

Nationalism and Anti-Americanism in Japan - Manga Wars, Aso, Tamogami, and Progressive Alternatives

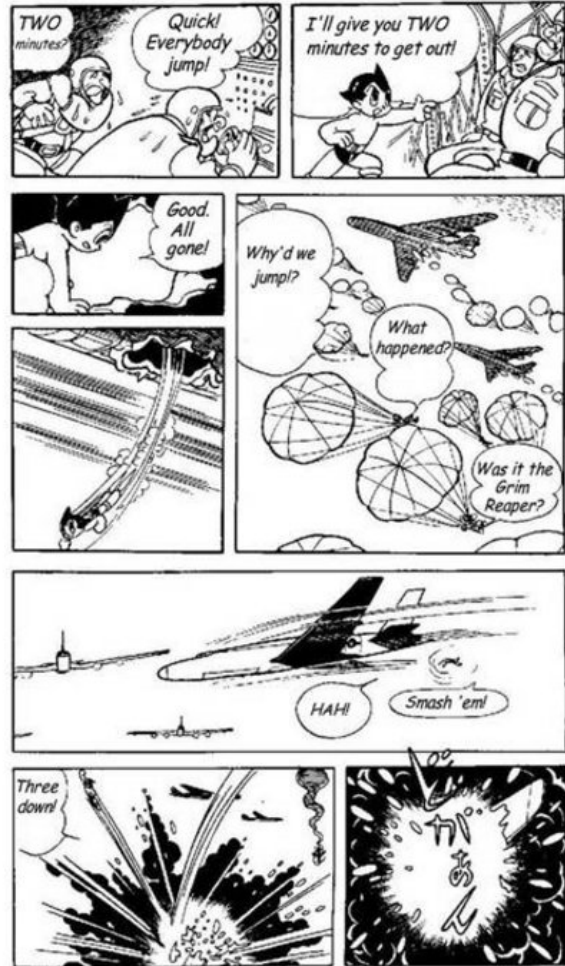
Matthew Penney

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In 1967, Astroboy, the Japanese animation and comic book icon, died protecting a North Vietnamese village from American bombers.

[Manga images should be read in Japanese manner from RIGHT to LEFT][1]





After the carnage, Astroboy's body was set adrift in the Mekong,



Despite this plot twist, Tezuka Osamu, Japan's "God of Comics", ensured that his most famous creation was brought back to life the following week. This narrative dodge did not, however, take away from the powerful condemnation of America's campaign of indiscriminate bombing that Tezuka conjured. By locating Astro on the side of the bombed, Tezuka sought to build both outrage at the practice of indiscriminate bombing, and sympathy for the victims.

Throughout the postwar period, progressive artists, directors, and

authors in many countries, not least the United States, have represented the US in critical ways. Peter Katzenstein has described representations which criticize the United States for failing to live up to its often lofty human rights rhetoric, as "liberal anti-Americanism".[2] While opposed to American wars and other international actions, it must be asked, however, if "anti-American" is the best label for categorizing such writing. In Japan, critical commentary has often been combined with deep reflection on Japan's own human rights record, past and present. This type of discourse, at its best, seeks a universal standard from which the mass killing of civilians and other forms of violence can be condemned. In *Astroboy*, Tezuka's critique of the American practice of indiscriminate bombing is part of his life-long condemnation of militarism and organized violence, which included probing looks at Japan's war record. Criticizing American atrocities in this way is quite distinct from using the US as a convenient target to reify Japanese nationalist images. For Tezuka, the critique of US destruction of Vietnam was part and parcel of his dissection of Japan's war crimes.

Japanese popular culture, however, also sees the contextless use of anti-Americanism and vague but nonetheless meaningful images that glorify Japan's 20th century wars. Morikawa Joji's *Hajime no Ippo* (Fighting Spirit) is a popular boxing manga currently running in leading boy's weekly *Shonen Magazine*. In one chapter, an elderly Japanese

trainer recalls his youth during the American occupation.

The future trainer, Gen, and his friend encounter an American officer - a man they had seen brutally beating a much smaller Japanese boxer in an earlier exhibition match - chasing down a young woman in his jeep,



The pair are no match for the American, but they begin a strict training regimen in hopes of challenging him in the ring. Morikawa represents their “passionate feelings” with a war image,



The boxers were not pilots. They did not fight in the war and Japan had no air power early in the occupation, all aircraft having been destroyed following the surrender. This is a fantasy image included at the beginning of a chapter and has nothing to do with the narrative. It very clearly, however, relates a vaguely conceived “war” with postwar acts of defending Japanese honor. There are grounds on which American occupation era behavior can be criticized, but glorifying Japanese bravado in the Asia-Pacific War is a distraction at best.

When the final battle takes place, Japanese revenge is carried out with

predictable brutality. Readers are treated to “x-ray” drawings of the American’s ribs and internal organs being destroyed by the smaller Japanese fighter’s blows,



Morikawa says nothing about the war and nothing substantive about the Japanese-American relationship. These images are more or less a dead zone of historical awareness. Evident, however, is a lingering sense of Japan’s victimization at American hands. The manga expresses frustration at Japan’s defeat and a sense that Japan was victimized in war - with hundreds of

thousands of civilians killed in incendiary and atomic bombings – and during an occupation that stripped away the nation’s sovereignty. Even in works of popular culture that show little historical awareness, the past can be an open wound.

A public opinion poll conducted jointly by Gallup and Japan’s *Yomiuri Shimbun* in November of 2008 revealed that positive feelings toward America were at their lowest ebb in decades with only 32% of Japanese respondents saying that they “trust” America compared to 67% of Americans who express “trust” for Japan.[3] Rather than being channeled constructively, such as through discussion of the nature of the Japanese-American relationship, however, these feelings are instead manifested in examples like Morikawa’s war image and simplistic “vengeance through boxing” narrative.

This article attempts to shed light on the tremendous rifts that exist in contemporary Japanese visions of America. It sets pop culture anti-Americanism in the context of the inability of conservatives like current Prime Minister Aso Taro to articulate a clear and compelling vision for Japan’s future. The United States frequently pressures allies to subordinate their own interests to American priorities. Some American partners, however, find ways to say “no”. For Japan, uncritically supporting each of America’s wars since the occupation, even dispatching Self-Defense Forces into a disastrous venture like the Iraq War, illustrates a lack of will

to pursue a dynamic Japan-centric conception of national interest and international contribution on the part of politicians who have exacerbated two disturbing trends in the country’s public discourse.

The first is the increased appearance of vague, anti-American images like those employed by Morikawa. In the absence of a clear political vision of what “national interests”, “reform” and Japan’s future “international contribution” should look like independent of American influence, many popular creators have lashed out at an alliance that they see as predicated on one-sided bullying. They most often do this not with reasoned criticism and the articulation of alternatives, but by reproducing neo-nationalist tropes, lampooning the status quo, or with simplistic *schadenfreude*. Gags and fleeting images of “victory”, often ultra-violent, over American bullies are marketed as anti-American fantasies to audiences who face a sense of powerlessness within the Japanese-American alliance. The second negative trend is the revisionist history of former Air Self Defense Force Chief of Staff Tamogami Toshio and an array of neo-nationalist ideologues that he counts as influences or associates. Confrontational rightwing ideas, including abrasive anti-American rhetoric, are also empowered by the lack of a clear future vision at Japan’s political center.

Tezuka’s style of principled perspective, however, has not vanished and there is also a significant progressive counterpoint to neo-nationalist positions.

A variety of alternatives to subservience, to confrontational neo-nationalism, and to attempts to glorify Japan's wartime militarism, are being expressed. What sets the progressives apart is context. In representations of the past, when points like war crimes of the United States are raised, they are most often discussed *alongside*, not *instead of* Japanese atrocities. This forms the basis for a broad humanist critique of the type of violence and militarism that other works glorify. When the current relationship between Japan and the United States is criticized, alternatives to dependence and vivid imaginings of future bi- and multi-lateral cooperation are also presented. While the present political elite may pay little attention to this form of expression, it enjoys a powerful position in intellectual discourse, scholarship, and non-fiction publishing, and circulates popularly in many forms including fiction, film and manga.

Anti-Americanism in Popular Culture

Negative images of America in Japanese popular culture became more widespread during the Bush years. The vast majority of works that take an anti-American stance do not call for severance of the alliance or nuclear armament; they simply evoke a profound dissatisfaction and sense of insult, due as much to the Japanese government's lack of initiative as to any action of the United States. Unfortunately, these representations often share with the political elite a lack of context and an absence of clear, reasoned alternatives to the status quo.

Sometimes the popular culture backlash consists of spoof and is relatively benign. In the popular fighting manga *Hanma Baki* which runs in the irreverent youth manga digest *Shonen Champion*[4], Japanese martial artist Hanma Yujiro, the "strongest man on earth", effectively reverses the common imagining of the Japanese-American alliance by forcing Bush to chauffeur him,

[Please note, some of these pictures contain disturbing images and strong language]



While Japanese readers may smile at this ironic if silly image, some depictions of the Japanese-American alliance in recent manga move further into the realm of shocking anti-Americanism fantasies.

Karate Shokoshi Kohinata Minoru (Little Karate Lord Kohinata Minoru) is a popular karate manga by Baba Yasushi that runs in Kodansha's *Young Magazine*, a mainstream digest for young adults that often sells in excess of 1,000,000 copies weekly.[5] Early in the series, the cast journeys to Okinawa - the birthplace of karate - for a training camp. What they

find, however, are violent American troops. In volume 5, one of the female characters is accosted,



are turned but no serious points about sexual violence are made. In the end, the male leads come to save the day and the Americans are beaten up. Here Okinawa, which faces vital real world issues relating to the American base presence, becomes a space where visitors from mainland Japan can come for some sparring with rowdy Americans. Actual issues disappear into the background of a carnivalesque story that soon throws a far more sinister threat in front of the adventurous mainland youths. While the assailants in the first case are African-Americans, Baba's most ghoulish creation is a Caucasian character, Kevin Norton, described as a "soldier on a rampage". Norton is the "king" of an American-run, underground fight circuit.

