

Body & Society

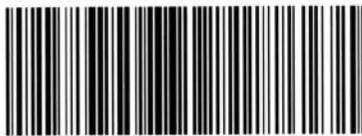
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Japan's First Cyborg? Miss Nippon, Eugenics and Wartime Technologies of Beauty, Body and Blood

JENNIFER ROBERTSON

Our generation is the first to begin to reconcile itself to the machine; to perceive it as containing not utility but beauty. (Jünger, 1929: 81)

On 20 January 1931, a notice appeared in the *Asahi Shinbun*, a national daily newspaper, announcing the first 'official' Miss Nippon (*misu nippon*) beauty contest. All Japanese girls and women over the age of 15 were eligible except 'girls whose professions depend on their figures' ('Miss Nippon', 1931: 71). The contestants had to be rank amateurs – geishas, actresses and dancers whose beautiful bodies were commodified, were not eligible. The deadline for entries was 31 March, by which time 1000 young women had registered to compete in the grandiose event.

The semi-finalists in the Miss Nippon competition were introduced in the June issue of *Weekly Asahi* (*Shûkan Asahi*) as 'one hundred beautiful soldiers' marching to the 'battle front in high spirits', whose 'victory march' will usher in 'new ideas and new sensations' to 'revive our [national] spirit and to soothe our nerves' ('Hyaku bijin kôshinkyoku', 1931: 16). The metaphoric language of the announcement alluded to the dented spirit and jangled nerves of the Japanese body politic in the wake of the global economic crisis. More direct language was used to link the Miss Nippon contest to the powerfully influential eugenics and race hygiene movements that were established at the turn of the century. The 1931 contest was different from earlier beauty contests, most of which involved patrons ranking their favorite geisha, and none of which claimed to represent the

modern nation-state. All of the finalists and semi-finalists in the Miss Nippon contest were regarded as unprecedented exemplars of the modern eugenic nation.

The defeat by imperial sympathizers of the 250-year military rule of the Tokugawa shogunate enabled the restoration of the Meiji emperor in 1867 to a ruling position within a parliamentary system. An imperial policy of elective and controlled Westernization was introduced together with unprecedented social reforms. These included the introduction of universal conscription for males, the joint institutionalization in the Civil Code of monogamy and the patriarchal household (which was designated the smallest legal unit of society), and the invention of the Good Wife, Wise Mother (*ryōsai kenbo*) gender role, which remains firmly entrenched as the status quo. Collectively, these reforms formed the socio-cultural core of the dominant discourse of eugenics and race hygiene during the wartime period, one popular expression of which was the Miss Nippon contest.

The Miss Nippon contest coincided with an attempted military coup d'état in March 1931 in the name of domestic reform, and it presaged the Japanese invasion of Manchuria three months later in September, effectively marking the beginning of the Second World War for Japan and galvanizing the overt militarization of Japanese society.¹ It also coincided with the rising popularity of robots, in consumer and industrial culture alike.² Several months before the Miss Nippon contest, the Matsuya department store in Tokyo exhibited a 'mechanical human' (*jinzō ningen*) whose notoriety was stoked by countless cartoons and articles in the mass media on the place of robots in human society (e.g. 'Jinzō ningen no shinka', 1931; Nakamura, 1931; 'Saishin kagakukai no kyōi', 1931). Miss Nippon herself, as I argue, was a concept and an entity whose existence was made possible by the confluence of science, technology and nationalist ideology. She signified the aestheticization of the erosion of a boundary between human and machine, a boundary that had begun to blur with the relentless pace of Japan's industrial revolution. As I will show, she was an icon inscribed with the utopian hopes for and scenarios of a eugenic nation – a technology-dependent figure who was both the subject and object of the 'new and mechanized mode of vision' (Biro, 1994: 73) adopted by the imperial state.

As will become clear, the contest itself was a product of and metaphor for military and colonialist projects. From the outset, the state aimed to establish a strong central army and fundamental social institutions in order to maintain its own power as well as for protection against any imperialist moves by Europeans and Americans. Beginning with the colonization of Okinawa in 1874, by 1942 the state had consolidated through military force a vast Asian-Pacific domain, the so-called Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (*daitōa kyōeiken*), a rubric coined two years earlier in August 1940. New Japan (*shin'nippon*) was the name

for a defiant Imperial Japan, eager to spearhead the 'liberation' of Asia from the yoke of European and American colonialism. On the one hand, New Japan was an imagined community constructed from select artifacts of Euro-American material cultures, a nation whose new Western inflections would, theoretically, allow it to withstand the encroachments of European and American powers. On the other hand, New Japan was both the legacy of and repository for the products of Asia's ancient cultural histories, and assumed the task of salvaging Asia for the Asians – a task that actually proved to be a burden borne by Asian and Pacific peoples under a Japanese military colonial administration. New Japan was thus distinguished by its cultural hybridity, and the country possessed the ambiguous status of anti-colonial colonizer. My primary focus in this article, however, is on Japanese internal colonialism, that is, on the means by which the imperialist state claimed and indoctrinated its own people. I shall argue that the Miss Nippon beauty contest was much more significant in this regard than one might first assume. My argument pivots on an exploration of three interrelated subjects common to the colonial project as framed by the contest: blood, body and beauty.

Blood

Blood (*chi*, *ketsu*) began to be invoked by the mid-19th century in Japan as a metaphor for both hereditary material and racial essence. Equated in earlier centuries with death and symbolic pollution, blood acquired a positive metaphorical meaning of life force and lineage, and the terms 'blood relationship' (*ketsuen*), 'blood line' (*kettô*) and 'blood relatives' (*ketsuzoku*) appeared in a wide range of literary sources (Nishida, 1995: 65, 76). These new ideas about blood drew from a shifting bricolage of Lamarckism, Darwinism, Social Darwinism and Mendelian precepts, and from novel hypotheses about the connection between blood-type, race and temperament, which, in Japan, were blended with vestigial Confucian notions of social hierarchy and perduring Shinto ideas about purity and pollution.

Eugenics, in the sense of selective breeding, was hardly a new concept in fin-de-siècle Japan, where, both historically and mytho-historically, as well as across classes and statuses of people, the maintenance of genealogical integrity was a key strategy of household (*ie*) succession. Integrity in this context was understood not as a matter of blood qua shared heredity, but as the successful augmentation or replacement of household members from one generation to the next through strategic marriages and adoptions. With eugenics was introduced a new national premium on 'wholesome' (*kenzen*) heredity as a necessary condition of race improvement.

Eugenics, a term coined by Francis Galton in 1883, was translated into Japanese as both the romanized *yuzenikkusu* and the neologism *yūseigaku*, or science of superior birth. These terms were most often used synonymously with 'race improvement' (*minzoku/jinshu kairyō/kaizen*) and 'race hygiene' (*minzoku/jinshu eisei*).³ *Minzoku* and *jinshu*, the two Japanese words for race, for the most part were used interchangeably, although *jinshu* remains the more clinical, social-scientific term (cf. the German term *Rasse*) and *minzoku* the more popular and populist term (cf. *Volk*). During the wartime period in particular, the nuances differentiating these terms were blended in the concept of an organic, national body politic, the *kokutai*, the Japanese equivalent of the German *Volkskörper*.⁴

Although I have no room to elaborate here, it is important to understand that the eugenics movements in Japan and elsewhere in the world were interconnected, as evidenced in part by the inauguration of the International Eugenics Congress in July 1912. Japanese scholars studied eugenics and race hygiene in Europe, and key European texts were either translated into Japanese soon after their publication and/or reviewed in Japanese science journals. Similarly, the initiatives of Japanese hygienists and eugenicists were reported on in key European journals.⁵ German scholars played an especially important role in shaping the Japanese discourse of eugenics. Erwin von Baelz, for example, was a medical doctor who spent 30 years (1876–1906) in Japan, studying Japanese racial origins. He contributed to the prevailing view among Japanese ethnologists that the Japanese or 'Yamato race' was basically a 'stem race'. (Yamato was an ancient and, by Baelz's time, nationalistic name for Japan.) This view held that the so-called Yamato race, associated with the Imperial Household and its allegedly unbroken lineage stretching back over 2500 years, conquered and subjugated the different racial groups coexisting on the islands during prehistoric times, assimilating them selectively and slowly so that purity of 'Yamato blood' was never compromised. According to the stem-race hypothesis, all traces of these diverse prehistoric blood groups disappeared over the course of centuries, so that the multiracial prehistory of Japan did not interfere with the nationalist ideology of a monoracial Japanese culture.

