CLOTHING THEIR IDENTITIES: COMPETING IDEAS OF
MASCULINITY AND IDENTITY IN MEIJI
JAPANESE CULTURE
A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF ARTS

BY

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JULY 2013
Acknowledgements

There are many people I would like to thank for their help and advice during my years as a student at Ball State University. First, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Kenneth Swope, for guiding me through a significant portion of North East Asian history for so many years in so many classes and for your invaluable insight and advice while writing this thesis. Second, I would like to thank Dr. Ken Hall for stepping in and helping me through the finishing of my thesis and my degree when I worried I might not accomplish either. I also need to thank Dr. Carolyn Malone for her words of wisdom in regards to and enthusiasm for masculinity studies and for your turning my attention to masculinity studies in the first place. I most certainly must thank Dr. Daniel Ingram for helping me get all of the (what seemed like) millions of technical problems fixed, saving me time, money, and the need to take anxiety medicine! Finally, thank you to my supportive family, my sympathetic friends, and my patient co-workers who put up with the seemingly never-ending process that was my degree.
If you were to look up the meaning of culture, you would find that it could be described as “the predominating attitudes and behavior that characterize the functioning of a group or organization.”\(^1\) It is a simple and straightforward description with no evidence of complexity and as such, it cannot begin to convey the reality of that word. In truth, culture in real world application is endlessly complicated. This is extremely evident when the cultures of two distinctly different groups intersect. Take, for instance, the meeting of a person born and raised in the culture of present day New York City and someone presently living in my rural hometown in Indiana. “New York” might find “Indiana” too passive and boring while “Indiana” might find “New York” too abrasive and aggressive.\(^2\) While cultural differences between two people from the same country are significant enough, the differences only increase when the people involved are from different continents. This was especially true in Japan during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when Japan began to interact with the Western world. Before this time, now known as the Meiji period, Japan and the West had mostly secondary knowledge of one another. With the coming of the imperialist era in the West, the secondhand knowledge soon became primary knowledge. The two distinctly different culture sets meshed and clashed in one of the most fascinating episodes in world history.

The Meiji period, regarded by many as the beginning of the modern period in Japanese history, was rife with change and differing ideals.\(^3\) The culture shock experienced by the average United States citizen visiting Japan, or vice versa, during the present time is nothing

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1. Webster’s Dictionary.
2. This is not a certainty, but in my experience, this was a reality. In my undergraduate days, I had a very interesting conversation with a girl in my Advanced Communications class. She discussed with me the things that most annoyed her about the Midwest where our college was located. As she described to her what she loved about the city, I found myself feeling oppressed by her preferred lifestyle of constant activity with no time out in nature. While this is one instance, it stuck in my head as a true testament of cultural differences.
3. The Meiji period followed the Tokugawa period. The end of the Tokugawa period is also referred to as the *bakamatsu* period, which basically means end of bakufu.
when compared to the shock the Japanese experienced after the so-called “opening of Japan” by Commodore Matthew Perry in 1853. Unlike a modern Westerner visiting Japan today who could experience culture and then return home, the people of the Meiji period could do little but watch as foreign ideas invaded and changed many aspects of Japanese existence. Within a few decades of Perry’s arrival, a rigid social structure that had been in place for centuries was replaced by a more flexible system and previously banned foreigners travelled freely through the ports of Japan. Traditionally taboo foods like beef and other animal products became staples in Japanese cuisine, forcing the people to disregard centuries of religious and cultural practices that limited the Japanese diet to food items like rice and fish. Traditional ideas of masculine clothing also changed. For centuries, robes, long split skirts, and geta sandals were the traditional methods of dressing for men but after Matthew Perry’s visit and the influx of Western influence, pieces of Western-style dress permeated the wardrobes of many Japanese men.

These changes seem unimportant to us now but they were quite drastic for many people of the Meiji period as they affected all aspects of life. They were also unavoidable as their government was instrumental in forcing the changes upon them. Instead, many found surprising and fascinating ways of coping with the changes, from adapting and adopting the changes to protesting and rejecting the changes. While all areas of Meiji culture and society felt this upheaval, narrowing down the analysis to that of Meiji Japanese masculinity offers a manageable window through which to analyze the many changes that occurred.  

4 For the purposes of this paper, discussion of homosexuality in Japanese culture will be excluded. While it is a very interesting topic and often overlaps with issues pertaining to heterosexual masculinity as discussed by this paper, space constraints limit this. While it is very true that homosexuality was an important part of samurai culture, and thus the traditionally minded men who longed for the return of samurai ideals, dissecting and understanding heterosexual masculinity in Meiji culture is onerous enough. Analyzing homosexuality in Meiji Japan vis a vis heterosexual masculinity would be quite an undertaking, even though they sometimes overlap. Additionally, in plain truth, homosexuality in Meiji culture has received more attention than heterosexual masculinity and the purpose of this paper is to increase awareness of heterosexual masculinity studies.
of masculinity I will not only focus on details that might be lost in a broader study, I also have the ability to see firsthand how even the smallest changes brought on by the invasion of Western culture affected great change in Meiji Culture.

Japanese masculinity came under great scrutiny during the Meiji period as ideas of masculinity from the powerful West caused some to believe that traditional ideas of masculinity were outdated, feminine, and essentially weak. These men adopted Western-style clothing in hopes of showing their countrymen and foreigners that they were modern men who ascribe to the masculine ideal perpetrated by Western culture. They became Japanese gentleman and were dedicated to strengthening Japan through adopting advanced Western technology. The Japanese gentlemen, however, was not uncontested. There were those who believed the Western-dressed Japanese male to be a foolish mimicker with no real ability to do anything they promised. These traditional-minded men fought against the Western-styled Japanese men through whatever means they could. The traditional-minded man sought to stem the influence of the changes brought on by Western influence.

To best explore and analyze the changes and conflicts within the topic of Meiji period masculinity, I will follow a very precise order of analysis. First, I will discuss Meiji period history in hopes of teasing out important aspects of that time that will aid in understanding the context within which modern Japanese masculinity developed. It is important to understand the history of the period because there were so many changes that happened very quickly. Secondly, I will review the historiography of the topic. It is important to understand where the field stands so that we can know where the arguments of this thesis fit. After gaining a basic understanding of Meiji period history, culture, and current historiography relative to this study’s topic, I will then discuss in detail the two prevalent and competing ideas of heterosexual masculinity in a
segment of Meiji Japanese culture that I call the “influential class.” This group was comprised of men living in metropolitan areas who were government employees, journalists, educators, businessmen, writers, and various other vocations that guided and shaped the development of Meiji Japan.5

The influential men in Meiji society came from a variety of social and monetary backgrounds. At first, many of these men were of the former noble samurai class, but of various monetary levels as many samurai families were impoverished at the end of the Tokugawa period.6 As the Meiji-era progressed and new laws demolished old social rules, men of all incomes and social backgrounds moved into positions of influence.7 By focusing on these men, we focus on the origins of most of the debates surrounding masculinity in the Meiji Period. These men lived in cities where Western influence was prevalent and they were employed in important positions in society, as already discussed. Some of the men found inspiration in the Western men they lived and worked with and pushed for the Western ideal of masculinity because they saw it as a source of power. Other men of the influential class advocated traditional Japanese masculinity because they believed that was the source of Japan’s strength. Because of their strategic geographic locations and their place in society, the influential class is an excellent vehicle for analysis of Meiji period masculinity.

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5 In some ways, this classification was inspired by the idea of an intelligent class, or intelligentsia. However, I do not want to compare them too closely for fear of bringing in notions of Marxism, Russian politics, and other such topics that would further complicate an already complicated paper. I do admit there are some similarities between what I call the “influential class” and the Russian intelligentsia, as long as the definition of intelligentsia is kept as pure as possible and only pertaining to a group of people working for the greater cultural good.

6 For instance, the famous writer Yukichi was of samurai class descent, but his family was fairly impoverished by the end of the Tokugawa period.

7 Marius Jansen, Making of Modern Japan, (Cambridge, MA: Bellknap Press, 2000). Indeed, men like famous writers Natsume Sōseki and Shimazaki Tōson were born to less noble and poorer families, yet found a way to rise up to positions of influence in Meiji society.
In order to accomplish the proposed analysis put forth, I will rely on a variety of sources from books on Meiji education to journal articles on Meiji society. In addition to the secondary sources that will aid in understanding the background of the period, I will also utilize firsthand accounts of Meiji Japan. This means that I will be using diaries, magazine articles, books, and other primary sources specifically from the Meiji period, or from 1868-1912. The most important and telling sources used in my analysis are the illustrations found in two prominent periodicals from the Meiji Period, the MaruMaru Chinbun and the Tokyo Puck. The illustrations, used very rarely by scholars of this period, offer a insight into the discussion of the high-collar gentleman and the traditional, or rough, man in Meiji Japan. The cartoons became a published attack upon the Japanese Westernized gentleman, or “high-collar man” in these cartoons for the starched collars found in Western-style men’s clothing, by those following more traditional ideas of masculinity. These satirical cartoons were found in periodicals that were widely read, some with circulations of well over 100,000, signifying that to many people, the conflict between the Westernized “high-collar” and the traditional “rough” man was an important one. Though the collar in these cartoons were integral to the cartoon and used to show how foolish the Japanese high-collar was in the eyes of the traditional Japanese man, the collar was more than just a piece of clothing. It was a way to express anger, frustration, and disappointment with the Japanese government. It was also a symbol of the conflict of ideals and identity for many of the Meiji period. These primary sources, especially the cartoons, are important not only for their information about the period, but also for the fact that they were read, discussed, written, and often about the influential class.

With all of this information in mind, I argue that though the coming of the Westerners and the changes that came with them had a major impact upon Japanese ideas of masculinity,
ultimately the uniqueness of traditional Japanese masculinity prevailed. Keeping in mind that the conflicting ideas of masculinity in the Meiji Period were a microcosm of the entire Meiji Period, I simultaneously argue that though the West influenced and modified parts of Japanese culture and society, ultimately the uniqueness of Japanese culture remained intact and a strong sense of tradition prevailed. This is all very important when one takes into consideration what occurred just a few years after the end of the Meiji period. The origins of World War II (or Second Sino-Japanese War) in North East Asia from the invasion of Korea onward, the organization of the military during this time, and even the atrocities committed by the military during the war can all be traced back to this period. In fact, aspects of modern day Japanese culture can be traced back to this time and the outcomes of these conflicts.

A Synopsis of the Meiji Era

The Meiji period of Japanese history is, with very little argument, one of the most dynamic eras in Japanese history. In less than a century, Japan went from relative isolation to a major world power. Historians point to the arrival of Commodore Matthew Perry from the United States in 1853 as the spark that ignited the rapid modernization that affected almost every aspect of the Japanese way of life. Well-known historian W.G. Beasley described Perry’s arrival as “the beginning of both a new phase in Japan’s relations with the West and the politics surrounding them.” The Tokugawa bakufu, or the military government that ruled Japan at the time of Perry’s arrival, felt this new phase quite severely. For many years, the bakufu had

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8It is important to note that during the Tokugawa period, the isolation, of sakoku, imposed by the bakufu was not as isolationist as some would believe. The Dutch traders had access to Nagasaki, as did the Chinese. Occasional trade with Korea was allowed as well through northern ports. For more on the truth about sakoku and Japanese isolationism, see W.G. Beasley, The Meiji Restoration, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1972), pp74-78, the volume edited by Marius B. Jansen, The Cambridge History of Japan: Volume V, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989) pgs 432-434, and even Peter Booth Wiley, Yankees in the Land of the Gods: Commodore Perry and the Opening of Japan, (New York: Viking, 1990.)
9 Beasley, Meiji Restoration, 87-98.
10 Ibid, 98.
received information through the designated port for foreign trade, Nagasaki, about the steady crumbling of the neighboring Chinese government under the onslaught of Western encroachment into China’s land, economy, and culture. News of the forceful British intrusion of the former Asian power of China in the 1840s understandably worried the bakufu, especially since China had served as Japan’s mentor for centuries. The fall of China unsettled the Japanese government. If China, a former Asian superpower, succumbed to Western intrusion, what would happen to Japan?11

When Perry’s expedition sailed into Edo bay, those in the highest levels of the bakufu were willing to listen to and accommodate the American foreigners.12 However, the bakufu listened a little too well, at least according to many non-bakufu Japanese who argued that the bakufu gave the foreigners too many rights within Japan.13 The opening of treaty ports for Western use and the unequal treaties adopted by the bakufu that favored the West left many Japanese people angry. The bakufu attempted to appease the United States and other Western powers with limited use of these ports in the hopes that by offering at least some access they could spare Japan from the same type of Western encroachment that had befallen China. By 1863, however, seven ports were opened to Western residency and trade.14 Opponents to the bakufu saw these appeasements as betrayals, especially as the West continued to gain ever-increasing access to Japan. The Westerners did not stay sequestered in designated quarters or on

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11 The ruling dynasty in China at this time was the Qing, or Manchu. They were actually not of Chinese origin, but this little fact did not bother the Japanese in the same way that the Western intrusion in China did.
12 Wiley, pgs 38-54.
13 Ibid., 115. Beasley points out that it was not just those in high offices or status that were angered by the bakufu agreements with the West, but those of the middle and lower samurai ranks were angry as well.
14 Jansen, Making of Modern Japan, 284.
an artificial island as foreigners had for centuries in Nagasaki, but were soon strolling casually through the streets.\textsuperscript{15}

It is important to realize that at this time the Tokugawa bakufu existed as a separate entity from the imperial throne. The bakufu, a military government rather than a civilian one built around the Tokugawa shogun headed samurai and daimyo hierarchy, governed and ruled Japan during the Tokugawa. The emperor existed as a remote and impoverished figurehead. As the Tokugawa consolidated their power behind a complex network of subordinate daimyo regional lords and their local samurai dependents, animosity towards the Tokugawa rule fermented. Increasing animosity, due in great part to the perceived weakness of the bakufu, eventually resulted in a full-scale rebellion. Members from various powerful daimyo domains, especially those of the south controlled by the Satsuma and Chōshū samurai networks, banded together to overthrow the Tokugawa. By the late 1850s and early 1860s, the Tokugawa were losing power to rival factions of samurai who had allied with townsfolk. The anti-bakufu forces eventually overthrew the Tokugawa and, in 1868, the Emperor Meiji ascended to the throne, ushering in an era of great change.\textsuperscript{16}

With the commencement of the Meiji period and a return to focusing on Imperial power, those behind the restoration hoped to unify the Japanese people behind the emperor in order to stand up to the West.\textsuperscript{17} As the opposition forces began plotting and fighting against the bakufu,

\textsuperscript{15} Nagasaki was the only major sanctioned point of access for foreigners like the Dutch and Chinese for hundreds of years. Actually, foreigners were to stay mostly on the artificial island of Deshima for their trade and to stay off real Japanese lands. This further explains why the Japanese people felt so betrayed. For over 200 years, foreigners were limited to artificial land for most contact with the Japanese. Now, after posing themselves as the saviors of Japan and the ones capable of pushing back the foreign incursion, the Meiji government welcomed them with greater leniency than what the Tokugawa allowed.

\textsuperscript{16} For further information regarding this transition, please see any number of works on the topic, including W.G. Beasley \textit{The Meiji Restoration} and Marius Jansen, \textit{The Making of Modern Japan}.

\textsuperscript{17} Beasley, \textit{Making of Modern History}, 142. The return to worshiping the emperor at this time was largely symbolic but it was powerful enough to rally a significant portion of the Japanese populace the change in government.
they used the emperor as a rallying or focal point for their cause. A popular slogan, “restore antiquity,” expressed the feelings of many of those instrumental in the restoration.\(^{18}\) Japan was ultimately able to resist permanent and total colonization by the West by unifying behind the idea of the emperor and working beyond local borders. However, expelling the barbarian was a much more difficult task. In fact, foreign residence led to increased cultural and political influence in Japan after the Meiji Restoration.\(^{19}\) From the very beginning, Westerners and their societal norms began to shape the way the Meiji government formed as many who led in the Restoration visited the West or had retainers/advisors who visited the West. Evidence of Western influence can be found in the pivotal Charter Oath prepared for the emperor. It was decreed on April 5, 1868 that:

1. Deliberative councils shall be widely established and all matters decided by public discussion.
2. All classes, high and low, shall unite in vigorously carrying out the administration of affairs of state
3. The common people, no less than the civil and military officials, shall each be allowed to pursue his own calling so that there may be no discontent.
4. Evil customs of the past shall be broken off and everything based upon the just laws of nature
5. Knowledge shall be sought throughout the world so as to strengthen the foundations of imperial rule.\(^{20}\)

The Charter Oath ordered a break with the past and advocated a worldwide search for knowledge. This differed greatly from the Tokugawa policy that barred anyone from attempting to travel or gain knowledge from around the world, especially the West, upon threat of death.\(^{21}\)

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\(^{18}\) Beasley, *Making of Modern History*, 142. This slogan or idea advocated ideas and practices from before the Tokugawa period as the periods prior to the Tokugawa period had the proper perspective on the emperor and country.  
\(^{19}\) This is largely due to the fact that those behind the Restoration hid their revolution in traditional terms (restoring the emperor, led by samurai, etc) when in reality they were working for a more non-traditional future.  
\(^{20}\) Marius Jansen, *Making of Modern Japan*, p. 338. The Charter Oath was not as effective as hoped, but it did pave the way for more important improvements.  
\(^{21}\) Information from China and from the Dutch are amongst the most notable exceptions from the Tokugawa period. The Tokugawa allowed Rangaku, or “Dutch Studies,” to specific people. However, this was mainly allowed in order to promote communication for trade as well as medical and scientific learning. For more information, see Jansen, *Cambridge History of Japan*, pp 90-93.
The issuance of the Charter Oath signaled changes in traditional society and culture. Most of these changes were not widely wanted, especially the changes imposed on the traditional societal hierarchy. The intentional shift towards things Western affected the samurai class most severely, as the changes affected their status, their power, and their sense of purpose. After the Charter Oath and other similar government missives, the rigid hierarchy class system of samurai, peasants, artisans, and merchants disappeared. In its place, a class system emerged that had a more fluid structure, which allowed greater opportunities for advancement.

This change in the hierarchy of Japanese society poked holes in the Meiji government promises. Throughout the early stages of the Meiji period especially, the Meiji government pushed the idea that the Restoration was a return to traditional values. The fact that the Restoration “civilian” government centered on the Emperor and not a military government was supposed to show the Japanese people that cherished traditions dating from before the origin of the very first bakufu had returned. In the simplest terms, the men behind the Meiji Restoration disguised their progressive ideas in traditional terms.

