

Locating Hakata: History, Self, and Masculine Mythology

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M Y T H AND HISTORIES

"What is life?" is a linguistic trap. To answer according to the rules of grammar, we must supply a noun, a thing. But life on Earth is more like a verb. It is a material process, surfing over matter like a strange slow wave. It is a controlled artistic chaos, a set of chemical reactions so staggeringly complex that more than 4 billion years ago it began a sojourn that now, in human form, composes love letters and uses silicon computers to calculate the temperature of matter at the birth of the universe.

Lynn Margulis

G A T E W A Y

The meaning of history: the local is national

The brochure of the Hakata History Hall proudly proclaims "Hakata

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was the gateway to the continent of China and the Korean Peninsula." Located in Kushida Shrine which is crammed up against long shopping arcades, the Hall's gateway idea of history suggests bustling international commerce and exchange: the introduction of paddy-grown rice, tea, and Zen from continental China. The area we now call Hakata, and its earlier incarnation as Tsukushi, was the major centre for commercial and diplomatic activities from the eighth century onwards.

These days the place name Itasuke does not make many Hakata folk think of prehistoric rice cultivation, their glorious agrarian traditions, and agricultural festivals celebrating bountiful harvests. Instead Itasuke brings to mind complex memories associated with B-29s bound for Korea, parked at that U. S. air base which was imposed on long-suffering residents from 1952 to 1972. However mentioning Itasuke makes Japanese pre-modern historians go weak at the knees, and not for what we might imagine are the usual reasons.

Initial excavations carried out at an Itasuke site revealed the remains of a Yayoi period rice paddy. The Yayoi era saw bronze being used to create ceremonial bells and mirrors, and iron being used for weapons and farming tools. Not content with evidence of domesticated pigs, distinct social classes, and jawbone rituals, deeper excavations discovered a rice paddy from the late Jomon period. Conclusive dating was established by the presence of fragments of Jomon period ceramics and gave the northern area of Kyūshū the prestigious title of the Japanese archipelago's first rice producer.

And incidentally, it is a matter of considerable pride for local pre-modern obsessive-compulsives that Itasuke was not tainted by the recent

scandal involving confessions by Fujimura Shinichi that he had been enriching 42 archeological digs, including the famous Paleolithic site in Kamitakamori (Miyagi Prefecture) and Soshin Fudozaka (Hokkaidō), with found objects from his private collection. As Deputy Director of the private Tohoku Paleolithic Institute, Fujimura was armed with the nickname of "God's hand" for his almost divine skill at finding historically significant artifacts when he worked on roughly 180 prehistoric Japanese sites. Fujimura rolled back Japanese antiquity in mammoth chunks of centuries each time he used the evidence of those fabricated finds to rewrite ancient east Asian history.

The idea of a nation as an invented community is well enough established, and the idea of pre-historic rice continues to be a powerful icon for Japanese to rally around as questions of historical interpretation become elements of debates on national identity. Blatant self-advance is an insufficient explanation for why it is necessary and possible to hang the mechanics of career trajectory onto the national narrative.

Nationalist pride in a uniquely ancient cultural history is justifiably not confined to right wing extremists. Revisionist proponents of secondary history textbook change want to expunge any references Japanese misbehaviour conducted during their colonial endeavours in Korea, China, and Taiwan. Hard versions of this view of Japanese history assume that colonization was good for Korea, and are driven by a fervently counter-factual insistence that Japanese culture pre-dated Korean peninsula developments. There must be a special operation that allows some Japanese people to sincerely embrace this deluded take on history while simultaneously ignoring the press conference given by Emperor Akihito on the

occasion of his 68th birthday: not content with acknowledging the benefits of the rich cultural legacy transmitted from Korea to Japan, he proclaimed he has Korean blood. Too bad the mainstream Japanese press did not give this announcement a few more inches of column space.

Once Fujimura's pat and stomp technique was recorded for posterity by a diligent Mainichi Shimbun video camera team a little after 6 a.m. on October 22nd 2000 and incriminating photographs were subsequently published by that newspaper on November 5th 2000, the media circus went berserk. Even without the protest-by-suicide of Professor Emeritus Kagawa Mitsuo of Beppu University after being named by *Shukan Bunshun* as possibly being implicated in this academic fraud, we can see that messing with the national mythology is not a good career move when such tales construct local identity. Local identity is often an important component of the increasingly competitive business of marketing an area as a destination for domestic cultural tourism. The trickle down effect of these stories of the glorious past pays mortgages and supplies the discretionary income that funds kids attending cram school as they trek their way up the slippery slopes of Japanese education.

Yamakasa as Antidote

1241/2004

Looks like it wasn't enough to have cell phones with cameras. Now they're adding TV.

They say any time now, we will be able to connect to the Net from airplanes.

They advertise an electronic dictionary small enough to fit in the palms of our hands that contains the information that was once printed in dozens of books.

When we were children, the 21st century was going to be a bright, shining future.

That future has been today, for several years already.

Robots now shower us with love.

But in Iraq and Palestine, people still take each other's lives.

Nations cling secretly to nuclear weapons.

Parents abuse their children.

Thieves using the Net steal vast amounts of personal information.

The range of things we have to eat is unbelievable.

Progress? Evolution? Something new? — Will that make humanity happy?

July, 2004

Once again, the Yamakasa Festival begins,
with power and passion unchanged for 763 years.

Japan, like many post-industrial societies, is often felt by its residents to be a mess. Never mind the reality check delivered by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research: at the end of 1997 there were fewer Japanese under 15 than the 65 years of age and over population. More than an increase in the average lifespan of the rapidly aging Japanese society, it is four decades of a decreased birthrate that is expected to result in one in every three persons being aged at least 65 years old by 2050. Holy dependency ratings, I can feel that undertow sucking on my salary even now.

The real problem is the social fabric of Japan is more than a little worse for wear. Despite the social myth of "we Japanese are all middle class rice-eaters", the widening gap between the haves and the have-nots is laying a foundation for future social problems as more people are labeled 'deviant' as they fall through the cracks in the education and social welfare systems: victims of bullying, criminal youth, and the homeless. But these so-called misfits are the lucky ones: they are surviving.

The economic downturn produced a spike in the suicide rates, typically small businessmen caught in the loan shark spiral, or men in their fifties who have been 'restructured' and cannot repay heavy mortgages on properties significantly devalued by the bursting of the economic bubble. Negative equity: when the home loan exceeds the value of the family home, tilting the head and audibly sucking air through Japanese teeth is a less than adequate expression of embarrassment. Under the so-called group insurance, even if the borrower of the loan dies by his own hand, the loan disappears but the ownership of the property is not assumed by the mortgage-holding bank. The surviving spouse receives the property as the

parting gift from their partner.

Against these backgrounds of individual anxieties and family anguish, members of the leisured classes are afflicted with a different compulsion: too much of what we don't need is simply not enough for them. Fukuoka bureaucrats, city politicians and businessmen can't stop 'til they get too much, and they have their own collective malady: a habit of being caught holding hands, up to their elbows in the honey pot of public funds. These sticky alliances profit from third sector scams that destroy precious natural habitats and become financial liabilities for the next generation of municipal taxpayers. These bad boys occasionally get their pictures in the papers while scrupulously denying any wrongdoing, spend their day in court emphasizing their regret, and get the suspended sentence slap on the wrist after delaying their way through the courts of appeal. Sly smirks from the victors as they leave the court house.

Teachers in the front lines of primary and secondary education struggle to impart some sense of justice and morality to youngsters who are numbed by the endless media procession of professions that are sullied by one scandal after another. Despite a modest supersizing of children's physiques, thanks to pre-mad cow nutritional advances, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology regrets to inform that each year since 1964, the athletic performance of Japanese children has fallen. When their parents were dutifully applying themselves to the 50 metre dash and softball throw as children unthinkingly caught up in the postwar ideology of doing your best as a national duty, they set standards that exceed the fitness aspirations of the current generation of video game masters.

In stark contrast to all this gross social turpitude, the opening quotation from the *Photography Collection Hakata Gion Yamakasa* by Shindō Yukō points to one value of the annual Yamakasa summer festival. For Hakata residents and their associates, this festival is a unifying touchstone that for two weeks each July gives urban life the appearance of being immutable in the face of social disintegration.

December 1999: Fukuoka Prefecture makes public its intention to eliminate a total of 17 public schools by 2008. Even as the Fukuoka Municipal Board of Education closes or amalgamates Hakata district elementary schools because of falling enrolments resulting from falling birthrates and an exodus to the suburbs, young boys and girls are initiated into the running rites of Yamakasa by school textbooks. These locally produced textbooks endorse the transmission of Yamakasa culture from father to son. Extended family ties link different generations together as junior and senior members of the Yamakasa team assume their designated roles in dispelling evil influences. Persevering in spite of the heat, humidity and fatigue of summer to create a more auspicious atmosphere by satisfactorily discharging Yamakasa duties increases individual self-esteem. Members of neighborhood communities make financial contributions, and networks of women labour together to provide food for the Yamakasa runners. Local businesses support the floats in their area and make offerings which advertise their company's name as they are displayed around the altar of Kushida Shrine. The Yamakasa fortnight is communitarian communication with its own annual rhythm of preparation that leaves the community feeling protected from inauspicious calamities for another year.

