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JAPANSKA

Leaving Home

Media Images of Japanese Expatriates

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Abstract

This thesis aims to deduce and analyse the media images of Japanese expatriates faced by those who are considering such a career path. The foundation of this study the author's personal experiences with young Japanese academics, background studies of the evolution of Japanese working society and the previous field of study of the *kikokushijo*.

A theoretical framework comprised of a subset of Edgar Schein's model for the study of organisational culture was formulated. The cultural artefacts to be determined were, the rituals, myths and heroes expressed in the media. To expedite this research, articles were sampled from Japan's three largest newspapers from the last five years. Nine articles were selected as the most relevant to this thesis.

The artefacts yielded by the analysis consisted of rituals of academic diligence and enduring of adversity, tales of successful elites and lonely road-warriors. Finally, the heroes were identified as returners who leveraged their experience for domestic benefit.

It was therefore concluded that the images promoted by the media corresponded to conservative values and a Japan centric world-view. Furthermore it was theorised that this was related to the concepts of *giri*, and *amae*, and in turn contingent upon the dualistic Japanese approach to expression of sentiments.

Keywords: Japan, expatriate, media, culture, Schein

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1 Background

1.1 Introduction

This thesis originates in a single quote by a friend of the author.

“You wouldn’t want to work in Japan.” -25 year old salaryman

Recently graduated and now in his first job he was committed to joining the expatriate community and leave Japan to work abroad. Indeed, on further inquiry within my social circle consisting mainly of young academics with significant experience abroad as exchange students, many, if not most were dissenting of Japan’s traditional morale of hard work and self-sacrifice (Herbig & Palumbo, 1994), (Hamada 1998, in Matanle, 2008), and considered working abroad a preferable alternative. Although not part of a formal investigation, these sentiments have been sufficiently prevalent in the author’s social interactions that they may be considered participatory observations.

As an external observer, I am liable to have a biased view of Japanese working society stemming from the “systematic stereotyping based on past, often favourable, images” (Wilkinson, 1983, in Breger 1992) as used in the press, which has, served to romanticize the reality of the Japanese working society. So, if this dissent is as common as my experience indicates, where did it originate?

1.2 Changes in Japanese working society

The Japanese employment system has been evolving since the post-war period, when lifetime employment after recruitment directly out of school became the norm and it is currently changing towards employees becoming more independent in relation to their employers (Matanle 2006), (The Economist 2008).

Changes such as these must necessarily affect dimensions beyond the professional one in a culture such as Japan’s where one’s work has traditionally been intertwined with many aspects of one’s personal life, from the practicalities of family formation (Salamon 1975)

to the more philosophical matters of belonging (Ishida 1971, in Goodman 1993), (Nakane 1970), (The Economist, 2008).

Therefore it follows that an upset of the Japanese employment system must have extensive social repercussions. Indeed, the prolonged economic slump, since the 1990s, has given rise to the concepts of “lost generations” and “unravelling of Japan’s social fabric” (Smith 2010).

However, this shift may well be one of evolution, rather than breakdown. Dr. Colin Smith, in a lecture on April 25 2013, claims that this restructuring of the Japanese employment system to accommodate non-traditional forms of employment has rather served to open up the labour market for those who have previously been seen as disenfranchised due to their failure to enter the system. In his fieldwork Smith has encountered many young adults who reject the traditional forms of employment in favour of independence, with claims of upwards of 40% of graduates seeking freeter, i.e. low wage, low skilled, part time jobs (Smith 2013).

Recent statistics shows the group freeters, holding steady at a level of 1800000 individuals since 2006 with the proportion of freeters over the age of 25 rising (Cabinet Office, Government of Japan 2014, pp. 37-39). Furthermore, some 2.3% of the population aged 15-34 are unemployed (Ibid). Discounting those unable to work for reasons of illness or injury leaves a significant amount of NEETs, those Not in Employment Education or Training, with reasons for not participating in the workforce, apart from “Other”, being “Lack of self confidence in abilities/knowledge” and “Tried but failed” (Ibid).

Following the view proposed by Smith, the associated shift toward independence might not necessarily be symptomatic of a labour market which has estranged young adults, but rather of a generation which has reinvented itself to take advantage of the opportunities of a more open labour market.