The Meiji government was not as jingoistic as some supporters of the new government wished. The Emperor Meiji ascended to power at least partially due to those pushing the slogan

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22 During the Tokugawa Period, it was unusual for peasants of villages to protest or voice their problems. If they did, they had to go through proper channels (the village headman started the process) that often did not provide any solutions to their problems. If those of the lower class, like the village headman, petitioned those of the higher classes for help, it could mean their death. For a fascinating analysis of the hierarchy of governmental structures at the peasant level and the ramifications of perceived dissent, see Stephen Vlastos, *Peasant Protests and Uprisings in Tokugawa Japan*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986).

23 Vlastos, *Peasant Protests and Uprisings in Tokugawa Japan*, 325. For instance, in 1871 the old domain system was replaced by the prefecture system. A man chosen by the government oversaw each prefecture. In 1872, a law was enacted that offered schooling to all, not just men from the samurai class.

24 Jansen, *Making of Modern Japan*, 391-392. There was still a distinct separation between the Emperor/imperial family and commoners. A peerage was established that meshed former daimyo and court nobles, but there was no land attached to the title or any real power. When they were dismantled after WWII, no one seemed to notice that they had ever existed.

25 The Tokugawa Bakufu was actually the third bakufu in Japanese history. The Kamakura and Ashikaga shogunates (another term for a bakufu) came before.
“honor the emperor, expel the barbarian,” but the slogan, “use the barbarian against the barbarian” better suits the truth of the Meiji period. The Meiji government never expelled the foreign barbarians. In reality, they invited foreigners to live and work in Japan. Advisors from all over the Western world came to Japan to educate the Japanese on topics such as agriculture, education, military tactics, and government—and to help them build new bureaucratic agencies to manage them. The foreign advisors also brought with them a new way of thinking, behaving, eating, and dressing. These advisors worked in schools, taught young impressionable Japanese minds about what they believed was superior Western knowledge. Western multi-dimensional involvement in Japan disrupted the flow of everyday life in ways that the Japanese had not experienced before. Previous interferences from other cultures had resulted in relatively minor bumps compared to the impact made by Western intervention during the Meiji period.

The Western advisors in Japan taught that it was important to be modern, which meant being Western. The societal structures changed to reflect Western ideas, schooling codes changed to models that were more Western; Western foods were added to the diet, as was a Western way of dressing. These changes, understandably, caused a feeling of dissatisfaction amongst many people. Not surprisingly, tension mounted with most of it aimed at foreign

26 The Western advisors most likely subscribed to the theory of Social Darwinism popular in Western countries. The theory, in layman’s terms, said that the stronger and more developed people would win out over those beneath them. Often associated with that belief was the belief that different races would never reach the same advanced state as those in the West due to racial inferiority. This theory is also associated with imperialism. In studies of Great Britain and the New Imperialist movement of the late 1800s, many people in influential places in British society perpetrated the idea that imperialism was good for those living in Africa and India. There was even a racial scale of showing the ability to think and govern and those who were to be subjugated. According to social Darwinism and the ideas associated with this theory, the Japanese were in the middle of the scale and as such could be taught, but never quite fend for themselves. For more on Social Darwinism, please reference J.A. Mangan, “The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal,” (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 69-113.

27 Some may argue that the European and Japanese interchanges during the 1500s and early 1600s were rather intrusive. While this is true, the Meiji period saw permanent changes brought on by a culture very different from its own. Previous influences from European interchanges were wiped out by Tokugawa bakufu orders after the Shimabara Rebellion (1637-1638).
advisors, foreign visitors, and members of the Meiji government. Many outlets were used to express this dissent; in a few instances violence resulted. Most Japanese found personal release through popular culture. Some of the best examples of popular expression were politically and socially charged cartoons published in popular magazines during the Meiji period. These popular cartoons safely channeled public frustration and anger into visual discussions about the different ideas embraced by Meiji Society. Oftentimes these cartoons were used to illustrate the two sides of a “masculine debate.”

Japanese masculinity encountered a drastically different counterpart when Westerners began to stay and live in Japan. Men of the Meiji period, especially those of the influential class, acutely felt the internal dissention the Western influence created. Instead of the long robes, long hair, and traditional geta sandals as the standards of what a Japanese man wore, some men began to dress in suits, sported top hats, had short hair, and wore closed leather shoes as the Westerners did. Other men did not see the value in replacing their traditions and continued to wear their traditional garb. This clash played well in cartoons because they represented not only the clash of masculine ideals and deeper issues of what it mean to be a true Japanese man, but also placed focus on the struggles found in the remainder of what remained of Meiji culture.

Historiography

Masculinity is a topic of study that irritates as well as inspires scholars from many disciplines. Scholars from various disciplines use gender as a means through which to understand the composition of individuals, families, and societies. Early on, scholars publishing

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29 For centuries, the samurai class was at the top of the Japanese social order. They were the epitome of masculine as they were the class allowed to carry and wield weapons (swords, rifles, and even certain farm related implements) for hundreds of years. As a result, they were the defenders of Japan and the people who exemplified what it meant to be manly.
in English and focusing on gender tended to equate the study of gender with women’s studies or feminism. In fact, many of the books published about gender in the past thirty years have focused on issues and roles women deal or dealt with in the past. It was not until the late 1980s that studies concerning men appeared on shelves. Specialized topics within this field were developed later in the 1980s and 1990s. For instance, the main difference between the broader field of gender history and the narrower Japanese field is that the study of the Japanese field is approximately twenty years behind. Like the broader field, Japanese gender studies first focused on women before gradually expanding to include studies on Japanese men.

Since studies of Japanese masculinity are relatively new, they are extremely limited and very unsatisfying. This section will focus on English-language analyses of gender in the Meiji Period from 1980 through the present. Surveying the sources will highlight the fact that the field of gender studies in Japanese history has much room for growth and expansion. This study will begin with the earliest works in order to understand the origins of gender studies in Japanese history. If it were not for the study of femininity, women, and their roles in society, it is doubtful that scholars would look at men and masculinity. Subsequently this study will move on to the more current scholarship to track changing themes and understanding of the complexities of gender, especially masculinity. By reviewing the historiography, this study will also show the progression of opinions and arguments to what scholars currently believe, especially about masculinity in Meiji Japanese history.

*The Beginnings of Japanese Gender History*

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30 Harry Brod, *The Making of Masculinities: The New Men’s Studies*, (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987). Henry Brod, in his introduction to this volume discusses the inequity between men’s studies and women’s studies. *The Making of Masculinities* was one of the first full studies of men and masculinities.
Aside from a few preliminary attempts at gender studies in Japanese history made in the 1950s through the 1970s, quality works on gender studies in Japanese history did not appear until the 1980s. The Hidden Sun: Women of Modern Japan, written by Dorothy Robins-Mowry (1983) is an example of one of the first attempts to analyze women’s roles in Japanese history. The Hidden Sun covers a large portion of Japanese history, from the Asuka Period (552-710 CE) to the 1980s. According to Robins-Mowry, women in every period of Japanese history lived through harsh treatment by their husbands and society. She states:

…this premodern era…nourished the cultural, societal, and politically creativity that gave rise to the modernism of Meiji. For Japanese women, however, the constraint side of the ledger weighed heavy; one hundred years after Meiji Restoration, they still struggle to free themselves from deeply ingrained, restraining habits of mind, emotion, and action…

The rest of Hidden Sun continues on this negative theme. Robbins-Mowry condemns Japan in every period of Japanese history and finds very few positive things to say about Japanese society.

Robbins-Mowry asserts that women of Japan faced oppression at all times in their history, especially during the Meiji period. The author does praise the attempts made by women and Christian influences in Japan to bring equality to Meiji period women through education and other means. More specifically, Robbins-Mowry praises a few prominent Meiji era historical figures like Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901) and Tsuda Umeko (1864-1929) for their promotion

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33 Robins-Mowry, 29. Once one reads this paragraph, one can put the book aside. The rest of the book reiterates the sentiments of this single paragraph in every chapter.

34 It is understood that Robbins-Mowry looks at Meiji Japanese society with modern eyes.

of education for women.\textsuperscript{36} Apart from these worthy people and their attempts at equality for women, the author finds little else to praise in Meiji Japan.

Less than ten years after \textit{The Hidden Sun}, the edited volume \textit{Recreating Japanese Women 1600-1945} was published under the editorship of Gail Lee Bernstein.\textsuperscript{37} As the title suggests, this work of gender history focuses on the history of Japanese women over an extended period. Bernstein states that the main purpose of \textit{Recreating Japanese Women} is to “track the creation of female gender” over the 400 years covered.\textsuperscript{38} Unlike the Robbins-Mowry monograph, this happens through a collection of fascinating essays written by numerous contributing scholars. Only one of the essays, however, actually deals with gender in the Meiji period. The article, “The Meiji State’s Policy Toward Women, 1890-1910” presents an insightful look at women’s evolutionary roles in society and politics during the later part of the Meiji period.\textsuperscript{39}

Sharon H. Nolte and Sally Ann Hastings, the authors of this essay, point out that their study of feminist works benefit greatly from the wider work done by Japanese historians.\textsuperscript{40} Not surprisingly, this article is one of the first studies of this nature written in English that made use of Japanese language sources, most particularly Japanese historians’ secondary treatment of feminist movements and primary source writings by Meiji women themselves. Nolte and Hastings argue that during the Meiji period, as evidenced in the sources provided to them, women were shut out of political involvement in society and possessed little voice in society as an unsurprising result. This lack of voice persisted despite the work of individuals like

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{36} Robbins-Mowry, 41-46.
\item \textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 1-2. The “creation of female gender” is, Bernstein clarifies, is created and transmitted through culture and constructed by society.
\item \textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 151.
\end{itemize}
Fukuzawa Yukichi, who strove to change the lack of representation for women. However, women did find their spot in Japanese society by acting as well-educated wives and mothers ("good wife, wise mother," ryōsai kenbo) and even working as nurses during times of war.

The ideal woman of the Meiji Period was one who lived in a “modest, courageous, frugal, literate, hardworking, and productive” life regardless of her social rank. She used these virtues to raise her children to have strong moral values as well as to run her own household perfectly. In both instances, the Meiji woman would aid her country in its quest for increased strength.

Despite the trust placed in women’s ability to raise their children and run their households, the authors argue that women remained subjects to the emperor, their husbands, and the rest of the male populace. Society placed value on women’s ability to nurse injured soldiers and in other philanthropic situations, but they remained overlooked and subjugated. In fact, the authors point out that “they could not claim these territories (nursing, etc) as their own,” but remained under the supervision of men.

Doctors ordered nurses about in a similar manner as husbands who had the final authority in the affairs and operation of a home. Motherhood, another area where women found a modicum of value, remained overlooked until the mid-20th century.

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41 Nolte and Hastings, 156-157.
42 Ryōsai Kenbo or “good wife, wise mother” was a popular slogan or phrase during the Meiji period as well as at other times. Women were to be supportive wives to their husbands by taking care of as much of the household as they could so that their husbands could focus on other things. In addition, women were expected to bring their children, especially their sons, up in a manner that was beneficial to the Meiji emperor. There were similar ideas in the West at approximately the same time, especially in Great Britain during the New Imperial Period. Women in Britain were encouraged to raise their boys to be masculine men who could defeat their enemies.
43 Ibid., 172.
44 Again, this call for women to be good mothers and wives is found in other countries at this time. Women of Great Britain were taught that frugality, literacy, modesty and productivity were essential to a successful country. This moral standard is most often associated with the middle class, but it was a standard that was viewed as ideal.
century. The change only occurred after “an articulate women’s movement” that brought about substantial change, something Nolte and Hastings argue the Meiji Period needed.

In 1998, Stephen Vlastos’ edited volume *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, showed that the Japanese traditions often assumed to be ancient are, in reality, quite new. Judo and *bushido*, two traditions sometimes thought of as ancient and steeped in centuries of Japanese history, originated in the Meiji period. *Mirror of Modernity* also discusses the phenomenon of changing life during the Meiji Period. “Home in the Meiji Period: Inventing Japanese Domesticity,” written by Jordan Sand, analyzes two family systems, the traditional *ie* system and the form that originated during the Meiji period, the *homū* system.

The *ie* system existed for centuries in Japanese history and included not only the nuclear family (parents and children) but the extended family, servants, and other types of retainers. The *homū* system organized itself around just the nuclear family that had far fewer hired retainers.

What is most important about the study of the two family systems is the discussion of women and their roles in the *homū* system. This system, also known as *katei*, “bore powerful

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46 The same could be said about women in the United States and other Western countries during the same time.
47 Nolte and Hastings, 175. There were women’s movements during the Meiji Period, especially regarding education, as Robbins-Mowry pointed out briefly in her work. Nolte and Hastings must not have found them much help because they are not discussed in any depth.
48 Ibid.
49 *Bushiido*, a term used heavily during the Meiji period and discussed often by Nitobe Inazo, actually has its origins in the Tokugawa period. However, the version of *bushiido* that we read of originated with Nitobe in the Meiji Period. To read the Meiji version of bushido, see Nitobe Inazo, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1905). To read more about the Tokugawa version of *bushiido*, see Karl F. Friday, “Bushiido or Bull” A Medieval Historian’s Perspective on the Imperial Army and the Japanese Warrior Tradition,” *The History Teacher*, 27 no 3 (May, 1994), 339-349. Also, see Eiko Ikegami in *The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995). pp., 278-281.
51 Ibid., 192.
52 Ibid. Protestant missionaries influenced the homū system, or so Bland asserts.
gender connotations” similar to those associated in Western Victorian homes. More specifically, the idea of katei conveyed feminine notions and entered the feminine world and psyche through magazines, textbooks, and other forms of media. Females learned from these sources that their job was “prime minister” of the home and that they were to regulate the cleanliness, finances, nutrition, and other aspects of domesticity in their homes. Sand argues that the formation of katei empowered women and kept them subjugated. Wives played a bigger role in the family in the katei system than they could in the traditional ie system because there were rarely mothers-in-law in residence in the modern system. In the ie system, the mother-in-law was the ruler of the household and new brides—since there were often more than one son and thus more than one daughter-in-law residing in a household—were to do exactly as their mother-in-law ordered. The wives had no power at all while their mothers-in-law continued to rule long after a husband (the patriarch) might have passed on. In the katei system, wives were the ones who dictated how the homes ran and how the children grew up.

Despite their improved position within the family system, the author points out, the wife still took her orders from her husband and could control only a small portion of family life. As Sand states, “the ideologies of the katei did not demand other conjugal or feminine hegemony over the entire house.” The wife had her own space, but it was confined. She could not have influence over the entire house as the husband often claimed domination over the public rooms

53 Sand, 194. This was mentioned earlier. The Victorian model addressed specifically here is the separate spheres ideology, where there was the public sphere and the private sphere. Men inhabited the public while women dominated the private.
54 Ibid., 195.
55 Ibid., 196. It is interesting and very strange that this study never mentions ryōsai kenbo though it is quite clear that this ideology encompasses many aspects of what Bland looks at including the running of the household, finances, and childrearing.
56 Sand, 200.
57 Ibid., 206.
of the house. The wife remained in the private spaces, which became her space.58 Yes, women could raise the children and teach them according to the standards she saw fit, even if her children were all male. Nevertheless, her control did not spread throughout the house. The public sphere remained in the hands of her husband.59

Sand never mentions the slogan ryōsai kenbo in his analysis, though his topic is quite compatible with the “good wife, wise mother” ideology. In fact, this is noted by Kathryn Ragsdale in her article, “Marriage, the Newspaper Business, and the Nation-State: Ideology in the Late Meiji Serialized Katei Shōsetsu” in 1998.60 Published in the Journal of Japanese Studies, one gathers from the title that this study focuses upon women and the katei family system in a similar manner as “Home in the Meiji Period.” Ragsdale uses serialized romance stories (katei shōsetsu) aimed at the female populace and published in several newspapers of the Meiji Period.61 Ragsdale argues that these stories are important, and in some ways instructive. They offered glimpses at what the state thought appropriate for women to read because the authors of these stories for women were actually written by men who were ideologically more similar to state officials than they were to their readers!62 Unlike their Western counterparts, the kotei shūsetsu were about women learning how to deal with “how a woman might live within marriage” or within the katei as a faithful wife, not about finding the ideal mate.63

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58 Even if a woman was not married, she often lived in this same set up. In general, daughters were kept in private spaces as well.
59 The public and private sphere dichotomy evident in Western Victorian culture obviously applies here. What would be an interesting study of its own would be tracking how Meiji Period women influenced the public sphere from their private sphere. This type of analysis might alter the understanding of women’s roles in Meiji society.
61 Ibid., 233. Ragsdale informs us that these stories were “influenced by Western romance and marriage novels.” Katei Shōsetsu literally translates as domestic or household novel. Novels like the Katei Shōsetsu were intentionally formatted in the manner of Western novels.
62 Ibid., 230-234.
63 Or more salacious topics.
A key factor in these stories about the *katei* was the idea of the *ryōsai kenbo*, which Ragsdale analyzes. She agrees that in order to be the good wife and good mother, as the ideologies of the *katei* dictated, Japanese women needed some amount of education.\(^{64}\) If Japan suddenly engaged in war and the man of the house was called to active duty, how would a woman run the household efficiently until the return of her husband if she did not have at least some education? The Meiji government decided that it was important to teach women how to sew, cook, tend to the accounting books, and master other important aspects of running a home. This provided a sense of security to the men called away from home, for war or any other important obligation to society, allowing them to feel as though their homes would not fall to ruins in their absence.\(^{65}\) The need for educated women in the homes found its way into the serialized stories. Many *katei shōsetsu* heroines were well educated, which allowed them to be useful to their husbands (and thus their countries) in times of great need such as war, financial struggles, or sickness.\(^{66}\)

Like previous scholars, Ragsdale acknowledges that women remained decidedly beneath men in society, describing women as “the dutiful servitor of family, nation, and emperor.”\(^{67}\) The *katei shōsetsu* provided the best and most obvious example of a woman’s place in Meiji Japanese society since it was men writing the stories that instructed women concerning their roles in society.