By invoking and re-enacting the mythic events of 1241, the Yamakasa rites continue to remedy the social malaise of Japanese modernity. Yamakasa performances belong to a culture of the copy. The infirmity to be overcome changes dramatically across history, an authentic Yamakasa experience less so. Yamakasa is an antidote, Yamakasa stops time.

History 101: Hakata as Gateway

Honourable archeologists had been searching for the location of the Korokan, a guest house for foreign emissaries mentioned in a *Nihon Shoki* entry from 688 and known to have burnt down in 1047. Fortunately the outfield spectator seats of the Heiwadai Baseball Stadium were in need of repair in 1987, and construction work unearthed an extensive complex designed to make the stay of delegations coming from and going to Tang (China) and Silla (Korea) comfortable. Korokan's dimensions were a measure of the expansion of Tsukushi's role as diplomatic hub. In the latter half of the seventh century, Korokan was an embedded pillar building. In its second phase, the building had four metre high stone walls. Finally, the facilities included north and south wings of identical proportions, with points of entry facing the east. As evidence of the status of Tsukushi as the happening place for diplomats, scholars, merchants, and priests to have been, Fukuoka City Archaeology Center proudly displays Yue celadon bowls, stoneware from Silla, and Islamic glass excavated from the Korokan of Tsukushi.

The pilgrimages of priests to the continent enriched the life of the spiritual mind. Monk Myōan Eisai returned to Hakata in 1191 with tea seeds which were planted at Ryōsenji Temple on the border of what we now

call Fukuoka and Saga Prefectures. As Eisai established Shōfukuji Temple in Hakata, popularly regarded the first Zen temple in Japan, tea was also grown there. Although the Chinese had been grinding tea into fine *macha* powder since 1053, Eisai introduced this custom into his circle of temples associates.

Eisai successfully established Rinzai Zen as an independent religious school, based on the belief that enlightenment can come suddenly through breaking through the *koan* puzzles. He wrote *The Propagation of Zen for the Protection of the Country* in 1198 as part of an attempt to overcome resistance from competing practices already in favour in Kyoto. Around 1199 Eisai had a breakthrough selling the instant enlightenment merits of Rinzai Zen to samurai members of the Shōgun court in Kamakura. His *Drinking Tea to Improve Health and Prolong Life* was the first installment in a rich literature about tea in Japan that includes the *Nambōroku*, the sacred text of Hakata's distinctive school of tea, Nambō Ryū. His embodiment of the connection between Zen and tea at Shōfukuji Temple mean we should probably thank him for the platitude "*zen cha ichi mi*": Zen and tea are one flavour.

Sūfukuji Temple was established by Nampō Jōmyō, and these two entities deserve a footnote in tea history for their role in the arrival of the *daisu* tea stand from the continent. The Kyoto-centric version of tea history appears too ready to place temples such as Daitokuji at the epicenter of tea development. Let us pause to remember that the formal *daisu* tea stand, which is still used in the most highly ranked tea procedures, was brought from China to Hakata by Jōmyō in 1267. The *daisu* stand was stored at Sūfukuji until it was sent to Musō Kokushi at

Daitokuji Temple in Kyoto. In the sixteenth century, Sen no Rikyū, who under alpha-male general Toyotomi Hideyoshi held the office of pre-eminent tea master, was highly skilled in *daisu* serving procedures.

Rikyū could justify the purificatory logic of those procedures in terms of the Chinese system of Five Elements, later recorded in the *Nambōroku* 'discovered' by Kuroda han retainer Tachibana Jitsuzan around 1690. Rikyū taught those *daisu* procedures to his political master Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the military ruler of the day who was mocked by his "Saru" (Monkey) nickname before Hideyoshi consolidated his control of the islands of Japan. In order to reinforce his political control of tea, Hideyoshi initially prohibited Rikyū from teaching others the *daisu* secrets. Once Hideyoshi had taught the procedures to seven of his closest political followers, Rikyū was over time given very strict permission to teach the *daisu* procedures to only the most trusted military allies of Hideyoshi. Hakata merchants did not receive this honour.

In the sixteenth century, Hakata merchants traded copper, sulphur and lead for Korean cotton and sacred Buddhist texts. The import of spices, dyes, and pharmaceutical supplies from south-east Asia increased the pleasures of Hakata life as regionally distinctive culinary, ceramic, and textile traditions continued to develop.

During this age of warring states, the Sengoku era, Hakata was buffeted as Toyotomi Hideyoshi consolidated his power in preparation for his invasion of the Korean peninsula. Shimai Sōshitsu, Kamiya Sōtan, and Oga Sōhaku were known as the Three Hakata Merchant Princes for their combination of political acumen, business success, and tea room activities. When Hideyoshi was in Hakozaki on the shores of Hakata Bay in 1587,

Sōshitsu congratulated Hideyoshi on his victory in settling the Shimazu-Ōtomo dispute in Kyūshū with a present of purple cloth and fresh fish. Hakata merchant-tea masters successfully petitioned Hideyoshi for permission to repair the war-battered infrastructure of Hakata. As an expression of gratitude, Sōtan built a shrine to Hideyoshi. That site, now called the Hōkoku Shrine, was the venue for memorial rites honoring the generosity of Hideyoshi.

Hakata Bay Reverie

Spend 420 yen on a return ticket and take a municipal ferry into the middle of Hakata Bay. Ten minutes later you are walking on Nokonoshima, my island home. Noko is a quasi-national park, and inside this 12 km circumference is a perfect place for raising kids. Walk the dog in the morning down to the garden for the morning harvest, imagining the bento lunchbox de jour, and you can smell the difference in the air after just one car goes past.

An intimate community with rich relationships between people is revealed when relative newcomers and other outsiders ask wizened Noko insiders too many questions. "Why didn't you return that guy's greeting?" "Well, two generations ago his great uncle gave my grandmother a hard time." My son attended the Noko kindergarten, and in his fourth year of elementary school there are now three other kids in his class. One of the fathers of the other students is from a second generation Noko family. This father was intemperately dissing an absent third party when a friend within earshot said "Oh yeah, he's my uncle". Whoops. Even after two generations of living the Noko life, social walls remain dangerously

transparent. Gossip is a potent mode of social control, and a resistant tolerance for the distilled malice of these quietly confided asides is one of the acquired tastes of island life.

The aging Noko population of around 700 is sustained by farming (oranges, rice, vegetables, and flowers), fishing (netting fish has been eclipsed by digging for clams), and salaryman jobs. The boundaries between these three means of subsistence come down during Okunchi, the autumn harvest festival, when the real business of being a Noko bloke unifies the community with one irresistible imperative: "Let's get blind."

Noko is divided administratively into five areas. Kitaura cops the cold winter northerlies, is a great place to windsurf as long as the water temperature stays above 10 degrees C, and has one public toilet near a minor wharf. Higashi is the downtown of Noko and its central port, mixed businesses, inns, and restaurants like Minato-ya face the urban highlights of Fukuoka Tower and a residential complex designed by Michael Graves on the other side of Hakata Bay. Einoguchi has Eiguchi's bottle shop and Mizumoto's modest grocery shop sells the best bananas on the island. There is another public toilet in Nishi near the island's secondary port, and because this area takes the brunt of most typhoons it has open areas where locals refuse to build houses. Ōtomari is the back hills and contains Island Park, a popular tourist destination for flower lovers, families, and enthusiasts of Noko-noko ball, a local hybrid of croquet and mini-golf.

Ōtomari was initially populated with a settlement pattern related to the dispersal of Japanese Christians from Nagasaki and surrounding islands, and this area does not participate in the autumn Okunchi rite. However the other four districts cooperate in expressing their thanks for

the continuing gift of enough rice to subsist. Okunchi is transmitted along the lines of family and neighbourhood. Having spent four years as the Kitaura representative on the island sports festival committee, I traded myself up to the position of Kitaura Okunchi representative. This Okunchi responsibility gave me membership of one other island-wide committee that deals with major business confronting the island.

Fukuoka Municipal Government has designated the Okunchi of Noko as an important cultural asset. The Fukuoka History Museum in Momochi features a video installation documenting the preparation and performance of Okunchi, and some of the local identities appearing on the screen are no longer with us.

Japan has got some bad press for a stubborn insistence on the holy trinity of Japanese ethnicity, language, and culture as the self-evident demonstration of the uniqueness of Japanese identity. Self-appointed protectors of Japanese ethnic purity use this trinity to refute suggestions that immigration is one possible solution to the national decline in population. In the light of those attitudes about who can speak with authority about Japan, all of my talk of fine degrees of Noko insider knowledge should raise questions about how competent I am to write about the niceties of the Okunchi rice rites. These doubts are further complicated by my son's habit of innocently displaying the porous boundaries of identity. Those lines defining legitimate self and illegitimate other might be based on the threads of citizenship, family ties, or residential affiliations inside Noko.