Therefore, individuals wishing to pursue an international career would be indicative of a generation turning toward a globalised labour market in order to exercise this novel autonomy.

1.3 International youth

As stated in the beginning of this chapter, the negative sentiments towards the Japanese labour market and desire to leave it to work in foreign countries, was most commonly voiced by individuals who had experience from studying abroad. A review of the research on Japanese spending extended periods abroad led toward the concept of *kikokushijo*. That is, Japanese who have spent periods of their lives abroad accompanying their expatriate parents, and have been sufficiently exposed to foreign culture to be perceived as tenuously different from the general Japanese population (Goodman 1993).

These *kikokushijo* were, when the area of study was instituted in the 1970s, regarded as having problems interacting with peers and society and therefore in need of re-integration. This discourse however, evolved throughout the 70s and 80s, taking the *kikokushijo* from a position as ill integrated children to one of well-regarded ‘international youth’. Quite possibly due to the parents of *kikokushijo* generally being from elevated positions in society, and also due to the high academic achievements of the *kikokushijo* themselves (Goodman 1990).

Although people within my social sphere did not fulfil the textbook definition of *kikokushijo*, they share several traits that seem inherent to being educated abroad. These are primarily, the questioning of, and being questioned by their native society; treating others and being treated slightly different; and signs of not being fully integrated with Japanese mainstream society.

Compounding the issue is the observations by Kobayashi on re-adaptation to mainstream Japanese society. Firstly, he showed, that adaptation generally took between three to six months among the absolute majority of returnee children. Furthermore, he notes that “/.../ *those who spent their time overseas in upper elementary school and junior high school have more trouble than those who were educated overseas during kindergarten and*

lower elementary years” (Kobayashi 1983, in Goodman 1993, p. 71). The indication also seems to hold for my acquaintances as those spoken to have spent less time abroad (typically one to two semesters) at a higher educational level, and yet after several years continue to voice a dissenting opinion.

Based upon this reasoning, we are indeed dealing with some subset of *kikokushijo*, more precisely one who is failing re-integration and thanks to globalisation has found an avenue for exercising the shift toward autonomy currently occurring within the Japanese labour market.

1.4 Action and reaction

According to Dr. Colin Smith there exists a countermovement to what he describes as an unfavourable portrayal of non-traditional workers in Japanese media (Smith 2013). The indication being that Japanese media is conservative with regard to the labour market and espouses traditional views on hiring and employment.

Therefore, to evaluate this notion, we must identify the public image faced by those who wish to work overseas. What are the ideals imposed upon them by the media and how are they construed?

Our research question therefore becomes as follows:

What is the image of expatriates as projected by the press?

2 Theoretical framework

2.3 Deriving cultures from text

As discussed above, there are some psychological intricacies seemingly unique to the Japanese. These are what one would call cultural particularities, or as Edgar Schein (1992) might define them, artefacts. Schein uses the term culture in an organizational, i.e. corporate, context. However, as Hofstede (1980, 2005) has shown, organizational culture and national culture are very closely intertwined. One may rightly assume that organizational culture is merely a subset of national culture, and that the study of one, is tantamount to study of the other.

The framework for cultural studies, as proposed by Schein is one that is easily applied and that may be understood by most individuals. Furthermore, as it is formulated for application at a corporate locus, it bridges the realms of management, sociology, anthropology, and also provides an interface to language studies.

Schein's model for cultural analysis presumes, and explicitly states, that each culture, be it national, sub- or organizational, has its own set of fundamental assumptions about reality. On a higher level of abstraction, these assumptions lead to a specific set of norms and values. Here, values constitute "social principles, goals and standards, which a culture determines to have an intrinsic value", and norms "unwritten rules that makes the members of a culture aware of what is expected of them" (Hatch, 2002, p. 242 – 247).

The values and norms, as well as the underlying assumptions are by their nature unobservable, but rather expressed at yet another, higher, level of abstraction, which Schein terms cultural artefacts.

