nation in changing times, but also suggest a sort of national character in the manner described earlier by Billig (2006). Three themes, in particular, inform this research, painting a picture of modern Japan’s struggle to define itself: bushido, nihonjinron, and cosmopolitanism.

Bushido, Nihonjinron, Hybridity

The modern history of Japan is characterized by three significant periods of change. Choosing three moments in history risks artificially separating the continuous experience of history into fragments, treating each as somehow independent and unique. In fact, when defining and discussing bushido, nihonjinron, and hybridity a chronological sequence of events emphasizes particular intellectual movements and experiences that rise and fall according to their relative position to major historical events that have shaped Japan. However, the three concepts share similar roots and frequently overlap as events unfold. The chronological treatment of these ideas has much to do with their conceptual identification and promotion by intellectuals. Nihonjinron, as a construction about race, informs the intellectual tradition of bushido, but was not fully realized in its own intellectual tradition until after the Second World War. The chronological order of their presentation here is practical in nature.

Modern Japan can be said to find roots in the late-19th century as the feudal order of the Tokugawa shogunate gave way to a re-opening to the international community and the standards of modern international society. During the period between 1600 and 1867, Japan was ruled by a series of Shogun of the Tokugawa lineage. The Tokugawa period is noted for its isolationist philosophy, originating in its early years when Christian missionaries were restricted, expelled, or even murdered in order to quell what was perceived to be the destabilizing influence of Christian teaching. In 1639, the Sakoku, or “Closed Country,” Edict formalized the exclusion of Christians in Japan and restricted the travel of Japanese outside the country. This period of isolation was interrupted, on

one hand, by the long term effects of the systems of education and literacy established in the 17th century, rooted in the influence of the Dutch, and on the other hand by the more immediate arrival of Commodore Perry in 1853, and the powerful technologies at his disposal (deBary, Gluck , & Tiedemann, 2005).

Forces, both internal and external, prompted the end of the Shogunate and the return to an Imperial Japan. The Meiji Restoration is considered to be a period of enlightenment in Japan, a period in which the nation focused its attention on “civilizing” itself, which in many respects simply meant adopting broader international sentiments about liberty and civilian participation in both domestic and international affairs. deBary, Gluck, and Tiedemann (2005) offer a summary of the Meiji emperor’s Charter Oath of 1868, which sets as its goals:

1. Deliberative assemblies to decide all matters by means of public discussion.
2. The participation of all classes in government.
3. The abolition of all hereditary status and occupation.
4. The discarding of all past evil customs.
5. A search for knowledge throughout the world to strengthen the foundations of imperial rule (p. 666).

Many of the prominent intellectuals at the head of Japan’s modernization had been educated in foreign universities and had become familiar with the modes of living common in modern societies. In order to shepherd a nation of people from a long period of isolation and a hierarchical system of feudalism, to a modern, international society of participatory civic life, a new philosophical order was also required. Meiji intellectuals recognized that a new national ethic was required that, at once, fostered a culture suited

for the modern, international society and also possessed an unmistakably Japanese character. This new ethic required shared myths, memories, symbols, values, and traditions employed in a new modality common to the principle nations of the international community, predominately those of Europe and the United States. The old sensibilities would be made to serve a new reality. The long arc of the past provided equilibrium in a time of profound social and cultural change.

Benesch (2014) places the philosophical roots of bushido in the mid-Meiji period, around the late-1870s, arguing that the young intellectual Ozaki Yukio established himself as a central figure in Meiji nationalist discourse during that time. Ozaki rose to prominence thanks to a series of editorials called *On Militarism*, which argued that Japan's historical schisms could be attributed to an imbalance in the civil-martial relationship. He argued that feudal Japan had suffered from an excessively martial mode of governing, while his contemporaries had overemphasized the civil aspects of public life. Ozaki characterized Japanese society in terms of "civil weakness," an attitude that he suggested came to Japan from Chinese Confucianism (Benesch, 2014, p. 47). His perspective on Japanese power in the international community was one of distress. He feared that Japan's ability to stake a strong position in the world order was compromised by the lack of nurturing afforded the martial character of the people, and advocated for martial virtues to be included in primary school education. These virtues, as described by Ozaki, were: "frankness, bold thriftiness, courage, quick-mindedness, generosity, and liveliness" (Benesch, 2014, p. 47)

Benesch (2014) further notes that Ozaki's travels to China and Korea convinced him of Japan's cultural superiority to its Asian neighbors, and that Japan had to take a prominent role in the affairs of the region in order to raise it to the stature of the Western powers. His travels to Europe and the United States had a profound effect on his bushido treatises. His editorializing about Japanese character and the virtues of the martial life were reinforced in his encounters with English chivalry, and Ozaki spent a great deal of time reading English treatises on the development of gentlemanship as a public project. The English literature of the time rooted such notions in a fictional medieval chivalry, much of which employed stories of knights in shining armor as metaphors for contemporary moral struggles. Ozaki is said to have been particularly impressed with the sense of fair play present in the depiction of martial life. The respect and even admiration that combatants shared for one another was the fabric of honor that defined chivalry.

In search of a proper idiom for Japanese gentlemanship, Ozaki found the culture lacking. It was only when he turned to Japan's own feudal past that the proper metaphor was revealed to him. The historical characters best able to capture and represent the English chivalry to the Japanese people were the *bushi*, the warrior class of Japan's feudal past. Although Ozaki clearly understood and reviled the brutality of Japan's feudal history, the code of the warrior, or *bushido*, was an appropriate standard of strength and virtue for the people of Meiji Japan. He began to write on the subject of *bushido* with greater purpose, arguing that Japan's past offered a model for vigorously participating in the international community as leaders. Bushido, thus, is an invented tradition (see also:

Inoue, 1998; Barshay, 1998; Gluck, 1998; Darling-Wolf & Mendelson, 2004; Frost, 2010).

Bushido, in the years following Ozaki's initial explorations, became something of a favorite topic for prominent nationalist thinkers. A range of individuals published on the subject of bushido and its role in defining Japanese character. Benesch (2014) describes this period as a "bushido boom," which ultimately led the ideas away from Japan and into the outside world. Perhaps the most widely recognized of the intellectuals dedicated to exploring Japanese national identity was Inazo Nitobe, a man of the new Japan, born at the start of the Meiji era and educated abroad. Nitobe was a highly educated Japanese Christian born in the north of Japan, multilingual and successful in his graduate work in both the United States and Germany. Upon returning to Japan, he taught at Tokyo Imperial University, Kyoto Imperial University, and Sapporo Agricultural College before becoming the first president of Tokyo Women's Christian University. From 1906 to 1913, Nitobe was the headmaster of the well-known Ichiko, the First Higher School of Tokyo, currently affiliated with Tokyo University (Blackwood, 2008).

The most famous of Nitobe's contributions to the new Japan was his treatise, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, written in English in Malvern, Pennsylvania with the editorial help of his American wife, and published in 1900. The book was intended to explain bushido to the broader international community. A great deal had already been published on the subject of bushido within Japan, and by the time Nitobe's book was published, the concept was considered a primary source for national identification. Bushido was the brand associated with national identity at the turn of the 20th century. In

his book, Nitobe focused on the lessons of the samurai that reflected the virtues of benevolence, courtesy, truthfulness, honor, and loyalty. This notion of chivalry, however, is said to owe as much to the English public school traditions as the warrior class of his native Japan (Blackwood, 2008). Like Ozaki, and others before him, Nitobe looked to the so-called “civilized nations of the world” for his inspiration, elevating Japan in the process and distinguishing it from China and other “backward” Asian peoples. Such was the prevailing attitude of the time in Japan.

The prominence of Nitobe’s *Bushido* owes as much to his own self-promotion and the publication of the book in English as it does to any original thinking. There is very little in the book that would be recognized as exceptional or different to the person familiar with the older rhetoric on the subject published in Japan. Benesch (2014) points out the many contradictions and fallacies in the book, and notes that in many ways it fails to articulate anything meaningful at all. Still, Nitobe’s mission was to introduce Japan to the nations of the international community and provide something familiar, rooted in Japanese history, to situate the nation as a full-fledged member of the civilized world. If the Japanese people, and their character, were made to resemble the proud traditions of other nations, the nation would take its place amongst the elite.

Bushido also figured prominently in the rise of nationalism in the post-Meiji period. The fealty to the Emperor created by Meiji nationalists, and promoted in conservative newspapers, characterized the public mood of the time. A revival of bushido ethics blurred the lines between the civilian and military life of the nation during the period leading up to the Second World War, and martial character was infused into the

arts and culture of the period. Japan's ultimate defeat in World War II brought to an end the chapter of Japanese national identity born in the fires of modernity, internationalization, and imperial ambitions. Just as decades before, however, a Japan forced to readjust itself to the international community sought guidance in the past. As the Allied Occupation of Japan introduced democratic reforms to the nation, Japan was forced to deal with the adoption of democratic principles born outside its borders via the integration of shared myths, memories, symbols, values, and traditions. Once again, old sensibilities would be made to serve a new reality and the long arc of the past provided equilibrium in a time of profound social and cultural change. It was at this time that Japan began to frame itself as a victim of war, which allowed it to erase the memory of its colonial past (Dower, 1999; Duus, 1998), a change characterized by a sort of "public amnesia" (Gluck, 1998).

A third wave of bushido followed the end of the war, mainly through renewed interest in Nitobe's writing. Contemporary Japan has repositioned itself amongst the powerful nations of the world, primarily through the exertion of soft power. Japan has built a competitive international profile in the areas of economics, art, and sports. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s it was common to see American businesspeople reading English translations of the samurai Miyamoto Musashi's *Book of Five Rings* as a way to unlock the psychology behind Japan's newfound economic strength. Much of the interest was driven by a Japanese revival of bushido in business circles of the time (Gluck, 1998). Some conservative nationalists have adopted traditional modes of thought about bushido as a way to reclaim something they perceive to be lost in Japan's postwar victimhood.

Barshay (1998) argues that the revival of bushido rhetoric, and its emphasis on “group competitiveness, individual self-sacrifice, and loyalty” has resulted in a sense of “noncapitalist capitalism,” where many Japanese people fail to consider Japan a capitalist nation. The aspects of capitalism that appear contradictory to the story the Japanese tell about themselves can be resolved by allying economics with invented tradition.

More common is the association of bushido with sport, as Benesch (2014) notes in his description of the “fair play” ethic made popular in the post-war period. He mentions that the men’s national baseball team was nicknamed “Samurai Japan” as it took part in recent Olympic Games and the World Baseball Classic. Likewise, the men’s national soccer team was nicknamed “Samurai Blue.” As Darling-Wolf and Mendelson (2008) point out, contemporary Japanese have a complicated relationship with the topic of the samurai and bushido. Many Japanese feel little connection to either, despite the frequent use of samurai symbols in popular culture texts and corporate sloganeering. Japan’s relationship to the samurai is often reflected back through foreign media. Between the glorified rhetoric of bushido promoted in some contemporary literature, and the constant feedback of samurai imagery from foreign admirers of Japan, a connection between modern Japan and its invented traditions is reproduced.

Nihonjinron is a concept with historical roots that overlap with the articulation of bushido as a national philosophy. Benesch (2014) explains that contemporaries of Ozaki and Nitobe alike took keen interest in establishing a sense of Japanese superiority over other Asian “races,” often legitimating these claims in arguments about national character and cultural progress. *Nihonjinron* narratives have typically emerged at times when Japan

has found its position in the international community most precarious, and therefore different historical contexts reflect a stronger or weaker presence of the theme. Sugimoto (1999) explains that *nihonjinron* is a concept that blurs the lines between Japanese ethnic, cultural, and national identity. It deals with the uniqueness of the Japanese people, based on blood, culture, and citizenship in their totality. One depends necessarily on the other. *Nihonjinron* and its proponents share a conviction that non-Japanese can never fully understand Japan, giving a special exclusivity to the people of Japan.

In an empirical study Manabe and Befu (1992) attempted to identify the relationship between individual familiarity with *nihonjinron* literature and the degree to which individuals agree or disagree with its basic tenants. They found that, despite a broad familiarity with the discourse of *nihonjinron*, a wide range of acceptance exists. Older men, for instance, tend to more strongly identify with the propositions of Japanese uniqueness and homogeneity than others. People with more education, or greater travel experience, tend to demonstrate a weaker acceptance. However, the authors are careful to note that the central tenants of *nihonjinron* “buttress the economic and political institutions” of Japan, and therefore younger Japanese are more likely to gravitate towards the ideology as they become more invested in said economic and political institutions.

Befu (2001) offers a description of the factors at play in the assimilation of *nihonjinron* into mainstream Japanese life. Much of the public knowledge about *nihonjinron* comes from some complex mix of “folk knowledge” and popular discourse about *nihonjinron* promoted in literature between 1946 and 1978, in particular, with

additional works continually produced in the following years. Nakane (1967) further legitimized the idea of Japan's uniqueness in her anthropological treatments of Japanese social order, and Dale (2011) argues that the psychological writings of Takeo Doi performed the same function. Befu (2001) argues that the range of exposure to *nihonjinron*, and the degree to which individuals accept or reject the premise, are impossible to know with any degree of certainty. He argues, however, that the prescriptive tone of *nihonjinron* discourse has a powerful effect on its audience. Much of the discourse is articulated through the description of the Japanese as essentialized in one way or another. The guise of descriptive work masks the power of each proposition. The Japanese *are* this, or Japanese language *is* that, for instance. The volume of literature produced in this particular tone, argues Befu, results in a wide diffusion of essentialized perceptions of the Japanese as a unique race.

In the final decades of the 20th century, the private sector began to endorse some of the central tenets of *nihonjinron* in the organization culture of the business establishment. The Japanese characteristics most associated with group orientation and harmonious relations played an especially prominent role. In 1980, Prime Minister Ohira Masayoshi formed a committee to build public policy around Japanese culture, appointing a group of prominent *nihonjinron* authors and scholars to study the issue. Befu notes that the report produced by the committee “hails Japanese culture for its emphasis on harmonious human relations – contrasting such relations with the self-centered individualism of the West – on members of society knowing their station in life, and on Japanese tradition in general” (p. 81). As *nihonjinron* discourse was promoted from the

cultural sphere to the economic, professional, and political spheres it took on an entirely different level of significance. Nihonjinron, under these conditions, constitutes a hegemonic ideology, acting as an instrument to shape and organize public policy. Befu argues that the state has used nihonjinron discourse in building monuments, bestowing awards of various types, and funding museums of Japanese cultural heritage.

One of the most powerful arguments found in Befu's writing is the notion that nihonjinron took a particularly important place in Japanese society in the years following the Second World War due to the symbolic vacuum that emerged as a result of the country's defeat. The national flag, national anthem, and many prominent symbols fell into a state of disuse after the war, either as matters of public policy or as a result of public shame. Much of the symbolic work related to Japanese national identity centered on the Emperor prior to the war, and in defeat the status of the Emperor had been diminished, including legally in the terms of surrender. These ideas mirror the description of postwar myths of Japaneseness established by Lie (2001).

Morris (2002) notes, "As identity is most commonly and accessibly expressed through symbols that are felt to represent a group, some fear that exposure to the foreign symbols carried by imported media will weaken allegiance to and eventually replace existing symbols" (p. 280). The Japanese reliance on nihonjinron can be understood in this light as a symbolic environment in which Japaneseness can be protected. Nihonjinron, as a definition of essential Japaneseness, is a symbolic boundary within which Japanese people can assert their uniqueness. It's the symbolic importance of blood in this scenario that's significant, and therefore a matter of culture. The strength of blood

as a signifier of belonging has little or nothing to do with chemistry. A transfusion of “non-Japanese” blood would hardly make a person less Japanese when it comes to identity. Blood, then, stands alongside language, art, and custom as a cultural symbol. Blood becomes an unassailable marker of belonging, and of difference, especially when set as a boundary between the conqueror and the conquered. The conquered can learn to speak the language and mime the customs, but blood is essential. It’s a boundary that perpetuates the necessary distance required to subjugate. When conquered, and forced to assimilate culture from outside, blood holds the promise of integrity. No matter the changes forced upon a people, their blood will remain true. Nihonjinron was useful in this way during Japan’s colonial period at the start of the 20th century, and once again during the post-war occupation. As Japan confronts increasingly intense exchange with outside cultures during the early 21st century, nihonjinron remains a contemporary mechanism for group solidarity.

Hybridity is a concept associated with globalization, particularly as the social realities of individuals around the world are found in overlapping flows of information and experiences characterized by deterritorialization. Appadurai (1996) articulates this idea through the concept of disjuncture, where the geographic basis for cultural identity is altered by the intensification of transnational migration and tourism, financial relations, technology of mass communication, and the diffusion of cultural products and ideologies. Relying on Anderson’s (1990) notion of imagined community, Appadurai argues that these contemporary flows influence the nature of our imagined worlds. Appadurai and Breckenridge (1988) argue that a widening of travel experience, a broader menu of

culinary choices, greater exposure to news from around the world and global-media events, like the Olympic Games and the World Cup. As individuals gain access to transnational flows of culture, they sample from a range of “outside” experiences, reimagining the world in the process.

Garcia-Canclini (2005) defines hybridization as “socio-cultural processes in which discreet structures or practices, previously existing in separate form, are combined to generate new structures, objects, and practices” (p. xxv). Werbner (2004) uses the phrase “border crossing connections” to emphasize the quality of hybridity that evokes Appadurai’s notion of locality. As mentioned earlier, the experience of locality is the experience of boundaries. It’s a contextual phenomenon subject to change as boundaries are crossed and contexts are redefined. Kraidy (2005) argues that this social reality is defined by the tendency of individuals to experience the convergence of local and global forces through a process of mixture or blending. He calls this phenomenon *hybridity*, arguing that it is the cultural logic of globalization. Hybridity theory suggests that when different cultures come into contact with one another an exchange takes place. The interaction of cultures results in a mixture in which similarities and differences are negotiated and a broad transformation occurs. In the realm of globalization studies, hybridity theory stands in contrast to traditional concepts of cultural imperialism, which suggest that powerful global forces homogenize everything with which they come into contact. Kraidy (2005) makes the case that individuals experience the interaction of culture at the local level, and as such the effects of cultural blending are uneven and vary

from place to place. Rather than the potent effects suggested in the cultural imperialism model, hybridity theory proposes a more nuanced approach.

An active process of selection and rejection marks cultural hybridity, although it would be a mistake to suggest that imbalanced power relations have no effect on the process. Kraidy (2002) writes, “I believe that hybridity needs to be understood as a communicative practice constitutive of, and constituted by, sociopolitical and economic arrangements. Understanding hybridity as a practice marks the recognition that transcultural relations are complex, processual, and dynamic” (p. 317). He goes on to cite Werber (1997), who makes the case that “the transgressive power of symbolic hybrids to subvert categorical oppositions and hence to create the conditions for cultural reflexivity and change” (p. 1).

These ideas account for the way the Japanese have adopted foreign language, clothing, and food while continuing to promote the value of “native” culture as well. The grey business suit is a staple of menswear in Japan, but trips to the public bath or the local festival find the *yukata* robe and wooden *geta* sandals as appropriate attire. Pasta restaurants have gained widespread popularity in all parts of Japan, but diners will find *wafu*, or Japanese-style, recipes alongside marinara on their menus. *Wafu* pasta may include a butter-soy sauce mix poured over a plate of pasta, topped with enoki mushrooms and shredded seaweed. Cafes across Japan emphasize a European feel, but serve traditional Japanese sweets alongside espresso. It’s tempting to imagine this as a contemporary phenomenon, however any close examination of Japanese culture over time suggests such blending is the rule rather than the exception. Much of the art and

architecture favored by tourists to Japan was influenced by Chinese culture. The early Heian court (794 – 1185 C. E.) demonstrated a nearly insatiable appetite for all things Chinese, including Chinese Buddhism and Taoism, poetry, literature, architecture, and calligraphy. During the second half of that period, however, court administrators began to turn inward, and away from China. The influence of Chinese culture on Japan persisted, and continues to persist even today, but it became the invisible ground for Japanese culture, largely unrecognized as time moved forward.

Kraidy's (2002) warning against applying hybridity theory at the descriptive level demands that the researcher dig deeper to uncover and analyze the social, political, and economic forces that shape the interactions at the heart of hybridization. All of the examples noted in the previous paragraph have roots in some form of exchange. Local values and translocal relationships both play a role in the way cultures mutually influence one another. Hybridity theory offers a way to describe historical processes to demonstrate Pieterse's (2009) point that not only are things "no longer the way they used to be but were never really the way they used to be, or used to be viewed" (p. 97). In a more virile way, hybridity theory helps us recognize the process of hybridization as it occurs in our own day-to-day lives. Deconstructing history is certainly a useful enterprise and informs a great deal of the way we think about our own origins and the path to the present. Observing our own culture as participants, hybridity theory helps us put a finger on what we believe, why we believe it, and the degree to which we're willing to accept influences from the "outside."

Morris (2002) presents a model to explain the process of hybridization, writing, “Innovation and cultural borrowing, overlaid on a foundation of tradition, are integral parts of cultural creativity. Robust traditions assimilate new elements and adapt to new circumstances, while remaining recognizably linked to their communities. Key to this process is the maintenance of a link to existing traditions” (p. 282). She adapts the linguistic model of transformational-generative grammar to suggest, “traditional culture could be considered to constitute a society’s ‘deep structure’, which through innovation and the assimilation of external cultural elements is transformed into – or generates – varying ‘surface structures’” (p. 282). The deep structure acts as a ground for communication, a cultural context from which assumptions are made. In the generative model this corresponds to the concept of prefiguration. Configuration is the process by which audiences interact with new information, interpreting it through the lens of traditional culture. The third part of this process is called refiguration, when audience interpretations enter the larger cultural context, eventually becoming part of the deep structure. Morris (2002) argues that this feedback loop enables cultures to remain relatively stable, while assimilating cultural elements from outside. She writes, “Tomatoes in Italian cooking, African elements in US popular music, and European Jewish cultural elements in Hollywood productions are all examples of external elements that have cycled back into the prefigurative – into the deep structures of their cultures” (p. 283).

When it comes to identity, however, Morris is careful to note that the changes in the surface structure of our culture do not necessarily alter the sentiment itself. The

Japanese have broadly adopted so-called Western clothing styles, but the sentiment of Japaneseness remains the same. Strategies of assimilation, as suggested by the generative model, facilitate change in the surface structure of culture, while preserving the deep structure from which identity is derived. As Meiji intellectuals, for instance, strategically adopted cultural symbols from outside Japan, they undertook to judge their suitability for the deep structure of their culture and edited them when they saw fit. Bushido can be understood as a hybrid element of Japanese culture, as the ethics of the British school system were adopted and then rooted in something symbolically Japanese. In this case, the invented tradition of samurai ethics served the purpose. Today, bushido has become part of the deep structure, particularly through its reproduction in sports rituals. Japan offers an important context for the study of hybridity and assimilation, thanks to its particular experience with assimilation. As mentioned previously, the essentialist view of Japanese culture, represented in *nihonjinron*, sets the ground for a particular type of hybridity.

Iwabuchi (2002) is careful to note that Japan's strategic application of *nihonjinron* allows it to balance its position as victim of Western dominance and aggressor of Asian colonial power. The so-called West offers a model for Japanese modernization, while Asia is the stage for the performance of Japan's past. Japan has been able to join the powerful Western nations as a full member of the elite international community, while holding itself above Asia as something more than Asian. This position has proven useful to Japan in positioning itself between the East and West, as a mediating entity in the age of globalization. Iwabuchi notes that the well-known sociologist Imada Takatoshi has

argued that Japan ought to play the role of negotiator of difference between societies, aiming to avoid negation or suppression in the process. Japan's experience in "editing" its own culture during periods of national turmoil gives Japan the experience to assist in this process broadly (pp. 12-13). This process might also be known as *strategic hybridism*.

Iwabuchi contends that hybridity represents a destabilization of national identity, in which a liminal space is created where fixed national and cultural boundaries can be blurred (p. 54). Hybridism, on the other hand, describes a form of essentialism in which the assimilation of foreign cultures does not change the core. In the case of Japan, the assimilation of foreign cultures through the process of cultural indigenization alleviates the anxiety of contaminating native culture with something from outside. At the same time, the assurance that Japan's essentialized national identity will not be radically transformed in the assimilation of foreign culture means "impurity sustains purity" (Iwabuchi, 2002, p. 54). Japan's experience with hybridism can be attributed to the urge to preserve the monoethnic discourse of Japaneseness represented in *nihonjinron*. Following other scholars presented in this research, Iwabuchi traces the Japanese reaction to assimilation through several historical periods.

In the colonial period of the early-20th century, as Japan was experiencing modernization and exerting an imperialist foreign policy in Asia, it was the assertion of Japaneseness that protected the culture from the powerful effects of Western-style modernity and simultaneously legitimized the subjugation of other Asian "races." Japan was able to assimilate the other races of Asia because Japan was uniquely endowed with the capacity to harmoniously integrate, or so the story goes. In the postwar period,

discourses of Japaneseness turned away from the assimilation narratives of the early-20th century and towards an essentialized national identity, which has been established in this research as *nihonjinron*. The essential “Japan” and the essential “West” were established as principle players in the discourse of national identity. Much of this discourse centered on the contrast between Japan and other Asian countries in the depth of Western cultural adoption. Japan, according to the narratives, was able to indigenize Western culture, where other Asian peoples had succumbed to a form of cultural blurring. Beginning in the 1980s, according to Iwabuchi (2002), Japan’s powerful economic position afforded the people a new environment of abundance in which the consumption of foreign goods and culture became a symbol of status. It was the prevailing notion of Japan’s capacity for assimilation without cultural blurring that spurred such enthusiastic appetites. Iwabuchi notes that the prevailing belief that Japan indigenizes foreign culture has spread beyond Japan. He asserts that discourse regarding Japanese strategic hybridism has spread through the Western academy, legitimizing the idea as an object of Japanese essentialism.

This is not to say that Japan runs fearlessly into the era of globalization, confident in its ability to indigenize the foreign. Since the 1980s, and the growth of Japan’s enthusiasm for internationalization, a movement to improve the competency of the Japanese public’s English language skill has emerged. Educational policy has embraced the introduction of native English speakers to Japanese junior and senior high schools, and in recent years a movement to introduce English at the elementary level has begun. Parallel to this public policy runs the fear that Japan will lose something of its national

character with the introduction of widespread English education. The view that Japan is unique is as much a matter of language as it is of blood. *Nihonjinron* discourse links blood and culture, and there is nothing more indicative of Japanese culture than its language (Moeran, 1988). It is popular opinion in Japan, that Japanese is nearly impossible for foreigners to master (Ivy, 1995, p. 2). Manabe and Befu (1992) noted that this aspect of *nihonjinron* was among the most popularly reproduced in their study. Popular discourse reflects the idea that children learning English will lose the capacity to develop their native language as deeply, resulting in a loss of “Japaneseness.” I encountered this view in my day-to-day conversations with Japanese neighbors and friends over the course of a decade, but also in conversations with my colleagues in academia.

Hybridity, in the Japanese context, is understood through the lens of strategic hybridism. As transnational flows of culture result in a “plurality of imagined worlds” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 5), Japan has taken on a protectionist project aimed at preserving its national identity. In fact, *nihonjinron* discourse has long been a tool for this sort of national reproduction. The overlap between cultural and national identity is important in the study of Japan. Smith (1996) argues that nationalist projects evoke a sense of cultural distinctiveness, emphasized the necessity of cultural purity. The Japanese have long imagined themselves a race, bound by blood, and language, and culture. As the global becomes new ground for the imagination of nation, Japan must struggle with the desire to protect its national and cultural heritage, and the reality of its own hybridity.

Ivy (1995) describes the Japanese situation, saying:

The hybrid realities of Japan today – of multiple border crossings and transnational interchanges in the worlds of trade, aesthetics, science – are contained within dominant discourses on cultural purity and nondifference, and in nostalgic appeals to premodernity: what makes the Japanese so different from everyone else makes them identical to each other; what threatens that self-sameness is often marked temporally as the intrusively modern, spatially as the foreign. (p. 9)

This study addresses the manner in which Japanese sports narratives thematically reproduce the boundaries between the Japanese and others. This is particularly important when considering “the hybrid realities of Japan today,” as Ivy (1995) puts it. Studying sports as invented tradition, and the vehicle for other invented traditions, the emphasis on hybridity theory can illustrate Pieterse’s (2009) assertion that not only are things “no longer the way they used to be but were never really the way they used to be, or used to be viewed” (p. 97).

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

As a 10-year old boy, living in Oakland, California, I spent a great deal of time in my best friend's home. His father was Austrian by birth, and his mother Japanese. I began to learn some early lessons about both Japanese culture and language in their home, and carried many of those experiences with me as I grew into young adulthood. As a teenager, I began to take keen interest in studying the Japanese language, learning some basic phrases and grammatical structures, and practicing the various writing systems in my free time. I made a number of close Japanese friends during those years and found myself visiting Japan on several occasions in the late-1980s and early 1990s. I was bridging the period between my late-teens and my twenties at that time, and I'd already spent half of my life involved with Japan in some way. In my late-20s, I began to study Chinese and Japanese poetry in my time away from work. My interest expanded to history and philosophy, among other things. I took up the study of language once again, and met the woman who would eventually become my wife.

In my early-30s, I found myself leaving the United States to take part in my wife's career plans. She'd been offered a job at a university in her native Japan, and we set up a life in the northern part of Honshu, Japan's main island. During a period spanning nearly nine years, I lived and worked among the Japanese, struggling to find a comfortable place. I became a father and a scholar during those years and, over time, I assimilated quite effectively to the country and our community. I became proficient in the language after some years, and internalized the customs and sensibilities required to "fit

in.” Although I would never been seen as an insider, for reasons obvious in the earlier treatment of Japanese national identity, I integrated very successfully in the ways that were available to me.