This ten years of border crossing by my son pales in comparison with the plot of *The Impressionist* by Hari Kunzru but it is one small local

example of how the Japanese trope of sacred identity can be rewoven. My son was accompanied by his Australian and Japanese grandparents to Shirahige Shrine on Noko for his *hatsu mairi*. We celebrated his first shrine visit with a prayer to the shrine deities, asking them to protect our child. After living in Higashi for two years, my son was 'adopted' for the Okunchi day by a childless Higashi couple, and he served as the image of purity that represented Higashi for the more public rite performed at Shirahige Shrine where all Okunchi processions from the four districts gather. These one day adoptions, often across the lines of the five administrative areas, are becoming increasingly necessary as falling birthrates make it impossible for each area to field their own representative. In my second year of holding the Kitaura Okunchi office, my son performed an important role in the handling of sacramental rice at the more private rite performed inside the Kanmon Sama Hall at Kitaura. Initially this honour was suddenly offered to me by the head director of Kitaura Okunchi 15 minutes before the ceremony was to begin. However the polluting death of my mother more than five years previously violated the *kegare* purity criteria for participation, and the opportunity to follow the movements and guidance of an experienced player in this sacramental rite passed to my son because both of his parents are alive.

Heroic tea

Tea anecdotes featuring Hakata men of tea are an important device for sustaining local tea traditions because they capture 'authentic' tea values and practices. When tea was no longer the discrete domain of warriors and successful merchants, instructors of tea practices were busy re-positioning

tea as mass culture. These tall tales featuring tea's elite were important marketing devices for learning tea: "Why learn to write linked verse when you could be in a tea room, learning how to perform seasonally appropriate serving procedures that will delight your guests, instead of just writing about your sensitivity to natural cycles?"

The conduct of Hakata merchant-tea masters was one standard by which to assess who is a real man of tea, and who is a real man. These tea anecdotes were examples to tea newbies of masculinist ideals of knowing, acquiring, and performing the common sense of tea. As these stories were published from 1701 onwards, male tea communities were bound together by the spectre of these anecdotal role models. However in the twenty first century tea practices are global icons recognized as marking Japanese-ness. Tea room competence is one sphere where non-Japanese obsessed with these arcane forms of medieval high culture can perform the embodied competencies of Japanese language and culture underpinning the host-guest interaction.

Hakata tea anecdotes from the sixteenth century position tea as an index of intimacy with powerful warlords. Ostentatious tea stories record the wealth amassed by Hakata merchants, and document tea's role as the play and display of conspicuous consumption. Ethics and morality are the other important components of this anecdotal genre, and one tale about Shimai Sōshitsu emphasizes the masculine virtue of not panicking.

In 1583 Hakata merchant Shimai Sōshitsu attended a tea gathering organized by Oda Nobunaga at Honnōji Temple. Nobunaga was the dominant military player of the day and the Hakata merchants benefited from their commercial relationship with Nobunaga. As fate would have it,

the main event of this evening was not the gentle aesthetic surprise of seeing a distinctive tea bowl tastefully paired with an exquisitely aged water container. Instead of the pleasures of enjoying a moment of tea unity, the real world intruded in the form of the traitorous attack of Akechi Mitsuhide against his unsuspecting leader Nobunaga.

Legend has it that after Nobunaga left the tea room to take command of his forces, Sōshitsu and the other guests remained unmoved. Even after Nobunaga accepted the inevitability of defeat and committed ceremonial suicide, these Hakata tea men retained that deliberate tea-master quietness and dignity as the flames leapt at the tea room. Amid the battle cries and the roar of the inferno, Sōshitsu rolled up a scroll of the Thousand Character Classic written by Kukai and removed it from the display alcove. After putting the treasured scroll inside his kimono for safekeeping, Sōshitsu took refuge with Kamiya Sōtan in the monk quarters of Honnoji Temple. Without the impressive presence of mind of Sōshitsu, Kukai's precious writing would have been ash in castle ruins.

Male bonding

In rural Japan, any communal activity worth participating in commences with a drinking party for the organizing committee, and the Okunchi of Noko politely practices this precept. The preferred beverage at these drinking rites is rarely tea. Cynics might be suspicious of festival funds being misappropriated for the odd expensive bottle of rice wine, but the informality of the first meeting underlies the real agenda. Ensuring the transmission of the Okunchi tradition is a weighty responsibility that is felt by the committee dedicated to the preservation of the Okunchi rites, the

Okunchi representatives from the four administrative areas, other sections of the island population, and municipal government.

Procuring some of the necessities is the first hands-on duty of the rank and file members. Okunchi representatives tend to be quick off the mark. Before the weekend of preparation they organize the purchase of auspicious fish, chestnuts, persimmons, snacks for the kids, and yes, alcohol. One of the committee big swingers usually bludges some rice and oranges off one of the area's farmers. Accepting donations is a more auspicious mode of acquisition than paying with the precious readies (which are better spent on social lubrication?). Junior Okunchi representatives have the honour and responsibility of cleaning the utensils that will be displayed in the procession into Shirahige Shrine.

The fun part is going up the hills on a brisk autumn morning, sneaking through orange orchards on the south side of the Kitaura valley, and squinting at the soft sunlight while searching for male and female bamboo. Considerable disagreement results from conflicting opinions about these gender distinctions, so gangs of less than three decision-making men are recommended unless you are hoping for a quick show of how the *Hakata-ben* dialect can be employed to signify strong disagreement. Once the bamboo is selected and schlepped to a quiet side street, the production line begins.

The division of labour gives everyone a chance to circulate and chat about nothing much as the bamboo is split into certain lengths, and two types of stakes are carved. The cut and thrust of daily life in the village is intensified and inverted in competitive and humorous displays of orthodox Okunchi lore, as we dodge the occasional car and fend off questions from

uninformed passers-by who are heading up to see hibiscus that bloom year round inside the Noko Yumei Coffee Garden. Without getting all touchy-feely, the arguing about how the node of the stakes should be carved somehow seems to release most of the stresses and strains of living check-by-jowl in a rural community.

The second stage of preparation is conducted indoors at the Kanmon Sama Hall. After following the entry etiquette of washing our hands and offering prayers to the Buddhist god of mercy, we commence preparing the procession implements. Thick green stalks are bound by a vine to form rigid cores that will hold the bamboo skewers. Once cut to appropriate lengths, these cores are staked onto a variety of trays. Once the stability of these cores on the trays has been doubled checked by senior members of the Kitaura community, separate displays of chestnuts, persimmons, and oranges are prepared. Once the sharp knives have been dispensed with, moderate consumption of libations are permitted and encouraged. As the men move from task to task, the smell of dried squid accompanies the quiet chatting over sips of rice wine.

Preparing neatly these sculptural hemispheres of chestnuts, persimmons, and oranges requires the skilled hand of experience. The menial task of skewering the nuts and fruit allows for quiet chatting as the more experienced men concentrate, silently assembling the round forms. Like the relationship between common sense and ideology, the art lies in having the globe of the displayed offering conceal the stakes on which fruits and nuts are skewered onto the core. The head man of Kitaura makes occasional reference to a Fukuoka-based historical institute publication which notes the obvious Korean influence on how the Okunchi harvest offerings are

displayed. The final authority apparently lies with these key illustrations of how ropes, fish, rice, fruit and nuts should be arranged. The head of the Noko Community Hall arrives to photograph the autumn colours of the harvested rice, fruit, and nuts as they are displayed at Kanmon Sama Hall until the day of the Okunchi procession and rites at Shirahige Shrine.

The real foundation for the success of Okunchi however is done backstage by the women. Preparing the food for the post-rite feast in Kanmon Sama Hall takes the expertly managed team of Kitaura women two full days. As the inebriated men slope off home at the end of the festival, it is the women who stay back to clean up the kitchen.

Codes of honour

Hakata merchant Kamiya Sōtan made his fortune in foreign trade. In 1592 Kamiya Sōtan invited Hideyoshi to his residence in Narayamachi. Hideyoshi had consolidated power after the death of his lord Oda Nobunaga, and came to Hakata to oversee the course of his Korean campaign. Sōtan wished to receive Hideyoshi in a manner befitting the military ruler's absolute authority. As a descendent from the house of Sugawara, Sōtan was entitled to display a gate curtain with the same plum-blossom design visible on all Tenjin Shrines. This *umebachi* crest also decorated the properties surrounding the house of Sōtan; the neighbourhood had been requisitioned by Sōtan to receive Hideyoshi and his entourage of generals because the total number of guests reportedly exceeded five hundred. The scale of the reception acknowledged Sōtan's reliance on his commercial relationship with Hideyoshi and hinted at their tea room intimacy.

