



## “Not Befitting Our Divine Country”: Eating Meat in Japanese Discourses of Self and Other from the Seventeenth Century to the Present

Hans Martin Krämer

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**“NOT BEFITTING OUR DIVINE COUNTRY”: EATING MEAT  
IN JAPANESE DISCOURSES OF SELF AND OTHER FROM  
THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY TO THE PRESENT**

**HANS MARTIN KRÄMER**

In volume 3 of his bestselling series *Sensōron* (“On War”), published in 2003, the popular Japanese right-wing cartoonist Kobayashi Yoshinori devotes the first two pages of a chapter entitled “A World History of Invasions and Massacres” to ruminations about the difference between Japanese and Western attitudes towards animals. Kobayashi contrasts the Japanese tradition in place “since the time of the myths” of treating animals kindly, a tradition that rested on the assumption that “gods resided in humans as well as animals,” with attitudes in Europe, where “there has been the sentiment that humans and animals differ absolutely and thus cruelty towards animals other than humans has always existed universally.” The most obvious result of this difference, writes Kobayashi, is that, while “in Japan people could raise grains for immediate consumption, in Europe agriculture did not develop, so instead they raised animals by letting them eat the grass of the meadows, and ate them after killing them.” Accordingly, a “meat-eating culture” developed in Europe, while in Japan “eating meat only spread since the Meiji Period [1868–1912].”<sup>1</sup>

Kobayashi soon shifts his attention away from these considerations and towards giving examples of atrocities from the histories of other countries with the transparent aim of exculpating war crimes committed by Japan during World War II. It is significant, however, that he sets out by contrasting East and West through commenting on their food practices. Throughout history, food has been employed culturally to represent meaning, and it has also often been used for ideological purposes. In particular, food issues have loomed large in building a sense

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Address correspondence to Hans Martin Krämer, Japanese History, Faculty of East Asian Studies, Ruhr University Bochum, 44780 Bochum, Germany. E-mail: hans.martin.kraemer@rub.de



FIGURE 1 Frames from Kobayashi Yoshinori's "On War".

of belonging-together of large groups, for example in the construction of national self-identity.

In Japan, the notion of a distinct entity of "Japanese food" even found its way into the lexicon: The term *washoku* has been formed as a separate word of its own, meaning "Japanese cuisine,"

as opposed to *yōshoku*, “Western cuisine.” The concept of *washoku* as a distinctly Japanese way of preparing, serving, and eating dishes, ignoring regional differences, was not created until the late 19th century and defies a precise definition. Indeed, many of the dishes associated with the term are of recent origin and therefore lack the traditionality the term implies. As food historian Harada Nobuo notes, none of the three dishes most Japanese name as typical of *washoku*—namely *sukiyaki*, *sushi*, and *tempura*—were part of the Japanese cuisine before the early modern period, the oldest (*tempura*) being basically a Japanese variant of a Western (in this case Portuguese) dish. On the other hand, claims Harada, even a hamburger may be instantly transformed into *washoku* by serving it along with *miso* soup, rice, and pickles.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, food historian Katarzyna Cwiertka has emphasized the role eclectic combinations of Japanese and Western foodstuffs and the “creolization” of Japanese foodways have played in the formation of today’s “Japanese cuisine.”<sup>3</sup> Another way of approaching a definition of *washoku* would be to use this label for all food not available outside of Japan (or Japanese restaurants abroad). That way, even dishes perceived as having a clearly “foreign” origin can be classified as *washoku* today, such as *karē raisu* (curry rice, i.e. white rice served with a curried beef sauce) or *rāmen* (Chinese-style noodle soup with broth based on soy sauce, *miso*, or bonito stock).<sup>4</sup>

The central component of *washoku*, as it is commonly understood, is rice. Although rice did not become the main ingredient of everyday Japanese cuisine until late in the 19th century,<sup>5</sup> self-identities in Japan have indeed often been constructed through identification with a grain diet, or more specifically, rice-eating, culture, as anthropologist Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney has pointed out.<sup>6</sup> Ohnuki-Tierney has also noted that the construction of a rice-centered food identity has entailed the emergence of a mirror image, so that the “discourse on the Japanese self vis-à-vis Westerners as the other took the form of rice versus meat” in the Meiji Period,<sup>7</sup> although she has not elaborated on this opposition.<sup>8</sup>

This paper will trace how not eating meat was established as a valid representation of “the Japanese” in various writings on food during the 20th century, from literature to cultural philosophy and contemporary academic literature, and will link this practice to the theory of discourses on Japanese identity (*Nihonjinron*). I

will also show that the ascription of the practice of eating meat to an “other” predates the Meiji Period. Although taking China as its object rather than “the West,” food discourses of the early modern or Tokugawa period (1600–1868) reveal a logic similar to that of *Nihonjinron*. In conclusion I will tie up the findings from the 20th century and from the early modern period in order to demonstrate how representations of food have contributed to creating national homogeneity by disregarding differences and positing the self against a referent other (which moved on, over time, from China to “the West”). In addition, I will argue that the fact that seemingly “modern” discursive modes of exclusion and inclusion can be shown in the Japanese case to have preceded the advent of the modern nation state by several centuries may well serve to enhance our understanding of modernity itself.

### **Meat Consumption in Premodern Japan**

Actual meat consumption in Japan today, taken to mean the gross intake of food derived from non-maritime animals, is roughly on a par with that of other industrialized nations.<sup>9</sup> In the past, however, meat consumption patterns have varied considerably. The earliest settlers on the Japanese archipelago (from around 30,000 B.C.) were hunters and lived mainly from collected plants and hunted flesh. Seafood also featured prominently in the diet of early settlers, as the shell mounds unearthed along the coast of the Japanese islands and dated to the Jōmon period (which began around 12,000 B.C.) suggest. It was not until rice cultivation was introduced from the Chinese mainland in the last millennium B.C. that systematically grown grains started to play a role in the diet of the inhabitants of at least some regions of Japan. Only after the establishment of the first centralized state based on Chinese models in the 7th century A.D. were efforts made to diffuse agriculture among all those parts of the islands considered part of the emperor’s realm. A ban on meat pronounced by Emperor Tenmu in 675, mentioned in the chronicle *Nihon shoki* (compiled in 720),<sup>10</sup> may in fact be considered part of these efforts.