As the fight continues, it can be argued that author Baba makes light of the serious issue of sex crimes by American troops by sexually exploiting his female characters,



The resistance of the girls is striking, but it is a fleeting fantasy in which the tables

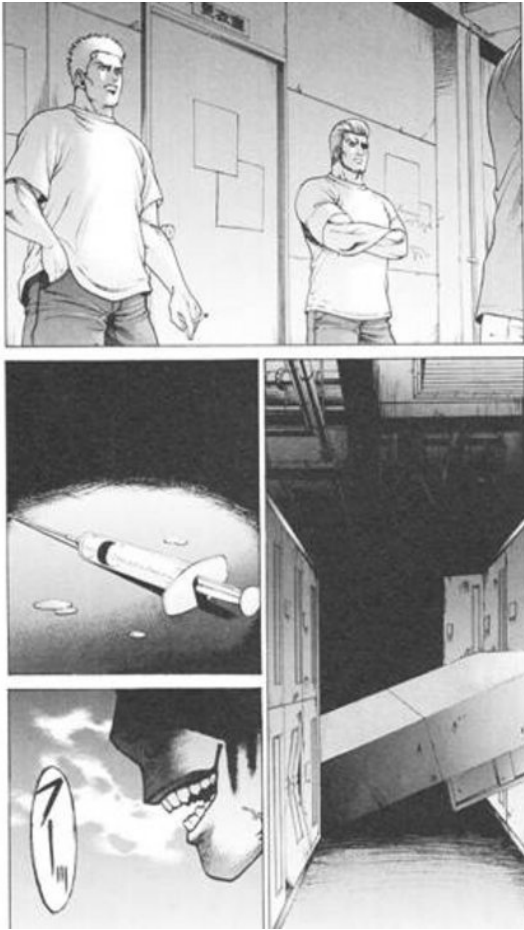


his behavior is even worse. Chris, a “good” American, tries to help the Japanese characters, but he is quickly dispatched by Norton,



Before his fight with the main character, Kohinata, Norton shoots up with drugs,

Norton appears physically inhuman, and



He is transformed into an even more horrible monster,

In the end, after a foul-filled bout, Norton is ruthlessly battered by Kohinata's teacher,



If a “message” can be taken away from this, it is simply that the American presence is toxic and that Japanese can only protect themselves by responding to violence with greater violence. Unable to imagine serious alternatives to an unequal alliance and base situation that many, apparently including author Baba, consider to be intolerable, *Kohinata Minoru* strays into demonization, allowing readers to thrill as young Japanese heroes batter American ogres, but not giving them a vision of an alternative and better future.

There are manga far angrier and cruder in their depiction of the American presence than *Kohinata Minoru*. *Uramiya Honpo* (Revenge Inc.) by Kurihara

Showshow which runs in the popular adult manga digest *Business Jump*, centers around a service that carries out elaborate revenge schemes for clients.[6]

One chapter focuses on Jeff, an American marine in Okinawa who runs down a young Okinawan while driving drunk and mercilessly beats his Okinawan girlfriend when she tries to call for help,







Disturbing undertones of chauvinist nationalism do nothing to build a firm foundation for critical discussion of the American base presence. Indeed, they reduce a serious social issue to fodder for B-rate exploitation.

Uramiya Honpo does differ from *Kohinata Minoru* in that it discusses the base presence critically at points. The Japanese government is depicted as slavishly following America and unwilling to seek justice. Here the victim's father is outraged,



The Japanese biker dies and the crime, an exaggerated amalgam of real-life incidents, goes unpunished.[7] What could have been a layered, critical commentary on the base presence, however, falls into caricature.

Business Jump is a digest that appeals overwhelmingly to older Japanese male readers and author Kurihara's depiction of a Caucasian-Japanese relationship here is highly suspect. Suspicion toward these pairings is a common trope in neo-nationalist writings. For example, leading rightwing manga artist Kobayashi Yoshinori has made frequent snide remarks about Japanese women who enter into relationships with foreign men.

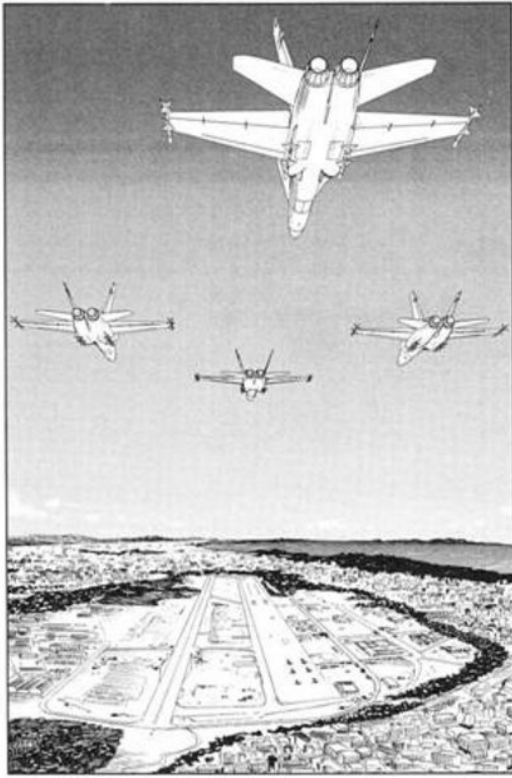
Serious criticisms stop there, however, yielding to murderous fantasy. The victim's father hires "Revenge Inc." to do what the Japanese government will not. Confrontation ensues and Jeff is drafted to speak as a representative of a monolithic "America" in the narrative, and also to be on the receiving end of the "Japanese" comeback,



Author Kurihara does not settle for just a little retaliatory violence, however,



Kurihara presents the American base presence as rotten to the core, but in place of context, analysis, and alternatives, readers are given a grotesque anti-American revenge fantasy. The larger context of these images is the widely held belief that Japan is dominated by the United States and that Japanese politicians care far more about pleasing their American counterparts than they do about protecting the dignity and indeed, the lives, of Japanese citizens. The final solution, however, is the same offered by *Kohinata* - an offender is punished with extreme violence, but no alternative is imagined or sought. The chapter ends with an image of an American base, sinister in the context of this story. The future, however, is the status quo.



While based on historical incidents, these manga trivialize crimes against Okinawan civilians rather than subject them to serious critique. For example, while the largest demonstrations in Okinawan history vigorously condemned sexual crimes by US GIs after the case of the 1995 rape of a 12 year old Okinawan girl, and the incidents surrounding the crash of a US helicopter in a densely populated area of Okinawa have also sparked significant protests, there is no reference to these or other citizens movements that have challenged the US military presence over many decades. In the manga schema, Okinawa simply becomes a

nightmarish dreamscape with American troops as boogeymen. The “demons” are exorcised by heroic mainland Japanese figures, but there is no effective consideration of alternatives. American assailants are chastised, but the American presence is still taken completely for granted.

America has considerable “soft power” in Japan. Many Japanese are fans of American popular culture from Hollywood and TV to pop music, baseball, and jazz. America remains the top overseas destination for Japanese tourists. It is also the top choice for Japanese who study abroad. Personal connections between individual Japanese and Americans are numerous and some are deep. But many view “America” as a personal and cultural space very differently from the “America” of the Japanese-American alliance. The images presented above evoke a sense of insult, of unequal treatment within the bilateral relationship, and a sense of powerlessness when faced with a lack of alternatives to situations such as crime around American bases that are commonly seen as intolerable. They also represent a nationalist response that is passionate, not reasoned, and utilize stereotypes that cross the line to racism and sexism. These images have only become more common since the beginning of the Bush presidency. There is even a manga series entitled *Amerika nante Daikirai* (I Really Hate America!) devoted entirely to negative images of the superpower.[8]

Non-fiction

The types of contextless anti-American images popular in some manga are common in works of non-fiction as well. *Amerika Daitoryo no Rirekisho* (The Résumés of American Presidents) –

a “mook” (magazine book) published on November 4, 2008, to coincide with the US presidential election – is representative.[9] The overblown rhetoric on the cover sets the tone, describing American history as “220 years of plunder in the name of ‘freedom.’” It also refers to “A history of tyranny from the time of George Washington!” And promises, “Just past the land of freedom America, you can see a mountain of corpses!”



The cover of *Amerika Daitoryo no Rirekisho*

As the title suggests, the work presents “résumés” of all American presidents. These are, essentially, catalogues of aggression and atrocities. America, often discussed in the text as if it were a single individual, is described exclusively as the

perpetrator and victimizer in each of its past conflicts and many of its political dealings. Japan is positioned as one of the primary victims of American misdeeds.

As with other neo-nationalist titles like *Kenkanryū* (Hate Korea Wave), *Amerika Daitoryo no Rirekisho* does make many valid points. In a section entitled “The World under American Rule”, for example, its description of America’s “empire of bases” mirrors closely Chalmers Johnson’s insightful writing on the subject,

America has divided the world into five areas of military operation and through special military organizations established in the various areas, has placed the entire globe under American military influence.... Apart from forces in the United States itself, there are land and naval forces consisting of hundreds of thousands of soldiers based overseas and if something should happen, they can be combat ready almost instantly.[10]

What follows immediately, however, sets this apart as a neo-nationalist work, “As of April 2008 the number of American embassies or consulates has reached 234 worldwide forming a global network that acts as the eyes [and ears] of America.”[11] Painting America’s diplomatic infrastructure as nothing but an agent of global domination trivializes

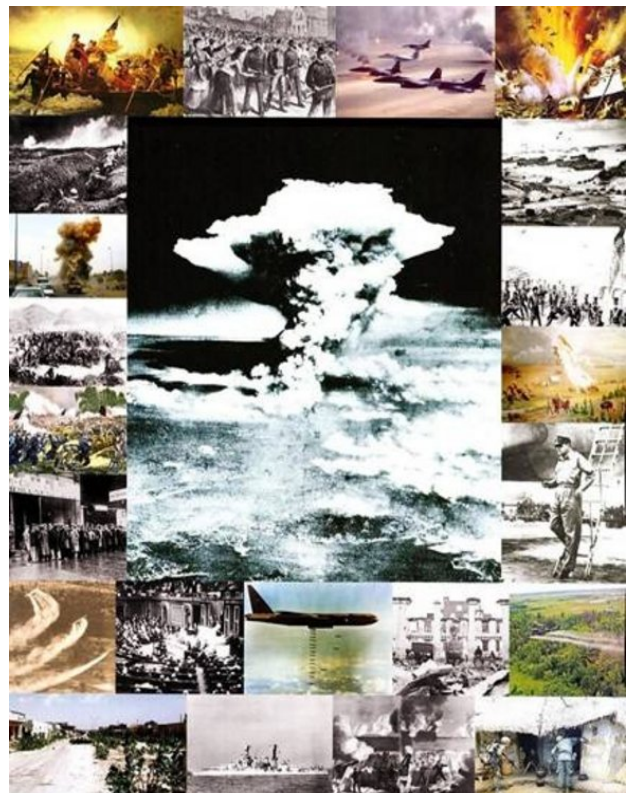
the discussion. Oscillating between legitimate points and conspiracy theory, *Amerika Daitoryo no Rirekisho* omits the sort of context that would make for a convincing critique of the “Pax Americana”.