What is most interesting about Ragsdale’s study is that she does not condemn Meiji Japanese society as previous authors had done. The author argues that because women were the

\(^{64}\) Ragsdale, 255.
\(^{65}\) Ibid., 236-237.
\(^{66}\) During earlier periods of Japanese history, women often ran their households in place of their husbands in times of war in a similar manner as women were expected to during the Meiji period. Ragsdale does not mention this in her study.
\(^{67}\) Ibid., 239.
target audience for these stories, women were becoming increasingly important to Meiji Japan.68 Women, in a way, controlled the newspapers and newspaper content. Yes, the authors of the *katei shōsetsu* were men, but they responded to reader feedback (i.e. female feedback), often changing their storylines to suit the wishes of their female readership so they could increase circulation. In addition to female control of portions of newspaper content, Ragsdale points out that the male-dominated *ie* system receded during the Meiji period and the *katei* system replaced it, effectively trading totalitarianism with “loving obedience.”69 Households shrank in size with fewer to no servants, giving wives more control of the affairs of the home as the husbands increasingly depended on them. Ragsdale concludes that women in Meiji Japan fared better than other scholars might believe due to the growing importance and power available to wives in running their home and family.

Only a year after Sand and Ragsdale published their works on gender, the edited volume *Women and Class in Japanese History* was released.70 Anne Walthall, one of the editors of the volume, contributed a valuable study of Matsuo Taseko, a female poet who led a remarkable life. Born to a wealthy family of the farmer class in the early 19th century, Taseko’s poetic talents allowed her an “entrée into the society of men.”71 Taseko did not remain at home with husband and family but instead attended many politically charged poetry meetings that allowed her to express herself in ways that transcended the walls of her home.72 Taseko’s involvement in the

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68 Ragsdale, 234.
69 Ibid., 235-236. Some scholars might argue, of course, that loving obedience was still a form of subjugation. However, Ragsdale views this change as a positive one. In fact, the *ryōsai kendo* can be viewed as giving women a greater amount of power.
72 Ibid., 220-221.
successful movement to restore the emperor to power during the late Tokugawa period, Walthall argues, exemplifies the power Taseko wielded. With her inconspicuous presence as a mere woman, Taseko operated as a spy for the restoration movement supporters against the bakufu supporters. She also acted as a contact and go-between for imperial supporters and was able to save the life of Inoue Yorikumi. Inoue was an important figure in the restoration movement and in the Meiji government. Due to her connection with Inoue, Taseko was in a position to influence and procure positions in the new government for people of her acquaintance. For a woman of the late Tokugawa and early Meiji period, Taseko thus had considerable power in a society that supposedly did not allow women a great deal of power.

Walthall mentions that after the tumultuous beginning years of the Meiji Period, Taseko sank into a more limited role. To many, this development is regrettable and deplorable, but Walthall quickly asks the reader to not judge Taseko’s case too harshly. As she says:

Her adventure in Kyoto failed to lead her self-illumination that might have rendered it truly subversive according to contemporary standards, but it is hardly fair to judge a woman of the past by the advanced feminist standards of the present.

To call Taseko a remarkable woman of her time is an understatement, but her case is not the norm for the period. Men held her in great regard not for her abilities as a wife and mother, but as a poet, an intellectual, and political force. What Walthall’s assessment shows is that it was possible for a woman in Meiji Japan to acquire a modicum of influence and power.

Nishikawa Yūko, also a contributor to Women and Class, presents a stimulating study of women that compliments Walthall’s assessment of women as Nishikawa looks at a large group

74 Ibid., 233.
75 Ibid., 234.
76 Ibid., 237. Referring to Kyoto, Walthall discusses Taseko’s working with the imperialists during the restoration movement.
of women, not just one. In “Diaries as Gendered Texts,” Nishikawa analyzes the use of diaries during the Meiji period and the “role played by diaries in the self-education of women, especially in the acquisition of a gendered identity” and the “training of the professional housewife.” For those not living in or familiar with Japan, it might seem strange to think of diaries as a useful tool in the education of other people. However, in Japanese history it is common for people to write diaries with the expectation of an audience. Nishikawa uses *Ichiyō Diary*, written by novelist and poet Ichiyō Higuchi (1872-1896), as an example of a teaching diary published widely in Meiji period presses. Ichiyō learned the art of keeping a proper journal from her former samurai and later lower member of the Meiji government father and Ichiyō later taught her little sister. For Ichiyō, a diary was “something to be written as a form of education within the household, and people within the household would be expected to read it.” Due to her notoriety as a poet of the Meiji period, she believed her diaries about her experiences and thoughts would help future generations.

Nishikawa also looks at what she calls “the era of standardized diary,” in addition to analyzing just Ichiyō’s diary. During the Meiji period, the publishing company Hakubunkan sold blank diaries for use at home and ran the magazine that published *Ichiyō Diary*. Both the publishing of diaries such as the one by Ichiyō and the wide availability of diaries for purchase by women sheds light on the role women played in society. The standardized diaries sold to

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78 Ibid., 243. By the Meiji period, the expected audience for diaries included anything from a few family members to publication in newspapers.
79 Ibid., 242-245.
80 Nishikawa, 248. It is interesting to note here that mentions of the men of the house or anything relating to masculinity is completely ignored by Nishikawa. Though the diaries must have mentioned how to do various household duties or advice on how to be a good wife to the husband, Nishikawa does not mention the role of men in the lives of these women or how men factored into the picture.
81 Ibid., 250.
82 Ibid.
women were tools for training women to be perfect housewives. The diaries allowed them to write out the day’s activities—such as shopping for provisions, teaching children, managing household finances—as well as record what the women felt and how they wanted to improve upon their roles as wives and mothers.\textsuperscript{83} The act of writing a diary in combination with the reading of the other women’s diaries published in newspapers and magazines allowed women a way to live out the slogan \textit{ryōsai kenbo} to their best abilities. Nishikawa views the diary as a source of strength and power for Japanese women of the Meiji period because of the diary’s ability to teach, educate, and empower. However, the author is quick to add, “While the position of the wife rose within the household, the role of women ended up being confined to the home.”\textsuperscript{84} Nishikawa shows women to have an increasing amount of power in their household, though their power remained inside the walls of their home.\textsuperscript{85}

\textit{Gender and Japanese History}, edited by Wakita Haruko, Anne Bouchy and Ueno Chizko, also came out in 1999.\textsuperscript{86} This two-volume analysis of women’s history looks at a variety of topics such as religion, sexuality, work, and everyday life. Several essays in \textit{Gender and Japanese History} offer brilliant insights into the lives of Japanese women through several epochs, but only a few offer any information about the Meiji Period. The first notable essay, written by Hirota Masaki, is “Notes on the “Process of Creating Women” in the Meiji Period.”\textsuperscript{87} Hirota remarks that her inspiration for the article comes from her reading of Simone de

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{83} Nishikawa, 254.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., 252.
\textsuperscript{85} Nishikawa does not mention this, but the fact companies published material just for women and that either the women themselves or their husbands purchased these goods for them is an indication of the rising power of women. \textsuperscript{86} Wakita Haruko, Anne Bouchy, and Ueno Chizuko, eds., \textit{Gender and Japanese History, Volume 2} (Osaka: Osaka University Press, 1999). \textsuperscript{87} Hirota Masaki, “Notes on the “Process of Creating Women,”” in \textit{Gender and Japanese History, Volume 2}, edited by Wakita Haruko, Anne Bouchy, and Ueno Chizuko, (Osaka: Osaka University Press, 1999). Hirota focuses on the Meiji Period, but makes it a point to remind the reader that the problems faced by women in the Meiji Period originated in the Edo Period.
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Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex*, in which de Beauvoir argues that education and male-dominated societies turned women into second-class citizens.\(^{88}\) With this in mind, the author analyzes the process through which women’s roles evolved during the Meiji Period. Hirota focuses on three changes that affected the creation of Meiji women: changes brought on by the state, by economic changes, and by education.\(^{89}\) The changes brought on by the state, though promising equality actually increased the disparity between men and women. For example, Hirota cites the adoption of the solar calendar by the Meiji government. According to the author, this change placed a greater importance on the Doll (girl’s) Festival and the Boy’s Festival than the previous calendar. The festivals became more elaborate and actually emphasized the differences between boy and girl children, thus causing further separation of the sexes.\(^{90}\) Hirota also points to *ryōsai kenbo* as a factor in the gender role disparity of Meiji Japan. If women did not live up to the socially constructed ideals of the *ryōsai kenbo* and the perfect wife and mother, women felt inferior or even like failures.\(^{91}\)

For Hirota, the most obvious perpetrator of gender differences in Meiji Japan was the educational system. The Meiji government revolutionized education in Japan, making education mandatory through elementary school for boys and girls.\(^{92}\) Originally, the education standards for boys and girls were to be the same. It was soon evident that this was not to be a reality. By 1876, the education of girls shifted to teaching, sewing, home management, etiquette, Confucian ideals, and other important areas that fostered good wives and wise mothers. Despite the creation of universities for women, the fact remains for Hirota that the Japanese education system, “did not simply install an awareness of sexual difference, but also simultaneously

\(^{88}\) Hirota, 197.
\(^{89}\) Ibid., 199.
\(^{90}\) Ibid., 201.
\(^{91}\) Ibid., 205.
\(^{92}\) Ibid., 207.
reinforced a sense of inferiority of the female sex.” The Meiji Period enforced old gender biases and established new ways for women to be second-class citizens. In this way, Hirota differs from the growing trend in gender studies in Japanese history. After Robbins-Mowry and *Hidden Sun*, historians tended to argue that women had a limited but significant role to play in Meiji Japanese society. Hirota, however, argues to the contrary.

Another contribution from *Gender in Japanese History* is Yoko Iwahori’s “*Jogaku Zasshi* (The Women’s Magazine) and the Construction of the Ideal Wife in the Mid-Meiji Era.” Yoko writes to correct the inaccuracies she sees in the way that earlier scholars of Japanese history approach and explain the *ryōsai kenbo* slogan. Unlike others in her field, Yoko believes that the slogan was not a completely traditional Japanese idea, but also based upon ideas found in the Western Christian model known to us now as the separate spheres ideology.

Evidence of this is found in the third decade of the Meiji Period when “we find a new family model revolving around the housewife, and this model is clearly based on connections between Western ideas.” The very Western idea of separate spheres infiltrated the minds of the society cementing the differences between male and female roles in society. Women’s magazines like *Jogaku zasshi* played a vital role in perpetrating these ideas amongst women by staying away from self-enlightenment or empowering rhetoric and focusing on domestic-related issues. Yoko looks at *Jogaku* articles of the Meiji period and contends that the magazine not only promoted patriarchal Confucian *ie* ideals but also Western ideals revolving around the idea of

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93 Hirota, 209.
95 Ibid., 392.
96 Ibid., 396.
97 Ibid., 399. As mentioned earlier, *hōmu* and *katei* are basically the same thing. The connections between these ideals were mentioned earlier in Sand’s article in Vlastos’ *Mirror of Modernity*. 
hōmu (katei). Thus, the magazine prompted filial piety as well as the separate spheres ideology, both of which keep women in the home and under their husbands.

Though Yoko begins her study with the intention of showing that the slogan ryōsai kenbo differed a great deal from what previous scholars had argued in that it was more Western than previously believed. However, the conclusion is remarkably similar to those of Nolte, Hastings, and Ragsdale who do not argue against the traditional interpretation of the slogan as Japanese and Confucian. No matter the exact origins of ryōsai kenbo, the result on women of the Meiji period is the same. On the other hand, Yoko wants readers to realize the amount of responsibility given to women in their job of running the household. Having information, education, and control over the household were all examples of women’s power in Meiji Japan. On the other hand, the fact remains that women remained within the home. This prevented a woman from engaging in a larger social context and from “exploring her greater potential.”

Instead of advising and inspiring women to break from their subservient positions in society, Jogaku zasshi and other publications like it promoted and enforced the woman’s place in the home. Thus, Yoko approaches the role of women in Meiji Japanese society with a moderate view. Women enjoyed a certain amount of power in their roles in Japanese society, but for most women that power remained located in the home and in the home only.

It should be clear by now that studies of gender in Japanese history from the 1980s and 1990s were usually studies of women in history. A study of gender was synonymous with the study of women in Japanese history, though titles of books and essays promised a look at gender, not just women. Despite this pitfall, these works offered valuable glimpses of Japanese women’s lives. These works also stirred up differing opinions of the role of women in Meiji Japan. At

98 Yuko, 407.
first, consistent with some of the previous literature, scholars were divided since some thought 
women were treated as nothing. By the late 1990s, however, most scholars who evaluated the 
role of women in Meiji Japan came away from their studies with a more moderate view: women 
had power to a point, but their situation in society was far from perfect.99 The study of gender, 
which was really the study of women and their roles in Meiji Japan did not end in 1999. Instead, 
gender studies became increasingly diversified and increasing in number. By the early 21st 
century, the study of gender in Japanese history became a true analysis of gender. The study of 
men and their roles in society finally show up alongside studies of women.

_The Present: Gender Studies in Meiji Japanese History Today._

Knowing that the field of gender studies in Japanese history is approximately 20 years 
behind the international scholarship on gender studies, it comes as no surprise that the study of 
men and masculinity does not appear until 1999. Nishikawa Yūko was one of the first scholars 
to study men in her work “Diaries as Gendered Texts.” Nishikawa briefly analyzes men’s diaries 
in addition to women’s diaries. Her study of men’s diaries is of little merit, but it does represent 
a first attempt at a true study of the male gender in Japanese history.100 Books published in the 
late 1990s continued to be gender specific despite titles and promises to the contrary. In the 
introduction of _Gender and Japanese History Volume 2_, the editors write that:

> The intent was to focus on history without taking on a male-centered historical studies 
approach or being limited to the realm of women’s history, an area that has developed in

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99 One notable exception is Hirota Musaki, whose stance on women’s roles is more in line with Dorothy Robbins-Mowry. Both view the Meiji period as dark period for Japanese women. However, Hirota’s negative view of women in the Meiji period is the only one in the after Robbins-Mowry I encountered during the 1990s.

100 Nishikawa, 241-243. Nishikawa’s analysis of men’s diaries discusses, very briefly, the differences between men and women’s diaries. She points out that men wrote in Chinese characters while women wrote in kana, or phonetically. In addition, the author mentions that the style of mass produced diaries differed between men and women, which still happens today. The diaries were packaged to appeal to the proper sex.
isolation from the rest of historical studies. We hoped to better understand movements and changes in society, in terms of men and women and their relationship with society. As detailed above, the contributions analyzed above from *Gender and Japanese History* focused solely on women, thus not living up to the editors’ claim; one essay out of the many published in the volume actually analyzed men. “The Modern Family and Changing Forms of Dwellings in Japan: Male-Centered houses, Female-centered Houses, and Gender-Neutral Rooms,” was written by Nishikawa Yūko, the author of “Diaries as Gendered Texts.” As in her other work, Nishikawa spends approximately two pages analyzing men, this time in terms of their role in the changing family structures of modern Japan. Also like her other work, her analysis of men is brief and lacks a depth seen in her analysis of women.

By the beginning of the 21st century, works focusing on the role of men in Japanese society began to appear. One such work, “The Gender of Nationalism: Competing Masculinities in Meiji Japan,” written by Jason G. Karlin, appeared in the *Journal of Japanese Studies* in 2002. According to Karlin, there were two extremely different schools of thought in Meiji Japan regarding the role of men in Japanese society. One school of thought urged men to be cultivated and urged men to dress and act like well-mannered gentlemen of good social standing. Men should treat women with respect and deference. This school of thought took their ideas from what they saw in the West, specifically the Western or European dandy. In order to disseminate the ideas of the perfect cultivated man, etiquette guides were written by men such as

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101 Haruko, iii.
102 Nishikawa Yūko, “The Modern Family and Changing Forms of Dwellings in Japan: Male-Centered Houses, Female-Centered Houses, and Gender-Neutral Rooms,” in *Gender and Japanese History, Vol 2*, edited by Wakita Haruko, Anne Bouchy, Ueno Chizuko, (Osaka: Osaka University Press, 1999). I did not include this essay in the historiography of this topic because this essay focuses on the Showa period. However, it is a good initial study of Japanese Men.
104 Ibid., 41.
Fukuzawa Yukichi or translated from Western guides. Most men in government ascribed to this school of masculinity because they felt it would improve Western opinions of Japan by showing that the Japanese people mastered the art of being civilized. By mastering civilized behaviors, the West would then see Japan as an equal and not as a country to walk on.

As the idea of the cultivated gentleman spread, so too did the reaction against it. A group formed around an idea that authentic Japanese man ignored all Western influences that the group considered feminine, and as such, weak. The authentic man wore traditional Japanese clothing considered more functional, less frivolous, and less ostentatious. These men considered themselves the true patriots of their country and refused to be “performing monkeys” who merely mimicked the West, as evidenced by their aping of Western clothing and affectations. The primitive and more natural men condemned their opposing school of thought as being weak, overly elaborate, fake, wasteful, and neglectful of the country’s best interests. Those dressing in Western style were called “high-collared” men because of the overly high-collars typical in Western attire at the time. Several papers printed during the middle to late Meiji period satirized these high-collared men. These papers gloried in the lifestyle of the traditional, or primitive, man who worked to further Japan’s best interests. The proof of this was that they dressed in traditional clothing and did not waste their money or time on pointless expensive Western trappings. The primitive man detested the materialism that accompanied Western clothing and influence. By the beginning of the 20th century, high-collar could symbolize either gender, but

105 Karlin, 44.
106 Ibid., 45-46.
107 Ibid., 41.
108 Ibid., 53.
109 Ibid., 56.
110 Ibid., 63. It is not surprising to note that the papers that satirized the men dressing in Western style clothing often had men of the primitive or traditional school of thought acting as editor-in-chief.
only in feminine terms. 111 Thus, the high-collared man was usually considered feminine by a large portion of Japanese society.

By the end of the Meiji period, the cultivated gentleman school of thought and dress lost out to the primitive men. The gentleman seemed to care more about appearances than the well-being of a quickly modernizing and militarizing country. For those men who detested the high-collared lifestyle, there came a notion called *bankara* that stood for crassness and brutishness.112 After the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), the younger generation in Japan turned from the path set by their elders and turned toward the past and Japan instead of modernization and the West.113 The younger generation believed that their past and their heritage was the true reason for Japan’s successes. Japan defeated Russia, a Western power, and as such it proved that Japan and its cultural heritage was strong and worth being proud of.114 A result of this return to Japanese roots, ideas of masculinity also came into question. Two ideals of masculinity would not work for a country that was emerging as a world power where men needed to be strong, manly, and adventurous. By the end of the Meiji Period, one ideal superseded the other.