The primary guest room was dominated by Hideyoshi's largesse. A pair of black and white renderings of bamboo by Tan Shih of Tang that Sōtan received from Hideyoshi took pride of place displayed in an alcove twelve feet across. A rare leopard-skin marked Hideyoshi's seat of honour. A Kamiya family heirloom, a horizontal picture of roosters and grapes by Yun Wai of Tang, was placed in a smaller display alcove. Cushions of the finest Yamato brocade ensured that the highest ranking generals were comfortable as they gazed at an impressive array of pieces selected from Sōtan's valuable antiques. Two pairs of gold screens by the son of the founder of the Kano school of painting that served the Ashikaga shogun were the final touches to the remaining walls. These radiant images of wild geese among reeds by Kano Motonobu faced the display alcoves.

In contrast to the opulent scale of the main reception room, the tea-room was an intimate two mat space. A modest scroll of Evening Rain on the Hsiao Hsiang River graced the display alcove. The renowned thick tea container called Hakata Bunrin, the petite proportions of this fifteenth century Chinese ceramic piece almost contradicting the assertion of Sōtan that he would only part with Hakata Bunrin if he received half of Japan, quietly sat below. On the *daisu* was placed the esteemed tea jar called Omokage ("Vision") and a steady stream of steam rose from Johari ("World-reflecting"), the impressive kettle on the hearth.

Sōtan served Hideyoshi tea. Throughout the preparation Hideyoshi stared with great intensity at the scroll and Hakata Bunrin. Finally, in an expansive tone, he concluded that something was not perfect. Hideyoshi declared that when Hakata Bunrin is in the display alcove, its presence would be better received by the addition of a dedicated shelf to the side of

the alcove. The Evening Rain scroll continued to compel the attention of Hideyoshi, and Hideyoshi asked Sōtan if he might be able to take it home.

Sōtan commenced his refusal to the most powerful man in the land by referring to how his great grandfather Jutei acquired this scroll and Hakata Bunrin from China during the Bummei era (1469-1487).

"Jutei was trading with China. The Ning-Po branch was extremely lucrative and our manager had a Chinese wife. This success unfortunately made him feel personally responsible when we took some rather severe losses. Once he got this strange idea that the best thing he could do to solve our business dilemma was to cut his stomach open, his wife decided that it was all her fault. As an apology for her inability to prevent a business downturn, she dug into her family heirlooms and handed her husband the Evening Rain scroll and what we now call Hakata Bunrin. We know these pieces were treasures from the Imperial House of Tang because they were rescued when one of her ancestors had accompanied Yang Kuei Fei when she fled and was put to death at Ma-Wei. This cool-headed ancestor discreetly sent these masterpieces back to his own premises for safekeeping. Jutei received the scroll and tea container when our manager returned to Hakata and offered them to Jutei as compensation for poor business decisions. Jutei was so overwhelmed with gratitude that he rewarded the manager by sending him back to Ning-Po, armed with a significant amount of currency. The manager returned the investment of Jutei's trust by ensuring the long term profitability of the Ning-Po branch. Finally our manager and his Chinese wife returned here to Hakata."

Sōtan coolly continued his explanation of the difficulties of parting with this piece of family history by reminding Hideyoshi that he was not

the first to express an interest in the Evening Rain scroll.

"Because of the way this scroll has been tied up with the longevity of our family business, it has therefore been the duty of my great grandfather to politely decline repeated requests from Higashiyama Dono and Ouchi Dono. My grandfather, and his son after him, respectfully followed the example of Jutei in not parting with the scroll. Despite my deepest intention to co-operate with your Lordship, I cannot help feeling that I am bringing dishonour to the memory of my great grandfather if I casually grasp at the pleasure of simply offering the scroll to you. Perhaps an exchange might be one possibility, if your Lordship would care to part with a possession of equal value."

Hideyoshi quietly considered the proposition of Sōtan before excitedly offering something that honoured the trading successes of the House of Kamiya. "Remember that Tang masterpiece of ships returning from a far-off shore? Nine feet wide and a fleet of more than three hundred ships!"

Hideyoshi was elated when Sōtan accepted his offer. As an expression of thanks for his magnanimous understanding, Sōtan sweetened the deal by presenting Hideyoshi with ten rolls of fine damask and three pounds of rare incense. Hideyoshi responded by giving Sōtan a hundred pieces of silver, and a glorious set of gold screens painted with plum trees under snow by Kano Sanraku.

Sōtan and his wife escorted Hideyoshi to the gate, and all present at the completion of festivities agreed that the hospitality of Sōtan was to be treasured. Hideyoshi looked to be in fine fettle but as he was about to leave he paused, as if he had forgotten something of considerable importance. Hideyoshi intended to quietly pocket the Hakata Bunrin thick tea container

from the unguarded tea-room while Sōtan and his wife were both bidding farewell to the entourage of Hideyoshi's generals at the gate.

As Sōtan politely bowed towards Hideyoshi he said "My Lord, is it possible that you have forgotten one small item?" Sōtan then pulled back the left lapel of his kimono to reveal Hakata Bunrin, securely hanging around his neck. Hideyoshi laughed approvingly as Sōtan continued, "I have taken to heart your wise counsel to guard it with my life."

Hideyoshi's suggestion to add a shelf for the Hakata Bunrin thick tea container did not go unheeded. Sōtan followed that advice, and this style of *tokonoma* display alcove is called Bunrin Toko. The tea room with the Bunrin display alcove was in the grounds of Hiroaka Ryosuku of Tenjin Machi in Hakata.

Stopping time: Okunchi

Back in the good old days of pre-war simplicity, Kitaura men carried the processional elements from Kitaura to somewhere in Higashi near Shirahige Shrine. These days ubiquitous light trucks do the deed. To avoid traffic congestion on the single lanes around Shirahige Shrine, it is either bicycles or shank's pony that gets most of us to the Shrine on time. The lucky few get to pile into the truck tray and steady the precious cargo. Lining up and waiting our turn to pass in through the first tori gate has something of the butterflies before the start of a long awaited triathlon. I get a mild touch of the sort of nerves that focus the attention on both the details and the shape of the whole performance before stepping onto a noh stage. We make it in through the first gate and under the *shimenawa* sacred rope with its white paper marking off the purified space of Shirahige

Shrine.

For generations the right hand has been privileged for the important business of writing Japanese language. During Okunchi, a principle of reversal applies and we are all dutifully schlepping these heavy loads on our left shoulders. Just as we make it up and over the step between the first and second gate, one of the Kitaura seniors insists on exercising photo-op rights. We are stalled holding these heavy loads. The strong-bodied father of four behind me starts groaning. He sweats as he wonders whether he can keep holding his precious cargo in the prescribed position.

The discomfort of staying in the Guantanamo Bay inmate pose as I try to discreetly adjust the position of the tray wasn't as bad as the experience of various temporalities that followed. All I need is just one quick bounce of the tray off that pressure point and I will be fine to hold the designated position until we enter the inner sanctum of Shirahige Shrine.

I stare uncomprehendingly as the persimmon display cartwheels off my tray in the most agonizingly surreal slow motion. Time stops. Frantic attempts to reunite the persimmon display and the tray, I fall back and numbly apologize to my favourite father of four. A near enough repair is good enough and the procession continues with a less than perfect offering a few minutes later. A minor hiccup in a couple of hundred years is not enough to thwart the forces of tradition, and the image of persimmons being liberated is guaranteed to haunt me at any island drinking occasion for the next two or three decades.

This infamous first is best forgotten: I was the first foreigner, left-handed or otherwise, to drop the sacramental tray of persimmons inside the hallowed precincts of Shirahige Shrine. A year of study leave at

UTS was the perfect alibi for laying low as I practiced not walking while balancing heavy loads on my left shoulder. Convulsive communication indeed, Monsieur Bataille, as I single-handedly broke the communal identity. What are the intensities that are suppressed in everyday communication?

G A T E - K E E P I N G

Hakata History 103: Hakata Gate-Keeping

This sedate narrative of Hakata as continental gateway, with Hakata merchants as pre-modern global go-getters, has a more brutal flipside. Some of the brutality is domestic (gate-keeping as keeping people in), but some of the other bouts are conducted in the area of foreign relations (gate-keeping as keeping people out). Regardless of who was doing the head kicking, one major casualty in this tale is the idea of a rigorous adherence to the facts. Out of this disregard for the distinction between 3,000 enemy soldiers and 30,000 invaders emerged a potent myth: Japan as the divine nation.

As an example of internal violence, consider the fate of the family of Itō Kozaemon. Like Shimai Sōshitsu, the Itō fortune came from foreign trade, and Kozaemon was well known for his weapons exports to the Chosen Peninsula. Unfortunately for him the early Edo period took a dim view of entrepreneurial contact with the outside world. As punishment for breaking the national policy of isolation, Ito was executed in 1667. One version of local history has his infant sons, Shoshirō and Manosuke, also

being executed, but another account cites the absence of the children's name from the court records to suggest a narrow escape for the two boys. Located at the site of the Itō family residence, the Manshirō Shrine takes its name from a compound of the names of the two sons. Using this compound of names to identify the shrine that was built to cleanse their souls of this injustice suggests an act of resistance by those who assumed the worst possible outcome. Hakata residents confirm that the shrine is dedicated to the god of thriving business, and improves the health of children, and longevity.