The “mook” (manga book) criticizes America in a variety of ways,

Before the war began, America strongly condemned the indiscriminate bombing carried out by other countries and pledged that it would do nothing of the sort. Roosevelt himself said, “I condemn the most contemptible acts of wartime violence like the bombing and strafing of unarmed civilians.” But what happened in reality? The bombing of Hamburg (July 1943) and Dresden (February 1945) are the most famous of the bombing attacks against Germany, and in Hamburg about 50,000 and in Dresden about 30,000 citizens were burned to death. Cities all over Japan were bombed indiscriminately and in the great raid on Tokyo in March 1945 over 100,000 were killed in a single night. Roosevelt may have talked a good game but when it came to “the most contemptible acts of

wartime violence” it was none other than America that carried them out on the biggest scale.[12]

This critique makes valid points about civilian bombing.[13] The discussion, however, lacks context. It includes no mention of who Roosevelt was originally condemning - namely Japan for its bombardment campaigns in China. This is a counterpoint that omits the original point. The work directs anger at the United States government for condemning the war crimes of others while making no mention of its own. In eliding Japanese bombing and other atrocities, however, *Amerika Daitoryo no Rirekisho* produces a one-sided amnesiac narrative.



An atomic bomb centric collage of American misdeeds and atrocities from *Amerika Daitoryo no Rirekisho*

Just as poorly contextualized is the section devoted to President Bush and the Iraq War,

The reason given for the beginning of the war was that Iraq was hiding “Weapons of Mass Destruction” outlawed under international law, but no evidence was ever found. Even though Hussein had ruled over a strong-arm dictatorship in Iraq, it is not unreasonable to argue that the act of toppling a sovereign government on the whim of America is a crime in itself... In the nearly 20 years since the government of the first President Bush brought about the Gulf War, military involvement has swelled but “stability” has not come to the region, the corpses of the barefoot victims have continued to increase, but at the same time, as a state of war has become normalized and financial chaos more acute, the anxiety of the American people and the people of the world has only continued to deepen.[14]



Bush is an easy target in *Amerika Daitoryo no Rirekisho*

These comments are typical of anti-war positions internationally and indeed, of the views of Japanese progressives. What is missing, however, is any mention that Japan was a direct supporter of the attack on Iraq, a major diplomatic and financial backer of the American war, and participant in the occupation. Is it possible to criticize America in this way without discussing the Japanese government’s subordination to and strong support of the superpower? *Amerika Daitoryo no Rirekisho* does precisely that, and the result is an inability to imagine a stable future direction for the Japanese-American alliance. In the absence of a contextualized rethinking of the Japanese-American alliance which includes alternatives, *Amerika Daitoryo no Rirekisho* can only be read as an anti-American tract designed to stoke feelings of rage, not self reflection, in Japanese readers.

Distrust of America and Tamogami Toshio’s Neo-Nationalism

Amerika Daitoryo no Rirekisho was circulated to bookshops nationwide and grabbed shelf space as one of the most visible interpretations of the United States around the time of the US election, a period when Japanese public interest in the superpower peaked. This same period also saw the birth of a new “star” of rightwing Japanese punditry who exploited contextless anti-American tropes to grab attention. Former Air Self Defense Force Chief of Staff Tamogami Toshio’s controversial essay “Was Japan an Aggressor Nation?” came to light in November of 2008, resulting in a flurry of media attention and his dismissal from the military.[15] When the text was read in the United States, the focus was on its wholesale denial of Japanese war responsibility and portrayal of America as an historical villain. Far less attention was paid, however, to his contemporary critique, which included suggestions that American culture is “corrupting” Japan. Barely a month later, Tamogami’s book *Mizukara no Mi ha Kaerimizu* (I Don’t Repent), not only upped the revisionist ante by engaging in explicit Nanking Massacre denial, but found different ways to lash out at the United States, showing the extent to which distrust of America combines with a warped vision of history in his worldview. Tamogami has used contextless America criticism, layered with conspiracy theory and points that elide Japan’s war record, as a means to transform himself into a pop neo-nationalist pundit.

While recent Japanese leaders like Koizumi Junichiro and Abe Shinzo can

rightly be described as “nationalists”, as Gavan McCormack has argued, their vision and their policy priorities for Japan have been firmly subordinated to American interests.[16] Have the “structural” reforms of the past decade, carried out along the lines of American demands, been good for Japan? A significant number of recent publications respond with a resounding “no”.[17] While many criticisms of the reforms are valid, in his essay, Tamogami goes beyond contesting policy options to depict America as a moral corruptor,

If we are protected by America, then the Americanization of Japan will be accelerated. Japan’s economy, its finances, its business practices, its employment system, its judicial system will all converge with the American system. Our country’s traditional culture will be destroyed by the parade of reforms. Japan is undergoing a cultural revolution, is it not? But are the citizens of Japan living in greater ease now or twenty years ago? Is Japan becoming a better country?[18]

When Tamogami writes, “I am not repudiating the US-Japan alliance. Good relations between Japan and the United States are essential to the stability of the Asian region,” it appears as a platitude in the wake of his all-embracing culturalist

attack.[19] The effective subordination of Japanese interests to those of the United States and the lack of vision of a future outside of those interests have brought forth anti-American ideas from some of the very conservative and military elites that entrenched this unequal relationship in the first place.

The United States is a convenient target for this brand of neo-nationalist. Playing up past misdeeds of the US government, real or perceived, without important context such as honest reflection on Japan's 20th century wars and uncritical support for American foreign policy in the postwar period, is one way to argue that Americans are in no moral position to comment on Japanese history. Tamogami's screeds fit squarely into this discourse. Tamogami links with a pattern of neo-nationalist thought that has evolved into a significant niche since the mid-1990s. This perspective pivots on a triumvirate of confrontational ideas – distrust of the United States, calls for constitutional revision, and nuclear armament. With its own deterrent, in this view, Japan would free itself from American strategic priorities. This vision is often coupled with dislike, distrust, or even outright hatred, of China and the Koreas, and an obsession with defending Japan's "heroic past" against the criticisms of others. The result is a chaotic pattern of expression that finds rivals and enemies everywhere, and that looks obsessively backward rather than considering ways to foster future cooperation.

In Tamogami's view, expressed in his book *Mizukara no Mi ha Kaerimizu*, the current security alliance with the US is not simply inadequate, it is dangerous. He writes, "While Japanese may think it is natural that America will come to the rescue, the regime has changed, and now we have Obama, who was elected as the first black president, who in an essay published during the election said that importance will be placed on [relations with] China, while hardly touching on Japan at all." [20] This, combined with Tamogami's anti-American perspective introduced in "Was Japan an Aggressor Nation?", depicts the US as an unreliable ally that has exploited Japan and left the country "unable to defend itself." [21]

Many of Tamogami's criticisms of the US stance toward Japan are valid. For example, he writes with annoyance that Japan is stuck buying American weapons and paying huge amounts for co-development of technology, largely under American pressure.[22] Tamogami is justifiably angry that the US Congress officially condemned Japan's wartime behavior while offering no contrition for the firebombing of Tokyo or the atomic bombings.[23] His comments on America and China, however, lack context and in some instances are simply dishonest. Obama does not devalue Japan, he simply acknowledges the importance of fostering better Sino-American relations. Such a move could significantly increase stability in East Asia, clearly not something that Tamogami welcomes.

Tamogami employs such sophistry because he feels that Japan's hands are

being tied by the United States, “If we depend on America for protection, we cannot take any action that goes against America’s national interests.”[24] He represents the current situation as an insult to national pride, “We absolutely have to think that having another country’s army stationed in our country is a humiliation.”[25] On its own, this is an understandable reaction to an unequal political relationship and an onerous, costly and controversial base presence. These are concerns shared by progressives and a wide spectrum of the Japanese population.[26] The major problem lies, however, with the national direction that Tamogami proposes to replace the status quo.

Tamogami’s future vision is dominated by the past. He states that to believe Japan was “an aggressor” in wartime amounts to “not loving the country”. Tamogami never seriously discusses his reasons for this assertion, nor does he acknowledge that it may be possible to accept that acts of aggression and war crimes occurred, and still feel love for Japan. He sees the two positions as dichotomous, arguing essentially that being a “good Japanese” is necessarily tied up with accepting a heroic narrative of the past.

What drives Tamogami’s obsession with a “heroic past” is the desire to “Take back Japan’s shining history...”[27] and reclaim it from “the mass media and educational establishment who... join with China and Korea, and other foreign powers to condemn Japan.”[28] Tamogami sees a “shining” history as a cover-all solution to future problems. He

asks, “If we teach that Japan was an evil country, can we really expect to raise splendid Japanese?”[29] If this is carried through to its natural conclusion, it seems as though Tamogami shares with past Prime Minister Abe Shinzo and other critics of progressive education such as the *Atarashii Rekishi Kyokasho wo Tsukurukai* (Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform) a belief that imparting knowledge of the “shining” past is enough to ensure a bright future.[30] In Tamogami’s imagination, this future would, unfortunately, be characterized by brinksmanship and an inability to come to terms with painful historical problems.

Tamogami writes, “It is because other countries have realized that Japan is ‘a country that will never strike back’ that they started to think of us with disdain.”[31] Far from openly worrying about protecting Japan from invasion, Tamogami is more concerned with protecting Japan’s *reputation*, centered around the “heroic past” idea of Japan as a savior that delivered Asia from Western imperialism outlined in “Was Japan an Aggressor Nation?”

This line of thought ends with the belief that Japan should be nuclear armed, “In the end, countries that don’t have nuclear weapons have no choice but to follow those that do.”[32] Tamogami holds that only a nuclear-armed Japan can break away from subservience to the American government, thus becoming free, presumably, to engage in atomic brinksmanship which would allow nationalist Japanese to vigorously defend their preferred narratives.

Japan, he believes, must lash out at China in particular – “China, which [during the war] could only manage to put together an army akin to [a bunch of] bandits, is now broadcasting a fake history of Japan as an evil country all over the world.”[33] He singles out the Nanjing Massacre as the type of “fake history” and example of “disdain” for Japan that the country must fight against.[34] While it is difficult to imagine that Tamogami wishes to attack Chinese historical narratives with nuclear weapons, it is evident that he sees a nuclear standoff as a sort of stalemate which would free Japan to strike back with words.

