"Show Me a Samurai": British Representations of Japanese Manhood, 1895-1905

by

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Abstract

British representations of Japanese manhood from 1895 to 1905 were influenced by contemporary global politics and reaction to Japan's rapid and impressive political and military reforms, but more significantly by the prevailing British middle-class discourses on gender, religion and race. Within these material and discursive contexts, these representations reveal conflicting tendencies to celebrate aspects of traditional Japanese manhood such as its vibrant martial traditions, to condemn other aspects such as its treatment of women and adherence to Confucian family ethics, and to attempt to recognize and reconcile Japanese men's increasing 'westernization' and modernization. Two distinct characterizations of Japanese manhood stood out in the writings of British missionaries, travellers and pundits in this period: the family man and the martial man. These characterizations reflected contemporary British middle-class conceptions of "manliness" and revealed their concerns about the ability of Japanese men to measure up to British ideals of modern and civilized manhood.

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This thesis is dedicated to my brother, Derek.

Chapter One:
Gender and Paradigms of Japan

A 1905 article on Japanese school boys, written by a British missionary resident in Japan, began with the statement, "[t]he world now knows something about the Japanese man."[1] The author was referring to the Japanese soldier, who was earning the attention of many in Europe and America due to Japan's war with Russia; that "something" had to do with Japanese performance on the battlefield. Japanese military men were the objects of admiration and approval particularly by the British, Japan's military allies. During the war, British observers frequently lauded Japanese soldiers as brave, loyal, courageous in battle and gentlemanly in victory, all qualities admired— and presumably possessed— by the British.

But just what exactly did the world, and more specifically Britain, "know" about "the Japanese man"? How was this man described by British travellers, missionaries, and scholars of Japan? Between 1895 and 1905, most British periodicals and books portrayed Japanese men in reference to a popular and recognizable model of manhood, "that most masculine of men, the soldier."[2] But there were other representations as well. Travellers and missionaries portrayed them variously as amusing servants, aristocratic gentlemen, brave soldiers and philandering husbands. Although these representations could, and sometimes did, become racialized stereotypes and crude caricatures, taken together they reveal fairly complex and ultimately conflicting views of Japanese men and Japanese manhood.

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[1] Rev. C.H. Basil Wood, "Notes on Japanese School-Boys," *The Japan Evangelist* 12:5 (May 1905), 151.

[2] Graham Dawson, "The Blonde Bedouin: Lawrence of Arabia, imperial adventure and the imagining of English-British masculinity," in Michael Roper and John Tosh, eds., *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800* (Routledge: London and New York, 1991), 113.

This thesis will examine two key characterizations of Japanese manhood around the turn of the twentieth century: husbands and soldiers. British writers based these representations on much more than simple observation of Japanese men's appearance and behaviour. Images of brave warriors or male chauvinists, for instance, developed according to the way Japanese men either conformed to or contradicted an intricate web of understanding that was made up of preconceived ideas of manhood and "manliness" that in turn were founded on British cultural traditions and contemporary social concerns; popular perceptions of Japanese society, traditions and history; and a wide range of reactions to and analysis of Japan's growing international presence and power.

Representations in Context

British views of Japanese men were formed within several distinct yet interrelated material and discursive contexts and depended "on the attitude toward the Other as well as the system of categories available"[3] to describe that "other." The characteristic British position towards the standard non-white, non-British, or non-Christian "other" was one of superiority, and this was largely true for attitudes towards the Japanese. However, during this brief period, British attitudes towards Japan were unusually favourable, influenced in no small part by strategic military concerns, but also by the ways in which Japanese men seemed to exhibit behaviour and characteristics that were admired in Britain. These attitudes towards Japanese people were often articulated through gendered language using categories such as manliness. Taken together, the variables upon which representations depended— attitudes and systems of categories— constitute a working

[3] Rotem Kowner, "'Lighter than Yellow, But Not Enough': Western Discourse on the Japanese 'Race', 1854-1904," *Historical Journal* 43:1 (2000): 105.

definition of discourse: a group of texts and words and the particular meanings they produce, as well as the systems of language and the institutions in which these texts were in turn produced and developed.[4]

Between 1895 and 1905, Japan defeated both China and Russia in major wars, concluded a military alliance with Britain, and began to emerge as a great power, industrializing, militarizing, and acquiring colonies of its own. British observers looked upon Japan's successful military, political and social reforms as models for Britain, and Japan's reformers and leaders were the subject of discussion and evaluation.[5] Paradoxically, Europeans created the derogatory image of the "yellow peril" in this same period and centred it on Japan, an act which was indicative of widespread negative attitudes towards Japan's recent accomplishments. The concept of the "yellow peril" had wide currency in Europe and North America, and helped to produce a contradictory and conflated overall picture of Japan and Japanese men.[6] Thus the image of Japan was not

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[4] "Colonial discourse," argues Sara Mills, "does not... simply refer to a body of texts with a similar subject-matter, but rather refers to a set of practices and rules which produced those texts and the methodological organization of the thinking underlying those texts." Sara Mills, *Discourse* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 107.

[5] Many of the new generation of leaders attracted comment from British observers. The new, young emperor of Japan especially was often discussed as being modern, forward-looking and eager for the westernization and modernization of Japan. The British commented on the adaptive and innovative character of the Japanese as seen in contemporary military figures such as Admiral Togo, whose navy defeated Russia, and they also pointed to historical Japanese figures such as Saigo Takamori, the samurai who led the Satsuma Rebellion in 1877 against the new imperial government, as representative of the Japan's thriving martial spirit.

[6] This image was born in Germany during the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) and quickly spread throughout Europe. Europeans conceived the "peril" as consisting of throngs of "Asian hordes" that would descend upon and overrun the white races of Europe if Japan and China ever joined forces under Japanese leadership. While Continental Europe expressed this fear more often than Britons, a number of British people espoused this notion as well. For a contemporary British debate on the "yellow peril", its numerous facets and its significance for Britain, see Demetrius C. Boulger, "The 'Yellow Peril' Bogey," in *The Nineteenth Century* (January 1904) and O. Eltzbacher, "The Yellow Peril," in *The Nineteenth Century* (June 1904). For an examination of the "yellow peril" in a Canadian context, see Patricia Roy, *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants 1858-1914* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1989); and in the American context see Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice:*

coherent but complicated. Britons simultaneously saw Japan as a possible model of military and national efficiency and a potential threat to Britain's existence. Correspondingly, Japanese men were seen as models of efficient soldiers and progressive reformers, and as barbaric warriors and cunning "Asiatics." These two contradictory representations were nonetheless the product of the same circumstances: Japan's rise as a world power coincided with troubling signs of the British Empire's decline at a time when many in Britain were re-evaluating the quality of their country's fighting men, the efficiency of their military and the survival not only of the empire but of the Anglo-Saxon 'race'.[7]

As British military observers commented on Japan's military and political reforms, many Protestant missionaries concerned with its educational and social reforms argued that the nation could never be totally modern and 'civilized' or on par with the western powers without adopting Christianity. Missionary evaluations of Japanese manhood, which were intricately connected to evaluations of Japanese social and cultural institutions, reveal that missionaries were less convinced than political observers of Japan's 'progress' on religious and moral grounds, although many were convinced this could still be achieved.

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the Anti-Japanese Movement in California and the Struggle for Japanese Exclusion (New York: Atheneum, 1969), chapter five.

[7] Several contentious words that are used in this thesis warrant the use of inverted commas to draw attention to their contested meaning and usage. Instead of using such notation repeatedly, I wish to note here that the terms and categories the British used to evaluate Japanese men were historically and culturally specific. Words such as 'civilization', 'race' and 'progress' cannot be read as absolute or essential terms, but must be recognized to have held particular meaning for late-Victorian and early-Edwardian middle-class British people. Inverted commas will be used for the initial occurrence of such words, and will thereafter be implied throughout this thesis.

Old and New Japan

Despite nearly half a century of cultural and political interaction, Japan and its people remained in 1895 a source of fascination for many British people. So many books about Japan were published that an apology in the author's preface for yet another book on Japan seemed almost a requirement. Most of these books were much the same. They included cursory summaries of Japanese history, religions, social customs, art and culture which were often found dispersed throughout personal narratives of the author's experiences travelling or living in Japan. However, towards the end of the century there was an observable shift, not so much in the way many people wrote about Japan as in their attitude towards the subject. Authors no longer apologized for writing about Japan, and instead found new reasons for reiterating well established facts. Current events, particularly the country's war with China, treaty revisions, the alliance with Britain, or war with Russia were all reasons for finally looking at Japan 'seriously.' After the Sino-Japanese War a new sub-genre moved beyond descriptive accounts of the land and people toward explanatory treatises on Japan's advancement and progress, especially with regard to military, government and social reforms. Some of these questions had been addressed earlier, but now the tone had changed and it was necessary to apply previously held knowledge to some kind of explanation for Japan's success. One such work "sought to draw attention to some of those characteristics of the Japanese and their undertakings which have tended to make them at this hour a nation to be honoured,"[8] and another aimed "to indicate the forces which have been at work in bringing about what is admitted to be the wonder of the latter half of the nineteenth century; namely the rise of

[8] J. Morris. *Advance Japan: A Nation Thoroughly in Earnest* (London: W.H. Allen and Co.,Ltd., 1895), xii.

Japan as a member of the comity of nations."[9] The classic genres of travel accounts and general interest books about Japanese history and culture remained popular, but many more publications now portrayed Japan as a dynamic nation of people warranting attention not just because they were interesting or "singular," but because their actions were having worldwide consequences.[10]

From their first contacts with Japan in the 1850s until the 1890s, Victorians predominantly described Japan in aesthetic terms, as a place remote from Europe: it was an ideal, "pre-industrial paradise," portrayed as a nation "of pretty dolls dressed in flowered silks and dwelling in paper houses of the capacity of matchboxes."[11] By the end of the nineteenth century, this image of picturesque Old Japan was contrasted with contemporary New Japan, whose people were portrayed as ambitious, adaptive and forward-looking. In the eyes of many westerners, Japan's reforms culminated in its victory over Russia in 1905, an event that led many westerners to question and to alter their rather simplistic and superficial ideas of Japan, and to take it seriously in terms of its real military and economic power.

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[9] Henry Dyer, *Dai Nippon the Britain of the East: A Study in National Evolution* (London: Blackie and Son, 1904), vii.

[10] Basil Hall Chamberlain's *Things Japanese* was available in its fourth edition in 1902, and the works of Chamberlain and the other most popular authority, Lafcadio Hearn, were still the standard references for most of the books written about Japan in this period. A few of the other popular authors who provided the basis of knowledge about Japan in this period included Alice Mabel Bacon, Rutherford Alcock, and A.B. Mitford. These authoritative books provided the basis for other works of both the 'serious' and more entertaining kind, and their ideas were very influential. Edward Said calls such a phenomenon a 'discursive formation', wherein the discourse on a subject, in this case Japan, is self-perpetuating, a product of what has already been said more than a result of empirical investigation or observation. New authors are influenced by and depend on the discourse produced by earlier writers. See Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 20.

[11] "In the Japanese Capital," *The Times*, 17 March, 1904. See Jean-Pierre Lehmann, *The Image of Japan: From Feudal Isolation to World Power, 1850-1905* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978); Toshio Yokoyama, *Japan in the Victorian Mind: A Study of Stereotyped Images of a Nation 1850-80* (Hampshire: Macmillan, 1987); and especially Ian Littlewood, *The Idea of Japan: Western Images, Western Myths* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996).

Masculinity and manliness

The most common embodiment of New Japan was the soldier or warrior. This figure was very close to the hearts and minds of the British middle class whose contemporary culture of imperialism created popular heroes out of soldiers, warriors and adventurers. The imperial man or adventure hero of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, a popular and widely discussed paradigm of British masculinity, permeated adventure novels, athletics, and public schools, and was also found in the colonies and the frontiers of empire.[12] Japanese culture had its own martial tradition which was represented by the samurai and his traditional code of conduct, bushido. "[T]he military virtues," explained Herbert Moore in 1904, "comprehended under the expression 'Samurai spirit' ('samurai' meaning 'knight'), came to form the ideal standard of character, and the word 'samurai' was practically the equivalent of 'gentleman'— in the best sense of the term."[13] Bushido was popularly known in Britain from the work of

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[12] For a few examples of this work, see: Dawson, "The Blonde Bedouin" in Roper and Tosh, eds., *Manful Assertions*, 113-144; John MacKenzie, "The imperial pioneer and hunter and the British masculine stereotype in late Victorian and Edwardian times," in J.A. Mangan and James Walvin, eds. *Manliness and morality: middle-class masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 176-198; Jonathan Rutherford, *Forever England: Reflections on Race, Masculinity and Empire* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1997); J.A. Mangan, "'Muscular, Militaristic and Manly': The British Middle Class Hero as Moral Messenger," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 13:1 (1996):28-46.

[13] Herbert Moore, *The Christian Faith in Japan* (London: The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1904), 16. The samurai were an elite military class in Tokugawa Japan (1600-1868), an era of military rule under a shogun, or overlord. Samurai were retainers of the daimyo, or local lord, and were soldiers for his army and civil officials in his territory. In earlier times, they were first and foremost warriors, but they were subsequently moved off the land and into castle towns by the daimyo, where they collected taxes, maintained civil order, and performed other official duties. Peter Duus, *Modern Japan* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1998), 27. After the restoration of the Emperor Meiji (r. 1867-1912) as the legitimate ruler of Japan, the samurai formed the majority of the new government officials and political reformers. Those who did not enter the government pursued various careers as merchants, farmers, policemen, soldiers, and domestic servants. The distinct social, cultural and aesthetic traditions of the samurai had started to become antiquated by 1870 when universal military conscription was introduced, and again in 1873 when the government forbade them to wear their signature two swords in public. Still, the image and the idea of the samurai as warriors maintained a place in the imagination of foreigners long after they ceased to exist solely as warriors. Actually, it was not until the traditional

Inazo Nitobe, whose 1899 book, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, was written in English for a mainly British and American audience and was so popular in Britain that a tenth edition was published in 1905. It outlined the main principles of bushido— loyalty, courage, honour, and politeness— and its aim was to explain the principles of Japan's ethical system and to use those principles to account for Japan's recent achievements. Many British saw the precepts of bushido to be as important a factor in Japan's success as its reforms and modernization efforts.[14] The contemporary British mindset that valorized and celebrated martial masculinity, combined with popular and vibrant martial traditions in both Britain and Japan, influenced one discourse on Japanese men which measured their manhood in terms of martial qualities such as bravery, patriotism, chivalry and other gentlemanly attributes.

Despite the focus on public displays of masculinity and manliness, such as games and athletics and imperial wars and adventures, a few historians remind us that the domestic lives of men contributed as much to their identity as did their public lives.[15] The imperial adventure hero overshadowed, but did not entirely displace, the previous paradigm of middle-class masculinity in Britain: the family man— provider, protector, husband and father. Martin Francis suggests that "[m]en constantly travelled back and

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samurai were gone that foreigners portrayed them in really benevolent terms. While the samurai still held power and status they posed a potential threat to foreigners and were often portrayed negatively, as when a group of samurai attacked the British legation in Edo (Tokyo) in 1861. See Yokoyama, *Japan in the Victorian Mind*, 66, 68. After the threat was gone, though, the image of the samurai became comparatively more romantic and nostalgic in westerners' writing.

[14] See Colin Holmes and Hamish Ion, "Bushido and the Samurai: Image in British Public Opinion, 1894-1914," *Modern Asian Studies* 14:2 (1980): 309-329.

[15] See Martin Francis, "The Domestication of the Male? Recent Research on Nineteenth-Century British Masculinity," *The Historical Journal* 45:3 (2002): 637-652; John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999); and for an earlier period, see Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987).

forward across the frontier of domesticity, if only in the realm of imagination, attracted by the responsibilities of marriage and fatherhood, but also enchanted by fantasies of the energetic life and camaraderie of the adventure hero."[16] John Tosh's work on masculinity and domesticity, although suggesting that domesticity was less important to middle-class men by the end of the century than it had been a few decades earlier, is also particularly significant to the present study. The subject of family life comprised a large part of the missionaries' discourse on Japanese men, for instance in the reports of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and in discussions of the Japanese YMCA, boarding houses and home visits. British men's place in and ideas about their families influenced how they evaluated the manliness of their counterparts in Japan.

Previous students of western representations of Japan have generally not used the insights of gender history that have proven their merit in studies of other colonial contexts. Within the growing body of literature on masculinity and men's history, studies of nineteenth-century Britain have probably received the most attention, beginning with the idea of manliness as it developed in homosocial institutions such as public schools. This approach recognized and problematized men as gendered beings, and though limited in its scope and focus, it created the space for further studies of manliness in a wider historical context and of other aspects of masculinity.[17] This thesis will be quite narrowly focussed on the late nineteenth-century British idea of manliness, for, while recognizing its limitations in fully explaining western perceptions of Japanese masculinity, it is an obvious, necessary, and previously under-examined starting point.

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[16] Francis, "The Domestication of the Male?" 643.

[17] See Francis, "The Domestication of the Male?"

Two seemingly disparate sites— the middle-class home and the edges of empire— demonstrate how widely applicable the study of masculinity and men's history has been, and how different are the places where gendered identities have been created and experienced. At the same time, though, this type of analysis also demonstrates how these sites can be connected. John Tosh's groundbreaking work has moved beyond the study of men in the public sphere to examine the important ways that men's identities were shaped by their domestic lives, and Mrinalini Sinha, among several other scholars, has looked at the way that colonial experiences shaped these identities.[18] Tosh and Sinha— and more recently, Martin Francis— have all contributed discerning analyses of the state of the field of men's history.[19] In spite of some differences of opinion as to its relative importance, Sinha, Tosh, and Francis all underline the significance of empire to the construction of British masculinities in the nineteenth century.

Historians have quite thoroughly established that the identities of middle-class British men in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were shaped by encounters with others both in Britain and in the colonies. Studies of middle-class British masculinity have shown how men created themselves in opposition to women, other classes, and men and women of other races throughout the empire and around the world. Scholars have looked at masculinity in terms of its seemingly natural opposite, femininity, but have more recently challenged the idea of such a hegemonic masculinity, and instead of comparing some absolute masculinity to its counterpart femininity, are studying

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[18]Tosh, *A Man's Place;* Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity.*

[19] See Tosh, "What Should Historians do with Masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth-century Britain," *History Workshop Journal* 38 (1994): 179-202; Mrinalini Sinha, "Giving Masculinity a History: Some Contributions from the Historiography of Colonial India," *Gender and History* 11:3 (November 1999): 445-460; and Francis, "The Domestication of the Male?," 637-652.

historically and culturally specific masculinities in light of and in connection to other masculinities. In other words, "[t]he concepts of 'Self' and Other' or of 'us' and 'them' which are frequently invoked to explain the *separation* of masculine and feminine, or civilized and savage, or occidental and oriental in nineteenth-century perceptions of the world need also to include the sense of the symbiotic *connections* joining each apparently opposed pair."[20] British masculinities were created through contact with others—through the appropriation of some aspects of foreign masculinities and the rejection of others— and not simply in opposition to those others.