The presence of Mongolian anchors displayed inside Kushida Shrine remind Yamakasa festival goers of the 1274 and 1281 attempts by the forces of Kublai Khan to invade Hakata. Like the president whose father was president, Kublai Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan, had big ambitions and didn't mind getting into a stoush on foreign soil. Having spent 30 years subduing the Koryo administration on what we now know as the Korean peninsula, the next conquest of Kublai Khan was to be the Japanese archipelago. Kublai's 1266 missive, modestly signed as "Master of the Universe", offered friendly relations with the Kamakura court as a more pleasant alternative to open warfare. Recognising the implied threat, court officials wasted no time. Prayers to repel foreign invaders were commenced in the third month of 1268.

The first Mongol invasion of Hakata came in 1274, when according to accounts delivered to the Kamakura shogunate, a force of some 90,000 warriors from Mongol, Koryo, and Han forces burned Hakata. Hakata men were killed and captured women had their palms pierced before they were strung together on the side of Mongol ships as decorations. Mongol

accounts of the day talk of almost overcoming a defensive force of 102,000 before a severe typhoon wrecked their reinforcements and supply lines. More sanguine reports note how the Mongols recognized that the conquest was not going to be as simple as previously thought. Consequently when Koryo officials suggested that the sudden reversal of wind direction would aid a strategic withdrawal, Mongol commanders agreed to extract themselves from a battle they were not clearly winning.

Construction of twenty kilometre defensive wall around Hakata Bay started in 1276. The second Mongol invasion came in 1281, when the local bean counters reckon several fleets carrying 140,000 invaders came to do their worst. The first fleet avoided initially landing at Hakata because of the bayside fortifications and detoured to Takashima. By mid-June indecisive fighting had begun around Hakata Bay. The antics of Kawano Machiari included fighting in front of the fortified wall, and boarding enemy ships to make surprise attacks. The second fleet arrived before mid-August, and three days later, the invasion had become a nightmare for Mongol forces.

According to Mongol and local accounts, once more a typhoon saved Hakata residents from the shame and indignity of having to learn Mongol as a second language. More florid versions of this natural event claim divine intervention protected the sacred soil. The Hojo shogunate in Kamakura had implored the Emperor in Kyoto to coordinate the prayers of all shrines. The sun-goddess Amaterasu, that Queen of Heaven who in Chapter 17 of the *Kojiki* fled from the vulgar treatment of her brother Susano and plunged the world into darkness by hiding in a cave, was subject to a personal plea from ex-emperor Kameyama, who prayed for

delivery from the Mongol invaders the very day the typhoon struck. The power to repel foreign attacks was a most timely performance of the legitimacy of the Kyoto court.

In Mongol accounts of the failed invasion, the divine wind was more destructive than Japanese explanations of how the invaders were repelled. When Saidaiji monk Eison tried to bask in the afterglow of the typhoon's success by claiming the worship of *kami* spirits contributed to the fortuitous weather of 1281, Nichiren, a self-proclaimed incarnation of the bodhisattva destined to spread the true teachings of the Lotus Sutra, guffawed that it was little more than an autumn breeze and a few splashes of brine that kept the Mongols out of Hakata.

Production and resistance

Let me tell you a story.

A skinny white fella is writing a book. Everyday he meditates twice and he lies down after meditating. When he lies down, and just around the time he decides to wake up and go to sleep, he finds the fetal position most conducive to dreaming about his Yamakasa book. He privately wonders if this mode of gestating ideas and deciding how to proceed is a rather obsessive way to produce 700 words a day. Particularly when, after getting much appreciated feedback from critical friends, he can't sleep because the until-now almost dreamed sequence is subject to conscious cut-and-paste rewriting at the pillow face. Alpha waves are replaced by a giddy enthusiasm by the prospect of the pre-dawn rewrite.

One day this gaunt and pallid tangle of conflicted emotions has a dream about what to write next. Someone bigger than him says "He can't

do that. That's my thing. What does he know about Yamakasa? *I AM Yamakasa. I practice and participate every year!*"

Someone pasty and spare is writing a book, and he is suspicious of authority. He is suspicious of his authority in university classrooms, he is suspicious of authority in tea rooms and spaces where noh is taught and performed. Although he is suspicious of these forms of authority, he is also grateful for employment that allows him to submit to the discipline of obsession for the duration of sabbatical leave. He is grateful for the trust of tea and noh teachers who have initiated him into deeper knowledge of the pleasures and responsibilities of those rich and complex traditions. He notes with a disappointed admiration how the women who teach these traditions often resort to resistance: their superior embodiment of the tradition rebukes the often masculinist forms of authority of these systems of cultural transmission. As a part time lecturer, each Friday he visits a certain university where he teaches exchange students the little he knows about how the universes of tea and noh operate as meritocracies. When, in an occasional moment of deprecatory irony, he makes the claim for himself that he is a victim of Japanese high culture, some exchange students laugh at this curious attitude to one's professional authority.

A wan and lean receptacle of cultural studies and other debates about cultural nationalism and transmission is writing a book, and he is suspicious of the authority of the author. He sees the voice-of-god theory, that disembodied expert who opines from on high untouched by the grain of history, culture, or the body, as something probably exploitive and therefore not to be trusted. High cultural theory has its place, and can be useful as a foundation for framing how we think about the complexities of

social life. However the passionate details of alternative cosmologies and inner lives on the ground at Kushida Shrine are important to him, and something more than the thick description of ethnography is required.

The importance of higher education

Eight U. S. airmen captured after their B-29 crashed on May 5th 1945 were transported to Kyūshū Imperial University on May 17th. At the Anatomy Department Building, four fatal vivisection experiments were conducted: on May 17 (2 men); May 22 (2 men); May 25 (1 man); and June 2 (3 men). Staff members of Anatomy Department cremated eight cadavers. Some removed organs were preserved in formaldehyde. False records documenting the death of the captured airmen during a mid-June U. S. bombing of Fukuoka were fabricated. These first drafts were later revised to take advantage of the destruction of Hiroshima. The final report suggested that airmen died when Enola Gay detonated Little Boy on August 6th 1945.

This paper trail resulted in this incident catching the attention of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East which convened from May 3rd 1946 until November 12th 1948. The Tokyo War Crimes Trials sentenced 30 people in connection with these vivisections and related events. Of the 30 cases tried, 14 Kyūshū Imperial University personnel from the ranks of professor, associate professor, research student, or nurse were found guilty. At the initial sentencing, sentences ranged from death, life imprisonment, and prison terms from 3 to 25 years. Five suspects who were not associated with Kyūshū Imperial University were found not guilty of the consumption of human liver at a barbecue.

Dr Ishiyama Fukujiro, Chief of the First Surgery Clinic, was one member of the Faculty of Medicine of Kyūshū Imperial University who did not go to trial. He hung himself in prison in July 1946. His suicide note read, in part, "I have devoted my heart and soul in giving medical treatment to the American soldiers. However, I regret that they did not understand me. My children have no reason to be ashamed."

Surviving members of the Faculty of Medicine at Kyūshū Imperial University examined their institution's role in the vivisections. Once the Tribunal had adjourned in 1948, the university reported the outcome of their deliberations: "even if the events occurred as has been said," Kyūshū Imperial University can accept no responsibility because its Hakozaki campus facilities were under military jurisdiction and being used without the explicit permission of the university.

General Douglas MacArthur reduced these sentences in September 1950 as Japan was no longer an enemy: an ally has no need for the victor's justice, and thankfully no one was executed. Endo Shusaku's 1957 novel, *Umi to Dokuyaku (The Sea and Poison)*, addressed the nature of morality suggested by these Kyūshū Imperial University vivisection experiments. As part of his postwar critique of national tales of self-invention, in 1986 Kumai Kei adapted Endo's novel for the screen and retained the novel's title for his film.

Fictocriticism

Someone sits, facing an iBook. Fictocritical writing offers him evocative ways to catch something of what is precious about the Yamakasa mindset while mapping the fingerprints of the author onto the narrative

surface. The story of Yamakasa is contained in the telling, not merely captured in his words. Acknowledging the teller is part of the tale opens spaces for the reader to evaluate the credibility of what he is saying and to identify silences, of which there are many.

He aspires to write fictions in matters of impassioned Yamakasa truths but is stumped by the corporeal forfeit of narrative. The text is where the body of the author is not. The master narrative of postcolonial between-ness, being at home abroad, balances dwelling and displacement by juggling the disciplines of theory and travel. A cameo appearance by the problematic of the observer, driven by the desire to interpret and desires for identification. He recognizes that these desires for meaning and belonging are mediated by appeals to local configurations of authority and constrained by the interpretative limits of those identities. The fictocritical menu being offered includes fictive techniques but feasible relationships, the coupling of memory and imagination, senses capturing that elusive sense of place, and the genre smorgasbord.