In 2003, one of the first major volumes written specifically about Asian masculinities in the English language was published with Kam Louie and Morris Low acting as editors.115 In the introductory chapter, Kam Louie explains the reasons behind the publication of such a volume—the most important reason being the fact that all major works published about masculinity omitted any studies of Asian men. Until the publication of this book, even the journal *Men and

111 Karlin, 67, The author mentions that women also could be labeled “high-collared.”
112 Ibid., 68.
113 Though the “high-collared ideal lost, it is interesting to see that the clothing itself remained. The military dressed in Western style attire, as did men in business and other non-military affiliated professions. For more on this, see the discussion on Ofra Goldsten-Diodoni’s book below.
114 Of course, Russia was not necessarily a strong Western power at this time. In addition, some very favorable chance events aided the Japanese in their successes.
Masculinities omitted any articles analyzing Asian men unless they analyzed these men in Western contexts.\textsuperscript{116} This large and problematic gap in the study of men and masculinities prompted the publication of \textit{Asian Masculinities: The Meaning and Practice of Manhood in China and Japan}. In this volume, there are several fascinating essays. One essay, “The Emperor’s Sons go to War: Competing Nationalities in Modern Japan,” chronicles the attempts of Japanese men of the Meiji Period to find a masculine identity amidst great change.\textsuperscript{117} The author, Morris Low, argues that men of all income levels, “Appropriated the older cultural mode of the samurai, not only as a refuge against the rapid changes that Japan was undergoing, but also as part of a national ideology centered on the emperor.”\textsuperscript{118} Thus, the men of Japan looked backward and upwards to figure out what their role as men was.

Low briefly mentions the arrival of Commodore Perry and admits that the influx of Western influence on Japanese men that caused them to “turn white.”\textsuperscript{119} Japan appropriated Western ideas of masculinity so that the West would see Japan as an equal, not as an inferior. For example, even the supreme authority in Meiji Japan, the emperor, donned Western military apparel in all of his official photographs. The military, too, adopted Western accoutrements, as well as training techniques and even speech patterns.\textsuperscript{120} However, Low also points out that Japanese men did not fully adopt all Western ideas of masculinity. Traditional ideas remained, such as the treatment of women as having lower status than that of men and the retention of old

\textsuperscript{116} Louie, The editors state that when Asian men are analyzed in the journal, they are often studies of Asian American men.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., “Emperor’s Sons,” 81.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 82.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 83.
codes of behavior appropriate for soldiers. Yes, the Japanese army did adopt Western military strategies and systems, but at the core of the army were Tokugawa samurai ethics.  

Low uses the invented tradition of *bushido* that became popular at the turn of the 20th century as an example of old and new since *bushido* was an old code reformatted and used alongside Western ideas. Low acknowledges that *bushido* was not entirely traditional, but believes that the majority of the ideology was rooted in Tokugawa ideologies, such as martial valor and honor. In this way, men (especially military men) of the Meiji period were Westernized in new technology but rooted in Japanese historical tradition; they were two competing nationalities in one body. Men were in a difficult position, stuck between ideologies with only their emperor to guide them. The idea of competing ideals of masculinity presented in this chapter is not so very different from Karlin’s assessment of masculinities, though in this instance the competition is between two masculine masculinities, not a feminized masculinity and a masculine masculinity. Low only views his subjects in thoroughly masculine contexts within Japanese culture without looking at the multitude of variables that constituted masculinity during that period.

Taking a break from studies just of masculinity, we turn next to a study of divorce in Japan. *Divorce in Japan: Family, Gender, and the State, 1600-2000* is an extremely engrossing study written by Harold Fuess and published in 2004. Though the focus is on the act of divorce, Fuess gives the reader a great analysis of gender roles over a long period. The portion of his work dealing with the Meiji period offers a surprisingly equal assessment of men and

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121 Low, 84.
122 Ibid., 85. The main difference between the old and new versions of bushido was Western ideas of manners and etiquette when dealing with women.
women and their roles in society. Fuess points out repeatedly that throughout history, there were several differences between Western and Japanese divorce practices. Foremost among these differences were the trial marriage system that encouraged co-habitation before marriage and the fact that parents could initiate divorces.124 These differences astonish enough, but the number and ease of divorces were even shocking to those from a Western upbringing where society demanded purity before marriage and lasting marriages.125 In fact, the rate of divorces and remarriages were so high that foreigners visiting Japan during the Meiji period made it known to Japanese political leaders how shocked and saddened they were at the acceptance of divorce in Japanese society.126 Despite Japan’s morality, remarriage after divorce for men and women was common.127 If a man or a woman wanted to contract a second or even a third marriage, they could do so quite easily.

What is most interesting about Fuess’ assessment of Japanese divorce practices of the Meiji period is the emphasis on women’s power in marriage situations. In the early years of the Meiji period, women did not have the same rights as men. If a man committed adultery, the wife was powerless and could not legally obtain the right to divorce. A woman could only obtain a divorce if both the man and woman agreed to the dissolution of the marriage or if the man had committed a major crime.128 By 1873, however, women gained the right to initiate divorce in many instances, including the previously prohibited case of adultery.129 The reason for this was the monumental ruling by the Meiji government, Council of State Decree No. 162, which gave

124 Low, 50-70.
125 Societal demand and reality obviously did not always line up.
126 Ibid., 68.
127 Ibid.
128 Fuess, 77.
129 Ibid., 97.
women and their natal families the right to sue for divorce.\textsuperscript{130} This decree, Fuess argues, is an important step in Japanese history because it allowed women greater equality with men.

For Fuess, then, women had even more control over their lives and situations in society than believed by other scholars discussed so far. Fuess also shows that men were not always harsh masters who ignored their wives. In fact, they often consented to a woman’s desire for divorce if she asked for one. Even before women were allowed to initiate divorces, there were several instances of women asking their husbands for a divorce. Many of these men then initiated the divorce and included in the divorce decree that the former wife was allowed to remarry without any fear of retribution from the former husband. The author offers the example of a man who wrote in a divorce decree, “You have asked for divorce. I grant the divorce you wanted. For future reference, I certify that I have no objections to whomever you remarry from now on.”\textsuperscript{131}

Fuess offers the reader a very neutral look at gender in the Meiji period, showing that the roles of men and women played in society was not as fixed as other authors believed. True, women granted a divorce went from the home of their former husband, back to their parents’ home, and then possibly to a new husband’s home showing that women could not easily set up a home of their own. Nevertheless, Fuess does point out that women \textit{could} leave the home of her husband and think for and of themselves, and that men \textit{could} act as both head of the household and concede to women. This shows that the roles of men and women in Meiji Japan were not as black and white as previous historians had argued.

\textsuperscript{130} Fuess, 100.
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., 79-80.
In 2005, several works were published that dealt with gender in Japanese history. One such example is the essay “Fashioning Cultural Identity: Body and Dress” found in *A Companion to the Anthropology of Japan*. The author, Ofra Goldstein-Gidoni, previously published the article in a fall 1999 issue of *Ethnology* as “Kimono and the Construction of Gendered and Cultural Identities,” but there is little difference between the two publications aside from the name. The author analyzes the role of the kimono, in its most modern form, and argues that it is a great example of the “construction of cultural identity in modern Japan.” It symbolizes the extreme disparity between what is Western and what is Japanese, as well as what is traditional and what is modern. Wrapped up in this discourse is an analysis of where men and women fit into Japanese society.

Goldstein-Giodoni argues that the emergence of a new type of kimono during the Meiji Period was not accidental since the modernization of the kimono parallels the modernization of the country. The push for a modern and simplified kimono that could still symbolize Japanese tradition was an attempt to create not only cultural distinctions between the West and Japan, but also to cement distinctions between what was male and what was female. The Japanese government even went so far as to regulate how women and men could style their hair by forbidding women to cut theirs. These regulations, Goldstein-Giodoni asserts, sent “distinct

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133 Ofra Goldstein-Giodoni, “Kimono and the Construction of Gendered and Cultural Identities,” *Ethnology 38*, no 4 (Fall, 1999); 351-370. The arguments and notes are basically the same. The one difference in the substance of the two articles is Giodoni’s inclusion of a source from 2001 that serves to update the article and make it suitable for a 2005 publishing. The 2001 source is not cited in the body of the essay, but serves to show that the arguments made by the author in 1999 still hold true for 2005.
135 Ibid., 154.
symbolic messages to Japanese men and women.”

Women were to symbolize the old value systems and men were to symbolize Western thinking.

It is safe to say that the author believes the kimono represents the confinement of women in Japanese society. This is true for Meiji period Japan as it is for women in Japan today, though fewer and fewer young women wish to don the kimono for special occasions possibly signifying the concerted effort of women to break with the past association of the kimono with female submission.” For people living outside of Japan today, the author argues, a picture of kimono-clad women symbolizes all of Japan. However, for the Japanese, the kimono symbolizes a women confined and trapped by tradition. Women are still seen as childbearing vessels and caretakers of the home. Goldstein-Giodoni point out that ryōsai kenbo remains a popular slogan today, especially for those in influential positions. It is not a stretch of the imagination to think that the kimono played an even more important symbolic and physical role in enforcing the idea of women as good wives and wise mothers during the Meiji period. The kimono, worn more often during the Meiji period than now, kept a woman wrapped up—reminders of old Confucian ideas of filial piety that placed the woman firmly under the husband in terms of rank. For Goldstein-Giodoni, the kimono represents the male dominated repression of women now as well as during the Meiji period.

Another 2005 publication, Gendering Modern Japanese History, is one of the most impressive comprehensive works on gender in Japanese history. For once, a book with a title containing the word “gender” actually includes analyses of women and men. The editors of the work, Barbara Molony and Kathleen Uno, believe that studying gender enhances the

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137 Ibid., 157.
138 Ibid., 164-165.
139 Ibid., 163.
understanding of modern Japanese history.\textsuperscript{140} As is to be expected in a volume such as this, there are several seminal essays. Among these is a contribution from historian Donald Roden that deals with ideas of men and masculinity in Meiji Japan. The article, “Thoughts on the Early Meiji Gentleman,” begins with a discussion of the famous Japanese educator.\textsuperscript{141} Fukuzawa argued that men of the rapidly changing Meiji period needed to be educated, refined, and upstanding gentlemen. The cultivated gentleman was the ideal, but they were not born and as such needed to be taught the proper methods and ideals.

For the most part, Fukuzawa disliked the traditional role of men in society, especially in terms of men’s education. His biggest complaints were the elitism and primitivism inherent in the education system.\textsuperscript{142} Fukuzawa argued the need for not only education for the elite, but also for those of the lower social status as well as for women. An important part of Fukuzawa’s ideal man in Meiji society was that men learn the rules of dressing themselves in a proper manner. To aid in this process Fukuzawa published tracts that taught men the finer points of Victorian social customs and dress including how a man should wear his collar, top hat, and how a man should consume his food.\textsuperscript{143} Fukuzawa also encouraged men to be good husbands, arguing that this was another important part of the cultivated gentleman’s role in society. He believed that men who kept away from women did not develop proper “association skills,” thus hindering the road to their enlightenment.\textsuperscript{144}

\textsuperscript{140} Barbara Molony and Kathleen Uno, eds., \textit{Gendering Modern Japanese History}, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005).


\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., 71.

\textsuperscript{143} Roden, “Thoughts,” 77. Fukuzawa’s tracts were mentioned above in Karlin’s article “The Gender of Nationalism.”

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 79.
Fukuzawa belittled men who ascribed to the primitive ideal of manliness. In particular, he denounced the wearing of a sword, traditional attire, sloppy posture, and the seeking of instant sexual gratification common amongst those living the primitive lifestyle. Fukuzawa was not the only Meiji period figure to argue for cultivation of the mind for men and many of Fukuzawa’s biggest supporters were fellow educators such as Nakamura Masano, Mori Ogai, and Nijima Jō. However, Fukuzawa’s ideals did not have as many supporters as he might have wished. Roden admits that the ideals perpetrated by Fukuzawa soon came under attack by those who viewed the cultivated gentleman as fake, womanly, and concerned only with dressing up in fancy Western clothes. By the 1880s and 1890s, Fukuzawa modified his ideal gentleman to that of a man who engaged in more masculine activities like kendo or the American import, baseball. Simultaneously, Fukuzawa canceled his plans to start a college for women within his own Keiō University, further distancing himself from all that was feminine. For Roden, Fukuzawa represented a valiant but failed attempt at changing the role of men in Japanese society from barbarous to refined.

Another chapter in Gendering Japanese History is “Womanhood, War, and Empire: Transmutation of “Good Wife, Wise Mother” before 1931” written by Kathleen Uno. The intention of this essay is to elaborate on ryōsai kenbo and put forth a comprehensive study of that slogan since many Western historians only briefly cover the topic and do not detail the many changes the ideal went through from the late 19th century to the beginning of the Pacific War.

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145 This primitive ideal is the same ideal discussed by Karlin, Roden, etc. It was a variation of the bankara ideal of masculinity.
146 Roden, “Thoughts,” 81.
147 Ibid., 84.
148 Ibid., 87-88. Without a doubt, this article bears remarkable comparisons to Karlin’s article. However, Roden does not reference Karlin’s analysis of masculinities, but the two do share the same sources. For instance, the edited volume Manga zasshi hakubutsukan, ed Shimizu Isao, vol 1 (Kobusho kankōkai, 1986) is cited by both authors as is Roden’s earlier work Schooldays in Imperial Japan: A Study in the Culture of a Student Elite, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980.)
(1931-1945). The author wishes the reader to know that this study is “based on preliminary research” and “offers a working hypothesis rather than a definitive statement or interpretation of ryōsai kenbo evolution before the Pacific War.” Despite the author’s reluctance to engage in a definitive argument of her topics, there is an interesting and engaging attempt to further the understanding of how the Meiji government and Japanese society viewed women. In the author’s view, before the first Sino-Japanese War, women of all classes were regarded as unimportant and insignificant. After the war, the Japanese government began to re-think their position on women, adopted the slogan ryōsai kenbo, and instituted educational requirements for girls. The slogan grew through the rest of the 19th century with journalists, educators, and women entering into discussion about what the slogan meant. At first, the trend leaned towards women learning the basics of education so that they would be useful to their husbands and their children. Soon after Japan began to fight larger powers, however, the slogan changed. Now, the slogan promoted the idea of women being not only educated mothers and wives, but also caretakers of the home and household finances so that men could go to war and not worry about their families. This required that girls went to school—possibly even beyond the elementary level—so that they could learn how to run the home. The new emphasis on education for women was also the result of the government’s desire for a strong army. Since women raised the children, women needed to able to teach their children how to be proper subjects of the emperor, subjects who were ready to fight for and defend their emperor and country.

149 Kathleen Uno, “Womanhood, War, and Empire: Transmutations of “Good Wife, Wise Mother” before 1931,” in Gendering Modern Japanese History, edited by Barbara Molony and Kathleen Uno, eds, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005), p 494. It is interesting to note that Uno’s sources on ryōsai kenbo are Japanese sources.
150 Ibid., 495.
151 Ibid., 495.
152 Ibid., 499-500.
The author admits that at the time of writing her article that her study is still preliminary, but her research thus far suggests that *ryōsai kenbo* was not as accepted as other scholars might have believed. The most enlightening part of Uno’s assessment of *ryōsai kenbo* is her assertion that the slogan and its meaning was a topic of discussion in Japanese society, rather than being blindly accepted. For example, even girls’ higher education taught ideas that contradicted the *ryōsai kenbo*, encouraging women to think and do things outside the home.\(^{153}\) Those who did not seek active roles in society outside of the home were determined to show the valuable role of the wife in the home, calling the wife and mother the “foundation of the nation and society.”\(^{154}\) Not every woman accepted the slogan, but instead sought to interact with society in ways beyond the walls of the home. The fact that *ryōsai kenbo* was contested is a sign that women had more power than previously argued.\(^{155}\)

Two years after *Gender in Japanese History* was published, *A Companion to Japanese History* was published with William M. Tsutsui acting as editor.\(^{156}\) Like *Gender in Japanese History*, this volume is a collection of essays on a wide range of subjects that are valuable analyses of various aspects of Japanese history. “Gender and Sexuality in Modern Japan,” written by Sally A. Hastings, looks at the roles men and women played in creating modern Japan. Sadly, only two and a half pages of this article deal with gender of the Meiji period and as such, there is little analysis. The article does not offer an argument, but rather is an overview of many of the topics covered by the authors above. What is most interesting about this article is the author’s use of sources.

\(^{153}\) Uno, 506.
\(^{154}\) Ibid.
\(^{155}\) This study does not approach women who could not follow *ryōsai kenbo* because of their economic situations, but rather women who could financially stay in the home and chose not to.
Looking at Hastings’ bibliography, one can see that she cites many of the works discussed, including the works by Fuess, Karlin, Nolte, Sand and Walthall.\textsuperscript{157} This is important for two reasons. First, the bibliography shows the author actually using other scholar’s arguments in informing readers. Previously, scholars tended to use primary sources almost exclusively to formulate their own arguments. This is fantastic, but also indicates that there is much primary research still to be done. With Hastings chapter in \textit{Companion}, one sees the possibility of the field coming to a point where historians can build upon other historians’ works. Secondly, Hastings’ bibliography highlights one of the first attempts in the field to study men and women in Japanese history concurrently. The works by Karlin, Sand, Nolte and Walthall cited in Hastings’ article cover the different genders, yet Hastings intertwines the information into a brief article that explains the roles men and women played in Japan.\textsuperscript{158} Though very brief, “Gender and Sexuality” is an important step in the field.

From 1980 through the present, there have been advances in the study of gender in Meiji Japanese history.\textsuperscript{159} The field expanded from analyzing women in Japanese history only to analyzing the roles of men and women in tandem. While there have been great strides forward, there are plenty of areas within the field of masculinity studies for more study. The following pages attempt to give attention to a field that deserves and needs it.

\textit{Masculinity as a Window to Culture}

\textsuperscript{157} Tsutsui, 285-388.

\textsuperscript{158} Hastings’ article is not an assessment of the current state of the field, but rather a brief look at gender roles in Japan that happens to use many of other historian’s findings to fill in the gaps of her study.