Relationships between masculinity and imperialism have been demonstrated in studies of colonial spaces as diverse as India, North America, and Southeast Asia. As Mrinalini Sinha argues, historians of gender and colonialism have thus far largely dealt with women and femininity, but in doing so have provided the theory and methodology for similar studies of men.[21] Such studies use discourse analyses to uncover the gendered notions present in colonial discourses. Elizabeth Vibert, in her study of early nineteenth-century British fur traders in north-western North America, has shown that traders' writings about the indigenous men they met there yield fascinating information about how the traders constructed their own masculinity and the masculinity of the 'Indians'. Vibert also suggests how these gendered representations became the basis of enduring stereotypes of First Nations in North America.[22] Similarly, Mrinalini Sinha deconstructs

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[20]Joanna de Groot, "'Sex' and 'race': the construction of language and image in the nineteenth century," in Catherine Hall, ed. *Cultures of Empire: Colonizers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: a Reader* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), 39.
[21] Sinha, "Giving Masculinity a History," 446.

[22] Elizabeth Vibert, "Real Men Hunt Buffalo: Masculinity, Race and Class in British Fur Traders' Narratives," *Gender and History* 8:1 (April 1996): 4-21; Vibert, *Traders' Tales: Narratives of Cultural Encounters in the Columbia Plateau, 1807-1846* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997).

the discourse surrounding a number of legal debates in late nineteenth-century colonial India to explain how certain constructions of Indian masculinity were used to control the population and to maintain and advance British political interests in India, as well as to demonstrate how "the effeminate Bengali" obtained its potency as a racial stereotype.[23]

These studies, presented here as a small sample of the work in this field, offer analyses of how British masculinities were created in colonial spaces, and how the experience of these masculinities informed stereotypes and opinions of other men. Gender historians focussing their studies on Britain have shown that colonial relationships also affected the way men in Britain saw themselves, even if they had no direct interaction with people of other cultures and ethnicities. These colonial relationships resulted in information about other cultures that was widely available in Britain.[24] Opinions and images of non-British masculinities were mainly, but not entirely, created outside Britain; people at home, possessing an imperial "habit of mind" could read the writings of travellers or missionaries, for example, and extrapolate about the general character and also the manliness of Japanese men.

Middle-class Britons used the term manliness to denote a number of interrelated qualities such as strength, honour, loyalty, courage and morality.[25] Historians J. A.

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[23]Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity.*

[24]Catherine Hall, *Civilizing Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002). See also the introduction to Martin Daunton and Rick Halpern, eds., *Empire and Others: British Encounters with Indigenous Peoples, 1600-1850* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).

[25] For an intriguing examination of the idea of manliness in nineteenth-century Britain, see Peter Gay, *The Cultivation of Hatred: the Bourgeois Experience Victoria to Freud Volume III* (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1993), 95-116. Other scholars have focused on one or another of these aspects of manliness and its relation to other contemporary discourses and have produced a stimulating body of literature. For a few examples, see Norman Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit: The ideal of Christian manliness in Victorian literature and religious thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Mark Moss, *Manliness and Militarism: Educating Young Boys in Ontario for War* (Oxford: Oxford

Mangan and James Walvin have suggested that manliness as it was widely conceived was an attribute of the English-speaking, Anglo-Saxon world, an argument that highlights the importance of race in its meaning.[26] Other historians such as Peter Gay, by contrast, see manliness in broader terms as a set of attributes presumably, but not exclusively, possessed by the middle classes in Britain and America. Manliness sometimes meant the opposite of womanliness, but it more often was used to describe differences among men, and broadly reflected concerns about effeminacy among the bourgeoisie and about the perceived Darwinian struggle for survival and against degeneration.[27] These manly qualities were largely considered the property of middle-class men, meant to distinguish them from others, specifically women, the aristocracy, the working class, and other cultures. But these qualities were not exclusive to middle-class males; other men and even women could possess and demonstrate manliness as well. As Peter Gay has suggested, "the meaning of 'manliness' was infected with incurable imprecision and subject to dispute."[28]

How did British writers project their notions of manliness onto Japanese men? Many British observers believed that the Japanese already possessed some manly attributes because of their martial qualities, and because bushido, the warrior code, contained precepts very similar to British notions of manliness. Bushido, while "car[ing] little for the cultivation of the highest mental faculties or for the satisfaction of the

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University Press, 2001); Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: a cultural history of gender and race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); and the essays in Mangan and Walvin, *Manliness and Morality*.

[26] Mangan and Walvin, eds., *Manliness and Morality*, 2-3.

[27] Gay, *The Cultivation of Hatred, 97.*

[28] Gay, *The Cultivation of Hatred*, 99.

spiritual instincts of man," and containing an "inevitable tendency to self-appreciation, conceit, and inordinate ambition," had many virtues such as "benevolence, magnanimity, affection for others, sympathy, and pity" as well as "gentleness."[29] British observers also saw potential for Japanese men to become even manlier by becoming more civilized, although civilization could also hinder the development of well rounded manliness. Being Japanese did not hinder their being manly, this label being mainly dependent on their actions, not their physical characteristics. Manliness was not conditional upon race, although race could affect a man's degree of manliness. For example, men that belonged to 'martial races' were considered to possess some important manly qualities such as loyalty and bravery and to be lacking in others such as refinement and self-restraint. Stated simply, it was readily agreed that "[t]he qualities which stamp the yellow man as inferior are what give him an edge when it comes to conflict."[30] The late-Victorian and early-Edwardian ideology of manliness thus offers an interesting way of examining gendered representations of Japanese men.

Two paradigms

Historians of western images of Japan have tended to favour two particular models for understanding representations of the country, one based on the idea of Japan's uniqueness and the other based on the idea of the Russo-Japanese War as a distinct turning point. Neither model works when gender is used as a main category of analysis. More than any other word, "singular" has been used by westerners to describe Japan.

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[29] G.H. Pole, "Bushido—Its Virtues and Defects," *Church Missionary Intelligencer* (October 1905): 721-730.

[30] Littlewood, *The Idea of Japan*, 28.

Historians of western images of Japan have widely embraced the idea of a "singular" Japan, and have suggested that the British considered Japan to be without parallel and in a different category from other 'Orientals.' This was in part because the relationship between the two countries was exceptional: Britain was not in an entirely obvious position of power, either by cultural or material indices, nor did Japan fall under its direct political or economic control. Japanese people could not be seen the same way that other Asian people were seen; they had absorbed and adapted many aspects of European culture while still maintaining their own culture, thus they were "neither Occidental nor Oriental."[31]

Because of this perceived singularity, Donald Richie suggests, westerners created a specific paradigm for understanding Japan. Earlier in the Victorian period, Japan was represented as a "topsy-turvy" place, a land where everything was the opposite of Britain. This later shifted into another paradigm which was a slightly different take on the singularity model: a paradigm of "dualistic anomalies." "[D]ualistic anomalies were sought for and found," Richie argues. "Japan was shortly discovered to be paradoxical—a country that was a contradiction in terms. The people were quaint, childlike, polite on one hand, and militaristic, cruel and treacherous on the other; they were artistic but they were also the yellow peril." He further argues that "[t]he success of this particular model was that it was based upon an unquestioned assumption— the duality of all reality, the necessity of 'either/or' above 'both.' This is how most Westerners structured their [own] existence and it was therefore the paradigm of choice, whether it actually fit the subject

[31] Lehmann, *The Image of Japan*, 39.

or not."[32] Support for the thesis of the singularity and dualistic character of the Japanese is easy to find in the sources and among other historians;[33] however, it is important to attempt a deeper reading of these sources. Why did British people portray Japan as paradoxical? Is there a slightly more manageable explanation than Richie's immeasurably large and complicated claim that "Westerners structured their existence" in terms of this paradigm? An examination of contemporary prevailing notions of gender, race and religion in Britain can help to provide a more historically focussed and less essentialising evaluation of these images.

Some British writers described Meiji Japan as singular because it *was* "both"— a hybrid, a mix of old and new, east and west. These ideas of "both" and "either/or" do not necessarily exist in opposition to each other, although they have often been presented this way. "Both" and "either/or" correspondingly take for granted the presence of two distinct categories existing as a binary, such as east and west or masculine and feminine, and historians have too often used these categories uncritically. The construction and meaning of these categories is as much an "unquestioned assumption" as the duality that these categories supposedly create. Can the "dualistic paradigm" be used satisfactorily by historians of gender? Does it stand up when we pick apart the larger discourse on Japan

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[32] Donald Richie, "Interpretations of Japan," *Japan Quarterly* (April-June 2001), 81-83. The idea that the western mind conceives of the world in binary opposites is widely held and has been discussed by scholars of colonialist literature. Abdul R. JanMohamed describes this binary mode of thinking as permeating colonialist writing and expressing itself as a "manichean allegory—a field of diverse yet interchangeable oppositions between white and black, good and evil, superiority and inferiority, civilization and savagery, intelligence and emotion, rationality and sensuality, self and Other, subject and object. The power relations underlying this model set in motion such strong currents that even a writer who is reluctant to acknowledge it and who may indeed be highly critical of imperialist exploitation is drawn into its vortex." See JanMohamed, "The Economy of the Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature," *Critical Inquiry* 12 (Autumn 1985), 63.

[33] See, for example, Yokoyama, chapter one; Littlewood, *The Idea of Japan*, chapter one; and John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon, 1986).

and examine one strand in detail? This paradigm is based on a number of suppositions and generalities about the nature of its object, particularly its gendered nature.

An examination of representations of Japanese men reveals that men generally did not fit into this paradigm. They were seen as gentlemanly and unchivalrous, modern and antiquated, they were taken seriously and romanticized; however these categories were not firm in the British imagination and often melded into one another. Richie's dualism is based on a problematic and essentialising use of the terms masculine and feminine and does not hold up when applied to gendered images of Japanese men. The few historians of this subject who have attempted to deal with gender have used the terms masculine and feminine uncritically and arbitrarily, and have always placed them in opposition. In fact, masculine and feminine did not appear in binary opposition in the discourse on Japanese men, and we might be better off examining masculinities not simply in opposition to femininities but in interaction with other masculinities as well. How did Japanese men fit into the dominant contemporary British concept of manliness? Did British writers construct a different kind of manliness for non-white, non-European men, or was it more common to think in terms of some essentialized manhood, such as the soldier or the husband might represent? Were Japanese men measured by universal standards, or was their existence as husbands or soldiers somehow conditioned by their being Japanese?

The Russo-Japanese War is the focal point in a second, related model for understanding western images of Japan. Like the dualistic paradigm, this model depends on a binary opposition between masculine and feminine, on assuming their mutual exclusivity. A number of historians regard the Russo-Japanese War as a turning point in

western images of Japan—it is presented as a sudden challenge to the idea of feminine Japan. Many scholars have suggested that before the war, outsiders saw the Japanese as feminine, artistic and playful, but as masculine, militaristic and serious afterwards. The country's military advances caused British observers to adjust this vision and to begin to take Japan seriously. Like the dualistic paradigm, this model is undermined when the meanings and associated qualities of masculinity and femininity are scrutinized. In introducing his discussion of western images of Japan's military during the Russo-Japanese War, Rotem Kowner states that from the mid-nineteenth century until the war, western countries "perceiv[ed] its people in general and soldiers in particular as weak, childish, and feminine."[34] Kowner provides no evidence for his argument but uncritically relies on the "received standard version"[35] of orientalism based on essentialising ideas of a masculine west and a feminine east, an argument that does not stand up to closer scrutiny of contemporary ideas of masculine and feminine.

As many historians have demonstrated, masculinities cannot be understood in direct opposition to femininities, nor to any other category— be it women, different racial or ethnic groups, or different men. Masculinity must instead be studied in connection with and in relation to the "other."[36] It is necessary to examine culturally and historically distinct expressions and understandings of masculinities and their interaction with each other as well as with particular femininities. For instance, while the late-Victorian and

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[34] Rotem Kowner, "Becoming an Honorary Civilized Nation: Remaking Japan's Military Image During the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905," *The Historian* 64:1 (Fall 2001), 19.

[35]Frank Proschan, "Eunuch Mandarins, Soldats Mamzelles, Effeminate Boys, and Graceless Women: French Colonial Constructions of Vietnamese Genders," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*. 8:4 (2002), 437.

[36]Roper and Tosh, "Introduction: Historians and the politics of masculinity," *Manful Assertions*, 13-15.

early-Edwardian cult of manliness, the celebration of martial myths and valorization of soldier heroes, can be located in part among longstanding cultural traditions, it can also be identified as a distinct historical phenomenon, which began as a "flight from domesticity" in the 1890s and ended after the First World War.[37] In addition to these particular notions of British masculinity, the British people reacted to a very strong and distinct masculinity exhibited in Japanese society that was most easily recognized in the figure and idea of the samurai.

The idea of the Japanese as a martial race was common during the war, but it was based in earlier experience with and knowledge of Japan's history and culture, however limited that knowledge might be. Western visitors to Japan during the late Tokugawa (1600-1868) and early Meiji (1868-1912) eras had witnessed and commented on the social power and status of the samurai and had described their behaviour as barbaric, cruel, noble and aristocratic.[38] It is incorrect, then, to state that westerners saw the Japanese as feminine before a particular time or event and that they only recognized Japan's manhood after the country's modernization and 'westernization.' This view is based on uncritical assumptions about what is feminine and what is masculine, and assumes that western gender norms are universal. The war may have represented a shift in views of Japan, but this shift was not at all distinct, because these categories were not distinct. Westerners had earlier recognized a discrete masculinity in Japanese society that they sometimes dismissed and sometimes celebrated. They often recognized the manhood of Old Japan in the person of the samurai and in the idea of bushido, and though it held

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[37] Martin Francis had critiqued this argument in his article, "The Domestication of the Male?" The example however still serves as a demonstration of how certain expressions of and beliefs about masculinity are the product of particular times and places.

[38] Littlewood, *The Idea of Japan*, 160-162; Yokoyama, *Japan in the Victorian Mind*, 88-91.

much appeal for many British, it did not always fit comfortably within the British model of manhood. Earlier in the century, samurai were often feared by foreigners because of their perceived ruthless savagery and their violence; however they were also often said to be effeminate in their love of beauty and their practice of art. Japan was often described in the 1890s and 1900s as embracing a "new manhood," but this need not suggest that previous to this time Japan was considered feminine. To understand representations of Japan and Japanese manhood, we must consider the idea of Japan's old manhood and the alternative expressions of masculinity that the British observed between 1895 and 1905.

In sum, the two common models for understanding western images of Japan— the dualistic paradigm and the notion of the war as a turning point— do not stand up to gender analysis. These models persist, perhaps, in part because the broader historiography of this subject has for the most part not incorporated gender as a category of historical analysis. This is not to say that gender alone can provide the key to understanding British representations, but rather that gender is an important component of the discursive approach to historical enquiry as it operates alongside other categories of analysis such as race and religion. While gender is the primary focus of this study, it must be remembered that it is always intrinsically interconnected with these other categories.

Western images of Japan

The scholarship on western images of Japan deals with a wide range of time periods, approaches and themes. Studies in fields from art history to military history have created an abundance of literature which examines in detail the decades after Japan's 'opening'

by the west in the mid-nineteenth century. Some late twentieth-century scholars treat Victorian representations of Japan as a small part of a larger, enduring Orientalist discourse, although most see the intellectual and material conditions of the Victorian period as creating a unique set of images. Some historians see attitudes and representations evolving through each decade, while others treat the topic thematically, revealing common and durable stereotypes and ways of seeing Japan. Diverse scholars have dealt with topics such as western attitudes towards Japanese race, religions, civilization, and martial spirit,[39] but have not adequately deployed gender as a category of analysis. This is a significant and surprising gap, especially in the face of numerous excellent studies on gender and British imperialism, and the attention given in broad studies of western images of Japan to Japanese women, especially geisha and prostitutes. Nor have scholars examined the subjectivities of the writers in any more detailed terms than their "changing consciousness towards the outside world and of themselves as members of the most powerful empire in the world,"[40] as the author of the standard work on this topic has written.

As historian Catherine Hall has shown, it is not enough to take for granted that these people considered themselves English, or even part of the empire; we must "deconstruct those English identities" and "unpick the stories which gave meaning to the

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[39] Rotem Kowner, "Lighter than Yellow, But Not Enough"; Sandra Caruthers Thomson, "Meiji Japan through Missionary Eyes: the American Protestant Experience," *Journal of Religious History* 7:3 (1973): 248-259; Margaret Prang, *A Heart at Leisure from Itself: Caroline Macdonald of Japan* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1995, chapter 2; Philip Charrier, "The Evolution of a Stereotype: The Royal Navy and the Japanese 'Martial Type', 1900-1945," *War and Society* 19:1 (May 2001): 23-46; Holmes and Ion, "Bushido and the Samurai".

[40] Yokoyama, *Japan in the Victorian Mind*, xx.

national and imperial project."[41] How did Japanese men appear through the eyes of people who shared in a (for the most part) common understanding of masculinity and femininity? How was the discourse about Japan informed by the larger discourse of empire, which was itself comprised of and connected to "various intersecting late nineteenth-century ideologies of race, ethnicity, class, religion, and sexuality"?[42] This discourse was not the product of a homogeneous voice, but of a combination of voices from various ideological and material positions. Together, these voices make up what could be called a "Victorian image of Japan." It is essential, though, to isolate some of these constitutive voices and to expose them to closer examination, in order to challenge stereotypical notions of an essentialized "Victorian person," and to uncover concerns and perspectives that might otherwise be overshadowed by this stereotype. It is equally important to isolate some of the objects about which these voices spoke, for the Japan that was presented in this discourse was as heterogeneous as Britain, and the image of "the Japanese" glossed over much diversity. The present study will examine one particular object of widespread speculation, judgement, attraction, and prejudice: the Japanese man of the samurai class.

Gender has only recently— and then unsatisfactorily— been made explicit in this historiography. Given that the literature is greatly lacking in the perspectives of women's history, which has in other instances provided the tools and methods for the history of men,[43] not surprisingly, there has also been no concern with masculinity in this body of

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[41] Catherine Hall, *White, Male and Middle-Class: Explorations in Feminism and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 207.

[42] Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'manly Englishman' and the 'effeminate Bengali' in the late nineteenth century* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), 11.

[43] Mrinalini Sinha, "Giving Masculinity a History."

work. Japanese women have been singled out for comment, allowing for, if not directly resulting in, discussions of femininity; Japanese men have rarely been identified by historians as objects of attention, and so questions about their (perceived) masculinity have not been asked. In order to study images of Japanese men, we must, as Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman suggest,

> make men and masculinity explicit and thus simultaneously, and somewhat paradoxically, assist in the decentering of men and masculinity in discourse. This involves making problematic the ways in which men and masculinity may be conventionally and unproblematically at the center of discourse, often as explicit or implicit, transcendent subjects, explanations, or foundations.[44]

Information about men was implicit in the apparent social status of women, yet when discussing women, historians have ignored men or treated them as part of the social structure that acted on women rather than as similarly gendered actors within that structure. Foreigners often commented on the low status of Japanese women in society and their poor treatment by men. Historians have suggested that women's status influenced westerners' views of Japan's level of civilization or barbarity,[45] which were also influenced by contextualizing discourses of race and gender. Representations of men and especially the idea of manliness were also intricately connected to notions of civilization and barbarity; men's status in society, their behaviour and their appearance all influenced how westerners imagined Japan's level of civilization; conversely, presumptions about Japan's level of civilization influenced how Japanese men were represented.