Artefacts of this type can be of a physical nature, for example art, fashion or design. Behavioural artefacts, as in ceremonies, rituals, rewards and punishments, are also accounted for. And finally, there are verbal manifestations such as jokes, jargon, tales, myths and history. Extending this, the heroes and villains, which are present in these tales, will also be included (Schein in Hatch, 2002).

2.2 Establishing the model

Physical artefacts will be discounted since these are, not directly observable in written material. As the subject of this study is an image of the expatriate as it is expressed to the native Japanese audience, what will be attempted is to bring to the front ideals with which a prospective expatriate will identify with. Therefore the following artefacts have been selected from Schein's model as being of particular interest for this thesis.

1. Rituals. Particular behaviours commonly associated with expatriates.
2. Myths. Stories teaching moral maxims of expatriates.
3. Heroes. What makes the ideal expatriate?

These three should provide a foundation for delineating the image of the expatriate, as someone on the verge of following the same path would encounter him or her when perusing the media.

3 Method

3.1 Scientific approach, qualitative research and application of logic

This thesis follows the hermeneutical approach for textual analysis. Originally devised to interpret scripture (Sykes 1982); it serves to “interpret human actions, expressions of life and the traces of these” (Patel & Davidsson 2003).

As the research is concerned with images found in mass media, it will be confined to Japan’s top-three biggest newspapers as these also run the political gamut from conservative to left. These are, in descending order with respect to 2011 average, combined (morning and evening editions) circulation figures and political stance: Yomiuri Shimbun (9.969.200, conservative), Asahi Shimbun (7.749.548, center-left) and Mainichi Shimbun (3.438.280, center-liberal) (IFABC 2013, worldpress.org n.d.). All three newspapers maintain extensive archives of their published articles on their websites.

The following search terms were applied with the delimitation that material was to be contemporary. Therefore, five years was chosen as the delimiting factor and the selection bias was set towards more recent articles. This resulted in the selected articles reaching back a maximum of two years.

- 海外就職: Initial search term. Primarily returned press releases. 37 hits.
- 海外で働く: Broader, yielded most useable articles. 61 hits.
- 海外駐在: Common term in previous articles. 75 hits.
- 海外事業: Articles mostly related to business entities. 634 hits.
- 海外転勤: Highly specific but added very little. 19 hits.
- 海外赴任: High cross contamination with other terms. 137 hits.

Although some search terms yielded an impressive amount of results, cursory examination proved many to be only tangentially related to the research subject. Manual skimming of abstracts was used to select those most applicable, yielding a set of nine articles.

These articles include two editorials from the Mainichi Shimbun by Mr. Kimihiro Itoki (August 9 2013) and Mr. Masaki Miyaji (March 30 2014), the latter from the Hokkaido local edition. Both relay international experiences and domestic implementations of these.

Three articles, From the Asahi Shimbun, dating to March 27, June 6 and October 10 2014, dealing with family matters among expatriates are included. These cover the issue from the perspectives of both family formation and, to a greater extent, of the issues faced by female expatriates with children.

One article from Asahi Shimbun, dated June 4 2014, retells the international experience of Mr. Katsumoto Saiki as his incentive for funding international education for youth in his hometown.

Two articles dealing with the prospects of international employment were also selected. One from the Yomiuri Shimbun (August 6 2013) tells the story of Ms. Akiko Kouno's international endeavours. The second, published in the Mainichi Shimbun January 21 2014, is a report from a seminar on international opportunities held in Tokyo.

Finally, an article published on Asahi Shimbun's digital lifestyle magazine "And" (&), relates Ms. Yoshiko Fujimaki and her sister's international experience and their mutual inspiration.

Note that articles have been selected from a rather wide range of sections in the newspapers. Although the disparity may raise worries about the material's validity, as the analysis focuses on commonalities, this rather serves to strengthen the conclusions.

For a complete listing of the articles and their respective authors, titles, source publication and publication dates; see Appendix II.

3.2 Treatment of the text

Due to the limited scope of this thesis the criterion of treating thirty pages of Japanese text was used as a qualitative delimiter to force the usage of the most relevant pages.

Texts were then treated in the following manner:

1. Exhaustive reading intended to identify the particulars of the specific story.
2. In-line quoting of the relevant sections within the thesis body.
3. Subsequent in-line translation of the text.
4. First order analysis of the text, with follow up quotations as necessary.