As a tenure track victim of Japanese high culture, he sees cultural practices, including the concatenation of tea, noh, and Yamakasa that sustain a particular account of Hakata local identity, as pleasure and power. As a consumer of that identity, occasionally prone to ostentatious displays of Hakata-*ben* dialect, he has memories of passing as a low-intermediate insider of certain sections of the tea, noh, and Yamakasa communities.

He understands his associate membership of Yamakasa in these terms. During the past three decades, his Nambō Ryū tea teacher has taught more than ten students who perform the sacramental *kencha* tea rite at Kushida

Shrine on July 12th. For the past two decades, his Takayasu Ryū noh drum teacher has performed at the *shizumu* noh performance that concludes Yamakasa by settling the festive atmosphere down after Nishi *nagare* have trashed their float in a ritualized frenzy of I-don't-know-what.

Being able to read the details of the sacramental tea and recognize the nuances of the noh programme and its performance is a different way of identifying with the totality of Yamakasa. The able male Hakata body is the conventional site for authentic Yamakasa knowing, legitimated by the *happi* coat uniform and animated by the desire to attain and wear emblems of rank. As a community festival presenting itself as the embodiment of Hakata spirit, however, Yamakasa offers multiple points of entry and different ways of knowing. When a festival conjures such a strongly gendered local identity, the spectre of the gatekeeper inevitably emerges, appointing itself the duty of determining who can legitimately know what. Even within the *nagare* teams the gatekeeper mentality is a force to be reckoned with by relative Yamakasa newcomers: the standard unit of orthodox authority is one generation of Yamakasa participation.

Pine tree

The territory of Kumai Kei is the fable of the nation, the individual costs of consuming that tale, and the possibility of being consumed in the name of the nation by that myth. Critics like Satō Tadao have been sensitive to his exposure of the counterfactual elements of the mythology of the Japanese nation, characterizing early Kumai works as "villain films" with "power structures as the enemies of democracy". Kumai's film, *Sen no Rikyū: Honkakubō Ibun (Death of a Tea Master)*, is one memorable example

of this villain film genre. Instead of crude institutions as the obstacles to be overcome, this 1989 film points to something more seductive that lurks in the vicinity of our more delicate sensibilities: the dangers of identifying with an aestheticized national identity.

Sen no Rikyū (1522-1591) was an elite merchant-tea master who served both Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Under Nobunaga, merchant-tea masters including Imai Sōkyū and Rikyū were major players in *chanoyu seiji*, sixteenth century practices of using tearoom spaces as a discreet venue for economic, political, and military activities. Although several merchant-tea masters were noted exponents of this other-than-aesthetic use of tearooms while Nobunaga was alive, Rikyū became the designated Number One Tea Man under the patronage of Hideyoshi. In an era stricken by civil war, tea became a final rite for elite warriors before they entered the battlefield. Instead of tea having the taste of Zen, it reeked of blood.

Tea masters were not immune to contamination of this sort. Yamanoue Sōji (1544-1590) and Furuta Oribe (1543-1615) were two tea masters who were ordered to fall on their swords in the honourable manner reserved for privileged members of the warrior class. More than four hundred years after the death of Rikyū by ritual suicide, the historical debate about Rikyū's *seppuku* continues. Did Hideyoshi order Rikyū to commit *seppuku*, or did Rikyū defiantly choose it for himself?

In *Rikyū*, the 1989 film directed by Teshigahara Hiroshi, Rikyū asserts he has no reason to apologise to Hideyoshi. Rather than make an empty but life-saving apology that reaffirms the status of Hideyoshi as the embodiment of absolute authority, Teshigahara's Rikyū chooses not to accept the

offer of help from Hideyoshi's wife: "Why is everyone trying to make me crawl?"

In Kumai's *Death of a Tea Master* film, Rikyū chooses the road of *seppuku*. When Hideyoshi enters the tea room, his breath is taken by a glance at the alcove. A flower is displayed in a bamboo container and a sword has been thrust horizontally through the vase. When Kumai's Rikyū thanks Hideyoshi for the death sentence as that one gift which allowed Rikyū to understand the true nature of *wabi*, Hideyoshi protests: "But you don't need to disembowel yourself. Let's change the subject. How about you make another bowl of tea?" Rikyū refuses to serve a bowl of tea to his master, bows farewell and remains in the down position as Hideyoshi stands up. A point of view shot from the alcove shows Kumai's Hideyoshi look back as he flashes a puzzled stare at the sword displayed in the alcove. Hideyoshi exits the tearoom. In an explicitly cinematic moment the *tokonoma* alcove display of the flower and the sword in the bamboo vase slowly dissolve, leaving Rikyū alone with the bare *tokonoma*.

Kumai made *Sen no Rikyū: Honkakubō Ibun* with the co-operation of the grand master descendants of Rikyū, and all three Houses of Sen were extremely uncomfortable with the prospect of a graphically realistic depiction of the death of their deified ancestor. Although Kumai's Assistant Director Hara Kazuo had organized a meeting between actor Mifune Toshiro and an unnamed *seppuku* researcher, Hara offered the idea of using cherry blossoms as a metaphor for the decision of Sen no Rikyū to commit ritual suicide. The expressionist use of the almost monochrome cherry blossom sequence, where uncountable masses of cherry blossoms were fearfully driven by violent winds of fate, gives Kumai's film a

powerful contemporary resonance.

Kumai's use of cherry blossoms as a visual substitute for Rikyū's death by ritual suicide draws together an idea of sacramental identity that links the thirteenth century Mongol attempt to invade Hakata with the ill-fated generation of Japanese youth conscripted into suicide squads in the final throes of World War Two. The sakura sequence connects the fatalistic determination of Rikyū with that lethal aesthetic conjured in the nationalist discourses of transience that justified the Pacific War special attack units.

Outside Japan these units were known as the so-called kamikaze squads. The kamikaze reference brings to mind that divine wind that reputedly routed Mongol invaders from Hakata twice, in 1274 and 1281. Sakura was the name taken by special attack unit groups, and squad name variations with cherry blossom references include: Yamazakura Tai, Mountain Sakura Corps (23rd October 1944); Wakazakura Tai, Young Sakura Corps (25th October 1944); Hatsuzakura Tai, First Sakura Corps (29th October 1944); Yoshino Tai, Yoshino Corps (25th November 1944), Sakurai Tai, Sakura Well Corps (7th December 1944).

Dominant readings of Kumai's 1989 film are sensitive to this use of seasonal scenery as one representation of Japan as the community of unnatural death. Behind platitudes like "Japan has four seasons" that invent the national community is a coercive slippage between the natural and the social: because cherry blossoms have always fallen before their prime, you too, young pilots and sailors, must die. Consider the final death poem calligraphy of Fukuoka youth, Shibamoto Katsumi who flew out from Chiran on April 3rd 1945: "Scatter [die] laughing. What is a Kuroda

warrior? That is me."

Readers of social theory might opine that tea practices centring on Sen no Rikyū are elements of a politicised Japanese culture, an ideology that communicates the lethal transience of human life by insisting on the primacy of state over individual. Tea room insiders would however gently note that aspects of Rikyū's tea practices are preserved by Nambō Ryū, a school of tea centred in Hakata.

The opening sequence of Tanaka Kinuyo's 1962 film *Oginsama* records one Rikyū innovation that remains part of the Nambō Ryū repertoire: the hanging of a small tea kettle from a pine tree, and using fallen pine needles to heat the water. Tachibana Jitsuzan showed his respect for the deceased Rikyū by building a monument on the Hakozaki site of this July 1587 tea gathering where Rikyū served tea to Hideyoshi. This tea gathering was called 柴火の会, presumably because of the colour of the burning pine needles, and the site was called Kamakake no Matsu. Tourist information signs at the relevant subway exit provide directions to the actual site of this pine tree outside a Faculty of Medicine building on the Kyūshū University Hakozaki campus. When this site was relocated, members of Nambō Ryū performed this *kake kama temae* on the new site of the Kamakake no Matsu.

Earlier films by Kumai criticise the individually destructive programme of national (re)construction by noting that the company has replaced the military as the institution that consumes the identities of its subjects. In Hakata, as Nambō Ryū employ a *daisu* tea stand to sacramentalise local identity and history, the figure of Rikyū loiters close at hand.