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[44] Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman, eds. *Theorizing Masculinities* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1994), 98.

[45] See for example Lehmann, *The Image of Japan*, 68.

Two monographs on western images of Japan have informed nearly every subsequent treatment of this topic. Toshio Yokoyama's *Japan in the Victorian Mind: a Study of Stereotyped Images of a Nation 1850-80* uses articles from British monthly and quarterly reviews to argue that representations of Japan in Britain changed gradually but significantly from feelings of empathy and even similarity with Japan in the 1850s and 1860s to convictions in the 1880s of Japan's innate difference and singularity; in a parallel shift, which he attributes to the demands of the reading public, Yokoyama suggests that early representations were more accurate and the writers more insightful than in later years when stereotypes and generalizations were much more common.[46] Concerned more with the producers of these images than with the images themselves, he suggests that British writers had many ways to emphasize affinities but chose to employ the stereotype of Japanese singularity.[47]

A thematic approach to Western images of Japan is favoured over a chronological one in Jean-Pierre Lehmann's *The Image of Japan: From Feudal Isolation to World Power, 1850-1905.* In contrast to Yokoyama, Lehmann states that a chronological approach is essentially inappropriate for this topic, because images did not change in tune with real changes occurring in Japan and Europe.[48] Instead, he pulls out common images and stereotypes found in western representations and treats them as separate subjects, tracing the development, from the mid-nineteenth to the early-twentieth century, of images like the geisha and the samurai, and the land of "topsy-turvydom." Lehmann's

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[46] Yokoyama, *Japan in the Victorian Mind*, 174-175.

[47] Yokoyama, *Japan in the Victorian Mind*, 170.

[48] Jean-Pierre Lehmann, *The Image of Japan: From Feudal Isolation to World Power, 1850-1905* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1978), 15.

theme is "changing Japan" and his focus is on the images rather than their producers. Although he does not address the issue of gender explicitly, his argument speaks to the paradigm of the Russo-Japanese War as a turning point. By focussing on themes and images, he highlights the continuity of ideas such as the romance of the samurai and bushido in western images, rather than a shift in these images due to material changes in Japan and Europe. Thus, he does not see the Russo-Japanese War as a clean break from a feminine image of Japan to a masculine one.

Both Lehmann and Yokoyama contend that as much as Japan was rapidly changing in the last decades of the nineteenth century, western imaginations and the pictures of the country did not necessarily develop in step with material reality. Yokoyama provides quite a convincing analysis of the formative decades of Victorian images of Japan and establishes the background for the common and recurring themes of the later period. Although Lehmann, by extending his study to the first years of the twentieth century addresses the change in attitude towards Japan as it became involved in international politics, he too stresses that stereotypes and familiar worldviews endure in the face of change, and that the beliefs and values we characterize as Victorian informed British images of Japan as much as observable realities.[49]

Both studies adhere to the idea of a common and definable "Victorian image of Japan" rather than considering in more detail the numerous and diverse threads that were interwoven to create a dominant discourse, such as those created by missionaries, diplomats, travellers and scholars. Yokoyama takes a similar approach to the object of these discourses; he does not examine in any detail the exceptional features of the country

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[49] Lehmann, *The Image of Japan,* 14-15.

and the people that attracted the most attention— for example, representations of Japanese women or men— but treats them as all parts of "Japan." Lehmann does break down the overarching image somewhat and isolates certain aspects that best represented "changing Japan." His chapter on women, however, is presented as an exception to his theme. He states that "[i]t can hardly be argued that the position of women was one of the more striking aspects of changing Japan. On the other hand... probably no aspect of Japan was of as much interest as her women."[50] Although historians identify images of women as significant, few of them look at their subjects (British men and women) or their respective objects (Japanese men and women) as gendered beings influenced by powerful cultural notions of masculinity and femininity.

Since the publication of these two books, several historians have attempted more focussed studies of particular aspects of western images of Japan. A few have begun, in varying degrees, to incorporate gender as a method of analysis. Robert A. Rosenstone has examined the commonly held stereotype of the "imitative" Japanese and contends that Americans in Japan in the second half of the nineteenth century learned as much as they presumed to teach the Japanese.[51] Although it is a small part of his larger argument, his discussion of American views of Japanese men makes Rosenstone's article noteworthy as a surprisingly insightful analysis and clear evidence of recognition of the gendered nature of these representations. Rosenstone suggests that the accepted definition

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[50] Lehmann, *The Image of Japan*, 16.

[51] Robert A. Rosenstone, "Learning from Those 'Imitative' Japanese: Another Side of the American Experience in the Mikado's Empire," *American Historical Review* 85:3 (1980): 572-595. Rosenstone's framing argument, that in spite of momentous changes in both countries during this time, "the essential core values of each society were little touched by political and economic change"(p. 575) and Americans continued to see "this Oriental society" as "remarkably constant and enduring" (p. 574), is perhaps contentious, but his article is otherwise quite standard fare, discussing the various aspects of Japan that attracted comment by Americans, such as Japanese imitativeness, civility, and aesthetic preoccupations.

of American masculinity was challenged and threatened by Japanese men, who were seen as feminine in their playfulness, refinement and love of art, and that American men who showed too much interest in or appreciation of Japanese culture were in danger of appearing "effeminate." He argues further that widespread American support for Japan's wars of expansion and praise of the military were in part "an attempt to show that Japanese men, who could be moved to tears by a poem or go into raptures over the perfection of a cherry blossom, also knew how to kill and be killed."[52] His argument is left largely undeveloped, but provides the germ of a very interesting analysis. Subsequent studies of masculinity have provided the tools and the framework to expand this argument and to explore how Anglo-American men in this period were informed by a particular understanding of masculinity and why they had to understand Japanese men in these terms, but later historians have not adequately advanced Rosenstone's insights into images of Japanese men.

In her examination of the travel writings of two individuals, George Curzon and Isabella Bird, Jihang Park has tried to use gender as an analytical framework. Unfortunately, though the study might be a welcome move in the right direction, it is a disappointing one. Park attempts to compare the discourses of the two travellers and to show how Curzon's discourse is masculine and Bird's is feminine, but never demonstrates how or why she assumes each discourse to be gendered a certain way. She relies on essentialized and ahistorical definitions of masculine and feminine, and does not explore the forces behind the creation of these categories, nor even refer to others who have done so. She perplexingly states without explanation that descriptions of the body

[52] Rosenstone, "Learning from Those 'Imitative' Japanese," 586.

are a "recognized mark of femininity" and appear in Bird's writings but not in Curzon's.[53] Yet she ignores the writings of military historians who have shown that physical descriptions make up a significant part of English assessments of Japanese military men and the numerous travel accounts by men and women that refer to the physical qualities of the Japanese. Later, Park states that western medicine was "a symbol of masculinity,"[54] an interesting notion, but she offers no qualification or further explanation. By assuming some inherent, universal masculinity in male writers and innate femininity in females, Park does not allow for the malleability of gender identities, nor does she allow that these identities were not rigidly formed in Britain, but were also formed through contact with Asians and other non-British people. The one useful point in her article is the discussion of how Victorian ideas about civilization were incorporated into the discourse on Japan and Korea. In this case, she does recognise that the concept held a peculiar definition in late nineteenth-century England.[55] A similar recognition of the specificity of the concepts of masculinity and femininity would have made her argument more persuasive. Park's attempt to provide a gender analysis of travel writings on Japan is well noted, but any student of gender history should question her indiscriminate and uncritical use of the terms masculine and feminine.[56]

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[53] Jihang Park, "Land of the Morning Calm, Land of the Rising Sun: The East Asia Travel Writings of Isabella Bird and George Curzon," *Modern Asian Studies* 36:3 (2002), 525.

[54] Park, "Land of the Morning Calm," 529.

[55] Park, "Land of the Morning Calm," 519-523.

[56] That which has been considered masculine or feminine at any time has depended on class, ethnicity, religion, and a number of other variables. Most scholars have recognized the existence of multiple and competing masculinities in England, even though most historians' attention has been focused on the dominant, middle-class gender ideologies. On this subject, see John Tosh, "What Should Historians do with Masculinity?" and "Introduction: Historians and the politics of masculinity," in Roper and Tosh, eds., *Manful Assertions*.

Rotem Kowner also uses these terms uncritically in his study of western images of Japan during the Russo-Japanese War. The war has commonly been presented as a brief and anomalous period in which the British press presented the Japanese military and society in general in favourable terms.[57] Rotem Kowner argues that these uniquely favourable images were the result of western nations' economic and political concerns—particularly animosity towards Russia— as well as Japan's conscious effort to control the image that it presented to the west. Kowner presents evidence from newspaper correspondents and military observers that demonstrates how Japanese soldiers were admired for their actions in the war, and how westerners abandoned their views of the Japanese as weak, undisciplined, feminine and childish. However he provides no evidence of this earlier attitude, seemingly taking it for granted. He limits his argument to the war itself, only very briefly sketching some common perceptions of the Japanese and their military prior to the war. His focus on the war and other material explanations for the images of Japan is designed to show change rather than continuity in this aspect of western perceptions of Japan. "[S]uch positive images of Japan constructed during the Russo-Japanese War," he maintains, "were the outcome of unique circumstances that arose only once in the modern history of Japan and its international relations."[58] Kowner ignores the importance of pre-existing, popular western ideas and opinions about martial men in general and Japanese soldiers and samurai in particular, and how these ideas might also have influenced wartime representations. All this is not to say that the specific, material circumstances of the war did not affect the image of Japan in the west, and

[57] Rotem Kowner, "Becoming an Honorary Civilized Nation."

[58] Kowner, "Becoming an Honorary Civilized Nation," 35.

particularly in Japan's ally, Britain. These circumstances should be considered as creating a generally more favourable image of Japanese soldiers in the press, but not for the creation of the images themselves nor the ideas and values associated with them— the ideas of manliness and bushido particularly. These images existed before the war. A more discursive approach yields more interesting insight into these representations. Images of Japan were generally positive during this period, especially in the *Illustrated London News* and *The Times*, largely because Japan was Britain's ally. However, if we shift our frame of reference slightly, we see that the value judgements placed upon the character and behaviour of Japanese soldiers also reflect values and assumptions about masculinity and manhood that existed in the absence of, and without specific reference to, the war.

Because missionary views account for a very large part of the overall image of Japanese men in this period, it is pertinent to discuss very briefly some of the histories of Christian missionaries in Meiji Japan, with particular regard to how missionaries represented Japanese men and women. The publications of missionary societies were a major source for many people's knowledge of Japan.[59] Christine Bolt suggests that missionary publications were widely read at the end of the century perhaps not only for their religious content, but because they fit into the popular genre of stories about

[59] Cyril Powles states the monthly circulation of the two main missionary periodicals in Britain, the CMS *Gleaner* and *Intelligencer*, was about 90,000 copies in 1896, compared to about 38,000 for *The Times*. See Cyril Hamilton Powles, *Victorian Missionaries on Meiji Japan, The Shiba Sect: 1873-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto-York University Joint Centre on Modern East Asia, 1987), 93. It must be noted that missionary magazines published in Japan often included multi-national and multi-denominational perspectives; even the Anglican Church Missionary Society publications included reports from Canadian, American and some Australian missionaries, as well as from Japanese Christians. I have not used Japanese reports in this study; a few reports from Americans and Canadians have been used, for while ideas of manhood were in many important ways closely tied to British nationalism, other aspects of manhood and manliness, such as religion or race, were shared between Britain and North America. For discussions of these shared experiences, see Mangan and Walvin, eds., *Manliness and Morality*.

"personal adventure and national achievement."[60] While missionaries did have distinct goals and beliefs that were often different from and at times derided by secular writers, historians often see the information they provided and the images they created as part of a larger discourse on Japan. Periodicals with news or opinion from the Japanese mission field often contained the same information found in secular publications, such as brief introductions to the religious and cultural traditions of the country, and commentaries on current events, such as the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. But the main concern of these periodicals was the level of morality and civilization in Japan, generally measured according to people's adoption of Christian values and beliefs.

In the broad works on western images of Japan discussed above, historians do not give missionaries special attention and tend to include their views as part of the larger discourse. The few books written since the Second World War that focus specifically on British missionaries in Japan place missionary representations in the wider framework of British representations and in the context of broader Anglo-Japanese relations. A. Hamish Ion's overarching argument is that "the missionaries remained British in outlook, interpreting Japan with Western attitudes, and judging Japanese by Western standards."[61] While questioning the quality of much missionary writing, Ion maintains that these writings were a large and vital part of the British literature on Japan. Cyril Powles, in his

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[60] Christine Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes to Race* (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1971), 213.

[61] A. Hamish Ion, *The Cross and the Rising Sun volume 2: The British Protestant Missionary Movement in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, 1865-1945.* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1993), 3.

book on Victorian missionaries in Meiji Japan, also places missionaries within the larger category of Britons in Japan.[62]

This is a sound approach. The people who wrote and read these descriptions and evaluations of Japan were informed not only by the shared meanings and shaping discourses of empire, race, and gender, but also of religion. Several scholars have demonstrated the prominent place of religion in the broader cultural life of Britain,[63] and have recognized religion as a foundation of the extolled middle-class British morality, a morality which has been presented as "the backbone of an immense sense of national superiority."[64] Missionary representations of Japanese men might seem to be at odds with those produced by writers with a more secular worldview: while the Christian view was that differences in peoples were caused by their physical and cultural environment and could be overcome (i.e., that people could improve themselves by becoming Christian), the other, more widespread and also more hardened belief in this era was that differences between peoples were inherent, biologically determined and unalterable. However, these two worldviews were "not two different systems, but 'racism's two registers', and in many situations discourses of both were in play, the cultural slipping into the biological, and vice versa."[65] Race and culture were not necessarily at odds in evolutionary and racial thinking but were in practice often conflated, demonstrating how malleable and

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[62] Powles, *Victorian Missionaries on Meiji Japan.*

[63] See the brief review essay of this literature in John Wolffe, "Introduction: Victorian Religion in Context," in John Wolffe, ed., *Religion in Victorian Britain Volume V: Culture and Empire* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 1-20.

[64] Yokoyama, *Japan in the Victorian Mind*, xxi.

[65] Hall, *Civilizing Subjects*, 17.

how easily coupled religious beliefs and scientific knowledge could be.[66] These two discourses of difference, religious and scientific, existed in relation to each other and to diverse other discourses, all comprising a larger discursive milieu, a web of meaning outside of which it was virtually impossible to construct knowledge. Religious belief could not be expressed outside of or in isolation from this era's extremely powerful discourse on biological racism.[67]

Because of the profound interconnectedness of numerous floating discourses that informed all representations of Japanese men, differences between missionary and secular writing are considered in this thesis as a matter of degree and of focus, not of nature. Missionaries wrote more explicitly and more prolifically on expressly religious issues such as evangelizing and converting the Japanese, whereas pundits', travellers' and scholars' expressions of religious sentiment, such as a belief in Christianity's superiority to other religions and its role in Britain's success and power, were less in the forefront but were still present in their writing. During wartime, everyone who wrote about Japan paid major attention to Japanese soldiers. The difference was that missionaries placed these men more plainly in the context of family life than did military observers, who focussed on the way that men lived up to the ideal of a soldier. A second and related point of difference is that missionaries focused on the home front, not on the battlefield,

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[66] See Peter J. Bowler, *Evolution: The History of an Idea*, revised edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 299-306. See also Douglas A. Lorimer, "Race, science and culture: historical continuities and discontinuities, 1850-1914," in Shearer West, ed., *The Victorians and Race* (Aldershot, England and Brookfield, USA: Scolar Press and Ashgate Publishing Co., 1996).

[67] Nancy Stepan argues that factors such as religion or morality cannot be "thought of as lying somehow 'outside' science" in this period. Just as racial scientists were not isolated from broader society and culture, neither could other people in that society separate themselves from the impact of scientific knowledge of humans. See Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain 1800-1960* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1982), xiii-xv.

as military analysts and journalists did. Thus this thesis will scrutinize missionary writing primarily— but not exclusively— when discussing representations of Japanese men in the context of family life and gender relations because missionaries, having the most intimate contact with Japanese people, were in a good position to comment extensively on this topic. Likewise, in treating images of men as soldiers, sources come mainly from military and political writers. However, nearly every source examined in this study, with the exception of the journals of military officers and war correspondents, comments on a wide variety of topics and issues, and so for this study every person who commented on Japanese men, regardless of his or her profession or purposes, is included as a contributor to the general image of Japanese manhood.

Like religion, race figures in this study as an important and influential contextualizing discourse. However, race will be specifically addressed mainly as it informed ideas of Japanese manhood. Popular periodicals and travel books did not frequently discuss the idea of the Japanese race in great detail. An explicit racializing discourse about Japan did exist in Britain at this time, but it was mostly confined to a smaller and more academic audience.[68] British opinions and representations of Japanese race are a fascinating topic, but a topic for another study. The principal concern here is with British conceptions of manhood and manliness as sets of behavioural and character traits and how Japanese men were seen to possess these traits. Above all, what is most strikingly obvious in examining the sources is not the divisions among the writers, their motivations or their primary concerns, but the pervasiveness of the two distinct images of manhood that were exposed: the family man and the soldier.

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[68] See Kowner, "'Lighter Than Yellow, But Not Enough'".

This study will attempt to uncover a picture of Japanese manhood at the turn of the twentieth century as told by British writers whose representations were shaped by their own highly subjective sense of what made a man. In doing so, it is hoped that new insight will be gained into the construction and maintenance of two important faces of "the Japanese man."

Chapter Two: Men's Domestic Lives

By the end of the nineteenth century, many British writers described Japanese men as "competent" by European standards in several areas of public life and national development. In his 1899 book *Japan in Transition*, Stafford Ransome categorized Japan's progress and westernization in the following terms: "Speaking personally, I have been in contact with statesmen, politicians, diplomatists, barristers, lawyers, doctors, journalists, engineers, and architects, who, looked at from the Western point of view, would be considered thoroughly competent in every way."[1] What did British people say about these men, not as public figures but as private men, and how did they measure Japanese men's "competence" as husbands, fathers and sons? Moreover, what did domestic life matter to the development of the nation as a world power and an ally of Britain? This kind of analysis did not figure prominently in the official assessments of the nation by European statesmen and policy makers. Nevertheless, beliefs about men's personal lives were always present below the surface and emerged again and again in the midst of more 'serious' discussions of Japan. Concern over family life and social issues factored into British assessments of Japanese society and civilization, Japan's suitability as an ally, and Japan's prospect for Christianisation.