Of equal importance was the influence of religion: In Buddhism, the teaching of transmigration implies a compassion for all beings, which has been interpreted to mean that it is undesirable to kill animals. Emperor Tenmu, whose edict prohibited eating

the meat of cows, horses, dogs, monkeys, and roosters, was a well-known sponsor of Buddhism. Shintō, on the other hand, is bound up intimately with notions of purity. Blood and dead bodies clearly belong to the category of *kegare* or “impure,” falling under the tenet of avoidance (*imi*). In ancient Japan, Buddhism and Shintō entered into a syncretic relationship, which allowed the ideas of mercy for all beings and avoidance of the impure to reinforce each other.<sup>11</sup> Since about the time of Tenmu’s edict, occupations that dealt with the processing of dead animals (i.e., mainly tanning and slaughtering) came to be held as defiled and subsequently socially stigmatized. For many centuries, it was only members of these hereditary groups (best known by the medieval derogatory term *eta*) that continued to eat meat openly—indeed, the fact that they visibly consumed dead mammals was often viewed as the cause of their inferior social status.<sup>12</sup>

Yet, despite the rise of agriculture, hunted and gathered foodstuffs, including animals, remained part of the Japanese diet for a considerable time. References to eating wild boar and deer can be found throughout the ancient (710–1185) and medieval (1185–1573) periods. Less strongly class-based than the distribution of types of grain (with rice generally available to the upper classes only), meat seems to have been an occasional part of the diet across a broad spectrum of social classes except among the poorer agricultural population. Geographically speaking, consumption clearly centered on the mountainous regions of Northern Japan, although it seems to have been available on city markets as well.<sup>13</sup> Never in historical time, however, did the practice of raising livestock for consumption as food develop in Japan. Instead, the supply of animals for the purposes of consumption had to rely on catching and gathering. This activity was centered around fish and, since the middle ages, increasingly birds, especially water fowl. Mammals, however, continued to be hunted as well, now not only by those subsisting on them, but also by members of the *bushi*, the new warrior elite. In descriptions of their life, we find them hunting and feasting on deer, wild boar, bears, serows (*kamoshika*), raccoon dogs (*tanuki*), fish otters (*kawauso*), and rabbits. Even the court nobility, traditionally feeling obliged to follow Buddhist precepts closely, ate mammal meat during the medieval period, although still holding it in lower esteem than fish and fowl.<sup>14</sup>

For 16th century Japan, the presence of European traders and missionaries in Japan offers us a rare glimpse from the outside. The Jesuit priest Luis Frois (1532–1597), who was in Japan from 1563 until his death, in 1585 authored a short treatise on “Cultural Oppositions of Europe and Japan.” While Frois’s judgments are sometimes dubious and he frequently errs in details, the casualness with which he writes about the consumption of meat by the Japanese seems to indicate its ubiquity. In a chapter on “Eating and Drinking,” Frois claims that the Japanese “love to eat wild dogs, cranes, monkey, cats, and raw algae,” that dogs are eaten “quite nicely,” and that wild boar is eaten “raw, cut into slices.”<sup>15</sup>

The focus of culturalist theories on Japanese meat-free eating, however, is frequently on the early modern period. Certainly, if the object of comparison are the meat-eating practices in early modern central and Western Europe, particularly Britain, then Japan will appear as basically meat-free. The frequently voiced preference for meat and the high value attached to it in 17th and 18th century Europe are met by almost absolute silence on the matter in Japan, where mammal meat never became a symbol of prestige or wealth before the end of the 19th century. Yet, it is far from clear how much meat was actually consumed in Japan between the 17th and 19th centuries. Archaeological evidence found in the 1990s suggests that “the eating of animal meat during the Tokugawa period was far more widespread than generally believed. This includes large, four-footed mammals, the consumption of which is generally thought to have been taboo in premodern [i.e., pre-1860s] Japan.”<sup>16</sup> The archaeologist Kaneko Hiromasa, who conducted the excavations that lead to these findings, was able to demonstrate that wild boar, deer, bears, dogs, monkeys, and horses were part of the Tokugawa period diet, although beef is conspicuously absent from it.<sup>17</sup> In one province close to the capital, several thousands of animals were slaughtered annually. Although the exact usage of these animals is unclear, they were killed at least partly for the purposes of meat consumption, as is shown by the fact that the lords of the province regularly sent dried beef to the Shōgun.<sup>18</sup>

Cookbooks also seem to be telling a slightly more complicated story. The earliest Tokugawa period example of this

genre, *Ryōri monogatari* [“Meal Tales,” 1643], features recipes that contain deer, raccoon dogs, wild boar, rabbits, fish otters, bears, and dogs.<sup>19</sup> It has been argued that this constitutes a remnant from the medieval period, soon giving way to a new emphasis on vegetarianism for the rest of the Tokugawa period.<sup>20</sup> Mammals featured in cookbook recipes were, however, not limited to the early Tokugawa period. Even excluding whales, seven of the 88 cookbooks treated in food historian Matsushita Sachiko’s “Dictionary of Tokugawa Period Cooking,” three of them dating from the mid-18th century, have chapters on “beasts.”<sup>21</sup>

Traditional eating prohibitions, which forbade eating certain foodstuffs in certain months, are also a telling indicator of what must have been eaten in reality, hence becoming a worthy object of prohibition. Such prohibitions partly reflected hunting seasons, but more so a belief in inauspicious timing as part of cosmological considerations. One list of food prohibitions dating from 1630 mentions raccoon dogs, four-legged “beasts” in general, wild boar, turtle, and deer in six different months, and another one from 1808 lists raccoon dogs, “beast” liver, rabbit, “beast” intestines, animals with shells, deer, wild boar, and cow meat in five different months.<sup>22</sup> The “Laws of Compassion” are another prominent example of a prohibition related to slaying animals, hinting at the frequency with which animals were actually killed, partly for the purpose of consumption. These laws were a series of edicts issued by the fifth shogun of the Tokugawa period, Tokugawa Tsunayoshi, prohibiting the maltreatment and arbitrary killing of animals, particularly dogs. The fact that Tsunayoshi issued no less than 66 such instructions during the time of his reign from 1680 to 1709 indicates that they were probably not closely obeyed.<sup>23</sup>

Partly due to such legislation, actual meat consumption, while also surfacing in clear words in cookbooks, was frequently cloaked under euphemisms. Red meat was sometimes called “winter peony” (*fuyu botan*), and meat in general “mountain whale” (*yamakujira*).<sup>24</sup> A chapter from Terakado Seiken’s *Edo Hanjōki* (“Notes from Prosperity in Edo,” 1832), the popular late-Tokugawa comic description of life in Edo, claims that the number of shops selling “mountain whales” had recently risen. There, customers could buy meat products derived from wild boar, deer,

foxes, rabbits, fish otters, wolves, and bears. While Terakado mentions the voice of a dissenter who warns that “meat defiles the body and pollutes the spirit,” this opinion merely becomes the target of ridicule.<sup>25</sup> *Morisada mankō* (“Random Thoughts of Morisada”), another late-Tokugawa book of a similar spirit dating from the 1860s, also discusses the various euphemisms, adding that in Ōsaka and Edo, meat from wild boar and deer had always been sold in a few places at least as early as the beginning of the 19th century.<sup>26</sup>

Documents in fact mention a meat shop in central Edo as early as 1760. By the early 1800s, meat was also sold in more remote parts of the country such as the Northern Kyūshū port town of Hakata.<sup>27</sup> Quantities, however, remained very low: Meat was expensive and its consumption (other than by hunters) was limited to towns and cities. Indeed, in some isolated parts of the countryside meat consumption remained an alien practice until the middle of the 20th century.<sup>28</sup>

Due to the absence of systematic livestock raising, meat eating was certainly never central to the diet of most inhabitants of the Japanese islands between the 8th and 19th centuries. Hunting remained a skill central for supplying a major part of the diet only in some regions in Northern Japan; but even there, people living mainly from hunting generally receded into more mountainous areas as early as the first centuries B.C. with the advent of agriculture. Neither, however, has eating animal products ever been completely absent from eating patterns in Japan. While quantitative data are lacking for the whole premodern period, it is clear that all social strata had access to some form of meat and more or less frequently included animal products in their daily diet.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, the historian of outcastes Nobi Shōji argues that the quick acceptance of eating meat after the Meiji Restoration can only be explained by the existence of earlier customs of eating mammals in Japan.<sup>30</sup> It is noteworthy, however, that both legal and customary prohibitions on eating meat were in place, that it was necessary to resort to euphemisms when speaking of meat, and that medical guidebooks frequently discouraged readers from eating it.<sup>31</sup> This may partially explain why during the early modern period itself as well as today Japan is frequently represented as completely meat-free, often in contrast to other countries.