\textsuperscript{159} Though lengthy, I felt it important to put forth as detailed of an analysis of the works on Japanese gender studies as possible. None of those authors in the Japanese gender field ever put forth a fully developed definition of gender. They may have relied on the definition put forth by scholar Joan Scott, who believes gender is a socially constructed knowledge about the differences in sex, but no mention of her appeared in my studies. As such, I felt it rather important to analyze as many works as possible in hopes of providing an agreed upon definition of gender amongst those scholars studying Japanese gender. As none was concretely created or quoted by a scholar, it is up to the historiography to provide a working understanding of what scholars of this field believed gender to be.
To understand the culture of a certain group or society it sometimes helps to look through a specific window or vantage point of that culture in order to narrow down the information into manageable sections. To understand the culture of Meiji Japan analyzing masculinity is a valid and interesting window through which to look. Masculinity in Meiji Japan experienced the cultural upheavals and dissention running throughout Japanese society, especially among those in what I call the influential class. One portion of the Meiji-era influential class looked at the West and saw a new paradigm of masculinity in the radically different modern Western man. The Western man was a symbol of power, ability, and modernization. As such, as reported above, Western styles of dress and Western polite manners became the fashion for the men of the influential class who wanted to perpetuate the idea that Japan was run by modern and powerful men who were just as modern and powerful as men from the West.

To the modern and new type of Meiji-era man, dressing this way set him apart from the men still clinging to the past. To the modern man the traditional man was crass, dirty, and foolish for his refusal to see the benefits of modernity. The modern man of the influential class was superior because he had learned the ways of the West and could interact with the powerful Western countries with ease. They were forming a new Japan, a Japan that could better compete with the West in many ways including changes in education, government, culture, and even sports. Those opposing the Westernizing influential men wanted to remain feudal by continuing to read the old Japanese classics, maintaining the old social order, and continue traditional life. To the modern man, being like the West was the best way to help Japan gain international acceptance and power while simultaneously defending itself from the Western imperial threat.

160 Please refer back to page 4 for the definition of the influential class.
By the 1880s, the adoption of Western culture came under fire by those feeling disgruntled with the government’s implementation of Western technologies, laws, and cultural practices because they were completely foreign and incompatible with traditional Japanese culture and society. Many, including members of the influential class, felt that a renewal of traditional values, not Westernization, was the answer to Japan’s problems. These traditionalists spoke and worked against those advocating Western ideas claiming that modernists did so without a true understanding of Western culture or values, thus rendering their attempts ineffectual and foolish. The chief visual representative of this critique was the Japanese gentleman and the later “high-collar” man created for use in satirical cartoons. This “Westernized” man was the target of sharp criticism from traditional and anti-Western nationalists. He was representative of those who adopted Western ideas seemingly without thinking and rejected most, if not all, aspects of traditional Japanese culture. Not only was this an insult to traditional Japanese culture, it was foolish.

Traditional minded Japanese of the influential class believed they had reason for the condemnation of the Westernized man because it was obvious that these men wore the fashions wrong. Instead of advancing Japan’s situation in world affairs as they believed they were, they were making fools of themselves in front of the Westerners watching Japanese progress. Hats that were the wrong size, collars that were too starched, jackets that were too long, pants that were too short, and shoes that were too small were often the norm on the high-collar man. Not only did the traditional Japanese man view the high-collars as foolish for their improper usage of Western clothing, they also viewed them as feminine due to their affinity for fine clothing, their shiny shoes, obsession with their toilette, and various other markers of a Western gentleman that traditional Japanese men disdained. True men did not care about their appearances or about the
way they acted in public. True men were confident without the need of special clothing and hair products.

The traditional, also known as “roughs,” knew that focusing so much time on the outside had to mean little, and devoted instead themselves to the kokoro, or the inner spirit/heart. Those who focused on the outside appearances and not on their inner spirit could not have the best interest of Japan in their hearts. The roughs took great pride in being the opposite of their counterparts. The roughs often-times were represented as dirty and gruff in the cartoons of that era to show that the roughs thought more about activities for their lives and their countrymen than their clothing and toilette. They wore traditional clothing, and instead of a cane they carried a club, as a club was a useful tool in many situations than the foppish cane. They did not care how they appeared to anyone, especially those of the opposite sex. The roughs, not the feminine and Westernized high-collar gentlemen, were the true representation of the Japanese male.

*The Japanese Gentleman’s Case for Westernization*

The high-collar man in the Japanese satirical lexicon did not appear until the 1880s. Well before the high-collar man surfaced, however, there were men in elevated positions throughout Japanese society, i.e., the influential class who dressed in Western style and attempting to Westernize Japan. The first step in these attempts was an 1870s edict sent down from the early Meiji government mandating that all topknots be cut off. The topknots had

161 The high-collar man was respectful and cordial to women in a similar manner as the Western gentleman behaved in public.
162 In fact, as Jason G. Karlin points out in “Gender of Nationalism,” it was not until 1898 that the term “high-collar” (haikara) was actually used. Created by journalist Ishikawa Yasujirō, this term gave a name to a character that was already permeating satirical papers throughout Japan.
163 Ofra Goldstein-Gidon, 355.
distinguished the noble samurai from those of other levels in the pre-Meiji period. The
government’s logic behind banning top knots was twofold: in one way, it was a symbolic act that
asserted the government’s control over the samurai, the other was to convince Western powers
like the United States and Great Britain that Japan was making great strides towards leaving the
antiquated past behind and moving toward total modernization. As discussed above, the Meiji
leadership worked towards improving the military, its educational system, and government
structure all based upon Western examples.\textsuperscript{164} Though these happened quite rapidly, nothing
could quite make an impression on Western observers like the visual proof that Japan was
adopting and adapting to Western ideas and culture.\textsuperscript{165}

Out of this drive towards modernization and the desire to prove the worth of the Japanese
in Western eyes was born the Japanese gentleman, a man fashioned out of the Western idea of a
gentleman.\textsuperscript{166} Of course, understanding what comprised a Western gentleman was not easy.
Guidance was needed even for those who encountered Western men daily. Luckily, books soon
arrived giving detailed instructions on the Western gentleman by authors with firsthand
knowledge. Fukuzawa Yukichi, born of a poor samurai family and one of the earliest and most
prominent members of the Meiji influential class, was an early proponent of Western education
and one of the first to publish guidebooks on Western culture. He was able to provide this
information because he traveled with one of the few Tokugawa sanctioned missions to the West
from 1858-1862. During his travels with the mission, Fukuzawa amassed a collection of
documents and firsthand knowledge of Western customs and culture that led him to write the

German, French, and American influence on the Japanese education system. For information on the Western
influence on the army, navy and much more, see Marius B. Jansen, \textit{The Cambridge History of Japan: Volume V},
\textsuperscript{165} Karlin, 45.
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid., 44.
first etiquette book for Japanese men.\textsuperscript{167} In this work, \textit{Seiyō jijō}, Japanese men were introduced to European and American clothing, etiquette, and styling techniques.\textsuperscript{168} The first volume of this three-volume work, published in 1867, sold 150,000 copies.\textsuperscript{169} Influenced by Fukuzawa and his books, the Japanese gentleman began to dress in frock coats, neckties, and white collared shirts. Once dressed in this manner, a gentleman was a symbolic paragon of modern virtue and ability. He was the \textit{shinshi}, a man of talent poised to guide Japan into the modern world and the embodiment of the rapid modernization.\textsuperscript{170} To Fukuzawa, nothing was more responsible than a man who could take the “semi-developed land” of Japan and raise it up the level of the “most highly civilized” and “enlightened” countries of the United States and Europe.\textsuperscript{171}

Fukuzawa Yukichi was not the only Japanese man to have a deeper understanding of Western culture than the average man in Meiji Japan. Nitobe Inazo, also born of a poor lower samurai family and an early member of the influential class, played a major role in the progress of the Japanese gentleman. Nitobe is an interesting figure in Japanese history. Born in Japan, he spent much of his formative years in the West. He studied at Johns Hopkins University in the United States, where he adopted Quaker beliefs, and married an American woman. When he returned to Japan, Nitobe was more Western than Japanese. He played an integral role in educating Japanese people about Western culture, ideas, and traditions. For much of his life Nitobe wished to serve as a “bridge” between the Japanese and those on the other side of the

\textsuperscript{167} Duus, 185. The Iwakura Mission was sent out by the Tokugawa bakufu to various points in the United States as a fact-finding trip. The Japanese sent out on the trip learned a great deal, but upon their return, the mission members were hushed and the information ignored. Their information was not regarded as important until after the 1868 Restoration.

\textsuperscript{168} Karlin, 44.

\textsuperscript{169} Duus, 185.

\textsuperscript{170} \textit{Shinshi} was a derivation of \textit{shinshin}, or Confucian scholar that was once an integral part of the Heian period court.

\textsuperscript{171} Duus, 187.
Pacific. By serving as this bridge, he hoped to show both sides the positive qualities of the other. He wished to show the Japanese people that dressing and acting like the West would benefit the Japanese people as a whole. He taught at various colleges in Japan, always dressing in Western garb and teaching Western techniques on topics ranging from agriculture to business.

Nitobe also had his own ideas about traditional minded men in Japan. In his work *The Japanese Nation* (1912), Nitobe informs his audience that “It seems to me that there is at the bottom of [present day] Japanese character a feminine trait.” This was a harsh enough critique of his fellow country people, but Nitobe was not finished. He continued by saying “The child whose soul is molded in womanly qualities…in his temperament he remains feminine.” Nitobe, it seems, found the men of all classes in his country weak and feminine. His low opinion of his compatriots is beyond just the description of masculine and feminine. While Nitobe deemed his traditionally minded countrymen as feminine and sensitive, he also argued that the Japanese were “marked by great susceptibility to a variety of influences, with a tendency to a will, impulsive, and alas! liable to collapse.” It seems as though Nitobe thought his countrymen were weak and, taking into consideration the fact that he supported Westernization, Nitobe believed that the answer to his country’s shortcomings were in the West. This is supported by Nitobe’s belief that his people would make little headway into many scholarly areas for “the next generation or two.” This is a poor opinion to have of one’s own people, but it was not surprising as he believed, like Fukuzawa, most of his country was still unenlightened. To counteract the flaws he saw in his fellow man, he pushed the idea of modernizing/Westernizing. He also believed in dressing and acting to impress. He saw the

172 Duus, 11.
174 Ibid., pg 107.
175 Ibid., 109.
176 Ibid., 114.
Western way of life as superior, as it was manlier and less feminine than the traditional, Japanese way. If Japan were fully Westernized, it would also display the advancement of the Japanese people.

There were other influential supporters of Westernization besides Fukuzawa and Nitobe. They all argued that Western style clothing actually helped Japan on its modernization process and ultimately its rise to become a major power. The military, for instance, adopted Western style uniforms as a means to look more modern and possibly even perform their jobs more effectively. Others saw the new uniforms as a status symbol or an outward sign of modernity to prove the validity of the new Japan. Nitobe summed it up best for the majority of Meiji-era supporters who favored Western dress. Not only did Nitobe find traditional men feminine, he also believed that traditional Japanese robes billowed too much to be practical and made it harder for the men of Japan to be upstanding men working in new jobs necessary for Japan’s future. Western suits and other forms of Western clothing were the answer. They provided better functionality for men to work in a modern and powerful country.

As the Meiji period progressed, more men of the influential class began to dress and act according to Western ideals. Like the education system, the government formed along Western lines, taking ideas of government structure from that of the German Diet bureaucratic system and ideas of education from the education system found in the United States. Men in high places within new Japanese agencies, like the government and education system, dressed and acted Western. The military not only used Western-built weapons but also dressed like Western

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177 However, in the early years of the Meiji Period the military was not regarded well amongst a good portion of the Japanese populace.
soldiers. With so many Japanese adopting Westernized lives during the Meiji Period, who could possibly resist the temptation to be a Westernized man?

_The Evolution of Satire and the Rise of Traditional Masculinity_

At the beginning of the Meiji period it seemed as though total Westernization was the fate of Japan. However, the Westernization of the Meiji period was not a complete success. As mentioned earlier, not all Japanese gentleman mastered the art of Western dress. Those that failed elicited mockery aimed at all Westernizing men. The ridicule, however, did not stem from clothing alone. Instead, poking fun at the clothing was a way at probing the validity of the Meiji government. Within the first few years of the Meiji period, rumbles of discontent began to course through Japanese society. Like the Tokugawa government before, the Meiji government was considered by some too lenient and considerate to the West. Instead of uniting behind the Emperor Meiji and working to expel the foreigners as promised, the Meiji government invited more foreigners into the country. Since many of those in this Meiji government, the Emperor Meiji himself included, dressed in Western attire and worked so closely with foreigners, the ridicule of clothing and government became intertwined. This makes sense when one remembers that the Japanese gentleman was visually representing the modernization, Westernization, and improvement of all sections of Japanese society.

For instance, in the _MaruMaru Chinbun_, we find a fantastic example of the lampooning of the Japanese gentleman (figure 1). Five different men wear Western style clothing in various states of disaster. For one, the pants are too short. For another, the shoes are too small. Yet another has a hat several sizes too large and has a collar that is too tight. The caption reads,
Mr. Punch says: a Jackdaw in peacock’s feathers and a fox in a lion’s garb are but ridiculous and nothing more, yet only outward imitations of foreign civilization are also such.179

The Japanese gentleman, according to this popular periodical of the late 1800s, was visually ridiculous and was attempting to dress like something he is not. Since the Japanese gentleman was so closely tied with the modernizing Japanese government, ridiculing the Japanese gentleman often meant insulting the new Meiji government.

(Figure 1) *MaruMaru Chinbun*

We can extrapolate from this illustration and caption that many of the Japanese men dressing as Westerners were unconvincing, but I believe there is much more to this illustration if we just delve deeper into the tableau. Take, for instance, the comparison of Western dressing

179Karlin, 49. It is important to note that “Mr. Punch” was the Japanese take on a British magazine called *Punch*. There are similarities between Japanese satirical magazines and British satirical magazines as one of the first illustrator satirists, Nomura Fumio, studied in England where he encountered *Punch* during the Tokugawa ban on oversea studies of the mid 1860s. Nomura went on to found *Maruchin* in 1877. Though there are similarities between the British and English satirical magazines, the Japanese magazines are very Japanese. The satirical magazines are a very good instance of the Japanese taking something from another culture and making it uniquely Japanese.
men to “foxes in lion’s garb” and “a jackdaw in peacock’s clothing” (figure 1). Neither comparison is flattering. The fox is often associated with slyness and deception in Japanese folklore and the lion is associated with strength and nobility, while the jackdaw is a plain bird that could never compare to the extravagant peacock. Calling a man a fox dressing in lion’s garb or a jackdaw with peacock’s clothing points out the futility of these men’s attempts to be sophisticated and powerful men. In the desire to put on the vestiges of power and strength, these men made a mockery of themselves. In another edition of the Maru Maru Chinbun, the writers bluntly state in a satirical story’s moralizing tag line that “the blunders made by many of our countrymen, in the attempts to ape the ways of foreigners, often expose them to the ridicule of their friends.”

They are portrayed as not having mastered the foreign culture. Their clothing comes from their desire to convince their fellow Japanese citizens as well as the rest of the world that they have become the equal of the Western man. But the result was ridiculous and instead highlights the stupidity and lack of substance these men had. They were trying to be Western without the expertise and knowledge to be Western. Worst of all they had abandoned their Japanese ways without knowing how to be Western, leaving them in a ridiculous limbo.

The Japanese gentleman faced even more ridicule during the late 1880s. After a series of lavish and widely criticized parties and Western style masked balls held by Prime Minister Itō Hirobumi, tempers flared at the amount of money and time spent on the parties. During this time, despite the government’s subsidizing Western style parties for Western guests, the Western enforcement of the unequal treaties was still in effect. To many Japanese, especially those against the Japanese gentleman but also of the influential class, the need to end the exploitive

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180 Maru Maru Chinbun, Vol 1 no 1-31, 200. The Japanese gentleman would sometimes be caricatured as a monkey wearing Western clothing. This, obviously, stems from the opinion that the Japanese gentleman simply mimicked Western ideas and customs like a monkey would mimic a human.
181 Karlin, 46.
treaties was of prime concern. The fact that the members of the government danced and drank in Western style instead of focusing on ending the last vestiges of legal inequality with Western powers led to talk of hypocrisy and insincerity. Jason Karlin quotes a contemporary critic of the Meiji Japanese gentleman in “Gender of Nationalism” as writing, “though the Japanese gentleman is an unabashedly civilized man…one finds that his conduct is depraved. Radiant on the outside, he is rotting within.”

Certainly to many people of the influential class as well as members of other social order living throughout Japan during the Meiji Period, the Japanese gentleman did not live up to the proper persona he was supposed to embody. Instead of upstanding men, they saw wastrels throwing lavish and expensive parties filled with drunken Western-dressed men. As damages to their reputation mounted against the Westernized gentlemen of the Meiji government, questions about their ability to run the government emerged. Were the Japanese gentlemen running the country upstanding men working for a strong Japanese future or a mass of partying wastrels?

It is without a doubt that the Japanese gentleman was an easy target for politically charged satirical comments in written or illustrated form. However, there is more to the expressed discontent focused on the gentleman of Japan’s government than just political unrest. Ideas of what it meant to be a true Japanese male were slowly being asserted into the forefront of the discussion of the Westernized man in Japanese culture, especially amongst those of the influential class. Out of this dissatisfaction, doubt, and anger with the Japanese gentleman came the “high-collar” man. Honda Kinkichirō, founding member of the Maru Maru Chinbun, created a caricature in the 1880s depicting the Japanese gentleman in all of his Westernized glory: ill-fitting suit, top hat, and high-collar adorned his caricature of the gentleman who walked through

182 Karlin, 48.
life oblivious to the real needs and problems facing Meiji Japan. It is important to note that the caricature of the high-collar man in Japanese history was not only government officials who wore Western-style clothing. Businessmen, educators, writers, and many other professions had been dressing in Western garb for years. In addition to men already living in cities, more men moved to the metropolitan areas every year that also aligned themselves with either the Westernized group or the traditional group, thus growing the size of the debate. In order to distinguish between the large number Westernized and traditional men, Honda began to draw his Japanese gentleman with high collars. While collars were higher during the 19th century than they are today, Honda’s characterization of the high-collar took the height of that article of clothing to extremes. The exaggerated height symbolized the impracticality, foolishness, and vanity of the Meiji-era Japanese gentleman. A man with a collar as high as Honda often depicted would be unable to do any real work or contribute much to society in any way as the collars hindered the turning of the head and the ability to see anything around them.