After the performance of sacramental tea before the altar of Kushida Shrine, the Nambō Ryū school of tea serve tea to their members and guests in two venues inside Kushida Shrine. The *nodate* style of serving is conducted outside under a red umbrella, and is informal enough to encourage the Yamakasa men to sit down on the wooden benches in their loincloth-*happi* coat uniforms and drink tea before they depart on their mid-afternoon July 13th event. A more intimate experience is offered inside one of the Kushida Shrine buildings for people who can remove their footwear before entering the tea room. The storage space to the left of the alcove is screened off by a curtain. As we serve tea to our guests we are conscious that behind that curtain is a rather intriguing tableau of the overlap between seventeenth century Hakata and early twentieth century Japan. Silently scrutinizing the host-guest interactions on the other side of the curtain sit three life-sized figures made by local Hakata *ningyō* doll artists: Sen no Rikyū in his priest garb is flanked by Hakata merchants Shimai Sōshitsu and Kamiya Sōtan. Displayed above these three merchant-tea men is a photograph commemorating the nineteen forties visit of the Shōwa Emperor to Kushida Shrine.

Reception

One response to the justifiably protective anxieties of authenticity adjudicators may be to point towards the reality of many possible forms of Yamakasa communal membership: able and *nagare*-affiliated Hakata male bodies as the privileged site of corporeal authenticity; the invisible labour of Yamakasa women that makes the public display of the one-pointed focus of Yamakasa runners possible; the pleasures of being an appreciative audience

member when Yamakasa anecdotes circulate through the social networks of neighbourhood; and the thrill of recognition as local dialect and identities appear in nation-wide media reports of Yamakasa. Leaving aside the transient insights of nomad theory generated by theorists on the move as they hunt and gather funding and other artifacts associated with global intellectual commodities, for long-term residents there is also the possibility of a more bureaucratic identification with Yamakasa. As a payer of municipal taxes, it is satisfying to contribute to something sacramental and communal when the local newspapers are reporting the private profiteering occurring under the cover of incompetently managed public works projects, the shortfalls of which are being funded by future generations of Fukuoka citizens.

The diversity of a broadly defined Yamakasa community as corporeal, social, linguistic, and civic implies numerous possibilities for representing Yamakasa in writing. Different forms of authority will be inclined to rule some of those textual representations as illegitimate, because of who is speaking or the combination of genres employed. No problem. My preferred form of validity is driven by the desire that the Yamakasa audience celebrate the truth of recognition in these pages.

My efforts are directed at presenting the persistent charms of Yamakasa, and exploring the reasons for its longevity, hundreds of years after Hakata ceased to be afflicted by the plague. As a member of the networks that combine to produce the Yamakasa experience I have a long term interest in not alienating those kind souls who have generously shared their traditions with me. I am in the business of transmitting aspects of these traditions to those younger than me, and it is a business

with sacramental, theoretical, aesthetic, and communal forms of authority.

Here is the hard reflexivity of acknowledging that these composite selves are part of what I am exploring on these pages: these Hakata montages and the limited selection of Yamakasa texts examined are filtered through a shifting complex of emotional, social, and historical states. Under these circumstances producing a fictocritical snapshot of Yamakasa as the creation of meaning and self-making, the addition of certain conventions and other fining agents could have increased the general stability of the narrative and reduced the harsh flavors and unwanted aromas of imagining a different form of community. Instead of being ready to knock back a nice drop redolent with the added luster of a partial engagement with narrativity, readers should perhaps grit their teeth as a preparation for the appearance of disturbed trajectories, visible sediments of rejected closure, and other grainy tannins of hopefully partial bewilderment.

As a procession member of the Noko Okunchi festival, I share the sentiments of the more urban Kushida Shrine Okunchi festival, and cherish a slightly more removed admiration for the intensity of Hakata Gion Yamakasa. What you are left with as a reader is an eye to identify certain silences in the text, gender being the most apparent absence. There is also a need to interrogate the category of not you/like you. I am inclined to harbour suspicions of a near cognate of that inside/outside distinction, the culturally naturalized non-citizen.

It is better to give than receive: 6/19/45, Mission 211

Each Friday, I have an important appointment. After teaching a tea

class for exchange students and regular Japanese students at Kyūshū University and before returning to Noko, my island home in Hakata Bay, I go to my tea teacher's home in Minoshima. (And yes, the place name could be translated as the Island of Beauty. The river bank is about four hundred metres from the Tokushige house.) On a warm autumn afternoon, my Nambō Ryū tea teacher, Tokushige sensei, gave me a book produced by local community members to commemorate an anniversary of Narayamachi School. Tokushige sensei often gave me materials and information that she thought would be relevant to my project. In this case, her stated intention was to give me something that would document pre-war everyday life. First-hand accounts of the devastating effects of Mission 211 on wooden residential buildings were also drawn to my attention by Tokushige sensei.

The American view of wartime Fukuoka, outlined by the target description contained in the target information sheet ("NOT TO BE TAKEN INTO THE AIR ON COMBAT MISSIONS") belongs to a much more lethal discourse, unconcerned with niceties of handling tea scoops, or the pleasures of transmitting tea culture across generational and cultural lines:

Numerous industries are located in and around Fukuoka, including two iron works producing naval ordnance, and a rubber company estimated to be producing 700 tires daily. Some textile mills and a number of warehouses are also located here. ... The city is a funnel for all types of transportation. Kyushu main highway runs through the city, the harbor receives a large part of the shipping from Korea, and a major branch of the Kyushu RR runs through town with the Hakata Yards, Target 1270, serving it. ...

Besides the destruction of a good deal of industry, an incendiary attack on Fukuoka should destroy or disrupt important regional administrative and governmental facilities. It should also post [sic] another problem for the already over-burdened Kyushu transportation system, and create a serious housing problem for governmental and industrial workers in the area.

P-47s bombed Hakata on June 19, Itazuke, and Saitozaki Airfields on June 23 and 24 as part of Mission 221. Hakata Harbor was mined. The target information sheet noted that the network of rivers and streams crossing Hakata, including the broad stream near Minoshima, would be inefficient as firebreaks. The reality of that American assessment was more graphically confirmed by the details recorded by the Narayamachi publication.

A Potentially Falsifiable Fictocritical Genealogy

1:1 A feminist tale of the generation of Fictocriticism, conceived by Cultural Studies, out of Aesthetics, his less than coherent bricolage of Imaginaires, Panopticon Gazes, and Bodies (Actual, Ideal, Immaterial, Invisible, and Otherwise-no hierarchy intended), speculatively told by A Tosser for Potential Audiences.

1:2 Modernist Dissatisfaction begat All Sorts of Ethnography; All Sorts of Ethnography begat Searches for User Meanings; and User Meanings begat Practices of Consumption; and User begat Consumer and Consumption. **1:3** And Persons begat Structure, and Structure begat Processes; and Individual and Group Creativity begat Cultural Production. **1:4** And Cultural Production begat Commodification, Codification, and the

co-joined twins of Political Co-optation and/or Resistance. **1:5** And Political Co-optation and/or Resistance knew Textual Pleasures who begat Subversive Selves, of whom was born Reflective Presentation of The Written Self, who is called Fictocriticism.

On the fertile field of the analysis and practice of everyday Yamakasa festival life (including but not limited to demystifying archetypes including The Shrine, The Tea Room, and The Noh Stage), the coupling of Fascinated Outsider with Celebrant of Popular Culture resulted in complications. Specifically, tensions arising between Positivism and Magic: Faith in Universal Theory pulled the hair of Wide-eyed Presentation, and Production of Written Self ("Reminiscence") may have cast aspersions on the reputation of A More Disembodied Ethnography ("Thick Description"). A duel with Staying Put as Ancient Trope facing down Reiterative Narratives of the Modern put a time-stopping gap between Memory and Aesthetics. Women's Local History Discourses of Memory were busy wrangling Tourist Sites as Social Conflict. Breaking the embrace of A Willing Suspension of Disbelief from Illusory Senses of Closure revealed the methodological stakes were banal, not high: would More Than Theoretical Self-Justification pin Identity in Place?

Hakata Bay Murders: Crime, Cooperation, Punishment

After the four bodies of the Matsumoto family were dragged from Hakata Bay in June 2002, three exchange students from China were charged and convicted. The investigation of this case involved direct co-operation between Fukuoka Prefecture police and Chinese detectives because these two countries have no bilateral extradition treaty. Of the two

students tried in the Chinese courts, the 24 year old student received the death penalty and the 22 year old student was given a life sentence. The Japanese media had interpreted the language of the Chinese prosecution team as implying that both suspects would have the honour of the customary one bullet salute. The fate of the remaining 24 year old student has yet to be determined by the decidedly more glacial Japanese court system.

The Liaoyang City Intermediate People's Court in Liaoning Province, northeastern China took the extraordinary measure of granting Japanese media access to the closed court of this Chinese criminal trial. The Liaoning court supplied Japanese translations of crucial elements of the trial. The Japanese media said precious little about the *privilege* of receiving permission to cover the legal proceedings, or the unprecedented levels of support given by Chinese detectives to the prosecution's case in the Japanese court system. The announcement of the verdicts was conducted under similar courtesies, with Japanese translations available.