Common among all British writers was the question of Japan's potential to become 'civilized,' which largely depended on the character of its male residents. Missionaries in particular wrote much about Japan's potential to become a civilized and Christian nation, and wove this theme into every topic they treated in their periodicals— topics as diverse as Japan's education system and marriage practices, its foreign policy and its military

[1] Stafford Ransome, *Japan in Transition: A comparative study of the progress policy and methods of Japanese since their war with China.* (London and New York: Harper & Brothers, 1899), 13.

alliance with Britain.[2] Evaluating the Japanese education system in 1903, one missionary wrote, "[n]o matter what kind of soil a country may have, no matter what its climate may be, no matter what kind of animals it may produce, no matter what its natural curiosities may be; the great question is, what kind of men does it produce?"[3] What kind of men did Japan produce in the eyes of the British? Were the men in Japan considered different than other men, the product of a unique moral and social environment? Or were all men simply men in every country, regardless of environmental factors? Some observers seemed not to take Japan's social and cultural traditions into account at all, seeing men in essential or absolute terms, the standard of measurement being the British middle-class gentleman. Others attributed supposedly unique characteristics of Japanese men to the Confucian ethical system, to Japan's martial traditions, or to the nation's level of civilization—a level which, contradictorily, was often measured by the behaviour of its men. The close connection between civilization and manliness was a common and recurring theme in English discourse on Japan.

A key way that observers evaluated the level of civilization and the quality of men in Japan was by scrutinizing gender relations. Focussing primarily on the context of home and family life, this chapter examines how British observers discerned Japanese men's

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[2] Most of the periodicals and books used as sources for this study were Anglican, published by the Church Missionary Society or the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Others were multi-denominational and multi-national Protestant publications produced in Japan and intended for readers in Britain, Canada and the United States.

[3] "The Ethical in Education," *The Japan Evangelist* 10:5 (May 1903), 157. The author likely meant 'humans' and not 'men' specifically, but it is important to note this metonymy because it highlights the way in which men have regularly been presented as gender-neutral beings who stand for a nation or a community. In this case, I want to read the word as if it did refer specifically to males in order to draw out the ways in which masculinity was a subtle but recurrent factor in the measure of Japan's status in the eyes of the British. The tendency of Europeans to look at non-European societies in this way, to characterize whole societies based on men's actions, has been discussed by historians in other colonial contexts. See, for example, Elizabeth Vibert, *Traders' Tales Narratives of Cultural Encounters in the Columbia Plateau, 1807-1846* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 135.

manliness (or lack thereof) in their family relationships and their behaviour towards women. The discourse on Japanese domestic life reveals a number of contradictory views about the level of Japanese men's morality and their ability to improve themselves, about the value of Japanese traditions versus westernization, and about the existence of some inherent manly quality versus culturally relative masculine behaviour.

Views of Japanese Gender Relations

A brief discussion of British views of gender relations in Meiji Japan will provide a framework for looking more closely at how British observers perceived Japanese domestic life. British writers found many ways to differentiate Japanese men from themselves. 'Race' was a key marker of difference, particularly when used to discuss the idea of martial races.[4] More often, though, books and periodicals meant for a general audience presented behaviour or traditional social customs as the key differentiating features of Japanese men, and one of the most widely discussed features of Japanese society was its gender relations. In almost all of the British books that dealt with the issue of Japan's progress, social relations occupied a position alongside economic and political reforms as factors in Japan's development.

Gender relations and gender identities not only played a large part in the impression of Japan but were also a key factor in the way that the British middle class structured and understood their own lives and identities as well as those of others. The British ideology

[4] 'Race' held a number of meanings in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although in this period the term was strongly associated with scientific knowledge of humans, it was still used to describe groups of people based not only on skin colour or physical appearance, but also on a variety of factors such as culture, ethnicity, religion, or nationality. The Japanese, for instance, were described variously by the British as a martial race, an Asiatic race, and a Japanese race. I am using the term 'race' in this broad sense to reflect the wide currency that this vague term held in the discourse on Japan. See Nancy Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain, 1800-1960* (MacMillan Press, 1982), xvi-xvii.

of manliness featured implicitly in discussions of Japanese men's behaviour in Japanese society. Mrinalini Sinha suggests that British colonials in India used unmanly or manly behaviour as a principal point of difference among men and argues that the controversies surrounding certain colonial legislation there demonstrate the way in which British imperial ideology "substituted for a straightforward defence of racial exclusivity a supposedly more 'natural' gender hierarchy between 'manly' and 'unmanly' men."[5] Similarly, in Japan, some British observers pointed to Japanese men's manly behaviour as proof of their suitability to join the civilized nations of the world, while others saw their unmanly behaviour as reason to exclude them from such status. Jean-Pierre Lehman has suggested that "[t]he consequences of this extreme dominance of the male in Japanese society were numerous and were the cause (or so it was believed) of certain outstanding differences between Japanese and Western social and moral customs."[6] Although other expressions of manliness, such as supposed martial qualities, were also used to differentiate men, men's dominance over women was considered a major cause of difference between Japanese and western society and between Japanese and western men. Perhaps unlike some other measures of masculinity, such as physical appearance, most observers believed men's behaviour towards women to be correctable and a significant but not insurmountable barrier to Japan's progress towards civilization. Other markers of masculinity such as physical size, muscularity or strength were less flexible and operated more strongly to racialize Japanese men, but manliness was seen as being more malleable than other differentiating categories, because possession of manliness did not strictly

[5] Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity*, 5.

[6] Lehmann, *The Image of Japan*, 72.

depend on physical criteria. The flexibility of this ideology of manliness gave Japanese men the potential to become better men in the eyes of the British.

A key index to the social and moral environment of any nation, according to the British, was the status of its women. The position of women in Japanese upper-class society was a common concern among most of those who wrote about the country.[7] Japan was often described as "a man's country, where women [were] regarded as mere conveniences."[8] The status of women in society was interpreted as a measure not only of the level of civilization and progress of the nation, but also of the quality and character of men. British men and women decried Japanese men's treatment of women not only for the sake of individual women, but also for the damage it was doing in retarding Japan's progress toward becoming a modern, civilized nation. By the end of the nineteenth century, British observers were beginning to take Japan more seriously, and were re-examining new problems that were once taken for granted or not considered important. One of these problems was the relationship between husbands and wives. Light-hearted jokes about Japan as a man's country, where "a house of ill-fame is to them hardly more remarkable than a restaurant,"[9] were less often heard. Instead there were attempts to reconcile unpopular aspects of Japanese society such as prostitution with Japan's apparent progress and civilization. Those writers who were enamoured of Japan and its

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[7] Peasants and lower-class women were comparatively rarely discussed. When they were, it was to note how similar they were to men in their costume and labour, and how much better they were treated by their husbands than were upper-class women. Apart from prostitutes and geisha, it was upper-class women who were the focus of the most attention, even though few westerners, except for missionaries, ever interacted with them.

[8] Douglas Sladen, *Queer Things about Japan* (London: Anthony Treherne & Co., Ltd., 1903), 23.

[9] Sladen, *Queer Things about Japan*, 156.

people tried to paint as innocuous a picture as they could, while still addressing the problems of Japan's exceedingly male-dominated society.

Japanese women, not men, most commonly attracted westerners' gaze, and have been a favourite subject among historians of western images of Japan. Women— and certain types of women such as geisha and prostitutes in particular— were objects of both male and female foreigners' attention and usually their affection as well.[10] This combination of attention and affection created an idealized image of women, an image that, according to Lehmann, "transcended reality; it was a source of dreams, certainly of fiction ... no aspect of Japan captivated the Western male imagination as much as Japanese woman [*sic*]."[11] Lehmann's choice of words here is suggestive of a commonly held ideal of the "Japanese woman" which positioned 'her' in what Mary Louise Pratt has termed "a timeless present tense."[12] A few western voices spoke in negative terms of the lack of chastity and loose morals of Japanese women, who bathed in public and appeared to prostitute themselves with virtually no compunction, but by this time the great majority of westerners, men and women, spoke of them in very flattering and often exaggerated

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[10] While I recognize the differently gendered lenses with which English men and women saw and interpreted Japan and Japanese people, I have chosen to treat all their images together. Attention must be paid to these differences, but one must also be careful not to take these differences too far, as Jihang Park has done in her recent analysis. See Park, "Land of the Morning Calm, Land of the Rising Sun." I am approaching the subject in this manner for other, more practical reasons. First, my focus is on the images themselves and their combined effect, not on the individual people who produced them. Second, articles in the missionary publications were often written anonymously, or else the author provided only his or her initials, making it impossible to state for certain if the author was male or female.

[11] Lehmann, *The Image of Japan*, 68.

[12] Mary Louise Pratt, "Scratches on the Face of the Country; or, What Mr. Barrow saw in the Land of the Bushmen," in Henry Louis Gates, Jr., ed., *"Race," Writings and Difference* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 139. This "iconic" pronoun, Pratt suggests, presents people's characteristics and actions "not as a particular historical event but as an instance of a pregiven custom or trait." Lehmann himself does not make a distinction in his own analysis between the expressions 'Japanese woman' and 'Japanese women', using them indiscriminately and interchangeably, nor does he note the implications of this confusion in his own text or the texts he is analysing.

terms.[13] To western men, Japanese women's attractiveness was sometimes found in their physical beauty, but more often in their demeanour, which was characterized as childlike, innocent, and self-effacing.[14] This demeanour was presented as a function of their gender roles and their status in society. Looking at what was said about women, then, can help to reveal what was thought about men.

How did Japanese men figure in the glow of this idealized womanhood? Often, as women were portrayed as gentle and self-effacing, men were seen in opposite terms as arrogant and cruel. This western paradigm for representing Japanese men and women has been traced back to the sixteenth century, and though it reached the height of its popularity in the 1930s and 1940s, it still exists in some form today.[15] But we must ask with what kind of analysis, in what kind of light, has this model been constructed and observed? Using gender as a framework and exploring meanings of masculinity and manhood, can we see more clearly the complexities in what has become a standardized and very superficial model? To do this we must look at the specific contexts in which this image was created and the spaces where gender identities were established. One of those places was the home.

Praise for Japanese women was often matched by feelings of pity for their low status in the family and in society. Many considered men's sexual immorality to be the

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[13] To give just one example of this flattering and essentialized discourse surrounding Japanese women: "The Japanese wife is ... always a careful housekeeper, and she excels as a tender, loving mother [and she has a] bright disposition, economical management of money, and perfect cleanliness and order in her household duties." J. Morris, *Advance Japan: A Nation Thoroughly in Earnest* (London: W. H. Allen and Co., Ltd., 1895), 88. This kind of description of womanhood paralleled very closely the popular Victorian image of the middle-class wife as the "angel in the house."

[14] See Lehmann, *The Image of Japan*, chapter three and Littlewood, *The Idea of Japan*, 109-156.

[15] See Littlewood, *The Image of Japan*, 159-169 and Richie, "Interpretations of Japan," 87.

reason women were kept in such a degraded state, both in and outside the home. In 1904, an article called "The Geisha: A Faithful Study" in *The Nineteenth Century* attempted to correct the romantic image of the geisha held by most westerners and make known the "real" Japanese woman. The author asserted that "[h]er husband despises, indeed, and ignores her; yet regards her as so inviolably sacred a piece of the family furniture that never does he allow her within sight of the Western barbarian. He shuts her away from outside gaze, even though he himself finds her society tedious and insipid... [h]er husband has no wish to see or hear any more of her than is necessary to the thriving conduct of the household."[16] Most other writers agreed with this narrative, and almost everyone, men and women equally, denounced Japanese men's behaviour towards women. One particularly effusive 1894 article in the *Japan Evangelist*, a multi-denominational Christian periodical, expressed this notion plainly:

> [F]rom my associations with the Japanese covering many years, I am convinced that the great mass of Japanese men are not willing to treat woman on an equality. In many a home the woman is hardly more than a household slave to wait on her husband as upon a master. We recognise many exceptions to this, and these exceptions only bring out the old order of things more vividly. Woman has no fair chance yet in Japan, and most men are too selfish and too self-indulgent to give her a fair chance. The majority of Japanese men think of their own comfort and position first and of women only as much as they can minister to them. Here lies the curse of woman in Japan, - the selfishness and self-indulgence of the Japanese men. What a terrible tide woman has to fight against ... I do not regard Japanese men more lascivious than westerners; but this, I think, is clear, that the lusts of men here are more in the way of woman's advancement than they could be in the West, owing to the treatment woman has received in this land and to men's loose views of marriage and marital faithfulness. To what extent concubinage is practiced I am not prepared to say, but I know only too well of the unhappiness and the broken hearts in some of the homes in the city in which I live and labor. I know also of the terrible evil that the habit of frequenting the dances of the

[16] Reginald Farrer, "The Geisha: A Faithful Study," *The Nineteenth Century* (April 1904), 630-631.

> singing girls brings upon the peace and purity of the home. The Japanese wife and mother— Aye, hearts bleed in the Orient, too.[17]

The discourse on men's treatment of women reveals much about expectations that the British held for the Japanese as new members of the civilized community of nations, particularly the assumption that educated Japanese had embraced western ideas and values. "Western learning" had in fact been an important part of the new Meiji government's reforms after the restoration in 1868. The government hired foreign teachers and sent Japanese students abroad to learn and appropriate western institutions and technology. By the turn of the century cultural and political relations between the two countries had been well established. Against this background, many British people seemed baffled that in spite of all the western education Japanese men had received and all the western institutions they had adopted— such as a constitutional system of government, modern communication systems, and military organization— they did not assume European social institutions, particularly the gentlemanly treatment of women. This surprise was often tinged with disdain. "It is surprising," wrote one missionary, "to walk home with a Japanese sufficiently educated to converse in English, and to hear him say to his wife the single word 'Boots!' when she opens the door, as a signal for her to stoop down and unlace them."[18] The frustration is obvious in the description of another man, who "has received the best results of western learning and is very affable with foreign gentlemen, but does not even lift his hat to a foreign lady."[19] It was presumed that

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[17] Max Marron, "Simple Scenes of Japanese Life IV: A Young Woman," *Japan Evangelist* 1:4 (April 1894), 223-224.

[18] Herbert Moore, *The Christian Faith in Japan* (London: The Society of the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1904), 49.

[19] Marron, "Simple Scenes of Japanese Life," 223.

respect for women was necessarily and naturally connected to western education, and British visitors tended to explain this deficiency in the western education of Japanese men by connecting it to ethnic traits or social conventions.

Missionaries were less often surprised than travellers and diplomats to note this defect and were more certain of its cause: the absence of Christian education as part of this western learning. In the words of a female missionary,

> there are some at home who seem almost to think that a nation like this might be left to herself... [however] [w]e need no other witnesses than some of the homes of our friends (and those I am thinking of are chiefly in the professional classes) to prove the pitiful inefficiency of any moral influence known yet in Japan to restrain sin. In our little old house in Aiocho I knew something of the appalling coil [*sic*] at work in the uneducated classes, but since we came to live here the shock of finding it hidden away in the very homes of men who have been to German and English Universities has been far worse, and brings home to one what our civilization works, without our Christianity.[20]

Christianity, and more specifically British Protestantism, was extolled in numerous articles as the reason for Britain's greatness. Missionaries considered Christianity to be the source of all that was great about western, and especially British, civilization, and part of this greatness was the status of women. Missionaries expressed a firm conviction that Christianity was superior to all other religions with regard to the status it gives to women, and found that "Japan is no exception to the rule that women are degraded by all religions but Christianity."[21] The belief in the relationship between Christianity's exceptional regard for women and Western Europe's achievements in all areas of society and culture was expressed not only by missionaries but was also clear in contemporary secular

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[20] A. M. Tapson, "Not Enough!" *CMS Gleaner* 32:380 (August 1905), 125.

[21] *Japan Evangelist* 5:1 (January 1898), 33.

writing.[22] The acceptance of Christian morals and attitudes towards women as a necessary part of Japan's modernization and the development of its manhood was thus a common motif in this discourse.

Several people interpreted Japanese men's divergent behaviour to mean that Japan maintained only "a veneer of Western civilization."[23] Many observers from various viewpoints recognized a sharp division between public and private life in Japan paralleling the division between Old and New Japan. The domestic life of the Japanese was still presumed to be fixed in the past, and this was a problem that had to be overcome if Japan was going to become an advanced, modern nation:

> [W]e must not run away with the supposition that Japan proper is at all like a Western country, or that the people in it are at all like Western people... for, while it may answer their purpose to master our sciences and our methods, they will merely apply them to their style of life, and not necessarily adopt our style. They require modern soldiers and sailors and business men, and ships and railways and telegraphs and machinery, to enable them to keep pace with their foreign competitors and to keep their country for themselves. But all these things can be adopted without radically changing the methods of conducting their homes, that is to say, of their inner life. At all events, we may take it that domestic Japan will be the last feature of that country to give way to what we are pleased to term "civilization."[24]

Japanese men were not thought to be fully civilized unless they adopted western domestic ideals as well. It was widely held that they adopted western customs to deal with westerners, but 'reverted' to Japanese customs when at home. In 1903 Douglas Sladen wrote that

> the official "smart set," which embraces ambassadors and cabinet ministers and politicians and civil servants generally, wear trousers in public. But

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[22] See, for instance, W. S. Lilly, "Marriage and Modern Civilization," *The Nineteenth Century* (December 1901): 905-919.

[23] "Japan and the Chinese Crisis," *The Times* (12 July 1900), 6.

[24] Ransome, *Japan in Transition*, 59.

> follow the immaculate field-marshal or pompous courtier home; and inside of five minutes you will find him, minus breeches or knee breeches, comfortably enveloped in a kimono, and most likely squatting on the floor. The Japanese who do wear European dress only flaunt it in public; they are as anxious to be shelled as a stout woman in corsets.[25]

Sladen further commented on the implications of this supposed public/private dichotomy for men's behaviour and for marital relations:

> In Japan the tailor makes the woman. The Japanese in a top hat or a cocked hat treats his wife in a bonnet and boots as his better half; he lets her walk beside him, and pays her all sorts of lofty compliments; though there are no doors to hold open, and it is no use offering her a chair. But once back in kimonos and clogs, the new order changeth, giving place to the old. He is the lord of creation, and she is the Asiatic wife.[26]

In several areas of national life they were fast reaching the level of European nations; it was in their relation to their wives, and by extension to women in general, that Japanese men were most clearly differentiated from British men.

Ostensibly, Japanese women were the object of concern and the intended beneficiaries of moral reform in Japan; however, these texts reveal other, less chivalrous reasons for concern over the behaviour of men. In 1899, an article on concubinage in the *Japan Evangelist* argued that men's sexual immorality and poor treatment of women were a stain on the nation, but it was decidedly less concerned with the women of Japan than with the men themselves:

> Concubinage and harlotry are parts of the same scheme of things. Both customs here alluded to minister to sexual excess and lead straight to physical inferiority... If Japan wishes to produce, on the widest scale, the best physical manhood, it must abandon all those sexual customs which go with concubinage and those social beliefs which defend it... In his Principles of Sociology, a work familiar to educated Japanese, Mr. Spencer shows that promiscuity, concubinage, polyandry and polygamy are all forms of sexual

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[25] Sladen, *Queer Things about Japan*, 214-215.