When Japan encountered their first real taste of modern warfare with the Sinō and Russo-Japanese Wars in the 1890s and early 1900s, there was a slight shift in the opinion of those dressing in Western attire. While the government still found itself reviled and ridiculed, the army and navy enjoyed an increase of favor that saw men of the military move from reviled to revered. Before the wars, the military was considered worthless for their perceived laziness and sloth. This was especially true of officers as an excerpt from the Maru Maru Chinbun from the early 1880s points out. The periodical mocks Japanese military officers:

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183 Karlin, 49.
184 Ibid., 51.
185 Karlin, 54-56. Some men of the influential class dressed in Western clothing that still retained their traditional Japanese cultural values and worked against those who would have seen Japan totally Westernize. Karlin also points out that as rural men moved into cities and gained access into the influential class through jobs/careers, they assimilated into the dynamics of the cities. This meant that as more moved to the cities, not only did the influential class grow, but each side of the masculinity debate/modernization debate grew as well.
(Q) Why are Japanese officers fond of the game of draughts? (A) Because they have too much leisure time. (Q) Why do they not enjoy active amusements such as hunting, fishing, etc? (A) Because their bodies are too feeble, being weakened by sensual pleasure.\textsuperscript{186}

This telling excerpt portrays those in military service, especially those of the more privileged officer class, as weak and lazy. They enjoyed too much leisure time and were overly concerned with sensual pleasures like drinking alcohol, smoking, gambling, and spending time with women of questionable reputation.\textsuperscript{187} They were not on guard against threats and did not behave with their country’s best interest in their hearts. They lacked any honor.

After the success in the wars, those living in and outside saw Japan in a new and surprising light. While they realized that Japan was not as strong as the United States and Great Britain, Japan was on the rise. More importantly, those living in Japan began to view themselves with increasing pride as it was their men who had faced down their enemies with samurai-like honor.\textsuperscript{188} Once again, men were strong and mighty, but only if they exemplified values of traditional Japan in the same way the Japanese soldiers did in the wars. Take, for example, \textit{Tokyo Puck} just after the two wars (figure 2). A giant sumo wrestler (a paragon of traditional male masculinity and virility) dwarfs a small and fragile looking man symbolizing Russia.\textsuperscript{189} The sumo wrestler is large, relaxed, and exuding confidence. He stands with his feet firmly planted on the ground and looks down at his lesser neighbor in the illustration with contemptuous and superior air. The wrestler is also dressed in traditional clothing, down to the white paper chains prevalent in the exclusively Japanese Shinto religion, making sure the reader knows that the wrestler is the quintessential Japanese paragon of strength. The Russian man looks frightened and ready to run away. He points up at the large man in such a manner as to say, “you should

\textsuperscript{186} MaruMaru Chinbun, vol 1, no1-31, p 216.
\textsuperscript{187} The sensual pleasures discussed here are drinking, smoking, sexual intercourse, etc.
\textsuperscript{188} Jansen, \textit{Making of Modern Japan}, 433.
\textsuperscript{189} Tokyo Puck, vol 1, p 25.
leave me alone, please.” This depiction shows the artist’s opinion of the greatness of Japan and the weakness of Russia, as the caption reads “No Match to Me,” indicating that Russia was no match for Japan’s prowess. It also showed the renewed greatness of Japan stemmed from Japan’s glorious past.

On the cover of a later Tokyo Puck (figure 3), a sumo wrestler once again symbolizes Japanese prowess. This time, Japan (the sumo wrestler) is set to fight the United States (a
smaller and less formidable looking Western wrestler). The caption reads, in English, “Justice Harlan of the United States said the crash between Yellow and White Races is a question of Time…Who questions who will win?”\textsuperscript{190} By looking at the illustration, the sumo wrestler looks poised to wipe out the Western wrestler. The face of the wrestler is determined and the caption indicates that the publishers of the \textit{Tokyo Puck} believe that the Japanese were superior to the West and that they would be victorious. In the inevitable clash between the United States and Japan that Justice Harlan predicted, the Japanese believed that they would be victorious. The improvement of military branches, military victories, and diplomatic gains demonstrated by the victories in China and Russia all bolstered Japanese self-confidence.

\textsuperscript{190} \textit{Tokyo Puck}, vol 5, p 33. Justice John Marshal Harlan was a member of the Supreme Court who was adverse to the idea of ever allowing the Chinese race (yellow) to intermingle with those living in the United States. The same rang true for Japan, another “yellow race.” Interesting enough, John Marshal Harlan’s grandson, John Marshall, Jr., was a key advocate for the internment of the Japanese during World War II when he served on the Supreme Court.
The government, however, received no credit for the military victories from those living in Japan. In fact, it seems the victories of the military only increased the dissatisfaction with the foppish government and their supporters, due in part to the amount of money the government spent on things deemed superfluous. In the mainstream periodical *Tokyo Puck*, the Japanese gentleman came under increasingly harsh criticism after the Sino and Russo-Japanese wars. And after 1898 and the coining of the term “high-collar” by Ishikawa, the collars of the Japanese gentleman became even more exaggerated. One critic offered the public a 1901 checklist of what it took to be a high-collar man,

- embellish one’s dress above all else
- never open one’s mouth without citing the case in foreign countries
- enthusiastically speak foreign languages
- compliment one’s own wife in the presence of others
- spend half the day making up one’s appearance
- grovel before one’s superiors
- make a habit of mentioning that you dined with Itō Hirobumi
- peer at others through your pince-nez while smoking a cigar
- refer to geisha as “geisha-san”
- become totally shameless
- forget how to speak Japanese.

According to these characteristics, the high-collar man was a despicable creature who was no longer connected to Japan despite his elevated position in Japanese society. He did not speak Japanese anymore—he has forgotten. He is leading the Japanese people, but has lost all ties with the Japanese people and Japanese culture. He is preoccupied with his appearance and is more made up than any woman.

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191 The emperor, however, was immune to such ridicule. Though pictures circulated throughout the Meiji Period of him wearing Western style clothing, his masculinity and abilities were questioned either quietly or not at all. There were some instances of this, but his supposed divinity kept him clear of much negative feedback. Often times, they blamed his advisors and other government employees.

The increased dissatisfaction is evident in the even higher collars found in caricatures, like one found in a 1907 edition of the *Tokyo Puck* (figure 4). The collar is so high that the man cannot function. His moustache is greased and curled to perfection, as is his hair. This suggests that the artist and editor of the *Puck*, Kitazawa Racten, viewed the collar as a symbol of distinguished foolishness and impracticality like his predecessor Honda Kinkichirō. The high-collar man had lost all rationality. He was not able to serve his country, including any basic daily functions, rendering him useless.
It is no surprise, then, that the high-collar man became a symbol of the foolishness of the Japanese government to a greater degree than even the Japanese gentleman before. However, we know from earlier it was not just those of the government that were high-collar men, but also those who supported the government. The high-collar man came to symbolize men who were journalists, scholars, philosophers, business, and of other vocations that comprised the influential class that were perceived to be overly Westernized just as the Meiji government politicians and administrators had been criticized before. Itō Hirobumi, an important politician of the Meiji period and considered a possible model for the development of the high-collar man, is one such man often criticized in the papers for his Western ways and perceived weakness in office. Itō was a key force behind the new Meiji government structure that was based on Western models. He was also known for throwing lavish parties for Western guests paid for by the government an action that angered a great many of the opponents to the Westernized man.

Itō’s actions made others targets for the traditional minded satirists of the influential class if there was any hint of support for his ideas. Take, for example, Takekoshi Yosaburō. He was a lowborn journalist and politician of non-samurai origin, staunch supporter of Ito Hirobumi, and was often targeted as a high-collar for his affinity for Western clothing, primping, and forward thinking. Takekoshi pushed for the complete Westernization of Japan and for more rights for women. His position in society, his admiration of Ito Hirobumi, and his Western ideas made him a high-collar man regardless of his social background. As the influential class of the Meiji period grew, so too the ranks of the high-collar Westernizing men.

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193 Karlin, 62.
194 Jansen, 390-393.
195 Ibid.
As critics of Westernized men progressed from the Japanese gentleman to the high-collar amongst the influential class, so too did his association with femininity. We know that advocates of the Japanese gentleman like Nitobe viewed the traditional Japanese man as feminine, but those who opposed Westernization fought back. Since the inception of the Westernized Japanese gentleman, there was always an underlying connection with the perceived weakness and foolishness of the Japanese gentleman and femininity. Think back to the first illustration (figure 1) and the comparison of the Japanese gentleman to a fox in lion’s clothing. Yes, the fox was a sly, devious creature, but it was often associated with women in traditional folklore.\(^{196}\) This is not to say that the Japanese gentleman was considered a homosexual. In fact, the Japanese gentleman and especially his later incarnation as the high-collar man, tended to be characterized as overly amorous towards women rather than homosexual. He was self-absorbed and fixated on his looks, which was something young and foolish girls were expected to do, not working men. His attention to his looks and to women also indicated that the man spent little time on physical activity, leaving him weak.

Take, for example, the “Ara Mah!” stories in the \textit{Tokyo Puck}. Oftentimes the Western dressed high-collar man Mr. Cholly is chasing after a woman, even if she is in the company of another male. One such story from 1907 shows a Miss Violet eating a meal with a man who is either her husband or father. Mr. Cholly, seated at a nearby table in his Western finery, is making amorous overtures towards Miss Violet. His attempts culminate in a letter that he tosses

\(^{196}\) See the story of Tamamo-no-Mae, a famous folk legend of Japan, in the collection of stories printed in 1725 called \textit{Otogi-zōshi}. Tamano-no-Mae was beautiful, intelligent, and always of pleasing demeanor. One day, the emperor became sick and an astrologer blamed his condition on the fact that Tamano was a nine-tailed fox sent to kill the emperor. China, India, and Korea also have stories containing foxes. Not all stories regarding nine-tailed foxes (or lesser-tailed magical foxes) portray the fox as sly and devious or female. However, a majority of myths regarding magic foxes have a female fox. For more information regarding the fox in Japanese folklore, see Michael Bathgate, “Religion in History, Society, and Culture,” \textit{The Fox’s Craft in Japanese Religion and Folklore: Shapeshifters, Transformations and Duplicities}, Vol 7, ed Frank Reynolds and Winnifred Fallers Sullivan (New York: Routledge, 2004).
over to Miss Violet’s table. Accidentally, the letter hits Miss Violet’s companion. The companion reads the letter, ascertains who it is from, and takes appropriate violent action. Miss Violet’s traditionally dressed male easily overtakes the high-collar Mr. Cholly (figure 5). Yes, the traditionally dressed man is older, but this is no problem. He easily overtakes the inappropriate high-collar man and beats him for his actions.

To me, this suggests that the writers and readers of the *Puck* believed that any traditionally dressed Japanese male would easily overtake a weaker and less traditionally trained Western dressed man. To the writers the traditional man was morally, physically, and intellectually superior to the Western man regardless of age. What well-mannered Japanese man would throw notes to a woman in public in the presence of a husband, father, or companion?

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197 *Tokyo Puck*, vol 1, p 57.
In another instance, Mr. Cholly is late for a planned stroll through a park with Miss Ribon. Unfortunately for Mr. Cholly, he did not pay the rickshaw man enough money for all of his errands. Mr. Cholly refuses to pay what he owes the rickshaw man, causing the *traditionally* dressed rickshaw man to lose his temper, attack Mr. Cholly, and betray to Miss Ribon that Mr. Cholly was late because he was talking with his wife. Miss Ribon, upon hearing the truth, runs away crying “Ara Mah! Confound! [he] Told me [he] [w]as single and ….Ara Mah!” (Figure 6). Mr. Cholly, in this example, is an adulterous and despicable man. He is not faithful to his...
wife, he has not told his girlfriend he is married, and ignored paying his debts. He was without honor, a key tenant for any upstanding Japanese man.\textsuperscript{199} The high-collar man, Mr. Cholly, has several other variations of transgressions in other issues of \textit{Tokyo Puck}. In these, men dressed in traditional Japanese style clothing take him, in his Western style clothing complete with exaggerated collar, to task. In each instance, Mr. Cholly is incapable of defending himself, presumably because he is too weak by lack of physical activity or too constricted by his Western clothing. The Japanese roughs beat down the Western influenced man with ease, taking the immoral high-collar man to task for his indiscretions. These types of illustrations indicate that the publishers, and the many people who bought the magazine, believed that the morals exhibited by the traditional man were more appropriate than those espoused by the high-collar “modern” Meiji period gentlemen.

\textsuperscript{199} Honor was and still is important to Japanese tradition that if a man’s honor is damaged by himself or by another, suicide was often the only recourse.
Mr. Cholly gives us a glimpse into the fact that to many of the influential class and beyond, the high-collar man was considered feminine but never a homosexual. He was weak, focused on dressing well, and worried more about himself than others. Another illustration from *Tokyo Puck* goes even farther into the femininity exhibited by Western dressing Japanese men. This illustration shows us a very well dressed man, high-collared of course, just arriving home. He has on his high top hat, his eyeglasses with chain, his long coat, and shiny black shoes. His apparent weakness or just plain laziness is so complete that he cannot even take off his own
clothing. Instead, he has a male servant taking his shoes off for him. He also cannot seem to bother himself with putting down his own cane for there is another person, a woman, taking his superfluous walking cane from him. The high-collar man is so incapable of taking care of himself that he has to lean on or brace himself on a third person, yet another woman, to keep himself upright while the male servant takes off his shoes. As his servants take care of his things for him and keep him upright, the high-collared man has the time to blow smoke rings with his cigar. The servants accomplish their labors for their high-collared boss without disturbing a slicked back hair on his head (figure 7).200

200 *Tokyo Puck*, vol 1, p 2.
I believe that the best satirical evidence of the disdain felt for the high-collar is the illustration titled “The High-collar’s Toilet!” This series of 13 illustrations tells the story of a typical high-collar man. We first see him going through a large set of drawers as he looks for “something suitable to wear.” Next, we see him washing with scented water and “brushing his raven locks” while a woman, possibly his wife, looks on. After this is done, the high-collar man begins shaving and waxing his moustache while the woman holds the mirror for him. Powdering his face and ironing his clothes follow, then the woman assists him in dressing, polishing, and putting on the final touches. Finally, after all of this the high-collar man is ready to go outside. His objective, the caption reads, was “to buy a bottle of scent.” (Figure 8)\textsuperscript{201}

\textsuperscript{201}Tokyo Puck, Vol 3, p 32
Figure 8
This illustration shows us better than most the popular perception amongst the traditional minded influential class of the high-collar man. The labors the man put into his appearance just that he might go buy a bottle of scent, so that he might continue to complete his complicated daily toilette, is both ridiculous and feminine. No Japanese man should spend that much time on a daily basis on his outward appearance! According to a significant portion of the influential class, and probably many all across Japan, Japanese men should be focusing on the greater good. Men of the influential class should focus on the betterment of Japan as they were in the positions in society to affect the greatest change. This man, whom we might assume is either a government worker or someone of the influential class, instead spent a good portion of his day primping and focusing upon his vanity. It does not seem that he once thought about acting on behalf of the greater good of Japan or at least tried to improve upon himself.

Though extremely entertaining, this illustration highlights the anger and hostility towards the high-collar man found in not only the influential class, but in other areas of Meiji-era society. It is true that many people, especially in the rural areas of Meiji Japan, had less time to spend dwelling upon the nature of the high-collar men and what effect they might have on Meiji Japan than those of the cities. However, *Tokyo Puck*, one of the most influential satirical publications of the Meiji Period, reached a record number of people. While most magazines and periodicals of this time had a circulation of 10,000-20,000 people, *Tokyo Puck* had a circulation of over 100,000. This signified that the ideas and opinions of the artists and writers of that publication reached a greater variety of people, possibly beyond the influential class.\(^{202}\) Moreover, it is important to note that it is quite possible that *Puck* reached more people than the recorded 100,000 subscribers through secondary viewings by friends, family, or employees of *Puck*.

\(^{202}\) Karlin, 64.
It is nearly impossible to know how many of those who had a subscription to *Tokyo Puck* let those who did not have a subscription read their magazines. Given that there was little besides print media for most of the Meiji period, it is safe to say that more than 100,000 people read and sympathized with the opinions and critiques of people like Kitazawa Racten.

As the numbers of the metropolitan influential class grew, so did the number of high-collar gentlemen. Interestingly, the height of the illustrated collars continued to grow as well to reflect the growing problem of the high-collar in society. They hid behind their Western accoutrements and lost touch with a large portion of Japanese society. In one illustration from *Tokyo Puck*, there are two gentlemen pictured wearing Western clothing and holding their unnecessary walking sticks (figure 9). The collars are so tall that they hide their entire face. In this way, these high-collar gentlemen had Westernized so completely that they could not see Japan anymore. They were hidden behind their Western clothing and ideas.

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203 Studies of circulation numbers in Great Britain during the New Imperialist Period show that though the circulation of a periodical or newspaper is a certain figure, the actual readership was usually significantly higher. Two or more people might read one issue of a periodical.  

204 *Tokyo Puck*, vol 3, p 35.
The Japanese high-collar’s apparent dismissal of all things Japanese alienated and angered the other side of the influential class. Evidence of this is found in yet another illustration from influential journalists and illustrators of the *Tokyo Puck*. Entitled “The High-collar As Seen by People.” (Figure 10)\(^{205}\) In the center of a sectioned off hexagon is the high-collar man in full high-collar regalia. Around him are eight different types of people giving their opinion of the high-collar man. The European man, “looks at him as a lunatic,” and “people with common sense look at him with despise.” The “sons of Tokyo look [at] him with a fist,” and the “Grandmothers look [at] him as a foreigner.” Only two of the eight represented groups view the high-collar man with happiness, “toilets dealers” and “Miss Violet.” The former valued the money the man spends on his toilette and the later out of desire of his attentions. The variety of

\(^{205}\) *Tokyo Puck*, vol 3, p 35.
opinions given by those at the *Tokyo Puck* represent a wide spectrum of people in Japanese society, with most of them displaying varying degrees of dissatisfaction or disdain.