One of the earliest treatises on eugenics in Japan was a controversial book published in 1884 by the journalist Takahashi Yoshio titled, *A Treatise on the Improvement of the Japanese Race* (*nippon jinshu kairyōron*). A protégé of the celebrated Europhiles and educators, Fukuzawa Yûkichi and Mori Arinori, Takahashi benefitted from his two mentors' public support of his radical treatise. He argued that Japan was undergoing a transition from a 'semi-civilized' to a 'civilized' status represented by northern European countries, and that transition

could be expedited through the marriage of Japanese males and Anglo females, or, as he phrased it, the 'mixed-marriage of yellows and whites' (*kôbaku zakkon*). Obviously, in this context marriage meant procreation. Mixed-blood marriages, Takahashi hypothesized, would create a 'physically superior and beautiful Japanese race, thereby making it possible for the Japanese to compete successfully with Europeans and Americans in international affairs'. He was especially keen on increasing the size of individual Japanese, who, he estimated, were at least ten centimeters shorter than 'white people' (*bakujin*). Interbreeding yellows and whites would be instrumental in creating a 'race of taller Japanese' (Takahashi, quoted in Fujino, 1998: 381, 385; see also Suzuki, 1983: 34, 39). Generally speaking, height and weight were central concerns in the discourse of eugenics in Japan.

Takahashi advocated what I shall call the 'mixed-blood' (*konketsu*) position in the discourse of Japanese eugenics. It is one of two essentially incommensurable ideological positions, the other being the 'pure-blood' (*junketsu*) position, which quickly emerged as the dominant one. Advocates of both positions acknowledged the mixed-blood origins – that is, the Yamato stem-race theory – of the Japanese people. Although some pure-blood ideologues initially supported the idea of Japanese marrying Koreans and Chinese as one facet of assimilation qua Japanization, most withdrew their support fearing the dilution and vitiation of the Japanese race. Moreover, new encounters with the manifold ethnic populations of Southeast Asia and the Pacific during Japan's southward advance (*nanshin*) further reinforced the pure-blood position among eugenicists and colonial policy makers. These positions continue to shape public discourse on family and race in Japan today, as is evident in the polarized debates about so-called international marriages.

The mixed-blood position was given a different spin by the eugenicist Ijichi Susumu decades later in 1939, when Japanese empire-building was proceeding full tilt. Ijichi advocated the intermarriage of Japanese males and select Manchurian females, arguing that 'mixing superior Japanese blood with inferior Manchurian blood' was ultimately good for Manchuria. 'Racial blood transfusion' (*minzoku yûketsu*) was the name he gave to his eugenics-informed proposal. Ijichi argued that Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5) had clinched the country's transition to a civilized status and called for the recognition of the superiority of Japanese blood, which was now capable of 'stimulating the development and civilization of inferior peoples by producing offspring who will mature as natural political leaders' (Ijichi, 1939: 82–8). Whereas Takahashi, claimed that the blood, or 'germ plasm', of *Anglo females* would improve the Japanese race, Ijichi declared that the blood of *Japanese males* would jump-start Manchuria's civilizing process, provided the recipients were superior females.

Although the mixed-blood position was marginalized in the discourse of eugenics, the connection made by both Takahashi and Ijichi between a superior *female* body and race improvement was echoed in the pure-blood position, accounting for the central focus in the Japanese eugenics movement on the hygiene and health of girls and women.

Opposition to Takahashi's proposal for race improvement was swift and clamorous. One of the most outspoken of Takahashi's critics was Katô Hiroyuki, a philosopher of Natural Law, imperial adviser and chancellor of Tokyo University, and an influential advocate of the pure-blood position. Katô's scathing criticism of the mixed-marriage plan was published in 1886 in the press and mainstream periodicals, both of which were regularly filled with articles and opinion polls on eugenics and hygiene. To summarize, Katô first of all objected to Takahashi's notion that the Japanese were less civilized than Europeans.⁶ Second, he argued that interbreeding 'yellows' and 'whites' would create a completely new hybrid category of person whose political and social status would be unclear and perplexing. Miscegenation, Katô concluded, would result in racial *transformation* and not in racial *improvement*, and would, over the course of several generations, seriously dilute the pure blood – or racial essence – of the Japanese.⁷ He elaborated that subsequent interbreeding between mixed-blood offspring and whites would, by the eighth generation, result in an offspring whose portion of Japanese blood would amount to only 1/128th of the total (Fujino, 1998: 385; Suzuki, 1983: 36–7). Japanese society would, in short, become dangerously differentiated and blood anarchy would prevail. For Katô, a eugenics policy premised on the pure-blood position was the key to maintaining Japan's distinctive culture and social system, a point drummed home to the public in the many hygiene and eugenics exhibitions organized throughout Japan in the early 20th century by the Red Cross, the private sector and, later, the Welfare Ministry, established in 1938 (see Tanaka, 1994).

Nevertheless, by the 1930s, the offspring of Japanese (males) and non-Japanese (females) were evident throughout Southeast Asia – and were especially numerous in the Philippines, much to the consternation of state ideologues like Tôgô Minoru. Tôgô was a bureaucrat, politician and theorist of colonialism whose argument for preserving the pure blood of the Japanese formed the eugenic core of state policy on assimilation, contrary to Ijichi's dreams of sharing the 'superior blood' of Japanese males with the 'inferior blood' of select Manchurian females. Sharing Katô's worries about the detrimental effects of thinning the pure blood of the Japanese through miscegenation, Tôgô pointed to Latin America as, in his view, a case study of the 'degenerative consequences of racial hybridization'. He also emphasized the crucial role of physically fit females in ensuring the

success of the eugenics movement, declaring that the health of girls and women had been woefully neglected during the feudal and xenophobic Tokugawa period (1603–1867). In seeking to reduce the number of mixed-blood offspring in Greater East Asia, Tôgô advocated recruiting and training healthy unmarried Japanese women (between the ages of 17 and 25) to immigrate to the colonies where they could marry their male counterparts (Tôgô, 1945). In the 1930s, males outnumbered females by ratios ranging from 3: 1 in China and Manchuria (with a population of 308,000 Japanese), and 9: 1 in Southeast Asia and the Pacific (where 309,000 Japanese lived) (Young, 1998: 314–15). Recognizing the problems posed by the uneven immigration of Japanese males and females, the Colonization Ministry (Kaitakushô) opened, in 1939, offices in each of the 46 prefectures for the recruitment and indoctrination of ‘pioneer brides’ (*kaitaku hanayome*) and ‘continental brides’ (*tairiku hanayome*), as female settlers were called. Theoretically, the immigration of Japanese females to the colonies would have the dual benefit of greatly reducing unsanctioned sexual relations between Japanese males and non-Japanese females, and of ensuring that the superior blood of the Japanese race would be planted and harvested in the soil of the new imperium (Dower, 1986: 274; Tôgô, 1945).⁸

Body

Fujikawa Yû, an internist and medical historian, was among the dozens of Japanese medical students who studied in Germany at the turn of the century and who were keen on applying European ideas about eugenics and race hygiene to the general project of ‘improving the Japanese race’.⁹ In 1905, Fujikawa published the quasi-scholarly journal *Jinsei* (*Human Life*), which was subtitled, in German, *Der Mensch* (The Human) (Figure 1). *Jinsei* was modeled after German eugenicist Alfred Ploetz’s *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschafts-Biologie* (*Journal for Racial and Social Biology*) founded a year earlier.¹⁰ The contents were divided into 16 categories, including biology, social anthropology, social hygiene, religion and statistics, among others.¹¹ According to the ‘mission statement’ included as part of the Wagnerian design of the cover, *Jinsei* was devoted to studying and improving the ‘social and spiritual life of humans’. The journal’s professed objective was to become ‘the best academic journal in Japan’. Articles by an international array of scholars interested in these same issues were translated into Japanese and included in each issue, along with reviews and synopses of books and articles on race science as a form of social medicine and public policy. *Jinsei* soon became a major vehicle for publicizing and popularizing domestic and foreign eugenic ideas and programs in Japan (Suzuki, 1983: 60). My perusal of all of the issues revealed



Figure 1 The cover of *Jinsei* alludes to the journal's international content and imperialist message. On either side of the rectangle containing the journal's preamble are drawings of emblems of war (shield, horn) and emblems of the arts (palette, brushes, scrolls); Baldur, the German mythological god of war, and Apollo are astride two pedestals that frame a large globe displaying the Pacific Rim region, an area Japan would dominate by 1942. A radiant sun rises behind the globe to shine on the future empire. (Photograph by author from *Jinsei* 3[7], 1905)

that *Jinsei* was also a forum in which an international debate about the pros and cons of miscegenation was conducted. Some of the articles claimed that mixed-blood females were more beautiful than their pure-blood counterparts; others argued just the opposite.