### Representing Japan as Non-Meat Eating in Modern Japan

Soon after the 1868 Meiji Restoration, when many Japanese were introduced to European and North American customs and everyday life practices, eating beef became fashionable in the big cities. Encouraging the consumption of beef can be seen as part of the new government’s efforts to rework the Japanese physique in a way that would be more appealing to the Western gaze and to make it appear more civilized, thus facilitating Japan’s entry into the ranks of those countries perceived to be of higher international standing.<sup>32</sup> To further this goal, the Meiji government supported the consumption and production of meat, in 1871 removed the monopoly in the meat and leather industries which had been held by hereditary occupation groups, and in 1872 saw to it that the emperor’s first partaking of beef was well-publicized.<sup>33</sup> These steps were accompanied and sometimes preceded by discussions among intellectuals and literary renderings of the new ways of life.

Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901), the single most important advocate of new ways of civilized and enlightened living for modern Japan, took sides in his 1870 article *Nikushoku no setsu* (“On Eating Meat”) when he advocated the consumption of meat for cultural and health reasons. For him, eating meat—in general, not just beef—was a decidedly “Western” practice, and one that was a symbol of civilization. Fukuzawa, who was known as a critic of Buddhism in general, maintained that the refusal to eat meat could only be explained by backward religious superstitions.<sup>34</sup> A famous expression of similar sentiments can be seen in the collection of comic episodes *Aguranabe* (“Sitting at the Steaming Pot”) by the playwright and journalist Kanagaki Robun (1829–1894). Appearing one year after Fukuzawa’s tract, this work portrayed the beef pot house then in vogue as the quintessence of “Western” culture. In the first chapter, Kanagaki made fun of those who blindly followed the new fashion: “We really should be grateful that even people like ourselves can now eat beef, thanks to the fact that Japan is steadily becoming a truly civilized country. Of course, there are some unenlightened boors who cling to their barbaric superstitions and say that eating meat defiles you so much that you can’t pray any more before Buddha and the gods. Such nonsense shows they simply don’t understand natural philosophy. Savages

like that should be made to read Fukuzawa's article on eating beef. In the West they're free of superstitions. There it's the custom to do everything scientifically, and that's why they've invented amazing things like the steamship and the steam engine."<sup>35</sup>

Fukuzawa's writings on meat and Kanagaki's vivid satirical portrait of the craze for beef in the early Meiji period have helped cement the popular belief that meat could not possibly have been consumed prior to the 1870s. While the belief that the consumption of animal flesh was something decidedly non-Japanese had thus struck root in popular discourses in Japan from early on, it was not theorized until the first half of the 20th century. An important step into this direction was undertaken by the philosopher Watsuji Tetsurō (1889–1960), who in his 1935 book-length essay *Fūdo* put forth the most important theoretization of cultural differences between Japan and "the West" in general terms in the first half of the 20th century. Building on 18th century European climatological theories, Watsuji described how the three basic climate-geography complexes of the monsoon, the desert, and the meadow have led to different styles of life and thinking in different regions of the world. Watsuji's primary interest lay with religious and philosophical insights, in that he linked the different climates to the emergence of monotheism in the desert, polytheism in the meadow, and identification of nature with the divine in the monsoon regions and juxtaposed an Asian style of thought that views man and nature as a unity against the Judaeo-Greek tradition which pitted man as the conqueror against nature.<sup>36</sup> He did, however, touch upon issues of nutrition as well: "[T]he predominant factor governing the choice between a vegetable or a meat diet is climate, rather than the vegetarian's ideology"<sup>37</sup> and: "It goes without saying that clothes, food and the like, as being tools, assume a climatic character."<sup>38</sup>

While Watsuji did not explicitly state a dualism in nutrition, he did lay the foundation for such a dualism by stressing the differences in the source of the main diet. Thus it comes as no surprise that when cultural anthropologist Ishida Eiichirō (1903–1968) introduced a "scientific" version of the popular dichotomy between meat-eating "West" and rice-eating "Japan" in the 1960s he made explicit reference to Watsuji. According to Ishida, "brutal" Western cultures, conditioned by dealing with animals daily, are the counter pole to the "peace loving" national

character of the Japanese people, based on rice agriculture.<sup>39</sup> This view was radicalized one step further by historian and popular writer Sabata Toyoyuki (1926–2001). In a 1969 newspaper article, Sabata took sides in a political conflict between England and Japan which had erupted over the issue of the treatment of pet dogs in that year. English tabloids had reported that in Japan, which was a major importer of pedigree dogs from England during the 1960s, owners soon lost interest in their precious dogs and neglected or abandoned them.<sup>40</sup> Sabata explained European-Japanese differences in the treatment of sick pets by the culturally conditioned attitude towards animals, which in turn was shaped by past dietary habits. “Why then,” he asks, “has the difference between the Japanese and the Western concepts of love and care for animals been so great until now? Here, we face the long tradition of meat eating in the Western countries. There is a remarkable chasm between the background conditions for meat eating and fish eating. [...] In the meat eating world, the line between man and animal is by and large drawn clearly, and a position for humans is called for which places them above animals.”<sup>41</sup>

It is perhaps not coincidental that these opinions were first put forth in the 1960s. By then, the position of meat had undergone a change in the nutritional discourse of “proper diet”: A symbol of ultimate nourishment in the late nineteenth century, meat had, by the 1970s, turned into the epitome of unhealthiness. Since the 1960s, nutritional science universally acknowledged the unhealthy character of a meat-based diet; efforts to portray the Japanese cuisine as based on seafood and vegetables coincided with this trend, emboldening culturalists such as Ishida or Sabata to voice their arguments with added force. Albeit with a slight time lag, these developments were reflected in actual patterns of consumption. While in the interwar period, the limited availability of meat had meant that the number of dishes containing meat prepared in private households was restricted,<sup>42</sup> meat products had become a regular item on shopping lists by the 1960s. By 1973, expenditures for meat were close on the heels of those for fish products (with the former reaching a level of 80 percent of the latter), and by 1976 they reached a peak of over 11 percent of all food expenditures. Today, they still account for about 8 percent of money spent on shopping for food.<sup>43</sup>

Ishida's and Sabata's emphasis on "cruelty" as the main factor behind culturally different attitudes towards animals still has currency in contemporary Japan, as can be seen in the rhetoric of Kobayashi Yoshinori's cartoons quoted above, or in a 1990 analysis of a survey of Japanese veterinarians and their views on euthanizing animals. The authors of this study conclude: "In Japan, cruelty means that animals should be treated as alter egos and therefore should not have their lives taken from them. [...] In the West, on the other hand, cruelty involves denying the animal comfortable care, and if the animal is suffering, euthanasia is the desirable response."<sup>44</sup> The basis for such claims is taken from no other source than supposedly self-evident suppositions about 'the' Japanese culture.<sup>45</sup>