More than 30 years of my life have been spent with Japanese people, their culture, and language, and rituals. I’ve experienced life with Japanese people in my own country, and lived and worked among them in their own. As a researcher, it is critical to identify one’s position with respect to the subject of our study. Taking a position from within the area of study, an emic position, researchers attempt to draw patterns from the cultural understandings of “insiders,” examining, for instance, the manner in which self-understandings are expressed. Alternatively, the etic position approaches subjects from an outside perspective, often attempting to find common structures for comparison between cultures. Given the nature of the proposed study, and my own position relative to Japanese culture, a more nuanced approach must be proposed.

I have been the “stranger in the strange land,” to borrow a well-worn phrase from anthropology, but many years of rich experience have given me a privileged position from which to observe and interpret aspects of Japanese culture. Untold hours of conversation, questioning, exploration, and observation have resulted in an intimate relationship with Japan. At this point in my life, I frequently find myself more “insider” than “out.” Abu-Lughod (1991) suggests that the position of “halfie” be considered in conducting anthropological research, where the “halfie” is any person whose “national or cultural identity is mixed by virtue of migration, overseas education, or parentage” (p. 466). The “halfie” is faced with the blurring of self/other distinctions in the conducting of

research. On one hand, the challenge of standing apart from the observed culture is a matter of objectivity. On the other hand, standing apart is also a type of positionality, which Abu-Lughod argues brings a host of epistemological baggage. The “halfie” is acutely aware of the self/other tension, and therefore operates with a special sensitivity to the subject of observation.

In this research, I studied the Japanese newspaper coverage of sports in search of narrative themes that reproduce nation, and suggest particular aspects of Japanese character. The research was conducted using narrative analysis, in the mode of thematic analysis, as described by both Riessman (2008) and Braun and Clarke (2006). Riessman notes that all narrative analysis is concerned with “‘what’ is said, written, or visually shown,” but that thematic analysis is primarily concerned with content, where other methods may focus on structure, or various other characteristics. (p. 53). Thematic analysis is often applied to the study of qualitative interviews and archival documents. It can take either an inductive or deductive approach to data, and even both in many cases.

Braun and Clarke (2006) describe the processes by which thematic analysis can be conducted, noting a number of key choices in the approach to such work. The authors are careful to distinguish between a number of different types of thematic analysis, including inductive or theoretical thematic analysis, semantic or latent themes, and essentialist or constructionist epistemologies. The present research takes a theoretical, latent, and constructionist approach to thematic analysis.

They argue that the theoretical approach to thematic analysis is more analyst-driven than the inductive approach. Theoretical thematic analysis, for example, proceeds from a set of research questions and offers a more detailed analysis of some aspect of the data, in contrast to the inductive approach, which starts from a rich description of the overall data set. Researchers taking an inductive approach would not proceed from an established theoretical perspective, instead allowing the data to drive the identification of themes. As this research is informed by the theoretical foundation of nationalism, and very specific manifestations of nationalism in the Japanese context, the theoretical approach is most appropriate. In this approach, I took interest in the way nationalism played out across the data, noting both specific patterns related to bushido, nihonjinron, and hybridity and patterns independent of those established features. Furthermore, the interaction of nationalist themes with other key areas of interest was identified in specific chapters, where present.

Braun and Clarke (2006) note that “thematic analysis at the latent level goes beyond the semantic content of the data, and starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations – and ideologies – that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data” (p. 13). In contrast to analysis at the semantic level, which describes and interprets only patterns found at the surface, the latent level approach is aimed at the underlying ideological assumptions and meanings of the data. As the data set examined in this research is principally about sports, sporting events, and athletes, it is only through a latent approach that nationalist themes may be identified and interpreted. Likewise, given the choice to approach the data from a

theoretical point of view, rather than an inductive methodology, the latent level offers a richer range of possibilities for examination. Finally, based on the definition of nationalism established earlier, a constructionist epistemology is the obvious choice.

The authors argue that thematic analysis “can be a constructionist method, which examines the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society” (p. 9). Essentialist epistemology contradicts the nature of nationalism, nation, and national identity as established in the theoretical foundation of this study. Each of the aforementioned concepts is rooted in processes of self-definition and communication. Hybridity theory, in particular, offers a means by which to identify deep cultural structures and the ways in which they respond to cross-boundary interactions. When cultures change, assimilating symbols from the “outside,” the structure of feeling associated with the nation and with national identity must adjust as well. Taken together, the theoretical mode of thematic analysis, operating primarily at the latent level, and proceeding from a constructionist epistemology, structure the research presented in the case studies to follow.

The present research followed the six-step guide to conducting thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The first of the six steps is familiarization with the data set to be explored. I repeatedly reviewed the articles selected for each study, learning the landscape and generating lists of ideas about which aspects of the data stood out as particularly interesting. These lists eventually informed the coding process, but the key goal at the start was to simply build a strong feel for the ins and outs of the data.

Initial coding took place during the second step, focusing on patterns that could be organized into meaningful groups. The authors recommend creating a broad range of codes for patterns identified in the data, as some may prove useful later in the study. A number of different techniques are suggested in Braun and Clarke (2006), including heavy notation of texts, the use of highlighter pens, and the use of 'post-it' notes to identify segments of data. Riessman (2008) describes the technique of a particular researcher who was interested in identifying themes of "imagined space" in the letters of women of late-19th century England. Her theoretical framework informs the initial coding of the data, as the researcher "circles and highlights words and phrases that strike her" (p. 64). This approach is followed by additional readings of the data, informed by the relevant theory, to flesh out broader themes suggested in the various codes.

The data used in conducting this research was exclusively retrieved from online database archives, and as such I kept extensive notes on yellow legal pads, noting common themes, keywords, and story types. As I recognized patterns in the data, I organized the notes into groups to be reviewed at a later time.

Step three involves the process of broadening, where the codes are sorted into potential themes and the relevant data extracts are organized according to where they fit best. Several codes may be combined into a single theme, depending on the nature of the data. Braun and Clarke (2006) recommend that researchers begin a process of "mind mapping," where "the relationship between codes, between themes, and between levels of themes" are established (pp. 19-20). By the end of this process, a collection of "candidate themes, and subthemes" should be established for review.

In step four, the researcher begins to refine themes by asking a series of important questions: Is there enough data to support this as a theme? Are these themes really the same thing? Is this theme actually a number of different themes? Is there actually a coherent pattern in my data here? Such questions assure a particular level of scrutiny before assigning hard and fast thematic structure to the data, which becomes particularly important when interpreting themes. By the end of the process, I was able to identify a clear set of themes, a relationship between themes, and an overall story told about the data.

The fifth step in the process is the defining and naming of the themes. The researcher should attempt to identify the ‘essence’ of the themes in this step, describing what is interesting about them and why (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 22). The authors recommend that a detailed analysis of each theme be produced here, including a short description of a couple of sentences. Larger, more complex, themes may be broken down into a number of sub-themes, with each sub-theme receiving the same treatment. As I identified significant themes in the data sets, I assessed their validity by constructing brief definitions, reviewing the individual articles to determine how well they held up against the description. In some cases, this process resulted in the identification of significant sub-themes. I then applied the same review to the sub-themes to assess their suitability.

The sixth, and final step is the production of the report, in which the researcher offers an analysis that “provides a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive, and interesting account of the story the data tell – within and across themes” (p. 23). In these

analyses, I provided evidence of the themes in the form of vivid examples from the data, making an argument in relation to the research questions.

Research Questions

In conducting the study, the following research questions were applied:

RQ1: What can the example of Japan teach us about processes of national identity negotiation as they unfold across the globe?

RQ2: What can be understood about the role of mass media in these processes?

RQ3: How does this research contribute to the understanding of hybridity theory, particularly with respect to cultural assimilation?

Data Set

The data set used in this study came from the sports coverage of various, specific events and athletes represented in Japan's two highest circulation newspapers, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* and the *Asahi Shimbun*, and their respective sports tabloids the *Sports Hochi* and *Nikkan Sports*. Japan boasts one of the highest newspaper readerships in the world, and continues to defy the global downturn in newspaper readership. The two newspapers used in this study are among the top five most read daily newspapers in the world.

The *Yomiuri Shimbun* was founded in 1874 and quickly became one of the most successful newspapers in Japan. It continues to be the world's highest circulation newspaper with a daily readership of 9,240,000 as of September 2014, according to the

Japan Audit Bureau of Circulations (<http://www.nippon.com/en/features/h00084/>). The paper is considered to be a center-right publication, typically supporting the majority Liberal Democratic Party, and emphasizing conservative fiscal policies and cultural interpretations. In addition to the morning and evening editions, the company also publishes Japan's most popular daily sports tabloid, the Sports Hochi. It has numerous publishing, broadcast, and Internet interests, in addition to its most visible property, the Tokyo Yomiuri Giants baseball franchise.

Over the years, the newspaper has participated in the sponsoring and ownership of various sporting events and professional sports franchises. The first such endeavor was the establishment of the Tokyo Ekiden in 1917, a foot race through the streets of Tokyo that has run continuously since its founding. The ekiden is a phenomenon repeated in several Japanese cities today, and features prominently in the New Year's activities throughout the nation. The most famous of Yomiuri's sporting pursuits has been the ownership of the Tokyo Yomiuri Giants, Japan's most famous and popular baseball club. The "Dainippon Tokyo Baseball Club" was established by Yomiuri in 1934 and was later renamed for the company. The Giants have won more titles over the years than any Japanese baseball franchise, including nine consecutive years spanning the late-1960s and early-1970s. In 2002 the newspaper underwent a reorganization to manage the various television, publishing, and Internet properties under a single management system, creating the Yomiuri Group. That same year saw Yomiuri join the Japan Olympic Committee as the only media company in the organization (<http://info.yomiuri.co.jp/company/history.html>).

The *Asahi Shimbun* was founded in 1879 as a small publication, but quickly rose in prominence as a source of news and literature. Initially, the company produced two newspapers under separate urban corporate structures, one in Osaka and the other in Tokyo. In 1908 the two companies merged to form a single entity. Today, the paper is typically considered a left-leaning publication, although that characterization hasn't always been the case. The daily circulation as of September 2014, according to the aforementioned Japan Audit Board of Circulations, was 7,210,000.

Asahi was instrumental in the formation of the Koshien National High School Baseball tournaments, held annually in the Spring and Summer, and in the building of Koshien Stadium in the early-20th century. This aspect of their history is particularly relevant to the first case study in this research. *Asahi* produces one of Japan's most successful daily sports tabloid, *Nikkan Sports*, a strong competitor of *Yomiuri's Sports Hochi* publication. In addition to the newspaper, *Asahi's* parent corporation has significant interest in the broadcasting business. Among its most prominent holdings are *TV Asahi*, the *Asahi Broadcasting Corporation*, and the *All Nippon News Network*, not to mention a number of Internet endeavors

(<http://www.asahi.com/shimbun/company/outline/history.html>).

There are a number of other very competitive newspapers publishing in Japan, including the *Mainichi Shimbun* (3,300,000 daily circulation), the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* (2,770,000), and the *Sankei Shimbun* (1,600,000). Each of these newspapers ranks among the highest read daily newspapers in the world, and individually hold a number of media properties beyond their news division. To some degree, each of these companies also

cover sports, online or in print. The decision to limit the study to Japan's two largest, and oldest, publications primarily reflects practical concerns, as both *Yomiuri* and *Asahi* offer hundreds of articles related to each of the case studies proposed. Additionally, the profile of the two newspapers makes them representative of the larger set. Given their status as Japan's papers of record, it is also safe to assume that a certain amount of duplication will turn up as the sample size increases.

In total, 2054 Japanese language articles were reviewed across all case studies. 1072 were reviewed in *Yomiuri Shimbun*, and 982 were reviewed in *Asahi Shimbun*, with an additional 44 studies in *Yomiuri Shimbun's Sports Hochi*, and 50 in *Asahi Shimbun's Nikkan Sports*. The use of *Sports Hochi* and *Nikkan Sports* was limited to the chapter on the Koshien High School Baseball Tournament, as both tabloids are especially well known for their extensive coverage of high school baseball. The articles studied across the entire data set included "hard news," editorial writing, and opinion pieces submitted by the public. Editorials and opinion pieces were included in the data set to illustrate the range of narrative voices represented to audiences in the coverage of sports.

The data used in the investigation of Chapter Four is taken from the coverage of the 2014 Koshien Summer High School Baseball Championships, covering the quarterfinal, semifinal, and final rounds. In all, 376 articles were reviewed, 138 in the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 44 in *Sports Hochi*, 144 in the *Asahi Shimbun*, and 50 in *Nikkan Sports*. The articles featured coverage of the games' outcomes and the practice sessions conducted during the tournaments off days. In general, the articles featured significant moments from each respective game, interspersed with quotes from key players and

managers. Across all four publications, the majority of articles focused their attention on a single team, resulting in several articles per contest and per off day.

The data examined in Chapter Five comes from the coverage of four recipients of The People's Honor Award, and the publicity generated in the immediate wake of each honor. The articles studied appeared in the newspapers between the start of November 2012 and the end of December 2013. In total, 248 articles were reviewed, 131 from *Yomiuri Shimbun* and 117 from *Asahi Shimbun*. The articles ranged in content from short announcements to longer editorials. References to the individuals who received the award were observed in news coverage for several months beyond each ceremony, eventually tapering off completely. The majority of articles reviewed in the study referenced The People's Honor Award in connection to the athletes' personal appearances, local connections, and public ceremonies honoring their accomplishments.

The data studied in Chapter Six comes from the coverage of the Japanese Women's National Soccer team's victory in the 2011 FIFA Women's World Cup, spanning the period July 17, 2011 and July 31, 2011. That period reflects the coverage immediately preceding the championship game and the extended coverage of the victory as the team returned to Japan in celebration of the achievement. In total, 346 articles were reviewed, 190 from *Yomiuri Shimbun* and 156 from *Asahi Shimbun*. The articles ranged from short blurbs noting game details and viewing options, to feature pieces about athletes, to coverage of the championship results and subsequent celebrations.

In Chapter Seven, the coverage of the November 2014 *Kyushu Basho* (Tournament) and the January 2015 *Hatsu Basho*, or “First Tournament,” was examined. Coverage was reviewed between the dates of November 1, 2014 and January 31, 2015, spanning the coverage leading up to the Kyushu Basho and the review of the Hatsu Basho a week beyond its conclusion. In all, 242 articles were reviewed, 107 in *Yomiuri Shimbun* and 135 in *Asahi Shimbun*. The most colorful and in-depth coverage of Hakuho’s quest was identified in the lead up to each tournament, and in the closing review of his performance.

The data examined in Chapter Eight comes from the ongoing coverage of Japan’s role as host of the 2020 Olympic Games. 842 articles were examined, spanning the period between September 1, 2013 and September 30, 2013. That period reflects the coverage immediately preceding the IOC’s decision to award Tokyo the 2020 Games and the coverage of the immediate aftermath of the winning bid. 462 articles were reviewed from *Yomiuri Shimbun* and 380 from *Asahi Shimbun*. A relatively short range of topics were identified in this month long coverage.

CHAPTER 4

“BOYS BE AMBITIOUS”: THE KOSHIEEN TRADITION

When it comes to invented tradition in the form of sporting competition, there is no greater spectacle than the National High School Baseball Championships at Koshien Stadium. Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) argue that the study of the ceremonial must be rooted in its historical context: “The central idea underlying this approach is that ceremonial occasions, like works of art or of political theory, cannot be interpreted merely ‘in terms of their internal structure,’ independent of all subject, of all object, and of all context (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983, pp. 104-105). Studying the ‘meaning’ of Koshien is to begin by examining the context in which it was created, and to describe the ways in which the continuation of the ritual is positioned in the contemporary context. The origins of baseball in Japan begin to tell the story of its significance to Japanese national identity.

In contrast to the Tokugawa repression of Christianity and the foreign elements of Japanese society, the administration of the Meiji period fully embraced foreign participation and hired thousands of employees from outside of Japan to assist in pursuits ranging from engineering to medicine, and based a new system of public education on the English and American models. The Japanese, however, initially placed little emphasis on physical training in the new public education. The English and American sentiment of the late-19th century included a rigorous sporting component, as much for the purpose of displaying superior physical and tactical prowess in an era of international expansion as for personal health and vitality. The foreign settlements of the late-Tokugawa period had

all featured various sorts of outdoor games, which established a sense of masculine superiority in the minds of the foreign contingents when contrasted with “effeminate” pursuits, such as flower arrangement and kite flying, enjoyed by their Japanese counterparts (Roden, 1980).

Foreign educators in the early Meiji public school system believed strongly in the inclusion of physical education, and successfully petitioned the Japanese government to include light calisthenics in the routines of the lower school students. The English and American belief in athletic training at the end of the 19th century found origins in the same British public school philosophy that would later excite Inazo Nitobe and stressed the virtue of amateurism in the pursuit of excellence. This system of belief was also on display at the onset of the modern Olympic Games during the same period. The notion of amateurism was lauded in sport, wherein the pursuit of athletics was an “end in itself” and emphasized the “gentlemanly virtues” of “fair play,” “character-building” and self-control and generosity in victory as well as defeat (Blackwood, 2008).

Baseball was first taught to students in Japan in 1873. Two American teachers, Horace Wilson and G. H. Mudgett, teaching at Ichiko, began to introduce the game to groups of students as an effort to spread the doctrine of athletics as a character building pursuit. Initially, the Japanese administrators resisted the inclusion of such physical training, stressing instead the intellect over the body. Blackwood (2008) describes the dilemma facing both foreign educators and their dedicated baseball-playing students in convincing a skeptical public that the American game possessed value in the training of modern Japanese. It was the rhetoric of bushido that first won over the skeptics, binding

the pursuit of a foreign game, and the foreign idea of physical training as a character-building endeavor, to a time in Japanese history still looked on with reverence and respect. This was generally a popular symbolic association, but particularly so with the nationalists and those closely aligned with the military, those who may have otherwise rejected baseball. There is little evidence, however, to suggest that the Japanese game of baseball was substantially different in form or style to the American game, or that training was somehow adapted in a Japanese fashion. Rather, it is more likely that the English and American athletic philosophy of the late-19th century drove the pursuit of baseball, one that stressed a pedagogy of the physical alongside the intellect (pp. 224-226).

Nevertheless, Ichiko students were among the first to vigorously pursue baseball and test their mettle against an assortment of foreign competitors. At first, Ichiko teams of the 1890s sought out friendly games with elements of the foreign settlements, including merchants and naval officers sometimes twice their age. The initial contests with foreign players were decidedly lopsided in favor of the Ichiko boys, who trained as though their lives depended on it. The victories piled up and the legend of Ichiko's prowess traveled throughout Japan, prompting the formation of baseball clubs at schools everywhere. The victories had tremendous symbolic value for a Japanese public eager to stand up in the world as equals on the international stage. By the early-20th century, baseball had become the most popular intercollegiate sport in Japan (Whiting, 1989).

Not all Japanese were won over by the game, however, and in 1911 the conservative Tokyo Asahi Shimbun ran a series of editorials railing against "The Evil of

Baseball.” Inazo Nitobe, a great believer in the amateur ethic and the inclusion of athletics in public education, not to mention the head of Ichiko, decried baseball as a “pickpocket sport” where players cheat their opponents by stealing bases (Whiting, 1989, p. 35). Opponents of baseball cloaked their rhetoric in the language of bushido, or at least what had become popularly associated with bushido, while the supporters of the game followed suit. Opponents decried the vanity associated with the game and the use of the game as a marketing ploy by the major universities. Supporters, like educators and “fathers of baseball” Abe Iso and Tobita Tsuishu, noted the character-building qualities of the game and the dignity of athletic pursuit of the kind (Blackwell, 2008). The range of bushido philosophy was sufficiently open to interpretation that it bound both sides of the debate to the same invented tradition.

The public debates about baseball, with participants on both sides, played out in the Japanese newspapers for a period of time, proving to be great business for the publishers, whatever the sentiment of the day. The recognition of baseball as good business may have prompted Asahi Shimbun’s Osaka publishers to reverse course on the company’s opposition to baseball, when in 1915 they agreed to sponsor the first national middle school baseball championship tournament. In the first year of the tournament, 72 of Japan’s 321 middle schools took part, playing at Osaka’s Toyonaka Field. The following year’s field was more than double the schools that participated in the inaugural event, and the tournament soon outgrew the ball field at Toyonaka, shifting from the middle to the high school level soon after.

The popularity of the event was driven, in part, by the impassioned writing of Tobita Tsuishu, once an adversary of the Asahi Shimbun, who was hired by the paper to sing the praises of baseball, or ‘yakyu’ as it is known in Japan, as an essential part of modern Japanese culture, rooted in bushido. Unlike his mentor, Abe Abe, Tobita was a believer in the more conservative interpretation of bushido and its connection to baseball. Whereas Abe preferred to position his beliefs about baseball in the gentlemanly traditions of the British public school system, Tobita saw the sport as an extension of the samurai virtues of Japan’s warrior class. His bushido was a product of a burgeoning nationalist tradition, born in the reinterpretation of bushido for the modern Japanese. Tobita and Asahi chose to promote ‘yakyu’, “not a direct translation of American professional baseball, but Japanese baseball, based on the spirit of bushido” (Blackwell, 2008, p. 233).

The ceremony of the tournament, and its structure, further reinforced the psychological links to bushido as organizers, including Tobita, made the competition single-elimination and mandated both teams line up along home plate to remove their caps and bow to one another before and after games. The ceremony of the tournament resembled, in most ways, the spiritualism of Japanese martial arts, like kendo or judo. However, attaching such ceremony to the baseball field as an extension of bushido ignores the modern origins of the Japanese martial arts tradition, parallel to the Meiji historical period (Inoue, 1998). Amateurism, sportsmanship, fair play, effort and self-discipline were virtuously on display in the summer tournament, and reflected in the published accounts of the games as characteristic of Japan’s bushido heritage. The success of the sport, its marquee tournament, and the burgeoning newspaper relationship

with both owe a great deal to the symbolic association of baseball and bushido. Whether, in fact, the culture surrounding the sport owes its origins to the philosophy of the British public school system or the Meiji interpretation of bushido, Japan found baseball to be a suitable vehicle for the adoption of a new ethic, a set of symbols embodying the dignity and legitimacy of the nation as it entered the international community. Baseball, as a vehicle to promote the virtues of bushido, real or imagined, bound the beliefs, values, and attitudes of the Meiji Japanese to those of their ancestors.

At the same time, for individuals like Abe, who embraced the internationalization of Japan, baseball acted as an extension of the British ethic of amateurism and athletics that defined the modern Olympic Games. These symbols bound Japan to an international space, as well as to the collective experiences and philosophies of the Western Enlightenment. In both cases, ‘yakyu,’ or ‘field ball,’ had become firmly entrenched in Japanese society and its most famous competition required a new venue, suitable to the game’s stature and popularity. That new home was Koshien Stadium.

Koshien Stadium was opened in 1924 as a 50,000-seat facility in Nishinomiya, Hyogo Prefecture, Japan, located between the cities of Osaka and Kyoto. The organization and finance of the new stadium was shared by Asahi Shimbun, sponsors of the wildly popular Summer High School Baseball Championship Tournament, Mainichi Shimbun, sponsors of the newer spring high school baseball championship tournament, and the Hanshin Railway Company, who’s railroads not only connected the surrounding areas to the ballpark, but also played an important role in the evolution of the urban areas of the Kansai region generally.

The brick and concrete structure was soon covered in ivy, giving the games played within its walls an extra feeling of mystique. The “iron umbrella” awning covered the most expensive seats behind the infield, shielding spectators from the elements, rain or shine. The infield bleachers on either sides were nicknamed the “Alps” for their steep rise as well as for their appearance, schoolgirls in white blouses seated in the cheering sections for the home and away teams giving the impression of the snow-capped Matterhorn. Black-red dirt covered the infield, a distinctive feature that continues to serve as a ritual symbol for schoolboys lucky enough to qualify for competition in the annual high school baseball tournaments. Players scoop spoonfuls of the hallowed soil as a memento of their experience, evidence of their place in the elite of the sport’s history in Japan. The outfield grass, carefully manicured and protected, was a remarkable sight to fans in attendance, as the Japanese soil proves unfriendly to the types of lawns seen in the West (Kelly, 2011).

The technological and industrial boom of the early-20th century was not only seen outside the stadium with the electric trains and buses, but inside the confines of the stadium as well. In the 1920s, Koshien Stadium was one of the few places Japanese could experience public flush toilets, for example. Japan’s first live radio broadcasts were also conducted at the stadium. In recent years, the stadium has undergone restoration efforts to preserve its crumbling infrastructure. Over the years, the seats were replaced with plastic and solar panels now adorn various parts of the park, including the “iron umbrella,” in an effort to live up to the modern sensibilities of an international Japan. Still, the wooden press box sits behind home plate, evoking an era long since having passed into history,

and the modest locker rooms carry with them the ghosts of tournaments past (Kelly, 2011).

Although professional baseball was established in 1936 in Japan, it wasn't until the 1950s and the advent of televised coverage that teams adopted permanent home stadiums. The Hanshin Tigers have made their home at Koshien since that time, owned by the same railway group that initially built the stadium in the mid-1920s. The Tigers have a loyal and vocal following and share the most famous professional rivalry the Japanese sport has ever known with the powerhouse Yomiuri Giants of Tokyo.

Above the outfield walls stands a two-deck seating area, routinely filled with enthusiastic fans, cheering in unison, beating drums, and singing the heroic songs of their favorite clubs. A venerable scoreboard is set across the length of center field, raised to form a third tier, and topped by an analog clock. Aside from the colorful fans dotting the seating area, the only color breaking the modest stadium décor is the “Fenway green” seen sparsely throughout the facility and most prominently as the base color of the three-tiered centerfield configuration. The ivy and brick exterior, in combination with the traditional appearance of the modest stadium interior and striking dirt playing field, presents an environment frozen in time. Koshien is the cathedral of Japanese sport, in the way that American fans understand both Fenway and Wrigley fields.

Koshien is far more than just a feat of architecture, however. It is the material consequence of ideas. Koshien represents the convergence of modernity's technological

advancements, the adoption of a distinct form of play, and the sanctification of Japanese cultural heritage in the spirit of the samurai code called *bushido*.

“The Laurels of Victory Shine on You”

Despite the popularity of the Tigers, and the regularity with which professional contests take place at Koshien Stadium, the field is still synonymous with high school baseball. There’s plenty of evidence that the spirit of the Meiji era philosophy, bushido or British, is still alive and well at Koshien. All one has to do is listen to any interview conducted with participants in any of the stadium’s annual tournaments to hear the rhetoric of the past come alive again in the comments of 21st century teenagers and their managers. Hideshi Masa, manager of Osaka’s Tennoji High School, remarked to CNN after a loss at the 2011 summer tournament, “It was a beautiful game,” calling the experience an “education of the heart...to teach students through baseball how to endure whatever misfortune befalls them.” Masa further related, “By playing baseball and persistently trying to get to Koshien...students can learn charity and gratitude and get a better sense of who they are” (Krieger, D., 2011).

It is not hard to understand why ideas like these persist in contemporary players’ and managers’ remarks. The ritual of the championship tournaments makes one the ideals of past generations and the attitudes of their great-grandchildren. The training and culture that live on in small rural towns and the Japanese metropolis alike embody the spirit of the Meiji era: amateurism, sportsmanship, fair play, effort and self-discipline. Uniforms bear no names. Dedicated cheering sections fill the seats at Koshien to shout themselves

hoarse in support of their schools. The pomp and circumstance of both the opening and closing ceremonies is eclipsed only by the Olympic Games, albeit on a much smaller budget. Players weep openly at every loss, often collapsing to the ground unable to stand or speak. Deep bows precede and follow every game and the official song of the Koshien tournament, “The Laurels of Victory Shine on You,” is committed to memory by every player to take the field.

Each of these traditions, and plenty more besides, play out on the field and in the bowels of venerable Koshien Stadium. Arguably, no other place on Earth could stand in for Koshien when it comes to the embodiment of the Japanese quest for dignity and identity in the Meiji period and the values and attitudes that have defined more than a century of Japanese culture. When the summer tournament is in full swing, the ever-industrious Japanese turn to their televisions in the workplace to steal a glimpse of the Japanese boys of summer. The exploits of players and teams are discussed for years among proud alumni of the schools represented at Koshien and their local supporters.

Koshien is an essentially inward looking phenomenon. There is little talk of the Major Leagues, and very little talk of professional baseball at all, for that matter. The elaborate ritual was born from the womb of mass schooling and continues to serve as an educational phenomenon for both participants and audiences. The narratives surrounding Koshien reproduce nation in a particular way, linking both space and time, while also suggesting a number of things about Japanese national identity, many of which are rooted in bushido.

Themes

Several key themes were identified across the body of articles described in the methods chapter. Although the coverage of Koshien does not produce a deixis, an “us” and “them” opposition, a clear flagging of nation occurs. The theme “Nippon Ichi,” or “Best in Japan,” roots each team’s respective journey in the pursuit of a nationwide honor. The frequent repetition of this phrase, particularly in connection to prefectural origin, promotes the idea “out of many, we are one.” A second theme, “Tradition,” marks the continuity of the tournament across nearly a century and symbolically links the contemporary “boys of summer” with generations past. The unbroken line of history is particularly significant in preserving a sense of coherence between contemporary Japan and the increasingly distant past. The final theme is the most robust of the three, featuring several subthemes and a rich collection of supporting data. The theme “Spirit” describes the attention to attitude and temperament that pervades the coverage of Koshien. This theme is most closely related to the bushido origins of baseball in Japan, and details the many ingredients that go into the high school baseball experience and the quest for glory at Koshien. The first subtheme, “Effort,” is related to the focus on training and fighting spirit that runs throughout the coverage of the teams and players. The second subtheme, “Teamwork,” emphasizes the role of selflessness, cooperation, and support in pursuing the championship at Koshien. The third subtheme, “Emotion,” describes the emotional disposition of the players in victory and defeat. The final theme, “Growth,” emphasizes the mentor-student relationship between managers and players, particularly as managers attempt to extrapolate lessons from the competition.