Following Fujikawa's example, other Japanese eugenicists took their German-inspired programs directly to the public. For example, Ikeda Shigenori founded the Legs Society (*ashi no kai*) in 1925 as the centerpiece of his Japanese Eugenic Exercise Association (*nippon yūseiundō kyōkai*), formally established a year later. Ikeda had lived in Germany for five years between 1919 and 1924, and earned doctorates in eugenics and women's history. He founded the Legs Society as the Japanese version of *Wandervogel*, the popular name for a German youth movement that focused on physical and spiritual training as a way to reinvigorate a society perceived to be corrupted by urban modernity.¹² For Ikeda, *Wandervogel*-like activities, such as outdoor folk dancing and group camping, were key to the revival of Japan's 'national and racial essence' (*minzokukon*), and he crisscrossed the country promoting his brand of positive eugenics (Fujino, 1998: 84–7).¹³ The Legs Society capitalized on the growing interest in Japan in the eugenic and social engineering potential of mass calisthenics and group sports through which individual bodies could be programmed to function with machine-like precision as a corporate unit. Ikeda was particularly concerned about the health and physical fitness of Japanese girls and women, and the Legs Society included female members from the start, unlike its German counterpart.

Universal conscription, introduced in 1873, was the primary means by which males were introduced to hygiene, physical education and corporate body-building regimens. Years later, the Education Ministry made exercise and sports part of the mandatory curriculum for girls' schools as a means of forging healthy bodies, the rationale being that bigger and stronger females produced more and sturdier babies (Yokoyama, 1994: 63). There were, of course, critics who argued that sports 'fostered [in girls and women] a spirit of opposition to males' and 'compromised their traditional femininity' (Sugita, 1935: 277), but such voices were a distinct minority in a rhetorical climate favoring eugenics and social hygiene.

Because females serve literally as the biological reproducers of the national people, in many respects they are even more rigorously implicated than males, both sexually and culturally, within the discourses and institutions of race hygiene and improvement (McClintock, 1994: 241). Despite their symbolic investment and active participation in propagating the nation, Japanese females were not recognized by state ideologues as direct political agents or equal citizens. In spite of Ikeda's publications on the women's movement (e.g. Ikeda, 1926) and the

suffragist movement's highly visible mass media campaign, it remained the case that when women did exercise political agency, the state's response was invariably punitive.¹⁴ However, special attention was paid by eugenicists to the improvement of female bodies, which were evaluated and measured according to the new standard of 'healthy-body beauty' (*kenkôbi*), on which I elaborate below.

Generally speaking, the pronatalist state encouraged the improvement of the conditions surrounding female reproductivity (or positive eugenics) instead of advocating sterilization (or negative eugenics) as a way to reduce the reproduction of the unfit. In Japan, the militarily strategic need to raise the population by one-third in 20 years, from 73 million to 100 million persons, together with an emphasis on bigger, taller bodies over intellectual ability, effectively diminished support for sterilization as a eugenic strategy (Suzuki, 1983: 162–3; Takagi, 1993: 46).¹⁵ The Welfare Ministry inaugurated a 'propagate and multiply movement' (*umeyo fuyaseyo undô*), which included the staging of healthy-baby contests throughout the country. At the same time, the official age of marriage was lowered by three years (to the high teens), and soldiers were granted furloughs for the purposes of marrying or having procreative sex with their wives. For the vast majority of married women, sex was a purely procreative act, since the pronatal government prohibited all forms of birth control, including induced abortions (Dower, 1986: 358 n18; Takagi, 1993: 47). Especially fertile mothers were eulogized in the mass media as comprising a 'fertile womb battalion' (*kodakara butai*). The Welfare Ministry organized awards ceremonies, many of which were staged at department stores, where such mothers, babies in tow, were presented with certificates honoring their reproductive success.

As a means of accelerating the pace of reproduction, from 1933 onward, local governments opened marriage counseling and brokering centers where sexological and eugenic information and advice were dispensed to the mainly female clients. They were following the example set by Ikeda Shigenori six years earlier in 1927, when he opened a eugenic-marriage counseling clinic in Tokyo under the auspices of his Japanese Eugenic Exercise Association. Others followed suit, and a number of urban clinics were opened in department stores to make visits more convenient for their mostly female clientele. The director of one of the government clinics pointed out that increasing the population hinged not on prolific reproduction alone, but on the 'propagation and multiplication of excellent offspring' (*yoiko o umeyo, fuyaseyo*). Established to exert some measure of quality control over the project of increasing the population, the eugenic-marriage clinics were also designed to relieve family members of the responsibility of arranging marriages, as they were likely to include blood relatives among the suitable candidates. 'Thus', the director explained, 'the first order of business is for people to

marry a spouse selected on the basis of citizens' eugenics (*kokumin yūsei*) and thereby help to raise the caliber of the Japanese race' (Okada, 1933; Yasui, 1940a, 1940b; see also Frühstück, 2000).¹⁶ But, as one proponent of the minority mixed-blood position admonished, 'If we are not going to encourage the eugenic interbreeding of Japanese [males] and white [females] to produce mixed-blood children who will become the foundation of race improvement, then we must find instead Japanese females who have the ideal bodily proportions' (Negishi, 1931: 58). Enter, Miss Nippon.

Beauty

While *married* women were being prevailed upon to use their reproductive capabilities in the service of the state, beautiful and healthy *unmarried* women were being tracked down by entrepreneurs who, in collusion with the state, planned to promote them as eugenically superior females and future Good Wives, Wise Mothers. A nationwide beauty contest would both locate such women and help to promote the government's efforts to cultivate bigger and stronger females who embodied a healthy-body beauty.

The public relations announcement I quoted at the beginning of this paper about 'one hundred beautiful soldiers marching to the battle front', belies the fact that no actual female bodies were on display at the Miss Nippon contest: only photographs of female bodies were available for scrutiny, and *amateur* photographs at that. The only time the contestants appeared in the flesh was at the showy awards ceremony staged at the Takashimaya department store in Tokyo (Figure 2).¹⁷ Why photographs? According to press reports, both the contest's organizers and the contestants' parents felt that inviting the young women to parade in front of an audience of strangers would compromise their chaste reputations and, consequently, their marriageability. After all, it was their chastity together with their bodily measurements, detailed below, that qualified them as contestants and eugenically superior marriage partners in the first place. Although amateurs, the Miss Nippon semi-finalists were all members of affluent households and graduates of higher girls' schools who were expected to fulfil the normative female and feminine role of Good Wife, Wise Mother ('Miss Nippon', 1931). Not to be forgotten is that, instead of entering the Miss Nippon contest, many daughters of impoverished farm families were sold to factories and houses of prostitution.

Another answer to the question, why photographs?, is related to the development of photography in Japan and to the fusion, by the 1930s, of its commercial and documentary functions. Even a quick perusal of the popular print media



Figure 2 Miss Nippon 1931 (top left) with her awards, including a portrait of her in oil paint by the Western-style oil painter, Wada Sanzô. (Photo by author from 'Misu Nippon', 1931: 5)

confirms that, by the 1930s, photography had become the dominant mode of pictorial representation in Japan, and was eagerly adopted by advertisers keen on promoting the modern spectacle of consumption. Each major department store had its own weekly or monthly public relations magazine filled with photographs of modern commodities, often in the form of photomontage. It is widely acknowledged among art historians that the new medium of photomontage – a mechanically achieved superimposition or concatenation of fragments of photographic images – epitomized the modern *zeitgeist*. 'Beauty' was quickly appropriated as a subject and strategy of photomontage by advertisers, a point made rather literally in the Lait Cream advertisement in Figure 3.