4 Material and first order analysis.

4.1 The rituals of going abroad

4.1.1 Diligent academics on the global stage

The educational history of the subjects is quickly established. For example, Ms. Yoshiko Fujimaki writes on her own and her older sister's experience (Asahi Shimbun, January 16 2014). Ms. Fujimaki herself is currently stationed in California for Nikkei Enterprises.

高校生の頃はアメリカへ留学し、結婚後は、旦那様を引き連れて（笑）、イギリスの大学院で修士号を習得しました。

'When attending high school she went to America on exchange, after getting married she took her husband with her (laughs) to get her master's degree at an English graduate school.'

This section leads up to Ms. Fujimaki's own educational background and therefore does not go into further specifics than the countries visited. It does however illustrate the educational origins of her sister's expatriate experience.

Ms. Fujimaki elaborates on her own experience in the following passage. Although she takes a slightly different tack, the overall impression is similar.

高校生の頃は、トルコへ1年間交換留学に行き、大学では比較文化学を専攻。就職も海外赴任のある今の会社を選びました。

'By the time I attended high school, I went to Turkey on a one-year exchange programme, at my university I majored in comparative cultural studies. While job hunting I chose this same company I am now working abroad for.'

This excerpt shows a similar, international, experience. However, in this case the interpretation becomes that the exchange in Turkey prompted Ms. Fujimaki to delve deeper into the academia associated with globalisation for the express purpose of working with and within foreign cultures.

In other texts education is also a major component of the road leading to foreign experience. Consider Ms. Akiko Kouno who works for the tyre manufacturer Bridgestone (Yomiuri Shimbun, August 6 2013).

中高生の頃から英語や海外に憧れを抱き、大学に進学すると学内の外国人留学生と交流したりして英会話を覚えた。3年生の夏には交換留学でアメリカに。「将来、海外で仕事をする上で役立つ」と考え、現地の大学では国際政治学などを学んだ。

‘Ever since middle school she has held an admiration for the English language and overseas [matters], when attending university she learned conversational English through interaction with the foreign exchange students at [her] school. During her third year, she went on an exchange in America during the summer. Thinking, “it would be beneficial for working abroad in the future”, she studied international politics during her stay.’

Here as well, both an innate predisposition for the international and interaction with foreigners is expressed. This time explicitly stating that she is arming herself with the knowledge necessary to be successful in an international setting, however expressed in vague terms as “being beneficial” (役立つ). After having experienced an international business environment, she continues in a subsequent paragraph.

だが、海外駐在をする上では経営に関する知識も欠かせない。「現地に行っても役に立たなければ意味はない。まずは貿易や財務のことを日本でこつこつと学んでいきたい」と話している。

‘However, apart from being stationed abroad [she] says she will miss no opportunity to gain management related experience. “Going into the field without being useful is meaningless. First I want to diligently study matters such as trade and finance in Japan.”’

The impression from the segment above is that however well prepared she might be from her exchange program; she has identified fields in which she feels she must improve herself. Therefore, what is being shown is that she wishes to add to her repertoire, skills to increase her odds of succeeding abroad.

Not all of the subjects have been as specific in their endeavours though. In the case of Mr Katsumoto Saiki (Asahi Shimbun, June 4 2014). Although indeed academic, the education was acquired as a consequence of staying abroad.

転機は29歳のとき。会社の支援もあってドイツに渡り、働きながら大学でドイツ語を身につけ／・・・／

‘His turning point came at the age of 29. With added support of the company he went to Germany, acquiring German language skills at [the] university while at the same time working/.../.’

The caveat is that Mr. Saiki is 85 years old as of the time the article was written, and went abroad in 1959. However, it is interesting to note that the academic anchor is present well before the turn toward globalisation. A notion that also holds true for Mr. Masaki Miyaji (Mainichi Shimbun, March 30 2014) who graduated with a degree in commercial science from Waseda University in 1965 and has spent a significant amount of time abroad, particularly in Africa.