Nippon Ichi

A number of signs point directly at the idea of nation in the coverage of Koshien. The official name of the tournament is the Koshien National High School Baseball Championship Tournament, foregrounding the inclusiveness of the event across Japan. Each of the country's 47 prefectures sends a single representative to the national competition, decided in prefectural tournaments in the weeks leading up to the main event at Koshien. Local communities are deeply invested in the prefectural competitions, as televisions find their way into the workspaces of people throughout the small towns and villages during the day. Each prefectural tournament is its own Koshien, writ small. During these local tournaments, the big stage is only imagined in the abstract. Individual school histories are played out at the local level, as alumna hang on every pitch of every game. As soon as the prefectural championships are decided, however, attention turns immediately to prefectural pride and the national stage comes to the fore. The national coverage of the Koshien tournament prominently identifies the prefectural identity of each high school team, and frequent reference is made to the "people back home." Koshien, as a collection of many, is as much about the "us" and "them" of the nation's 47 prefectures as it is about Japan as a whole. That said, the coverage of Koshien in *Asahi Shimbun*, *Nikkan Sports*, *Yomiuri Shimbun*, and *Sports Hochi* regularly identifies the aim of individual players and teams as the quest to become number one in Japan.

The phrase "Nippon ichi" appears in over half of the articles examined for this research, nearly always as a part of a manager or player quote. Most of the quotes are unremarkable, either the statement of a simple goal, or the failure to achieve said goal,

but the sheer quantity across days of coverage reproduces the idea of nation. Against the backdrop of strong prefectural identification, the stated goal of becoming number one in the nation supports the understanding of “out of many, we are one.” After winning the 2014 championship, Osaka Toin manager Nishitani Koichi explained that he was happy to get the championship banner back. He had led Toin to the title in 2012 only to fall short in 2013. He praised his players’ determination to fight until the end, preserving a tight 4-3 victory, saying, “I was able to see the moment when the team became the best in Japan...It was a great championship game” (Otsuta, 2014).

A similar phrase appears in a handful of articles, expressing the same idea. Niigata Bunri High School player Kodachi Otowa recalled, in his excitement to reach the Koshien semifinal, watching Niigata Bunri compete in the 2009 championship game. He relates feeling exhilarated, realizing the power of baseball in that moment, and hoping to feel that way again. At last, Kodachi remarked that he was two wins away from the peak of the nation. The term *zenkoku* is at the head of the tournament’s title, meaning “nation.” Kodachi’s remark refers to being two wins from *zenkoku no choten*, the “nation’s peak.” It’s a colorful, expressive phrase that stands in for *Nippon ichi*, striking a visual reminder of the idea of nation (Maeda, 2014, August 23).

The two examples pulled to illustrate the flagging of nation in the Koshien articles, also hint at the second theme identified in the data. The Toin manager and the Bunri player, alike, refer to prior teams in past tournaments to imagine the significance of winning. It is through the present day connection to past glory that the thrill of victory is most powerfully understood at Koshien. Winning is not reward in and of itself, but rather

the connection to others who have won is where the greatest satisfaction is imagined. Koshien is nothing if not a sacred tradition.

Tradition

It's a common feature of Koshien coverage to provide the tournament lineage of each team. Teams are identified according to the number of appearances they've made since the competition's inception. If a team has competed in the tournament in consecutive years, an enumerated streak will be provided. Likewise, if a team is returning to Koshien after an absence of some time, the number of years between appearances will be offered. Continuity is crucial in the telling of Koshien's story, and in the way Koshien tells Japan's story. Approximately one-third of the 347 articles studied in this case directly identified team histories in this way. The word *renzoku* figures prominently in this sort of description, indicating the number of consecutive years a team has participated in Koshien. Likewise, the indicator *~kaime*, preceded by a number, indicates the number of times a team has been a representative of its prefecture in the tournament overall.

As an invented tradition, imbued with strong, enduring values, it's significant that a historical mapping follows the narrative of balls and strikes, wins and losses. Telling the story of the contemporary tournament's link to all tournaments past maps a straight line through history, reinforcing the image of national stability and enduring heroism. Putting each school's history at the center of their respective journeys adds a critical dimension to the latent meaning of the competition. On one hand, the idea that "out of

many, we are one” is made clear, but the additional idea that “it’s always been this way” is also communicated. To the extent that readers of these narratives will extrapolate the future from the events, one might imagine that “it will always be this way” as well.

Of the team narratives examined in the data set, three stand out as the most illustrative. The story of Osaka Toin, the eventual champion, is the story of a perpetual contender. Toin won the tournament in 2012 before capturing the 2014 title, and before that in 2008 and 1991. Mie Prefectural High School presented a different story to the followers of the 2014 tournament. A small prefecture in the southern part of Japan’s main island, Mie had not seen a national champion since 1955, when Yokkaichi High School claimed victory. The Mie team’s 59-year championship drought was the subject of 28 articles in the sample studied for this case. Mie was defeated in the 2014 title game by Osaka Toin and one headline read “Mie, The whirlwind stopped! Prefecture’s 59 year streak halted one step short of being number one in Japan” (Narasaki, 2014). Mie High School successfully represented the prefecture at the lesser-regarded Spring Koshien championships in 1969, when it beat the field to bring home the title, a point made prominently in one article detailing the team’s 2014 hopes (Iso, 2014).

The third team featured prominently in this way was Niigata Prefecture’s Bunri High School, but for a different reason. Bunri High School is not a stranger to Koshien, but the 2014 team found a link to history outside its typical lineage. The narrative following the Niigata entry at Koshien focused on the accomplishments of a single player and his remarkable link to a few big names from tournaments past. Although the team was noted for having appeared in the title game of the 2009 tournament, losing eventually

to Aichi Prefecture's Chukyo High School, the story of the 2014 club was ace pitcher Iizuka Satoshi. Nearly ten percent of all the articles studied in the sample covered Iizuka's historical feat in some way. Early in the tournament, Iizuka vowed to throw every single pitch for his team until they'd reached the end of their journey. In American circles, such physical punishment is taboo and strictly avoided, particularly at the amateur level. Koshien pitchers famously throw well over 100 pitches per game, and many team aces attempt to throw multiple days in a row. The tight schedule of the Koshien tournament makes such a feat a rarity, since few pitchers are capable of sustaining that workload, while also producing top results. Eventually, a young player's endurance is challenged and the quality of his performance jeopardizes his team's chances. Still, the attempt to endure such physical duress is considered heroic, a throwback to the bushido origins of the sport.

Iizuka's vow was met by a running tally of his pitches throughout the coverage of Bunri's advancement through the tournament. By the time his club reached the semi-final, where they would eventually lose to Mie, one article noted that Iizuka had thrown all 548 pitches for his team through four victories. The article went on to explain that the last pitcher to win the tournament by pitching every inning of every game was Mine Kensuke, who pitched Saga High School to the title in 1994 (Maeda, 2014, August 24). Two pitchers have fallen one step short in the twenty years since Mine accomplished the feat, the New York Mets' Matsuzaka Daisuke and the Nippon Ham Fighters' Saito Yuki. Matsuzaka and Saito are generation-defining names in Japanese baseball. Matsuzaka played at Koshien in 1998, throwing an extraordinary 17 innings and 250 pitches in

defeating the legendary PL Gakuen High School. The accomplishment was more extraordinary as he had pitched his team to victory one day before, completing the game just shy of 150 pitches. In the championship game, he threw a no-hitter and established himself as one of the tournament's greatest performers of all time. Although his pitching record was uncanny, he played several innings in the outfield early in the tournament, precluding him from the historical feat of throwing every pitch for his team. Matsuzaka's heroics continued beyond Koshien as the ace pitcher of the Seibu Lions of Japan's professional league. His departure to the United States, and the Boston Red Sox, in 2004 was an international spectacle the likes of which neither country had ever experienced.

Saito was a handsome young pitcher, playing for the famous Waseda Jitsugyo High School, in 2006. His tendency to dab his brow with a handkerchief kept in his back pocket earned him the nickname "hankachi oji," or the "handkerchief prince." Saito pitched in one of Koshien's most extraordinary championship games, which ended in a tie after 15 innings, forcing a rematch on the following day. By the end of his title-winning performance, Saito had thrown well over 900 pitches, which stands as a tournament record. Like Matsuzaka, however, Saito did not start one of the games earlier in the tournament, preventing him from holding a special place in history. Like Matuzaka and Saito before him, Iizuka did not accomplish the feat of pitching straight through to a title, however, as his Bunri High School team was defeated in the semi-final by Mie High School. One headline celebrating Iizuka's effort read, "Nihon bunri's Iizuka, 650 pitches from the soul! 5 complete games exhausted me" (Kanbara, 2014).

Each of these links to history deepens the sense of tradition. Teams and players hold the keys to the public's personal attachment. Just as they reproduce the nation in evoking Japan, the games evoke a particular sort of spirit. They reproduce an underlying character of dignity and pride, rooted in the bushido tradition. Few people speak openly of bushido at Koshien, or in the coverage of the tournament, but the celebration of particular values and attributes work beneath the surface to keep the original spirit of the event alive today.

Spirit

The nuances of the Japanese language make it difficult to quantify the number of spiritual references in the sample. The remarks of managers and players selected for publication reflect the deeply spiritual character of Japanese baseball. The bushido ethic is engrained in the participants, and the coverage of Koshien over the years has carefully cultivated a particular sort of narrative about the nature of the games. More than two-thirds of the articles reference remarks made by players and managers, and more frequently than not the remarks selected for print feature language spiritual in nature.

One article, in particular, stood out as a representative of this theme. In the wake of its defeat to the powerful Osaka Toin High School, Fukui Prefecture's Tsurugakehi High School team expressed great support for one another and traced their success back to a number of team bonding activities. During the winter, as the members built strength for the baseball season, players gathered each morning for team breakfasts and collected leftovers to make rice balls. This brought the team together in support of their collective

hard work. Further, senior player Kishimoto Kei related the story of a pre-game meeting held between players, in which members stood in a circle and voiced their support for one another. Kishimoto reminded his teammates to practice “determination, concentration, teamwork, and to believe in themselves,” noting that in doing so they would make superstars of themselves, one and all. Although the team lost the game to Osaka Toin, eliminating themselves from the tournament in the quarterfinals, one player noted that they’d all played like superstars. He remarked, “The quest to be number one in Japan wasn’t sweet. We’ll come back next summer to go further” (Ogawa, August 26, 2014).

Stories like this illustrate a particular character associated with the honor of playing at Koshien. There is a great awareness of the tradition among the players and managers, not to mention the press. So much has been established. The tradition is sanctified by the underlying ethic of the games, rooted in bushido, and players are carefully socialized to uphold the “right way to play.” The story of the 2014 champion, Osaka Toin, illustrates this important point. In one article recapping the team’s victory over Mie, the author tells the story of the schools’ failure at the Osaka Prefectural tournament in the Fall of 2013. In the 4th round of that tournament, as the story goes, Toin was defeated 13-1, the game being called off in the 5th inning by the mercy rule. The article described the pain of Toin’s failure by noting that the loss had broken their streak of five seasons reaching the “Holy Land.” The term *seichi*, meaning “Holy Land,” or “sacred ground,” is used twice in the article. The second time comes at the conclusion when Toin manages to reverse its fortunes in winning the summer title. Osaka Toin alumna came to address the team after the Fall defeat, according to the article, and their

encouragement assured the team would redouble its effort in training (Hanamaki, 2014). Many of the traits listed in the previously mentioned article about Fukui's team - determination, concentration, teamwork, and belief in oneself – are present in this narrative, and the team's ability to reverse its fortunes are a lesson to the Japanese people about perseverance and hard work.

The word *kokoro* indicates soul or spirit and is found in connection to a sense of deeper purpose or meaning in more than 25% of the articles reviewed. One article features a player quote using the term *ikyuu doshin* to describe team unity in victory and defeat (“Ikyuu doshin,” 2014). *Ikyuu* means “one ball” and *doshin* means “same soul or spirit.” The kanji pronounced *shin* in this configuration is alternatively pronounced *kokoro* when standing alone. Another article relates the story of a Hiroshima team captain who plays to inspire a childhood friend who suffered a debilitating stroke. The player once entered an essay about his friend in a prefectural competition based on the theme of “widening the spirit,” and took away first prize. The link between the young men and their mutual inspiration is established as the ground for the player's performance at Koshien, linking the exploits on the field with something deeply life affirming (“Natsu no Koshien V,” 2014). Some writers characterize player and manager remarks in a spiritual vein, even when the remarks are pedestrian. One article described a slugfest between Osaka Toin and Tsurugakehi High School, quoting Toin's manager as saying, “We were also hitting well. Losing would have been strange.” The writer chose to characterize the manager's remarks as being “said from a shaking spirit.” A few sentences later, in relating Toin's comeback, the writer adds that sustaining the hitting barrage “ignited

Toin's fighting spirit" ("Zenkoku koko yakyu dai 13-nichi," 2014). The term "fighting spirit" is a traditional bushido cliché invoked during trying experiences to demonstrate the desire to dig deep into one's soul to retrieve "fight" or "effort."

Effort

The subtheme "Effort" reflects a crucial ingredient in the ethic of baseball in Japan, particularly at the amateur level. Effort has long been a nationalist motto, spanning the modern history of the nation. It's not unusual to hear coaches and managers from any national background comment on their players' effort, but in Japan the term takes on a deeper meaning. In the United States, for example, effort is an ingredient to success. If players exhibit great effort and lose, coaches can claim satisfaction and try hard to improve the results of the next game. In Japan, effort is the point, or at least one of them. Baseball, as a character-building endeavor, is about nurturing the habit of effort in everything one does. The concept is understood in Japan as the ethic behind the Japanese people's attention to detail, their care and artistry in even the mundane. The expression *ganbarimasu* in Japanese is often translated into English as "I'll do my best," but the English version rings hollow. When Japanese people use the phrase they are communicating a sincere commitment to effort. It is an affirmation of focus and determination repeated routinely in daily life. Athletes frequently limit their remarks to a simple "*ganbarimasu*," or "*ganbaritai to omoimasu*," which suggests an even stronger desire. Also, the phrase *isshokenme* appears with some regularity. The word *isshokenme*, in many ways, better expresses the depth of commitment to effort. The word's root form indicates devotion and *isshokenme* is used throughout Japanese life to indicate "putting

everything you've got" into your affairs. Some version of *ganbarimasu* or *isshokenme* appears in 102 of the 376 articles reviewed.

Moeran (1988) argues that this sort of language constitutes the Japanese sense of spirit, or *seishin*, which creates and sustains a national collectivity. He argues that this "language of consensus" is frequently reproduced in order to remind otherwise amorphous groups that they are part of a larger people. Without such language, he says, otherwise disconnected groups "end up supporting the ideals of harmony and group consensus that characterize the group model of Japanese society." He goes on to say, "It is only this language of ideology which in the end allows the Japanese to be anything other than members of ill-defined groups, which enables them, in short, to say that they are in fact 'Japanese'" (p. 442). This type of linguistic work is apparent throughout the coverage of Koshien, reflecting the importance of language in the day-to-day reproduction of national identity, both in cultural rituals and the way they are communicated in mass media.

Meitoku Gijuku High School's well known manager, Mabuchi Shori remarked that while he was still living he would keep on fighting, using the term *ganbarimasu* to suggest the fighting effort (Kazama, 2014). Osaka Toin High School player Shozui Yuya played an important role in a come from behind victory during the tournament. When asked about his key hit in the winning rally, Shozui credited his teammates, saying "I wanted to respond to their determined efforts," using the noun form of the verb *ganbarimasu* to describe his teammates heart and fight (Imamura, 2014). Forms of the

verb *ganbarimasu* are peppered throughout the Koshien articles, but a more elaborate and descriptive set of narrative elements capture the sentiment as it manifests at Koshien.

The most prominent example of effort is found in the earlier treatment of Niigata Bunri High School's pitcher Iizuka Satoshi. The value of tying Iizuka's performance to the famous pitchers of the recent past is the affirmation of effort through endurance. The running account of Iizuka's effort establishes a sort of heroism in his commitment. Feats of great endurance have marked the historical accounts of Japanese baseball as far back as the sport has been played in Japan. Meiji training regimens were brutal by today's standard, but enduring extreme physical duress was considered a test of character and proved baseball's bushido bona fides to early doubters of the sport (Whiting, 1989). Less extreme examples, however, fill the accounts of the games at Koshien. Tales of year long training (Miura, 2014, Kito, 2014) and sweat soaked jerseys ("Nihon bunri", "Osaka Toin") are found throughout the coverage. References to sweat can be found in 50 of the 376 articles studied.

One Osaka Toin player related that he'd been practicing every morning since elementary school, swinging a bat 50 times in ten minutes, and at night hitting 300 balls (Hori, 2014). Mie Prefecture High School pitcher, Tsujimoto Hayato, broke his hip in June of 2014 and was given a three-month window for recovery. He was unable to practice during his team's training camp for Koshien, but his efforts in preparing behind the scenes are captured in one *Yomiuri Shimbun* article. The article notes that Tsujimoto continued to shoot videos of his teammates batting sessions to help them review their form. He also participated in the ritual grounds keeping expected of all team members

(“Zenkoku yakyu Mie,” 2014). Although his body had failed him, Tsujimoto’s effort persisted in supporting his team. One Hiroshima player fractured his ankle earlier in the year and took practice swings every morning in front of the team dormitory. The article noting the player’s tremendous work ethic suggests that the effort is responsible for a 30% improvement in his Koshien batting average (“Natsu no Koshien V,” 2014). Another article notes the dedication to effort in Tsurugaheki High School’s winter routine. Players gather voluntarily during the cold winter to practice, and the manager stocks a supply of cheap, rubber baseball gloves as regular gloves fray in the extreme conditions (“Zenkoku koko yakyu dai 13-nichi,” 2014).

Teamwork

Players at Koshien don’t wear names on the backs of their uniforms. In fact, most of the uniforms worn by schools at Koshien are a very plain white with dark numbers and letters punctuating the clean palette. Stirrups are dark colored as are the shoes. Some teams wear patches and school crests on the sleeves of their uniforms, but the attire at Koshien is not dissimilar to the whites of Wimbledon. There’s a lot of emotion at Koshien, as I will relate shortly, but the players aren’t “showy.” Everything about the atmosphere suggests that the team comes first. Although it is not reflected in the coverage of the tournament to any significant extent, except in passing, schools fill the stands with organized cheering sections called *oendan*. Members of each school’s *oendan* memorize a range of songs and cheers, playing instruments and working together to support the players. Even the cheering is a team activity at Koshien. One Mie High School player, noting the effort of all 18 members of his team, also mentioned the great rush of wind

that spurred him on every time he looked into the stands at the cheering section, waving their white towels (Narasaki, 2014).

The type of teamwork suggested in the accounts of Koshien have less to do with the play on the field as they do with the solidarity of yearlong bonding. Ueda (2014) notes teamwork as a point of emphasis in powerhouse PL Gakuen's experience at Koshien, noting that the team was using the games to emphasize togetherness and team spirit to overcome a high profile incident of bullying that plagued the club in 2013, making national headlines. Bullying isn't unheard of in Japan. In closed environments, like sports teams or corporate offices, bullying is often used as a way to keep individuals in line with group attitudes and goals. Group relations are often structured by the *sempai-kohai* relationship, where *sempai* are senior in some way and *kohai* are junior. The relationship is based on a type of mentoring, in which group identity is as important as skills and abilities. The *sempai*'s role is to educate and guide the *kohai* in "how things are done," both technically and socially. Various degrees of harshness can be observed across social contexts, with sports and business frequently being more severe. In recent years, a broad concern has been raised about the severity of some environments, particularly in schools, and many of the severe behaviors have been targeted as hazing or bullying. The emphasis on teamwork and unity has not changed, but rather the acceptable means to that end (see: Drucker, 1971; Rohlen, 1974; Whitehall, 1991; Bright, 2005).

Ogawa (2014) related the togetherness brought on in the practice of making rice balls together at every team breakfast during the year. Teamwork, like effort, is the point of participation. Hanamaki (2014) works through the idea of teamwork to demonstrate

how Osaka Toin overcame early adversity to accomplish their goal. Toin's manager nicknamed the club *zasso gundan*, or "weed corps," in reference to the team building exercise of performing maintenance on the athletic grounds of the club's home field. "Weed corps" is not an uncommon nickname in Japanese amateur baseball culture, as players routinely engage in groundskeeping activities as a way to create strong bonds.

Such stories appear throughout the recaps of each game, frequently receiving more print space than the specific details of the games themselves. Approximately 20% of the game coverage reviewed in the study made reference to team activities off the field of play. Osaka Toin's manager attributes his team's success to the motto he used to inspire the players after practice every day of the year. The motto *ashi to koe*, or "legs and voice," was intended to stress the importance of speed and unity, and the manager recounts the vigorous reception the phrase was met with at the end of every practice and team meeting (Yamaguchi, 2014). The story of Tsujimoto Hayato, mentioned earlier, is one such example ("Zenkoku yakyu Mie," 2014). A former Japan Bunri High School captain described his return to Koshien to support his alma mater by noting that he volunteered to do grounds keeping with the team to show that spirit never dies (Hoshi, 2014). Another anecdote about Japan Bunri described the words of encouragement given to the team by manager Maezaki Hidekazu. The manager told his team during their grounds keeping that they may find themselves down late in the game, but to swing without wavering. In fact, the club faced a deficit in the bottom of the ninth inning of one game, and the batter who delivered the winning hit credited the words of his manager for lifting his spirits (Yamaguchi, 2014). The treatment of the subject reinforces a particular

ethic of social organization in Japan, which stresses more than a superficial solidarity between community members. It is common for co-workers to engage in civic-oriented volunteer activities as a regular part of their professional lives. Employees of various businesses can be seen collecting garbage on the streets and sidewalks of their local communities on a regularly scheduled basis, for instance. Koshien narratives model this type of solidarity as a regular feature of game coverage. These narrative elements reflect the reality of Japanese social organization and customs, but also reproduce them as an important feature of the Koshien experience. The frequent, lengthy treatment of this theme creates a point of emphasis for the readers of the coverage, and links the heroic pursuits of young baseball players to the practice of solidarity across a range of Japanese social institutions.

Emotion

Tom Hanks famously told one of his players in the film, *A League of Their Own*, “There’s no crying in baseball.” Clearly he’d never watched a game at Koshien. The young men who compete year round to get their shot at appearing in the Koshien tournament put everything they have into training and team life. Despite the routine use of military language to describe sports, the camaraderie among teammates is hardly rooted in life or death circumstances. High school baseball players in Japan, however, live, and work, and study together every waking moment. For the teams competitive enough to qualify for Koshien, it is not a stretch to say that baseball is life. It may surprise some who buy into the stereotype of Japanese people as stoic and reserved to see the passion with which teenage baseball players go about their business. At times, their

demeanor borders on desperation during tight games and players can be seen breaking down in tears as their teammates give their all on the field. There is a great deal of shouting, fist pumping, and dugout celebration over the course of a typical game at Koshien. It is important to show emotion. The open expression of powerful emotion is not appropriate in many Japanese contexts, but in the endeavors that require the greatest effort, when one must *ganbaru* most, tears and guttural shouting prove your commitment and spur on others to follow.

Koike and Ishikawa (2014) describe two tearful episodes at Koshien in one day, noting that Toagakuen High School senior Ozawa Kenta burst into tears of joy after hitting a home run. Later that day, Iwakura High School's senior pitcher Kudo Takashi cried deeply after bowing to his parents in the stands. Both parents are hearing-impaired and signed to their son their hopes of going to Koshien when they dropped him off at the baseball dormitory in the winter. After giving up two home runs in a losing effort, the young man's emotions reflected his filial piety. Players, however, aren't the only ones crying at Koshien. As Tanaka (2014) relates, Kushiro Technical High School's manager Uemura expressed his tremendous pride in his players' "spectacular fight" in a losing effort, his eyes "stained red with tears."

Namida, the Japanese word for tears, are an essential feature of the Koshien coverage. Reference to tears appears in 54 of the 376 articles studied. As a visual spectacle, in the televised coverage of the event, the significance is unmistakable. In print, the frequent repetition of the theme converges with the emphasis on effort and teamwork, resulting in a particular sort of spirit. Players and managers work tirelessly for

months, eating, sleeping and working together. The devotion to work and to one another is a special bond that runs deep. When tears pour out, they are an affirmation of devotion and an affirmation of baseball as a metaphor for life. The final key to understanding this construction is the thematic emphasis on lessons learned.

Showing one's emotion on his sleeve is not limited only to tears. Osaka Toin's manager exhorted his players to express their pain openly. "When you feel pain, show it on your face," he is quoted as saying (Yamaguchi, 2014). One Aomori catcher attributes his motivation to succeed to his hard work in practice, noting that the pain he experienced inspired him to work hard for his teammates. The article also relates the player's journey from tsunami-hit Miyagi Prefecture where he hid with his family in the 2nd story of a home as the disaster struck. The emotional pain is connected to the player's endurance of physical pain as an important symbol of emotional resolve (Enomoto, 2014). A total of 45 articles reference pain and endurance in this way.

Growth

Baseball has always been an educational pursuit in Japan. The emphasis on amateurism established in the Meiji period is manifest at Koshien and the discourse is rich with examples of managers speaking in terms of lessons learned and character. Win or lose, the newspaper coverage of Koshien frequently concludes with a quote from a player or manager about the development of character. As with other themes in this narrative collection, the notion of growth is a spiritual one. Becoming better players, or better teams, is only important insofar as young men have been transformed at a

fundamental level. Most active Koshien players are high school seniors on their way to adulthood. Koshien is a symbolic rupture between childhood and adulthood, and the role of baseball in that process is almost religious in nature.

Niigata Bunri's manager Oi Michio revealed something of this view in his comments following the school's defeat at Koshien, saying, "Losing is very disappointing. But, I want to praise the children for sure. I can't complain about making the Best 4" (Nihon Bunri Oi kantoku). It is not uncommon in the narratives reviewed to find parental sentiments in the manager's quotes. Mie High School manager Nakamura Koji offered a story of praise for his senior infielder Nishioka Musashi, after the young man produced a game-winning hit. During infield training earlier in the season, Nishioka took a grounder to the chin producing several stitches. Despite the injury, the player showed great determination to continue, earning him the respect of his manager. Nakamura noted that Nishioka's father had given his son the name "Musashi" because he wanted to raise a strong child (Iso, 2014). The name "Musashi" is famous for its relation to the revered samurai Miyamoto Musashi, who wrote the almost sacred text *The Book of 5 Rings*. The manager of Ehime Prefecture's team praised his team captain by noting that he had a "heart willing to win," which made him more than just an outstanding player. Through his character, the team was able to learn the importance of teamwork and grow as men (Hatano, 2014).

One article, in particular, captures the sentiment expressed in paragraphs found throughout the coverage. The article begins, "I was a person who couldn't make great effort" (Ogawa, August 27, 2014). Tsuraga Kehi High School manager Azuma Akira was

a brilliant high school baseball player as a young man. He was often told that he was a hitting genius, and he thought his baseball prowess would help carry him into a successful life in society as well. After several years bouncing around between companies, trying his hand at semi-professional industrial league baseball, Azuma realized he had only been getting by on talent as a young man. After returning home, he found himself helping out at Tsuruga Kehi practices and was eventually hired as a coach in 2008. By 2011, Azuma was hired as the manager of the team and vowed that he would “do his best to avoid making players like himself.” The story relates his feeling that if only someone had pushed him more to make great effort he may have led a brighter life. In his dreams of leading a group of young men deep into the Koshien tournament, Azuma expresses the desire to show the players the right attitude to believe in themselves and their efforts as the key to success. There’s an almost evangelical tone to Azuma’s story and his remarks. They come to a poetic conclusion when he shares that he’s experienced great joy as a leader and that the support of parents and fans has sustained him. The Shinto charm he carries in his bag serves as a frequent reminder of his good fortune and his mission.

Conclusion

The set of themes identified in the coverage of the 2014 Koshien National High School Baseball Championship Tournament comprise a subtle, yet important, account of Japanese national identity. No sporting event is more cherished and revered in Japan, and so the narrative treatment of the events and athletes hold a lot of weight. Koshien represents one of modern Japan’s most persistent invented traditions, played on one of its

most sacred of stages. The reproduction of nation in the dreams and goals of the participants links the glory of the present with the rich tradition of the past. Not only does the dream of carrying one's native prefecture to the "Holy Land" of Japanese sport link champions of today with the champions of yesterday, but also roots the year long investment of effort, and teamwork, and emotion, and growth in the investments of those who committed themselves to carrying on a particular way of life. The lessons of Koshien's narrative arc in the mass media are lessons of Japaneseness that provide a sense of continuity of character and purpose.

These narratives are essentially inward-looking, and therefore one finds little or no emphasis on defining a boundary between "us" and "them." It does, however reproduce the values associated with bushido in the use of militaristic and spiritual language use and metaphors. The emphasis on education and amateurism, characteristic of these narratives has deep roots in the work of Nitobe Inazo, in particular. It was Nitobe and a group of allies who brought the Christian educator William Clark to Japan in the late-19th century. Clark supported the growth of Western-style institutions of higher learning in Japan during his short stay in Sapporo, but his example endures more than 100 years later. Clark's parting words to his Japanese colleagues and students are said to be, "Boys, be ambitious. Be ambitious not for money, not for selfish aggrandizement, not for the evanescent thing which men call fame. Be ambitious for that attainment of all that a man ought to be" (Maki, 2002, p. 196). The slogan "Boys be ambitious" is widely known in Japan, and frequently used in popular culture texts, public advertising campaigns, and other familiar discourses. The slogan operates at the place where cultural

identity meets national identity in Japan. The sentiments expressed in the terms *ganbarimasu* and *isshokenmei* are culturally produced, but the historical rhetoric of prominent intellectuals and representatives of the state suggest that the cultural value is an essential part of the national character. In the coverage of Koshien, sports act as a vehicle for the reproduction of this important identity marker. Koshien is the tradition in which the “Boys be ambitious” sentiment is most strongly manifest, and therefore the body of newspaper articles reviewed in this study come into focus as multiple themes converge to articulate that well known idea.