[26] Sladen, *Queer Things about Japan*, 215.

> intercourse which belong to relatively low stages of culture, and that monogamy has come to be accepted by higher races because it alone agrees with the conditions necessary for advanced culture.[27]

Another illustrative, albeit florid, account connected men's private life with the progress of the nation:

> Ah! Ye men of Dai Nippon, ye speak of your patriotism and of your loyalty, and make these the principles of morality, while at the same time ye are unfair to woman. As long as the singing-girl affords you in your depraved tastes more pleasure than your own wife, as long as you continue to break the heart of her who truly loves you by bringing in the accursed concubine, as long as you pollute the very nature of women who are much coarser that your own wife, can you, O you proud patriot, really love your country? You wax eloquent as a patriot, but your conduct not only saps the strength of your country but brings everlasting shame upon her. You want your women, meaning by that your mothers and your wives and your daughters and your sisters, to be chaste; and you yourself are rottenness personified. You exhort young men in the principles of morality- loyalty and patriotism- and want them to work *for* their country, but you yourself by your very example pollute the youth in whom you see the hope and strength of your land.[28]

These two different approaches to the issue of concubinage and prostitution suggest how romantic myths of chivalry interacted with ideas of social Darwinism to inform notions of manhood.[29] Fear of physical or racial degeneration played off the fear of a degradation of manhood. Being a man meant treating women (at least 'respectable' women, such as middle-class wives and mothers) as ladies and being monogamous in marriage; these

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[27] "Concubinage," *Japan Evangelist* 6:6 (June 1899), 189-190.

[28] Marron, "Simple Scences of Japanese Life IV: A Young Woman," 223.

[29]Chivalry here refers to the idealized and romanticized customs of medieval knights—most importantly gallantry towards women, but also bravery, loyalty and honour. These customs and characteristics were revived and reinvigorated in much of the popular Victorian culture of imperialism. I use the term social Darwinism here to denote the belief that "national or racial competition was vital for the progress of humanity" and that "throughout history the strongest nations have dominated their weaker neighbors and that the strongest have always been the fittest in the sense that they have contributed toward the development of civilization. Inferior nations, if not eliminated, have been subjugated and taught the advantages developed by their conquerors." See Bowler, *Evolution: the History of an Idea*, 289. This kind of thinking informed British ideas of manhood in that it was believed that there existed a proper or "best" physical and moral manhood; and that this manhood was demonstrated only in "higher," more civilized cultures.

actions would demonstrate Japan's "advanced culture" or high level of civilization. Conversely, ill treatment of women would "lead straight to physical inferiority." Manliness was thus intricately tied to morality in this discourse; morality was tied to culture and civilization, and both were bound to race. Unfortunately for any Japanese man who tried to live up to the expectations of westerners, morality was a difficult concept to pin down. It could mean anything from loyalty and patriotism to marital fidelity to Christianity. Japanese men's inability to pin down and grasp "manly morality" was one of the main reasons they were unable to improve themselves in the eyes of British missionaries.

The message in all of these texts was the same: men had to treat women better in order to be considered real gentlemen, to be taken seriously by western nations, to preserve the race, and to reach a higher level of civilization. These results were vital, if for no other reason than because Japanese people's behaviour in both international and national settings could reflect on Britain as Japan's ally.[30] The domestic and the public were closely linked and the nation's civilization and modernization could be advanced or hindered by the behaviour of its men in both these public and private spaces. The precepts of manliness served as a principal framework for discussions of Japanese men, and the wide-ranging applicability of this ideology helped to visibly link the public and private lives of men that were thought to be caught between past and present-day Japan.

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[30]A. Hamish Ion, *The Cross and the Rising Sun*, 262.

Constructions of Japanese domesticity

Having established the way in which the British observed this pattern of behaviour among Japanese men, we can now look more closely at one place where this behaviour was evidenced: the home. Historians such as Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall and John Tosh have compellingly demonstrated that the home was a key place where British middle-class identities were formed and demonstrated.[31] The ideal Christian home as a fundamental unit of society and as a place of "refined and elevating influences" played a prominent role in British middle-class society and conformed to very specific characteristics: a nuclear family with a working husband/father, a companionate, homemaking wife/mother, and young children.[32] This ideal was important to missionaries especially, but Christian family values and the meaning of domesticity were evident in the way that all writers treated the subjects of marriage, divorce and prostitution, subjects that received attention in nearly every book attempting to convey a definitive image of Japan to British readers. The central role of domesticity in confirming the existence of a properly civilized nation remained evident, even if the ideal had lost some of the weight and the appeal it had held for British men earlier in the nineteenth century.[33]

Missionary publications provided the most detailed information about Japanese families. These sources painted a considerably more prominent picture of husbands,

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[31] See Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes* and Tosh, *A Man's Place.*

[32] Lilly, "Marriage and Modern Civilization," 909. For a few examinations of the ideal Christian household in a variety of localities, see Lynne Marks, "'A Fragment of Heaven on Earth'? Religion, Gender and Family in Turn-of-the-Century Canadian Church Periodicals," *Journal of Family History* 26:2 (April 2001), 252-253; Deborah Gaitskill, "Housewives, maids or mothers: some contradictions of domesticity for Christian Women in Johannesburg, 1903-39," *Journal of African History* 24:2 (1983), 241; F. Knight, "'Male and Female He Created Them'[*sic*]: Men, Women and the Question of Gender," in John Wolffe, ed., *Religion in Victorian Britain Volume V Culture and Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 25-31; and Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes.*

[33] See Tosh, *A Man's Place*, chapter 8.

fathers and sons than did other sources, such as travel literature or analytic political treatises, although their picture of Japanese men was not at all consistent. Missionary periodicals usually contained several distinct types of commentary, all of which portrayed Japanese men predominantly as husbands and fathers instead of just as public men. In opinion pieces and feature articles about "Japanese Family Life," "Japan To-Day," or "Japanese Impersonality," the sentiment expressed was often the same: men's treatment of their wives and daughters, and of women in general, was an obstacle to be overcome in Japan's otherwise admirable growth as a civilized nation. The country needed to remedy this situation if it wanted to be taken seriously by the nations of the West. In contrast, these periodicals' reports from missionaries in various mission fields, which provided descriptions of real individuals and situations rather than vague discussions of morality and civilization, offered glimpses of real men, not "the Japanese man" who was the subject of most other discussions, both missionary and secular. Missionaries were among the few foreigners who actually had close contact with individuals and families through their home visits, women's groups and girls' schools, and relief work for soldiers' families during wartime. Through their various organizations they were able to know people on a more direct and individual level and to learn about Japanese private life in a way that other observers could not (although this did not stop others from commenting on the subject).

The family was a central unit on which the majority of missionary efforts were focussed. The topic of a Christian conference in Arima, Japan in 1896, for instance, was "How to foster and encourage the Establishment of Home and Social life among the

Japanese."[34] A. Hamish Ion contends that during this period, individuals, predominantly young, urban, male students, were the focus of Anglican missionary efforts more than were family units.[35] Yet, even as missionaries targeted students, policemen, and soldiers as groups for education and conversion throughout this period,[36] they often portrayed these men as members of a family. How did British representations of family life contribute to the overall image presented of Japanese men, and in what ways did these representations confirm or deny men's manliness? Three variables in particular shaped British portrayals of Japanese family life and factored into estimations of Japanese men's manliness: the perceived nature of non-companionate marriages, the commonness of multiple-generation households, and the supposed effects of non-Christian family ethics.

The first step in establishing a proper British middle-class home was to get married. Several writers noted with interest that marriage was not a competition or something to work for in Japan, but rather a matter of course for almost everyone: "The men, having everything their own way, naturally marry young. Speaking broadly, there are no bachelors in Japan."[37] This situation was in sharp contrast to British marriage patterns, the standard practice there being that men waited to be married until they had enough money to establish a household. The ease with which men in Japan fulfilled one of the main requirements of British manhood highlighted one of the ways that they were perhaps lacking the virtues earned through the process of preparing for domestic life—

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[34] J.H. Deforest, "The Moral Preparation for Christianity in Japan," *Japan Evangelist* 9:1 (October 1896), 9.

[35] Ion, *The Cross and the Rising Sun*, 57.

[36] Moore, *The Christian Faith in Japan*, 135.

[37] Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, 275.

the virtues of self-denial, hard work and resolve.[38] Unlike British men who were required to work for a home and family, Japanese men had everything given to them, including a wife, and could just as easily give these things up. A woman in Japan, it was often stated, was "not regarded as the help-meet, the sympathizing companion, of her husband" as was a middle-class British woman.[39] Japanese marriages were normally arranged, and this contributed to the common belief that Christian love between a man and a woman was not to be found in Japanese homes and that the relationship between husbands and wives was not a proper one, even if it was formally based on monogamy. "Generally speaking when it comes to marriage in Japan," reported an 1895 story in the *Japan Evangelist*, "love is the last thing to be thought of. If a man receives from his wife humble obedience and she receives from him a moderate degree of kindness, and if the union is blessed by the birth of at least one son, it is a good match, a happy marriage."[40] Missionaries made efforts to reform marriage practices, emphasising religious ceremony over the common Japanese stress on the civil contract.[41] They petitioned the government (unsuccessfully) to make adultery a crime for men as well as for women,[42] and they vocally objected to divorce laws that made it very easy for men to divorce their wives for reasons unacceptable to Christian sensibilities.[43] For some, Japanese marriage practices, "pure

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[38] Tosh, "What Should Historians do with Masculinity?" 185.

[39] Moore, *The Christian Faith in Japan*, 49.

[40] "The Story of a Japanese Girl," *Japan Evangelist* 2:5 (June 1895), 267.

[41] See Alfreda Arnold, *Church Work in Japan* (London: Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1905), 29-31; and Morris, *Advance Japan*, 87.

[42] *Japan Evangelist* 4:3 (December 1896), 193.

[43] Ransome told his readers that "Divorce in Japan is not based on infidelity, but on convenience." Ransome, *Advance Japan*, 167. Sidney Gulick, an American missionary, wrote, "[t]he system of divorce is, we may say, the device of society for remedying the inherent defects of the betrothal system" which did not

and simple mercantile transaction[s],"[44] were evidence that romantic love did not exist in Japan, while others asserted that love, or at least the idea of it, was present and could be found in Christian homes and developed with moral and social reforms, though "inveterate custom" was still a powerful obstacle for reformers' plans.[45]

One of the "inveterate" traditions most disquieting to British writers was the Japanese people's adherence to a Confucian ethical system, particularly the practice of filial piety. The most noticeable product of this practice was the multi-generation household and the subservience of a man's wife to his parents. The Japanese man "does not marry a woman to be his wife, but her mother-in-law's maid," wrote Douglas Sladen, "and if she be the prettiest and most tempting creature in the land, he may be required to divorce her, because she lets his parents' sake get cold."[46] A few British observers did not consider the very different dynamics of multi-generational households in Japan as factors that would affect a man's role in that household, and still expected the man to meet British standards of manliness such a providing financially for his dependents. Employing stereotypical 'oriental' labels such as idleness and self-indulgence, one writer considered "the custom of [middle-aged men] retiring from active life so soon as the burden of supporting the family can be imposed on a son or other younger member" an "appalling social evil," equivalent almost to the more well-known "social evil" of

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allow men and women to fall in love and choose their partners. "Are The Japanese Impersonal" *Japan Evangelist* 10:7 (July 1903), 222.

[44] Ernest W. Clement, "Japanese Impersonality" *Japan Evangelist* 6:1 (January 1899), 13.

[45] Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, 113-114.

[46] Sladen, *Queer Things About Japan*, 225.

prostitution.[47] Proper men were supposed to take and maintain responsibility for providing for their families and not pass on this burden to other family members.[48]

Many missionaries with close contact with and a deeper understanding of Japanese social customs, however, did allow that the family system in Japan meant different roles for men in the household, if not entirely different meanings for manhood. These people, as well as some secular writers, did not necessarily approve of the Japanese family system, but they saw Japanese people in light of their own societal constraints and liberties, and less in terms of ideal British middle-class society. For instance, the author of the 1904 *Nineteenth Century* article on Japanese women viewed men's attitudes towards their wives not as an inherent characteristic of the Japanese male, but perhaps as the product of women's lack of education and a subservience that could lead husbands to be "trained into an attitude of half-unconscious but dominant contempt... grow[ing] disdainfully to ignore his gentle saint at home."[49] Some seemed to see Confucianism as the cause of uneven gender relationships, and they had a more sympathetic view of men, who were the product of this particular ethical system as much as women were. While most were quick to point out all the ways in which this system kept women in subordinate positions in the family and to prove their belief that Christianity was the only religion beneficial to women, a few were judicious enough to see that men were constrained as well. Some writers noted that Confucian ethics did not include precepts for men's behaviour towards their wives, although there were many rules for women to

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[47] "The Social Evils of Japan Comparatively Considered," *Japan Evangelist* 5:1 (January 1898), 33.

[48] See Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 82-85.

[49] Farrer, "The Geisha: A Faithful Study," 632.

follow, and that the system let men down as well as women by not offering them a better set of values to adhere to. Of course, there was no denying that women were worse off, but neither was there an uncritical condemnation of men. "In analyzing the morality of Japan," wrote Stafford Ransome, "one must admit that the laws of the country allow a man to do tolerably well what he pleases in this respect, and that as a rule he fully avails himself to the privilege."[50]

While British writers often discussed filial piety disdainfully as a product of 'Oriental,' backward cultures, many nonetheless spoke highly of the commitment to family that it engendered. Some of the rare praise afforded to individual Japanese men was for their sacrifice for their families. In his letter in the *South Tokyo Quarterly Diocesan Magazine* in 1899, William Awdry, the Bishop of South Tokyo, noted that he had allowed a Japanese clergyman leave to return to his family home after the death of his eldest brother so he could care for his brother's wife and children and oversee the affairs of the larger family.[51] Another missionary described "a middle-aged man, [who] had been interested in Christianity many years ago, [and who] owned, and had all these years read a Bible, but on account of the opposition of his family had kept quiet on the subject. His wife having died he attended the Gospel meetings for the consolation they gave him... He is still very earnest," it was noted, "and his mother and son are also regular attendants."[52]

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[50] Ransome, *Japan in Transition*, 155.

[51] "The Bishop's Record," *South Tokyo Quarterly Diocesan Magazine* (November 1899), 69.

[52] *A Review of the Evangelistic work carried on under the auspices of the missionary association of central Japan at the Fifth National Exhibition, at Osaka, March 1st to July 31st, 1903*, 15-16.

Missionaries channelled their efforts towards soldiers during the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars. Unlike most secular writing on Japanese soldiers, which focussed on their actions on the battlefront, missionaries interacted with soldiers on the home front, and so created pictures of them predominantly in the context of family and community life. One of the most prevalent images of the soldiers in missionary periodicals is that of the husband and father, bravely but sadly leaving his family as he goes to the front (Fig. 1). One author described the experience of watching Japanese soldiers march to battle: "We thought of their experiences of the past weeks, the parting from wife and children, father and mother, which, whatever those who only see the outside of Japanese life may say and think, is a deeply trying and painful moment to both the solider and his family, and over which many bitter tears are shed in secret."[53] Missionaries commented approvingly of soldiers' "cheerful courage and the way in which they bear family partings,"[54] such as in this account:

> One day I noticed a young fellow, a mere boy he seemed, holding in his arms a dear little baby girl; so fond, so proud of her he seemed... I could not help saying to the young father, "It must be hard to leave such a treasure." One look he gave me, one emphatic "No", and strode away, the tears welling up in his eyes as he went. I felt rebuke and I honored him.[55]

The attention given to such scenes suggests how all-encompassing and pervasive the ideology of manliness was: it meant not only bravery and patriotism, but also possessing a "stiff upper lip" attitude, exhibiting control over emotions, and acknowledging familial roles and responsibilities. In the missionaries' portraits, Japanese soldiers undoubtedly

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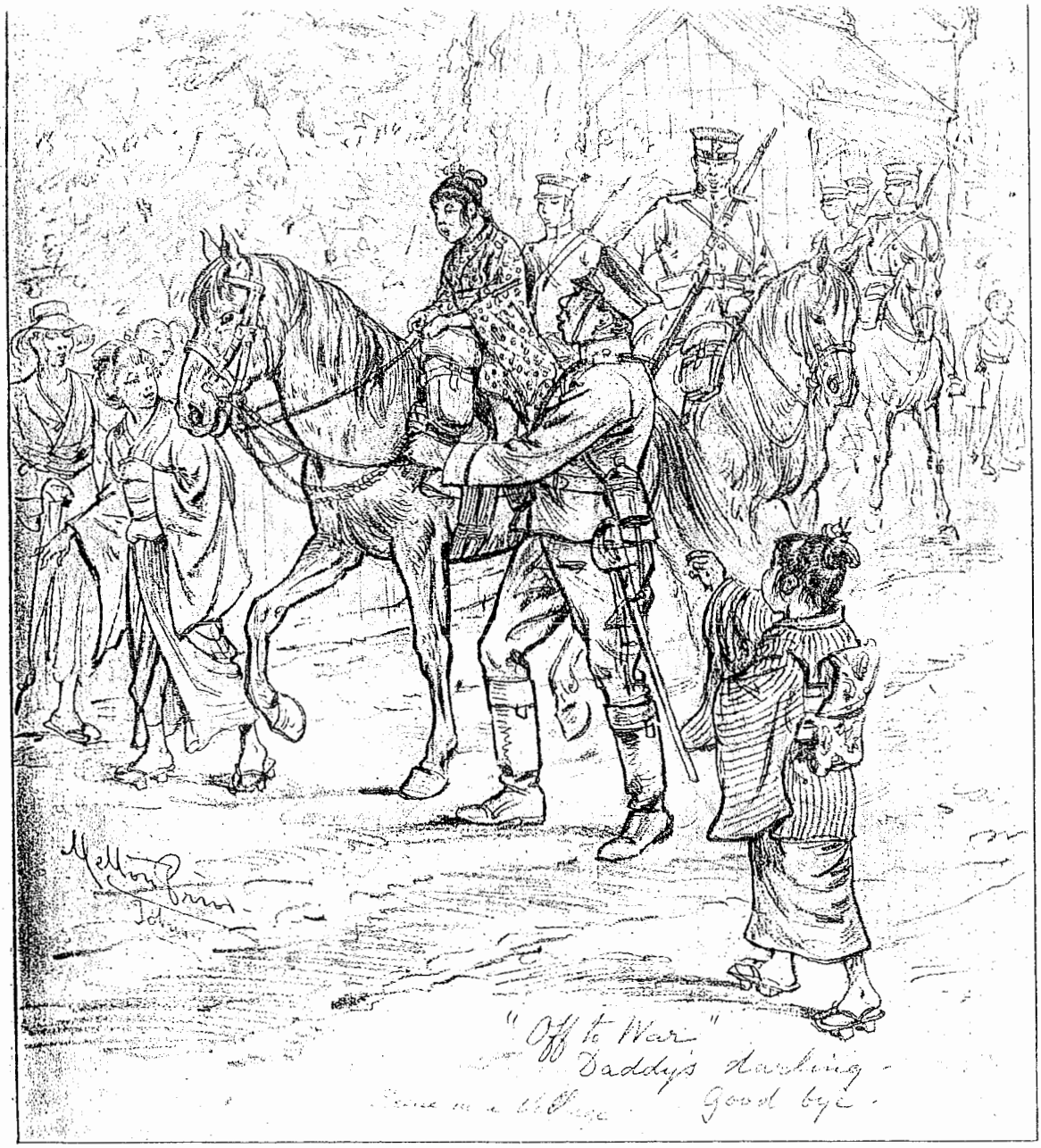
[53] "Editorial Notes," *CMS Japan Quarterly* 32 (July 1904), 1.