While cultural historian Ishida still employed a rather crude chronology, placing the cradle of "the" Japanese culture in the Yayoi period (roughly 300 B.C. to 250 A.D.) and glossing over all ruptures between the 3rd and the 20th century, even historians offering a more sophisticated chronology sometimes fall prey to the influence of the ideology of Japan as a purely plant-eating culture. Watanabe Minoru in his 1964 "History of Food Life in Japan" sees Japanese history as a sequence of steps leading up towards *washoku*, Japanese food. The medieval age, still devoid of essential ingredients of "the Japanese diet" such as tea or tofu, is characterized as the "period of the development of *washoku*," but it is not until the Tokugawa period that the "period of the perfection of *washoku*" is finally reached. While, says Watanabe, meat consumption had still played a considerable role in the middle ages, in which the warrior class was dominant, no reference is made to the consumption of animals other than fish for the Tokugawa period.<sup>46</sup> In fact, this chronologically somewhat differentiated view, which regards *washoku* not as a Japanese characteristic since times immemorial, but rather an achievement of the early modern period, is still hegemonic in current historical scholarship on food in Japan.

This is clearly visible in the work of Harada Nobuo, who more than anyone else has established himself as the leading authority on the history of food consumption in Japan. In his 1989 "A History of Cooking in the Tokugawa Period," Harada, while mentioning the persistence of the practice of meat eating in medieval Japan, goes on to say: "Of course, after entering the early

modern period, the awareness of avoiding eating meat permeated society broadly and a discriminatory view of people dealing with meat also gained strength. [...] Through the middle ages, animal meat first lost its place in ceremonies, which slowly came to affect daily life as well. [...] In addition, in the early modern period, [...] food with animal meat disappeared from the dining table, and in recipe books from then on, apart from some very few exceptional ones, animal meat dishes were no longer written down.”<sup>47</sup> Harada notes only one exception, the aforementioned *Ryōri monogatari*, which he regards as unrepresentative of its time by ascribing to it “the lingering of a remaining medieval influence.”<sup>48</sup>

Harada has further elaborated his point about the marginalization of meat and of the people producing it during the Tokugawa period in his 1993 “Rice and Meat in History.” In this book, he reformulates the binary opposition of meat and rice, but by doing so reinforces it rather than doing away with it. According to Harada, the historical relationship between rice and meat can be understood as a symbolic one representing the two ends of a power spectrum: Rice is associated with the imperial house, meat with the social class of the “untouchables,” the *eta* or *hinin*.<sup>49</sup> The centrality Harada attributes to this duality is visible from his following statement: “Why in the course of Japanese history rice was made a valuable foodstuff and why the Japanese came not to eat meat anymore—this simple question is really tied up deeply with the state of societal value judgments and the consciousness of the political order in Japan.”<sup>50</sup>

While Harada on the one hand acknowledges that animals were used intensively by humans in the course of Japanese history,<sup>51</sup> he represents the animal-human relationship quite differently when it comes to comparing Japan with “the West.” At a 1996 conference with the title “The Cultural History of Animals and Humans” (*Dōbutsu to ningen no bunkashi*) Harada preceded his explanations about how the Yayoi Japanese thought cultivating rice much more profitable than obtaining meat from animals by the following statement: “I think that animals were used in Japanese society more than is commonly thought. [...] But, I feel we must once again view Japan’s position relatively with a broad view. [...] In the Christian Western societies, I understand that man is put at the center and under him there is a clear order

of animals. Western societies have after all a sharper observation of animals and know how to approach them, stemming from the relationships of hunting and raising livestock. That is to say, an order of relations according to the measure of how useful they are has been created. Whatever may be the case, Western societies more so than Japan are more skilled in their way of dealing with animals.”<sup>52</sup>

Although usually adept at avoiding simplistic judgments by historicizing cultural attitudes, Harada can here be seen to fall prey to the essentializing assumptions introduced by Watsuji and others. Essentializing “Western” or “Eastern” foodways is, of course, not unknown in Europe or North America, where “Asia” or “the East” has sometimes come to stand for dietary practices more in tune with “nature” than those prevalent in “the West.” An early example of the juxtaposition of the meat-eating “West” against the vegetarian “East” is the 1791 treatise “The Cry of Nature” by the Scot John Oswald (ca. 1755–1793). Oswald, having been to India himself, used the dichotomy to argue in favor of the vegetarianism he had picked up from Hinduism, and to portray his own culture as backward. He deplores the “unfeeling dogmas” and “remorseless tyranny [...] over inferior but fellow-creatures” in “our country” in contrast to “the sentiments of the merciful Hindu.”<sup>53</sup>

In the Japanese context, however, as the German Japanologist Klaus Vollmer has pointed out, the dualist ideology of food consumption has a special relevance to modern society.<sup>54</sup> It can be regarded as part of the cultural practice of *Nihonron* or *Ninhonjinron*, discourses on Japanese identity, which constitute “a broadly based ideological stance for Japan’s nationalism.”<sup>55</sup> Such discourses have identified Japanese uniqueness in various areas ranging from ecology, subsistence economy, social structure, Japanese management, psychology, and ethos to language, thought processes, communication patterns, and cultural origins.<sup>56</sup> The anthropologist Harumi Befu has stressed that *Nihonjinron* theorists do not “consider heterogeneous elements in Japan to pose problems for the homogeneity argument.” The “summary dismissal of the existence of ethnic minorities in Japan is an explicit stance, a conscious decision made by *Nihonjinron* writers [...] to ignore ethnic variations in Japan. In short, racial and ethnic homogeneity in Japan is not an objective fact, but instead a construct of those

who are motivated to promote a certain cultural conception of Japan.”<sup>57</sup> Befu claims that present-day *Nihonjinron*, in which the counterpoint of ‘the West’ appears as monolithic as Japan, emerged in the 1960s with antecedents going back to the Meiji period, although at that time Japanese peculiarities were usually connotated negatively rather than positively. According to Befu, *Nihonjinron* developed alongside, and as a part of, modern Japanese nationalism.<sup>58</sup>

Vollmer agrees with Befu’s chronology and adds that the creation of views of the self and their reinforcement by positing them against an “other” were also an important part of the Japanese process of modernization.<sup>59</sup> Following on from the work done by Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, Vollmer emphasizes food as an area of contention rarely treated and in fact overlooked by Befu. In the case of Japan’s path into modernity, “the West” was in terms of food simplistically reduced to being a “meat-eating culture” as opposed to the Japanese “plant (or grain)-eating culture.”

Regarding such ideological discourses of cultural essentialization as modern, however, does not mean that some of the figures of thought involved did not have certain precursors in earlier times. While “the West” was not an important point of reference for Japanese authors before the 19th century, a similar dualistic logic, in which China took the position of Japan’s counterpart, had already been applied from the 17th century onwards.