The reproduction of bushido symbols reinforces the deep structure of Japanese culture. The ethics of effort, teamwork, emotion, and growth are key components of *shinshi*, or Japanese gentlemanship, as first articulated in the invention of bushido during the Meiji period. Traditionally, bushido has represented an important symbolic ground for Japanese masculine identity and so the narrative themes of tradition and spirit play an important role in such essentializing discourse. At Koshien, young men have participated in the ritual of sport, and all its pageantry, for more than 100 years. The running newspaper accounts of the tradition link the boys of summer 2014 to all the summers that came before it. Furthermore, the language promoted in the coverage of the event, and the cultural practice of baseball itself, reproduces a sense of its spiritual nature as well. Just as the symbol of blood has functioned as an unassailable marker of Japaneseness, so too does the spiritual symbolism here. Building a tradition around baseball as a spiritual pursuit, closely allied with bushido, masks the fact that both *yakuyu* and bushido are the products of cultural hybridization. They have become part of the ground of Japaneseness,

a fact that is continually reproduced as each tournament is held, and each new group of young men are brought into the ancestry of their sport.

CHAPTER 5

THE PEOPLE'S HONOR AWARD

In 1977, Prime Minister Fukuda Takeo created the *People's Honor Award*, or *Kokumin Eiyoshō*, to honor the accomplishments of Japanese baseball legend Oh Sadaharu. At the time, Oh was in the midst of passing Hank Aaron's home run record of 755, eventually ending his career with a total of 868 home runs (Nagata, 2013). Eleven years earlier, in 1966, Prime Minister Sato Eisaku founded the *Prime Minister's Award*, or *Naikakusoridaijin Kenshō*. However, the criteria for the award were sufficiently challenging for Oh's circumstances that Fukuda simply chose to create an entirely new honor. The *Prime Minister's Award* was intended to honor individuals who had made significant contributions in the area of social welfare, culture, or academia, in particular, and Fukuda wanted to avoid the rigors of a formal case on behalf of Oh. The *Prime Minister's Award* did not survive beyond Sato's term in office, the final awards being given to a group of participants in the 1968 Tokyo Olympics. It wasn't until Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro revived the award in 1985 that it regained its significance, although the *People's Honor Award* is considered the greater honor today.

At its inception, Prime Minister Fukuda's office produced a description of the People's Honor Award, which described the purpose of the award as, "an honor awarded to individuals who are widely loved by the people, and who have made remarkable achievements that have brightened and given hope to society" (Cabinet Office, Government of Japan). Recipients of the award are given a commemorating medallion and a gift of some sort. The type of gift is not specified in the Prime Minister's document,

although there is indication that it may be a token of some sort, or monetary. Much of the process in selecting recipients is vague. The document simply indicates that deserving individuals may be awarded, and that the timing of the award is noted as “at appropriate times.” The lack of transparency in the selection process has been the subject of some public debate, especially in light of the presentation of gifts (Nagata, 2013).

The bestowing of honors and titles has long been a ceremonial function of the state. Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) illustrate a number of examples in which the bestowing of honors and titles functions to 1) establish a class of individuals who represent popular public sentiments, and 2) who reinforce the authority of power by accepting said honors and titles from an official of the state. The authors illustrate the way the British monarchy learned to invent ceremonial rituals to celebrate popular public figures and occasions, as a means by which to associate themselves with the positive public sentiments of the people.

Prior to the 1870s, the monarchy reserved the ceremonial functions of the state largely for themselves. These affairs were little more than solidarity markers for the crown, the aristocracy and the church. As the power of the monarchy waned, the circumstances of the Industrial Revolution produced a very different society. The authors explain, “In such an age of change, crisis and dislocation, the ‘preservation of anachronism’, the deliberate, ceremonial presentation of an impotent but venerated monarch as a unifying symbol of permanence and national community became both possible and necessary”(p. 122). The media are credited with much of the presentation of this new ceremony to the public. Newspapers brought stories and photography to the

working class, venerating the monarchy and preserving its dignity in a world quickly becoming crass and harsh.

At the same time, the British Empire was attempting to legitimize and stabilize its colonial hold in various parts of the world, including India. The authors note, for example, that the British finally understood in the 1860s and 1870s “the notion that ‘authority once achieved must have a secure and usable past’” (p. 167). Under the authority of the crown, Lord Canning, the first viceroy of India, took a tour of the country to bestow various titles and honors on individuals who had demonstrated great loyalty during the uprisings of 1857 and 1858. The titles and honors were granted to great pomp and circumstance, with special clothing and emblems invented for the occasion. “Honour and titles by the 1870s were closely tied to the expressed goals of the new governmental order, ‘progress with stability’” (p. 181).

Similar practices have become commonplace in the contemporary world and in virtually all walks of life. Everyday employees at companies are given titles and honors, often in lieu of higher salaries, as a way to show appreciation and goodwill to the professional community and to present a sense of solidarity and continuity. The Academy Awards, and its myriad imitators, duplicate this process as a way to preserve the continuity of the movie-going public’s relationship with their craft. Actors and actresses, in particular, are held up as heroes as they receive golden statues named “Oscar,” joining a long tradition of other winners in the process. These ceremonies, honors and titles are most significant when they legitimize the power of the State. The US President publically celebrates the heroes of war, for instance, by bestowing the Medal of Honor for sacrifices

made in defense of the nation. The stories of each soldier are read aloud at a formal ceremony, and individuals are called to the stage to have the medal draped around their necks. Cameras click, video is beamed across the world, and news accounts are produced.

The People's Honor Award is hardly the most prestigious award given by the State in Japan. Its name, however, implies its purpose. It is a means by which the State honors the heroes born of "the people," legitimating its authority in the popular will. The State is naturalized under these conditions because it becomes firmly associated with the historical continuity of great deeds performed by regular folks. The Prime Minister, as the head of state, is the figurehead in this operation. Whatever the value of such ceremonial acts, to this point there has been no substantial change in the public perception of the Prime Ministers who have bestowed the People's Honor Award on its recipients (Nagata, 2013).

In the years since Prime Minister Fukuda first bestowed the award on Oh Sadaharu, 22 individuals and organizations have been awarded the *People's Honor*. The list of recipients includes composers, actors, artists and athletes, including some well known to the international community. Nine of the recipients, including Oh, represent the world of sport. It is noteworthy that the internationally famous baseball player Ichiro Suzuki was "unofficially" honored with the award on two separate occasions, in 2001 and 2004, refusing each time. Suzuki explained that he was still young at the time of the first honor, following the second time with the argument that he needed to remain motivated to continue ("Ichiro refuses," 2004).

The present research focuses on four individuals from the sporting world, who have been selected to receive the People's Honor Award. The four selections in question represent the most recent recipients of the award from the world of sport. They come from a fairly diverse range of athletic traditions, and represent both male and female athletics. The recipients include freestyle wrestler Yoshida Saori, who was presented the award in 2012 for career accomplishments in her sport, and the duo of Nagashima Shigeo and Matsui Hideki, who were presented with the award in 2013 for career accomplishments in baseball. The legendary sumo champion Taiho was also honored with the award in 2013, although his career in sport spanned the 1950s and 1960s as a wrestler and into the 1970s as a manager. Taiho was awarded the honor posthumously, passing away about a month before the Prime Minister named him as a recipient.

A brief history of each recipient will follow, in order to position the reader prior to engaging with the study. Each of the recipients represents something a bit different, based on their life stories, their accomplishments in sport, and in the context of their athletic endeavors. Individuals are frequently used in sports narratives to embody cherished cultural characteristics, personifying the abstract. This case study focuses on the possibility that the celebration of individual athletes presents an opportunity to communicate something about the whole. A single athlete, or team, may stand in for an entire people, placing particular definitions of national character on the map, and legitimizing them through official state recognition.

One important point must be addressed prior to presenting the stories of individual recipients. The Japan Women's National Football Team were presented the

award in 2011 after winning the Women's Football World Cup, but will not be part of this case study. I am primarily interested in the way sports narratives position individuals and their accomplishments as representative of national character. Including a team in the study would not present a terribly difficult problem, as teams are frequently used in the same way. However, the Japan Women's National Football team is the specific subject of interest in the following chapter, concerning gender and national identity, and a full treatment of narratives around their 2011 World Cup title reveals a number of important themes on its own.

Yoshida Saori

Yoshida Saori was born in Tsu, Mie Prefecture, Japan on October 5, 1982 ("JOC," 2015). At the age of three, Yoshida began to train with her two older brothers, and her father Eikatsu, who was the 1963 Olympic freestyle wrestling champion, and a national wrestling coach in Japan. Over the years, she has become widely regarded as the greatest freestyle wrestler of all time, winning gold in the freestyle 55kg category at the 2004, 2008, and 2012 Olympic Games. Her career at the World Championships includes 12 gold medals in 13 appearances between 2002 and 2014, only failing to medal in 2004. Finally, Yoshida is undefeated in four consecutive Asian Games, winning gold in 2002, 2006, 2010, and 2014 ("Gold medalist," 2012). Yoshida has been an active participant in the Japan Olympic Committee's successful bid to win and promote the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo, including a successful lobbying campaign to retain wrestling as part of the competition ("Wrestling," 2013).

Nagashima Shigeo

Nagashima Shigeo has long been considered the “face of Japanese baseball.” Born in Sakura, Chiba Prefecture, Japan on February 20, 1936, Nagashima spent his youth as a promising young ballplayer, eventually starring for the Rikkyo University team in Tokyo’s famous “Big Six” collegiate league. He was highly sought after by a number of professional baseball clubs, before eventually signing with the Yomiuri Giants in 1958 (“Meiyo tomin ni,” 2014). Nagashima was outstanding during his rookie year, earning the coveted clean up position in the Giants’ lineup on his way to winning Rookie of the Year honors. Nagashima is perhaps most warmly remembered by Japanese fans for hitting a game-winning home run in the first baseball game attended by the Emperor.

He would go on to lead the Giants to nine consecutive championships between 1965 and 1973, partnering with fellow People’s Honor Award recipient Oh Sadaharu as a powerful slugging tandem. Nagashima is a five time Central League MVP, and one of the most enduring icons of the sport in Japan. He went on to manage the Giants after his retirement, and successfully added to the team legacy by winning championships in 1994, 1996, and 2000. He enjoyed a brief stint as the manager of the Olympic team in 2002, before retiring after having a stroke (“Baseball great,” 2004).

Matsui Hideki

Matsui Hideki was born on June 12, 1974 in Neagari, Ishikawa Prefecture, Japan. His baseball story begins in earnest at Seiryō High School in Ishikawa Prefecture, where he led his team to three consecutive appearances at the Koshien National High School

Baseball Championships. His performance in those tournaments made him instantly famous, a household name across Japan. His impressive size and power, combined with his distinctive facial features, earned him the nickname “Gojira,” the Japanese language equivalent of the English “Godzilla.” In his final appearance at Koshien, Matsui was intentionally walked in all of his plate appearances, prompting great disapproval from fans around the country, anxious to see him perform. His team could not overcome the strategy, eventually losing. His grace in defeat earned him the admiration of Japanese fans across the country, and in the baseball establishment as well. When the Yomiuri Giants drafted Matsui, under the direction of Nagashima Shigeo, the torch was passed from the older generation to the hope for a revival of Giants’ fortunes.

Matsui started slowly in his professional career, but in just over a year he began to get the hang of professional life. He began to produce incredible power numbers, taking over the clean up position once held by his mentor Nagashima. It was a symbolic moment for Matsui, for the Giants, and for all of Japan. The Giants went on to win three championships with Matsui batting clean up, in 1996, 2000, and 2002. Two of the championships came under the managerial direction of Nagashima. Matsui chased Oh’s single season home run record in his final year in Japan, having won three Central League MVP Awards. Matsui was finally awarded free agency after the 2002 season, and famously opted to take his talents to the Major Leagues and the New York Yankees (Hirooka, I, 2006).

With the Yankees, Matsui displayed much of the power and timely hitting that made him famous in Japan. He proved himself as a Major League All Star in his two

seasons in the United States, eventually winning the World Series MVP Award in 2009 as his Yankees took the title. Injuries and age took their toll on Matsui, and he continued to struggle for a roster spot on several different clubs after 2009, before eventually retiring to great fanfare in both New York and Tokyo in 2012.

Taiho

The sumo wrestler known as Taiho was born Naya Koki on May 29, 1940 on the island of Sakhalin, a disputed territory between the north of Japan and the Eastern peninsula of Russia. His mother was Japanese and his father was ethnic Ukrainian, having fled to Sakhalin during the Bolshevik Revolution. In 1945, after the Soviets claimed control of Sakhalin, Naya and his family fled to Japan's northernmost island, Hokkaido, where he was raised.

In 1956 he entered the world of sumo, training with the Nishonoseki stable under his family name 'Naya.' He was very skilled from the start and quickly moved up the ranks, eventually earning promotion and a proper sumo name, Taiho, which loosely translates to "Great Phoenix." Taiho was so successful after his promotion to the upper division that he became the youngest wrestler ever to earn the rank of *yokozuna*, or Grand Champion, at the age of 21. During an historic 12-year career in the upper division, Taiho won a record 32 tournament titles, a number only recently surpassed by the Mongolian wrestler Hakuho. Many of Taiho's titles were of the undefeated variety, amassing 15 wins against no losses, and he quickly became one of the most popular sports figures across Japan. Taiho was forced into retirement by age and injury in 1971, and only a few

short years later suffered a debilitating stroke, which left him unable to manage. He eventually passed away in January of 2013 (<http://www.taiho-yokozuna.com/profile/index.html>).

Themes

Each of the athletes represented in this group carries a distinct profile, which shapes the character of their relationship to the award. In the case of the deceased *yokozuna* Taiho, coverage was more limited, although coverage of his award followed a similar pattern to his living counterparts. Yoshida Saori, as an amateur athlete, albeit a high profile amateur athlete, travels in circles “closer to Earth” than Nagashima Shigeo and Matsui Hideki, who are celebrities of a very different sort. Nagashima is a cultural icon for reasons mentioned earlier, and his protégée Matsui is an internationally famous multi-millionaire.

Despite the difference in the athletes’ personal profiles, the coverage of their honor followed a remarkably similar pattern. Whatever variation in the particulars of the coverage, beneath the surface several important themes can be identified. The first theme, “Memories that Connect,” positions memories of each athlete’s accomplishments as a connecting point between members of society. As individuals claim memories of each player, the coverage builds a sense of nationwide ownership of their legacies. The second theme, “Just Like Us – Hopes and Dreams for the People,” details the message communicated in both direct and indirect ways in the treatment of the public’s relationship to the athletes after being honored with the award. In each case, the athletes

are contextualized as everyday Japanese people, who made great efforts to achieve their hopes and dreams. That message is positioned as inspiration for members of Japanese society to follow their example. Finally, “Legitimizing the State” is a theme that can be identified in the use of each athlete by politicians, public figures, and civil organizations to associate themselves and their policies with the will of the people.

Memories that Connect

Of the hundreds of articles reviewed in this case study, one in particular foregrounded the role of media in the public understanding of athletes. In celebration of Nagashima and Matsui’s award, the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, owner of the two players’ Giants baseball team, went in search of public reaction. Reporting from Hokkaido, the paper reported “blessings from all over Hokkaido,” and illustrated that both men had connections to the northern island. In both cases, those connections were superficial, at best, but the memories of three men provided all the glue the paper needed to tell their story. The first man, Tajiri Yoshihara, recalls his family buying their first black and white television to watch the Giants play the first baseball game in front of the emperor. In that game, Nagashima famously hit a walk off home run, sealing victory and his place in history. Tajiri remembers jumping up and down as he celebrated. As an adult, Tajiri owned a sushi shop and made bento lunches to attend baseball games in Sapporo, leaning over the rail to greet Nagashima whenever he came to play. A second man remembered watching Matsui Hideki hitting home runs for the New York Yankees during his adolescence, remarking that Matsui had proved to everyone that Japanese home run hitters could succeed in the Major Leagues (Eiyosho donai).

The article connects the memory of both players to Hokkaido through individual fans, who experienced their careers both on television and occasionally in person. By framing these experiences as connections to Hokkaido, the newspaper is suggesting that Nagashima and Matsui are national heroes, and that people everywhere in Japan can stake claim to their legacy. This is the spirit of the People's Honor Award, and the role of media in the memory making is clear in both the televised experience of Nagashima and Matsui's heroics and the retrospective celebration of their People's Honor Award in the news. Nearly half the articles discussing Nagashima and Matsui's award reflect on their connection to local areas and people. Of the articles not represented in that group, most are short blurbs and announcements.

Another article, making reference to Nagashima and Matsui's award, used the occasion to highlight local baseball heroes. After relating news of the players' award, Maeda (2013) ties Nagashima, in particular, to the "big entertainment boom" of the Showa period, which began in 1926 and ended with the death of the emperor Hirohito in 1989. Maeda then goes on to link that period to the celebrated baseball heroes Sawamura Eiji and Nishimura Yukio, who are buried in Ise, where they were born and raised. Writing from that area of Japan, Maeda tells of "boys of baseball" praying at the players' graves for improvement and victory, often laying flowers as they visit. Nagashima and Matsui become background to Maeda's story about local heroes, an entirely superficial connection, but a significant use of the People's Honor Award, nonetheless.

A final example from the narratives related to Nagashima and Matsui tells the story of Kogiso Yoshimoto, a former Aichi prefecture civil servant who is working to

revitalize Gifu prefecture's Japan Taisho Village. The Japan Taisho Village is a typical municipal enterprise project that attempts to spur local economies by playing on nostalgia to drive tourism. Local businesses coordinate their efforts to play on nostalgia as a lure to visitors in search of memories of Japan's past. The article tells of Kogiso's attempt to make use of a vacant barbershop to display his memorabilia collection, including Nagashima's uniforms and the like. Kogiso is quoted as saying, "Mr. Nagashima represents Japan's postwar economic miracle, and contributed more to baseball than anyone else. I am truly very happy [he was given the award]" (Jiman no Nagashima, 2013). The three examples cited here characterize the way newspaper coverage of the People's Honor Award plays on individual memories, linked to broader historical contexts, in order to construct a sense of "folk." These particular examples emphasize the geographic diversity of this narrative style, as one originates in the northernmost island of Hokkaido, the next in the southern region of Japan's main island, and the last in a rural area of Central Japan, by the Sea of Japan.

The memory of Taiho is used as a link in a slightly different way. One story written in connection to Taiho's award chronicles the renaming of a National Park monument in Hokkaido after the late wrestler. The Sumo Memorial at Akan National Park in Hokkaido was officially renamed the Taiho Memorial in connection to the wrestler's former residence on Kawayu street where the memorial stands (Kawayusumokinenkan, 2013). As the earlier treatment of Taiho's biography notes, the wrestler was born to a Ukrainian father and a Japanese mother on the Sakhalin Islands before moving to Hokkaido, where he grew up. Of all the articles published about Taiho

during the period examined only five mentioned his Ukrainian heritage, and only in connection to his obituary. Of the selection of articles examined after the conferral of the People's Honor Award, only two mentioned Ukraine. Neither of those articles, however, mentioned the People's Honor Award. Whatever the reason for this lack of association, the coverage of Taiho's award, despite frequent reference to biographical details, never mentions his multiethnic heritage. The omission of this biographical detail subtly reinforces the collective memory of Taiho as a fellow Japanese, a man of the "people." The acknowledgment of Taiho's Ukrainian heritage would certainly run counter to the common understanding of Japanese identity as a matter of blood. The ability to use Taiho as an icon of Japanese virtues would be complicated by such an acknowledgement and perhaps this is why the issue is avoided altogether.

In the wake of her award, Yoshida Saori spent several months touring the country, speaking at schools and attending public ceremonies of one sort or another. Much of the coverage of her award relates to the second of the three themes identified here, but one important aspect of her tour reinforced the connectedness of the Japanese people. Yoshida spent the early days of her post-award tour in her hometown of Tsu, Mie Prefecture. Her appearances in Tsu frequently referenced the idea of *furusato*, which roughly translates to "hometown," although that translation isn't sufficiently nuanced. The word *furusato* suggests an ancestral heritage, beyond simply where one grew up. In common parlance, one might use *furusato* to point back at the place where you grew up, but always with a hesitancy. *Furusato* runs deeper than that. In fact, as Scheiner (1998) argues, the notion of these "old communities" is largely a mythical construct designed to

romanticize the idea of a rural, communitarian past. They're the places where the best of Japanese virtues can be retrieved for the urbanized culture of contemporary Japan.

Yoshida's appearance in Tsu brought a deep public appreciation. Her accomplishment reflected on the entire city and prefecture. In all, 20 articles chronicled Yoshida's return to Mie to speak at schools around the prefecture. In one article, Yoshida's visit to a Mie junior high school is described through the memory of her Olympic accomplishments, and her encouraging speech, as an inspiration to a young woman struggling with self-confidence (Ogata, 2012). In another, Yoshida spoke at her alma mater to offer a message of support and encouragement. The memory of her Olympic success was prominently featured as a background for her words (Kotoshi wa 14 renpa, 2013). In yet another, 600 local people gathered at a Mie kindergarten to share her memory of doubt and perseverance and to celebrate the People's Honor Award (Mokuhyo ya yume, 2013). In another Mie visit, Yoshida encouraged the students to "dream big" ("Yoshida Saori jimoto de," 2012). These *furusato* visits anchor ownership of Yoshida's Olympic memories in Mie, but her extended tour of the country begins to expand the range of ownership to include the people of the nation as well. Across a period of months, stories chronicling her visits from Tokyo (Zurari, 2013; Nengajo, 2013) to Miyagi prefecture (Yoshida senshu, 2013), and many points between, employ Olympic memories to promote one idea or another (see also: "Yoshida senshu kiai," 2013; "Nihon supotsu sho," 2013; "Jimoto no oen ni," 2012). Tokyo, as the nation's capital and largest city, is significant in the broader ownership of Yoshida, as is her visit to Miyagi, an area affected most deeply by the March 11, 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

Mass media facilitate shared imagination, and also a foundation for shared memories. The fact that individuals remember the accomplishments of athletes makes them central figures in a national story. The way people remember those accomplishments gives a particular character to their role as shared markers. The use of those memories in one particular way or another makes them an ideological focal point, which is the subject of the next theme.

Just Like Us - Hopes and Dreams for the People

Two elements define the second of the three themes presented here. The first element is the notion of similarity. In the coverage of each athlete's story, a recurring theme of the athlete's simple origins can be identified. This element facilitates stronger identification with the athletes and brings their accomplishments closer to "the people." If they come from hometowns just like ours, and people just like us remember them fondly, they must be just like us in some way after all. Darling-Wolf (2004) argues that the Japanese media frequently create a sense of "proximity" between celebrities and their audiences in order to create a sense of familiarity. Celebrities must preserve the sense that they're a typical boy or girl next door, in order for audiences to relate well to them (p. 359). Connected to this idea, a second element is evident. Throughout the coverage, with uncanny regularity, the notion of hopes, dreams, courage, and effort are repeated. Athletes in this equation are individuals who come from humble roots, and through hopes, dreams, courage, and great effort were able to achieve great things. As such, they offer a vision for the people to follow in self-actualization and in creating a stronger society.

The most powerful examples of this theme are found in the tour of public appearances made by Yoshida Saori. Throughout her visit to schools around the country, Yoshida described her own doubts and struggles as a way to connect with students. She continued by emphasizing the importance of hopes, dreams, and courage in making great effort and promised she would continue beyond the People's Choice Award in her quest for World Championships and gold medals. As the message was repeated in her various school visits, across 38 articles, the words were transcribed in news coverage and married to a few strong impressions from her audiences. Ogata (2012) relates the previously mentioned story of a junior high school student struggling with self-confidence in order to demonstrate the identification with the athlete and the inspiration to move in a positive direction. The student is described as a junior high drop out, who spent months hospitalized under the care of doctors and counselors. The student is quoted as saying, "She gave me courage. I won't be beaten! It's fun to have dreams," and, "She moved me. I want to be a pastry chef." Similar stories follow the coverage of Yoshida's tour, and in each case the foundation of her aspirational words, and memories of her Olympic success, are shown to culminate in the positive response of audiences around the country.

Yoshida travelled to Shiogama City in Miyagi Prefecture to show off her gold medals, host an athletic exhibition for children, and share an inspirational message. 1650 people attended the event to hear her praise of effort and cheer on her continued pursuit of medals at the 2012 Olympic Games ("Yoshida senshu to koryu, 2013). She appeared at a playground in Fukushima Prefecture to speak with citizens displaced by the nuclear reactor disaster to share her medals and words of encouragement. She offered that her

success was made possible by the cheers and support from the people of Japan, and that she would make every effort to succeed on their behalf in the future (“Yoshida senshura kasetu,” 2012). Yoshida participated in the 15th anniversary of the Hashimoto Marathon, held in Wakayama Prefecture and spoke to a group of children about having courage and trying their best (“Hashimoto marason,” 2013).

The official statement attached to Taiho’s award describes his brilliant achievements and the bright dreams that made him a national hero loved by the people (“Taiho-san ni kokumineiyosho seifu,” 2013; “Taiho-san ni kokumineiyosho tengoku,” 2013). Yamaguchi (2013) chose to characterize Taiho’s legacy by calling attention to his writing. The article cites one selection as saying, “There is one sumo ring. There is no way to become strong other than enduring, making effort, and then your dreams will come true. You must not defeat yourself. A life pursuing only pleasure is unfortunate.” Editorializing, Yamaguchi goes on to say that Taiho’s calligraphy of the character “shinobu,” which suggests bearing one’s circumstances in silent dignity, is a guide for the Japanese people (see also: Odagiri, 2013; Nakai, 2013; Ono, 2013; “2013 Hokkaido,” 2013; “Taiho-san ni eiyo no tate,” 2013; & “Moto yokozuna,” 2013).

The coverage of Nagashima and Matsui finds some connection to this theme through the previously mentioned association of players and historical events. Matsui’s ability to prove that Japanese home run hitters could succeed in the Major Leagues (Eiyosho donai, 2013) and Nagashima’s association with the postwar economic boom (Jiman no Nagashima, 2013) both imply the hope and dreams of the people in the efforts of great players. More directly, Fukuda (2013) shares a story from Nomi City, Ishikawa

prefecture, where Matsui was born and raised. The Hideki Matsui Museum in Nomi put on display the golden bat given to Matsui in connection to the People's Choice Award. Matsui's father, director of the museum, is quoted as saying, "About five times the number of usual visitors have come to the museum. It can give children the feeling of hopes and dreams." In all, 37 articles associate Nagashima and Matsui with the hopes and dreams of the Japanese people through reference to the People's Honor Award.

Legitimizing the State

The People's Choice Award was invented by the Prime Minister's Office, and is administered by each individual holding that position of leadership. By its very nature, the award is a means by which to reproduce nation and legitimize the connection of the people to the state. The media coverage of the award allows officials of the state and prominent civic persons to appear in the context of each athlete's accomplishment. Coverage of the award ceremony itself creates the first link between the athletes, as representatives of the people, and the state, via the Office of the Prime Minister, but the process continues well beyond that formal event and into the daily coverage of smaller civic news. It's the mundane repetition of this connection that naturalizes it, as Billig (2006) explains in his description of flagging the nation. The link between the office of the Prime Minister and the People's Honor Award is made in 90 of the 248 articles studied in this case.

Yoshida Saori's tour of Japan was not restricted to school appearances alone. On two occasions, in particular she appeared in Tokyo to promote civic events. On the first

occasion, Yoshida appeared at an official Shinto ceremony to bless the local business community in anticipation of the New Year (Zurari, 2012). This is a common practice in Japan, as local shrines assure the prosperity of individual businesses and the communities around them by offering blessings and religious tokens to be displayed on the premises of each respective company. Not long after this appearance, Yoshida participated in an official Post Office campaign to remind the public that the mailing deadline was near for the annual *nengajo* tradition (Nengajo, 2012). *Nengajo* are postcards mailed to the extended network of friends, family, and other associates in order to thank them in advance for their good relations in the year to come. Yoshida appeared in a kimono to pose for photographs and create publicity for the Post Office campaign. She also appeared beside Mie prefecture's governor, Suzuki Eikei, to "look back on the year in Mie," celebrating her accomplishments in addition to various "issues of prefecture and nation" (Yoshida senshu-ra no katsuyaku, 2012).

These appearances emphasize the cultural practices of the Japanese holiday season and their connection to various state and corporate functions. The convergence of a national sports celebrity, traditional holiday symbols, and state institutions reproduce the powerful overlap between cultural and national identity that exists in Japan. The historical link between Shinto and national identity, and the use of kimono in the Post Office promotion, illustrate the blurring of these two identities. She also appeared with the governor of Mie prefecture vowing to petition the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to restore wrestling to the menu of Olympic events in 2020 ("Resuringu kyokai,"

2013). Yoshida's public campaign was important to reversing the IOC's decision to eliminate the sport going forward ("Joshi resuringu ikusei, 2013).

Not all of Yoshida's associations with the civic community were positive, or wanted. A prominent scandal unfolded in the Kagoshima mayoral election when mayoral candidate Watanabe Shinichiro produced a photographic mailer featuring himself at an appearance with Yoshida as they visited a city hospital. 5000 postcards were distributed with the image and the slogan "We support you! Shinichiro!" prompting some outcry from the public and the opposition about foul play. The photo had not been approved for political use, and the scandal forced Watanabe to issue an apology (Resuringu joshi, 2012).

Wakako (2012) presented a lengthy editorial in the pages of *Yomiuri Shimbun* linking the issue of women's health and social support to the performance of female athletes. The editorial argues that greater support is needed for female athletes as they age and experience childbirth in order to promote their opportunity to compete internationally at the highest level. As the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology invest in programs to achieve this goal, the model should be applied broadly to the Japanese population to "strengthen women's role in society." Wakako argues that Japan is behind in women's social participation compared to other nations of the world. Yoshida's award figures prominently at the start of the editorial to demonstrate the possibility of sustained success for women beyond a certain age. The conscious effort to define a role for women in Japanese society, through the example of a prominent national figure, is deeply connected to how the Japanese people imagine themselves. The

connection of this issue to the state, in turn, legitimizes the link between nation and state, where the state is an extension of the will of the people. If it can be imagined, it can be done through the institutions that represent “us.”