While Asian neighbors are the main targets, America has increasingly come to loom large in the neo-nationalist worldview. The US Congressional “Comfort Women Resolution” inflamed Japanese neo-nationalist opinion against the superpower, and Tamogami is harsh in his condemnation.[35] Tamogami singles out Congressman Mike Honda for criticism, blaming his Chinese and Korean constituents for driving the censure. Neo-nationalist anti-Americanism is now deeply rooted in imaginings of America supporting a Chinese bid for hegemony in East Asia, leaving Japan out in the cold. At several points in the book, Tamogami conjures images of a looming Sino-American alliance, “America used to use the phrase ‘most important bilateral relationship’ to describe Japanese-American ties, but now exactly the same words are being used for China.”[36] This evokes a sense of crisis, and imagination of the US as a

potential *opponent*. It also represents a vision that focuses only on conflict. The Japanese and Chinese governments have recently made substantial strides in improving their bi-lateral relationship. In this framework, closer Sino-American ties should be welcomed as decreasing the potential for conflict in East Asia. That Tamogami chooses to view this negatively suggests that he sees conflict as the norm in international relations and is unwilling or unable to imagine anything different.

Neo-nationalists feel that far from being free to deepen ties with other nations and expand networks of regional and international cooperation, Japan is alone among enemies, “North Korea is nuclear armed, and China has become an economic superpower. From here on, we have good reason to believe that America’s stance toward Japan will change. It is absolutely necessary to make ‘the theory that human beings are essentially evil/selfish’ into the foundation for our understanding of international relations.”[37]

After all this, however, the only reason that Tamogami can offer for splitting with America and engaging in brinksmanship with China and others is to protect a parochial, distorted narrative of Japan’s past. As described above, the only hopeful image that Tamogami offers is of a “correct” understanding of the past producing “splendid” Japanese. The mechanics of how this will actually result in a better future, one in which Japan can play a constructive rather than a confrontational international role, is never discussed.

[See APPENDIX for discussion of the neo-nationalist thinkers who have influenced Tamogami]

Aimless Aso

The anti-American images described above are consumed as both entertainment and information and permeate different spheres of Japanese popular culture. Their circulation should be seen in the context of the failure of Japan's elite politicians to provide a clear and honest vision of the future of the Japanese-American alliance, clarity on how participation in the "War on Terror" will benefit Japan, and indeed, any compelling vision for Japan's future. In a poll conducted in February and March 2009, an overwhelming 91% of respondents indicated that they did not think that the current political establishment is providing an appropriate future plan.[38] More telling, a mere 9% feel that things will get better for Japan in the future. It is in this climate of gloom and lack of vision that neo-nationalism has broadened its appeal.

The rhetoric of current Prime Minister Aso Taro is representative of the failure of the Liberal Democratic Party elite to articulate a positive national direction. This section will outline elite conservative views on vital themes emphasizing the difficulties they face in charting a future course for Japan distinguishable from Tamogami's brand of neo-nationalism.

It is the norm for American presidential candidates to write books describing their personal history and vision. This has

recently become common in Japan as well with titles like Abe Shinzo's *Utsukushii Kuni e* (Toward a Beautiful Japan) and current Prime Minister Aso Taro's *Totetsumonai Nihon* (Incredible Japan). While these books should ideally provide a compelling vision of the future that the leader-to-be will endeavor to guide the country toward, Aso's offering, while clearly spelling out his views on the alliance with America, leaves far more obscured than illuminated.

What is Aso's basic view of America? In *Totetsumonai Nihon*, Aso turned to a grade school analogy to explain his point of view on international relations, "The strong fighter and the boss of the class is America... Japan is the rich kid who has individuality and sophistication, but people don't really think he's that cool." [39] He continues, "... as always, isn't it the best policy for us to walk in step with America? Of military power, economic power, and the power to make one's voice heard, isn't it increasing military power that puts the most strain on the household budget?" [40] Aso concludes by returning to the classroom, "... if you can't protect yourself by your own power, even little kids know that it makes sense to be friends with the best fighter... especially when our basic way of thinking (a value system rooted in democracy and free markets) is the same." [41] In essence, Aso wants Japan on the sidelines as a supporter, leaving warfare to the United States, but still celebrating that "fighter" role. [42] A vision of Japan's future lashed firmly to US power, however, could certainly lead

to a more expansive Japanese military role in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. By passing decision making on to the United States, Japanese elites have made it difficult for the Japanese public to have a say in the process.

In his book, Aso writes, “Japanese foreign policy needs a vision.”[43] Aso tries to provide one, but his treatment of Iraq undermines the enterprise. For example, Aso presents Japan’s involvement in Iraq as an epic success,

The JSDF sweated it out in Iraq. Iraqi government officials are still praising the fabulous morale of JSDF members. The Ground Self Defense Forces were in Samawa for a long period, but during that time, there was no violence against women, no desertion, and no eating for free, no problem behavior of any kind. Their deployment ended without a single casualty and without a single shot fired. If this was baseball ... we’d be talking about an amazing ‘no hit, no run’ game.[44]

Aso ignores the fact that the invasion and occupation were opposed by a majority of Japanese who considered the war a humanitarian and human rights catastrophe, nor does he clarify what contribution the SDF presence actually made to the still precarious US venture which has imposed so heavy a price on

the Iraqi people.

Likewise, Aso presents a bright future vision of the potential for Asian countries to come together, ignoring criticisms of Japan as an uncritical supporter of America.[45] While Asian nations are wary of massive hikes in US military spending, labels like “Axis of Evil”, discussion of China as a potential threat, “preemptive strike” strategy, and the “Bush Doctrine”, there will always be an asterisk placed beside “bilateral” relations with Japan. Aso is unable to reconcile Japan’s military partnership with the United States and an expressed desire to move closer to Asia, despite what he proclaims as “A New Asian-ism – The Aso Doctrine”.[46] These contextless discussions provide no coherent imagination of the future aside from simply “walking in step with America”.

At present, there is a tremendous gap between what Japanese see on their televisions and read in their newspapers – tragedy in Iraq and Afghanistan, crimes, accidents, environmental destruction, and other by-products of the US base presence in Japan, American conflicts with China, Russia and North Korea – and the contextless future painted by politicians like Aso. Adding to the confusion is the political double-speak and feigned ignorance that allowed the Tamogami incident to take place.

After the content of his essay came to light on October 31, General Tamogami was quickly sacked by the Aso government, but neither stripped of his pension nor disgraced. Indeed, the

incident gave the General a public platform without precedent for a military figure in postwar Japan. The affair has also raised awareness of the presence of extreme nationalist ideas in the Japanese military establishment. Opposition Democratic Party member Kina Shokichi asked in a Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee meeting on November 6,

This guy Tamogami, he has repeatedly asserted the same kinds of things that he wrote in the essay within the Defense Ministry for a long time. Even though he was well known for spewing that type of irresponsible talk, how did he still manage to get the top spot in the Air Self Defense Force? Doesn't this mean that successive Defense Ministers just said nothing, watched, and let this happen?[47]

So far there has been no investigation by the government of personnel oversight, raising the suspicion that there is widespread agreement with Tamogami's arguments behind the scenes at the highest levels of the military and the ruling party.

There is evidence that Aso shares some of Tamogami's neo-nationalist historical views. In *Totetsumonai Nihon* Aso tells of his love of manga - Japanese comic books. Listing some titles that he considers significant, Aso describes Kobayashi Yoshinori's *Sensoron* (On War)

as "a masterpiece that directly questioned young people about the meaning of war..."[48]

Calling *Sensoron* a "masterpiece" is tantamount to endorsing author Kobayashi's neo-nationalist mythologies - notably his insistence that no mass killings took place at Nanjing, that no Comfort Women were forced to perform sex acts or subjected to violence, that Japan was lured into war, that Japan's war was an honorable quest to free Asia from the brutality of Euro-American imperialism, and that Japan has been unfairly persecuted by its neighbors who lack a "correct" understanding of the past.[49] In short, this is precisely what Tamogami Toshio argued in "Was Japan an Aggressor Nation?" One is forced to conclude that Aso only dismissed Tamogami because of political pressures to do so.

Aso's vision of Japan's future is balanced precariously between Asia and America, between international cooperation and support for "preemptive strikes", between denial arguments and official apologies. Among those most dissatisfied with the current aimlessness of Japanese international policies are small groups of neo-nationalist ideologues including Tamogami. While Aso keeps his revisionist historical views (mostly) private, Tamogami and others seek to actively propagate them. Where they differ most, however, is in an increasingly strong dissatisfaction with the "America-first" status quo. Aso explicitly favors the current subordination of the Japanese-American relationship - relying on the

“boss of the class”, so to speak. Tamogami’s worldview, however, places the United States as a past villain and current corruptor of Japan’s culture. Moving from his position in the Self Defense Forces to a new career as a rightwing pundit and author, Tamogami has expanded on his views of America with increased vigor and venom. The absence of an unambiguous discussion of Japan’s global place by politicians such as Aso has only empowered this view, as well as the other strands of pop culture anti-Americanism that circulate in Japan at present.

Progressive Alternatives

In the larger culture, how common are the ideas put forward by Tamogami? Among newspapers, only the *Sankei Shimbun*, ranked eighth in daily circulation with around 2,000,000 copies sold, consistently articulates these positions.[50] Japan’s leading conservative paper, the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, by contrast, views the Japanese-American alliance much as Aso does. It has produced high-profile interpretations of history that go against Tamogami’s, and condemned the General’s controversial essay.[51] Some magazines that regularly feature neo-nationalist attacks on Japan’s neighbors have seen sales decline sharply over the past decade. For example, *Shūkan Pureiboi* (Weekly Playboy) sales fell by 40% between 2001 and 2006.[52] In March 2009, the leading neo-nationalist monthly, *Shokun!* (Comrades!), announced that it will cease publication because of falling sales.[53] Public

surveys also suggest that these voices have limited reach. Neo-nationalists oppose any apology for wartime violence and atrocities. In January of 2007, an *Asahi Shimbun* poll revealed that contrition is the mainstream attitude with 85% of Japanese agreeing that “apologetic reflection” toward the Asian victims of Japanese aggression is still necessary.[54] A recent survey of Japanese internet users, a group that many thought to be shifting drastically toward neo-nationalist positions, reports that only 1.3% express what can be described as “rightwing” views.[55] This leaves sensationalist tracts, including several bestselling manga like Aso favorite *Sensoron* and works like Tamogami’s as the main zone for the expression of the neo-nationalist world view.

Despite the circulation of a variety of problematic representations, Japan’s public sphere has no shortage of compelling future visions. The key factor that sets these apart from views of the current aimless elite, neo-nationalist polemics, and anti-American images that degenerate into caricature, is context. Progressives may strongly criticize US actions, including the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the Korean, Indochinese and Iraq Wars, but in discussing US attacks on civilians, these are typically discussed alongside, rather than as a basis for denying Japanese historical atrocities. This opens up the possibility of universalist critiques in place of parochial nationalism. Whether or not we accept universals as a

philosophical concept, their *utility* in encouraging empathy and blocking the use of violence is manifest. Progressives frequently locate their criticisms within a framework stressing the possibilities of an international environment built around cooperation rather than confrontation, dialogue rather than brinksmanship.