Photographs of all of the Miss Nippon contestants were exhibited in rows in the Takashimaya gallery, effectively creating a linear montage, a series of juxtapositions that provided spectators with a comprehensive vision of modern, feminine healthy-body beauty. By the time of the Miss Nippon contest there was already a close connection between amateur photography and what might be called 'pictures of beautiful, ordinary women'. These were related to but separate from the professional photographs of professional beauties – namely, geisha and actresses – that embellished advertising copy. Photographs of girls and women were recognized as a modern genre: the camera offered an unprecedented opportunity for advertisers and ideologues alike to create a New Woman of and for New Japan whose generic features, along with her generic needs, desires and aspirations, could be standardized (Nihon Shashinka Kyôkai, 1978: 417–18, 496–7).¹⁸

How did the Miss Nippon judges measure the modern value of healthy-body beauty on the basis of black-and-white amateur photographs? According to the rules, contestants were to include in their application file a full face, a profile and a full body photograph *taken on the same day*, ostensibly to ensure the objective accuracy of the image, although many files were incomplete. It was surmised that the limited technical skills of the amateur photographers would either curtail or make obvious any attempt on their part to enhance a candidate's healthy-body beauty through special effects. Thus, amateur photographs in particular would, theoretically, enable the judges to assess the beauty and character of their disembodied subjects. They were perceived as 'stilled lives' for, as one judge commented, 'evaluating a black-and-white photograph is like staring at a corpse' ('Misu Nippon o erande', 1931: 10).¹⁹ Consequently, the candidates' photographs were necessarily colored and animated by the judges' imaginations. One, a literature professor, enlivened the monochrome figures by linking them to women protagonists in Japanese fiction. Another was influenced by the resemblance of the contestants to women he knew ('Misu Nippon ni eikô are', 1931: 8; 'Misu



Figure 3 'First Lesson of Beautifying'. A Lait Cream advertisement stressing that 'beauty lies in the skin' and that the lotion would produce a 'smart modern beauty'. (Photograph by author from 'Rêto kurému' 1932: 7)

Nippon o erande', 1931: 11). The judges' need to read the photographs through a comparative lens suggests that they drew a distinction between the artistic and scientific uses of photography, a distinction that also fueled popular debates about the camera and its applications in a period of urban consumerism paired with wartime mobilization (cf. Thomas, 1998).

In the eyes of the judges, the pictures simply did not measure up to their supposed usefulness as artfully nuanced substitutes for the flesh and blood contestants. The 'preternaturally observant lens eye' was 'brilliant at registering the details of phenomena' (Haworth-Booth, 1997: 35), which formed the basis for new kinds of knowledge and, by association, new kinds of social control through photographic surveillance. What the Miss Nippon photographs *did* do, in other words, coincided with the eugenic motives of the beauty contest and underscored the state's increasing emphasis on scientific mindedness as the most appropriate attitude for the citizens of New Japan. The hundreds of amateur photographs of 'authentic, ordinary Japanese beauties' submitted to the contest proved the existence and recorded the circumstances of actual females whose bodies fit certain eugenic criteria and the new standards of hygienic, healthy-body beauty. It does not seem too far-fetched to imagine that the contestants' photographs were put to use in eugenic-marriage counseling clinics to serve as a standard of modern beauty and possibly as eligible brides.

All the judges in the 1931 contest were middle-aged or elderly Japanese males, with the exception of one tall Briton, Glenn Shaw. Shaw was selected on the assumption that, as a foreigner, he lacked both a native sentiment (*kanjō*) and an appreciation of Japanese traditions, and therefore would provide a more objective perspective to the business of judging ('Misu Nippon ni eikō are', 1931: 8).²⁰ Among the occupations held by the Japanese judges were physician, girls' school principal, literature professor, photographer, sculptor and painter. The artists were solicited specifically on the basis of their refined aesthetic sensibility, for the contest's organizers were keen on emphasizing the serious if popular, nature of the event. The two painters, for example, were acclaimed for their 'paintings of beautiful women' (*bijinga*), although their painterly representations of females belonged to a discourse of femininity and gender ideology only tangentially related to the eugenically-informed criteria of the Miss Nippon contest. Wada Sanzō specialized in Western-style (*yōga*) oil painting and Tsuchida Bakusen in Japanese-style (*nihonga*) mixed-media painting – the former's oil portrait of the winner was among her first-place prizes (see Figure 2). Juxtaposed, their specialties reflected the culturally and institutionally hybrid character of New Japan. Similarly, the juxtaposition of *painted* portraiture and *photographic* portraiture alluded to an intersection and synthesis in the figure of Miss Nippon, of art and

science, biology and bionics, the organic and the technological, a point to which I shall return.²¹

Aside from their personal imaginings, the judges also evaluated the amateur photographs of the Miss Nippon contestants comparatively on the basis of three aspects: (1) purity of spirit and blood; (2) the symmetry of the woman's 'facial furniture' (*kao no dôgu*), that is, the hair, eyebrows, eyes, nose and mouth; and (3) healthy-body beauty, which, along with various eugenic criteria, implied a body that met the classical Greek standards of shape and proportion, namely, seven-and-a-half to eight heads in height. Such a body was referred to in Japanese as *hattôshin bijin*, or 'eight-head-body beauty' (Negishi, 1931: 58).²² According to interviews published in *Weekly Asahi*, the judges were acutely conscious of their main task, which was to sort through the nearly 3000 photographs and 'select an image of New Japan suitable for the masses'. Implicitly recognizing that the body is a central symbolic resource of and for a national culture, they described the contest as 'culture work' (*bunka jigyô*) ('Misu Nippon ni eikô are', 1931: 8; 'Misu Nippon o erande', 1931: 10–11).

The winner was 23-year-old Tawara Tsuneko, from an affluent household in Yamaguchi prefecture. Her father was a physician and was likely appreciative of state efforts to promote an awareness of hygiene. My extensive survey of the contemporary mass media suggests that the only time Tawara appeared in person was at the awards ceremony. Although she herself embodied the criteria of the New Woman of New Japan, it was her body's measurements that, when photographically fixed, provided a standardized model for the New Woman of New Japan. Proceeding from the premise that national symbols should not be susceptible to significant transformations or alterations, Tawara/Miss Nippon's 'bright (*meirô*) modern'²³ features were eulogized and preserved photographically. It was as a photographic icon – a disembodied body, as it were – that Miss Nippon was both idealized and generalized as the New Woman of New Japan, and as the image of New Japan itself. Photographically reified, her symbolic properties immune from the vagaries and mortality of her human referent, Miss Nippon was at once a timely and timeless image of a eugenically superior national body.

It is worth mentioning here that the only feminine allegorical image of the Japanese nation prior to the investiture of Miss Nippon contest was one of Amaterasu Ômikami (the Shinto sun goddess and originary ancestor of the Imperial Household) (Figure 4). As shown in Figure 4, political cartoonist Kitazawa Rakuten transformed Amaterasu into the Japanese counterpart of Britannia in order to illustrate British–Japanese amity at the turn of the century. Miss Nippon was arguably the first secular and historical icon to represent the imagined community of Japan.



Figure 4 Amaterasu and Britannia in a 1902 cartoon. (Photograph by author from Itô 1980: 22)

Beauty queens who compete in the flesh have been described as possessing two bodies or maintaining a dual existence, the one represented by their concrete corporeal being, the other by their transcendent and metaphysical ideal being (Marcus, 1992: 297).²⁴ Miss Nippon, I would argue, was only the latter. A synthesis of organic and technological elements, a hybrid construction of materiality and discourse, she was, in a sense, Japan's first cyborg.²⁵ Miss Nippon connects a corporeal body – Tawara's – albeit one frozen in time photographically, with a discursive body made up of eugenic precepts and, as I enumerate below, statistically quantifiable measurements and contours (cf. Balsamo, 1997: 33). She was conceived through the conjugation of (amateur) photography and (popular) eugenics, and emerged from the place where technology impinged on and dictated human life. It was through photography that the Japanese public was presented with, seemingly objective, technological evidence of both the anthropometric progress of the nation and the bright modernity of the *Volkskörper*.