The link between Taiho and the state was less obvious, given his posthumous award. One article, however, noted that the “Kawayu Sumo Memorial” in Akan National Park, Hokkaido was renamed for Taiho. The article relates that Taiho lived a mere stone’s throw from the site of the memorial and that it was fitting the government saw fit to recognize the local hero in that way (“Kawayusumokinenkan, 2013).

Twenty articles linked Nagashima and Matsui to the state, through association with governors, mayors, or other government officials. The mayor of Sakura, Chiba prefecture presided over the renaming of the municipal stadium, inviting Nagashima to participate in a ceremony to commemorate “Nagashima Shigeo Memorial Iwana Stadium” (“Sakura ni,” 2013). The Japan Tourism Agency, a division of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism, created a new Shinkansen route connecting the Hokuriku coastal area of north central Japan. Along this route lie the cities of Nomi, Ishikawa prefecture and Sakura, Chiba prefecture, the respective birthplaces of Matsui Hideki and Nagashima Shigeo. The Japan Tourism Agency announced, in an article in *Yomiuri Shimbun*, that the dual award of the People’s Honor would be celebrated in a joint tourism venture between the two cities. The tourism campaign would kick off with a special exhibition at the Hideki Matsui Museum in Nomi and a photographic exhibition of Nagashima’s life in Sakura (“Matsui Nagashima,” 2013). Although the coverage of Nagashima and Matsui’s award included a number of public ceremonies and

appearances, the use of their accomplishments as an official tourism draw stands out as the most direct link between the players, as representatives of the people, and the state. The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism, in its zeal to promote new public policy, found a pair of national icons to connect different localities within Japan.

Conclusion

The coverage of the People's Honor Award maps neatly onto the work of Hobsbawn and Ranger (1983). When the authors argue that the bestowing of honors and titles functions to 1) establish a class of individuals who represent popular public sentiments, and 2) who reinforce the authority of power by accepting said honors and titles from an official of the state, they describe perfectly the sentiments expressed thematically in the newspaper narratives related to the People's Honor. The superficial coverage of the award ceremony is only the beginning of the process as it unfolds in mass media. The continued flagging of nation that occurs in the coverage of each appearance, each ceremony, each association between athletes and individuals, unfolds over months beyond the initial honor. Public sentiments about hopes, dreams, courage and effort are also reproduced and a model for Japaneseness is suggested in the discourse. There is much more to this aspect of the news coverage than meets the eye. In suggesting a particular set of national symbols through the example of these athletes, the mass media link a specific aspirational attitude to the sentiments of *doryoku* and *ganbaru*, industriousness and making great effort. To the extent that the athletes are also associated with Japan's prewar economic boom, or contemporary international success, the qualities embodied in their example become Japanese qualities. The state is legitimized as the

vehicle through which this sort of Japaneseness can be nurtured and channeled for the betterment of the nation as a whole.

CHAPTER 6

NADESHIKO JAPAN

Women's sports in Japan have a long history, stretching back nearly as far as their male counterparts. Kietlinski (2012) traces the modern origin of women's athletics in Japan to the Meiji period, and educator Toyoda Fuyu. Although athletic training was not prescribed for girls and young women in the way that became typical for boys and young men, Toyoda paved the way for later adoption of physical education in her early work with kinesthesia and learning. In her early-20s, Toyoda studied elementary education with the German theorist Friedrich Frobel, developing models of teaching designed to spur growth through the association of movement and music with education. She traveled to Japan to spread her philosophy, and many of the practices became widely used in elementary education. Toyoda's contemporary, Tsuboi Gendo, was also instrumental in the introduction of physical education to Japan, primarily in the form of dance. Kietlinski (2012) writes that Tsuboi was employed as a translator at the Ministry of Education when a widespread interest in Western dance forms was en vogue. There was a belief at the time that the path to Japanese modernization lied in its ability to emulate the West. Experimenting and adopting Western styles of dance was one such undertaking. The Ministry's interest in exploring physical education, and the fashionable pursuit of Western dance intersected and Tsuboi was deemed the perfect person to begin instruction in dance. Beyond this particular project, Tsuboi travelled abroad to research the methods of physical education practiced in Europe and the United States, and her work influenced

the following generations as physical education began to take shape in Japan across genders.

These two stories highlight the underappreciated, and often anonymous, individuals who laid the foundation for future generations to succeed. Kietlinski's (2012) book is titled *Japanese Women in Sport: Beyond Baseball and Sumo*. The title illustrates the problem of the naturalized association of sports and masculinity, and the historical attention paid to baseball and sumo in both scholarship and popular media. The Meiji period was certainly a dynamic part of Japanese history in terms of growth and modernization. Japan made great strides in technology, and science, and culture, and industry. Japan assumed the modern position of universal rights, and like the other nations of the modernizing world, Japan persisted in its adherence to rigid gender norms that resulted in distinct masculine and feminine spheres of social life. When Ozaki, for instance, began to write his bushido treatises, arguing for a cultivation of martial character, he clearly had men in mind. Benesch (2014) notes:

While recommending Ming epic novels as tools for instilling a martial spirit, Ozaki dismissed the Qing dynasty as weak and effeminate largely due to the long periods of peace that had followed. Ozaki leveled the same criticism at Japan, although he argued that the 'civil weakness' had originated in China before being imported by Japanese Confucians. (p. 47)

The association with effeminate character and civil weakness makes clear his position on the role of gender in national identity. Framed in this way, bushido is revealed to be as much a theory of Japanese masculinity as national character. A special cultural role was put aside for women of the Meiji period, the role of *ryosai kenbo*, or "good wife, wise mother." Uno (1993) argues that the concept of *ryosai kenbo* was

invented by Meiji intellectuals, and particularly by the men at the Ministry of Education.

She writes:

After the mid-1880s the education ministry, citing women's 'difference' from men, excluded girls from rigorous postelementary education. Ideologues, bureaucrats, and politicians began to laud the family as the foundation of the state, to equate filial piety with loyalty to the emperor, and to exalt the emperor as the father of all Japanese subjects in the family state (*kazoku kokka*). (p. 297)

During the Meiji period, women were expected to support the efforts of men as they labored to build and maintain society. Women were encouraged to understand their role as the managers of households, caretakers of the young and elderly, and the harmonizing influence of the family. Uno is careful to point out that while the state ideology clearly promoted *ryosai kenbo*, it failed to realize itself as a hegemonic ideology as it typically did not live up to the real experiences of most women. That did not prevent the state from building policy around the concept, however, shaping the experience of women in a powerful way. From the Meiji period until the end of the Second World War official educational policies reflected the idea that “[A] girl’s duty is to become someone’s wife and someone’s mother; to manage the household; and to educate children” (Uno, 1993, p. 299).

The Ministry of Education dictated the terms of women’s patriotic service to the nation, stressing “submissiveness to parents, husbands, and in-laws, modesty, and chastity” (Uno, 1993, p. 299). Although the expression *ryosai kenbo* diminished in importance in the postwar period, due to its association with the brand of nationalism centered on the emperor, the domestic policy of Japan continued to reflect the same

image of womanhood. The emphasis, in the years after 1945, has been placed on motherhood, rather than wifehood, reflecting the steadily declining birthrate in Japan. Dissenting voices have struggled against *ryosai kenbo*, and its unnamed contemporary cousins, from the very beginning. The tension between state-defined womanhood in Japan and the lived reality of the people has produced a constant tug-of-war, in which state policy has both influenced the role of women in Japanese society and bent to evolving times.

Yuval-Davis (1997) attributes this historical phenomenon to the belief in blood as a foundation for the nation. Women, in this formulation, are defined as the “bearers of the collective,” and women’s reproductive roles in discourses of ethnic and national reproduction are often framed in this way (pp. 26-27). She attributes discourse of this nature to the genealogical dimension of nationalist projects, most frequently found in nations predominately defined by a sense of racial or ethnic unity. As established earlier, Japanese people identify belonging most strongly through blood.

However, a cultural dimension is also important in the complex process of self-definition. As noted earlier, Yuval-Davis (1997) argues that the cultural dimension of nationalist projects finds the essence of belonging in shared symbolic heritage (p. 21). This symbolic heritage may be reflected in language, religion, or other customs and traditions. If the state, in Japan, has historically defined the terms of womanhood, in policy, through the genealogical dimension, the vibrant dissent to its position has come from the cultural dimension. The constant ebb and flow of policy and dissent, between state and people, is where one might expect to find a sense of gender and national

identity. As sports represent a form of symbolic heritage, an invented tradition, one might expect to find evidence of the tension between the “bearers of the collective” view of womanhood and the lived experiences of the women who dream, and struggle, and work towards self-determination.

Kietlinski (2012) traces the history of women’s participation in major sports in Japan to the story of Kinue Hitomi. Fifty years after the Meiji policies were put into effect, schools supported modest strength building exercise in the form of calisthenics, gymnastics, and dance. Those activities were said to balance the desire for strength training and feminine grace, and therefore grew rapidly in public education. The concept of *ryosai kenbo* emphasized productivity over beauty, and therefore training for strength was permissible in the education of young women. After pursuing a rigorous course of physical education, Kinue travelled to Sweden to participate in the 2nd Annual Women’s Olympic Games in 1926. Her performance was so impressive she returned to Japan with the competition’s award for outstanding overall athlete. Two years later, Kinue became the first Japanese woman to medal at the Olympic Games, taking silver in the 800 meters. During the 1920s and 1930s, as Japanese women helped to increase the country’s profile at international sporting events, officials of the state began to shift their stance on athletic training for women. They could not resist the temptation to showcase Japanese strength on the international stage, and began to officially support the development of women’s athletics at the state level. This attitude, however, did not immediately take hold across public discourse, as many of the nation’s newspapers openly mocked women’s participation even as it grew in prominence.

In Japan, women's soccer is said to have its roots in the 1966 partnership between the Fukuzumi Women's Sports Club in Kobe and Kobe College Junior High School for Women. Only a few short years later, in 1970, the female staff of the Japan Football Association (JFA) successfully appealed to form a women's team. During the early 1970s, several more women's teams were established in major cities throughout the country. By the end of the decade, FIFA was actively promoting the spread of women's soccer, and Japan formally introduced the Japan Women's Football Association in 1979. Over the next decade, soccer grew at an incredible rate in Japan, and the Japan Ladies Soccer League (JLSL) was established in 1989. When the first men's professional league was introduced in 1993 as the Japan Professional Football League, or J League, the JLSL was absorbed and rebranded the L League. Internationally, Japanese women were competitive but struggled at the 1996 Olympic Games, losing all three qualifying matches. The team, then, failed to qualify for the 2000 Games in Sydney and the L League saw its initial popularity dissolve. In just a few years, the L League was in danger of becoming defunct, but fortunes once again turned in 2003 with the promotion of soccer at the 4th FIFA Women's World Cup in the United States, and the strength of the Japanese qualifying for the 2004 Olympic Games. The rebranding of the national team as "Nadeshiko Japan," and the L League as the "Nadeshiko League," is also credited with a positive change in perception (Takahashi, 2014, pp. 104-106).

The "Nadeshiko Vision," as it was called, was a wholesale investment in women's soccer by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture. The aim was to raise the number of women participating in organized soccer to 300,000 by 2015 in a bid to

assure Japan's competitiveness in international competitions (Takahashi, 2014, p. 106). The state investment in women's soccer was rewarded in 2011, when Nadeshiko Japan successfully toppled the heavily favored US Women's team in the final of the FIFA Women's World Cup. That victory had a profound effect on the public image of women's soccer in Japan, particularly as the nation had been shocked by a devastating earthquake and tsunami on March 11th of that year. The prominence of this example in public discourse about the nation, and its obvious entanglement with discourse about gender makes it an important subject of investigation here. Before turning attention to the narratives associated with Nadeshiko's 2011 FIFA championship, it's important to scrutinize the JFA's "Nadeshiko Vision" for what it says about its aims, and to offer a brief explanation of the term *nadeshiko*.

The term *nadeshiko* refers to a pink flower belonging to the carnation family. It has long been used as a symbol of Japanese feminine beauty, an ideal that Kietlinski (2012) describes as "demure, quiet, and accommodating to men" (p. xviii). In my own experience with the word, Japanese women understand the meaning of *nadeshiko* a number of different ways, often simply describing it as the "essence" of Japanese women without further discussion of the qualities that define it. *Nadeshiko* and the essence of Japanese womanhood, in this understanding, are the same, although it seems that there's sufficient subjectivity in the meaning making that a team branded as "nadeshiko" could overcome the historical connotations and forge a new direction for the symbol. There was some official intent, however, in adopting the symbol of *Yamato nadeshiko* to brand a women's soccer team, particularly as a companion to the men's "Samurai Blue"

monicker, rooted obviously in bushido. The JFA section describing “Nadeshiko Vision” sheds some light on the meaning behind the name.

Beneath the particulars of “Nadeshiko Vision” pertaining to stated goals for participation, standards, and international competitiveness, the JFA offers a brief statement about “being Nadeshiko-like.” The aim of the JFA’s “Nadeshiko Vision” is to develop Japanese women’s soccer players who aim to be “single-minded in purpose, mentally strong, cheerful, and polite (courteous)” (JFA). The final two characteristics in the description, translated as “cheerful” and “polite,” carry some nuance worth mentioning here. The term *akarui* is often translated as “cheerful,” although it literally means “bright” or “illuminated.” The term suggests cheerfulness, but also the outward projection of positive energy. The depth of meaning behind the word is lost in translation as the word “cheerful” fails to suggest more than a pleasant mood in its typical use. Likewise the term *reigi tadashii*, translated as “polite,” implies a courteous nature associated with civility and high culture. It’s not a matter of manners, as much as it is the cultivation of a genteel spirit. The gentlemanship of bushido reflects this same understanding of character. The “Nadeshiko Vision,” as an articulation of Japanese femininity, borrows from the symbolic past through the *Yamato nadeshiko* idiom, but officially reinterprets that idiom to resemble, in some way, a feminized, contemporary “fighting spirit” for the female athlete. The tension between the historical association, the floral metaphor, and the contemporary mission offer an area of contested meaning. How do the newspaper narratives associated with Nadeshiko’s Japan’s 2011 victory articulate a vision of Japaneseness as told through the experiences of female athletes?

Themes

Across the articles examined for this study, three main themes were identified and one important sub-theme. The first theme, “We All Share Victory,” is related to the local support for the athletes competing on the Women’s National Team. Coverage of the championship frequently made note of the people back home, in the hometowns of players and coaches, watching and celebrating the team’s performance. Likewise, the local roots of each player and coach were highlighted whenever specific names appeared in the articles. This theme also produces a very important sub-theme, “Healing the Nation, Post-3/11,” as the local support for the team’s success extended beyond individual cities, towns, and villages and united the entire nation, reeling from the earthquake and tsunami of several months earlier. The second theme, “We’ve Come a Long Way,” relates to the frequent coverage of player struggles in playing the game in childhood and training to compete at the international level. The final theme, “Our Effort, Their Power,” details the way the coverage represents the Japanese team’s “fighting spirit,” which was instrumental in overcoming the size and speed advantage of their American opponents.

We All Share Victory

The most significant way the coverage of Nadeshiko reproduces nation is the constant reference to the hometowns of the team’s players and managers. The referencing

of hometowns and home prefectures is accomplished in two ways throughout the articles reviewed. The first form of identification appears when a parenthetical notation containing the characters of their home prefecture immediately follows players' names. This is a common practice in Japanese media, with identifying data corresponding to the context of the story. Frequently, the data involves the age of the individual, as Japanese culture emphasizes shifts in communication strategy and behavior according to seniority. In the case of sports coverage, the parentheses may also contain reference to the player's position. During the coverage of the 2011 Women's World Cup, the newspapers frequently flagged the prefectural identity of the players, creating a sense of the diversity of local origin under the umbrella of a national team. More substantial, however, was the longer form coverage of local support "back home" in the small towns and cities across Japan. Coverage anticipating the final match between Japan and the United States regularly told the story of local support groups gathering in front of giant screens to support both their hometown hero, and the national team. 72 of the articles studied made reference to player hometowns beyond simple mention. In this group of articles, player hometowns were frequently referenced as a way to establish a link between the player and groups of people watching the games on television or celebrating the team's championship after the fact.

Asahi Shimbun reported that Nadeshiko player Miyama Aya's hometown in Chiba prefecture had set up a 3m x 5m screen to watch the final match and expected hundreds of local supporters. The article took care to establish Miyama's roots by noting that her father had been a soccer player at Municipal Narashino High School many years earlier

(Jimoto shusshin). The paper also reported that manager Sasaki Norio's hometown in Yamagata prefecture was setting up a big screen, taking care to establish that Sasaki had lived in the town of Obanazawa until he was in the 2nd grade. The article quotes a member of the city planning division as saying, "Locally, everyone's spirits have been raised," and mentions that the mayor would also be in attendance (Kessho issho ni kansen). One article highlights the closeness of star player Sawa Homare with her mother, who rushed to Germany from their hometown to cheer her daughter during the title match. The article mentions that her mother watched the semi-final on a big screen in Tokyo, texting her daughter as much as possible during the time between games. Before leaving for Germany, she stopped to pray at Takahatafudosen, a well-known Shingon Buddhist temple, to ask for good fortune (Tada, 2011).

Following the championship, a wave of articles were published detailing the return of the team, and highlighting local ceremonies and celebrations of the individual players who represented the nation and their hometowns proudly. Mayor Kobayashi Tsuneyoshi, of Atsugi City, Kanagawa prefecture, announced a special award ceremony to recognize player Nagasoto Yuki. Nagasoto was born in Atsugi and the mayor noted that she had raised the people's spirits and given them great courage (Joshi sakka no Nagasoto senshu). Nadeshiko manager Sasaki Norio was celebrated in his Yamagata hometown, in front of hundreds of supporters. Mayor Kato Kunio also remarked that the team had given the people great excitement and dreams, and drew a parallel between Nadeshiko's victory in Germany and the people of Yamagata. Kato noted that Nadeshiko had worked hard together in Germany, and prodded the crowd to "use our power together

to work hard for our dreams” (Sekai ichi warera no hokori). A celebration in Osaka was held to honor two players born in the city. Sakaguchi Mizuho and Tanaka Asuna helped to raise a banner in celebration (Hatta, 2011). Seven Nadeshiko members attended the INAC Kobe Leonessa team practice to be honored by hundreds of fans. The Kirin beer company, an official sponsor of Nadeshiko, awarded each of the team’s 21 players with one million yen, or approximately \$10,000 US. Manager Sasaki Norio and player Ando Kozue accepted on behalf of the others (Kobe no Nadeshiko).

Twenty editorials were published in the weeks following the team’s victory, including one from an architect in Fukuoka, which thanked the team and noted that all of Japan was excited by the victory. Speaking for the entire nation, the architect noted that the US had also been moved by the performance and that the steady Japanese team’s defense against a relentless US attack had “given us all goose bumps.” He concluded by noting that not only in Japan, but all over the world, people were immersed in the excitement and felt the courage of the team (Soejima, 2011). The national is evoked here through the lens of the global. This sentiment can be found throughout the coverage of the team’s victory. The spirit of Nadeshiko’s fight is frequently linked to the hopes and dreams and efforts of local people all over Japan. Links to individual players reinforce the collective ownership of said spirit, and build a sense of continuity between small hometowns across the map. One particularly powerful sub-theme takes this idea a step further, identifying the spirit of Nadeshiko and its inspirational force in its healing potential for a nation reeling from natural disaster.

Healing the Nation, Post-3/11

On March 11, 2011, an enormous earthquake rocked Eastern Japan, devastating communities along the Pacific coast. Not long after the strongest shockwaves had reduced many small towns to rubble, a terrible tsunami washed across the affected area killing and displacing thousands of people. The disaster was so far reaching in Japan that a nuclear reactor facility hundreds of miles from the region most powerfully hit began to melt down, resulting in the greatest industrial disaster the country had ever seen. This series of incidents is described in Japan as the Great East Japan Earthquake, or simply as 3/11. Nadeshiko's victory in Germany came only four short months after the events had unfolded in Japan, giving the coverage of the World Cup a particular character.

Serazio (2010) argues that the experience of disaster can unite communities around a sense of trauma. He notes that collective memories can take shape through texts, bodies and celebrations and that sports journalism constitutes a form of collective memory narrative, acting as a sociological dimension to the experience of a disaster. Sports, in this way, also offer the potential for "collective renewal," as the exploits of athletes and teams stand in for the broader struggles of the public. The healing process of a people devastated by disaster can be identified through success on the athletic field. As Nadeshiko returned home victorious, the sense of shared joy was not only framed in abstract "hopes and dreams," but also in the potential to be healed after the trauma of natural disaster.

Nearly 25% of the articles reviewed made reference to the disaster and its aftermath, linking Nadeshiko to the process of healing. Although the coverage of Nadeshiko's connection to 3/11 was expressed in some articles at a local level, the most frequent association came in the national and global contexts. 3/11 was a national event, as characterized in the coverage, and the recognition of trauma and healing were frequently framed thus. In a series of articles in the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, international media accounts of Japan's victory were collected, always noting the great perseverance and tenacity of the team, just as with the Japanese people in their recovery from the events of 3/11. One article relates the British characterization of "the iron will of the team" in the face of the Great East Japan Earthquake. The article goes on to offer President Barack Obama's congratulations and respect, along with the impressions found in German, Swedish, French, and Italian media. In each case, a sense of Japanese determination and strength were associated with both the Nadeshiko victory and the disaster (Yanagisawa, M., Miyoshi, N., Kondo, Y., Mitsui, M., & Suetsugi, T., 2011). Another such article recounts the coverage in China's state media, Xinhua, highlighting the technical strength and great confidence displayed by the Japanese women against the powerful American team. The article describes this as "the miracle of Yamato Nadeshiko," and quotes a Chinese man as saying, "Although I don't like Japan, I admire the Japanese people's spirit" as they recover from the Great East Japan Earthquake (Ohki, 2011; see also: Kakutani, 2011; Nakagawa, 2011; Hamasuna, 2011; Teraguchi, 2011; & Kato, 2011). The article goes on to quote a South Korean article in which a man remarks, "Since the terrible earthquake the Japanese people had sunk into darkness, but now they were able to smile." He is further quoted as saying that the team sent the message "never give up" to

the public. Similar sentiments followed from Brazilian, Russian, and Israeli media sources. Here is another case in which the national level is evoked through the imagination of a global response.

The reproduction of nation in the coverage of Nadeshiko's victory operates across two distinct paths. The "out of many, we are one" dimension of the narratives links local pride to the broad dreams of the Japanese people. The connection between a shared trauma and the spirit of an entire nation is embodied in Nadeshiko's efforts on the playing field. The global stage sets a context for Japan's collective experience of disaster. The physical devastation and psychological distress of local people are transferred onto the nation as a whole through the global response to the event. The ability to overcome collective trauma is found in a sense of national spirit, in the values of effort, tenacity, determination and hope. Nadeshiko's victory, being characterized in those terms, translates from sports narrative to a broader national narrative as an idiom through which to overcome shared pain.

We've Come A Long Way

A second important theme relates to gender in Japanese society. The fact that the nation shared joy and healing through the success of Nadeshiko opens the door for greater scrutiny of the team's origin. The more the coverage exposes the background of the team and its members, the more one understands the dimension of gender in the evolution of the story. One series of articles, published in *Yomiuri Shimbun* the day before the title match, projects a vision of the team's origin through the individual

struggles of its star player, Sawa Homare, and a handful of her teammates. The series of three articles ran parallel to one another in the newspaper's Tokyo, Osaka, and Chubu editions, and followed the same general structure and style. The Tokyo and Chubu stories were identical until the conclusion, when a variation on the theme was presented. The Osaka story was similar thematically, focusing on local connections rather than Sawa, but the conclusion was built in the same way as the other two versions.

The Tokyo edition featured the background of team captain Sawa Homare, highlighting her early days playing the sport. Sawa joined the elementary school soccer club with her older brother when she was in the 2nd grade, quickly finding her voice as a talented and competitive member of the team. The article associated her early experiences as a girl competing against boys with her present efforts competing against foreign players. Her desire to succeed against the boys of her youth is compared to her desire to never lose against foreign players. Although she continued to play on her youth clubs, by the time she was in 4th grade she was limited to participating in practices. During the team's appearance in the Capital Championship Tournament, Sawa was not allowed to play and the team went down in defeat. The experience is something that haunted her for years. These struggles are situated in the article in contrast to the present circumstances when the expectations of a hopeful nation are behind the women's team. The article repeats the fact that team jersey sales were booming in anticipation of the final, and concludes by quoting the manager of the Kamo Soccer Shop in Shinjuku as saying, "I want more and more women to experience this success" (Nadeshiko choten, Tokyo, 2011). Another article argues that the rise of women's soccer in Japan coincides

with Sawa's debut in December of 1993, and that she's a role model for all the younger players, calling her a "living legend" (Shimizu & Kono, 2011).

The Chubu edition of the story repeats the Sawa narrative verbatim, and concludes with a quote from the Nagoya branch of Kamo Soccer Shop. His remark to Yomiuri is also, verbatim, the same as the remarks of the Shinjuku manager. "I want more and more women to experience this success" (Choten ubae, 2011). The Osaka edition ran a story highlighting the struggles of women's professional soccer players in Japan, noting that as Nadeshiko "sits one step from the top of the world" the history of women's soccer in Japan has not been easy for team hopefuls. It noted that women's soccer, in Japan, isn't blessed with the same level of support as the men's sport, and that players have historically endured trouble concentrating on training while also holding down full time jobs. The example of several INAC Kobe Leonessa players is related in support of this news. The article concludes in the same way as the others in the series, with a quote from a Kamo Soccer Shop employee, who states, "I want more and more women to experience this success" (Nadeshiko choten, Osaka, 2011). The similarity of the primary narratives is not particular surprising. The newspaper's editorial staff is presenting a picture of women's soccer in Japan, emphasizing the lack of support for female players, but the concluding remarks are particularly interesting. It's impossible to say without further investigation whether the remarks attributed to individuals working for the same national sporting goods franchise in three different cities were spontaneous, but it hardly seems to be the case. However the remarks were devised, spontaneously or otherwise, the message produced in the lead up to the title game is clear. Women's soccer

in Japan has suffered from a lack of support historically, and the people want to see a change.

Another story, presented in *Asahi Shimbun*, explores the roots of the Nadeshiko program through the experiences of former player Noda Akemi. Noda, the current manager of the Nadeshiko League's NTV Beleza club, shared the tough memories of her time representing the national team between 1984 and 1996. She remembered having to practice very early in the morning and very late at night because her daytime hours were spent working a number of odd jobs. She recalled working as a golf caddy, a pachinko clerk, and as a member of an aquarium sea lion show, feeding bait to the animals. Noda asserted that all the members of the 1996 national team, who competed at the Olympic Games in Atlanta, shared the same experience, and that the recession in the year 2000 forced a number of key players to drop out of the Olympic Games in Sydney. Urawa Reds' players Yamago Nozomi, Yano Takako, and Kumagai Saki all describe their struggle to remain in Japan to play professionally ("Nadeshiko no ken yukari," 2011). Contemporary players, Iwashimzu Azusa and Iwabuchi Mana, remarked, "Now that we've won, we want to lift up more players across Japan" (Nakagawa, 2011).

The expression of this sentiment was not limited to the coverage of current and former team members, however. One editorial, written by a Japanese language teacher from Mie prefecture, brought the issue to the general population. She related the story of her own childhood, echoing the experience of Sawa Homare. As an elementary school student, the woman was able to join her school's soccer club, but wasn't allowed to play in games. At that time, according to the writer, one couldn't imagine women's soccer on

the international level and she never dreamed it would ever come about. She expressed her wish to be an elementary school student once again because Nadeshiko had given Japan a new dream. In closing, the woman related her hope that the whole experience wouldn't end in a giant boom, but rather that it would spur the future development of women's soccer in Japan (Kawado, 2011). The body of articles that reflect this type of sentiment take the notion of Japanese spirit, rooted in courage, and effort, and dreams, and embody them in the struggle of female athletes to push their horizons. Nadeshiko's story becomes the story of Japanese women, even as the nation broadly claims it as its own.

Our Effort, Their Power

The last major theme identified in the coverage of Nadeshiko Japan is specific to the boundaries between "us" and "them." As an international event, the 2011 Women's World Cup provides a context for both inward and outward-looking narratives, including the type of narratives that define Japaneseness against the backdrop of others. The idea that Nadeshiko represented an "us," and the American women represented a particular "them" is found throughout the coverage of Japan's victory, and in very specific terms.

On the day before the final match, Asahi Shimbun published an article establishing the background of the Japan-US rivalry. Nadeshiko had lost to the US team earlier in the year by a score of 2-0. Japanese midfielder Sakaguchi Mizuho described the US players as strong and fast, offering her perspective as a player with US professional league experience. She noted that when one collides with their bodies their power is

understood. The article goes on to note the height advantage of the US team, and emphasized the effort made by Japanese players as key to victory. In the conclusion to the piece, the reporter noted that team captain Sawa Homare held a players' only meeting to stress the importance of giving "120%," which is characterized as *toshi*, or "fighting spirit" (Kono, 2011). Fighting spirit is a typical symbol of effort against tough odds with roots in Meiji-era bushido. However, it is used by high school students across Japan during the tough standardized exams for university entrance as well. The contrast in this article is clear. In order to be victorious, it will be Japanese fighting spirit that will prevail over America's superior size, speed, and strength.