As the political left lost ground, eventually imploding in the 1990s, and student activism, vital in the 1960s and early 1970s, was dulled by increasing affluence and the fact that new generations of youth had no experience of war, progressive movements declined. Yet progressive speech and writing continue to play an important role in Japan's public sphere. The progressive critique of the US-Japan military partnership, exemplified by the writings of individuals such as historian Ienaga Saburo - who not only drew wide attention to Japanese war crimes and the inadequacy of textbook descriptions, but also compared US excesses in Vietnam to the atrocities of Japanese militarists and pressed for Japanese to stand by the "peace clause" and avoid involvement in foreign wars - remains relevant.[56] This position was taken up and developed by some of Japan's most important thinkers and creators - historians and social scientists such as Yoshida Yutaka, Wada Haruki, Sakamoto Yoshikazu, Utsumi Aiko, and Ueno Chizuko, novelists Oda Makoto, oe Kenzaburo, Yamazaki Toyoko, and Medoruma Shun, manga artists Nakazawa Keiji, Mizuki Shigeru, Tezuka Osamu, and Ishinomori Shotaro, artists

like Tomiyama Taeko and Maruki Iri and Toshi, environmentalist Ui Jun, journalists Honda Katsuichi, Kamata Satoshi and Matsui Yaori and, a host of others. Progressive alternatives have circulated in myriad forms.

Positive alternatives continue to address some of Japan's most pressing issues. The re-imagining of Sino-Japanese relations is an important example. In the article "Foundations of Cooperation - Imagining the Future of Sino-Japanese Relations", I outlined how, in contrast with neo-nationalist works devoted to denigrating China, the mainstream of Japanese non-fiction representation of the continental power is rich in consideration of the types of nuanced, contextualized, and hopeful alternatives to the status quo that Aso and Tamogami have been unable or unwilling to present.[57] There are works suggesting everything from working more closely with China *and* America to encourage more constructive engagement with North Korea, scrapping the alliance with the US and entering into a partnership with China, taking environmental issues as a foundation for multilateral cooperation on a host of issues, and making the formation of an "East Asian Economic Community" the basis of Japanese foreign policy. Imagining connectivity, these works eschew the type of "human evil/selfishness" and purely conflict-based reading of international relations that Tamogami and others have embraced. Of particular importance at present are books that combine alternative visions of Japan's future, with an interrogation of

the “heroic past” that runs through the writings of Tamogami and other neo-nationalists.

The most enduring and powerful images of Japanese as victims in war are of death from the skies – the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the devastation by firebombing of nearly all of the country’s major cities. In the 1960s, American bombing of Vietnam evoked memories of the horrors of 1945 and helped drive Japan’s vigorous anti-war movement. In the 2000s, attacks from the air on Iraq and Afghanistan have again spurred Japanese progressives to action, as have the efforts of politicians and ideologues to justify this and conceal the lives destroyed.

Okazaki Hisahiko, a foreign affairs analyst, advisor to past Prime Minister Abe Shinzo and associate of Aso Taro, was quoted in the *Yomiuri Shimbun* as saying, “When considering the [Iraq War] on a long historical scale, what the United States has done is destroy the ecosystem of the Middle East. Destroying an ecosystem, however, is not necessarily bad... Building a new ecosystem, however, is going to require a lot of time and effort.”[58] The essential context here, that this “ecosystem” encompassed human lives, is omitted. More than context, what is missing here is a basic empathy for other human beings. Progressives have responded with varied critiques of this type of position and a number of recent works have focused on bombing, arguably the primary means by which foreign “ecosystems” have been destroyed.

An important example is Arai Shinichi’s recent book *Kūbaku no Rekishi* (A History of Bombing).[59] Arai is a specialist on the history of international relations, a professor emeritus of Surugadai and Ibaraki Universities, who has been active with the Center for Research and Documentation on Japan’s War Responsibility. The book was published by Iwanami Shoten, one of Japan’s leading publishers, in August 2008. It is emblematic of progressive writing on the subject of organized violence and the positioning of both America and Japan in related debates.

Unlike Tamogami, who moves from images of a “heroic past” to visions of a confrontational future, Arai roots a hopeful vision in honest discussion of Japan’s past,

Just before the Japanese forces began their general assault on Nanking, a communiqué, dated November 30, 1937, was sent from the 10th Army Chief of Staff (*Sanbocho*) to the Assistant Secretary of the Army (*Rikugun Jikan*). In the event that Nanking could not be taken quickly, it was suggested that, ‘Concentrated bombing for one week should be carried out on the city of Nanking using [poison gas] and incendiary bombs to turn the city into ruins.’[60]

Arai’s discussion of Japanese war crimes

is thorough and uncompromising,

From the time that biological attacks began in earnest in September of 1940, various cities in Hunan ... and other areas were targeted. Special bombs filled with fleas and infected with plague germs were found to be the most effective. Changde in Hunan, attacked with these germ-bearing fleas in November of 1941, saw the outbreak and spread of disease for the next five years.[61]

The narrative of the history of strategic bombing that Arai develops does not dwell on the image of Japanese as victims of war. The image of Japanese as assailants is central to Arai's story of world bombing,

The main thrust of my argument so far is that if a line is drawn illustrating the evolution of strategic bombing, it goes as follows: Morocco, Ethiopia, Changde, Chongqing, Hiroshima. What we must take from the history of bombing drawn in this line is knowledge of how ... the sense of ethics of the "civilized world" has become more and more clouded.[62]

When Arai does discuss the atomic bombings, the quintessential image of Japanese as victims in war, he broadens the discussion so that it leads to a universal condemnation of all types of bombing from the end of WWII to the present,

The idea that the atomic bomb saved hundreds of thousands of lives was strongly welcomed by American society. The idea that the atomic bomb had ended the war early and saved many lives was accepted smoothly by the masses, and became established as a reason [for dropping the bomb] that society could live with in the postwar period. Truman made efforts to move public opinion in this direction and this played a significant role in forming the "atomic bomb myth" - that the bomb is a humane weapon that contributes to world peace.... I refer to the era in which world peace is managed by atomic weapons as the "nuclear age". At a glance, the "nuclear age" may be seen as a peaceful one, but this is not so. With the American-Soviet military standoff in the background, military governments were born all over the world, and civil war

and the violent suppression of independence movements continued to take place. In these “limited wars” involving conventional weapons as the main means of violence, massacre through aerial bombardment has taken place again and again with tremendous sacrifice of the lives of ordinary civilians.[63]

The result is a discussion that strongly condemns the irresponsible and inhumane US use of air power in Indochina and later the Middle East, but brings the discussion back to a critical look at Japan’s past and present contradictions. Describing Japan’s current plan to dispose of its arsenal of cluster bombs, Arai writes, “At present, we do not know just how many cluster bombs the Japanese Self Defense Forces have, but it has been suggested that billions of yen will be required to dispose of them so it must be a lot. In addition, the cluster bombs held by the American forces in Japan will almost certainly remain, will they not?”[64]

Arai’s account is not limited to criticisms. It also contains an impassioned plea for Japan to move toward a vision of national security based on non-violent principles,

Just what country do we expect to manage an amphibious assault on Japan in the face of defensive fire? Isn’t it only [our ally]

America that has the capacity to do something like that? China and North Korea are probably imagined [assailants] but this idea departs too far from reality. Rather than wasting huge amounts of money on something that simply puts the lives of Japanese people at risk, can’t we say that our real national security lies in making active the spirit of the Japanese Constitution, doing away with inhuman ways of making war, and working toward building a peaceful international environment?[65]

Unlike Tamogami, Arai does not call for summarily scrapping the Japanese-American alliance. He hopes, however, for a dramatic expansion of the power of international organizations and laws to curtail all forms of organized violence, but especially aerial bombardment, which almost inevitably takes a huge civilian toll.[66] *Kūbaku no Rekishi* offers vividly imagined alternatives to the status quo and the absence of one-sided anti-American images. This is a humanist perspective that seeks to transcend nationalism in a bid to construct a trans-national Asian community.

Arai’s view is by no means rare. 2008 saw the publication of another important Japanese book on the history of bombing. Yuki Tanaka, a leading commentator on war crimes, both Japanese and American,

and currently a researcher at the Hiroshima Peace Institute, penned *Sora no Sensoshi* (A History of War from the Skies) for the popular Gendai Shinsho paperback series of Kodansha, Japan's largest publisher.[67]

Tanaka's approach differs from that of Arai in that he pays far more attention to World War I as the root of philosophies of indiscriminate bombing. However, he too places Japan's later bombing of China in the context of the long evolution of strategic bombing, making it part of a reflective condemnation of the practice. Where Arai makes use of legal arguments to support a sweeping call for a different conceptualization of international relations, Tanaka makes an extremely powerful plea for empathy.

In the conclusion, Tanaka quotes a poem of atomic bomb victim Kurihara Sadako,

Suddenly

A glowing blue flash

Buildings fall

Fires burn

Amid the spiraling smoke

A mass of people flee

Weaving beneath the power lines,
hanging downward [68]

He presents this moving image, not to exceptionalize, but rather to universalize Japanese suffering,

The scene ... that

Kurihara illuminates is not limited to the atomic bombings, it is an experience shared by all humans placed under aerial attack. It is a horror that cannot effectively be put into words. Suddenly a bomber, like some monstrous creature in the sky, brings with it the vicious roar of explosions... Thrown by the explosive force, arms are torn away, legs blown off.[69]

Tanaka calls for empathy with victims that transcends nationality,

To see things from the point of view of the victims... we must turn our ears toward their 'personal stories' as we look at their faces and seek to share their experience of pain and mental anguish, to internalize it ourselves until it takes root as our own feelings and in our own memories. It is ... through this

that we can make the often talked about ‘common memory’ possible for the first time.[70]

Drawing on the rich history of Japanese progressive thought, Tanaka cites the example of anti-war novelist Oda Makoto for cultivating the sort of empathy that leads to passionate action. Oda,

who passed away in 2007, had hung on the wall of the study in his home a picture taken from the air by the American forces of the air raid on Osaka that he experienced as a child, showing the many bombs being dropped on the city as black smoke wafted upward. By looking at this picture every day, Oda was able to connect the horrific air attack that he survived as a child with the Japanese bombing suffered by the people of China and the long years of bombing of the Vietnamese people by America. He took this pain and built it into ‘common memory’ that, in turn, he made the philosophical starting point for his lifetime of action and writing that began with the *Beheiren* movement.[71]

Tamogami’s approach to the past is predicated on the negation of empathy and the outright denial of the stories of others. Tanaka, on the other hand, looks to make this empathy “... a powerful wellspring of imaginative energy for building peace.”[72] Tanaka’s plea for universal empathy for the victims of violence, like Arai’s call in legal and emotional terms for a peaceful foundation

to all international relationships, provides both a hopeful vision of the future and contextualized criticisms of the status quo.