As I suggested earlier, in reference to Figure 3, it was this type of progress that cosmetics companies envisioned their products facilitating. Even Tawara Tsuneko was obliged to apply naturalizing make-up in order to meet the standard of hygienic, healthy-body beauty established by her winning photograph, of which she was now a caretaker. Mass produced commodities were instrumental in Miss Nippon's reification. Club Cosmetics (*kurabu oshiroi*) published two advertisements in May 1932 in the daily newspaper, *Ōsaka Asahi Shinbun*, that illustrate my point, although I shall describe only one of them. The advertisement in Figure 5 features a photograph of Tawara as she appeared at the time of her investiture in one of the professional portrait photographs taken shortly after the awards ceremony. It was presented as a seemingly factual 'photo news' (*fuoto nyūsu*) spot claiming that Tawara used Club cosmetics to achieve an 'ideal feminine beauty' – a modern, natural, healthy-body beauty – represented by Miss Nippon ('Kurabu oshiroi', 1932: 6).

Positioned just above the Miss Nippon advertisement (in Figure 5) is one illustrated with a drawing of an ostensibly African woman with distended lips. African and Amazonian women were regularly depicted in advertisements for Harunâ, a 'nutritional tonic' identified as a 'blood purifier' invented in Europe and adapted to the Japanese diet. The tonic supposedly cured dermatological problems and promoted a smooth, white complexion and the growth of silky black hair. The difference between Miss Nippon and the African woman is implied to be as diametrically opposed as the black and white face in the Harunâ logo ('Iro wa makkuro-suke', 1932: 6). Two years later, another Harunâ advertisement in the same newspaper featured a photograph of a Masai woman along with an explanation that dark skin was a consequence of 'impure blood'. The copy acknowledges culturally specific definitions of 'natural beauty,' but draws Social Darwinian conclusions

「此から心白くなる方法」を以てて
「ドナもハガキ」にて

「此から心白くなる方法」を以てて
「ドナもハガキ」にて

「此から心白くなる方法」を以てて
「ドナもハガキ」にて



「此から心白くなる方法」を以てて
「ドナもハガキ」にて



クラブ白粉

スーユニトオフ

無代進呈
二回入説明書

「此から心白くなる方法」を以てて
「ドナもハガキ」にて

「此から心白くなる方法」を以てて
「ドナもハガキ」にて

性的神経衰弱

「此から心白くなる方法」を以てて
「ドナもハガキ」にて

アラルル香水

「此から心白くなる方法」を以てて
「ドナもハガキ」にて

Figure 5 Miss Nippon 1931 in a Club Cosmetics advertisement above which is one for Harunâ, a 'blood purifying' tonic featuring a representation of an ostensibly African woman. (Photograph by author from *Ôsaka Asahi Shinbun* (1931) 24 May: 6)

about the superiority of Japanese notions of healthy-body beauty and the attractiveness of the white, undamaged skin eulogized in Japanese lore and cosmetics advertisements alike ('Iroguro karanu bijin o motomu', 1934: 5).²⁶

Like the Harunâ advertisements, the 1931 Miss Nippon contest occasioned the conjuring and juxtaposition of racial stereotypes, which were also manipulated in literature on eugenics and in public debates about the consequences of mixed-bloodedness. Since the express purpose of that beauty contest was to select a living, if disembodied, emblem of a purportedly racially homogeneous nation, it may seem odd that the winner and some of the other contestants were likened to foreigners. Number 24, a semi-finalist, was described by one judge as 'a woman with some Spanish blood running through her' (Figure 6). He also claimed that Number 21 'looks Hungarian' (Figure 7). And Tawara Tsuneko, Number 30, the future Miss Nippon herself, was described by the English judge as 'a little Jewish-like – a type of face seen frequently in Japan' (Figures 2 and 5) ('Misu Nippon o erande', 1931: 10–11).²⁷



Figure 6 No. 24, a Miss Nippon semi-finalist described as having 'some Spanish blood running through her'. (Photograph by author from *Shûkan Asahi* 6, 1931: 4)



Figure 7 No. 21, a Miss Nippon semi-finalist described as looking 'Hungarian'. (Photograph by author from *Shūkan Asahi* 6, 1931: 6)

As fanciful as they may seem, these characterizations were actually informed by the popular discourse of eugenics, one aspect of which drew connections between blood, physiognomy and racial temperament. Recall that in Japan at this time, as in Europe and the United States, people of all political persuasions and cultural backgrounds believed in the concept of race as a *general* proposition about human differences and cultural identities. The Vienna-born American anthropologist Reuben Ottenberg proposed in 1922 that the 'races' of the world could be classified into six categories on the basis of the pattern of distribution of the O, A and B blood-types. He grouped the Japanese in the so-called Hunan category, along with the Southern Chinese, Hungarians and the Romanian Jews. No sooner had Ottenberg released his findings than the Japanese social psychologist, Furuhashi Tanemoto, proposed that the category 'Hunan' be relabeled 'Japanese-type' (*Nippongata*). He insisted that the Japanese and central Europeans – minus the Jews – should form one group (Hayashida, 1976: 146–7; Suzuki, 1983: 180).²⁸ Furuhashi's proposal garnered a lot of publicity in Japan but was ignored by Ottenberg. My point here is that the apparently gratuitous characterizations of the Miss Nippon contestants as Spanish, Hungarian and Jewish were actually informed by the competing ideas about blood circulating in the mass media during the 1920s and 1930s.²⁹ Additionally, the characterization of Japanese faces as 'Jewish' had already been ventured at the turn of the century by German (and Jewish German) race scientists, inspired by the legend of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel whose descendants included the Japanese (e.g. Judt, 1903; see also Efron, 1994).

The Miss Nippon candidates may have been described as members of certain racial groups based on patterns of blood-type distribution, but not once was their actual blood-type identified much less ventured as a criterion of hygienic, healthy-body beauty. Although today the pseudo-scientific fiction that the Japanese constitute a 'blood-type A race' is widely invoked in the popular literature, knowledge about specific blood-types – as opposed to notions of pure-bloodedness – was not deployed as a eugenic tool in the early 20th-century discourse of race improvement. Nor were specific blood groups (or races) singled out for elimination in a diabolical scheme to purify the national body (*kokutai*), as was the case in Nazi Germany. The genocidal actions of Japanese Imperial Army and Navy in Asia and the Pacific were horrific, but they were not systematically orchestrated as part of a Final Solution.

The results of the Miss Nippon contestants' medical examinations also influenced the selection process. Although the bodies of the contestants were never on display, their photographs were fleshed out with data gathered during medical screenings and background checks conducted a week before the awards

ceremony. The physician's report for the 23-year-old winner emphasized that she was taller than average and had 'the long legs of a New Woman'. Specifically, she was nearly 159 centimeters in height compared to the average female's 148.5 centimeters, her chest measured 79 centimeters compared to the average female's 74 centimeters and she weighed 52.5 kilograms, compared to the average female's 46.5 kilograms – but, the physician reassured readers, 'she is not at all fat'. He went on to gloat that 'the 1931 Miss Nippon is as big as the average Japanese male was ten years ago'. The obvious subtext was that, in 1931, the average Japanese male was even bigger. The physician also confirmed that Miss Nippon had no 'abnormalities' and that her 'blood was pure'. Moreover, he concluded, 'she's not an old-style Japanese woman, but the embodiment of a healthy Japan' (Ioka, 1931: 13). And, the artist Wada Sanzô further boasted that, 'Miss Nippon is in no way inferior to Miss Europe!' ('Misu Nippon o erande', 1931: 10).³⁰

The *Weekly Asahi* issue on the Miss Nippon contest also included the report of the renowned gynecologist, often referred to in the press as a 'marriage doctor' (*kekkon igaku*), who was charged with examining the ten finalists to confirm their anatomical normality and virginity. He also assessed the reproductive potential of all 100 semi-finalists, and derived great satisfaction in reporting how 'these superior females will give birth to a splendid second generation', one of many such comments which further identified the Miss Nippon contest with eugenic motives ('Konpakuto', 1931: 17).