Political consideration of the implications for Chinese-Japanese relations may have resulted in the delayed handing down of the two verdicts by the Liaoyang City Intermediate People's Court. Relations between Beijing and Tokyo were extremely tense because of a wide cluster of issues that included systematic Japanese attempts to whitewash Japanese interpretations of early modern history. Negotiations that would hopefully move to a successful closure on the question of a mini-summit meeting between Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro and Chinese President Hu Jintao were agonizingly stalled. November came before the two leaders, who were barely on speaking terms, finally met.

Numerous commentators inside Japan noted that Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro had been deliberately antagonizing his Chinese and South Korean counterparts. While ignoring overseas protests and calls to exercise self-restraint, Koizumi repeatedly visited Yasukuni Shrine.

Yasukuni Shrine was a major player in State Shinto from 1879 up to 1945, unifying the nation, religion, and fallen soldiers. From 1872, publicly funded Extraordinary Government Shrines to the war dead became religious institutions. The Ministries of the Army and the Navy assumed administrative control of Yasukuni Shrine in 1879. Monthly prayers for Japanese victory were held at Yasukuni Shrine during the wars against China (1894-5) and Russia (1904-5), and in 1932 the Yasukuni Shrine festival day was declared a national holiday. Directives were issued suggesting that school students and teachers should celebrate that national holiday by making pilgrimages to Yasukuni Shrine.

One key doctrine that resulted in this imposition of Shinto as the official religion of Japan was the belief that Japanese identity was a sacrament more precious than the life of individual Japanese. "Let's meet at Yasukuni" was a popular farewell for kamikaze pilots and sailors about to depart on their fatal missions. Along with the souls of 14 convicted Class A war criminals, roughly two million Japanese who have died fighting on the side of the Emperor in civil wars and regional conflicts since the mid-nineteenth century are compulsorily interred there.

Japanese Christians and Koreans are also memorialized at Yasukuni Shrine, often against the explicit wishes of their surviving relatives. After fifteen years of litigation, Christian Nakaya Yasuko failed to reverse the unwanted internment of her husband at Yasukuni Shrine. On June 1st 1988

the Supreme Court overruled the deliberations of two lower courts and ruled 14-1 against her effort to reclaim her husband from the 'divine nation' narrative of Japanese identity. The Tokyo District Court on May 25th 2006 rejected a suit filed by 414 plaintiffs demanding the removal of South Korean soldiers who died serving in Japanese military forces from Yasukuni Shrine and seeking compensation totaling 4.4 billion yen.

Lawsuits at the district courts of Chiba, Fukuoka, Matsuyama, Naha, Osaka, and Tokyo have disputed the constitutionality of Koizumi's Yasukuni visits made since 2001. These separate actions assert that Koizumi's Yasukuni visits violate the separation of state and religion guaranteed under the Japanese Constitution.

The international ramifications of Koizumi's Yasukuni visits were no longer hot copy once the preliminary case for multiple murders had been established against these three twenty something sons of their mothers. Opportunist politicians and jingoistic media began competing with each other to denounce the so-called Chinese crime wave. Tokyo Governor Ishihara Shintaro conveniently made no mention of police statistics that document the 97% monopoly Japanese citizens have on crime. Having made that initial omission, Ishihara is saved the embarrassment of doing the math: historically crimes committed by foreigners tend to account for between 2% and 3% of legal transgressions, and people identifying as Chinese are statistically responsible for about half of that figure on an annual basis. The Mainichi Shimbun newspaper only had enough space to mention the latter half of 3% fact; a 97% monopoly held by the primary demographic of their readership is apparently not newsworthy.

The anti-Chinese bias of Japanese media was painfully obvious to

Japan's resident Chinese, Taiwanese and Korean populations. The contemporary presence of these *zainichi* communities has its origin in Japan's imperial excesses. *Zainichi* community representatives refer to another multiple murder prosecuted by Fukuoka Prefecture to document the extent of this anti-Chinese attitude in the Japanese media. In September Fukuoka Prefecture police arrested a Japanese gangster, his wife and sons in connection with the Suwa River murders of a 15-year-old high-school student, his 18-year-old brother, their 58-year-old mother, and a 17-year-old friend. When compared to the breadth, depth, and longevity of the publicity surrounding the Hakata Bay murders, the national media was almost restrained in their tone and coverage of the Suwa River murders. One global constant of big news on the national screen is the self-other dialectic: citizens killing friends and their family members is less newsworthy than foreigners killing citizens.

Family

Narratives, like the tales recorded in the growth rings of individual trees whose presence sustain the life cycle of forests, have their own circuitous logic.

Cootamundra, NSW, Australia. A buck-toothed boy, working hard on the serious business of creating fond memories of practicing soccer in the summer shade of those peppercorn trees. Yep, just around the corner from the birthplace of cricketing legend Sir Donald Bradman. Curly hair oblivious to the fact that there were no soccer fields until his father established a soccer club. Ron Cross, a name recorded in the plaque of the new Cootamundra Town Hall. Enjoying the flood of yellow globes across

the surrounding hills that mysteriously arrived each year in time for the Cootamundra Wattle Festival. And one fatherhood and two continents later, I spend Wednesday afternoon with my son and his classmates, kicking a soccer ball around Waverley Primary School. Three decades after leaving Cootamundra, these innocent recollections of father-son transmissions and solo macho are smashed in Japan by reading that Cootamundra was one institutional destination for the Stolen Generation, aboriginal children taken from their families and put in the 'protection' of the State. Knowing this history, hidden until it was flushed out by a Royal Commission into aboriginal deaths in custody and the 'White Invader or Settler?' history wars, brings a different interpretation to the John William's melancholy song "Cootamundra Wattle".

Narrow definitions of the authentic line the streets of our lives like landmines, waiting for any indiscrete contact by transgressors whose footsteps venture off the well-travelled track of common sense and orthodoxy. The other catch is that being smack bang in the centre of any scene administered by gatekeepers can be a crowded piece of turf to try to hold down. Never mind the mosh pit violations delicate sensibilities must endure just to get in the queue to be validated as a true believer. A couple of layers of scar tissue is often a prerequisite for being recognized as a card carrying member of any group.

Hakata is here

Reading Hakata local history as a stage for national struggles about the definition of what makes Japanese identity a sacrament confirms several more universal themes: geographical and cultural boundaries are as

porous as individual identities; the cultural sphere is political; and identity can be lethal when it becomes a sacrament that demands individual subservience to an narrowly defined ideal of 'the authentic'.

Interpretations of the distant and recent past continue to be the source of heated debates in the Japanese national media. Being a gateway brings certain benefits and responsibilities. Hakata benefited from increased commercial, diplomatic, and intellectual exchanges with the continent from the seventh century onwards. The seventeenth century merchant tea men of Hakata were brave souls, cool enough under pressure to retain a sense of the value of life's finer things. (If you were in Baghdad enduring the splinter bombs of American democracy, would you pause to roll up a Picasso and slip it down the front your shirt, before quietly slipping away?) Occasionally performing the role of gatekeeper meant trying to expel invading forces armed with superior might. Up against certain defeat by advanced military technology, desperate appeals to local deities were an important backup to strengthening the fortifications around Hakata Bay. Although recent scholarship on the Mongol invasion scrolls commissioned by Takezaki Suenaga suggests that defenders and invaders were much more evenly matched than anecdotal accounts suggest, tales of the intervention of the divine kamikaze typhoons established and sustained the belief in local identity as sacrament.

Certain elements of this local history remain very real for participants of the Yamakasa festival at Kushida Shrine, a sacred Hakata site. From the sixteenth century onwards the Hakata area was dominated by trading and bargaining as members of the merchant classes basked in the afterglow of the achievements of Shimai Sōshitsu and Kamiya Sōtan. The idea of an

authentic Hakata individual personality is defined against the background of this Yamakasa meta-narrative of local masculine identity.

The Hakata past is sedimented on the Yamakasa body, and the bodily performance of the ritual reenactments of the Yamakasa rites spark cultural memories. Our memories are more than personal recollections of a life history of moving to some local masteries that intersects with a tale of how the traditions of a Hakata festival have evolved. Our memories exceed a cognitive ability to recall external facts, like the date of the most recent redistribution of the boundaries of Yamakasa *nagare* teams (1966). Cultural memories expand beyond the expertise of psychoanalysts and psychologists because cultural memories are sustained by the capacity to reproduce a certain performance: habit memory.

Acknowledgements

This paper is composed of fragments from a larger work-in-progress, written for a non-specialist audience. The intention is to explore the relationships between local Hakata identity and national culture. My general interest is in the category of the sacred. I hope to map how certain configurations invite investments in the idea of group membership as a sacrament. Elements here were conceived and/or written during my sabbatical at UTS and I would like to acknowledge the encouragement of Professor Stephen Muecke and Dr Katrina Schlunke and the Institute for International Studies support of Dr Kate Barclay. I would also like to thank Dr Ian McArthur (Macquarie University) and Seiko Yasumoto (University of Sydney) for the opportunity to discuss this project at SYNLAB 2007: Media, Cultures and Social Networks in a presentation

entitled "Gendering Hakata: Yamakasa as social and media networks".

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