In another article, celebrating the return of Kumagai Saki to her hometown in Sapporo, accounts of the game are provided to situate her role in the victory. The article notes that Japan found itself in a pinch throughout the first half as the American players' superior physiques gave them an advantage, but Kumagai was able to gather all her strength to defend as the crowd cheered her on (Sakka joshi W-hai). Sapporo housewife Matsumoto Takako is quoted as saying, "Nadeshiko's success has become an inspiration to all Japanese women." In this example, the overlap of all three major themes can be seen. A hometown hero returns to help connect local people to the national celebration, bringing with her the essential Japanese trait of effort and fighting spirit, which empowers Japanese women everywhere. In all, 85 articles directly discussed Nadeshiko's efforts against the US team, with 31 emphasizing the superior US strength and speed to Japan's effort and fighting spirit.

Conclusion

The themes identified in the coverage of Nadeshiko Japan's 2011 victory point to a nation united in both trauma and celebration. Local investment in national success brings the people together, particularly as they collectively strive to overcome the effects of 3/11. Further, Nadeshiko is the story of Japanese women. It is the story of a collective struggle for support for people historically relegated to second-class citizenship in public affairs. Nadeshiko represents hope for change, and that men and women alike share that hope. At least the male store managers cited in Yomiuri's coverage offer that impression. Closer examination of the narratives suggest that some work remains before gender equality becomes reality in Japan. In the article describing Yamagata prefecture's celebration of Nadeshiko manager Sasaki Norio, Governor Yoshimura Mieko conferred the Prefectural Sports award, saying, "Nadeshiko is Japan's *tsuyahime*," and "they will further refine the luster by qualifying for the London Olympic Games" ("Sekai ichi warera hokori," 2011). *Tsuyahime* is a brand of Yamagata rice, engineered by agricultural researchers in the prefecture to withstand tough winters and taste delicious. The *Tsuyahime* project is a model for rice growing native to Yamagata, but the prefecture has invested a great deal of effort in promoting its brand across Japan. The name *tsuyahime* combines the root for lustrous with the word "princess." The milky white color of Japanese rice is often personified in the pale beauty typical of historical images of Japanese women. In her effort to praise Nadeshiko as a model for Japanese power, the governor linked the team to a state marketing project for consumer products, one that employs historical standards of beauty to princesses.

Further, Nadeshiko has been frequently flown internationally in coach, while their male counterparts are afforded business class seating. An article in *Time* magazine illustrates the public tap dancing performed by the JFA in explaining the situation, noting, “[T]he story received limited coverage in Japan, whereas it has been widely commented on elsewhere. *Nikkan Sports* daily were among the few to note the incident. ‘The JFA perpetuated the sexist divide that has existed in the world of soccer for a long time,’ it wrote” (Paramanguru, 2012). The rhetoric of empowerment and the dreams of equality are important, but until policy shifts and actual support is provided, the story beneath the surface will remain largely the same.

Whatever struggles remain ahead, the association of fighting spirit with Nadeshiko’s success represents an important turn. If bushido is understood as a theory of Japanese masculinity through the historical circumstances in which it evolved, Nadeshiko may present a new opportunity to define “fighting spirit” as an inclusive Japanese ethic. Despite the essentialist quality of the narrative, the boundaries of “us” and “them” set according to racial characteristics and cultural traits, positioning women in the role of heroes shapes the imagination of national character in a way that may be more inclusive. The lines between gender roles may continue to blur in Japanese society, but the process has certainly begun in earnest in the coverage of Nadeshiko’s success.

CHAPTER 7
THE GREAT YOKOZUNA OF HEISEI

To the outsider, sumo wrestling looks like the quintessential Japanese sport. It is a sporting culture steeped in Japanese tradition, linked to a symbolic Japanese past in both appearance and ritual. The wrestlers are muscular, to be sure, but obese. Their hair is carefully coiffed into a formal topknot, and they grapple in a small dirt ring, nearly nude, under the careful inspection of a traditionally garbed official. Prior to wrestling, the combatants perform an elaborate ritual of stretching and “facing off.” They toss salt high into the air to purify the ring, always serious, always focused. The pre-match rituals frequently occupy much more time than the match itself. One might assume that Japan’s “national sport” could be traced back hundreds of years to the era of samurai and feudal lords, but that assumption would be incorrect as sumo is as invented a tradition as one can find in the world of sport.

Thompson (1998) illustrates the self-serving narratives that some historians of sumo have produced in order to tie the sport to a time as far back as the 8th century in Japan. These narratives perform a delicate dance through history, attempting to recognize the practice known as sumo in various descriptions of centuries old ceremonies. In fact, many of the historical examples frequently identified as early sumo bouts bore little resemblance to the sport practiced today. Guttmann and Thompson (2001) argue that the roots of sumo may be found in the 8th century Heian period, when sumo contests were staged at the largest shrines during the celebration of agricultural rites. While there has

been a temptation to assign these contests a religious character, the authors point out that most evidence suggests an ancillary function, a simple form of entertainment for festivalgoers. The wrestling bouts held during the Heian period involved rituals, rules, and techniques that only superficially resemble modern sumo. The authors argue that many bouts were held at Heian court as a way to break the tedium, and to make a political statement. Wrestlers were invited from various parts of the territory to which the Heian court claimed authority. The authority of the imperial court was codified in the Taiho Code, but many local areas retained a degree of autonomy. By forcing these local communities to send representatives to the wrestling contest, the court was forcing them to recognize its ultimate authority (pp. 16-17).

Over time, the legitimacy of the court was challenged and the politics of the Heian period (794 – 1195 CE) were replaced by the militarism of the Kamakura period. Japan shifted from its so-called Classical period to its Medieval period, and the significance of wrestling shifted as well. Guttmann and Thompson (2001) note that close combat required a familiarity with grappling techniques, and that several of the prominent figures at the head of unifying Japan under military rule enjoyed the sport a great deal. Sumo underwent an important series of changes around the 17th century, when the practice became standardized. They write:

It is characteristic of modern sports that athletes are segregated from spectators and that fields of play are spatially differentiated from one another as well as from workspace. In the development of sumo as in the revolution of modern soccer and rugby from the medieval European sport of folk-football, roles became as specialized as the space in which the sport occurred. (p. 20)

With the specialization of the sport came a greater sense of its official stature, and many shrines maintained a regular relationship with local wrestlers to hold benefits. As the Medieval period came to an end around the turn of the 18th century, a central bureaucracy was established at Edo, modern day Tokyo, and the Tokugawa Shogunate presided over a period of civil order more than 250 years in duration. Their codes of public conduct were rigid, enforced by the samurai class, and sumo was eventually bureaucratized as a way to take control over the gaudy spectacle that dominated much of the Medieval period's later years. The authors note that the first organization charged with the administration of official sumo wrestling was called the *sumo kaisho*, established in 1751 in stable form. The contemporary Japan Sumo Association can trace its roots back to this early institution, formed in the same year that the English established their Jockey Club as the first national sports organization (Guttman and Thompson, 2001, p. 23).

Bolitho (2003) writes that the rigid administration of Tokugawa era sumo wrestling included a typical set of requirements based in moral character. The Tokugawa administration applied strict moral requirements on various trades, mandating any professional endeavor be scrutinized for its participants' credentials as responsible people. As it would be especially difficult for younger individuals to establish credentials as "responsible people," most of the controlling figures of Tokugawa era sumo were elders with strong connections to the privileged class. A hierarchy was established in the administration and control of professionalized sumo, and the sport took off in popularity soon after. Bolitho goes on to describe the privileged position afforded sumo in the court

life of the time. It was not uncommon to use bribery as a means to privilege during the 18th century, which enabled a family with strong Shinto heredity to gain a foothold in the commercial arena of the sport. The Yoshida family bought their way into the sport, but managed to associate their own heritage with the legitimacy of sumo as a religious rite. It was under their direction that the myth of sumo's religious heritage was born and flourished. The family's flair for religious ritual infused the sport with legitimacy, and tied it to practices dating back to the Heian period.

Thompson (1998) writes that the Yoshida family was the force behind the establishment of the tournament system, as well as the distinct ranking system used in the hierarchy of competitors. Yoshida Zenzaemon, who was instrumental in many of the invented links to the Classical period, also began to influence the ritual aspects of the sport's pageantry. At the end of the 18th century, Yoshida began to license wrestlers to perform an elaborate ring-entrance ceremony wearing a white rope around their waists called *yokozuna*. The *yokozuna* resembled the ropes on the gables of Shinto shrines, and therefore the license was a formal religious certification, legitimizing the Yoshida family authority over such matters. Very few such licenses were issued, even through the Edo period when a total of nine had been awarded. Thompson points out that more than fifty have been awarded since the beginning of the Meiji period.

Despite the tight hold the Yoshida family kept on matters of administration and ritual in the sumo world, times began to change as the Meiji period brought an end to the Tokugawa system. By 1909 the Sumo Association established *yokozuna* as the rank of Grand Champion, awarded according to merit as much as through the privilege of

license. The Yoshida family resisted this change throughout the first half of the 20th century, to no avail. The sport began to take on a distinct Shinto character, but also took on the characteristics of modern competition, familiar in the international community. On one hand, referees began to dress in formal Shinto costume, wrestlers walked the streets in traditional *hakama*, rather than civilian clothing, and the wrestling ring, or *dohyo*, was covered by an enormous roof-structure built in the *shinmeizukuri* style of many prominent Shinto shrines. On the other hand, the championship system was established, which formalized the criteria for crowning tournament champions, and the rewards they would receive for their achievements. This process was largely the function of the newspaper media, who profited in covering the competitions; speculating on contenders, covering the daily bouts, and legitimizing their place in modern Japanese society by underwriting the trophies and awards bestowed upon the champions (Thompson, 2001, pp. 177-180).

The importance of the *yokozuna* title in this context is paramount. As newspapers began to report on the official results of the regular tournaments, an official record came into being. In earlier times, winners of bouts would collect money and gifts thrown into the ring after their victories and the winners of tournaments received various forms of patronage. In the tournament era, as an official record became available to the reading public, the *yokozuna* title was awarded to those wrestlers who established a pattern of championship performance. Winning a single tournament was no longer the ultimate goal, but rather to establish a record worthy of historical account. The mythical status of the *yokozuna*, as constructed in the religious accounts of the Yoshida family, meant a

strict adherence to ritual, and tradition, and persistent excellence. One must prove oneself worthy of such a title before being allowed to associate with the spiritual roots of the sport and the nation. By the 1950s, an official set of criteria were set up by the Yokozuna Review Board to recommend wrestlers promotion according to both characters and merit. Any wrestler to win consecutive tournament championships, while holding the rank of *ozeki*, the sport's second most prestigious rank, would qualify for consideration. This system, however, would prove challenging to the nature of the sporting tradition, as wrestlers from outside Japan were permitted to compete.

The first foreign wrestlers appeared in Japan in the 1930s. Among the individuals allowed to participate were the American Harley Ozaki and the Korean Kim Sin-nak. In order to maintain the promotion of sumo as Japan's national sport, the wrestlers were given the names Toyonishiki Kishiro and Rikidozan, respectively. After the Second World War, another wave of foreign wrestlers competed in the ranks, and were given Japanese names. Often their foreign roots were hidden from Japanese audiences. In the 1960s, Cal Martin, a Caucasian wrestler from the United States, joined Hawaii's Jesse Kuhaulua as the first wrestlers whose ethnic origins could not be disguised as Japanese. Both men assumed Japanese names, and the ritual dress and style of the sumo wrestler, but there was no hiding the fact that the men were not Japanese. The matter became more complicated when Kuhaulua won a major tournament championship in July of 1972, becoming the first foreigner to achieve the feat (Japan: Sumo, 2010, pp. 180-181). The Sumo Association began to fear that Japanese fans would no longer support sumo if they were forced to watch foreign wrestlers defeating their native Japanese heroes, and

established a quota system, limiting the number of foreign members of any training stable. Thompson (2001) notes that the retirement of several Japanese *yokozuna* in the late-1980s opened the door for foreign wrestlers who had established a record of success in the sport. The Hawaiian-born wrestler Konishiki was in a favorable position to receive promotion during that time, but was passed over instead. Despite his popularity in Japan, the rank of *yokozuna* was not awarded by the officials of the Sumo Association. A void at the *yokozuna* rank persisted for a number of years, until the Sumo Association recognized another Hawaiian, Akebono, as the sport's first foreign-born Grand Champion. In the period between the early-1990s and the second decade of the 21st century, a handful of Japanese have achieved the rank of *yokozuna*, although the greatest number of wrestlers awarded the title have been foreign-born.

By far the most successful wrestlers of the contemporary period have come from Mongolia, a nation with a long, rich wrestling tradition of its own. The two most dominant wrestlers of the recent past are the Mongolians Asashoryu and Hakuho. A wave of Eastern European, Caucasian, wrestlers have joined the Mongolians to dominate the sport at the upper division, raising new fears about the Japanese character of the sport. These wrestlers, in particular, have presented some problems for the sumo establishment, as their fair skin and light hair make disguising their foreignness problematic. Some debate has arisen about the practice of blackening the wrestlers' hair, as a way to make them appear more Japanese, although there is no rule mandating the practice. The Sumo Association brushed off concerns about the issue, noting that the oil used to treat wrestlers' hair has a natural blackening agent that would color any wrestler's hair,

regardless of its original tone (Baruto). Foreign wrestlers must master the Japanese language, dress in *hakama*, wear their hair according to the tradition of the sport, adhere to a strict code of conduct, and be as Japanese as possible. The historical continuity of sumo as Japanese national sport, cloaked in Shinto religious ritual and presentation, demands that the “outsiders” be made to appear as much like “insiders” as possible, in both appearance and attitude. This is even more important for *yokozuna* due to the historical and spiritual air surrounding that honor.

A number of foreign wrestlers have struggled to adhere to sumo’s strict code of conduct and have been forced out of the sport altogether. The example of Asashoryu stands out as the most prominent of these cases, as he was poised to break every major record in sumo’s modern history before leaving the country. Two of Asashoryu’s fellow countrymen, Haramafuji and Hakuho, however, have maintained a certain type of quiet dignity required of the *yokozuna*. In early 2015, Hakuho broke the record for most upper division championships, winning his 33rd career tournament, surpassing “Father of Sumo” and the “Great Yokozuna of the Showa Period” Taiho. The coverage of Hakuho’s quest to tie, and then pass, Taiho’s record is of interest in this case study.

Themes

The coverage of the November 2014 Kyushu Tournament and the 2015 New Year Tournament was reviewed in this study. *Yokozuna* Hakuho tied the all time career record for tournament championships in the Kyushu Tournament, and broke the record months later in the New Year Tournament. Coverage during the two tournaments examined was

typically thin, as sumo wrestlers are known to be brief and cliché with their in-tournament remarks. The brevity of these remarks is considered a virtue, as focus and seriousness are signs of high character. Likewise, the newspaper reporting on the daily tournament results typically mentioned the number of days remaining in Hakuho's quest for history, only highlighting the historical connection between Hakuho and the man he was chasing, Taiho. The in-tournament coverage was extremely uniform across both newspapers, with a similar range of details and quotes presented along the way. Common themes and emphases were identified in the more substantial pre-tournament and post-tournament coverage.

Three key themes were identified in the narratives related to Hakuho's record-breaking quest. The first, "Yokozuna Continuity," deals with the link between Hakuho's current success and the yokozuna tradition to which he belongs. This theme illustrates the importance of continuity in that tradition and the way newspaper coverage contextualizes Hakuho's legacy in the legacy of the yokozuna. The second theme, "The Soul of Japan and the Gods of Sumo," emphasizes the spiritual nature of Hakuho's efforts and the recognition of the yokozuna as symbolic of a higher power in Japan. The final theme, "The Same but Different," characterizes the coverage according to its balance between continuity of Japaneseness and the recognition of Hakuho as a non-Japanese.

Yokozuna Continuity

It seems natural that the pursuit of a record held by one of the nation's most beloved figures would produce a strong sense of history. As Hakuho chased down

Taiho's tournament championship record, the link between the two men became firmer. The newspaper coverage of this event reflects a very personal tone, as Taiho was frequently associated with Hakuho as a mentor, father figure, and spiritual guide. Nearly half of the articles reviewed made mention of the link between the legacy of Hakuho and Taiho in this way. The actual closeness of the two men seems somewhat in doubt, although one would never get that impression from the articles published during Hakuho's pursuit of the record. One article quoted Hakuho as saying, "I want to live up to the example of Taiho. I want to chase youthfully after [the record]" (Hirayama, 2014). The article concluded by noting that Hakuho had visited Taiho two days before he passed away, and was told, "It's no good to simply win," implying that yokozuna have a higher responsibility than wins. Hakuho is reported as saying, "I'm glad to be associated with the master. The [yokozuna] line is very important." This impression is found throughout the coverage of the Kyushu Basho, in particular.

Another article established that Hakuho had met with Taiho four years earlier, as his success gave an early inkling of things to come. Taiho reportedly told Hakuho that records are made to be broken and to "go for it." The article concludes with a contemporary quote from Hakuho, saying, "Taiho is saying from heaven, 'Do it.'" (Hakuho yussho 32-kai mezasu, 2014). Upon tying Taiho's record on the final day of the Kyushu Basho, Hakuho addressed the fans, fighting through tears, remarking, "I stand side-by-side with the Father of Sumo" ("Kakukai no chichi ni ongaeshi," 2014). The article describing his tearful words also characterized the relationship between Taiho and Hakuho as mentor/student, attributing several more remarks to Taiho. "Don't forget the

lessons of your early days. Be an example to all of sumo,” the article goes on, noting that the words had planted a feeling in Hakuho’s chest as he ascended the stairs to become a “Great Yokozuna.” Tadashi (2014) explains that Hakuho’s name bears the same character ‘ho’ used by Taiho in honor of the “Great Yokozuna of Showa.” An opinion piece, written by an educator in Nagoya, argues that in passing the “Great Yokozuna of Showa,” Hakuho should be considered the “Great Yokozuna of Heisei,” the contemporary era in Japan, and that he hopes he will win up to 40 championships to reign as the “Yokozuna of the Century” (Yasuda, 2014).

The type of flourish found in articles like these is also echoed in the half dozen editorial and opinion pieces printed in the newspapers during the Kyushu Basho. Miki Shuji of the *Yomiuri Shimbun* editorial board published a particularly rich and colorful piece in the days after Hakuho tied Taiho’s record. Miki (2014) explains that Yokozuna is the symbol of sumo and that 71 people from the Edo period’s Akashi Shiganosuke to the contemporary Kakuru have been honored with the title. He wrote, “If there is a gene in the sand of the sumo ring, Hakuho has absorbed the sweat passed down from our ancestors across time on this final day.” Across the many examples found linking Taiho and Hakuho in this way, Miki’s is the most colorful, and also hints at the other two important themes identified.

The Soul of Japan and the Gods of Sumo

The spiritual nature of the yokozuna tradition comes out in vibrant, religious expressions throughout the coverage. As Hakuho addressed the crowd in Kyushu, he

remarked, “Because this nation’s soul and the Gods of sumo recognized me, I was able to have this outcome” (“Hakuho saita,” 2014). Miki (2014) follows his description of yokozuna genetics with a characterization of Hakuho’s winning remarks to the fans in Kyushu, and across the nation. He writes, “The tears streaming down his face showed gratitude to his home country’s parents and the Gods of sumo, recognizing the history of sumo in the topknot he wears. I could not help but think he’d moved the hearts of the Japanese people.” Another article describes the scene by noting that during the playing of the national anthem, Hakuho’s lips quivered as tears streamed down his cheeks, recognizing that he’d inherited sumo tradition and history, and that he promised to give everything he’s got to keep working hard (Kakukai no chichi ni ongaeshi).

Similar sentiments are repeated across 26 separate articles, published in connection to Hakuho’s pair of tournament wins, giving a sense of the traditional link between sumo and Shinto, and the broader link between Shinto and nihonjinron. As yokozuna represent a lineage of Japanese spirituality, it becomes essential that the most successful yokozuna embody what it means to be Japanese. The matter is complicated when the majority of yokozuna over the last 35-40 years have been foreigners. That fact becomes more problematic when the greatest champion of all time comes from amongst this group of foreigners, necessitating a direct link between the contemporary champion, a Mongolian, and the most revered champion, whose record he has broken. There is never mention of Taiho’s mixed Ukranian and Japanese heritage in all the articles proclaiming him the “Father of Sumo,” or the “Great Yokozuna of Showa.” It is enough that the public sees him as Japanese and that the yokozuna line can continue unpolluted

because Taiho taught Hakuho the depth of the Japanese soul. Being a yokozuna, as Taiho reportedly told Hakuho, is not about winning. It's about representing the essential spiritual character of the Japanese. As these two themes overlap and inform one another, the problem of Hakuho's foreignness comes into light.

The Same but Different

A quarter of the articles covering Hakuho made note of his Mongolian heritage. Many of the articles made reference to his Mongol roots in passing biographical reference. Just as common, however, was the assertion that despite his essential difference, Hakuho had learned to know the Japanese soul, and in doing so learned to embody the yokozuna spirit. This aspect of Hakuho's story is particularly important given the story of Asashoryu, who preceded Hakuho in the chase for Taiho's record. Asashoryu, a fellow Mongolian wrestler, was one of the sport's most devastating champions. Where Hakuho's sumo has been characterized by its muscular versatility, and its cerebral character, Asashoryu's style simply inspired terror. He was lightning fast and devastatingly powerful, something akin to a knockout heavyweight fighter. Asashoryu not only dispatched his opponents, he did so with terrifying ease. Upon throwing opponents from the ring, he would stare deep into the stands, chin raised in triumph, and turn back into the ring with a cocky flourish. In the sumo world, such behavior is considered unnecessarily showy, particularly for a yokozuna. Outside the ring, Asashoryu was also trouble for the Sumo Association. He constantly walked the fine line between excellence in the ring and embarrassment outside it. Asashoryu was a rock star. He made pithy quips to reporters, laughed robustly in public, drank openly, and paraded around

wearing sunglasses. He frequently rubbed the Japanese traditionalists the wrong way with his public persona, an attitude that frequently leaked out in the ring as well.

Asashoryu was building an historic career when Hakuho arrived on the scene. There was no legitimate competition to Asashoryu for years and his tournament victories were piling up one after the other, until Taiho was right in his sights. Hakuho blunted his momentum towards the all-time tournament record by standing as an equal in the ring, but the difference in demeanor was notable. The celebration of Hakuho's achievement was made easier by his reserved personality. It is not to say that Hakuho embodies the Japanese ideal when it comes to the yokozuna, but rather that in comparison to his countryman Asashoryu, he plays the part very well. Asashoryu was eventually drummed out of the sport for his behavior outside the ring, just shy of Taiho's mark. Asashoryu is linked to Hakuho in 17 of the articles reviewed. The timing of the articles is significant as each was published in direct connection with Hakuho's two tournament wins.

One article in *Yomiuri Shimbun* makes note of the distinction between the two yokozuna, saying, "Compared to his fellow Mongolian, Asashoryu, Hakuho has not caused big problems" (Hakuho no shingitai). The article makes reference to this aspect of Hakuho's story to excuse an indiscretion committed in the ring on the eighth day of the Kyushu Basho, when Hakuho pushed the wrestler Teru no Fuji out of the ring, into the crowd, after defeating him. The late push is called *dameoshi* in sumo parlance, and is especially unbecoming of a yokozuna. The article further quotes Sumo Association chairman, Uchiyama Hitoshi, as saying, "A yokozuna must look within himself. It's his character problem," noting that the Association would take a "wait-and-see" attitude

towards discipline. Another sumo official, Kitanoumi, is quoted as saying, “Whether or not Hakuho shows the dignity of the top rank...he has unquestionably risen to the best sumo of the year” (“[Yagurudaiko],” 2014).

This pattern can be found repeatedly in the coverage of Hakuho’s achievement, in ways both overt and subtle. The pairing of Hakuho and Asashoryu establishes a dialectic about foreignness and the *yokozuna* spirit. It acknowledges that foreign wrestlers have exhibited athletic superiority in the ring, but that not all foreigners are capable of truly understanding the Japanese spirit as symbolized in *yokozuna*. In their opposition, Asashoryu stands as a failed *yokozuna*, a person capable of honing the flesh, but not the soul. Hakuho, particularly through his direct link to Taiho, has completed the circle. Yasuda (2014) wrote that despite Hakuho’s *dameoshi*, he spoke words more Japanese than the Japanese might muster. This remark asserts Hakuho’s foreignness in praising his understanding of the Japanese spirit. If the essential character of the Japanese people is difficult to penetrate, Hakuho’s triumph is all the more satisfying and remarkable for his ability to know what lies deep beneath the surface. The washing of Hakuho in pseudo-spiritual symbolism staves off the potential challenge to *nihonjinron*, represented in the domination of foreign wrestlers. He can be seen as different, an honorary Japanese, suggesting the power of Iwabuchi’s (2002) strategic hybridism.

Another article makes a similar case in recalling the match-fixing scandals that plagued the sport several years earlier. The scandals revived an old accusation that sumo matches were frequently bought and sold by shady underworld figures that ran in circles close to the sport. Most of the running speculation about this dark aspect of sumo focused

on Japanese wrestlers, until the summer of 2008 when Russian wrestler Wakanoho was arrested for possession of marijuana, a very serious crime in Japan. In his expulsion from sumo, and his deportation proceedings, Wakanoho asserted that rampant match-fixing was taking place around sumo, and named several wrestlers, both foreign and Japanese. In 2011, more than 20 wrestlers were expelled from the sport after a lengthy investigation. Many of the wrestlers were Mongolian, although at least half were Japanese. The article in question notes that Hakuho has kept “the history, tradition, culture, and pride of sumo,” and recalls his comments at the height of the investigation in which he remarked, “I guess foreigners are no good again” (Tadashi, 2015). Hakuho’s foreignness is set as the backdrop for his refinement. He is further quoted in the piece in his remembrance of wise words from yokozuna past. Hakuho relates the account of yokozuna Futabayama’s 69 match winning streak, broken at last by the wrestler Akinoumi. Futabayama’s manager is said to have told his wrestler, “Don’t be a wrestler who earns publicity when he wins. Be a wrestler who earns publicity when he loses.” Tadashi asserts that Hakuho knew Taiho was such a wrestler, which sets up, again, the lineage of the yokozuna as a critical factor in Hakuho’s success as a keeper of tradition.

One article noted that the Sumo Association assigned a special “lifestyle advisor” to Hakuho when he first began training in Japan. Hakuho was charged with facing his weakness during that time, including finding the gentleman within. The term *shinshi*, translated as gentleman, is the very essence of bushido described by Ozaki in his Meiji-era writings. Hakuho’s trainer, Naito Katsushi, is quoted in the piece as saying, “To come across cultures and stand at the peak [of sumo] took a lot of difficult effort. You must

have the appropriate attitude atop the ring to give the fans the correct impression of yokozuna” (“Hakuho no shingitai,” 2014). Another article explains Hakuho’s early days in Japan, when he wore a blue and white athletic trainer and bought food at a local restaurant. The restaurant owner became close to the young Mongolian and explained to the newspaper that Hakuho had a tender heart, which is a trait valued in the Japanese spirit. Hakuho’s promise to return to the restaurant to sing Japan’s national anthem when he finally won was evidence of his worthiness of the yokozuna title (“Hakuho kaikyo,” 2014). An important aspect of the coverage of Hakuho’s November victory, tying Taiho for career tournament championships, was his choice to deliver remarks in Mongolian to his parents, who were in attendance. One writer admits to being deeply moved by his decision to speak directly to his parents in their native language, even as he addressed the crowd in Japanese to evoke the soul of Japan and the gods of sumo (Uchida, 2014). Another article recounts Hakuho’s struggle to fit in, initially, and his reliance on an old Mongolian proverb for encouragement. The article quotes Hakuho as saying, “Do not retreat from a tall mountain. If you keep going you will overcome” (“[Kyo no noto],” 2014). The remark demonstrates a fitting attitude for a yokozuna.

Conclusion

The yokozuna title, as a Japanese spiritual symbol, can only truly be earned by deeply knowing the Japanese soul. The Shinto marriage to the sumo tradition, and its link to the birth of yokozuna status, assures this dimension to the sport. Japan has been forced to confront the reality that foreign wrestlers dominate the athletic achievements in its national sport. Narratives surrounding foreign yokozuna struggle with the symbolic

importance of the title and the differences presented by the foreigners who hold it. Perhaps a stroke of luck has given the world of sumo a yokozuna who can play the part plausibly, both in the ring and as a larger representative of the spiritual essence sumo lends to Japanese identity. The news narratives thematically link Hakuho to sumo's revered champion Taiho, both in terms of achievement and in the spiritual bond of the sports' greatest representatives. These narratives, however, suggest something larger about the assimilation of foreigners into Japanese culture.

The emphasis of *nihonjinron* in the coverage of *yokozuna* is unmistakable. If Japan has a soul, and that soul is most profoundly represented through the Gods of sumo, via the *yokozuna*, a foreign wrestler must do more than simply excel athletically to sway the hearts of the Japanese. One must become more Japanese than the Japanese themselves to assimilate. Even so, it is blood that ultimately creates separation, as noted by Miki (2014), who praises Hakuho by noting, "Hakuho, with Mongol blood, has shown as great a sumo as we've seen across these two eras." There's nothing to be done about blood, and so the best a foreigner can do is convert. The process of conversion requires long, difficult mentoring and may only be possible for the most exceptional gentlemen to arrive in Japan. Spiritual conversion, unlike blood transfusions, offers the possibility of assimilation. Hakuho has been made to look the part with his topknot, his Japanese name, and his mastery of the Japanese language. He adheres to the strict etiquette of his professional and cultural status. He speaks in the spiritual idiom of the people, invoking the gods of sumo and the soul of the Japanese people in claiming his place in history, and yet he is foreign. Iwabuchi (2002) argues that Japan's historic ability to edit its own

culture, to assimilate the foreign, while maintaining an essential “Japaneseness,” is strategic hybridism. The case of Hakuho is a perfect example of this process, manifest in the traditional culture of sumo wrestling. In the end, the national hero Taiho is the surrogate father to Hakuho. Taiho cleanses Hakuho’s foreign blood by symbolically bringing him into his family line. The ultimate irony in this narrative arc, of course, is that Taiho’s blood comes from his Japanese mother, and also his Ukrainian father, a point never addressed in any of the coverage. Why ruin a good story, after all?