This 'splendid second generation' was already anticipated: countless illustrated articles were published in the major daily newspapers announcing the definitive emergence of taller and heavier children. One such article appeared just above a story on the Miss Japan finalists from the Osaka area ('Risô no yûryôji', 1931: 11). Invariably, the girls and boys were posed in their underwear – or less – in front of a giant measuring grid that helped to establish visually their ideal, superior physiques. Strings of statistics accompanied such articles to show that by 1931, 12-year-olds were more than 4 centimeters taller than their counterparts 30 years earlier.³¹ These improvements in the 'Japanese race' were attributed in part to mandatory school sports, a diet higher in proteins and fats, the use of chairs (as opposed to floor cushions to be knelt upon), and less restrictive Western-style clothing – all behavioral and lifestyle modifications that the Miss Nippon judges urged the contestants to adopt, if they had not already.

A second and final Miss Nippon contest was held three years later in 1934. With the Berlin Olympics two years away, the 1934 Miss Nippon judges were even more preoccupied with the national objective of increasing the physical strength of Japanese citizens through sports and exercise. The eugenic motives of the contest were made even more evident with the inclusion of Nagai Hisomu as

one of the judges. A German-educated physiologist, advocate of race hygiene and regular contributor to the journal *Jinsei-Der Mensch*, Nagai was a key figure in the eugenics movement and helped to draft the 1941 National Eugenics Law (kokumin yûseihô). Eager to convince the Japanese public of the benefits of both positive and negative eugenics, he founded the Japanese Race Hygiene Society (nippon minzoku eisei gakkai) in 1930. The Society and its monthly journal served to broadcast Nagai's proposals for race improvement, which included marriage and fecundity among so-called superior persons and the segregation and sterilization of so-called abnormal persons, namely, the mentally infirm, physically handicapped and sexually alternative.³²

From among the 3400 photographs submitted – three times more than in the 1931 competition – Nagai and his colleagues singled out as the winner a lissom young woman who had been the captain of her school high school tennis team. Most of the semi-finalists in the 1934 Miss Nippon contest were active sports-women and most were from influential upper-class households. The winner, Gotô Keiko from Fukuoka prefecture, was eulogized as 'a woman of New Japan' (*shin'nippon no josei*) (Figure 8). At 155 centimeters and 48 kilograms, Gotô was sportier but a bit shorter and weighed less than the 1931 Miss Nippon ('Misu Nippon o tou', 1934: 11; 'Miss Nippon', 1934: 124). And, unlike her kimono-clad predecessor, the press displayed Gotô modeling Western-style sportswear as well as a kimono.

Compared to 1931, media coverage of the 1934 Miss Nippon contest was somewhat muted, perhaps in part because the signifier 'Miss Nippon' was no longer novel. In the intervening years it had been appropriated by advertisers as well as by the sponsors of *unofficial* beauty contests, such as the Naked-Body Beauty Miss Nippon (*zen'nikutaibi misu nippon*) photography contest sponsored in July 1932 by the monthly periodical, *Crime Revue* (*Hanzai Kôron*), in which the contestants posed in bathing suits (Akita, 1995: 67).³³ 'Miss Nippon' was also the rubric used to identify Japanese female athletes competing in the Olympic trials of 1932 ('Hare no orinpikku ni kagayaku Misu Nippon', 1932: 7).

Exit Miss Nippon, Enter Japanese Woman

As the military actions following the Manchurian Incident of 1931 escalated into a full-scale war, accompanied by the blatant militarization of Japanese society, the search for a particular female to refresh the photographic icon, Miss Nippon, was replaced by an all-out official effort to construct every ordinary woman in the image of New Japan. So confident was the state in the existence, by the late 1930s, of a critical mass of healthy-body beauties that it published their pictures in



【ミス・ニッポン二態】

(上)ケツトを持って—
(下)トランプ—

またなんにも知らない幸運の麗人 いかにも明らかな「ミス・ニッポン」
 桂子嬢にミス・ニッポン決定の報の「家」といつた感した、さうくば
 告をもちたらずべく、岡山県河川沿 らんにもミス・ニッポンに決定のニ
 ひの後、勝一氏宅(村中木林株式 ニースをお知らせすると
 會社の監督役)を訪うてみると、「まあほんとは——でも、お友
 誼の心(お情)にさんくと仰りそ うちに産しいわ……」
 懐かみの若輩にさんくと仰りそ 恥さや、羞恥や、喜びや
 そく陽ざしの明るさ、燃えるやう いろいろな感情のカクナルみた
 な麗人の 泣いた涙(なみだ)さきは いた微笑(ほほえみ)の聲(こゑ)だつた、お父様の生



Figure 8 Miss Nippon 1934. (Photograph by author from 'Misu Nippon o tou', 1934)

photograph albums distributed as wartime propaganda. These included the book *Photographing Female Beauty* (*Joseibi no Utsushikata*, 1938), *Female Expressions* (*Onna no hyôjô*, 1938) and the Anglophone *Girls of Japan* (1939) which was sent 'into the battle for Western affections' (Japan Photographers Association, 1980: 20).

With the xenophobic state's ban on everyday English loanwords in the fall of 1940, 'Miss Nippon' itself was no longer an acceptable title. Just as the cigarette brand Cherry was changed to Sakura, so Miss Nippon, hitherto a signifier of healthy, modern womanhood, was replaced with the somewhat archaic expression, Japanese Woman (*nippon fujin*).³⁴ It was an overdetermined expression, a model of female being that was less open – especially in the increasingly fascistic climate – to playful, contested or subversive manipulation. The ban on English pointed to the state's increasing fixation on the purity and purification of the body politic. If Miss Nippon had embodied primarily the physical and racial ideal of New Japan, 'Japanese Woman' signified both that *and* the additionally desirable state of mental or spiritual hygiene (*seishin eisei*). She represented a *Volkskörper* cleansed of and immune to polluted and polluting ideas and thoughts. It is not surprising that the referent and target of a spiritual hygiene campaign would be both female and feminine. Until the enfranchisement of women in the postwar constitution, female citizenship in early 20th-century Japan was defined largely in terms of consumerism, and a tenacious connection was established between women and commodity culture (Robertson, 1999, 2001). That in itself was not problematic in wartime Japan, provided that the consumption of commodities was undertaken shrewdly and thriftily. Embarrassing photographs of conspicuous consumers on shopping sprees were published in the newspapers and popular weeklies, and members of patriotic women's associations patrolled city sidewalks holding signs that implored people to refrain from profligate behavior.

The intensified emphasis on mental and spiritual hygiene is vividly illustrated by a cartoon published in *Manga (Cartoon)*, an official humor magazine, in May 1942. The drawing is of a kneeling woman, whose face the artist made to look stereotypically traditional but whose modernity is evinced by her skirt and blouse. Her head is bent as she combs out of her hair the 'dandruff' peculiar to Japanese women and men who have internalized Euro-American values. The loosened flakes are labeled luxury, selfishness, hedonism, individualism, money worship, egotism and Anglo-American thoughts. The caption reads: 'Remove the dandruff sticking to your head', a graphically metaphoric way of ordering citizens to purge Anglo-American ideas and thoughts from their minds (in Dower, 1986: 191). Obviously, spiritual hygiene and thought control were construed as important facets of race hygiene, for like the nation's colonial subjects, ordinary Japanese too had to be physically and mentally colonized and assimilated into the cultural machinery of New Japan: pure blood called for purified thoughts.

The now problematic hybridity of New Japan was premised on a polarized

sexual and gendered division of real and symbolic labor. At first this division was understood rather literally: crew-cut males in suits and military uniforms evinced the nation's modernization and the Meiji state's program of controlled Westernization, while kimono-clad females with chignons represented the longevity and continuity of 'Japanese tradition', itself a product of a willful, modern nostalgia (Robertson, 1991, 1997; see also Vlastos, 1998). By the early 20th century, the growing eugenics movement, together with the military mobilization of the country, left little rhetorical space in which nostalgic inventions of 'traditional femininity' could be publicly indulged.