Okinawa, long the site of the Japanese-American alliance’s greatest controversies, is also the center of the most powerful calls for change.[73] Due to the massive base presence and bloody fighting in 1945, Okinawa is often associated with America in Japanese popular culture. In the above examples, it was the site of crass and frustrated contemporary anti-American images as well as the site of repeated American violence against Okinawans/Japanese. The Okinawan war experience, however, has also been used as part of a cross-media progressive project to present a clear alternative to neo-nationalist history that also includes a much more subtle presentation of the American other.

The war experience of the people of Okinawa does not fit easily with Tamogami’s “heroic past”. Okinawan civilians suffered grievously during the American siege of the islands in 1945, but this is only one side of their wartime tragedy. Men, women, and children were forced from shelters and into the line of fire by Japanese soldiers who often saw civilians as a hindrance or a threat rather than people to protect. Simply for speaking their native language, some Okinawans were accused of “spying” and brutally executed along with their families. Many Okinawan civilians, encouraged by wartime propaganda or pressured by the Japanese military, killed themselves and their families rather than

surrender to the United States. Trapped between the advancing American military machine and Japanese forces that treated them as expendable or actually turned their weapons against the people of the prefecture, it is estimated that over 94,000 Okinawan civilians perished.[74]

The victims of Japanese army violence in Okinawa have recently been subjected to a denial campaign much like the one that Tamogami directs toward Asia. This took the form of attempts to alter approved textbooks and remove references to Japan’s military’s role in forcing Okinawan civilians to take their own lives in the face of the American advance. Vigorous protest resulted in this being overturned.[75] Accompanying academic and journalistic attempts to spread awareness of Okinawa’s war experience are manga that powerfully condemn Japanese militarism and also American attacks on civilians. These do not, however, fall into simple anti-American images. The Japanese forces are shown in a far harsher light and criticisms of American behavior in wartime are balanced with positive, humanizing images.

Shirahata no Shojo (The Girl with the White Flag) ran in the manga magazine *Bessatsu Furendo* - one of the bestselling *shojo* (girls) manga digests, a typical volume of which sells around 200,000 copies.[76] It is based on an autobiographical story by Higa Tomiko, adapted by Miyauchi Saya.

The manga follows the young Tomiko as she and her family flee from the

American advance. The pair witness the aftermath of an American bombardment as artist Miyauchi deftly employs visual patterns that have been used more often to represent the atomic bombings in works such as Nakazawa Keiji’s *Hadashi no Gen* (Barefoot Gen),





The family is also strafed by American fighters.

From this point, however, the manga begins to take a radically different focus and Tomiko realizes that far from offering protection, the Japanese forces kill civilians without warning,





One soldier tries to murder Tomiko and her internal monologue serves to communicate to readers the scope of the victimization of Okinawan civilians at the hands of the Japanese army,



In the end, Tomiko escapes and surrenders to the Americans who are thoroughly humanized in the narrative,

This is a true story that ends with an American photographer snapping a picture of the young Tomiko as she surrenders, clutching the “white flag” of the title,



Gurimu Dowa (Manga Grimm Fairytales).[79]

The story follows a young Okinawan boy, Shingo, fleeing the fighting with his mother and infant sister. Shingo barely survives an American air strike,



Shirahata no Shojo conveys a potent anti-war appeal. In artist Miyauchi Saya’s conclusion to the work, she relates that “I believe from the heart that peace is a treasure.”[77] Miyauchi also sets the work in the context of recent debates over Japanese education about war - “I hope that this work, even if just a little, is successful in spreading awareness of ‘the truth of war’ that does not appear in textbooks.”[78]

Higa’s story has also been reworked by artist-creator Kitagawa Reiko as *Shirahata no Shonen* (The Boy with the White Flag) that ran in the 250,000 selling monthly manga digest *Manga*



Much as in *Shirahata no Shoyo*, however, it is Japanese war crimes that are made the major focus,





In contrast, Americans are later humanized by a series of tender images,

Kitagawa distinguishes between Americans responsible for killing Okinawan civilians and those who worked within the wartime order to save lives. It is the second group that is held up as ideal in the narrative, promoting both empathy and the necessity of helping the victims of organized violence.[80]

These titles are as multi-sided and nuanced as the examples of the neo-nationalist media discussed above are crude. They look at wartime violence from a variety of perspectives, providing an important popular counterpoint to denial forces - which have focused on Okinawa - and to simplistic anti-Americanism.

American violence against civilians is

condemned along with that of Japan. Importantly, much like progressive non-fiction, these works seek to reconcile images of Japanese as victims and as assailants in war. This allows the works to present a broad critique of warfare and organized violence from a universal humanist perspective, in contrast to the parochial neo-nationalist “heroic past” favored by Tamogami and others.

Conclusion

Aso dismisses those who criticize Iraq War-era America as “sentimental leftists”.^[81] Tamogami and other neo-nationalists describe Japanese who are critical of their country’s past as “masochistic”.^[82] As described above, Tamogami believes that Japanese can either love their country or believe that Japan committed acts of aggression, never both. Individuals who insist that there is no constructive vision for Japan’s future are categorically dismissing a rich alternative discourse set in the multiple media of history, biography, literature, film, painting, manga and other arts.

When searching for hopeful future visions and nuanced war images, Japanese do not need to look abroad or even invent a radically new way of talking about problems. They need look no further than the prolific progressive themes that circulate widely in diverse forms. These ideas thoroughly challenge elite and neo-nationalist assumptions and expose the essential vacuity of many of their claims.

By March 2009, support for the Aso Taro cabinet had plunged to around 16%.^[83]

The election in the offing could oust the LDP and replace it with the opposition Minshuto or a new coalition. While many doubt that Minshuto victory would produce significant change, the party vigorously opposed dispatch of Japanese forces to support US action in Iraq and has continued to condemn Japanese support for American unilateralism. It has called for closer cooperation with the UN and for prioritizing relations with China and Korea while maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship with the United States.^[84] Leading members of the party strongly condemned Tamogami’s writing as “heartless” and “an essay that seeks to justify [Japan’s] wars of aggression” and commented that it did “incalculable damage to the country’s foreign relations”.^[85] Minshuto leaders have called for frank discussion in school textbooks of the behavior of Japanese forces in Okinawa in 1945.^[86] On November 25, two Minshuto members, Madoka Yoriko and Okazaki Tomiko, met with former Comfort Women and their supporters, pledging to push for official compensation and apology.^[87] The Minshuto is actively promoting this stance at present. Madoka is currently a party vice president. Okazaki has been tapped by the party as the “next Minister of the Environment”. The Minshuto is a diverse party, but it includes progressives in key positions and the party is broadcasting the fact.

Neither a Minshuto victory, nor positive outcomes in the event of such victory are assured. The preceding examples nevertheless suggest the possibility for

bringing progressive viewpoints into debates about Japan’s national direction in a post-LDP polity and the chance for new discussion of a real, vital, lasting alternative to Aso and to Tamogami.

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Matthew Penney is an Assistant Professor at Concordia University in Montreal and a Japan Focus associate. He is currently conducting research on popular representations of war in Japan. He can be contacted at penneym@hotmail.com.

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[“Foundations of Cooperation: Imagining the Future of Sino-Japanese Relations”](#)

[“War and Japan: The Non-Fiction Manga of Mizuki Shigeru”](#)

Notes

[1] Manga images that appear in this

article are “quoted” for purposes of analysis. All copyrights are held by the original artists and publishers.

[2] Peter J. Katzenstein and Robert O. Keohane, *Anti-Americanism in World Politics*, New York: Cornell University Press, 2006.

[3] Yomiuri Shimbun, [“Taibei Kankei Satei no 34%”](#) in *Yomiuri Shimbun*, December 18, 2008. Polls also report, however, that a majority of Japanese believe that the Japanese-American alliance should be maintained.

[4] Itagaki Keisuke, *Hanma Baki*, Vol. 5, Tokyo: Akita Shoten, 2007.

[5] Baba Yasushi, *Karate Shokoshi Kohinata Minoru*, Vol. 5, Tokyo: Kodansha, 2002.

[6] Kurihara shows how, *Uramiya Honpo*, Vol. 14, Tokyo: Shūeisha, 2006. The author chooses to Romanize his name in this manner.

[7] For details on crimes by American personnel in Okinawa, see Chalmers Johnson, [“The ‘Rape’ of Okinawa”](#), in *Japan Focus*.

[8] Takanashi Midori, *Amerika nante Daikirai*, Tokyo: Kodansha, 2004.

[9] Nishizuka Yūichi, et al., *Amerika Daitoryo no Rirekisho*, Kasakura Shuppan-sha, 2008.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

[13] Identical points are made by scholars in the English-speaking world; see, Mark Selden, “[Japanese and American War Atrocities, Historical Memory and Reconciliation: World War II to Today](#)”, in *Japan Focus*. Also, Marilyn Young and Yuki Tanaka (eds.), *Bombing Civilians*, New York: The New Press, 2008.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 88.

[15] For general background on the Tamogami case, see Herbert Bix, “[Tamogami’s World: Japan’s Top Soldier Reignites Conflict Over the Past](#)”, November 9, 2008.

[16] Gavan McCormack, *Client State - Japan in the American Embrace*, New York: Verso, 2007. Other authors have made similar arguments; for example, see Peter J. Katzenstein, “[Japan in the American Imperium - Rethinking Security](#)” in *Japan Focus*.

[17] See, for example: Honda Katsuichi, *Amerika wo Miyo*, Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun-sha, 2003. Yabe Takashi, *Amerika Byo*, Tokyo: Shinchosha, 2003. Tachibana Toshiaki, *Amerika-gata Fuan Shakai de ii no ka*, Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun-sha, 2006. Machiyama Tomohiro, *Amerikajin no Hanbun ha Nyuyoku no Basho wo Shiranai*, Tokyo: Bungei Shunju, 2008. Tsurumi Mika, *Hinkon Daikoku Amerika*, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2008.

[18] Tamogami Toshio, “[Was Japan an Aggressor Nation?](#)”, p. 5.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

[20] Tamogami Toshio, *Mizukara no Mi ha Kaerimizu*, Tokyo: WAC, 2008, pp. 16-17. This book, put together quickly in order to cash in on the media attention that Tamogami has garnered, is rambling and poorly edited. In context, his reference to Obama’s race seems more a product of padding than an attempt to suggest that having a “black president” is negative.