CHAPTER 8

TOKYO 2020

The modern Olympic Games are said to be the brainchild and passion of a 19th century French Baron named Charles Louis Fredey de Coubertain. Gutterman (2002) tells the story of the persistent visionary, who took his love of sport and transformed the world by reviving the Games for the modern world. Coubertain, as the story goes, was deeply influenced by the organized physical training made popular in Germany during the 19th century. To his mind, the German emphasis on physical training in education was responsible for their victory over the French in the Franco-Prussian war. The national brand of physical training was compelling to Coubertain, but more compelling were the stories of scholastic sport in England. Coubertain was an anglophile and interpreted the stories he read of character-building sports in English schools as a model for his own French ideal. He began to attend various international sporting events and observed the United States intercollegiate tradition firsthand. Throughout the end of the 19th century, Coubertain published extensively on his ideas of athletic training and competition and began to propose the organization of an Olympic movement to spread his passion throughout the civilized world. His ideas were founded on the amateur ideal he gleaned from his readings of the English school tradition, and his observations in the United States.

Coubertain was a master promoter and managed to convince a group of influential international delegates at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago to sponsor his vision, reviving the Olympic Games for modern times. The group formed the

International Olympic Committee in the summer of 1893 and began to plan and promote the event soon after. It was quickly decided that Athens play host to the first modern Games, for obvious symbolic reasons, although some convincing was required to reach agreement with the Greek government. Coubertain planned the opening and closing ceremonies and created a framework for the rules and organization of the events. Although the Games were an initial success, they did not soon become widely popular (Guttmann, 2002, pp. 7-20). Over the course of the 20th century the Olympic Games became part of the international fabric, but also mirrored the many social and political conflicts that marked the respective times. Coubertain's dream of promoting "peaceful internationalism" through sport was only realized in part, as many of the Games were impacted by war and geopolitical struggles. Still, the Olympic Games have endured as a symbol of internationalism. They are the backdrop for our expression of nation and for the community of nations.

Tomlinson and Young (2006) argue, "In participatory terms, the World Cup and the Olympics offer a platform to all nations, and most of all to small nations, of the world that is unrivaled by any other cultural or political body on a global media stage" (p. 2). The emphasis on media is important in that statement, as Coubertain's efforts at the turn of the 20th century are situated in a broader discourse about the Games when considered from the perspective of media spectacle. Public imagination of the Games as a significant cultural event, for example, depends on the nature and characteristics of the dominant media of the time. News traveled slowly in Coubertain's day, and most of the accounts of his early Games were limited to print. Today's Olympic Games are nothing, if not a

media spectacle dominated by pioneering television technology and techniques, and major corporate involvement in the sponsorship of the events. Whatever philosophical and organizational links one might draw to the past, the contemporary Olympic Games are a product of their times. As an invented tradition, the Olympics are a revival of the memories of ancient games, captured by modern people for the purpose of creating a solidarity of nations. Over the course of the 20th century, through the evolution of the Games, the sense of tradition remains, as does the sentimental attachment to the philosophy of amateurism and peaceful internationalism. In fact, the Games are regularly targeted as corrupt. The athletes and the organizers have been identified increasingly with scandals around doping and corruption of power. The Games have been marked as much by the presence of major international corporations, national security states, and professional athletes in contemporary times as any enduring link to the past, however invented it might be. Tomlinson and Young (2006) write, “Such events are produced by the alliances of the national state, regional politics, and expansion of the global consumer market” (p. 4). The Olympic path through history tells a story about internationalism and globalization. It involves power and politics, consumerism and culture, and a quaint set of ideals that continue to find a place at the surface of the discourse surrounding their tradition, even in the face of harsher realities.

In addition to being a story about nations, in the plural, the Olympic story can be told through the lens of individual nations and their associations with the Olympic tradition. Just as the international story of the 20th century can be traced in some way through the Olympic Games, each participating nation has a story to tell as well. This is

particularly true of the nations who have hosted the Olympic Games, as tradition and territory coincide briefly in each instance to produce a particularly powerful account of national character. Tomlinson and Young (2006) argue, “Studying the sport spectacle in its form as a media event is also to engage in a form of cultural history and the analysis of the persisting influence and power of ideas, that is, the use to which particular conceptions, values, and ideologies of sport...has been put” (p. 4). In this spirit, Japan’s bid to host the 2020 Olympic Games will be considered. Before setting the terms for such an investigation, however, it’s crucial to understand the historical relationship between Japan and the Olympic Games.

None of the first four Olympic Games included athletes from Asia. Coubertin understood that the lack of Asian participation compromised his vision of a truly international movement, and he approached the French ambassador in Tokyo to recruit on his behalf. Guttman and Thompson (2012) relate that in 1909 Kano Jigoro was tabbed to represent the International Olympic Committee in Japan and to grow an Olympic tradition in time for the fifth Olympiad, scheduled for Stockholm in 1912. Kano was the force behind the invented traditions around judo, building that modern martial art in the image of Japan’s past. Kano’s Japanese delegation sent two track and field athletes to Stockholm, but their performance was so disappointing there was some fear that support for Japanese participation would fall off. Quite to the contrary, a broad sentiment of support emerged for Japan’s participation in future Games, so much so that Japan became a major player in regional athletic competitions in the years following 1912, steadily improving in competitiveness with each passing year. World War I forced the

cancellation of the 1916 Games, but Japan used the intervening years to establish a strong domestic tradition of athletic competition, including a robust women's program, previously mentioned in connection to the track and field athlete Kinue Hitomi. In 1920, Japan took home a pair of silver medals in singles and doubles tennis, and in 1924 the team brought back a bronze in freestyle wrestling. Guttman and Thompson (2012) note that a great deal of hope for the Japanese track and field program grew from the 1924 Games, in particular thanks to the sponsorship of the Mizuno athletic equipment company, which has become one of the largest sporting goods manufacturers of the present day (p. 120).

The 1928 Games represent an early watershed moment for the Japanese Olympic tradition. It was at the 1928 Games in Amsterdam that Kinue Hitomi surprised the field in the 800 meters to take silver. It was also during those Games that Japan earned its first gold medal, as Oda Mikio dominated the field in the triple jump. With additional medals in the swimming events, Japan had staked out a reputation as a nation of fast learners, quickly rising from the bottom of the Olympic standings in many high profile events to serious competitors and medalists across the board. Even as Japan's fortunes had turned in the Olympic events, its militaristic engagements in Asia were threatening its standings in the community of nations. It was during this period of time, for instance, that Japan annexed Manchuria, having done the same in Korea a number of years earlier. Japan's imperial and colonial military presence in its home region certainly ran counter to Coubertin's "peaceful internationalism," and the condemnation of the League of Nations in 1931 cast a pall over the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

The intensity of Japan's commitment to athletic dominance ran parallel to the rise of hawkish nationalism and imperialist foreign relations. As Japan increased its colonial footprint in Asia, the country's athletes began to dominate a number of Olympic events. The 1932 Games in Los Angeles saw a contingent of 115 male and 16 female athletes, many of whom dominated their respective sports on the road to medalling (Guttman and Thompson, 2012, p. 122). In only a short twenty years, Japan had not only passed its Asian rivals, but also the established powers of the Olympic community in Europe and the United States. The ideological supposition of racial supremacy in the Asian region was symbolically supported by this fact, and Japan's suitability for belonging in the Euro-American club was proven in the eyes of the nationalists. In this feverish mood of national pride, Japan began to conceive its plan to play host to the first Olympic Games in Asia, setting sights on the 1936 Games in Berlin as a proving ground for the bid to win the 1940 Olympics. The IOC, however, had grave concerns about Japan's suitability for the honor, given the further invasion of China and the prospects that the country would be embroiled in war during the Games. Internally, members of the Japanese government were reluctant to set aside the resources required to play host to the Games in light of the significant cost accrued by the various imperial ventures. The decision to withdraw Tokyo from consideration was the last act of Japan's pre-war relationship with the Olympic movement.

Following the war, Japan was excluded from participation in the 1948 Games in London. The wounds of war were fresh in the minds of many across the international community, and Japan would have to wait until the Allied Occupation had come to a

conclusion in 1951 before reapplying to compete. Participation in the Olympic Games carried a different sort of importance for Japan in the post-war era. The Japanese were in no position to flex their proverbial muscles before the international community in the years following the Second World War. The mission was one of rehabilitation rather than the projection of power. Modest results followed in the 1952 Games in Helsinki and the 1956 Games in Melbourne. Japanese athletes remained strong across a number of different events, but the Japanese government had more in mind than individual medals. The lost opportunity of the 1940 Games haunted the establishment and the potential to bring the Olympics to Japan during the rehabilitation period after the war was very important. Japan met some resistance in the IOC in its attempt to secure the 1960 Games, largely due to the logistical and financial concerns of holding the events in Asia so soon after Melbourne. Hoping to convince the IOC to award the 1964 Games to Tokyo, the Japanese government formed a Council for the Promotion of Sport in the Prime Minister's Office and established a planning committee for the Tokyo Olympics. These newly founded organizations worked tirelessly for years to enlist the business community and the media in investing in the bid. The extraordinary efforts paid off when the IOC recognized Tokyo as the host city of the 1964 Games, perhaps the single most significant moment in Japanese sporting history (Guttmann and Thompson, 2012, p. 196). For Japan, the 1964 Games were significant on a number of levels. Being chosen to host the Games was an important affirmation from the international community that Japan had been rehabilitated politically. Further, the Games were positioned as a means by which the political rehabilitation could be met with economic rehabilitation. The Olympics posed an opportunity for international investment, and for the financing of important infrastructure

projects that would make Japan competitive in the international economic order.

Following the Games, Japan's economy boomed, restoring faith among the Japanese people that their nation could be great once again. Even today, this phenomenon is known as the "Postwar Economic Miracle."

Japanese athletes performed very well during the 1964 Games, medalling in a number of high profile events. Most famously, the women's volleyball team, nicknamed *Toyo no Majo*, or "Witches of the East," defeated the favored Soviet team in the gold medal match. The press lauded the team's great determination, a fitting narrative association with the nation's great determination to show the world that Japan had finally fought back from its wartime defeat (Guttmann & Thompson, 2012, p. 198). It was also during the 1964 Games that media became significantly more involved in the construction of the event's meaning. Radio broadcasts had spurred the popularity of the Olympics in Japan for a number of years, but the 1964 Games saw the production of Ichikawa Kon's *Tokyo Orimpikku* film and NHK's elaborate, 10-hour a day television coverage of the Games. The effect of the blanket television coverage was significant, as television was popularized throughout the country during the Games, and the marketability of the event as an international spectacle solidified the value of TV rights in general. In many ways, the 1964 Games represented a turning point, not only for Japan, but also for the way the world experienced the Olympics. By the time Japan assumed hosting duties of the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, the opening ceremonies had been established as an elaborate theatrical performance of national identity. Guttmann and Thompson (2012) note, "The Nagano games opened on February 7, 1998, with a complex

orchestration of national and international themes. Among the elements providing a ‘representation of Japaneseness’ were a Buddhist temple bell, a sumo wrestler exorcising evil spirits, and a chorus of schoolchildren performing a Shinto ritual dance” (p. 209).

In the 34 years between the Japanese games, the mass media experience of the Olympics had exploded, and with it came an enormous financial windfall associated with hosting the events. Guttman & Thompson (2012) close their treatment of Japan’s Olympic history by contrasting the mission of rehabilitation written into the history of the 1964 Games in Tokyo with the enormous profits associated with the 1998 Winter Games in Nagano. Billionaire Tsutsumi Yoshiaki was head of the Japan Ski Association and the JOC at the time Nagano was awarded the Games, and his resorts and properties profited a great deal from the international influx in 1998. Despite the enormous costs associated with improving infrastructure at Japan’s winter sporting facilities, the Games produced \$5 billion in profit, which was mainly awarded to Nagano Prefecture for the advancement of winter sports in Japan. In the early years of the 21st century, the Olympics are popularly associated with the notion of “nation branding,” which Fan (2010) described as “a process by which a nation’s images can be altered, monitored, evaluated and proactively managed in order to enhance the country’s reputation among a target international audience” (p. 101).

Nation branding is an image management endeavor aimed at the projection of soft power. Fan (2010) notes that the projection of power through nation branding has implications for public diplomacy and commercial competitiveness, but the practice differs from corporate branding in that its strategic foundation is rooted in national

identity. He rightly points out that national identity is a matter of self-definition with all the complex features described earlier in this study, and that nation branding is a particular projection of national identity, which emphasizes and promotes characteristics of nation understood as desirable and attractive. Throughout the evolution of the Olympic experience in mass media, this exercise of soft power is evident. The opening and closing ceremonies, in particular, have been transformed into elaborate theatrical performances of national symbolic character. The 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing featured a spectacular opening ceremony production, designed by renowned film director Zhang Yimou, divided into two parts; “Brilliant Civilization” and “Glorious Era.” The first half of the presentation was aimed at recreating China’s ancient history, while the second half showcases contemporary China. The 2012 Games in London featured an opening ceremony designed by Academy Award winning director Danny Boyle, which traced the history of England from primordial roots through the Industrial Revolution and into the present. The backdrop of athletic competition, during these performances, becomes incidental. They are media productions, designed by celebrated national figures, broadcast across the globe in real time. The individual events associated with the Olympic Games punctuate the world’s attention in various ways, but the extravagant production around the Games as a whole tells a particular sort of story about the host nation and the international community at large. This production begins with the bidding process and ends with the celebration of the Games’ close. The 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo offer Japan an opportunity to assert itself to a global audience once again. What is the story that will emerge from the corporate-government-media complex staging the

Olympics? What themes of Japaneseness will prevail in the promotion and coverage of Japan's role as host nation?

Themes

The short list of topics is almost more notable for what was not covered, than what got heavy rotation. Analyzing the thematic character of the coverage, most articles directly address the political and economic dimension of the Olympic bidding process and its subsequent effect on Japan. Very little emphasis was placed on athletics, individual athletes, except as they played a role in the politics of the bid, or the spirit of the Games. The first theme identified, "The Games are Political," reflects the emphasis on the internal politics of the IOC bidding, and the geopolitics surrounding the competition. The second theme, "The Games are Economic," reflects the emphasis on the economic character of Japan as a suitable host for the Games, and the way the winning bid will spur various types of economic growth in Japan. The final theme, "Voices of the People," reflects the way individuals were used in the coverage to act in support of the bidding process, protest the Games, or express various hopes and fears about what the Games bring to Japan.

The Games are Political

130 of the 842 articles examined for this case involved Japan's petitioning of the International Olympic Committee and the various strategies and events surrounding the bid. It is unsurprising that the coverage of the IOC bidding process would result in a politics-heavy narrative. Much of the political character of the coverage comes from the

nation branding initiatives used by the three finalists, Tokyo, Istanbul, and Madrid, as covered across 65 articles. Hirai (2013) describes the public relations strategy widely used in the contemporary bidding process, noting that British PR professional John Tibisu, who had been contracted by the Tokyo Municipal Government to handle the city's unsuccessful bid of four years earlier, developed Istanbul's presentation. The article goes on to explain that the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics were plagued by a bribery scandal, which prompted a change in IOC rules prohibiting IOC members from visiting potential host cities during the bidding process. This rule change prompted the increased use of public relations professionals, planners, environmental managers, and athletic facilities experts in the image management of the bidding cities. The Japanese team hired British public relations consultant Nick Valley for the 2020 bid, who goes on to tell of the shady practice of selling insider information about the bid presentations. He asserts in the article that Istanbul has Tokyo's plans.

Many of the articles published before the announcement of the winning bid focus on the specific message of the individual campaigns, assessing their strengths and weaknesses. For instance, Istanbul's presentation was based on the idea that the country represents a bridge between the East and the West, a theme linked to the idea of Japanese cosmopolitanism earlier in this study (Inagaki, 2013; Kimura & Kanai, 2013). It's not clear in the newspaper coverage of the bidding process whether Japan may have pursued that strategy had Istanbul gone in a different direction, but it stands out that the bridge metaphor is an increasingly familiar one in the cosmopolitan rhetoric of contemporary international discourse.

In addition to the various nation-branding campaigns, the articles focused heavily on the geopolitics of the selection process. 15 articles focus on the Chinese influence within the IOC in some way. Nakamura (2013) focused on the powerful Chinese influence in the IOC, with three members of the voting committee representing China. With various territorial disputes and tough relations between Japan and China, the article expresses some fear that China's political relationship with Japan will color the members' IOC vote. Likewise, China's political and financial interests in other parts of the world may influence the decision to award the Games to Istanbul, in particular. Nakamura suggests that Japan will appeal to China as a regional partner to advance the interest of Asia in hosting the Games. Six articles mention the Spanish influence within the IOC, particularly emphasizing former IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch's relationship. Inagaki (2013) makes this connection noting three sitting IOC members of the committee from Spain, including the son of former IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch. The article stresses the lack of social skill and English language proficiency in the JOC's presentation team as a source of further anxiety.

Another political story emerges when the Japanese bid team secured the cooperation of Princess Takamado Hisako to assist in the final pitch at the IOC meetings in Buenos Aires. 43 articles mention Hisako-sama's role in securing the bid for Tokyo. Japan's royal family is constitutionally prohibited from acting in the realm of politics, a provision insisted upon by the post war occupation forces. Despite a great deal of heated internal debate, the princess agreed to visit the IOC General Assembly to express the nation's thanks to the international community for assistance in the recovery from the

Great East Japan Earthquake. Meiji Gakuen University professor Hara Takashi expressed worry that the use of the royals harkened to darker times, only to counter fears of the Fukushima nuclear reactor disaster, which had suddenly become an enormous obstacle to the Japanese bid (Kozoku Hisako-sama, 2013). Despite Japan's initial plan to promote Tokyo as an "advanced environmental city" (Inagaki, 2013), foreign media continually pressed the Japanese delegation to address the fears that water leakage from Fukushima's nuclear reactors was polluting the environment, and that radiation may pose a threat to the Tokyo area as well.

Prime minister Abe Shinzo was frequently enlisted to alleviate fears about the Fukushima reactors, noting that construction to contain and control the water leakage had been started in earnest long before his speech to the IOC. He downplayed the attention the issue had received in the foreign press as part of the politics surrounding the Olympics, and argued that Japan needed to show the world these safety measures as soon as possible (Shibata, 2013; Fukushima daiichi no osen, 2013). Takeda Tsurekazu of the JOC spoke at a press conference in Buenos Aires to assert that Tokyo's water, food, and air had been tested and came up completely safe. Under a barrage of questions from the international media, he further noted that Tokyo's level of radiation was exactly the same as those of London, New York, and Paris. He forcefully explained in English and Japanese that in Tokyo's population of 35 million people, not one had become ill (Akutsu, 2013).

The level of attention forced upon the Fukushima situation prompted a shift in public relations strategy for the Japanese team, a change reflected in the tone of the

coverage as well. The Japanese strategy always involved some discussion of the Great East Japan Earthquake and the reconstruction efforts characterized by international aid and cooperation. That aspect of the presentation, however, was never the primary focus. Tokyo was being positioned as an environmentally advanced city, determined to invest in green technology, and rich with a traditional background rooted in nature. Japanese fencer Yuki Ota was brought aboard the JOC team for his English and social skills, but he was frequently put to use allaying fears about Fukushima (“Gorin asu kettei,” 2013). Paralympian Sato Maume was used to deflect attention from Fukushima by speaking extensively of her hometown in tsunami-hit Miyagi Prefecture, stressing the importance of the Olympics to rebuilding (“Hisaichi ni Gorin no chikara o,” 2013).

In all, 200 articles linked Fukushima to the Olympic bid, with 146 directly referencing the Fukushima Daiichi reactor leak. It’s noteworthy that Asahi features three times as much coverage of the Fukushima link to the JOC’s bid as Yomiuri. In order to counter the negative publicity raised by the Fukushima questioning, the Japanese team opted to link the 2020 bid with the 1964 Tokyo Games as “reconstruction Olympics.” Memories of the 1964 Games were also an important feature of the initial strategy, but the promotion of “reconstruction” as a key theme put the historical link in a new light as the final decision neared. The story of the 1964 Games is often linked to the postwar economic miracle. A crowd of 2500 supporters gathered in Tokyo’s Setagaya Olympic Park, a symbol of the 1964 Games, cheering and lighting the 1964 cauldron when the winning bid was announced (“Seika ga mata kuru,” 2013). One article notes this strategy as a “quest to dispel anxiety,” including the use of Princess Takamado, and paralympian

Sato Maumi, who lost her home to the tsunami (Tokyo gorin shochi, 2013). Another article quotes the governor of Miyagi prefecture, Murai Yoshihiro, citing his worry that the focus on the Games will take important resources from the rebuilding efforts in his community, contrasting his remarks with the hopes of a local Olympian who believed that the Games would bring high spirits to the people of Miyagi in the same way the 1964 Games once did (“Tokyo gorin kangei,” 2013).

One day before the IOC’s decision was scheduled to be revealed, the South Korean government announced an embargo on Japanese seafood imports, citing worries over waters contaminated by the Fukushima reactor leak. The *Asahi Shimbun* reported on the South Korean decision noting that there has been no scientific evidence to support such fears. A spokesman for a professional fisheries organization linked the embargo to the Olympic Games, displaying a wariness of South Korea’s historical dislike of Japan. Foreign Affairs journalist Toshikawa Takao, however, argued that a steady rise in tensions between Japan and South Korea in recent years is likely to blame, rather than the Olympic bid (Kankoku no suisanbutsu, 2013).

A number of other political narratives were identified in the coverage, ranging from disputes over government expenditures on the bidding process (Gorin shochi oendan, 2013; Okada & Betsumiya, 2013) and the disparity between the bidding committee’s rhetoric on reconstruction and the reality on the ground (Seino & Nose, 2013). The Korean Residents Union, a Korean-Japanese civic organization, expressed support for the bid, hoping the games would become a “bridge between Japan and Korea to improve the cold relationship” (“Kankokumindan,” 2013). The prevalence of the

political theme in the coverage of the Olympic bid highlights the role of the state in the Olympic movement, and of states in general. The second theme identified is a bookend to the focus on the Japanese state, emphasizing the economic dimension of the Games.

The Games are Economic

Over a third of the articles studied directly involved economic issues and their relationship to the 2020 Games. Nearly half of the economic articles were substantially about macroeconomic issues, such as infrastructure and transportation investment, real estate, and the role of the Olympics in Prime Minister Abe's broader economic agenda called "abonomics." Nearly a week before the IOC decision on the 2020 host nation, the Asahi Shimbun published an article highlighting the infrastructure investment plans waiting in the wings for a potential winning bid. The article noted that municipalities were looking forward to hosting the 2020 Games because they would advance the business of the city. Officials seeking to improve the transport infrastructure to alleviate congestion across the metropolitan area had set aside a budget of 108 billion yen for a new airport train line and sought substantial money to improve highways as well. A winning Olympic bid would reportedly accelerate the investment in said infrastructure and benefit business everywhere (Betsumiya, 2013). Another elaborate article spelled out the many benefits of an Olympic Games in Tokyo, including its many corporate headquarters, swanky shopping districts, rich international flavor, efficient and convenient public transportation, and history of sound economic development (Kajiwara & Nakagawa, 2013). Toyota Motors honorary chairman Fujio Cho was a member of the JOC's presentation team, speaking before the IOC General Assembly to emphasized the

size and potential of the Asian market (Akutsu, 2013). Articles frequently made note of the JOC's argument about the 1964 Games and the prewar economic miracle, linking that situation to the reconstruction of the areas affected most in the Great East Japan Earthquake, as noted earlier.

After the winning bid was announced, a spate of articles appeared during the following weeks elaborating the effects of the new investment on infrastructure and real estate. One article argued that the Olympic "bubble" had already begun, as real estate speculation had investors scrambling to secure valuable property close to rail transport. Tokyo rail stations, according to the article, were convenient to both airports and local businesses, and so buyers were quick to invest after the announcement of the winning bid. Hotels were first to book solid, and the market for longer-term living situations would begin to open up the newly purchased apartment space (Tokyo gorin baburu). Other articles warned that the rush of new construction would lead to an oversupply of property, representing a greater risk for investors (Takeuchi, 2013).

In an *Asahi Shimbun* editorial, Miyashita (2013) lays out the economic consequences of Tokyo's winning bid, noting that the Games would assuredly be a catalyst to the Japanese economy. Stocks would rise, investments in infrastructure would produce untold benefits, public areas would be greener, and traffic and transit improvements would be made. He explained the role of the winning bid in the Prime Minister's economic strategy for the nation, called "Abenomics," where the Olympics serve as the central pillar of the administration's deflation-controlling measures. The article goes on to mention a 150 million yen boost from tourism revenue, a corresponding

boom in employment, and the promotion of sporting goods exports overseas. Miyashita warns, however, that the Olympic bump has always been followed by a downturn, and that Japan must plan accordingly.

A number of smaller scale stories also emphasized the microeconomic dimension of the Games. Tokyo Tourism founding director, and current Japan Tourism Board managing director Kotake Naotaka used the winning bid to promote his pet project to build Edo Castle. Kotake argued that Tokyo lacked an icon to represent the country's history in contrast to other major cities of the world. His project to rebuild the castle would give Tokyo an historical structure to rival Buckingham Palace, Beijing's Forbidden City, and Paris' L'Arc de Triomphe. In the article, Kotake argues that one million people would visit Japan during the rush of the Olympic Games, but no building in the capital city stands to boast the nation's cultural heritage. In arguing his case, he notes the wide economic effect such a location would produce, not to mention the spiritual importance to the people ("Tokyo ni shinboru," 2013). Hattori (2013) describes a local community's efforts to secure the contract for the Olympic cauldron, based on their local, Jomon period historical artifact. The artifact is a national treasure, some 5000 years old, and the community hopes that it might stand as a symbol of the Games on behalf of the entire nation.

One of the more remarkable stories highlighting the economic dimension of the Games in Japan, focuses on the JOC's tight control over Olympic trademarking around the country. Ikuta and Hirai (2013) share the story of the JOC's demand that businesses around the country refrain from using Olympic trademarks in the special sales conducted

after the announcement of Tokyo's winning bid. In celebration of the 2020 Games, many local supermarkets and department stores began to cheer the coming of the Olympics by attaching the Games to their local events. The official slogan of the JOC, "Ganbare Nippon!" or, "Let's go, Japan!" was included in the JOC's cease and desist order. Major retailers were forced to cancel local promotions, and many businesses chose, instead, to simply feature the color scheme of the Olympic rings as a compromise. The story illustrates the state-corporate relationship in the Games, and the significant distance between the political economy of the Olympics and the people of the host nation. The third theme addresses the way the coverage positions the Japanese people in the story of the Games, particularly as individuals are used by the state towards a particular end.

Voices of the People

The Olympic Games are as much about people as they are anything else. Whatever the finances and political wrangling surrounding the event, the Games are memorable for the performance of athletes, the emotional connection of the fans, and the potential for people all over the world to celebrate peaceful relations in the enjoyment of the competition. The coverage of the Olympic bid rarely references athletes or fans, except in service of the political or economic narrative. There is very little high-minded narrative about peace, or unity, or international understanding at all. The presence of people, of non-state officials or non-corporate representatives, is minimal, but the character of citizen participation is telling.

Athletes, for example, only play a role in the narrative as official representatives of the JOC. Silver medal winning fencer Ota Yuki is praised, for instance, for his crisp English and sociability in contrast to the government representatives in the delegation. Ota's smooth way with the foreign press, and the various international dignitaries in attendance at the Buenos Aires General Assembly meeting, is frequently referenced. One article quotes the fencer as saying, "The Olympic bid is not only a fight for gold medals. It's about the connection between people and the momentum that's built towards securing each vote" (Inagaki, 2013). As mentioned previously, paralympian Sato Maumi was presented as a symbol of Japan's quest for reconstruction, and the rebranding of the bid as "the reconstruction Games," having lost her home in Miyagi to the tsunami on March 11, 2011 (Tokyo gorin shochi, 2013). Several other figures were presented in a similar manner, particularly in connection to the legacy of the 1964 Games in Tokyo.

70-year old interpreter Nagai Mariko addressed the Assembly on behalf of the JOC team, remembering her participation in the 1964 Games and the impact it made on her life. Nagai remarked "I've been an interpreter since the 1964 Olympic Games in Tokyo. I remember the spectacle of the Opening Ceremony. At the time few people spoke English in Japan, so I stood out" (Hirobe and Nakamura, 2013). She went on to say that her work as an interpreter led her to G8 meetings and to the 1998 Winter Olympic Games in Nagano. In closing, Nagai spoke about losing her childhood home to the tsunami in Sendai Prefecture, and expressed her belief that the Olympics have the power to revive Japan and help those who suffered in the disasters to celebrate again. Okinawa's Miyagi Isamu, who was a torchbearer for the 1964 Games, followed her remarks. Miyagi

told of his experiences in the aftermath of the Second World War and the role of the Olympics in helping Japan to rebuild highways and develop the Shinkansen, inspiring a generation of people to build. His experience at the Games inspired him to become a physical education teacher and he shared his belief that the Games are a symbol of peace. The third, and final, person to speak in this way was Uehara Kazuhiko, who served as a chef in the athlete's village in 1964. Uehara related several anecdotes about his experience, including learning to make authentic curry from Indians at the Games. He opened his own restaurant in Nagano in 1976, and again served the Games in 1998. In his final words, Uehara hoped to work again for the deep, mutual understanding that the Olympics bring.