[54] "Notes from Hiroshima," *Japan Examiner* 11:9 (September 1904), 280.

[55] "Work Among the Soldiers," *Japan Examiner* 12:3 (March 1905), 89.



A SOLDIER'S GOOD-BYE TO HIS FAVOURITE CHILD.

Figure 1
From *The Illustrated London News*, June 25, 1904 p. 953

displayed all of these attributes.

Missionaries exploited this strong commitment to family to achieve their evangelizing goals, especially among men. The Temperance Union, Sunday schools, women's groups and girls' schools sought to reach women, girls and boys, and through them to reach men, and to provide the family support that men were thought to need. Fathers and husbands appeared often in the reports of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, which were a regular feature in the *Japan Evangelist.* A popular story in these reports that was reprinted repeatedly with slight variations both in Japan and in other mission fields, told readers of a typical Japanese man who drank too much and neglected his family. He was made to change his ways, give up alcohol and start to take an interest in the Bible because his daughter shared with him what she had learned at Christian school. Another stated that a "girl who is being prepared for baptism took with her the message of life to her father in the holidays; he now wants to hear and know more and bids his daughter learn all she can about GOD and tell him."[56] Women who attended ladies' meetings were meant to "carry back to their own homes the truths learnt from our lady teachers, and before long the men of their household [should] become so interested that they are willing that the ordained missionary should visit them. Whole families have been won for Christ... It is chiefly the middle class that is thus reached, the class that will be the most influential in the Empire."[57]

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[56] Emily J. Buncombe, "Princess Lodge," *South Tokyo Quarterly Diocesan Magazine* 3:10 (November 1899), 81.

[57] Bishop Ridley, "Impressions made by a Visit to Japan," *Church Missionary Intelligencer* (April 1904), 273. The importance of this goal and the effort put into achieving it is evident in an 1897 report from a Christian girls' school in Yokohama, where a major purpose of the girls' education was stated to be to meet the demand for "wives of evangelists and other Christian young men." *Twentieth Report of the Council of Missions co-operating with the Church of Christ in Japan* (Publications Committee of the Council, 1897), 11. See also A. C. Bosanquet, "Women's Work for Men," *CMS Japan Quarterly* 10 (October 1898), 10-15.

Clearly, missionaries as well as political analysts in Britain saw value in the importance placed on the idea of family in Japan, if not its actual form and function. Some missionaries saw in Japanese families the seeds of proper, Christian family life, found in respect for parents, love of children, and "a truly English recognition of the home, and of respect for authority, the two qualities which more than any others have enabled Englishmen to build up and extend their national life in every part of the world."[58] Missionaries considered several aspects of Japanese society immoral, but also believed in the power of solid family relations as the key to a moral nation.

> In spite of the frightful extent of licensed evil and the existence of a large class of "entertainment women;" notwithstanding the practice of concubinage; although divorces throughout the Empire are one to every three marriages; and though the language has no term for chastity as applied to man; yet the ideal of family life is comparatively high. It is that one man and one woman form a union for life, that they have children who honor and obey their parents, and that the family line be maintained forever. Great as are the forces that tend to undermine and destroy family life, the moral sentiments that preserve it are yet more powerful, so that it has been a mighty factor in the development of the nation.[59]

In this case, it did not matter to this author that high ideal of family life did not include a companionate marriage; what was more important than the happiness of individuals was the role of family life in the nation's development. Japan's progress was considered by many to be possible, with proper guidance, because "[a] nation that emphasizes, through continuous ages, the moral necessity of maintaining right family relations cannot be morally rotten."[60] A number of other observers, though, could not look beyond the widespread presence of prostitution in Japan, asserting that "any nation that fails to give

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[58] *Missions in Japan: Annual Report* (1895), 4-5.

[59] *Japan Examiner* 4:1 (October 1896), 2.

[60] *Japan Examiner* 4:1 (October 1896), 2.

this position to woman, any nation that has a standard of chastity for women only, any nation in which concubinage is practised, and men have wives merely to perpetuate the family-line, while they go to geisha and harlots for amusement, in just the proportion these acts are done, is still outside the circle of modern civilization."[61]

There was no coherent discourse on the nature of Japanese family life, even among missionaries, nor was there agreement on the relationship between family life and the country's modernization. A number of missionaries, as well as writers with less knowledge of the personal lives of Japanese people, positioned men in a more direct binary relationship with women and argued that the moral foundation of family life was seriously weakened by this detrimental relationship. Several other observers saw the foundation of a moral society in the observance of "right family relations," of which men were simply a part and over which they did not necessarily have control. Most missionaries positioned Japanese men in a complex network of family relations, defining them not only in relation to their wives, but also in relation to their children and parents and demonstrating that men's actions were influenced by all members of the family and by the structures of traditional family systems.

Gender relations and domesticity as a measure of manliness

What do British evaluations of Japanese gender relations and domestic life reveal about the way the British perceived Japanese manliness? A less pervasive but still persistent racializing strand of discourse on Japanese men emphasised the differences between public and private men and thus between the appearance and the reality of men's

[61] Rev. J.H. DeForest, "Modern Civilization and Christianity," *Japan Examiner* 6:6 (June 1902), 170.

nature. This opinion presented them as fundamentally different from the British in their attitudes towards women, and in need of instruction on how to behave like gentlemen. The contrast between this view and the more prevalent opinion that the Japanese could be real gentlemen on the inside, kept from expressing themselves as such by a lack of socially imposed moral constraints, meant that there was no cohesive image of Japanese men. Similarly, the predominant claim among missionaries was that adopting Christian values and expressing them through public display such as a marriage ceremony would positively affect men's behaviour, but confidence in this claim was undermined by their desire for laws on adultery and concubinage that would force unwilling men to give up the benefits and privileges that this male-dominated society had thus far accorded them.

Despite these contradictions, there was an unmistakable trend in representations of Japanese men in the context of domestic life. The majority of observers explained men's behaviour as constrained and their attitudes towards women as influenced by particular societal structures and traditions, and for this reason such behaviour could not be racialized or reduced to something inherent in Japanese men. The sharp contrast often drawn in missionary publications between Christian and non-Christian men would seem to plainly demonstrate what missionaries believed good men should be and do, but the portraits of Japanese men as family members were not so black and white, and they reveal ambiguities about the meanings of manliness and its connection to family life. Manliness was repeatedly lauded and indiscriminately used as an explanation for men's behaviour, and because of this it could not be refuted by race or religion or definitively denied to Japanese men. It was a concept that allowed for the similarities between British and Japanese men to reveal themselves in the face of a number of differences.

Chapter Three: Martial Men

Travellers to Japan interacted with a variety of men, such as rickshaw drivers, customs officials, and police officers, but they most often cast "the Japanese man" as the samurai, or his modern successor, the soldier. The activities of Japanese soldiers, described in British newspapers, magazines and books, received more attention than any other aspect of Japanese society in this period.[1] This chapter will examine the ways in which the British represented the Japanese soldier in a variety of figurative and literal guises: as the embodiment of a set of positive attributes collectively referred to as manliness, as the exemplar of Japan's progress and westernization, and, contradictorily, as an enduring symbol of Japan's ancient martial traditions and its inherent difference.

As Kipling complained while travelling in Japan in the 1890s, "I've seen something like the Babu class, and something like the farmer class. What I want to see is the Rajput class— the man who used to wear the thousands and thousands of swords in the curio-shops. Those swords were as much made for use as a Rajputana sabre. Where are the men who used 'em? Show me a samurai."[2] Kipling's statement reflects a good deal about how the English imagined Japanese men in this period. It is particularly revealing that he compared the samurai to Rajputans, men of another supposedly martial race in India, a comparison that challenges the idea of Japanese singularity in British eyes. Kipling clearly had a specific image in his mind of the samurai he wanted to see, and was disappointed that he had not seen such a man in late nineteenth-century Japan. Nostalgia

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[1] During and after the Russo-Japanese War, in addition to more general overviews of Japan, numerous books were written about the war which provided detailed accounts of the battles, of each country's strategies and capabilities, etc. Most of these were virtually the same. Japanese soldiers were not described in great detail in these books, and often presented in generic, rehashed terms. For this reason, I have not looked in depth at these numerous, repetitive books, but have chosen one as representative: Ian Hamilton, *A Staff Officer's Scrapbook During the Russo-Japanese War* (London: Edward Arnold, 1905).

[2] Rudyard Kipling, *From Sea to Sea: Letters of Travel* vol. I. (Norwood, Mass.: Norwood Press, 1899), 335.

for Old Japan was evident in those writers who were critical of Japan's progress as well as in those who approved of it. For those observers who admired Japan's modernization and westernization, the samurai of Old Japan stood for barbarism, hostility to foreigners and resistance to change. For admirers of Old Japan, the samurai stood for a vital and valuable martial spirit that was being lost in the country's drive towards westernization and modernization. Regardless of whether he was respected or maligned, the samurai that most of these writers depicted existed as much in the imagination as in reality, and the aesthetic, romantic, idealized Japan from which this image came blended with views of contemporary Japanese men in the images produced in this period.[3]

British observers held the samurai and the ideas associated with him, especially bushido, to be responsible for Japan's recent successes.[4] In addition, the soldier hero was already well established in the British imagination, reflecting contemporary middle-class British values of honour, patriotism, and bravery. For Japan, as for Britain, many people held that, "all the best elements of the national culture [are] associated with the military class."[5] The popularity and predominance of the soldier hero or imperial man at a time of imperial decline, dissatisfaction with the unfavourable by-products of industrialization and modernization, challenges from the feminist movement and from working-class masculine culture, as well as a growing awareness of other cultures around the world all

[3] The use of the term aesthetic requires a brief explanation. Until the last decades of the nineteenth century, what had come to be referred to as Old Japan was almost always described in visual terms and focused on Japanese people's concern with aesthetic aspects of life; it was a land of fans and screens, gardens and tea ceremonies. Westerners viewed Japan through this aesthetic lens and focused their attention on things that were beautiful or ornamental. While this way of seeing Japan was overshadowed by more 'serious' concerns by the end of the century, it was not completely replaced.

[4] See Holmes and Ion, "Bushido and the Samurai".

[5] "The Strong and Weak Points of the Japanese Character" *East & West* 1:1 (January 1903), 12.

contributed to the way British middle-class men saw themselves and other men. As John M. MacKenzie writes,

> Fascination with such heroic paradigms in the nineteenth century is well represented by the fact that it was a time when the classical and medieval heroic cults were recreated, modified and adapted for a new age. Chivalric myths and Arthurian legends, Scandinavian and Germanic folk tales were assiduously recreated in poetry, painting, sculpture, music, opera, the theatre, even to a certain extent in architecture... To some extent mythic and historic heroes began to intertwine, the one being credited with the attributes of the other through free association of nomenclature and iconography. At the same time the mythic traditions of the rest of the world were being uncovered through ethnographic study. Here too Europeans found, or imagined they found, a mixing of the mythic and the historical.[6]

The samurai embodied both the mythic and the historical, and fit into this "heroic paradigm" perfectly. Japanese masculinity was thus firmly established in the British imagination; however, this traditional manhood was also, often paradoxically, described in the context of current events and Japan's attainment of a new manhood.

A new manhood?

Nearly all the contemporary writing on Japan contained the same group of themes: change, advancement, and transition. These themes were, in several instances, presented as a gendered metaphor, which portrayed Japan as a young man among the more mature and established European powers, and described its progress and change in terms of its coming of age, its development into manhood. Commenting at the end of the Russo-Japanese War, Anglican Archdeacon of Japan C. F. Warren assessed the country's recent successes in war and in other aspects of its modernization. "[W]ithin the limits of a single generation," he stated, "Japan has been completely transformed, and now stands before

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[6]John M. MacKenzie, "Heroic myths of empire," in *Popular imperialism and the military 1850-1950* ed. John M. MacKenzie (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1992), 111.

the world in the strength of a new and vigorous manhood."[7] Why and how was Japan seen to have acquired this new manhood? If it had not been masculine in the way that the British perceived masculinity then had it necessarily been feminine, or had it possessed an alternative form of manhood? Did the country previously possess an old, weak manhood, or no manhood at all?

The frequent association of Japan's manhood with its national development took several forms. Although Japanese men were carrying out reform in every aspect of Japanese life, including education, economics, and politics, westerners were most interested in the country's military reform.[8] The Sino-Japanese War attracted little popular attention in Britain, but Japan's involvement in the Boxer Uprising in 1900 brought the country more into Britain's field of vision; the 1902 Anglo-Japanese Alliance sparked comparatively more attention to Japan in the popular press; and the Russo-Japanese War received thorough treatment in the media.[9] It is within this context of international military concerns that one of the most popular and enduring images of Japanese masculinity— the soldier/warrior— attracted the gaze of westerners. It was not simply young men who were most visible in Japan's transformation, but more specifically military men. Missionaries prayed for them, cared for the wounded, and provided support for their widows and families. Military writers and war correspondents lavished praise on these men for their "natural" martial qualities as well as for their ability to modernize and utilize western military techniques and technology. As the

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[7] Archdeacon Warren, "The Japan Mission," *CMS Gleaner* (March 1895), 39.

[8] See Lehmann, *The Image of Japan*, 123-124.

[9] This statement is based on a survey of the comparative number of articles, letters and editorials appearing in *The Times* and the *Illustrated London News* during this period.

nation was measured by its progress towards western standards, Japanese men were also often seen and measured in terms of an assumed and essentialized symbol of manhood, the soldier.

Young, urban, Japanese men from the samurai class lead the shift towards westernization with activities ranging from studying English to practicing Christianity. These men, mostly students, were the largest group of converts to Protestantism in the first three decades of the Meiji period, and they remained an important group for missionary efforts.[10] Missionaries considered work among young Japanese men as "the very cream of a missionary's labours in Japan, and... also his most fruitful field." The "salvation of the students" as "a mighty factor in the evangelization of Japan," was a commonly expressed conviction among missionaries.[11] Among other initiatives, the missionaries established Christian schools, boarding houses, and the Japanese YMCA in order to reach these young men, who were considered the key to Japan's future progress. Japan's young manhood had to be directed and made to conform to the British model precisely because the British were aware of these young men's potential for progress and change. Indeed, partly because of the strength of Japanese manhood, revealed in traditions such as bushido, Japan drew British attention and admiration. The simultaneous antipathy for and attraction to Japanese manhood was a constant theme in this discourse.

Representations of Japan as a young man must be understood in the context of the popularity and pervasiveness of the contemporary discourses of manliness and civilization in Britain. Like the concept of morality discussed in the previous chapter,

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[10]See Scheiner, *Christian Converts and Social Protest in Meiji Japan*, 8.

[11] Rev. W. P. Buncombe, "Our New Ally and her Claims 5: The Young Man Student of Japan," *CMS Gleaner* (1 September 1902), 133.

manliness could have many meanings, and was continually and inconsistently granted and denied to Japanese men. Several writers deemed Japanese men unmanly because they were unchivalrous towards women; but the manliness of the military was virtually never in question. Similarly, the ambiguous concept of civilization was widely used to illustrate Japan's progress. In discussions of Japan, civilization was often used in connection with and sometimes as a synonym for Christianity, westernization, and modernization.

The prevailing association of civilization with Christianity had important implications for considerations of Japanese manliness. Several observers debated whether or not Japan had a genuine civilization of its own, and, if so, if the country would ever completely abandon it. But the great majority of writers agreed that for better or worse, Japan was adopting western civilization. "Modern civilization is something quite distinct from all other civilizations and is recognized at once as unique," insisted one missionary. "Japan alone of eastern nations is adopting and adapting this civilization. In all history no nation has made such rapid progress in one generation as Japan, which has largely turned her back on Eastern civilization and has in the main accepted that of the west."[12] The fact that the Japanese were successfully adopting and exploiting western civilization without also adopting Christianity was problematic for several observers. Some maintained that because manliness was a part of civilization and because Japanese men embodied civilization, then any display of manliness implied the influence of Christian-like values, while others denied 'true' manliness to the Japanese due to their lack of Christianity.

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[12] Rev. J. H. DeForest, "Modern Civilization and Christianity," *Japan Examiner* 6:6 (June 1899), 166.

According to one missionary, "[t]he conduct of the present [Russo-Japanese] war, and of previous negotiations, has shown to the world that the Japanese not only possess dignity and a natural manliness, but other virtues superadded through the influence, direct or indirect, of Christian ideals."[13] A few missionaries still saw a need for further such influence, and some saw a new, British, Christian version of bushido as a way to teach young men and boys the precepts of Christian manliness. As one minister commented, "the immediate need is for colleges given to academic training of a higher grade, to the building up of manhood, to the creation of a new *bushido*, to the formation of Christian gentlemen finished in culture, devout in spirit, pure and holy in life, and obedient servants of Jesus Christ."[14] For most writers though, both religious and secular, the original Japanese version of bushido was a fine set of principles for developing good men, even British ones.[15] "The spirit of Japan has been an object lesson to the world," stated a 1904 article in *The Nineteenth Century*, "and it is hoped that we are learning from it." The author added that this spirit taught a man to "do the best work he can for his country's sake and for his own honour, and by that means the training which the youth of Japan are receiving is not only one that is wanted in time of war, but one that is calculated to promote peace. It would be well if some kind of imitation of 'Bushido' were introduced into our schools."[16]

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[13]Alfreda Arnold, *Church Work in Japan* (London: The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1905), 19.

[14] Rev. S. H. Wainwright, M.D., "Educational Results and Prospects: Schools and Colleges for Boys" *Japan Examiner* 7:11 (November 1900), 356.

[15] For a discussion of British views of bushido, see Holmes and Ion, "Bushido and Samurai."

[16] "The Defence of the Empire III: Universal Military Training for Lads," *Nineteenth Century* (May 1905), 739-740.