[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 9-11.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 102.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 176.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 174.

[26] “[Nichibei Kyodo Yoron Chosa](#)”, in *Yomiuri Shimbun*, December 14, 2007. This survey indicates that 42.2% of Japanese believe that the base presence should be reduced and 9.8% believe that it should be eliminated altogether. Only 1.3% believe that it should be increased.

[27] Tamogami, *Mizukara no Mi*, p. 9.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

[30] Abe Shinzo, *Utsukushii Kuni he*, Tokyo: Bungei Shunju, 2006.

[31] Tamogami, *Mizukara no Mi*, p. 154.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 184.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 101.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 104.

[35] *Ibid.*, pp. 102-103.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 176.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 177. *Seiakusetsu* 性惡説 is translated here as “the theory that human beings are essentially evil”. This is a theory rooted in Chinese philosopher Xun Zi’s (荀子) writing. It is often contrasted with Mencius’s (孟子) *Seizensetsu* 性善説 “the theory that human beings are essentially good”.

[38] Asahi Shimbun Yoron Chosa, [Asahi Shimbun](#), March 17, 2009.

[39] Aso Taro, *Totetsumonai Nihon*, Tokyo: Shinchosha, 2007, p. 128.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 130.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 130.

[42] While Aso and other conservatives have pushed for closer military ties between Japan and the United States, they have also been unwilling or politically unable to dispatch Self Defense Force troops overseas in a combat capacity. Aso has even shied away from dispatching troops to Afghanistan in a non-combat role. See Kyodo News, [“Aso Wary of Afghan Deployment”](#) in *The Japan Times*, October 29, 2008.

[43] Aso, *Totetsumonai Nihon*, p. 186.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 178.

[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 185-187.

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 153.

[47] Kina Shokichi, Speaker 11, [003/007]170, House of Councilors, Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, Nov. 6, 2008.

[48] Aso, *Totetsumonai Nihon*, p. 58. Aso uses the word *meicho* 名著, translated here as “masterpiece”, to describe *Sensoron*. The leading Japanese-language dictionary, *Kojien*, identifies the meaning as “a famous work” or an “excellent work”. It has the nuance of “masterpiece” and Aso is clearly taken with the manga, praising it for “fitting in more words than most books in print.” He also groups it among “high quality manga”.

[49] Kobayashi Yoshinori, *Sensoron*, Tokyo: Gentosha, 1998. For an analysis of the manga see, Rumi Sakamoto, [“Will you go to war, or will you stop being Japanese? Nationalism and History in Kobayashi Yoshinori’s Sensoron”](#) in *Japan Focus*.

[50] [“Shinbun Teiki Kodoku Hikaku”](#) NAVI. The *Sankei* is often ambiguous on the Japanese-American alliance. The newspaper often supports greater Japanese participation *alongside* the American military machine. The *Sankei*’s uncritical support of Tamogami’s positions shows, however, that there are considerable fractions in the neo-nationalist camp.

[51] The *Yomiuri* described Tamogami as “forgetting his proper place” in an editorial and criticized him for going against the government line on war apology, “Tachiba Warsureta, Keisotsu na Ronbun Happyo” *Yomiuri Shimbun*,

November 1, 2008. On the *Yomiuri's* war history project see, Tessa Morris-Suzuki, “Who is Responsible? The *Yomiuri Project and the Enduring Legacy of the Asia-Pacific War*” in *Japan Focus*.

[52] FACTA Online, *Shuyo 50 no 'Busū Gekimetsu Himitsu Deta*, August 12, 2007.

[53] “*Shokun! ga Kyukan he*”, *Sankei Shimbun*, March 3, 2009.

[54] *Asahi Shimbun*, “*Aikokushin 'aru' ga 78% honsha yoron chosa*”, January 25, 2007.

[55] Tsuji Daisuke, “*Intanetto ni okeru 'Ukeika' Gensho ni kan suru Jissho Kenkyu*”, September 10, 2008.

[56] Ienaga Saburo, *Taiheiyo Senso*, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2002.

[57] Matthew Penney, “*Foundations of Cooperation - Imagining the Future of Sino-Japanese Relations*”, in *Japan Focus*.

[58] Okazaki Hisahiko, “*Chikyu wo Yomu*”, *Yomiuri Shimbun*, November 5, 2006.

[59] Arai Shinichi, *Kūbaku no Rekishi*, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2008.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 61.

[61] *Ibid.*, p. 62.

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

[63] *Ibid.*, p. 168.

[64] *Ibid.*, p. 246.

[65] *Ibid.*, p. 246.

[66] *Ibid.*, pp. 212-234.

[67] Tanaka (Toshi)Yuki, *Sora no Sensoshi*, Tokyo: Kodansha, 2008.

[68] *Ibid.*, p. 239.

[69] *Ibid.*, pp. 239-240.

[70] *Ibid.*, pp. 242-243.

[71] *Ibid.*, p. 245.

[72] *Ibid.*, p. 246.

[73] For details of Japanese works that look at the situation in Okinawa in a nuanced manner see, Matthew Penney, “Bridging the Gap - Images of Okinawa in Japanese Popular Culture”, in *Social Science Japan Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 1, April, 2006. *Japan Focus* also contains many articles on this topic: Steve Rabson, “*Okinawan Perspectives on Japan's Imperial Institution*”, in *Japan Focus*. Sakurai Kunitoshi, “*Okinawan Bases, the United States and Environmental Destruction*”, in *Japan Focus*. C. Douglas Lummis, “*The US-Japan Status of Forces Agreement and Okinawan Anger*”, in *Japan Focus*.

[74] Tanaka Nobumasa, “*Desecration of the Dead: Bereaved Okinawan Families Sue Yasukuni to End Relatives' Enshrinement*”, trans. Steve Rabson.

[75] oe Kenzaburo, “*Misreading, Espionage and 'Beautiful Martyrdom': On Hearing the Okinawa 'Mass Suicides' Suit Court Verdict*”, in *Japan Focus*.

[76] Higa Tomiko and Miyauchi Saya, *Shirahata no Shojo*, Tokyo: Kodansha, 2006.

[77] *Ibid.*, p. 179.

[78] *Ibid.*, p. 185.

[79] Kitagawa Reiko, “Shirahata no Shonen” in *Senka no Naka no Kodomotachi*, Tokyo: Bunka-sha, 2005.

[80] Given the countless thousands of Okinawan civilian lives lost in American attacks including the widespread use of weapons such as flamethrowers against civilian targets during the fighting in 1945, it may seem strange that the focus of so much contemporary anger has shifted toward Japanese army atrocities against the Okinawan people. There are, however, several possible explanations for this. Americans were the “enemy” and Okinawan civilians were psychologically prepared for attack. What they were not prepared for, however, was the *betrayal* by mainland troops who were looked to as protectors but often behaved very differently when the fighting started. While individual exceptions should be taken into account, at best the Japanese forces treated Okinawans as a nuisance, at worst as a target for violence. In addition, while the American side is more or less silent about wartime killings of Okinawan civilians, at present, some high profile *denials* of Japanese wrongdoing have offended many Okinawans. Even if the denial position is a minority one in mainland Japan, it has still renewed bitter feelings toward Japanese militarism. For a study of the communication of

memories of victimization at the hands of the Japanese forces see, Matthew Allen, *Identity and Resistance in Okinawa*, New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002. For coverage of the impact of denial on reconciliation projects see, Jennifer Lind, “[Memory, Apology, and International Reconciliation](#)”, in *Japan Focus*.

[81] Aso Taro, *Totetsumonai Nihon*, p. 129.

[82] Tamogami Toshio, *Mizukara no Mi*, p. 10.

[83] Asahi Shimbun Yoron Chosa, [Asahi Shimbun](#), March 17, 2009].

[84] [DPJ Manifesto](#).

[85] Minshuto, “[Tamogami Mondai ni tai suru Boeisho no Taio nit suite](#)”.

[86] Hatoyama Yukio, “[Okinawa-sen ‘Shūdan Jiketsu’ ni kan suru Kyokasho Kentei ni tsuite](#)”.

[87] Minshuto, “[Jūgun Ianfu Mondai, Kaiketsu ni Mukete Ketsui wo Hyomei](#)”.

Appendix - The Ideological Pedigree of Tamogami Toshio

Since the 1990s, a voluminous body of neo-nationalist writing has appeared in Japan. While Tamogami has garnered the most attention, his views are by no means rare, nor are they original. His view of a “shining past” and an ineffectual present, in which Japan bears the brunt of insults and is held back by America, ending in a confrontational near-future vision, runs

across the work of numerous neo-nationalist authors. This is Tamogami's intellectual pedigree.

Watanabe Shoichi, perhaps Japan's most prolific and influential neo-nationalist writer, was the chief judge of the essay "contest" that awarded Tamogami's "Was Japan an Aggressor Nation?" the thirty million yen first prize, sparking the subsequent controversy.[1] Tamogami and Watanabe seem a natural pairing – the ideas expressed in the winning essay are virtually identical to assertions that Watanabe has made since the mid-1990s. Surveying Watanabe's positions and those of other leading neo-nationalists can provide insight into the pattern of public discourse that lies behind Tamogami's views.

In *Showashi* (History of the Showa Period), Watanabe suggests that in the 1920s and 1930s, the unfair trade policies and confrontational diplomacy of America and England pushed Japan into a corner.[2] Japan's wars were, in this view, a legitimate and courageous attempt to free Asia from "Western" imperialist bullying. Watanabe rightly notes that Japan was hardly the only imperialist power in Asia; nor was it the only power to expand its empire in the 20th century. The American seizure of the Philippines, for example, imposed horrific atrocities against the population.[3] Japanese neo-nationalists are rightly frustrated when Japan's colonial conduct is described as uniquely terrible. Watanabe responds, however, by lurching to the other extreme – representing "the West" as brutal

colonizers while portraying Japan as benevolent, just as Tamogami does.