Although the focus has been on traditional education, learning a set of skills to bring abroad seems to be a definite ritual present among expatriates. The image, as expressed in the articles is indicative of a sub-culture where knowledge, particularly academic, is of utmost importance. One interpretation is that these individuals see themselves as bringing new skills, and new perspectives abroad. Another interpretation may be that the knowledge and skills acquired through education are absolutely necessary to thrive abroad. Mr. Kimihiro Itoki (Mainichi Shimbun, Aug 9 2013) lends some credence to this interpretation.

海外赴任や海外事業の展開にはさまざまなノウハウやスキルがある。語学力もその一つだが、真にグローバル化を進展させるには「異」と向かい合う姿勢、現場と世界をバランスさせる視野、そして現地文化に深く根差して立つ意思、といった「志」がとても大切なのだ。

‘There is a variety of skills and know-how to be deployed in international businesses and by those stationed abroad. Although the foremost of these is language skills, to truly

advance globalisation, “resolutions” such as an attitude of facing “difference”, a balanced perspective of the present location and the world [at large], and a willingness to act within a deeply rooted local culture, are very important.’

These values are indeed ones, which, are presently communicated through education, particularly academic education. Furthermore they are of such an abstract nature that, to comprehend and apply them would imply a degree of academic acuity.

Therefore the ritual of education shall be accepted as an artefact called: diligence.

4.1.3 Enduring adversity

Authors and subjects, tend to provide examples of stumbling blocks associated with the expatriate experience. More specifically one will be described, which has been successfully surmounted. Failures are not alluded to in these articles, ever.

A common theme, and one which authors devote a surprising amount of space to is the issue of childcare. Exclusive to articles about expatriate women, this is indicative of an issue that seems deeply rooted in traditional morale (Asahi Shimbun, October 10 2014).

社内の聞き取り調査でも、女性社員から「子どもが生まれたら一緒に行きたい」などと赴任に前向きな声があがる一方、上司側からは「海外赴任を打診すると仕事を続けてもらえないのではないか」と悩みの声が多かったという。

‘According to internal surveys, there are female employees that are positive towards working abroad with the opinion that “if I have children I wish for them to come along. On the other hand, there is a widespread worry among managers that “when approached about foreign assignment, wouldn’t they rather discontinue their jobs?”’

This seems to indicate a generational gap between managers and employees, where the former seem hesitant toward the concept of women working abroad due to traditional family structures and the hurdle such an assignment may create in their employees’ lives. However, an article about Mrs. Tomoko Ishii (Asahi Shimbun, June 6 2014) shows that it is certainly not insurmountable.

「海外で働く機会があるといいな」と漠然とは思っていたが、結婚、出産した女性が次々と退職した時代だ。自身も結婚、出産を経験するうち、「そんな機会はないだろう」と思いこんでいた。

‘I had a vague notion that “An opportunity to work abroad would be great”. However women, by the time they have gotten married and had children, generally retire one after the other. By the time I myself had gotten married and had a child I thought, “I won’t have that opportunity.”.’

Although initially eager to gain overseas experience, Mrs. Ishii is on the path of retiring from work to raise a family. The interpretation of this section is the author establishing the status quo in the story to have a point of reference for Mrs. Ishii’s achievement.

「シンガポールに行ってもらえないか」。人事担当者から内々に打診を受けたのは、昨年暮れ。「えっ、今ですか。子ども、小さいですけど……」。驚きと戸惑いを隠せなかった。

“‘Won’t you go to Singapore for us?’” The HR department discreetly inquired around the end of last year. “Eh, now? My child is still small and...”. I could not hide my surprise and confusion.’

Naturally, the uncertainty of going abroad with a child in tow, and how this would affect her family, is the main issue.

長女にとっても、引っ越しや言葉の分からない保育園での生活、父親と離ればなれの暮らしと、初めての経験が一度にやってくる。「小さい娘に負担をかけるのは、よくないのでは」。数日、悩んだ。

‘For the eldest daughter, the experience of moving away and attending a nursery school where she wouldn’t understand the language and living apart from her father all at once. For days I worried “laying such a burden upon my young daughter cannot be good”.’

Further along in the story, the impact on her child is what really worries Mrs. Ishii. Considering the *kikokushijo*, the true issue becomes, the risk of bringing up her child in a

foreign culture and therefore robbing her of her roots. However, the challenge is managed in a rather progressive way.