### **Vegetal Self vs. Carnivorous Other in the Early Modern Period**

Insights into how food came to assume ideologically charged meaning in early modern Japan can be gained by looking at cookbooks. Cookbooks in the broad sense did not always come as pure recipe books. Rather, works containing information on various natural phenomena (e.g. plants, animals, geological formations, forms of water, human beings) could well contain practical instructions for medical usage or preparation of food. Probably the best-known of these hybrid publications was the *Honchō shoku kagami* (or *Honchō shokkan*; “Food Mirror of Our Country”) by Hirano Hitsudai (lifedates unknown), first published in 1697 and republished several times until the late nineteenth century. It consisted of twelve thematic volumes, eight of which were devoted to food deriving from animals (including fish). The author’s elder

brother wrote a foreword entitled “Differences and Similarities Between China and Japan,” in which he stated: “About China and the barbarian countries we say that if it is not meat, they don’t eat it, while fish is what we desire.”<sup>60</sup>

This identification is taken up in the entry on “cow,” which has a privileged position in the work as it is the first entry under the heading “domestic animals.” It reads: “In our country we have from the old revered the gods and regarded eating the six domesticated animals (horses, cows, sheep, pigs, dogs, and roosters) as impure [*kegare*]; when one has eaten [meat], one cannot go to a shrine and pray. Since those who violate this principle will without fail be cursed, high and low intensely fear [eating meat].”<sup>61</sup> Hirano here constructs a national homogeneity without explicating the position of those not “in our country,” but the opposition to China is clearly presupposed as is apparent from the introduction cited above. In contrast to eating meat, the premier position of rice at the dinner table is considered to be a shared trait, again making clear that the object of comparison to Japan is always China. Under the entry “rice,” Hirano writes: “Rice in particular is first among the five grains. Since life depends on it, one must know its effects and taste and its nature and appearance. It is the same thing both in China and Japan, both today and in the past. Even if metals, stones, herbs, and trees or birds, beasts, insects, and fish are said to be ‘the hundred medicines,’ they are no match for the importance of rice for man’s body.”<sup>62</sup>

The *Honchō shoku kagami* was clearly indebted to the relatively new discipline of natural history, or *honzōgaku*. Works more closely associated with this school also served to give contemporaries information on food and food usage. Originally founded as a discipline in its own right in China, Japanese intellectuals interested in the practical study of nature in the early 17th century began to collect information and publish lists of natural phenomena to be observed on the Japanese islands. The 1671 *Etsuho shokumotsu honzō* (“Etsuho Natural History of Foodstuff”), named after the pen name “Etsuho” of its author Nagoya Gen’i (1628–1696), was a hybrid work which was mainly devoted to introducing foodstuff from the angle of *honzōgaku*, but which also contained more practical advice. On the issue of eating meat, it drew on a mixture of Buddhist and Shinto phraseology, declaring: “Domestic animals are impure and therefore not something a

gentleman eats. Many people lust for life and like eating it. [. . .] The sin of killing life has always been deemed not befitting our divine country.”<sup>63</sup>

Perhaps the most important and influential author in the *honzōgaku* school was the physician and Confucian scholar Kaibara Ekken (1630–1714). In his widely read health guide *Yōjōkun* (“Precepts on Nurturing Life”; first published in 1713 and still available in a paperback edition even in our times), Ekken admonished his readers to avoid meat for a variety of reasons: It was harmful, shortened life, led to constipation, and blocked the free flow of one’s vital energy (*ki*). However, he also advised against eating meat because it was a foreign, non-Japanese practice: “The meat of all the different beasts is not good for Japanese because their intestines and stomachs are thin and weak. They should not eat much meat.”<sup>64</sup> In his more scholarly main work on natural history, *Yamato honzō* (“A Natural History of Japan”; first published in 1709), Ekken goes further and contrasts the richness of Japan’s agricultural land, where “fish, birds, and beautiful food abound,” with other countries where people eat “dirty things.” He specifically singles out China and enumerates several unpleasant things allegedly eaten there such as insects, snakes, ants, bees, as well as feces and urine, but also counts meat in general among the “dirty things.”<sup>65</sup>

Another work incorporating knowledge from the *honzōgaku* tradition was the widely sold *Wakan sansai zue*, Japan’s first encyclopedia, published by Terajima Ryōan (lifedates unknown), a physician from Ōsaka, in 1712. The *Wakan sansai zue* (“Japanese and Chinese Illustrations of the Three Worlds”) was modeled after the *Sancai tuihui* (“Illustrations of the Three Worlds”), which had been published in China in 1609. Terajima’s work contains over 5,000 illustrated entries on topics such as astronomy, occupations, punishments, tools, clothes, customs, natural phenomena, or geography. Subheadings describing the use as meat can be found in the entries for pig, dog, goat, cow, and horse in the chapter on domestic animals, and wild boar, deer, raccoon dog, fox, wolf, rabbit, and otter in the chapter on “beasts”, as well as several types of rat and mice in a separate chapter on rodents.<sup>66</sup> In the first animal entry, on pigs, Terajima, after having quoted several other works, writes: “I think: Pigs are easy to raise and they can be found at some places in Nagasaki and Edo. However, in our country we

don't like to eat meat. Moreover, since pigs are not something to be fond of, in recent years few have raised them. Also, both pigs and wild boar are slightly poisonous and have no value for people. The Chinese and Koreans, however, have chicken and pigs as their regular food."<sup>67</sup> While Terajima mentions differences between China (and here also Korea) and Japan concerning the usage of animals as a source of food only in the entry on pigs, he tries to legitimate the Japanese custom by giving reasons for neglecting to raise pigs. His reasons are not only very vague ("are not something be fond of," "have no value for people"), but practically contradict his summary of available sources on pigs he gives earlier in the entry, which lists the benefits to be had from keeping domestic pigs.

The appropriateness of eating meat or not was certainly not the focus of intellectual activity in early modern Japan. In that sense, the writings cited above are rather peripheral. Within the world of nutritional advice, health guidebooks, and *honzōgaku*, however, the works quoted from were among the most important and most widely read books during the Tokugawa period. In this sense, they constitute the mainstream of thinking on meat-eating, an assumption corroborated by the fact that dissenting opinions were rarely voiced until the second half of the 19th century.<sup>68</sup>

### China and "the West" as Japan's "Unforgettable Others"

The Japanese historian of animals Tsukamoto Manabu has pointed to the general tendency of both theoretical thinkers of the Confucian conviction and more practical pursuers of *honzōgaku* to portray eating meat as a detrimental practice. On the one hand, this portrayal signaled a break-away from China and a turn to the study of native conditions, on the other hand, these intellectuals shared a common conviction with the broader populace of being different from China.<sup>69</sup>

There obviously is a structural parallel here in the discursive practices of both the Tokugawa period and the modern era to represent meat eating as a practice of "the other". While the earlier Japanese self-identity in this respect was negative ("*not* meat-eating"), it had by the twentieth century acquired a positive complement by identifying "the Japanese diet," seen to rely mainly on rice and fish, as unique.<sup>70</sup> The cultural uniqueness

of this practice could only be achieved by replacing the old other (China) by a new one (“the West”) and indeed by never considering other Asians as constitutive for the construction of one’s self-identity anyway, as China and other Asian countries were seen as depending on fish and rice as much as Japan was.<sup>71</sup>

How do we make sense of the early modern opposition between China and Japan? Looking for predecessors of modern *Nihonjinron*, Harumi Befu has argued that before the end of the 19th century the cultural rivalry between Japan and China was brought to the fore mainly by the intellectual school of nativism (*kokugaku*). Having taken shape since the 18th century, *kokugaku* was an intellectual effort which focused on the rediscovery of Japanese classics, stressing the qualities of the indigenous literary and religious tradition, and taking a decidedly anti-Chinese stance. By aggrandizing the harmonious relationship of ruler and ruled in Japan’s ancient past, *kokugaku* emphasized the political role of the emperor, which had been reduced to almost complete insignificance by the time of the *kokugaku* writers. Nativist ideology criticized this status quo and thus by the mid-19th century played a part in influencing, if indirectly, a number of the protagonists of the anti-shogunate movement in the overthrow of the shogunate and the establishment of the modern Japanese monarchy in the 1860s. Befu argues that China served as a “referent” for *kokugaku* scholars “to demonstrate the superiority of Japanese culture.”<sup>72</sup> Yet, those works that portrayed eating meat as inferior at the same time stressed the shared practice of eating rice. Accordingly, in the realm of food meaning, the emphasis lay on difference rather than superiority, with some ambiguity as to the value of this difference. Furthermore, the examples given above actually predate the rise of the *kokugaku*, which did not become prominent until the middle of the 18th century.