There are many other points in common. In *Tojo Hideki - Rekishi no Shogen* (Tojo Hideki - The Testimony of History), Watanabe raises the "mind control" argument, blaming America for keeping knowledge of the exclusively honorable motives of wartime Japan from the postwar public.[4] Watanabe's *Rekishi no Shinjitsu, Nihon no Kyokun* (The Truth of History, Japan's Lessons) oscillates between demonizing 1930s America and depicting it as having been under the influence of communist spies bent on forcing war in order to destroy Japan's imperial system.[5] In *Kono Kuni no 'Gi' wo Omou* (Consider This Country's Justice), Watanabe claims "That the Tokyo Trials had no basis [in truth] is the accepted view of international society. Japanese! You've got to study more." [6] The findings of the trials are presented as myths one-sidedly pushed on Japan by the United States and more recently, exploited by China and Korea. *Watanabe Shoichi no Jinseikan-Rekishikan wo Takameru Jiten* (Watanabe Shoichi's Dictionary for Raising the Level of Your Views of Life and History) describes pre-war Americans as having viewed Japan as an enemy because they were, "fearful of the successful modern state of a colored race." [7] In context, this is an important point. As John Dower demonstrates in *War without Mercy*, race had a great influence on how the Pacific War was fought, and American wartime behavior was surely influenced by racial attitudes toward "colored" Japan.[8] In Watanabe's

writing, however, the issue of race simply serves to depict Japan as leading a racially united Asia in the struggle against Western imperialism. This ignores Japan's own wartime racism toward conquered peoples, commonly considered to have been a contributing factor behind widespread atrocities against Chinese and others.[9] Far from contextualized criticism, it is actually a self-serving form of forgetting.

There are striking similarities in the ways that Tamogami and Watanabe have responded to criticism. In *Nihonjin no Teki* (Japan's Enemies), Watanabe proudly declares, "I don't care a bit if I'm called 'rightwing'. I'm only saying what is in this country's best interest." [10] Tamogami has taken a virtually identical stance. Since the release of his essay, he has repeatedly lashed out at his critics, accusing them of replicating "North Korean-style" control over free speech.[11] He reiterates that he is only telling the "truth" about what is best for Japan.

Tamogami shows his intellectual debts to Watanabe and others who rank among Japan's most outspoken anti-American authors, viewing the superpower as having victimized Japan in war and held it back in the postwar era. Where exactly are these writers going and how do prominent neo-nationalists imagine the future?

In *Rekisho no Shinjitsu, Nihon no Kyokun*, Watanabe attempts to build a contemporary parallel to the conspiracy theory that it was Soviet spies who

engineered the Pacific War. In this case, Chinese-Americans are the villains. He accuses American politicians beholden to Chinese interest groups of resorting to unfair tactics such as attempting to alter the terms of the San Francisco peace treaty and push for compensation for forced laborers.[12] Watanabe considers this issue to be long settled and sees its current resurgence as part of an "anti-Japanese" campaign. He believes that the first step that the Japanese government should take to secure the country's future position in Asia is to stand up to China and counteract these forces of "anti-Japanese" agitation.[13] Watanabe believes that this cannot be done effectively without constitutional revision - casting off the "peace clause". In *Hannichi wo Kyozeitsu Dekiru Nihon* (Japan Can Wipe Out Anti-Japanism), Watanabe argues that not only should the constitution be remade, but that "The Meiji Constitution should be the foundation for constitutional revision." [14] Even among neo-nationalists, this position is extreme.

Watanabe also wants a nuclear-armed Japan. In *Nihon Kenpo Muko Sengen* (Declaration of the Invalidity of the Japanese Constitution) he writes of the United States, "... if we both have [atomic weapons] we can sit down and speak as equals." [15] Like Tamogami, it is not "security" so much as "voice" that Watanabe is after. He believes that nuclear weapons will create an environment in which Japan can broadcast its "heroic past" internationally, countering Chinese and

Korean narratives while attempting to solidify a larger exclusive economic zone.[16] This is tied up with an array of “victim images”. He says jokingly (but still says), “... Japan has a right to drop two of them (atomic weapons) on America.”[17]

In the 1996 text *Watanabe Shoichi no Jinseikan-Rekishikan wo Takameru Jiten*, Watanabe gave insight into how he imagines the new century playing out: “The 21st century will be Japan’s century. The sun will rise again and shine across the world.”[18] Watanabe holds that Japan’s industrial power, rooted in robot technology and cultural quality, will assure its prosperity and leadership.[19] In this schema, America should simply be used by Japan to counterbalance a rising China. Watanabe shares with a host of other neo-nationalists a view that Japan should be confrontational, putting China and the Koreans in their place in order to protect the “heroic narrative” of the past and assure Japanese leadership in future.

In “Was Japan an Aggressor Nation?”, Tamogami adopts the profoundly anti-American historical view of those like Watanabe who evoke visions of future Japanese hegemony in East Asia. These positions are shared by other major neo-nationalist ideologues, as the following examples reveal.

Prolific journalist Kusaka Kimindo is another figure whose views intersect with those of Watanabe and Tamogami. In *Tatakae, Nihonjin* (Fight, Japan) Kusaka accuses Japanese of being “naive” about war. Europeans and Americans, he

argues, see war in a “businesslike fashion”.[20] They see peace not as an ideal, but as a “break between wars.” This attitude, he opines, originates “in their cultural DNA”.[21] Due to this essential mindset, America has become a “terrorist country”.[22] Japan must go its own way, fighting aggressively in “hidden diplomatic wars” to put a stop to “apology-based foreign relations”.[23] The root idea here, once again, is that Japan, which was “trapped” into war by America and subject to “mind control” in the postwar period, must make its own way by exercising its power in East Asia.

In *Amerika ni Tayoranakutemo Daijobu na Nihon he* (Toward a Japan That Does Not Need to Depend on America) Kusaka calls for an “adult relationship with America.” He sees a nuclear-armed Japan as fundamental to this,

Deciding that ‘Japan is the only country bombed [with atomic weapons] and we have the ‘Three Non-Nuclear Principals’ so it is impossible [to have them ourselves]’ and sitting on our hands is nothing but ignorant laziness that will lead to the fall of our country.[24]

Possession of nuclear weapons would allow Japan to stare down rivals including “China, a country that does not understand what it is to be modern.”[25] These are simplistic arguments, all pointing to brinkmanship, with an assumption that Japan’s moral superiority will see things through.

Ko Bunyū, another leading neo-nationalist

voice, was cited by Tamogami in “Was Japan an Aggressor Nation?”[26] Most of Ko’s writings are strident anti-China attacks, but in *Nihonjin kara Ubawareta Kuni wo Ai suru Kokoro* (The Heart to Love Their Country Was Stolen from the Japanese People) he has harsh words for America.[27] Following the hyperbolic title, he argues that America has robbed Japanese of self-esteem and awareness of their moral and cultural superiority. Any self-reflection or internal critique is seen as a product of the same “mind control” evoked by Tamogami. He argues that “Japan bears no war responsibility” and anyone who says that it was an aggressor is “anti-Japanese” or even an “anti-Japanese Japanese”.[28] He goes on to argue that “Japanese nuclear weapons would contribute to world peace.”[29] He sees a nuclear standoff between Japan and China as desirable. He assumes that weapons would not be used, but rather that confrontation would prevent China from making any aggressive moves.[30] On this level playing field, he believes, the Asian giant’s corrupt culture would bring it down, leaving Japan as the major power in the region. This is the same author who, in *Manga Chūgoku Nyūmon* (Manga Introduction to China), described China as “A horrifying country with a cannibalistic culture”.[31]

Ko also believes that the peace constitution was something forced on Japan by America and that it should be immediately discarded. Despite all of these claims, however, he wants America as a partner of Japan, just one that can be manipulated into supporting a regional

power play, a backup in brinksmanship games. Not all neo-nationalists reject the Japanese-American alliance. It is most often conceptually pushed, however, into anti-China, anti-Korea polemics. While Tamogami is not always as explicit as others, his sources place him in some very dangerous company.

Appendix Notes

[1] There are indications that the contest was rigged from the beginning. This issue has been followed in detail by Roy Berman on the blog “[Mutantfrog Travelogue](#)”. Berman has also looked in depth at Tamogami’s connections with an array of political and business figures.

[2] Watanabe Shoichi, *Showashi*, Tokyo: Bijinesu-sha, 2005.

[3] Mass killings of Filipino civilians have even been described as genocide; see E. San Juan, Jr., “[We Charge Genocide: A Brief History of the US in the Philippines](#)” in *Political Affairs Magazine*.

[4] Watanabe Shoichi, *Tojo Hideki - Rekishi no Shogen*, Tokyo: Yodensha, 2006.

[5] Watanabe Shoichi, *Rekishi no Shinjitsu, Nihon no Kyokun*, Tokyo: Chichi Shuppan-sha, 2005.

[6] Watanabe Shoichi, *Kono Kuni no ‘Gi’ wo Omou*, Tokyo: Chichi Shuppan-sha, 2006, p. 211.

[7] Watanabe Shoichi, *Watanabe Shoichi no Jinseikan-Rekishikan wo Takameru Jiten*, Tokyo: PHP, 1996, p. 248.

- [8] John Dower, *War without Mercy*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1986.
- [9] For example, see Ienaga Saburo, *Senso Sekinin*, Iwanami Shoten, 1985.
- [10] Watanabe Shoichi and Terry Itoh, *Nihonjin no Teki*, Tokyo: PHP, 1999, p. 104.
- [11] [“Kita Chosen to Onaji”](#), *Sankei News*, November 3, 2008.
- [12] Watanabe Shoichi, *Rekishi no Shinjitsu*, pp. 46-47.
- [13] *Ibid.*
- [14] Watanabe Shoichi, *Hannichi wo Kyozeitsu Dekiru Nihon*, Tokyo: Tokuma Shoten, 2006, p. 107.
- [15] Watanabe Shoichi and Minamide Kikuji, *Nihon Kenpo Muko Sengen*, Tokyo: Business-sha, 2007.
- [16] *Ibid.*, pp. 151-155.
- [17] *Ibid.*, p. 147.
- [18] Watanabe Shoichi, *Watanabe Shoichi no Jinseikan*, p. 244.
- [19] *Ibid.*, p. 244-250.
- [20] Kusaka Kimindo, *Tatakae, Nihonjin*, Tokyo: Shūeisha International, 2005, p. 14.
- [21] *Ibid.*, p. 15.
- [22] *Ibid.*, p. 167.
- [23] *Ibid.*, p. 31.
- [24] Kusaka Kimindo, *Amerika ni Tayoranakutemo Daijobu no Nihon*, Tokyo: PHP, 2006.
- [25] *Ibid.*, p. 184.
- [26] Tamogami, “Was Japan an Aggressor Nation?”, p. 1.
- [27] Ko Bunyū, *Nihonjin kara Ubawareta Kuni wo Ai suru Kokoro*, Tokyo: Tokuma Shoten, 2005.
- [28] *Ibid.*, p. 55, 65.
- [29] *Ibid.*, p. 151.
- [30] *Ibid.*, pp. 151-155.
- [31] Ko Bunyu, et al., *Manga Chugoku Nyumon*, Tokyo, Asuka Shinsha, 2005, p. 164.