Instead, the state, seeking to improve the Japanese race, strongly encouraged – even mandated – girls and women to keep their hair shorter (but not bobbed) rather than longer, to wear comfortably fitting Western-style clothes, including trousers, and to strengthen and fortify their bodies through outdoor sports, a Western-style diet and vitamin supplements. Such social hygienic practices were partly responsible for the discovery, under the auspices of the Miss Nippon contests, of taller and heavier females. The Miss Nippon contests and other events and exhibitions devoted to popularizing a modern, scientific attitude toward health and hygiene, collectively constituted a sustained critique of traditional notions of bodily aesthetics, diet and gender roles and their substitution with new, eugenically informed technologies of the body.

The replacement of Miss Nippon with Japanese Woman was not, as it might first appear to be, an anti-modernist capitulation to the traditional femininity represented by kimono-clad females with chignons. Rather, the recuperated Japanese Woman signified the *very modernity of Japanese females* and, by association, the very modernity of New Japan. An article in *Djawa Baroe* (*New Java*), a bilingual (Japanese and Indonesian) magazine published in Java in the early 1940s during the Japanese colonial occupation, illustrates my point about the modernity of the Japanese Woman and her ideological significance.

Djawa Baroe was a propaganda medium through which Japanese ideologues attempted to assimilate, or Japanize, their non-Japanese Asian subjects. Issues of the magazine were often filled with photographs of Indonesian women wearing kimonos and studying Japanese classical dance. Such propaganda regularly depicted Indonesians as, outwardly at least, more stereotypically 'Japanese' than the Japanese themselves. It may seem ironic therefore, that at least one issue of *Djawa Baroe* was devoted to correcting the image of Japanese women by dismantling certain orientalist stereotypes of them, even as the magazine advocated the adoption of many of the same stereotypes by Indonesian women. What follows is an excerpt from a photograph-filled article appearing in the November 1944 edition titled, 'Japanese Women in Wartime'.

Most foreign men visiting Japan have the impression that Japanese women are obedient, gentle and chaste. Some men think . . . that to marry a Japanese woman is one of the highest of life's ideals. One can only guess how envious enemy American men are of Japanese husbands, for American men suffer endlessly from the high-handed ways of their arrogant, neurasthenic, luxury-loving women. . . .

Certain foreigners stereotype Japanese women as beautiful flowers that have bloomed for ages . . . but few realize that this same beautiful flower has a noble scent; she does not burn in fire or dissolve in water, and she is capable of loyalty and great strength. These qualities are invisible to most [foreign men]. . . .

There are women in Western history who . . . joined their husbands on the battlefield. . . . However, cases of wives and mothers sacrificing themselves for their husbands and children are unheard of outside of Japan. American and English women beg their husbands and sons to invent an excuse to return home [from the battlefield], or to become a POW instead of dying in battle. . . . In contrast, the love that the Japanese Woman has for her country and her love for herself are one and the same thing. . . .

Today, each citizen is a combatant . . . for we are engaged in a total war. Combatants must operate in a group formation; individualism cannot be tolerated. Only one woman flouting the war system can jeopardize victory. A Japanese woman who offers her beloved child to the war effort . . . or wives and sisters who regard the death of their husbands and brothers as a great honor – all are participating in our great military. . . .

[Military] victories . . . have their counterpart in the holy war of production waged by women . . . for women are taking the places of men in factories, producing airplanes, weapons, and ammunition. Japan's military incorporates all Japanese citizens. . . .

This issue [of *Djawa Baroe*] focuses on women and war in Japan, and includes many photographs of types of Japanese women: factory workers, whose minds and bodies are tempered by the Way of the Samurai; women who [as proxy leaders of neighborhood associations] participate in air raid drills; and women who make comfort packets (*ianbukuro*) for soldiers. These are some of the wartime activities of Japanese women. They want you, Indonesian women, to join with them in preparing for your future independence. ('Senjika no Nippon josei', 1944: 27–9)

This article illustrates the efforts of Japanese propagandists to modernize the image of *the Japanese Woman* by retaining those characteristics evocative of her mental and physical hygienic superiority, and, as in the example of the 'anti-dandruff' cartoon, repudiating those undesirable traits associated with enemy women. What the *Djawa Baroe* piece drives home is precisely how the seemingly traditional Japanese Woman was revalorized as a signifier of New Japan: she was recuperated through her incorporation into the machinery of imperialism.

In 1930, a year before photographs of the Miss Nippon contestants were solicited, social critic Itagaki Yôsui published a short manifesto on 'the ideal new beauty' that cast a raking light on the eugenic new body politic of New Japan. Echoing the words of his German contemporary Ernst Jünger, quoted in the epigraph, Itagaki declared that 'the era has passed when the human body set the standard for structural expression. Today, it is the machine that dictates the new standard, and bodily proportions have been revised to fit [the machine]' (Itagaki,

1930: 122). The appearance of Miss Nippon in 1931 would seem to confirm Itagaki's pronouncement. As a mass producible photographic icon, a synthesis of material and discursive, organic and technological elements, Miss Nippon was Japan's first cyborg. The subsequent forced metamorphosis of Miss Nippon into the new Japanese Woman makes crystal clear that the machine of which Itagaki wrote was the wartime nation-state itself.

Notes

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1. The name Miss Nippon itself alludes to the war fever heating up the nationalist and imperialist rhetoric in the popular press. Spelled out both in English and the *katakana* syllabary (used to denote foreign loanwords and exclamatory expressions), 'Japan' was rendered as the more chauvinist 'Nippon' rather than the neutral 'Nihon'.

2. Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1926) which depicted the good and bad of technology and technocratic leadership, was screened in Japan in 1927, capping the robot boom (*robotto būmu*) catalyzed in 1913 by the publication of Suzuki Zentarō's novel *Robot (Robotto)*. *Robot* was also staged as a play. The popular fascination with technology continued a decade later when Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1935) was screened in Japan.

3. In addition to *yūseigaku*, another neologism for eugenics was *jimbukaizengaku*, or 'science of race improvement'.

4. Eugenics programs in Europe, Latin America and the United States, were studied and adapted selectively by Japanese scholars and policy makers. Historians of science often note the qualitative difference between race hygiene and eugenics; the latter Galton developed as a 'science of improving stock' through the application of statistics to problems of heredity, although the dividing line between the two is arguably thin and they are often perceived synonymously.

5. See, for example, the international contents of the Japanese eugenics journal *Jinsei-Der Mensch* and its German counterpart, *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschafts-Biologie*.

6. Michael Weiner states incorrectly that Takahashi's ideas were shared by Katō (Weiner, 1997: 7).

7. Katō used the term *hitodane*, literally 'person-seed', to describe racial essence. *Hitodane* is the Japanese-style reading of the ideographic compound *jinsū*, or race.

8. The agricultural metaphor is used metaphorically here as only 0.23 percent (45 of 19,238) of the Japanese settlers were involved in agriculture – most were employed in commerce, industry, transportation, government and professional services (*Fujin Nenkan*, 1988 [1940]: 247; Peattie, 1989: 172).

9. Fujikawa studied pathology, pathological anatomy, psychopathy and physiology at Jena University, Germany,

from 1898 to 1900, and earned his medical degree from Kyoto Imperial University (now Kyoto University) in 1915, where he held a chair in medical history. He served on several government committees charged with investigating aspects of social hygiene and public health (Iseki, 1922: 223–4).

10. Ploetz first used the term *Rassenhygiene* in his manifesto-like book, *Die Tüchtigkeit unserer Rasse und der Schutz der Schwachen* (*The Ability of our Race and Protection of the Weak*, 1895). He was among the many German scholars whose work was adapted by Japanese eugenicists and nationalists. A key figure in the early eugenics movement in Germany, Ploetz has been described as a 'utopian socialist' who later joined the Nazi party (Weingart, 1988: 284).