A different approach to explain the early modern discourse portraying China as “the other” might be to turn to recent studies of nationalism, which hold that discourses and practices of inclusion and exclusion are central to the formation of the modern nation state. As Benedict Anderson has noted, premodern modes of exclusion were never absolute: Barbarians could learn Greek, thus becoming half-civilized, and heathen could convert to Christianity.<sup>73</sup> In contrast, the early modern process of formation of nation states in Europe has been described as marked by

the functional construction of “out-groups” from above, by the central state.<sup>74</sup> For Japan, historian Mitani Hiroshi has likewise stressed the importance of exclusion in the formation since the 17th century of what he calls a “proto-nation state”. According to Mitani, the discursive opposition to China is one factor that made Tokugawa period Japan an early *modern* society in the first place. Finding a national self-identity by opposition to an “other” on the one hand involved regarding Japan “as an unchanged and inseparable identity through the entire course of its history.”<sup>75</sup> On the other hand, China came to serve as “the other” in most of the dominant discourses of the time: “In short, Japan’s development of the Tokugawa period evoked cultural rivalry against China—Japan’s ‘Unforgettable Other.’”<sup>76</sup> In contrast to other historical experiences of defining a self against an “other,” the Japanese experience in its transition from early modern to modern has three specific characteristics, prompting Mitani to speak of not just any, but an “unforgettable” other. China was for Japan not an arbitrary choice among a multiplicity of referents, but rather the sole and constant defining other. At the same time, this other was deeply embedded into its own culture and at many times even viewed as superior, complicating any attempt to define oneself against this superior other without deprecating oneself.<sup>77</sup> One could add that the opposition to China was absolute, thus satisfying Benedict Anderson’s criterion of difference from pre-modern modes of exclusion: Chinese could not by quitting to eat pork become Japanese.

The modern nation state Japan that emerged in the late 19th century was prefigured and prepared discursively from much earlier on through this proto-nationalistic formulation of a self-identity and creation of an “other,” partly through food practices. For when, as Mitani Hiroshi continues his argument, by the second half of the nineteenth century, “the Japanese found the West to be another center of civilization,” Japan began to look down upon China, and “the West” quickly became the negative foil of national self-identity, Japan’s new “unforgettable other.”<sup>78</sup> Again, the value associated with this self-representation through food was not clearly fixed. In the early Meiji period, meat-eating was seen as superior, while in the twentieth century, beginning with the philosopher Watsuji, the negative associations of meat-eating came to be emphasized. Particularly in the postwar period,

representing “Japan” through allegedly old dietary “traditions” has thus contributed to the construction of a positive self-identity. Reinforced by the more general *Nihonjinron* discourse of what it means to be Japanese, the vegetal ideology continues to influence both popular and academic thinking to this very day. As was the case with the *kokugaku* in the Tokugawa period, ideology of this kind is also used in political struggles such as the international whaling controversy. Some Japanese pro-whaling advocates see in this conflict “a struggle between ‘meat-eaters (especially the Anglo-Saxons) and ‘fish-eaters’ (the Japanese) and even link the controversy to racism and cultural imperialism,” as political scientist Keiko Hirata has remarked.<sup>79</sup>

Just as the desire to gain a cultural identity vis-à-vis China was an important driving force behind the development of an ideology of self-assertion during the Tokugawa period, the fear of cultural imperialism, of losing one’s cultural identity to “the West,” has been instrumental in bringing about *Nihonjinron* arguments in the modern era. As the prevalence of discourses of identity in present-day Japan shows, the inner unity once needed for creating a modern nation state still seems to be necessary for the upkeep of the construction of a valid self-image. Contradictions actually inherent in Japanese society, such as the diversity of the range of food consumed in reality, are shut out and covered up in the process of the construction of these self-images. It is no coincidence that the dominant food representation of “the Japanese” works through meat-eating and against “the West”—the content of the negative foil is determined by the fact that there is in reality a plethora of “European” and “American” elements in Japanese society as well as in the Japanese diet. In this sense, Europe and North America today are Japan’s “unforgettable other,” just as China had been three hundred years earlier.

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## Notes

1. Kobayashi Yoshinori, *Shin gōmanizumu sengen supesharu sensōron 3* (Tōkyō: Gentōsha, 2003), pp. 160–161. According to the publisher, sales of all three volumes of the series which was started in 1998, reached 1.5 million copies by 2005.
2. Harada Nobuo, *Washoku to Nihon bunka: Nihon ryōri no shakaishi* (Tōkyō: Shōgakukan, 2005), pp. 8–10.
3. Katarzyna Cwiertka, “The Making of Modern Culinary Tradition in Japan” (PhD diss., Leiden University, 1999), pp. 49–59, 189–191.
4. Harada, *Washoku*, pp. 12–13. Although Harada emphasizes the historicity of the concept of ‘Japanese food,’ he still believes that there can be “no doubt that there is a Japanese cuisine representing the food culture of Japan” (235) and that “*washoku* is certainly the crystallization of Japanese culture” (239).
5. Penelope Francks, “Consuming Rice: Food, ‘Traditional’ Products, and the History of Consumption in Japan.” *Japan Forum* 19, no. 2 (2007): 161–162.
6. Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Rice as Self: Japanese Identities Through Time* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).
7. Ohnuki-Tierney, pp. 106. A variation of this dualism is to portray Japan as a ‘fish-eating’ culture as opposed to a ‘meat-eating’ culture.
8. See also the brief treatment of “Western meat, Japanese rice” in Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, “Rice as Metaphor of the Japanese Self.” In *Paths Toward the Past: African Historical Essays in Honor of Jan Vansina*, ed. Robert W. Harms et al. (Atlanta: African Studies Association Press, 1994), p. 463.
9. With 34 kg per capita in the year 2005, it ranged in the same category as Eastern European countries such as Ukraine (34 kg) or Croatia (36 kg) and somewhat below Northern European fishery countries such as Sweden (53 kg) or Finland (65 kg). Calculated from statistics provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, “FAOSTAT Data: Statistical Database of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,” <http://faostat.fao.org> (accessed August 2007).
10. William George Aston, *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697* (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1896), pp. 328–329.
11. Examples from the premodern history of Japanese Buddhism show, however, that it was possible to argue in favor of killing animals even within the framework of Buddhist thought. See Klaus Vollmer, “Buddhism and the Killing of Animals in Premodern Japan.” In *Buddhism and Violence*, ed. Michael Zimmermann (Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute, 2006), pp. 195–211.
12. Nobi Shōji, *Shokuniku no burakushi* (Tōkyō: Akashi shoten, 1998), pp. 33–40.
13. On the social distribution of rice and meat eating in ancient and medieval Japan see Harada Nobuo, “Shokuji no taikai to kyōshoku, kyōen.” In *Nihon no shakaishi*, vol. 8: *Seikatsu kankaku to shakai*, ed. Asao Naohiro (Tōkyō: Iwanami, 1987), pp. 52–61.
14. Watanabe Minoru, *Nihon shoku seikatsu shi* (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1964), pp. 147–148.