Figure 10

*The Rough—defender of Japan?*

If the Japanese gentleman and the high-collar man were known for their attention to appearance, there was a contemporary segment of male Japanese society known for being the exact opposite. Instead of spending time on their hair and clothing or affecting any Western style airs, this group of men from the other side of the dividing line in the influential class reveled in dressing in plain traditional clothing. Instead of shiny shoes, this group of men wore
the scuffed geta sandals. Instead of using any artificial scents, as the high-collar man was often accused of doing, these men did not care about how they smelled at all. By some reports, these men did not bother to stay clean. These men were referred to as “roughs.”

Obviously, the Japanese high-collar man and the roughs had very little in common. What they did have in common, though, was the common belief they were the saviors of Japan and both had their origin in the early Meiji era. Whereas the Japanese gentleman and high-collar were influenced by the West, the traditional man and rough man were inspired by traditional Japanese men. The marked difference between the high-collars and the roughs is that the rough ideal fermented and grew in schools and amongst a disgruntled younger set of men. They grew increasingly more disillusioned with those men in government and other positions of influence who led Japan down a path of total Westernization. These young men, often sons of the influential class or through education and future occupations destined to be a part of that group, sought to stem the growth of high-collar.

In a 1980 study by Donald Roden, we find a glimpse of what the younger segment of male society felt and how they acted during the mid- to late- Meiji period. Roden argues that embedded in the everyday writings and activities of young males at an elite school, feelings of dissatisfaction with Meiji society and government, a rejection of all things construed as emasculation, and a yearning for pure masculinity ran rampant. Roden’s localized study focused on First Higher School, otherwise known as Ichiko, during the Meiji and Taishō Periods when discussions of masculinity became a heated topic of discussion amongst students and even their teachers. The higher schools, with curriculum specific to the training and shaping of those

moving into elite or influential areas of society, fostered an atmosphere of freer thinking and expression forbidden in schools instructing those going into fields deemed more humble.\textsuperscript{207} Students in these schools were not only from the former samurai class, but also from artisan, merchants, and peasant society. These schools focused more on the building of character than on actual schoolwork, something that other schools would not approve. In order for these teaching methods and the mixing of former classes to work, educators of these schools established the “higher schools” in isolated areas so that they could teach without interference of those who would disagree with their methods.\textsuperscript{208} These oases of traditionalism, as in Roden’s case study Ichiko, became hotbeds of masculinity discussions.\textsuperscript{209}

Manliness came into question to Meiji-era students, at least in part, because of a serialized novel written by Tsubouchi Shōyō. Published between the years of 1885 and 1886, \textit{The Temperament of Present-Day Students} discussed, amongst other things, dandies and roughnecks.\textsuperscript{210} From this novel sprouted countless discussions of masculinity. In the book, Shōyō details two extreme types of men. The first group was very fond of all sorts of amusements from strolling with women, visiting teahouses, and even shopping. These men were easy to spot because they constantly wore silk kimonos, white socks, and carried parasols.\textsuperscript{211} These young men were the “soft faction.” The second group differed a great deal from the first. This group, the “rough faction,” eschewed everything the first faction did. Instead, this faction clung to the boyishness of childhood.\textsuperscript{212} The kimonos of the rough faction were not made from

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\textsuperscript{207} For example, clerks, technicians, etc.\\
\textsuperscript{208} Roden, \textit{Schooldays}, 53.\\
\textsuperscript{209} It should be noted that educators and headmasters at these schools were often supportive to the traditional idea of masculinity. It is also interesting to see the similarities between these Japanese schools and the public schools of the same time in England.\\
\textsuperscript{210} Ibid., 26. Dandies were the Ichiko high-collared gentlemen and the roughnecks were the roughs.\\
\textsuperscript{211} Ibid., 27.\\
\textsuperscript{212} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
silk, but from coarse cloth. They lived in rooms of shredded tatami floors that probably smelled as bad as the kimonos they wore.\(^{213}\) They did not care for chasing women and shunned all social niceties that catered to women.\(^{214}\) Ultimately, the worst thing a rough could do was fall under the control of a woman.\(^{215}\) If a man was submissive to a woman or a wife, it meant the man was weak and not the master of his house and family. In Japanese history, especially in samurai culture, the man was the supreme head and the woman was always subordinate. Traditional Confucianism and filial piety ethics also reinforced the dominance of the male. If a rough fell subordinate to a woman, he betrayed his expected role as the strong male family leader.

Due to the isolated nature of the higher schools that kept these schools away from the genteel eyes of older society, the rough faction won out with little opposition. Upperclassmen often welcomed the underclassman to school in violent “welcome storms” by yelling, shouting, and running through the dormitory halls while dressed in only loincloths and headbands.\(^{216}\) The upperclassmen then proceeded to kick and beat their freshmen as they huddled together under blankets. Once these freshmen recovered from their “welcome storm” injuries, they were full members of the higher school. They then could take part in other dorm rituals like “dorm rain” and “fire storms.”\(^{217}\) The former was an everyday ritual vital to dorm life where the students urinated from their dorm windows instead of going to the proper facilities. The last, unlike the “welcome storms,” was a spontaneous event enjoyed by all. The students would strip down to

\(^{213}\) Roden, _Schooldays_, 27.  
\(^{214}\) Ibid. For instance, they did not use knives to cut up fruit, but smashed them with their fists.  
\(^{215}\) Ibid., 28.  
\(^{216}\) Ibid., 106.  
\(^{217}\) Ibid., 110-112.
their underwear and dance around a fire lit on the athletics field while singing or chanting, as was common in traditional Shinto community celebrations.\textsuperscript{218}

These traditions, and probably several more, did not fall under the classification of gentleman-like, or “soft” behavior. There were other indications, however, that the students attending the higher school preferred the ideas of the rough faction in Shôyô’s book. For many years, especially from 1890 through the 1900s non-athletic related clubs found it difficult to start in Ichikō.\textsuperscript{219} In the words a student at Ichikō in the late 1890s, “the essence of the school spirit” laid “in sport.”\textsuperscript{220} Music and poetry groups were ridiculed in the higher schools until after the Russo-Japanese War, when it was remembered that samurai were sometimes gifted in composing songs and poems.\textsuperscript{221} The clubs that did exist before and continued to exist after the Russo-Japanese War (kendo, judo, etc) personified the prevailing masculine ideals circulating through the school. In the words of another Ichikō student, these clubs kept the honor of the school by “cultivating simplicity and manliness.” Evidently, music and poetry clubs did not do the same.

Roden’s work adds depth to the visual representations found in Meiji papers that satirized the Japanese gentleman and the high-collar man. When the students in the extremely masculine higher schools graduated, they often went on to college and then jobs in high places. However, these men espoused different ideals than the older men already working and operating in society. Drawing from their school days, the young men moving into society kept their highly masculine ideals and remained a part of the “rough” faction, viewing the men who Westernized as the equivalent to the “soft faction” for their attention to their clothes and their treatment of

\textsuperscript{218} Roden, Schooldays, 111. This happened in a “fraternalizing ecstasy” state.
\textsuperscript{219} Ibid., 115.
\textsuperscript{220} Ibid., 115.
\textsuperscript{221} Ibid., 115-116. Music and poetry clubs took on a patriotic or nationalistic importance after the Russo-Japanese War as well.
women.\textsuperscript{222} It is not coincidental that the emergence of these “rough” or traditionally minded young men into important positions in society coincided with the emergence of a desire to return to traditional frame of mind for Japanese society. As the younger generation of the Meiji period moved into their stations in the influential class, their ideas of what a Japanese man should be began to challenge the men who were already in influential positions and who were supporters of Westernized masculinity.

In the very same papers that ridiculed the Japanese gentleman and the high-collar man, we find examples of the Japanese “rough.” He was a man who preferred ideas of old Japan, wore traditional clothing, and ignored the imported societal niceties. In an illustration found in a 1911 edition of \textit{Tokyo Puck}, we find a great example of the clashing of the rough and high-collar gentleman (figure 11).\textsuperscript{223} In this, we see the fist of a rough punching through the figure of a high-collar gentleman. The fist is ungloved so that all may see that his hands are not white and fine, like a high-collar dandy, but large, hairy, dark, and a little dirty. The forearm of the rough is strong and with bulging veins, making it easy to believe that the rest of the body is most likely equally strong.

\textsuperscript{222} It did not help the Westernized Japanese men that they adopted the Western tendency to treat women well and even the idea of more rights for women. This was not in line with Confucian and Japanese tradition, according to the roughs.

\textsuperscript{223} \textit{Tokyo Puck}, Vol VII no 20, pg 1.
The gentleman depicted in this illustration, complete with hat, moustache, gloves, walking stick, and high-collar, exhibits all of those signifiers that make him weak. One hand is ungloved, and we see that he is wearing gleaming rings on two fingers. The hand of the high-collar man is white and without any sign of hair or dirt, showing that he does little work with his hands. The legs, obviously not human, are those of a horse. This, in Meiji Japanese society and culture, was a well-known visual symbol of stupidity (baka in Japanese) common in Japanese caricatures.224 The high-collar man in this picture is a high-collar idiot.

The fact that the title of this issue of *Tokyo Puck* reads “Plain Dealing and Raw Material” also seems to indicate that the fist punching through the high-collar man is breaking through the intrigue and falsehood attributed to the high-collar man. Jason Karlin points out that the caption translates into English as “sometimes it’s necessary to use the ban [barbarism] of bankara.”225 Turning to the second page of this issue, we find that “Mr. Puck” devoted a whole issue of the magazine to the “ban-collar” man who personified the bankara ideal.226 The ban-collar man, another term for the “rough” man, represents a paragon of virtue to “Mr. Puck,” exemplified in the following,

> Taken altogether then a ban-collar man may be loved for his sterling qualities and course innocence. He is always wholesome whether in views of health, disdain flip-flop and shim-sham of the high-collar man. Hence it is that Mr. Puck does this honor of devoting the present number to the singing of the praise of plain-dealing raw materials.227

Mr. Puck also gives us a stirring account of the clothing the ban-collar man “dresses himself in an ill-fitting kimono, short in sleeves and shorter in skirt.”228 The ban-collar man “must have

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224 Karlin, 30.
225 Ibid., 68. The “ban” in bankara is the symbol for barbarous
226 *Tokyo Puck*, Vol 7 no 2, pg 2. The Bankara ideal, which the 1911 *Tokyo Puck* edition discussed above is devoted to (or the ban-collar man), is synonymous with masculinity and the roughness and disdain for civility exhibited by the roughs.
227 Ibid.
228 *Tokyo Puck*, vol VII, 2
something about him or it that asserts itself and need not stand on borrowed luster or haberdasher ornaments.”229 The ban-collar man, then, is diametrically in opposition with the high-collar man. He is a man of values and morals, not a man who cares for appearances and “toilets.”

This figure is from 1911 and almost the end of the Meiji Period, but the idea of the “rough” man appeared in satirical fashion for years before the ban-collar issue of *Tokyo Puck*. For instance, in the *Maru Maru Chinbun* from 1889, we find an interesting illustration of three people, two men and one woman, sitting on traditional *tatami* mats partaking in a meal (figure 12).230 While one man and the woman (possibly a married couple) are dressed in traditional clothing, the man seated in the center is dressed in Western style clothing.231 The Western dressed gentleman’s high top hat is visible in the background. The traditionally dressed Japanese male, in stark comparison to the Japanese gentleman, has a kimono on and is shoeless. In a sign of possible disrespect, the Japanese gentleman still has his shoes on. In Japanese culture, even to this day, one takes off their shoes upon entering a home, especially if the home is of traditional design.232 This alone shows that the Japanese gentleman is not offering the correct and traditional respect due to the other Japanese people he is visiting.

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229 Karlin, 68.
230 *Maru Maru Chinbun*, vol 1 no 1-31, 470.
231 This was before the “high-collar” movement, so this man would be classified along with the Japanese gentleman archetype.
232 Yes, even today, people are to take off their shoes when entering homes. This is also true for some traditionally designed restaurants as well as Japanese hotels and inns. In my 2009 trip to Japan, the group I traveled with went to two traditional restaurants that required us to take off our shoes before we entered the main restaurant in Tokyo. While we were in Kyoto, we stayed at a Japanese inn that required us to take off our shoes before we entered the small lobby. When one of my traveling companions did not remove his flip-flops, the owner informed (kindly and with amusement at the uneducated gaijin) the young man that it was not polite to keep outside shoes on while in his establishment.
This illustration is interesting more for its separate pieces than as a whole. For example, the Western dressed gentleman is laughing in what could be construed as an arrogant or annoying manner and we have already addressed his possible discourtesy in regards to his shoes. The woman, holding what looks like a commemorative tablet, is hiding her face and possibly crying. This could mean that the woman is ashamed, sad, or in trouble. The traditionally dressed man is agitated or even angry. He is looking on at the situation with a scowl, has his kimono sleeves pushed up exposing his muscular arms, and is leaning forward in a confrontational manner. Whatever the underlying statement may be, it is interesting that the two traditionally dressed Japanese are weighed down with intense and heavy emotions while the Japanese gentleman is laughing. Whether there is an issue with the Japanese gentleman or the traditionally dressed woman, we once again see the Japanese gentleman and the traditionally dressed man in diametrically different lights. The Japanese gentleman is acting in an obnoxious and frivolous manner while the traditionally dressed man understands the levity of the situation.
In another, smaller illustration, we see the “rough” styled man and the high-collar man side-by-side (figure 13). The rough man is sitting on a park bench with one leg propped up on the other, wearing a short kimono with the front wide open, and his geta on his feet. It is quite apparent that he cares little for his appearance because his arms are not even in the sleeves of his kimono and the kimono itself looks wrinkled and disheveled. The high-collar man is standing whereas his counterpart is sitting. The high-collar man is dressed in a warm coat buttoned all the way, Western shoes, and a Western hat. The caption reads, “the ‘high-collar’ of olden times was noted for his simple clothing, but the present day ‘high-collar’ is anxious to wear the thick over coat with fur linings.”233 The traditionally dressed men, then, are celebrated as the non-fussy type while the modern Western dressed man wears furs to keep him warm. The traditional man has no need for luxuries to stay warm; he is manly enough for any weather. His one accommodation to the cold is putting his arms inside his kimono.

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233 *Tokyo Puck*, vol 3, pg 35.
The illustrations found in the Maru Maru and Puck personify the conservative nature of the “roughs.” The roughs of the influential class, as Roden and the writers of Puck note, are dissatisfied with the leadership of the government they considered foolish and feminine and who longed for a return to traditional (i.e. non-Western) values. For many years, the students in schools like Ichikō refused to allow any “soft faction” ideas gain a foothold in their school. Not only were music and poetry clubs prohibited, at least by the majority of the student population, but any perceived gentleman-like behavior was also forbidden. Gentleman-like behavior, of course, equaled Western influence, which in turn meant Western ideas. The same ideas espoused by the Japanese gentlemen/high-collars in government that drew criticism for their
weak-willed decision. The youth discussed in Roden’s work came under fire by those in government and other elevated positions because of the students’ rejection of progressive ideals and their desire for conservatism.

I believe that as the Meiji period progressed, many youths born of the influential class found their own way to act against the Western ideals of their elders. The youth immersed themselves even further in barbaric and manly activities. Students attending schools like Ichikō increased their primitive and manly activities to include nightly beatings.\textsuperscript{234} New forms of masculine, or \textit{bankara}, activities emerged as an effective way to keep Western ideas like gentleman-like behavior at bay. One such activity was the “clenched-fist punishment,” or romanticized schoolyard type beatings. These often occurred when a young man dallied with a woman and his fellow schoolmates found out.\textsuperscript{235} As reparation for his horrendous actions, students would take turns beating the offender. Another student, this one a staunch supporter of the \textit{bankara} lifestyle who was attending Waseda University (Tokyo), argued that there was a connection between ruined civilizations and versions of the high-collar man. Empires that fell, like those of the Romans and Manchus, succumbed to weakness and effeminacy that came out of civility and gentleman-like behavior.\textsuperscript{236} In fact, he pointed out, many of the once great “gentleman” empires and civilizations fell to “rough” barbarians. This, he argued, pointed to the need for increased \textit{bankara} in Meiji Japanese society.\textsuperscript{237} The proliferation of the \textit{bankara} warrior mentality amongst the youth and young men suggests that this fear was not isolated to the critique of just one young man.

\textsuperscript{234} Roden, \textit{Schooldays}, 140-141.
\textsuperscript{235} Ibid., 148. Being seen with a woman led others to believe that that man might become subservient to the woman. This was not allowed in the masculine atmosphere of the primary schools.
\textsuperscript{236} Karlin, 70.
\textsuperscript{237} Ibid.
Ban or High: Which Collar Fit Meiji Masculinity Better?

Even though it was the Japanese gentleman and the high-collar men that seemed to dominate the influential class and guided Japan much of the Meiji period, it was the ban-collar and roughs that were ultimately successful. We know that *Tokyo Puck* enjoyed a surprisingly large circulation for the period with a circulation of at least 100,000. We also know that *Tokyo Puck* mocked and ridiculed the high-collar gentleman, as *Maru Maru* mocked the earlier incarnation of the Japanese gentleman. Though *Puck* and *Maru Maru* were popular, no one can claim that support for the ban-collar man ran unquestioned through all of Japanese culture. In fact, no one can claim that all of Meiji Japanese culture even knew or cared about the competing masculinities and ideals running through the influential class. The small landholder in the countryside who needed to work all day just to survive probably spared little thought for the masculinity debate inherent in the ban collar and high-collar dialogue.

However, to those of the influential class who played a major role in shaping Meiji culture and society, the ban collar/high-collar debate mattered. Questions of masculinity played an important part in the creation of Meiji culture and how it was viewed. For those of influence who supported Western ideas and dressed like Westerners, the fact that traditional and backward ideas prevailed despite their tireless efforts to modernize and improve their country probably made them feel as though part of their efforts were for naught. For the men who championed traditional ideas, the proliferation and apparent wholesale adoption of Western ideas spoke of weakness and foolishness. The supporters of Westernization wanted to appear modernized and civilized so that Japan stood as an equal to Western superpowers. Those who supported Japanese tradition wanted strength, but in an authentic and Japanese way so that they might show the West the strength of true Japan.
Eventually, the competing ideas did come to a compromise. To those familiar with Japanese history, this comes as no surprise since Japan has a history of adopting or “borrowing” foreign ideas. While this may true, it is true only to a certain degree. The Japanese have the ability to take borrowed pieces of culture and make them uniquely Japanese. Take, for instance, religion in Japanese history. Shinto is the indigenous religion of Japan and no one knows exactly when it started. For centuries, though, it is believed that Shinto served as the only means of worship in Japan. In the sixth century, however, Buddhism arrived in Japan from China via Korea. Soon, it too was a major religion in Japan, in replacing Shinto as the most important religion. Many of the Japanese of the sixth and seventh centuries did not approve of the encroaching religion and refused to relinquish their Shinto beliefs and rites. After years of anger and tension, Shinto was once again allowed prominence in Japanese society and in true Japanese style; Buddhism took on a unique Japanese twist. Many Japanese people viewed Buddhism as a mere extension of Shinto, even viewing the kami as different aspects of the Buddha, thus turning Buddha into Shinto kami. Even today, one can see the uniqueness of Buddhism in Japan as many temples that are meant to be Buddhist are at least half Shinto (figure 14).