Japanese men could always be found lacking in some manly virtues, such as chivalry, self-control and compassion— virtues which were often linked directly to Christianity— and thus be found not truly manly or civilized.[17] When manliness was described in terms of martial qualities, though, even missionaries affirmed that Japanese men already possessed many of the virtues that made them good men and good soldiers, such as "self-denying patience," "a ready, willing, hearty obedience," and "reckless, daring heroism."[18] These virtues were not necessarily exclusive to Christianity, nor to modern civilization in any guise, but were instead paradoxically recognized and respected markers of masculinity found in peoples that the British described as 'martial races.'

Martial spirit/martial race

Japan's impressive military achievements and rapid modernization caused many writers to think about the relationship between the nation's martial spirit, the "spirit of Old Japan," and the modern soldier. "Of their fighting qualities it is impossible yet to speak with absolute confidence," wrote G. H. Younghusband, an English officer on leave in Japan in 1894, "but it must be remembered that for generations Japan has possessed that martial spirit which compels success in war, and her sons have in all times, to no mean extent, been imbued with the first attribute of a soldier, personal courage."[19] Japanese men's "natural manliness," their inborn possession of manly virtues, was described most often with reference to their military virtues. In 1904, Arthur Diosy,

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[17] L. B. Cholmondeley, "The Japan Church," *East and West* 3:10 (April 1905), 217.

[18] Morris, *Advance Japan*,, 175-176.

[19] G. H. Younghusband, *On Short Leave to Japan.* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, 1894), 214-215.

chairman of the Japan Society in London, raved that the Japanese navy had "proved themselves to be imbued with the most ardent patriotism, animated by heroic gallantry, capable of chivalry towards fallen foes, endowed with remarkable powers of endurance, wonderfully obedient to discipline, and skilful to the highest degree in all that pertains to modern warfare."[20] Basil Hall Chamberlain, widely held to be the British authority on Japan, enthused that "Japan— possessing, as she has ever done, with that warlike spirit which is the foundation of all military excellence— Japan stands forth to-day with an army that would do credit to many a country in Europe."[21]

Such statements raise questions about whether Japanese men's martial qualities allowed them to become modern and civilized, or whether modern civilization, as defined by the British, was the catalyst for their new manhood, and how much of this manliness was considered natural and how much was thought to be the product of westernization. By associating the best virtues of idealized manhood with the samurai and the samurai spirit, these writers were suggesting that Japanese men were proper gentlemen long before they became 'civilized' along western lines and that "[t]he courtesy and politeness of the Japanese were simply the outward symbols of the inward spirit which was the mark of a cultured man."[22] Modernization could only influence and improve these men; it did not have to remake them. These writers saw the spirit of Old Japan, which was represented by the samurai and bushido, as something to be overcome but to be

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[20] Diosy, *The New Far East* (London: Cassell and Company, 1904), 313.

[21] Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, 43.

[22] Dyer, *Dai Nippon*, 42.

recognized as a defining feature of New Japan. This martial spirit that kept Japan vibrant was to be preserved in the new generation and protected in the transition to modernity.

Connected to the idea of a martial spirit, but perhaps possessing more harmful connotations, was the idea of a martial race. This idea served to distance Japanese men greatly from their English counterparts by emphasising racial differences and making them out to be more savage and warlike than the British, and it allowed for the imagining of the "yellow peril." Interestingly, the idea also served to illustrate similarities between English and Japanese manhood. The concept of martial races as it related to ideas about British masculinities has been documented by several scholars.[23] Britain's colonial encounters in other parts of the world had led the British to establish a set of opinions and value judgements of these martial races. Pradeep Barua has argued that the idea first developed among British military officers in India and took hold in the popular imagination in the second half of the nineteenth century.[24] Martial races were believed to possess both the behavioural and physical characteristics that made good soldiers: constitutions that were loyal and brave, and bodies that were sturdy, compact and powerful.[25] These types of people were found all over Britain's empire and beyond, in Africa, New Zealand, and South and East Asia. Probably the best-known martial race was the Gurkhas of Nepal, to whom the Japanese were often compared. Like the Gurkhas, the

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[23]See, for example, Graham Dawson, "The Blonde Bedouin: Lawrence of Arabia, imperial adventure, and the imagining of English-British masculinity," in Roper and Tosh, eds., *Manful Assertions*; Pradeep Barua, "Inventing Race: The British and India's Martial Races," *Historian* 58:1 (1995): 107-117; Timothy H. Parsons, "Wakamba warriors are soldiers of the queen: the evolution of the Kamba as a martial race, 1890-1970," *Ethnohistory* 46:4 (1999): 671-701; James Belich, *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1986); Vibert, *Traders' Tales*.

[24] Pradeep Barua, "Inventing Race: The British and India's Martial Races," *Historian* 58:1(1995): 107-117.

[25] Barua, "Inventing Race."

Japanese were believed to possess all the qualities of a truly martial race. They were thought to be "warlike by taste and tradition,"[26] suggesting both inherent or natural and deep cultural roots of their martial qualities, and by extension, their manly qualities.

The British officer G. J. Younghusband described the qualities of Japanese soldiers as similar to those of other martial races: "[t]he physique of the men is good, and may best be compared to that of the Goorkas of the Indian army. Small in stature, strongly built, sturdy, active, and with good marching legs, the Japanese soldier makes a stout little warrior."[27] Ian Hamilton used similar language to record his first impression of Japanese soldiers. "These were surely Gurkhas" he wrote, "better educated, more civilized: on the other hand, not quite so powerful or hardy." [28] The seeming incompatibility of the best martial qualities and a high level of civilization was frequently and explicitly addressed in these discussions. Suggesting that "up-to-date civilization is becoming less and less capable of conforming to the antique standards of military virtue" and that "the hour is at hand when the modern world must begin to modify its ideals, or prepare to go down before some more natural, less complex and less nervous type," Hamilton warned, "we remain, and must continue to remain, a long way behind more primitive nations in these important warrior characteristics." Here Hamilton was referring specifically to the Boers in South Africa, who, because they were "primitive" had defeated the British army in their recent war. He was one of many in Britain who was concerned that his country's higher level of civilization might prove to have adverse

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[26] Hamilton, *A Staff Officer's Scrapbook*, 10.

[27] Younghusband, *On Short Leave to Japan*, 214-215.

[28] Hamilton, *A Staff Officer's Scrapbook*, 9-10.

effects on its people, as the best martial qualities were thought to be possessed by less civilized peoples. The popularity of the soldier as a national hero and symbol, of martial legends and of the "cult of manhood" suggest that a large number of British people saw theirs as a martial race as well. One thing that made the British different from other martial races, though, was that they had had to endure the effects of modernization and industrialization, which had made them weak compared to more "primitive" peoples.[29] British observers such as Hamilton were quite preoccupied with Japan's position at an intermediary stage in the hierarchy of martial races which placed them somewhere between the most primitive martial races and that most civilized one, the British.

British writers portrayed the Japanese as quite similar to themselves in some ways: they had all the characteristics of a martial race, but they too were in danger of losing their edge because of their increasingly higher level of civilization. Furthermore, this fear of declining vitality and strength was projected on the Japanese. Arthur Diosy wrote:

> [o]f the manifold influences which were at work to impel the Japanese towards the struggle [with China in 1894], none was more important than the necessity, often painfully impressed on the Japanese statesmen, of convincing the fiery spirits amongst the *Shi-zoku* [samurai], and especially those of the great fighting clan of feudal times, the men of Satsuma, that the new civilization had not emasculated the race. The war conclusively proved to them, and to the thousands whose hearts still hankered, in secret, after the old order of things, that Western science and foreign ways had not, as they feared, diminished the true Spirit of Old Japan. The old '*Yamato Damashi-i*' [Spirit of Old Japan] burnt as brightly as ever in Japanese hearts. The Japanese sword was still strong, the Japanese heart still fearless. All was well with Japan; the new civilization had not tarnished her honour.[30]

The concern over Japan's ability to adapt to modern civilization while maintaining its martial spirit was apparent in discussions about the Japanese education system.

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[29] Hamilton, *A Staff Officer's Scrapbook*, 8.

[30] Diosy, *The New Far East*, 33.

Missionaries and military analysts both commented extensively on the need for physical education for young boys, and debated the existing level and efficiency of this education in Japan. One missionary teaching at a boys' school believed that there was "an absence of boisterousness" in Japanese schools. "Quarrelling and fighting are unknown... are the Japanese school-boys true boys, then? Are they not of a rather mild type which would hardly find favour in England? I have for long wished to see more physical energy put forth in their play-time... the boys, if left to themselves, hardly ever play properly... Thoughtful men are already beginning to point a warning finger at the results of modern education in Japan."[31] For this teacher, Japanese students were too docile and did not display the characteristics of boys who would grow up into strong, manly men. Others felt that this was not the case, and that this danger had been recognized. "Physical training is made much of," wrote Alfred Stead in 1906, "because the future physical condition of the Japanese race must be efficient and able to support the nation in the ever-increasing physical struggle for existence."[32] Captain Frank Brinkley, the author of a lengthy study of Japanese history and culture and noted expert on Japan, agreed:

> It seemed as though the rising generation was destined to lose its physical stamina altogether, and to take for permanent companions consumption, impaired vision, and stunted stature. Many gifted youths perished on the threshold of promising careers, and others barely survived as invalids. Happily foreign teachers assisted to correct this fatal tendency by example or advice, and the Government, appreciating the danger, took steps to encourage gymnastics and athletics of every kind. Marked improvement resulted. It cannot yet be said that the Japanese youth shows anything like the absorbing avidity of the Anglo-Saxon for out-door games and sports, but he takes keenly

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[31] Wood, "Notes on Japanese School-Boys," 151-152.

[32] Stead, *Great Japan: A Study in National Efficiency*, 27.

> to base-ball, rowing, bicycling, and lawn tennis, and he begins to think of developing them as a business only second to acquiring knowledge.[33]

Brinkley suggested that the Japanese needed guidance from Britain, a more civilized nation, even though civilization caused those harmful effects. Just how much help from the British Japanese men required in order to be good, proper, and manly men was a question asked by a number of writers; a question that hints at these writers' uncertainty as to the nature, quality, and origin of Japanese manliness— as well as their own manliness.

The contemporary British vocabulary of manhood shaped descriptions of the samurai. The meanings behind the terms martial spirit and martial race were not specific to Japan, but were applied by the British to other cultures' manhoods as well. Yet there is an important point unique to representations of Japan. The word "samurai" was most often interpreted as "knight" or "gentleman," but it was also translated into English with words such as "swashbuckler" or "ruffian."[34] The word "knight" could be associated with the word "gentleman," but this was not always clearly the case, and depended on the context of description. For example, when describing students or government officials, writers used words such as "*Shi-zoku*," or gentleman, as a synonym for samurai; when describing historical figures, contemporary soldiers or military leaders, the word "warrior" was most often used, giving samurai more martial connotations. These two expressions of manhood—the martial man and the gentleman— were sometimes related in British discourse but just as often distinct, highlighting the uneasy yet unmistakable

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[33] Frank Brinkley, *Japan: its history, arts, and literature* vol. 5 (London: T. C. & E. C. Jack, 1903-1904), 84.

[34] Yokoyama, *Japan in the Victorian Mind*, 91.

relationship between the martial spirit and martial race. In the images created of samurai, these ideas were conflated into one complex and contradictory stereotype of a man.

Aesthetics of manhood

By the end of the nineteenth century, nearly every discussion of Japan touched on the perceived contrast between Old and New Japan, and although most writers fixed their attention on New Japan, popular interest in Old Japan did not fade. Several writers pointed out that westerners had not taken Japan seriously enough in the past and had focussed on irrelevant, artistic aspects of its culture, while ignoring the more important issues of Japan's modernization efforts. Although this was posed as a real concern among military and political observers, and newspapers and periodicals did present Japanese men as modern soldiers and military leaders in their discussions of current events, their concern with seriousness was belied by the continued and widespread attention to images of Old Japan in the majority of books and articles written about Japan. Japanese men and symbols of manhood continued to be portrayed in romantic, aesthetic terms and relied heavily on images and iconography from Japan's past.

When the British positioned Japanese men as modern, westernized and progressive, these men appeared somehow less authentically Japanese than previous generations of men and than contemporary women. This image could be equally positive or negative. In the introduction to the 1902 edition of *Things Japanese*, Basil Hall Chamberlain noted how "[t]he dear old *samurai* who first initiated the present writer into the mysteries of the Japanese language wore a cue and two swords ... His modern successor, fairly fluent in English, and dressed in a serviceable suit of dittos, might almost be a European, save for

a certain obliqueness of the eyes and scantiness of beard."[35] Tourists, missionaries, and even military men expected to see the Japan that they had seen on the fans and screens and other Japanese art that was available in Britain. Like numerous other British visitors to the country, G. H. Younghusband wrote a book about his impressions and opinions of Japan. The men he saw in Japan, who were dressed in western attire, did not satisfy his desire to experience the fairyland, and he was relieved that "[t]he women met with in the streets are, almost without an exception, dressed as we see them pictured, and we begin to feel that we have not travelled in vain."[36] Another traveller described the sight of Japanese men's and women's clothing as a "strange juxtaposition of East and West, of indigenous and European civilization."[37] Though on the surface men no longer seemed to be a part of the dainty, delicate and beautiful image of Japan, the aesthetics of masculinity still occupied a quite large space in British assessments of Japanese men in general and of men in uniform especially.

An *Illustrated London News* illustration from 1904 pictured a Japanese man wearing western clothing surrounded by western-style furniture, while his wife is clearly separated from him both by her Japanese clothing and by her placement in front of traditional sliding paper doors opening onto a garden filled with bamboo (Fig. 2). This image is one of a few produced in this period that presented Japanese men in western clothing in a favourable manner; in this case the positive imagery was perhaps due to the fact that the man was both a military hero from an ally nation who had just achieved an

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[35] Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, 1.

[36] G. H. Younghusband, *On Short Leave to Japan* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, 1894), 74.

[37] H. B. Tristram, *Rambles in Japan, the Land of the Rising Sun* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1895), 39.

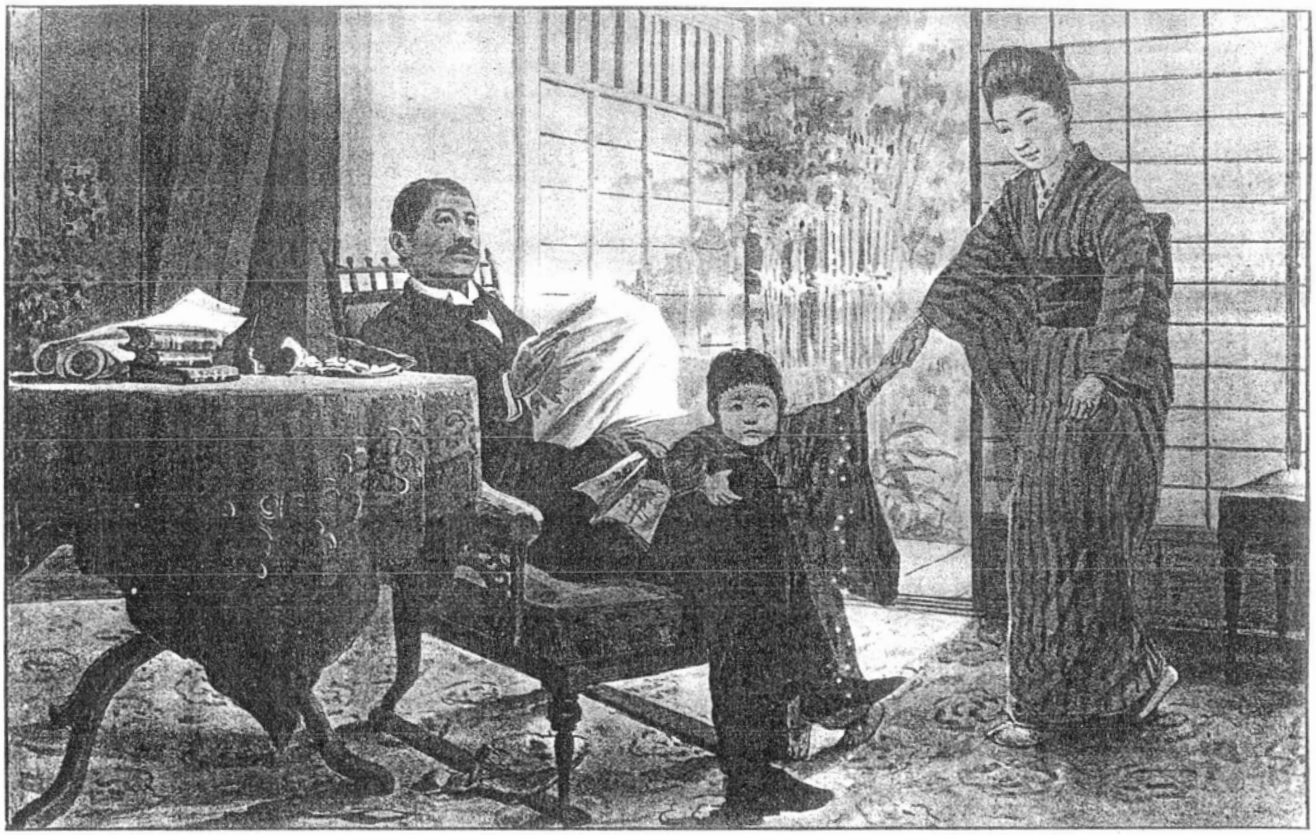
important naval victory and a good family man (suggested by his close physical contact with his child). This image approvingly portrays a Japanese man representing two of the most important features of middle-class British manhood: the soldier and the family provider. It also illustrates the common British notion of Japanese men as active agents of change in their country as well as visual symbols of Japan's new achievements.

In the ten years from 1895 to 1905, as the military became the principal shorthand for Japan's progress and modernization, the soldier was increasingly presented to the English public as the symbol of Japan's progress towards civilization. Just before the start of the Russo-Japanese War, the *Illustrated London News* laid out Japan's advancement in terms of its progressive adoption of European military uniforms and equipment with an illustration entitled "Japan's Leap from Barbarism to Civilization: a Generation of Military Progress" and an accompanying text which identified specific European influences on the Japanese uniforms and equipment (Fig. 3). In this image, and in many other depictions, the soldier was more than just an illustrative example of Japan's progress. He was the embodiment of progress itself. Significantly, however, while the discourse on Japanese men often articulated this idea of a universal manhood and an analogous universal progression towards higher civilization, it also reveals a recognition of and often an appreciation for those things that made it different from British manhood, things that were not changing or progressing, specifically its presumed martial spirit. The samurai embodied this martial spirit and were often represented as a distinct visual image that held a strong attraction for British writers, but were depicted nearly as often as the "new," modern Japanese soldier.

How was the tension between Old and New Japan implicated in representations of

THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS, JUNE 18, 1904.—919

OUR JAPANESE SPECIAL ARTIST AND THE WAR: DOMESTICITY AND THE CONFLICT.



THE MAN WHOSE MACHINE SANK THE "PETROPAVLOVSK": VICE-CAPTAIN ODA, THE INVENTOR OF THE MINE THAT SENT MAKAROFF TO HIS DOOM.