15. Luis Frois, *Kulturgegensätze Europa–Japan (1585)* (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1955), pp. 175, 179, 183.
16. Uchiyama Junzō, “San’ei-chō and Meat-Eating in Buddhist Edo.” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 19, no. 2–3 (1993): 302. There was no clear-cut concept congruous with the term “mammal” in Japan before the 19th century. Instead, *kemono* (hereafter translated as ‘beast’) was usually used to refer to four-footed land-animals. Sometimes, but not always, this was meant to include domesticated as well as wild animals.
17. Uchiyama, p. 299.
18. Klaus Vollmer, “Kegare und der Hunger nach Fleisch.” In *Referate des 10. Deutschsprachigen Japanologentages vom 9. bis 12. Oktober 1996 in München*, ed. Ulrich Apel, Josef Holzapfel, and Peter Pörtner (München: Japan-Zentrum der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, 1997), p. 333.
19. The text of the *Ryōri monogatari* is printed in *Zoku gunsho ruijū*, vol. 19c, ed. Hanawa Hokinoichi (Tōkyō: Zoku gunsho ruijū kanseikai, 1925), pp. 335–375. The recipes mentioned can be found on p. 342.
20. Harada Nobuo, *Edo no ryōrishī. Ryōribon to ryōri bunka* (Tōkyō: Chūō kōronsha, 1989), pp. 21–23. See below for a fuller discussion of Harada’s views.
21. Matsushita Sachiko, *Zusetsu Edo ryōri jiten* (Tōkyō: Kashiwa shobō, 1996), pp. 403–426.
22. Matsushita, pp. 7–8.
23. This argument is advanced by Beatrice M. Bodart-Bailey, “The Laws of Compassion.” *Monumenta Nipponica* 40, no. 2 (1985): 171. See also Beatrice M. Bodart-Bailey, *The Dog Shogun: The Personality and Policies of Tokugawa Tsunayoshi* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2006) pp. 128–160; Tsukamoto Manabu, *Shōrui o meguru seiji* (Tōkyō: Heibonsha, 1983).
24. Andrew Markus, “Meat and Potatoes: Two Selections from the Edo Hanjōki.” *Sino-Japanese Studies* 4, no. 2 (1992): p. 12.
25. Markus, pp. 13–15.
26. Kitagawa Morisada, *Ruijū kinsei fūzoku shi* (Tōkyō: Uosumi shoten, 1928), vol. 1: 121 and vol. 2: 449.
27. Nobi, pp. 150–153.
28. Nobi, pp. 25–27.
29. For other discussions of actual meat eating practices in the Edo period see Susan B. Hanley, *Everyday Things in Premodern Japan. The Hidden Legacy of Material Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 65–77, Michael Kinski, “Bratfisch und Vogelbeine. Frühmoderne Etikettevorschriften zum Verhältnis von Mensch, Tier und Nahrung in Japan.” *Japonica Humboldtiana* 3 (1999), 63–69, or Brett L. Walker, “Commercial Growth and Environmental Change in Early-Modern Japan: Hachinohe’s Wild-Boar Famine of 1749.” In *JAPANimals: History and Culture in Japan’s Animal Life*, ed. Gregory M. Pflugfelder and Brett L. Walker (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, 2005), pp. 181–182.
30. Nobi, p. 40.
31. For an example of a medical guidebook see Kaibara Ekken’s *Yōjōkun* (Kaibara Ekken, *Ekken zenshū*, vol. 3, ed. Ekkenkai (Tōkyō: Ekken zenshū

- kankōbu, 1911, pp. 476–604); references to meat on pages 497, 509, 513, and 516. Of course, the fact that it seemed necessary to enlighten readers about the evils of eating meat is another indication that meat must have been consumed in the first place.
32. The Meiji government in particular sought to revise the unequal treaties which had been forced upon the country by the North American and European powers during the 1850s and 1860s.
  33. See Cwierka, pp. 47, 61, 99–100. The imperial court started eating meat from cows, sheep, pigs, and other animals early in 1872, the first reports on which appeared a few weeks after the fact. See Harada Nobuo, *Rekishī no naka no kome to niku. Shokumotsu to tennō, sabetsu* (Tōkyō: Heibonsha, 1993), pp. 255–259.
  34. Fukuzawa Yukichi, “Nikushoku no setsu.” In *Fukuzawa Yukichi zenshū*, vol. 20, ed. Keiō Gijuku (Tōkyō: Iwanami, 1963), pp. 38–39. Fukuzawa later elaborated his views on eating meat in another article entitled “One must eat meat,” dating from 1882. See Fukuzawa Yukichi, “Nikushoku sezarū bekarazu.” In *Fukuzawa Yukichi zenshū*, vol. 8, ed. Keiō Gijuku (Tōkyō: Iwanami, 1960), pp. 452–457.
  35. Kanagaki Robun, “Aguranabe.” In *Nihon kindai bungaku taikei*, vol. 1: *Meiji kaikaki bungakushū*, ed. Okitsu Kaname and Maeda Ai (Tōkyō: Kadokawa, 1970), p. 57. Translation quoted from: “The Beefeater.” In *Modern Japanese Literature*, ed. Donald Keene (New York: Grove, 1956), p. 32.
  36. Tetsuro Watsuji, *A Climate. A Philosophical Study by Watsuji Tetsuro* (Tokyo: Ministry of Education, 1961), pp. 31–33.
  37. Watsuji, p. 7.
  38. Watsuji, p. 15.
  39. Klaus Vollmer, “Animalität vs. Vegetabilität—zu einem Topos der ‘Japan-Diskurse’ (nihonron) im 20. Jahrhundert.” *Minikomi. Informationen des Akademischen Arbeitskreises Japan 1* (1997): pp. 11–12.
  40. Robert C. Toth, “Issue: Exports to Japan. Dog’s Best Friend Sure to Be a Briton.” *Los Angeles Times*, May 25, 1969, p. G6.
  41. Sabata Toyoyuki, “Nihonjin to seiyōjin to inu. Aratamete sōgō rikai no konnan omou.” *Yomiuri Shinbun*, June 6, 1969, evening edition. My thanks go to Aaron Skabelund for directing me to this newspaper article.
  42. Francks, p. 159.
  43. Figures based on Sōmushō tōkeikyoku, “Nihon no chōki tōkei keiretsu,” Table No. 20-3 “Annual Household Expenditure and Quantity Purchased by Commodities (All Households)—Japan (1963–2003),” <http://www.stat.go.jp/data/chouki/zuhyou/20-03.xls> (accessed August 2007).
  44. Norio Kogure and Keiko Yamazaki, “Attitudes to Animal Euthanasia in Japan: A Brief Review of Cultural Influences.” *Anthrozoos* 3, no. 3 (1990): pp. 151–154.
  45. In contrast to the assumptions of this study, in surveys on animal protection conducted by the Japanese government in 1986, 1990, 2000, and 2003 a consistent majority of over 60 percent of respondents has found that “if one cannot let dogs and cats live, then it is necessary to euthanize them,” while