11. The categories were, in the order listed: biology, social anthropology, historical anthropology, physical anthropology, legal anthropology, comparative psychology, psychology, national psychology, cultural history of medicine (*bunmeishi igaku*), social hygiene, race hygiene, law, sociology, education and pedagogy, religion and statistics (Fujikawa, 1905: [ii]).

12. The various branches of the Wandervogel movement were later absorbed into the Hitlerjugend.

13. Subsequent to founding the Legs Society, Ikeda wrote several books extolling the efforts of the Nazis in rebuilding the postwar society and in reinvigorating the German national spirit.

14. For an overview of the feminist and suffragist movements in Japan, see Sievers (1983). The Welfare Ministry contributed its share of didactic advice about the condition of girls and women by publishing lengthy reports on race hygiene in the *Woman's Yearbook* (*Fujin Nenkan*) series that included mention of the consequences of the low birth rate among middle-class women in Japan and the untoward social impact of 'bad' or 'inferior' lineages, citing the findings of prominent American and European scientists in this regard, such as Henry Goddard (e.g. *Fujin Nenkan* 1988 [1939]: 152–8).

15. Comparatively few sterilizations were performed in Japan following the passage of the National Eugenics Law in 1941. Between 1941 and 1945, 15,219 persons (6399 females and 8820 males) were targeted for sterilization although 435 persons (243 females and 192 males), or about 29 percent of the total, were actually sterilized (Suzuki, 1983: 166). One critic of sterilization even argued that the divine origins and purity of the 'Yamato race' raised serious philosophical doubts about the validity of that procedure: 'one must not equate a divine people with livestock' (Makino, 1938: 18–21; see also Suzuki, 1983: 163, and Takagi, 1993: 46). Other critics of eugenics and sterilization, such as the sexologist Yasuda Tokutarô, stressed instead the importance of the physical and social environment on human development and also the complexity of human motives to reproduce or not (Suzuki, 1983: 162–3).

16. To some extent, traditional arranged marriage procedures helped to weed out the unfit, although the social criteria of fitness and unfitness (e.g. status, occupation, region) did not necessarily correspond to the eugenic criteria promoted by the counseling centers. Some overlap was present, as in the carrying out of background checks for venereal disease, tuberculosis, Hansen's disease, deafness, epilepsy, mental illness, criminal behavior and so on, pathologies that, if discovered, could be grounds for terminating arranged marriage negotiations.

17. In addition to a public exhibition of the contestants' photographs, another key attraction of the Miss Japan event was a performance by the all-female Takarazuka Revue at the awards ceremony. The Revue was known for its modern musicals and for the machine-like precision of its trademark 'train' (*keisha*) or 'line' dance. They staged a portion of their recent hit musical, *Miss Shanghai* (*Misu Shanhai*, 1931), which was about a beauty contest in that Chinese city, where, by 1930, the 30,000 resident Japanese formed the largest, and quite vocal, foreign community. It would appear that the Miss Shanghai contest supplied the bodies missing in the Miss Japan contest. For more information on the Takarazuka Revue, see Robertson (2001 [1998]).

18. This New Woman should not be confused with the self-identified feminist New Woman (*atarashii onna*) who was the antithesis of the state's version of Japanese womanhood. Miss Nippon was referred to by the judges as a 'new woman' in the sense of a eugenically superior female and a modern Good Wife, Wise Mother. Not only were women photographic subjects, they were also targeted in advertisements as camera operators, and the first women's amateur camera club was established in 1937. In March 1908, less than a decade after the first (young men's) amateur camera club was founded, the *Jiji Shimpô*, a daily newspaper, following the lead of the *Chicago Tribune*, sponsored a nationwide 'beautiful woman photograph' (*bijin shashin*) competition. The submissions were published as an album in which the contestants were described as 'ladies from good families' whose pictures were to be viewed with

a 'respectful attitude' ('Misu to iu na no onna no yukue', 1958: 11). The 1908 event anticipated the 1931 Miss Nippon contest in that the contestants had to be ordinary, unprofessional girls and women.

19. I borrowed the expression 'stilled lives' from Brusati (1990-91). The judge who likened the photographs to corpses was the Western-style painter, Wada Sanzō.

20. Glenn Shaw, an English teacher later recognized as a translator of Japanese literature and author of several impressionistic books on Japan.

21. This was a synthesis not fully achieved until the debut in 1996 of Date Kyoko, the first of now hundreds of virtual beauty queens created through computer graphics (Date, 1999). For more information on the 1990s cult of 'virtual girls/idols' in Japan, see 'Kūsō bishōjo daihyakka', 1999. Very recently, an article in a weekly news magazine addressed the phenomenon of female cyborgs created through the technology of plastic surgery (Hayami, 2000).

22. See also 'Shinjidai no reijin to wa', a newspaper article on the 'beautiful women of the new age', illustrated with a schematic drawing of an ideally proportioned woman based on the 'artistic anatomy' studies of Paul Richer (1934: 9).

23. In the course of my archival research I observed that *meirō* (bright) was a contemporary buzzword most often paired with 'modernity'.

24. Marcus here follows Ernst Kantorowicz's theory in *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theory* (1957).

25. The term 'cyborg' (cybernetic organism) was coined in 1962. The closest equivalent to 'cyborg' used in the early 20th century was 'mechanical human' (*jinzō ningen*). I follow Biro's argument (1994: 71-2) that, although the term cyborg had not yet been coined, it nevertheless was a 'recognizable type' in the modern visual and material popular culture of the early 20th century.

26. It is important not to conflate the celebration of white skin here to unconditional Anglophilia. Historically, 'white' has been a marker of upper-class and higher occupational status, and, later in this century, as purported racial status, as in the representation of Japanese as white relative to darker non-Japanese Asians. 'White' as a positively valenced code word for Anglos specifically was limited to the mixed-blood position in the eugenics debate; when used in reference to the Allies in wartime propaganda, it had a definitively negative, pejorative meaning. As Oguma points out, a thicket of debates about the alleged Aryan origins of the Japanese and their comparative whiteness contributed to the discourse of eugenics in the early 20th century (1995: 172-85). The novelist Tanizaki Jun'ichirō also elaborated on the distinction between the whiteness of Japanese skin and that of Anglo skin (1977: 33-4; see also Figal, 1999: 216-17; Murasawa, 1992).

27. Ironically, an article in the Anglophone annual supplement of the *Asahi Shinbun* on the contest described Tawara's face as possessing 'an expression that might be called mystic. It is like the face found in images of the Goddess Kwannon. She is oriental in every respect: a beauty with Japanese characteristics' ('Miss Nippon', 1931: 72).

28. The A, B and O blood-types were identified by Karl Landsteiner in 1901, and AB was identified the following year. Ottenberg's categories were European, Intermediate, Hunan, Indian-Manchurian, African-South Asian and Pacific-American.

29. Note that today in Japan many people continue to take for granted, as common-sense knowledge, the notion that blood-type, personality and national character are closely related.

30. The annual Miss America and Miss Europe contests were covered extensively in the Japanese press.

31. Specifically, boys were now 133.7 centimeters tall and girls 134.7 centimeters.

32. Artists were also invited to judge the 1934 contest: Asakura Fumio, sculptor; Kaburagi Kiyokata, Japanese-style painter; and Okada Saburosuke, Western-style painter. Kobayashi Ichizō, founder of the Takarazuka Revue, also served on the selection committee ('Miss Nippon', 1934).

33. *Crime Revue* was not a police blotter but a popular periodical that drew attention to the 'erotic and grotesque' (*eroguro*) aspects of modern urban life.

34. *Nippon Fujin* was also the name of the literary organ of the Greater Japan Women's Association (dainippon fujinkai) founded in 1942 by the amalgamation of two rival associations. Membership in the new group was mandatory for all married women and all unmarried women over 20 years of age.

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Jennifer Robertson is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Michigan. Author of *Native and Newcomer: Making and Remaking a Japanese City* (University of California Press, 1991 & 1994) and *Takarazuka: Sexual Politics and Popular Culture in Modern Japan* (University of California Press, 1998, 1999 and 2001), she is also General Editor of *Colonialisms*, a new book series from California on 'non-Western' imperialist regimes and colonial practices. She is completing a book on Japanese cultures of colonialism, with an emphasis on eugenics and 'race' science, and is also researching the genre of war art.