Among hundreds of articles reviewed in this study, only a small handful offer the personal view of the Games represented in the remarks shared above. Aside from the coverage of the IOC meetings, a collection of 81 opinion pieces, published every few days, brought the voices of Japanese citizens into the discourse. Among these opinion pieces, about half expressed some optimism about the Games in Japan, while the other half were openly critical. Setoguchi (2013), for example, likened the effect of the Games to a popular television drama. Noting the potential economic boost for Japan, after a prolonged period of stagnation, Setoguchi references *Hanzawa Naoki*, a TV drama about the financial sector, and the impact the story had on its audience, giving courage and encouraging the spirit to never give up. He recognized the limits of fictional narratives to offer real encouragement, however, and noted that the Olympic Games are more suitable for the “muscular work” ahead in reconstruction. Okazaki (2013) confesses to wondering

“Why now?” when considering the 2020 Games, but changed his mind while reading the foreign coverage of the 1964 Games impact on postwar reconstruction. He expressed hope that the nation’s young people would be brightened by the joyful expression of sport after 20 years of economic stagnation. Hirakawa (2013) recalled living in an orphanage as a junior high school student during the 1964 Games. He was invited to attend the Opening Ceremony and found great motivation to try hard through his experience. Hirakawa went on to high school and university and expressed thanks to the Olympics for giving him such power. In conclusion, he shared his hope that children today will feel that same power to live.

Nearly half the opinion pieces, a bulk of the dissenting opinions, focused on the distraction of the Games, and the potentially negative impact they may have on relief efforts in Tohoku. Yoneyama (2013) shared her visit to Minami Sanriku in Miyagi Prefecture, a town devastated by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami. She expressed anger and frustration at the difference between Prime Minister Abe’s remarks about the Fukushima reactors being “under control” and the ongoing displacement of Miyagi Prefecture residents, two and a half years after the disaster. Nomura (2013) recognized the potential benefits of the Games, including increased tourism and the introduction of Japan to the world, but worried about the ongoing problems in relief of the Great East Japan Earthquake. He noted that the number of volunteers had dwindled, funds were short, and that many other pressing problems may be put off by the diversion of the Games. He noted that half of him felt joy, while the other half felt frustration at the potential diversion of important resources as the Games approach. These sentiments of

reservation were echoed in another narrative thread, as citizen groups protested the Games around Japan. At the start of September, about a week before the winning bid was to be announced by the IOC, 50 members of the “Anti-Olympic Association” protested in Tokyo’s Chuo-ku (Olympic shochi hantai, 2013). The reports noted the group’s anger that the tax money used in securing the Games is being wasted while Fukushima repair and reconstruction is lagging. Likewise, the group argued that the Games would result in the displacement of homeless around Tokyo, and that large segments of society would be left out of the Olympic boom. Another article, published after the winning bid had been secured, related the protest of community groups in Tokyo, concerned about the proposed construction of a canoeing course in a protected wildlife area. The displacement of the area’s ecosystem was of primary concern to the group, who filed petitions for a change of location for the site (Tamura, 2013).

Compared to the volume of coverage surrounding the politics and economics of the Games, from the perspective of the Japanese government and corporations, the voices of everyday people were hardly more than seasoning. The hopes of everyday people mirror the remarks of the JOC delegation, amplifying the positive character of Tokyo’s bid. The contrary point of view, in contrast, appears infrequently in the newspapers. For readers with a passing interest in the Games, the likelihood of encountering contrarian perspectives from fellow citizens seems minimal, at best.

Conclusion

The coverage of the Olympic bid reproduced nation in a particular way. The Games are positioned as an extension of Japan's political and economic interests, which related more to the state than the people. People are only significant to the story as victims of disaster, depressed souls waiting for relief from 20 years of economic stagnation, or vessels of memory to be used as part of the JOC's strategy to win the Games. In referencing the Japanese people, the state is raised as the legitimate extension of popular will, and the hero of a nation's struggle for hope and renewal. There is hardly anything to say at all about the character of the Japanese people in these narratives, except perhaps in the assumption that they will collectively celebrate and work hard in the name of joy and hope.

Further, with respect to Japaneseness, the most telling aspects of the coverage are revealed in the public relations strategy used by the JOC. If Istanbul's claim to be a bridge between the East and the West blunted Japan's familiar cosmopolitan rhetoric, latent aspects of Japan's political dealings recover the theme, at least in the newspaper coverage. Appealing to Chinese IOC members as fellow Asians, and using Toyota executives to appeal to the economic opportunities in the Asian market, reflects Iwabuchi's (2002) description of strategic hybridism. Even without the rhetorical use of the bridge metaphor, Japan worked behind the scenes to position itself in a familiar role. The use of the royal family to appeal to the members of the IOC with royal ties, separates Japan from other Asian nations, while the emphasis on Tokyo's potential as a model for green development positions that city as a cosmopolitan icon.

I was most struck by the coverage of the JOC's cease and desist order to Japanese retailers in the research of this topic. More than any other story in the wide collection of articles, that story pulls back the curtain on the nature of the Games. Whatever rhetoric emerges from the Prime Minister's Office, Japanese corporations, urban development organizations, or other official sectors of Japanese society, the interest of the Japanese people can always find a plausible role in the narrative. The Olympics may represent an important financial boost for reconstruction efforts, infrastructure investment, and a stagnant economy. It is not a great leap to imagine the ways in which such economic circumstances may help everyday people in Japan, whether the benefits are found in employment, quality of life, or the general stability of the nation's finances. An inkling of the negative potential of the Games is found in the small collection of articles and opinion pieces highlighted here, but the cease and desist story suggests something more fundamental. It suggests that, at the local level, the celebrations of the people are still subject to the control of the state. The symbols of the Olympic Games, including its very name, are not open to general use. By illustrating the power of the JOC to enforce rigid trademark restrictions on behalf of the powerful, wealthy corporations that paid their way into the club, the state and corporate partnership is vividly revealed. There is little else to pull back the curtain on this reality, and so the relationship between the state, corporations, and citizens as consumers is naturalized in the coverage of the Olympic Games.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The overall character of the articles reviewed in this collection of case studies is important. Despite the many differences in storytelling, and in the thematic character of said stories, there are many telling similarities. The way these narratives collectively reproduce nation is critical. The story they paint of Japaneseness in the portrayal of athletes, fans, coaches, and officials is also revealing. In the coverage of sports examined in the *Asahi Shimbun* and *Yomiuri Shimbun*, the morality of national duty and honor were widely diffused as common sense, as Billig (1995) has argued. The coverage builds a sense that athletes train and compete for something larger than themselves. As locals, athletes compete to be the best in Japan, to show that their hometowns, among all hometowns, have prepared them to be icons of Japanese virtue. As nationals, Japanese athletes compete to be the best in the world, to show that Japan is an icon of excellence among the community of nations.

One key difference in the way the articles operate is the extent to which they can be characterized as inward-looking or outward-looking. Some narrative collections, like the coverage of Koshien, for example, are unmistakably inward-looking. Others produce a more nuanced representation, with some themes heavily focused on the domestic context and others on Japan's place in the international community. Inward-looking narratives tend to focus on the idea "out of many, we are one," which suggests that in the diversity of local and regional identities, the Japanese people are united as one people.

When the Japanese “boys of summer” come together to compete at Koshien, it’s the media that contextualize their performance in a series of different frames. Local media emphasize the qualities of the players’ performances that represent their hometowns, while national media emphasize the common character that binds the young men from northernmost Hokkaido to southernmost Okinawa. The national coverage of Koshien suggests to the reader that the character of the Japanese people is somehow essential. Teams take pride in representing their home prefectures at Koshien, but it’s their capacity to mirror a particular understanding of Japaneseness that dominates the national coverage. The shared dedication to particular values and characteristics links the representatives of local communities in a way that suggests a whole. The Japanese nation is thematically constructed in this way. An essential Japanese culture is promoted in the celebration of teams and athletes and then sold to reading audiences across the country.

This aspect of the narratives relies on Appadurai’s (1996) description of locality. As the shared logic of small towns, and *furusato*, is articulated in the coverage of various sports, the local acts as the ground for national identification. As readers are asked to identify with the experience of athletes and teams from “neighborhoods” just like their own, a “structure of feeling” is produced that binds people together, even at great distance. When national heroes are claimed by their local communities in the press, they act as an important glue binding the success of the collective to the identities of small town folks across a wide span of geography. As athletes evoke themes of hope, dreams, and courage they play on universal themes in the service of effort. The words *isshokenmei* and *ganbaru* are terms of devotion, representing an ends in and of

themselves. They reflect a spiritual essence of Japaneseness that links individual motivation with efforts made on behalf of the collective.

The use of athletes as national celebrities is important to this process. Yoshida Saori is able to travel to small towns across Japan to sell her success on the global stage as a product of local virtues. As a national figure, her status translates in each local context she visits; teaching the lesson that Japan's place in the world is assured by the lessons learned in neighborhoods "just like these." This harkens to Darling-Wolf's (2004) assertion that Japanese celebrities are frequently brought closer to their audiences as everyday people in order to teach a lesson about Japanese solidarity. The example of Nadeshiko operates the same way, as the struggles of the players are equated with the struggles of women across Japan. The global, national, and local levels interact to suggest a national character that can be enlisted in calls for solidarity among Japanese women. The improvement of local circumstances is tied to a shared understanding of Japanese women's power and the broader trends of equality in the global context.

Japanese society is forced to confront a number of vexing problems related to prevailing attitudes about effort. The term *karoshi* was coined to describe the phenomenon of death by overworking. Over the last several generations, Japanese salarymen, in particular, have seen a drastic increase in heart attacks, strokes, and other fatal ailments brought on by overwork. *Karoshi* is a product of the culture's emphasis on duty and effort (Fackler, 2008). Another social problem that has emerged in recent years is called *hikkikomori*, a term which describes withdrawal and reclusiveness. The problem mainly affects adolescents and young adults, who refuse to leave their parents' homes,

instead becoming increasingly isolated and depressed. In many ways, the phenomenon is the exact opposite of *karoshi*, as the pressures of Japan's competitive school system and the weight of the adult world, overwhelm young Japanese, forcing them to shut down. *Hikkikomori* is not especially well understood, and ongoing research is being conducted to confront the distinctly Japanese problem, but the premise that one must pursue their hopes and dreams with courage and effort is precisely the pressure that results in withdrawal (Jones, 2006). In the coverage of Yoshida Saori's school tour, a young woman was offered as an example of someone inspired by her visit and her message. The young woman had been hospitalized, under psychiatric care, unable to attend school for a long period of time. The article reinforces the essence of Japaneseness in the spirit of *ganbaru*, offering the young woman's turnaround as evidence of sports' power to heal (Ogata, 2012). Her ability to return to school, and to dream of pursuing a career as a pastry chef, is presented as a success story. Becoming whole as a contributing member of Japanese society is positioned as the result of Yoshida's tonic, although it remains to be seen what long term effect the encounter will produce. It is unlikely that the young woman's story will be revisited by the newspaper, years down the road, and so she will simply stand as a person made whole by the words of inspiration provided by an athlete. Dream, work hard, do your best and things will be as they should.

Inward-looking narrative themes bind across geography, but also across time. The coverage of Koshien links contemporary teams and athletes to those who came before them, with the same dreams and aspirations, pursued in the same stadium, on the same black dirt. Coverage of the Olympic bid prominently features a link between the 1964

Games and the Tokyo Games scheduled for 2020. The two are rhetorically linked via the theme “reconstruction Games,” and an elaborate collection of personal memories solidify the bond. Each of the case studies reveals this aspect of continuity in one way or another. The nation is reproduced in its continuity across generations through narratives of this type. Symbolically, this is also achieved in the thematic emphasis on mentor/protégée relations in athletics. Coaches and players are framed this way in the stories of Koshien. Yoshida Saori’s story emphasizes the role of her father, a prominent wrestler, in her training and development, and positions her in the same way with respect to the young students at her appearances. The relationship between Nagashima Shigeo and Matsui Hideki is one of the most high profile examples of this symbolic continuity, as the two men are linked by their personal narratives, and the many ways they intersect. Japan’s postwar economic miracle is embodied in Nagashima on several occasions in the coverage, and Matsui’s presence as a global figure is suggested as an historical extension. The historical and spiritual connection between Taiho and Hakuho is a central feature of the coverage surrounding Hakuho’s pursuit of the all time tournament record. The symbolic importance of *yokozuna* to the continuity of Japan’s soul is evident throughout.

The mentor/protégée relationship has deep roots in Japanese tradition. In the arts, potters and painters, poets and writers all trace roots back to masters of many generations past. This is also true in areas of trade. Businesses are often passed between fathers and sons, and traditionally children follow the lead of their parents in specific roles in their communities, spanning generations. To the extent that a Japanese essence is reflected in the arts, and in the various trades, sports play a similar role. Japanese baseball is made

distinct from the American sport both in name and in the continuity of students and masters, passing down something spiritual and essential over time. In both baseball and sumo, this spiritual character is understood as bushido. In the coverage of Nadeshiko Japan, a feminine alternative to the masculine bushido is suggested, as the articles chronicle the struggles of Japanese women to find support in their athletic dreams, and the new horizons established in the victory of the 2011 World Cup champions. Even as a new history is being written, a familiar narrative theme is present to root the circumstances of contemporary women to an unbroken Japanese line.

Even as the inward-looking aspects of these narratives suggest an “us,” established in both space and time, complimentary, outward-looking themes suggest a “them,” against which the Japanese people can be further understood. The coverage of Nadeshiko Japan offers a look at the way Japan is defined in contrast to other nations, establishing an essential character of Japaneseness in the process. Playing in the World Cup, on the global stage, wearing “Japan” across their uniforms, Nadeshiko represent the Japanese nation. The “structure of feeling” suggested as the basis for locality by Appadurai (1996) is national in character and the ground for the competition is global. The typical characterization of Japan’s success against the United States in winning the 2011 World Cup was a kind of Japanese spiritual will that trumps the physical superiority of the Americans. As previously mentioned, the resemblance of this theme to the bushido rhetoric born in the Meiji period is unmistakable. According to the narratives, Japanese people are physically disadvantaged in comparison to their Western counterparts, but hold something deep within their souls that allows them to compete and win. This

certainly presents an empowering perspective on Japaneseness. An essential character of the Japanese, even in their Asian physiques, is the capacity to triumph over Westerners by showing fighting spirit. In this was, the notion of being “of Asia,” and yet being “more than Asian” is reproduced. The culture-nation understanding described by Ivy (1995) is evident in this narrative treatment. The global context, as ground for identity work, allows *nihonjinron* to be reproduced. The similarity of Nadeshiko’s Japanese blood is set in contrast to the blood of others as national identity becomes salient. The spiritual character of the Japanese, as one people, becomes the difference that made a difference in the team’s victory. Arbena’s (1996) work claims that the adoption of European sports, like soccer, played a role in Latin America’s transition to modernity in the late-19th and early-20th century. The state program that produced Nadeshiko as world champions claims a sport with European origins as a vehicle to express Japan’s global competitiveness. Local investments in sports infrastructure are connected to the success of a national team competing on a global stage.

The assimilation of foreign wrestlers in the narratives around sumo completes the circle. If the Japanese spirit is unique, and sumo is the manifestation of that spirit in sport, foreign wrestlers must learn what it means to be deeply Japanese in order to capture the true meaning of *yokozuna*. This feature of sumo narratives allows Japanese readers to accept the physical superiority of foreign wrestlers, in evidence through their domination of the highest levels of the sport, by asserting that *yokozuna* are only legitimate insofar as they embody the soul of the Japanese. Foreign wrestlers may hold the title of *yokozuna* through the merit of their performance, but only by becoming Japanese in some essential

way are they legitimate. The boundary between “us” and “them” is maintained as a spiritual boundary, even when blood is occasionally evoked. This aspect of the *yokozuna* narrative illustrates Iwabuchi’s (2002) assertions about Japanese strategic hybridity. As Japan experiences the merging of contexts in its most sacred sporting environment, the foreign must be edited to accommodate the essentialized character of the Japanese. Hybridity, as the cultural logic of globalization, presents a threat to the dominant form of national identity represented by *nihonjinron*. The *yokozuna* system, as an invented tradition of a spiritual nature, reproduces *nihonjinron*, but also filters the assimilation of the foreign at the same time.

The politics of hybridity are most obviously realized in examples like these. On one hand, the logic of an East-West context is raised in the example of Nadeshiko Japan, but on the other a regional logic sets the grounds for identity negotiation in the story of Hakuho. Japan’s identity is constructed in relation to the imagined West through an understanding of Asian racial characteristics, Japanese cultural attitudes, and as a nation defeated in war. Japanese cultural purity is assured in the story of Hakuho through the invention of the *yokozuna* system as an extension of Shinto. Whatever physical dominance Mongolian wrestlers can assert in traditional sumo competitions, their legitimacy is determined by their closeness to Japanese appearance, cultural norms, and spiritual purity. The evolution of Japan’s modernity comes, in part, as the result of its relationship to European and American power, but also as a result of its strategic positioning within Asia. The link between Japan and the so-called West is unmistakable, and therefore the story of modernity necessarily involves the mutual influence of Japan,

as a powerful Eastern player, and the European-American coalition that dominates the discourse of the West. The understanding that Japan operates across a number of dimensions, however, makes it an important alternative site for the study of modernization and globalization. Iwabuchi's (2002) description of strategic hybridity in the Japanese context opens the door for a more nuanced approach to the study of globalization and national identity. Japan is as much a product of translocal relations within Asia as it is with Europe and the United States. In this study, the media plays a role in elaborating the East-West paradigm, as well as the negotiation of regional identity. The collection of case studies presented in this research offers a sense of this complex negotiation of identity.

A second key characteristic of the narratives is the way nation is reproduced through people, on one hand, and through the state on the other. The spiritual character of the Japanese people, expressed in the previous section, is a matter of "folk" tradition. The state has no role in establishing this spirit, as it precedes and transcends the political. When baseball discourse evokes bushido, it ties the present day players to an invented tradition of samurai and pre-modern Japan. When athletes are linked to *furusato*, they are linked to the traditions and bloodlines of their ancestors, rooted in particular geographic space. *Furusato* suggest ancient roots, and while the modern state frequently references *furusato* in the political arena, it's only a superficial sense of nostalgia that is put to work (Scheiner, 1998). *Yamato nadeshiko* is the essence of Japanese womanhood, which runs deeper than anything in our modern experience. The Nadeshiko Vision, created by the Japanese Football Association, plays on that essential understanding of Japanese female

personhood to establish a policy for investment and development. Narratives about athletes bridge the distance between the nation as a collection of “folk,” or *kokumin* in the Japanese context, and the state that supports their endeavors. In this way, a sense of the Japanese people as a community linked in blood and spirituality is reproduced, and the state is legitimated in evoking the people’s will.

In the coverage of Koshien, prefectural governments and local school systems are a constant background. It is the official support of these organs of the people that makes the dreams possible. The People’s Honor Award celebrates the accomplishments of Japanese citizens by evoking their love and certifying it in a medal, a title, and a series of gifts. The use of these athletes to promote state policies and agendas links the love of the people with the actions of the state. Nadeshiko Japan athletes wear the name of the nation on their jerseys. The coverage asserts their essential Japanese spirit in the victory over the physically superior US, but the Nadeshiko Vision behind the team is state policy. It is the state that recognizes something special in the character of Japanese women and works to nurture and develop their potential. These narratives ignore the fact that the state has been as much an obstacle to women’s achievement, historically, as an ally. The state is simply positioned as a mechanism through which women’s lives can be made better, and through which women can be supported in growing a robust and enduring Japanese society. The Olympic example is the most obvious example of the state in Japanese sports narratives. In the bid to win the Olympics, the state is a competitor in the same way as individual athletes wearing the nation’s colors. When the Games are held, and athletes perform on the field of competition, they will simply be reproducing what has already been done on

behalf of society at large. The state competed and won, on the strength of its Japanese will. The inclusion of the princess in the winning bid may symbolize something dark in the context of modern political history, but the essential Japanese bloodline has always been tied to the Imperial House, and so victory is owed in some small part to something that transcends that dark modern history. It owes something to the blood that ties the people together, and the soul that is essentially Japanese.

There is little in the collection of narratives about Japanese sport to suggest the nation as a multiethnic community. The omission of Taiho's mixed roots stands as a prominent example of this phenomenon. Class is rarely evoked, nor is a diversity of opinion on the presence of women, foreigners, or ethnic Koreans in the Japanese sporting community. When Japanese athletes compete, and when they succeed, it is important that they belong to everyone, at least in the official narratives. Sports, in the media, play a unifying role. They are intended to reproduce consensus and contain the general hopes and dreams of the public. Contentious social issues are solved through sport, as far as the narratives are concerned. They present a reparative function when things seem broken. They present a healing function when spirits are down. They present a balancing function when society is out of balance.

Anecdotally, this can be very powerful. I recall, many years ago, meeting my wife's grandfather in his Tokyo home. For some years, I'd heard stories about his hatred of America. He'd fought for Japan in World War II, and while he'd managed to forgive the Europeans, his dislike of America remained with him into old age. Needless to say, I felt an overwhelming sense of anxiety at the prospect of meeting him in his home. As an

American, I was marrying his Japanese granddaughter and I felt the nerves welling up in my stomach as we were greeted at the door by his wife. Despite her assurances that he was as nervous to meet me as I was to meet him, I couldn't shake the feeling that he was going to hate me. Things proceeded slowly, if cordially, for some time as we sat and drank tea. There was a lot of small talk between us, and over time I began to feel a bit less anxious. When the subject turned to baseball, my wife's grandfather lit up. He was proud to tell me the story of his childhood in Tokyo when the first team of Americans arrived to participate in exhibitions in Japan. He recalled meeting Babe Ruth at the ballpark and hanging off his arm with a bunch of other boys. By the end of our little talk about baseball, we'd become fast friends. As I write this passage, I find myself feeling very emotional about the memory.

Sports narratives may “paper over” uncomfortable aspects of social life. In the desire for neatness, and in the quest to make ourselves whole through sport, we sometimes allow ourselves to ignore the way the celebrations mask harsh realities. How long has sport presented a heteronormative, masculine view of success in American society? Sports narratives offer a path to spiritually overcome the darker aspects of our social past, but they also complicate the confrontation of present problems. If sports narratives, in the Japanese context, present a path to stronger social bonds and offer a spiritual centering for citizens of the nation, they also prop up beliefs about national identity rooted in blood or spirit. These beliefs can be destructive as they manifest in problems like *karoshi* and *hikikomori*, even as they provide the inspiration to hope and fight for collective dreams. They can mask the role of the state in the oppression of

women by promoting the state as the contemporary savior of female athletes. Sports, at the highest levels, are the products of a political economy that exploits the people as much as it acts as a natural extension of their collective will.

Sports narratives are not alone in exhibiting this set of characteristics. Popular media, generally, deserve the scrutiny applied in this collection of case studies. Further, it is important to recognize the agency of the public in interpreting and negotiating the meaning of the coverage reviewed for this study. Audiences interpret texts according to a complex set of personal experiences, attitudes, and perspectives, many of which derive from the deep structures associated with traditional culture. Hybridity theory, particularly through Morris' (2002) application of the generative model, offers a way to understand the delicate balance between assimilation and stability.

One semester, while teaching at an all-English liberal arts university in Japan, I presented a class of students with some video material about the “hafu” experience in Japan. The project was to exercise listening comprehension and engage in meaningful classroom discourse. The class was confronted with a host of new ideas, and I posed the question, “What does it mean to be Japanese?” As students wrestled with the definition of Japaneseness, in the face of new information, a lively and complicated conversation ensued. One student, who I’d come to know as intelligent, thoughtful, and well liked among her peers, insisted that a person could only be Japanese if he or she was born of two Japanese parents. I dutifully entertained her opinion, and opened the idea for discussion. Despite a round of counter arguments, she remained steadfast in her belief. It struck me as a curious position, but more than the opinion itself, it was the resoluteness of

her attitude that was remarkable. She was adamant even in the face of a thoughtful media presentation, a professor with two “hafu” children, and a classmate of Korean-Japanese heritage two desks away. What’s more, I knew the student to be a devout Christian, not to mention her place at an English language university with the mission to create “leaders in the global society.”

There are many reasons to study Japan in the context of national identity, mass media, globalization, and hybridity theory. At least one of them is personal. Lie (2001) works to establish a broader understanding of Japan’s multiethnic history, in hopes that the narratives of Japan’s many minority communities enter the mainstream of discourse and affect the way Japan understands itself as a society. When Pieterse (2009) writes that hybridity thinking is a “more radical and penetrating angle that suggests not only that things are no longer the way they used to be but were never really the way they used to be, or used to be viewed” (p. 97), and that that hybridity theory is “the antidote to essentialist notions of identity and ethnicity” (p. 77), he describes a mission of sorts for scholars seeking to open up new possibilities.

Hybridity, as a lens, opens our eyes to the dynamism of culture and the many strategies we employ to contextualize, negotiate, and assimilate new ideas. Likewise, it helps to account for the ways in which traditional culture is reproduced, rather than accepting our cultural contexts as fixed and essential. It returns agency to the conversation about cultural identity and national identity, and puts us in touch with why we feel we belong to certain communities and others do not. In a time when electronic media have transformed boundaries, and when people are increasingly migrating across

great distances, the deep structures of traditional culture offer the possibility of stability in the face of rapid and intense change. This study illustrates some of the ways that mass media can serve both a stabilizing and an assimilating function as central narrative structures of our public sphere.

Sports represent an important ritual aspect of our culture. They are brought into our lives as much by mass media as they are participatory in the 21st century. As ritual, sports reproduce traditional values and act as a medium for the assimilation of new ideas as well. America confronted the complex process of racial integration through the play of Jackie Robinson, particularly as media brought his story into homes across the country. The symbolic importance of baseball, as a vessel of American virtue, presented an important ground for the negotiation of new possibilities. Baseball fans could remain baseball fans. The game remained the American pastime. The terms of belonging changed through the example of a handful of brave African-American players, and have become the new ground by which Americans understand themselves as Americans.

As Japan is forced to confront new patterns of migration, new economic interdependencies, new cultural imports, and various other challenges to the established order of its own culture, individuals will learn to adjust and assimilate, while struggling mightily to hold onto whatever it's meant to be Japanese. New meanings of Japaneseness will inevitably emerge from this process, and it will be through both established cultural rituals and new modes of living that this process will play out. Mass media narratives represent one aspect of this negotiation, both reflecting social forces and offering symbolic material by which to imagine our present circumstances. The example of

Koshien represents the reproduction of the traditional cultural context, as does the People's Choice Award. Those narratives teach that the more things change, the more they stay the same. There is a reassurance in such narrative treatment that being Japanese is "the same as it ever was." In the narrative treatments of Nadeshiko Japan and the Mongolian yokozuna, Hakuho, Japan's interconnectedness with foreigners presents new ground for negotiation. The stability of bushido, as part of Japanese sporting tradition, serves as a symbolic vehicle for women to take broader part in Japanese society. The spiritual tradition of Shinto, as symbolically represented in the yokozuna, offers the chance for conversion. Hakuho is suitable as a champion, despite his foreign blood, not only for the surface structures of the topknot, the Japanese name, and the speaking of the Japanese language, but also by connecting at a deeper level with Japanese spiritualism. Understanding this strategic hybridism allows us to have a more productive discourse about the terms of belonging in Japan, who they serve, and who they do not.

The most significant aspect of the Tokyo 2020 narrative was the foreign media's strong influence on the bidding process. As foreign media continued to raise concerns about radiation from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear reactor, the JOC was forced to shift its strategy to frame the Olympic Games against the backdrop of the 1964 postwar reconstruction. The coverage reflected both the hopes and concerns of the people as the story played out, offering a glimpse at how a local disaster became a national story, and in turn was raised to the level of global discourse. Once the story became global, Japan was forced to redefine itself strategically, both in public and in the press, setting a new ground for the discourse of its upcoming Games. The strategic framing of the Games by

state and private organizations was largely adopted in the coverage of the bidding process, and time will tell whether the public at large accepts the grounds of that nationalist project for broader cultural negotiation. As the Games are held in Tokyo, domestic and foreign media will cover the rituals associated with the Games and engage in their own narrative rituals. That complex mix deserves close attention for its role in the ongoing process of cultural hybridization.

The example of Japan teaches an important lesson about the process of national identity negotiation, in general. As imagined communities, nations rely on the reproduction of cultural boundaries, as much as geographic boundaries, and nationalist projects are common around the world. The very notion of American exceptionalism is a nationalist project of this sort, and a parallel of sorts to *nihonjinron*. Japan's nationalist project relies on the symbolic construction of race, through the idea of common blood, to create a boundary between "us" and "them." American exceptionalism is, perhaps, more complex as there is no plausible claim to blood ties in a pluralistic society. The American nationalist project relies on the idea of shared values instead. Identifying the particulars of Japan's symbolic constructions, and their role in processes of national identity negotiation, allows researchers to take a comparative approach to national identity. In this case, the reproduction and negotiation of *nihonjinron* offers a foundation for comparison with other nationalist projects, including American exceptionalism and others.

Furthermore, as media play a key role in shaping the symbolic environments of a culture, both their form and content are significant loci of examination. In the case of this research, key narrative themes reveal a great deal about the construction of Japanese

national identity. The relationship between the local and the national was frequently evoked in the narratives, as well as the relationship between the national and global. The narrative construction of these relationships represents an epistemology of Japaneseness that becomes salient as circumstances demand. Media narratives function as broad grounds for the sort of imagination that Appadurai (1996) describes as the “structure of feeling” required to forming coherent communities. The manner in which the Japanese media constructs these grounds is evident in the articles considered in this research. Further study regarding audience reception of these narratives would deepen the understanding of the power of media in these processes of deliberation and change.

Finally, this research offers a further elaboration of Iwabuchi’s (2002) *strategic hybridism*, particularly through the story of Hakuho. Nationalist projects are constantly confronted with opposing cultural processes and the reach and scope of media in the contemporary world intensify this sort of confrontation. Powerful media institutions, like the news organizations represented in this research, perform an important role in negotiating cultural change. The story of Hakuho functions as a spiritual conversion, whereby the foreign is ritually cleansed in the Shinto symbolism surrounding sumo. These rituals of conversion are a function of hybridity, both in the assimilation and rejection of “outside” symbols. The particular examples illustrated in this research provide grounds for further examination of similar rituals as they play out in different contexts around the world.

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