- only about a quarter favored the response “as life is too precious, euthanasia should not be performed” (Naikakufu daijin kanbō seifu kōhōshitsu, “Dōbutsu aigo ni kansuru yoron chōsa,” <http://www8.cao.go.jp/survey/h15/h15-doubutu/> (accessed August 2007)).
46. Watanabe, pp. 147–148, 190ff.
  47. Harada, *Edo no ryōrishi*, pp. 22–23.
  48. Harada, *Edo no ryōrishi*, p. 21.
  49. Harada, *Rekishi no naka*, pp. 255–259.
  50. Harada, *Rekishi no naka*, p. 8.
  51. In a 1988 book chapter, for instance, he calls attention to the dangers of trying to explain patterns of meat consumption in Japan solely by referring to religion and offers a nuanced treatment of meat-eating in ancient and medieval Japan (Harada Nobuo, “Shōjin ryōri to Nihon no shoku seikatsu.” In *Gairai no shoku no bunka*, ed. Kumakura Isao and Ishige Naomichi (Tōkyō: Domesu shuppan, 1988), pp. 68–70).
  52. Harada Nobuo, “Inasaku bunka to nikushoku no kinki.” In *Dōbutsu to ningen no bunkashi*, ed. Kokuritsu rekishi minzoku hakubutsukan (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1997), pp. 191–193.
  53. John Oswald, *The Cry of Nature; or, an Appeal to Mercy and to Justice on Behalf of the Persecuted Animals* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 2000), 18. Nor was Oswald the first to see an opposition of Eastern compassion and Western cruelty. See the numerous examples in Tristram Stuart, *The Bloodless Revolution: A Cultural History of Vegetarianism from 1600 to Modern Times* (New York: Norton, 2007).
  54. Vollmer, “Animalität,” p. 10.
  55. Harumi Befu, “Nationalism and *Nihonjinron*.” In *Cultural Nationalism in East Asia. Representation and Identity*, ed. Harumi Befu, pp. 107–135. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 107.
  56. Harumi Befu, *Hegemony of Homogeneity. An Anthropological Analysis of Nihonjinron* (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2001), pp. 17–44. *Nihonjinron* authors are usually considered to consciously argue for Japanese uniqueness, although, as the discussion of Harada above shows, other authors who would justifiably resist being identified with the movement can sometimes be seen to employ similar rhetoric strategies.
  57. Befu, “Nationalism,” p. 114.
  58. Befu, “Nationalism,” pp. 121–127.
  59. Vollmer, “Animalität,” p. 10. Befu somewhat less clearly also sees modernization as an important factor for the development of *Nihonjinron* (Befu, *Hegemony*, pp. 126–130). Minami Hiroshi, the most prominent Japanese researcher of the *Nihonjinron* phenomenon, holds that “it was only as a result of Japan’s encounter with Western civilization and culture after the Meiji Restoration that the Japanese became aware of the existence of their selves as Japanese for the first time.” Minami Hiroshi, *Nihonjinron: Meiji kara konnichi made* (Tōkyō: Iwanami, 1994), p. 13.
  60. Hirano Hitsudai, *Honchō shoku kagami, vol. 1* (Tōkyō: Heibonsha, 1976), p. vi.
  61. Hirano Hitsudai, *Honchō shoku kagami, vol. 5* (Tōkyō: Heibonsha, 1981), p. 201.

62. Hirano, vol. 1, p. 47.
63. Quoted in: Harada, *Rekishī no naka*, p. 265.
64. Kaibara Ekken, *Ekken zenshū*, vol. 3, ed. Ekkenkai (Tōkyō: Ekken zenshū kankōbu, 1911), p. 516.
65. Kaibara Ekken, *Ekken zenshū*, vol. 6, ed. Ekkenkai (Tōkyō: Ekken zenshū kankōbu, 1911), pp. 26–27.
66. Terajima Ryōan, *Wakan sansai zue* (Tōkyō: Tōkyō bijutsu, 1970), pp. 429–436, 437–452, and 453–457, respectively.
67. Terajima, p. 429.
68. One of the few exceptions is the physician Kagawa Shūtoku (1683–1755) who advocated eating the meat of certain animals for medical purposes and criticized Buddhist precepts forbidding to do so (see Harada, *Rekishī no naka*, pp. 266–267).
69. Tsukamoto Manabu, “Dōbutsu to ningen shakai.” In *Nihon no shakaishi*, vol. 8: *Seikatsu kankaku to shakai*, ed. Asao Naohiro (Tōkyō: Iwanami, 1987), p. 268. Tsukamoto Manabu, “Edo jidai ni okeru dōbutsu no seimei to jinmei.” *Kokuritsu rekishi minzoku hakubutsukan kenkyū nenpō* 61 (1995): 31.
70. On the positive side of this process, see Ohnuki-Tierney, *Rice as Self*.
71. Late in the Tokugawa period, other ‘others’ are sometimes, if rarely, marked by ascribing the practice of eating meat to them. The explorer Mogami Tokunai, for example, in 1790 characterized the Ainu he observed on the Northern periphery of what was then considered to belong to the Japanese realm by their carnivorous diet, writing: “Ainu do not understand the way to cultivate grains, and would not even know a rice field if they saw one” (Brett L. Walker, *The Conquest of Ainu Lands: Ecology and Culture in Japanese Expansion, 1590–1800* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 86). In 1818, the thinker Tadano Makuzu already identifies meat-eating with the West, claiming that in Russia “the five grains are not grown” and, differing from those in “the sacred imperial country of Japan,” people eat meat, thereby shortening their lifespans (Janet R. Goodwin et al., “Solitary Thoughts: A Translation of Tadano Makuzu’s Hitori Kangae, Part 1.” *Monumenta Nipponica* 56, no. 1 (2001): 30–31, 33).
72. Befu, *Hegemony*, pp. 124–125.
73. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1983), pp. 13–15.
74. Anthony W. Marx, *Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
75. Hiroshi Mitani, “A Protonation-State and Its ‘Unforgettable Other’: The Prerequisites for Meiji International Relations.” In *New Directions in the Study of Meiji Japan*, ed. Helen Hardacre (Leiden: Brill, 1997), p. 301.
76. Mitani, p. 305.
77. Although Mitani’s choice of words is somewhat unfelicitous—the term “unforgettable other” was first coined by Sigmund Freud to refer to the earliest object of infant sexuality, the mother’s breast—I have decided to adopt his concept for the purposes of this essay in order to stress the specifics of Japan’s identity formation (constancy of referent, actual influence, perceived superiority).

78. Mitani, p. 310.  
 79. Keiko Hirata, “Beached Whales: Examining Japan’s Rejection of an International Norm.” *Social Science Japan Journal* 7, no. 2 (2004): p. 188.

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