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239 Ibid., 42.
240 Ibid., 43-44
241 Ibid., 45.
242 Even today, Buddhism and Shinto coexist in a unique way. Japanese people attend Shinto rites for traditional Shinto rituals like the Doll Festival, Boy’s Day, etc while Japanese people go to Buddhist temples for ceremonies like funerals. Oddly enough, after the Meiji Period, some Japanese incorporate Western/Christian styled ceremonies in conjunction with traditional Shinto ceremonies. While three vastly different ideologies are used in many present day Japanese people’s lives, they all combine into a phenomenon that is very uniquely Japanese.
In the same way that Buddhism changed, so too did other adopted concepts and cultural imports. None of this is truer than ideas adopted during the Meiji Period. Like Buddhism over a thousand years ago, Western ideas were adopted. Also in a similar manner, a contingent of Japanese society of the time fought for the traditional, in this instance, masculinity. Though it appeared that the Western supporters of the influential class had won for a time, the traditional minded men of that same class eventually won out. A comfortable syncretism of Western and Japanese, though skewed more towards the traditional, was reached.
Let us use Nitobe Inazo as a case study of Meiji period traditionally leaning syncretism. For the majority of his life, Nitobe lived, acted, and taught the way of the considerate and mindful Western-style Japanese gentleman. However, there were instances in Nitobe’s life that brought into question his high-collar status and his unquestioning love of Western ideas. Several of these instances in question occurred while Nitobe taught at Ichikō, the school studied intensively in Donald Roden’s study. We learned from an earlier discussion that Ichikō students reveled in primitive and barbaric masculine behavior for most of the Meiji Period. They rejected all feminine intrusions into their world and attacked those who associated with females with “clenched fists.” How then, did Nitobe fit in with students such as these?

At first glance, Nitobe did not fit well with Ichikō and the students attending that school. The previous headmasters of Ichikō lived according to the rough or ban-collar ideal. They were all traditionalists to the core who accepted and even approved of the bankara type activities the students engaged in because they believed that barbarism was a rite of passage that forged manliness and courage into the students.\(^\text{243}\) Nitobe arrived in 1906 to a student body living completely antithetical to his way of life. Students dressed in old uniforms and battered geta greeted him when he walked onto the campus.\(^\text{244}\) He immediately set out to civilize Ichikō, especially in the areas of cleanliness and “noblesse oblige.”\(^\text{245}\)

Many students of Ichikō reacted badly to Nitobe’s attempts to end the bankara. During an assembly, students proclaimed their distaste over Nitobe’s civilizing, declaring that they

\(^{243}\) Roden, *Schooldays*, 139 & 151. One headmaster, a little known writer named Kinoshita Hiroji, supported his students after a particularly violent display of bankara that involved the beating of a visiting Western professor who broke rules of the school by scaling the walls of the school. The students who caught the offending professor, members of the judo club, were not punished in any way for their attack on the Western professor. Kinoshita also thought that the “storms” and “clenched-fist punishments” were completely acceptable events.

\(^{244}\) Ibid., 202.

\(^{245}\) Ibid.
would knock down and destroy any sort of seating set up for women at Ichikō functions.\textsuperscript{246} On top of the distasteful consideration Nitobe had for women and for Western ideas, Nitobe also sought to end students’ use of the “clenched-fist punishment.”\textsuperscript{247} Clearly, many of Nitobe’s personal philosophies clashed with those held by many Ichikō students.

If we look farther into Nitobe’s ideas, however, we find that Nitobe is not as one dimensional as first thought. For instance, Nitobe actually approved of the isolated and monastic-style living the students’ reveled in.\textsuperscript{248} Nitobe pushed for “rustic living” and removing oneself from cities because cities drained away all traces of manliness and manhood.\textsuperscript{249} In addition, despite his love of Western culture, ideas, dress, and mannerisms, Nitobe ardently despised dandyism, foppishness, and other characteristics inherent in the characterization of the high-collar man. It is true that Nitobe did not like the “clenched-fist punishment” as implemented by the students at Ichikō. However, he did not completely disagree with the use of such harsh punishments. He only wished for the tempering of traditional bankara with Western civility.\textsuperscript{250}

Nitobe betrayed his true feelings of manliness and bankara in other ways as well. This is evident in his obsession with the samurai sword. In chapter 13 of his most famous work Bushidō, Nitobe speaks with great reverence about the ceremony surrounding the receiving of a samurai’s first sword in earlier centuries. He obsesses over the use of the weapon in battle and

\textsuperscript{246} Roden, Schooldays, 207.
\textsuperscript{247} Ibid., 152.
\textsuperscript{248} Ibid., 205.
\textsuperscript{249} Donald Roden, “Toward Remaking Manliness,” in Nitobe Inazō: Japan’s Bridge Across the Pacific. Edited by John F. Howes, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), Pp 144. In Great Britain at approximately the same time, there were fears of this same exact circumstance running rampant amongst British society. Steps were taken to correct this, including the formation of groups like the Boy Scouts that took boys out into the wilderness to train them how to be men. See Robert Baden-Powell’s Scouting for Boys (1908) for information on the Boy Scouts and the fear of weakness inherent in that manual.
\textsuperscript{250} Roden, “School Days,” 205.
the pain and deadliness of the sword. In addition to his obsession with this deadly weapon, Nitobe chose some very interesting heroes over which to obsess. In his life, Nitobe wrote biographies about several people. Some of them, like William Penn and Abraham Lincoln, made sense.²⁵¹ One was an integral figure in the Quaker faith, of which Nitobe belonged, and the other was a man famous for conflict resolution. The inclusion of Saigō Takamori and Nogi Maresuke in his list of biographies and heroes is the part that brings Nitobe’s pacifism and high-collar status into question.

Nogi Maresuke’s inclusion in list of heroes for Nitobe is the most problematic. Nogi, a former samurai made famous because of his role as a leading general in the Russo-Japanese war, was in many ways the epitome of traditional manliness and masculinity. During the attack on Port Arthur during the Russo-Japanese War, Nogi’s brash command style left approximately 75,000 men dead.²⁵² Instead of pointing out the flaws in the bluntness of Nogi’s outdated tactical style (Nogi fought as if he was in battle with samurai), Nitobe praised Nogi. Nitobe loved Nogi’s dutiful nature and loyalty to the emperor and Japan. This brings into question Nitobe’s pacifism and dedication to civilized gentlemen-like behavior. As Roden says, “Clearly, Nitobe Inazō was not a pacifist.”²⁵³ If Nitobe was not a true pacifist, a key tenant of his civilized and gentleman-like Western style living, then how high-collar was Nitobe? It seems that even Nitobe, one of the most Westernized Japanese men of the Meiji period, ultimately retained a devotion to traditional Japanese culture while integrating certain parts of Western teachings into his life.

²⁵¹ Roden, “Toward Remaking Manliness,” 141.
²⁵² Ibid., 141-142.
²⁵³ Ibid.
Nitobe was not the only Westernized gentleman to either return to or incorporate aspects of traditional Japanese masculinity. The reason for this, in part, is tied to the fact that many of the commanding officers of the Sino- and Russo- Japanese Wars qualified as ban-collars, not the high-collars. With the positive outcome of the wars came pride and a return of traditional values. People of the influential class—and in society in general—continued to wear Western style clothing, but the people wearing them began to think more along the lines of their conservative counterparts. Western technology and other Western imports of that nature were welcome, but former high-collars returned to their traditional sensibilities. The Japanese language regained prominence, traditional poetry and music was appreciated by more people again, and traditional history was once again important. This illustration, called “Evolution of Raw Material” (figure 15), shows the evolution of those men of the influential class during the Meiji period that were once high-collars. The “raw material” is the ban-collar or rough. In this instance, the story depicts a man fresh from the country wearing traditional clothing and carrying a club. He may even be fresh from a rural “high school.” After he came to town he adopted Western clothing and Western ideas, either joining the ranks of the high-collars of the influential class or at least emulating their actions. His sandals and umbrella are the only items that hint at his heritage, and those might only be used for rainy days. In the third and final stage, however, we find the man wearing traditional clothing once again, with only a Western style hat. This indicates that after his inculcation into the high-collar lifestyle, he picked up lasting pieces of Western ideology despite his return to traditional ways of dressing.

254 Donald Roden, Schooldays, 203. For example, Nogi Maresuke. He not only behaved like a general of pre-Meiji Japan but he also found the bankara lifestyle admirable. In a visit to Ichikō while Nitobe Inazō’s tenure as headmaster, Nogi informed Nitobe that in the lack of cleanliness and behavior of the students, there was “vitality” and “masculinity.”

255 Ibid., 114-117. Roden points out that after the Russo-Japanese War, traditional poetry and music clubs were no longer considered part of the “soft faction.” Those traditional forms of expression were once again popular as well as new songs and poems in traditional style glorifying the success of the soldiers and the greatness of Japan.

256 Tokyo Puck, Vol VII no 20, p 16.
In this, we actually find the evolution of the Meiji Period in a three-stage illustration. First, the traditional man faces the Westernization of the city brought on by the influence of Western thoughts and ideas. Second, he adopts most of the ideas forced upon him, only keeping his geta and umbrella for the rain. Third, he returns to his traditional style clothing, retaining only small visible tokens of Westernization like a hat. The high-collars of Meiji Japan followed a process like this to varying degrees. Not all of them went back to wearing traditional clothing all of the time, but they did return to more traditional ideas and thinking.

This picture represents not only the evolution of the ideas of masculinity in Meiji Japan, but also the process culture as a whole experienced during this time. Like the masculinity debate, Japanese culture was inundated with Western ideas, beliefs, and customs. Many believed the only way to cope with the advanced West was to emulate them. The wholesale adoption proposed by some angered those that did not want to lose traditional Japanese culture. Like the masculinity debate, two factions arose and debated throughout the Meiji period. The two sides eventually reached a compromise that saw Western advances fused together with traditional
Japanese cultural ideas. While it is true that the study of Japanese culture as a whole is more nuanced than the few sentences here allude to, the fact that Japanese culture followed a similar evolution to Meiji masculinity remains.

Conclusion

Japanese culture of the Meiji period is unquestionably fascinating. By analyzing just one small piece of the puzzle that is Meiji culture—masculinity—and narrowing down that topic even more through the lens of the influential class, pages have been filled. As the historiography section of this paper attests, there are not many monographs available to the English speaking world on masculinity of the Meiji period. The fact that this study is one of few on this topic means that there is a need for a great many more studies on Meiji masculinity. While some scholars like Jason G. Karlin promise forthcoming monographs specifically on masculinity in Japan, there are currently few monographs that specifically address masculinity in Meiji Japan. This is most disappointing as there are multitudes of topics within the masculinity field that are perfect for in-depth study. Masculinity discussions amongst rural men is one such possibility, as is masculinity through the eyes of the Meiji period woman as revealed in their diaries and letters. One could also analyze the ways in which young boys and men were inculcated into the ideas of masculinity of the Meiji era, through the analysis of school documents and popular literature for young boys and men. Masculine ideals came into play

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257 Return again to the soldiers of the Meiji period. They dressed in uniforms that were Western inspired, but they fought and trained under leaders who operated along traditional lines.

258 After personally emailing Dr. Karlin in regards to his forthcoming monograph on Meiji masculinity, I gave up on purchasing his *Eternal Return of History: Gender and Nation in Prewar Japan*. I emailed him in late 2010 as I was preparing for this work and as his journal article, “Gender of Nationalism,” was one of the few works on Meiji masculinity. After being told it would publish in 2011 and that never coming to fruition, I lost hope. As of the time of this work, that monograph has still not been published.

259 Questions about virility and manliness of the fighting forces were called into question. This is not uncommon during this period as discussion about the virility of Great Britain’s fighting forces also circulated during this time. After a disheartening defeat in the Boer Wars in the peripheral territory of Great Britain’s vast empire, questions of
in discussions on nationalism, politics, and the military. These topics were touched on in this paper, but each could receive its own treatment. I am sure there are sources out there waiting to be discovered that would shed light on these topics.

What is most fascinating about the dialogue of masculinity in Meiji culture is that it did not completely disappear. We know that by the end of the Meiji period, the traditionally-minded man with a few Westernized ideas was the ideal. Through the political upheavals of the Taishō period and especially the world-changing involvement in the 2nd Sino-Japanese War/World War II during the Shōwa period, ideas of Japanese masculinity came under scrutiny again. The 2nd Sino-Japanese war placed the Japanese ideal of masculinity under worldwide scrutiny for their brutish actions in China in 1937 during the invasion of the mainland as well as their treatment of prisoners. Japanese soldiers looted and pillaged as they invaded further into China, Korea and other countries. They tortured and experimented on prisoners they captured in horrifying

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the manliness of Great Britain’s fighting forces and young boys. Fears of virility and ability to protect Great Britain’s interests around the world also abounded. Concerned citizens began to take steps to stop the degradation of Great Britain’s men, starting with their young boys. Robert Baden-Powell published *Scouting for Boys* (1908) as a guide to instilling sound ideas of manliness into young boys and a focus on military topics entered the schools. The later is very similar to what education changes made by the Japanese government during the middle and late Meiji period. For more information on Great Britain’s similar struggle with ideals of masculinity, please see Paul Wilkinson’s, “English Youth Movements, 1908-1939,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 4, no 2 (April 1989): pp 3-23. Also, see J.O. Springhall, “Lord Meath, Youth, and Empire,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, 5, no 4 (1970). Springhall, interestingly enough, draws comparisons between the militarism of Great Britain’s schools and boys movements and the militarism of young men and boys in Japan.

260 For discussion of Taishō and Shōwa masculinity, please return to Kam Louie and Morris Low’s *Men and Masculinities* for great introductory pieces on these topics. There are several more works regarding more modern periods of Japanese history and masculinity studies, but Louie and Low’s massive tome offers a thought-provoking look at a wider range masculine ideals.

261 For the Japanese and other parts of North East Asia, World War II started well before 1941. Some argue that Japan’s invasion of Manchuria in 1932 signaled the start of war while others argue for the invasion of mainland China in 1937. That is why I list World War II alongside the 2nd Sino-Japanese War as I believe that when speaking of Japan, the second term for the war is a bit more appropriate.
ways. They also raped women living in combat areas, even forcing women into prostitution for men serving in the military.

These atrocities committed by members of the military called into question the brutish nature of the Japanese soldier and the interconnectedness of the Japanese soldier traditional ideas of masculinity. When reports of what occurred in occupied Japanese territories reached the rest of the world, many wondered whether the actions of those soldiers represented Japanese masculinity as a whole. Were the Japanese men noble samurai or ruthless maniacs? The post-World War II period for Japan was a drastic rebuilding time in many ways, including the reputation of Japanese men. Men of Japan once again had Western examples of men around them as the United States aided in the rebuilding of Japan after the bombing. Western technologies and culture once again infiltrated Japan, infusing life and vitality into a country that had been at war for over a decade and as such had stagnated. With this renew interaction with Western culture, all areas of Japanese life were challenged, including ideas of being a man. Like the Meiji Period before, the Post WWII era experienced its own mashing and clashing of ideals. The results of this Post WWII era translated into Japanese dominance in areas like the technological industry in succeeding decades, as well as the creation of the “salary man,” or a man idealized for his working non-stop. This new man, dressed in suits and button-up shirts, embodied the new Japanese masculinity of the post war era.

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262 For more information on the war atrocities and experiments, see such sources as Timothy Lang Francis, “To Dispose of the Prisoners”: The Japanese Executions of American Aircrew at Fukuoka, Japan, during 1945,” The Pacific Historical Review, Vol 66 no 4 (Nov 1997), 469-501 or Walter E. Grunden, Secret Weapons & World War II: Japan in the Shadow of Big Science, (University Press of Kansas, 2005)

The reevaluation of Japanese masculinities continued to evolve and continues in the present time as well. Today, for instance, one can see a distinct disparity between ideals of masculinity. Recently, I spent a few weeks in the Japanese cities of Tokyo and Kyoto with a group of young adult judo players. As the only one to have ever studied Japanese history in any detail, I was fascinated by my time in Japan in a way my traveling companions were not. It was simultaneously everything I expected and beyond anything I could have prepared for. The history, the people, the food, and the atmosphere made me feel welcome and completely foreign at the same time. My biggest joy, however, was watching my male traveling companions come face-to-face with a Japan they had not expected.

Having made myself acquainted with today’s Japanese culture as well as I could over the years (i.e., reading some manga, watching Japanese TV shows and movies, attempting to learn the language, etc), I was relatively prepared for what my conventionally Westernized masculine traveling buddies were not—young Japanese males. The minute we stepped onto the Japan Rail Lines, I was gratified to see the modern incarnation of two very different ideals of masculinity at work in Japanese culture. On one hand, there stood a young man of approximately 22 wearing skin tight jeans, a woman’s v-neck t-shirt, “Hello Kitty” shoes and belt, and carrying a “Hello Kitty” compact to adjust his makeup and extremely stylized long hair. On the other hand, there was another young man of about the same age wearing a masculine cut dress shirt, dress pants, and dress shoes. When the very pretty young lady standing near both of the men received a kiss from the young man dressed in pink and wearing makeup and not the man dressed in what we see as traditional masculine clothing, my traveling companions could barely contain their shock. The young man they assumed to be homosexual was very clearly heterosexual! This interesting intercultural interchange highlights that though the nature of the dialogue has changed in Japan,
the fact remains that there are still competing ideals of masculinity coursing through Japanese culture. Is it possible that the younger generations of Japan today are still feeling the effects of Meiji period cultural upheaval? In my opinion, this is a very viable possibility. The only way to answer that question in a satisfactory way is through continued research in the field of masculinity in Meiji culture.
Bibliography