Figure 2
From *The Illustrated London News*, June 18, 1904 p. 919

Figure 3
From *The Illustrated London News*, January 16, 1904 p. VII

Japanese manhood? Men were associated with the new civilization of Japan in a way that women were not. The British saw Japanese men as the ones who were undertaking the modernization and westernization of their country, and although the image of Japanese men as embodiments of this modernization was prevalent among British writers, closer examination reveals interesting differences in the way that this image was presented. Despite using a common language of manliness and civilization, this discourse did not produce a cohesive picture of Japanese men. Indeed, sometimes the same image could be used to argue completely different points. For instance, a common sentiment was that Japan had adopted the outward appearances of civilization, but that this was only a veneer, and "the old traits of character exist under the European costumes of to-day, as under the flowing robes of the two-sworded retainer."[38] How this statement was interpreted depended on what value was given to "the old traits of character." For some a statement such as this was meant as a compliment, implying a belief that the quality that made Japan great was its samurai spirit. Those "traits of the samurai which distinguish them, and make them such honoured types of the perfect Japanese gentleman" were such that "to live and die worthy of the name of samurai was the highest ambition of the soldier."[39] For others, these old traits were oriental, savage, and barbaric. The *Illustrated London News* and *The Times* favoured New Japan over Old, and presented racialized images and ideas of 'oriental' barbarism and savagery in order to highlight how far Japan had progressed in the past few decades. For a few people, these images did not serve as an illustration of Japan's progress but instead as a warning and a reminder

[38] Bacon, *Japanese Girls and Women*, 206.

[39] Bacon, *Japanese Girls and Women*, 197.

that the Japanese might appear to have become civilized, but were still barbaric 'Orientals' just below the surface. An editorial on the 1900 Boxer Rebellion in *The Times* stated:

> It must be remembered that barely a quarter of a century has elapsed since Japan was murdering foreigners with as wild a fanaticism and as reasoning a cruelty as China. True, in that interval she has donned a veneer of civilization. But how deep does it go? Can the leopard have changed its spots so quickly? The words Daimio, Samurai, Ronin have disappeared into the limbo of the past. But the Yamato Damashi, the spirit of old Japan, by which the men who bore those titles were fired, has that died too?[40]

Here the conflation of martial spirit and martial race is clear— the "spirit of old Japan" is not dynamic or constructive, but is distinctly negative in its connection to an innate, racial quality in the Japanese.

The popular press was more inclined to play up this idea that Japan was until very recently uncivilized, while books written by 'Japan experts' and scholars were more approving of traditional Japanese culture and more critical of westernization. More than a few of these writers, though, still employed these ideas of oriental savagery and cruelty, perhaps more for stylistic flair than any other reason, as in this example: "in 1860, and even 1870, it was possible that a head should roll into a Japanese ditch when a vile trafficker in merchandise tainted the hem of a military gentleman's robe with the breath of his wares."[41] Here again it is clear that the dualistic character of Japanese men was a product of the representations, which produced two very different pictures and expressed two very different values of traditional Japanese cultural practices and social behaviour.

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[40] A. B. Freeman Mitford, "Japan and the Chinese Crisis" *The Times* (12 July 1900).

[41] W. Petrie Watson, *Japan: Aspects and Destinies* (London: Grant Richards, 1904), 1.

Ian Littlewood has argued that at the end of the nineteenth century, "the prevailing attitude [in the west] put war, business and industry on the male and adult side, while arts, crafts and leisure were on the female and childish side. Aesthetic Japan— the fairyland that Victorian travellers were so fond of invoking— belonged firmly with the women and children."[42] The large amount of attention to manliness and the strong connection between manliness and seriousness in British discourse on New Japan would seem to support this view. However, Japanese manhood, as we have seen, was never distinctly categorized as old or new, eastern or western. Despite the marked efforts of numerous British newspaper writers and journalists to separate men from an aesthetic, static picture of Old Japan and to connect them to a dynamic, progressive, representation of New Japan, the images that were produced and the interest in exotic behaviour and practices contradict this "prevailing attitude" that separated manhood from the past and from the east. For instance, widespread fascination with the spectacle of samurai performing ritual suicide was continually expressed by every type of observer: missionaries, military officers, and travellers. Jean-Pierre Lehmann sees an enduring desire among western writers not to take Japan seriously, and to search out the aesthetic and the beautiful and all the things that made Japan unique in the eyes of the Europeans. He argues that this was a political move with racist overtones: because westerners wanted to maintain distance and keep Japan remote from the reality of its becoming a modern and powerful nation, they romanticized and exoticized their images of the country. In this way, he states, "there was no contradiction between the images of *bushido* and the images of art

[42] Littlewood, *The Idea of Japan*, 94.

and sensuality, between Admiral Togo and Madame Chrysantheme."[43] Also in this way, some British writers kept Japanese manhood connected to Japan's past and to its traditional culture, preserving true manliness for themselves.

Japanese martial traditions and their martial spirit elicited the most complimentary comments from British writers. The attraction of the Japanese as a martial race was evident in visual depictions of samurai as well as in descriptions of their character. The common ridicule of Japanese men in western uniforms was not simply malicious but reflected a more pervasive sense of nostalgia and romanticism towards traditional Japanese samurai costumes and paraphernalia. Western-style clothing could be emasculating to the samurai in British eyes: "Whilst in the old days, prior to the Meiji era, the Japanese gentleman always wore his two swords when out of doors...he now carries nothing more formidable in his belt than his tobacco-pipe and pouch," wrote J. Morris in 1895.[44] Having his passport inspected by Japanese soldiers, traveller Gilbert Watson complained, "[t]hey were the most melancholy mechanical toys I had seen. They seemed to feel the depressing dignity of having been 'made in Germany'... Every pleasant characteristic trait had been stamped out, to give place, alas! To nothing but the dead uniformity of the man-killing machine."[45] Frank Brinkley's explanation of the traditional boys' festival, in which boys displayed their toys and dolls in their homes, reveals a similar sentiment:

> In the alcoves, warriors, battle-steeds, armour, and weapons of war – often beautiful and brilliant examples of skilled workmanship and decoration- are

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[43] Lehmann, *The Image of Japan*, 767.

[44] Morris, *Advance Japan*, 83.

[45] Gilbert Watson, *Three Rolling Stones in Japan* (London: Edward Arnold, 1903), 180.

> ranged, but these relics of the bygone days are fast losing their interest for the youth of the nation; and since it is impossible to combine picturesqueness with accuracy in any representation of the military uniforms and accoutrements of modern times, alcoves that used once to be crowded with gallant puppets in gorgeous panoply now make no contribution to the gaiety of the *tango* [boys' festival].[46]

Warriors in armour and swords were undoubtedly more appealing and exotic than soldiers in ill-fitting, ordinary uniforms:

> As one watched the nimble battalions of little riflemen marching through the streets in their Frenchified uniform, and now read of their prowess against their hereditary rivals, we could hardly realise that not only the grandfathers but the fathers of these dapper little men had paraded these same streets in all the glory of their mediaeval accoutrements, weighted with the chain armour and steel helmets, and girt with their two swords.[47]

Although Japan was supposedly coming into a new manhood, British observers described Japanese men more positively when they looked more traditionally Japanese. Japanese men's manhood was tightly bound to their otherness and their Japanese-ness. Although it was often argued that the spirit of Old Japan was alive in the men of New Japan, and that the men who were effecting the changes and reforms were in fact former samurai, these new men—"Frenchified" and "dapper"— were less attractive to British writers than the iconic and formulaic samurai that illustrated in British books.

Even authors who were concerned with purportedly serious matters such as Japan's foreign policy or the consequences of the country's westernization paid as much attention to how men looked as to how they behaved. The male side of aesthetic Japan was presented as a central aspect of British evaluations of Japanese men that described in detail their appearances in both western and Japanese clothing, and also in books whose

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[46] Brinkley, *Japan: its history, arts, and literature.* vol.6, 72.

[47] Tristram, *Rambles in Japan*, 57-58.

discussions of Japan's progress and modernization were presented alongside pictures not of men in modern military uniforms or western-style clothing, but in antiquated armour or kimono. This led to a confused and often anachronistic image of contemporary Japanese men. British writers may have been beginning to take Japan more seriously, but this did not mean that they ceased to view Japan through romantic and aesthetic lenses. Examining these images and their prominence in the contemporary discourse of Japan requires that we think more carefully about the standard argument that this period represents a definite shift from seeing Japanese men as feminine to seeing them as masculine, from dolls to soldiers. It also requires that we scrutinize the common argument that the British separated aesthetics from masculinity and seriousness in their representations of New Japan.

The multiple meanings of the samurai

While easy to identify, the warrior/soldier was not as straightforward a stereotype as it might seem: the image that the British painted of the samurai was not simply a celebration of a familiar and respected paragon of masculinity nor a denigration of Japan's "oriental" barbarism. It was also a reflection of their conflicting attitudes towards Japan's cultural traditions and towards the ideas of modernization and civilization. The qualities associated with manliness were often discussed as if they were timeless and enduring qualities of a good man, but they were in many ways fixed in the present and reflected contemporary concerns. The figure of Japanese manhood that was most celebrated by the British, the samurai, and the qualities associated with him, were fixed in the past, and although manliness was often connected to civilization, the images of

samurai and soldiers that the British created show how they located manliness and even gentlemanliness in the past, before the arrival of 'civilization' to the country. The British unmistakably saw the samurai, though safely under control in the confines of this new civilization, as a constructive and vital force in modern Japan.

The contradictory uses of the image of the samurai were largely responsible for any apparent dualism seen in Japanese men. This dualism was presented as a tension between civilization and primitiveness; it was not some natural racial or cultural attribute but a consequence of Japan's transition towards manhood/civilization and the way that British writers understood and described those ideas and Japanese men's relationship to them:

> That the Japanese is more cruel than the European is possible: his civilization, if it is not, as has been most unjustly said, a mere veneer, is recent and has not yet had time to work its full effects. It is not so many years ago since *hara kari* [*sic*] was one of the institutions of Japan. Is it then just to condemn the Japanese for outbreaks which have occurred in the most civilized armies, and which may be only a passing phenomenon, not a characteristic of the race?[48]

If the British saw these men as both savages and gentlemen, it was mainly due to the effects of the combined discourses on martial races/martial spirit, on manliness, and on civilization.

For the majority of British writers who wrote books and articles about Japan in this period, the images of samurai as antiquated warriors or as modern, westernized men held attraction whether they were portrayed approvingly or disparagingly. These images suggest British observers projected their often confused notions of martial spirit/martial race onto another culture's manhood. The images give expression to British anxieties over the difficulties of being civilized, vital and manly all at the same time. This anxiety

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[48] H. W. Wilson, "England and Japan," *Fortnightly Review* 63 (January-June 1898), 507.

was directed at themselves and also at the Japanese who were becoming more like them in many ways. Even when Japanese men were associated with barbarism or savagery, this association was not necessarily a detriment to their character, and served to illustrate, paradoxically, both how far they had come in terms of civilization and how powerful the samurai spirit remained.

Conclusion

The complex and contradictory images of Japanese men produced by British discourse were influenced in part by current events. Doubtless, several British writers had an interest in presenting Japanese men favourably as progressive and civilized in light of Japan's recent modernization and its alliance with Britain. These events could also, however, have led some observers to maintain their views of Japanese people as singular and different, to keep them distant and perhaps downplay the significance of their achievements, particularly those achievements that did not require Christianity or an Anglo-Saxon 'racial' heritage. More profoundly than by current events or material realities, though, representations of Japanese men were shaped by the ways these men fit into the contemporary British discourse on manliness and their compatibility with the values placed on soldier heroes, martial races, and British/Christian family life.

The two most prevalent pictures of Japanese men at the turn of the twentieth century were the chauvinistic, unloving husband and the fierce samurai with the semblance of a modern soldier. Although these images became hardened, to different degrees in different times and places in westerners' imaginations (the Second World War is an example of a period when these images were exceedingly disparaging and virulent),[1] during this period the discourse on Japanese men was full of inconsistencies and conflicting opinions. British writers did not fix these stereotypes; instead, British representations of Japanese men were sometime positive and sometimes negative, often contradictory, and always the result of an unsteady meeting of British and Japanese cultural traditions and gender identities.

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[1] See Littlewood, *The Idea of Japan*, and Dower, *War Without Mercy*.

Manliness was an ideology that permeated and found expression in every aspect of a man's life. This broad and consequently often imprecise notion was the ideological framework most often used to evaluate Japanese men in this period, and therefore it was impossible for British representations to produce a simple, one-dimensional stereotype of Japanese men. Every aspect of Japanese men's lives contributed to their identity and evaluations of their manliness, and to focus narrowly on only one characterization of Japanese men or one aspect of their lives neglects the importance of the variety of circumstances in which men exhibited their masculinity. Manliness allowed men to be designated as men regardless of anatomy or physical appearance and depended primarily on their behaviour in diverse situations. Japanese men were sometimes considered manly and sometimes not, depending on how strongly their observer attached religious or racial prejudices to the concept of manliness. In every case, though, manliness overshadowed and softened more stringent racializing discourses, making it difficult to maintain either an altogether positive or negative view of these men or to clearly distance and differentiate them. Such ambiguity meant that British observers could always find a reason to deny Japanese men true manliness and to affirm their inferiority to British men.

Manliness was a key discursive site wherein anxieties about the meaning of civilization and modernization were articulated. British representations of Japanese manhood revealed a concern with creating a comfortable manhood for the Japanese, a manhood that was made up of the attributes of a proper, civilized gentleman but that was strong enough in "primitive" martial qualities to withstand the more negative aspects of civilization. In addition, the discourse created a manhood that could be a model for British middle-class men while still being different enough to be romantic and exotic.

The British portrayed the Japanese man as evidence of a comfortable, preconceived view of manliness (and civilization and progress) and at the same time as a challenge to that view. Representations of Japanese men did not straightforwardly, or even primarily, differentiate and distance the British from other men. Rather, these representations provided an object of desire and a comforting vision in the face of fears of the ill-effects of civilization on a robust and virile British masculinity. British observers inscribed these closely related ideas— repeatedly expressed as the tension between Old and New Japan—on the bodies of Japanese men.

In the eyes of the British, Japan's successful modernization and civilization depended on the quality of its manhood, a term that was used to describe both its national development and the individual males that were undertaking that development. In turn-of-the-century British discourse on Japan, Japanese manhood was strongly connected to modernization, civilization and Christianity, in a way that Japanese womanhood was not; western perceptions of Japanese womanhood were comparatively more idealized and unchanging, whereas perceptions of manhood were in flux and in the process of being created. The widespread discourse on Japan's new manhood might seem to suggest that previous expressions of masculinity in Japan were not really manly in terms that the English appreciated or recognized, and that only after westernization and civilization were Japanese men considered manly. However, the evidence used by the British to confirm the manhood of the Japanese came largely from Japan's distinct cultural traditions and iconography from Japan's past. British writers did not present Japan as having achieved a clean break with the past or a leap into modernity and seriousness; instead many upheld the romantic image of Old Japan in their minds. Japanese manhood

was thus simultaneously measured in terms of its own unique cultural traditions and in terms of comparison with British (i.e. modern, civilized) manhood. This dual means of evaluation confirmed Japanese men's manliness while underlining their difference from British men, and made a definitive notion of Japanese manliness impossible.

Undeniably, British observers saw similarities between themselves and Japanese men, or at the very least, they recognized the many ways that Japanese men fit into their notions of masculinity. Some features of Japanese manhood, such as martial skills and traditions, were celebrated as universal attributes of ideal manhood and looked upon as models for British men, and some aspects of Japanese culture, such as strong family ties and family values, were familiar or attractive enough for the British to respect and even to desire. Some writers presented the Japanese martial spirit as a beneficial quality and the source of many of the attributes of manliness, yet they also used it to show that Japanese men were the "yellow peril." Similarly, some praised Christian behaviour by Japanese soldiers on the battlefield, but condemned the misogyny and other allegedly un-Christian features of Japanese society and family life. These men, whatever their differences, were seen as capable of change, which was itself considered both good and bad— with the adoption of Christianity and the rejection of Japanese religious and social customs they could improve their manliness, but where their traditions, such as bushido, already fit into the pre-existing ideology, they were encouraged to uphold these traditions and resist the detriments of modern civilization on manhood.

Although the images were often quite different from the images they created of men in other colonial contexts, British observers viewed Japanese men from within the same colonial mindset and through the same refracted lenses of race, religion and gender as

they saw other non-British or non-white people. Therefore historians cannot continue to view late-Victorian and early-Edwardian British opinions of Japan as based simplistically on notions of Japanese singularity. Paradigms for western images of Japan that are based on the idea of Japanese singularity, inherent dualism, or straightforward opposition to the West cannot contain the complexities of gendered identities and the numerous ways these are represented.

Gender organizes people into categories based on their appearance, behaviour, and social position in relation to others, and carries out this sorting within a larger discursive matrix in relation to and in combination with other categories, such as religion and race. Because it is so intricately bound to and impossible to separate from these other concepts, historians of western images of Japan—or any other culture— cannot ignore gender as a necessary category of analysis. When British images of Japanese men are studied under the lens of gender, it is clear that the idea of a singular and inflexibly dualistic character inherent in Japanese men does not conclusively explain westerners' reactions to and perceptions of these men. This model for understanding these representations does not provide an accurate or comprehensive picture of "the British image of Japan." Historians can uncover a much richer and more detailed portrait of Japanese people by looking beyond the singularity model and examining British discourse more closely and from a variety of angles.

If Japan was indeed singular, then its men could not have exhibited all the virtues of recognizable manliness that they so obviously did. The apparent dualistic or paradoxical characteristics of Japanese men are evidence of complexity, not of anomaly. British observers arrived at this model not because of a need to make sense of the contradictions

they saw in Japan, but to make sense of Japan's challenge to the racial, religious, and gendered hierarchies in their worldview. They did not measure Japanese men strictly in comparison with themselves, but also in light of a more comprehensive masculine ideology. The British people who described Japanese men were not distanced and objective observers; rather the contrasting approving and disapproving images of Japanese men paradoxically secured the superiority and highlighted the inadequacies of their own gender identities. For instance, the close and complex relationship between a martial spirit and a martial race exemplified by Japanese soldiers showed that the martial heritage which made the Japanese better fighters also made them less civilized; the repercussions for British men of this tension between civilization and savagery were hinted at in discussions of Japanese men. The apparent contradictions and the co-existing positive and negative images were the product of Japanese gender identities embodied and demonstrated and the way these interacted with British observers' own gendered subjectivities, not the result of the dualistic character of Japanese men.

The influence of gendered thinking on British representations of Japanese men demonstrates that the creation and maintenance of an 'other' is not dependent only on persistent, seemingly firm, and easily identifiable categories such as 'race' or religion. Racial thinking does not always entail feelings of superiority, but can also produce anxieties, fears, and feelings of inferiority towards an 'other.' British representations of Japanese men tell us not only how and why these men fit into a British notion of manliness, but also how enmeshed was manliness— and gender identities in general— in a wider world-view. These representations also show us how powerful a role gender plays in the creation of differences.

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