背中を押したのは、夫の一言だった。「娘が大人になるころは、性別に関わりなくもっと社会とかかわる世の中になる。家族みんなにいい経験になる」

‘What encouraged me were my husband’s words. “When our daughter grows up, the world will have changed from one divided by gender to one of community. This will be a good experience for our whole family”’

With which, the parents reach a, rather poetic, consensus on the impact on their child. Indeed, upon establishing herself in Singapore, it quickly becomes apparent that the issue was not as critical as it first appeared.

当初、中国語と英語が飛び交う生活に戸惑っていた娘も、少しずつ慣れてきた。

‘Her daughter, at first confused living in [an environment] fluctuating between English and Chinese, has little by little grown accustomed to it.’

The message inherent in this story is the apprehension at upsetting the customary order of things. The hurdle Mrs. Ishii is facing is both one of tradition and practicality. As she is pondering her decision, it is her husband who finally nudges her forward with his vision of the future. The reader is, however, not told anything about whether Mrs. Ishii’s peers and, perhaps parents encourage or discourage her.

Illustrating the growing awareness of this new flexibility and acknowledging the failure of management to address it, Mr. Atsushi Nose, manager of personnel welfare for Sumisho Group relates the following (Asahi Shimbun, October 10 2014).

「海外赴任は男性社員を想定したものだったが、女性社員が直面するキャリアの谷間を埋めることで、男女が同じ土俵で活躍してほしい」

‘It has been assumed that employees stationed abroad are male, however, women want to be active in the same fields as men to close the career gap.’

The implication from this section is that, although acting as providers, the presumption remains that childcare is the woman's responsibility, even when working abroad. Since the societal norms and personal wishes of those involved seem utterly inflexible with regards to letting the husband raise the children in Japan, consequently a hurdle unique to women is created.

What is expressed in media is the overcoming of this hurdle. In part, it is indeed praise well deserved but the tone in the articles also indicates that it could have been avoided by not going abroad at all.

As these issues seem common enough to warrant a fair amount of coverage, and furthermore that they always are handled successfully, this shall be deemed an artefact and called: endurance

4.2 Myths

4.2.1 The international elite

From the discussion about *kikokushijo* in a previous chapter, it was shown that their image shifted from a potential problem toward a well-regarded “international” group. When perusing the articles on expatriates, the notion of belonging to or stepping into an elite group emerges; consider these excerpts about working in Singapore (Asahi Shimbun, March 27 2014).

「海外で仕事の経験を積んでステップアップしたいと考える女性が増えているようです」と担当者。

“It seems that number of women who want to take a step up by amassing experience by working abroad, is increasing” says the person in charge’

「海外赴任してくる若きエリートを逃す手はない」。現地で働く女性の一人はこう打ち明ける。

“There is no sense in passing up the young elite being deployed here”. A woman working in the field confides.’

Although this article is actually about dating between Japanese expatriates, the wording is unmistakable. “Elites” and “stepping up” through experience acquired abroad. The causation at work in the latter case is hard to ascertain, but it will be inferred that whatever the case is, being a member of the elite is significant.

Considering Mr Itoki’s experiences (Mainichi Shimbun August 9 2013), an interesting strategic benefit inherent in foreign endeavours may actually be inferred.

／・・・／そのうち3カ国では現地法人の社長、1カ国では工場長、そして1地域では地域本社のマネジメントに携わった。

‘/.../during that time, I was the subsidiary president in 3 countries, plant manager in one, furthermore I was involved with the management of the regional headquarters in one region.’

Presumably, with Japan’s traditional system of seniority, foreign branches would offer quicker paths to promotions for one willing to forsake the security of staying at home.

Therefore, stories such as these border on the mythical and rather act as moral guidance, implying that you can be successful abroad; in fact you must be.

4.2.2 The lonesome road

As citizens of a country where the family is still regarded as a core unit of society, expatriate work carries serious consequences. In these texts one, at times, encounters the lone road warrior who has postponed marriage and family.

Whether this is a consequence of their international endeavours or the reverse, something they have opted against in order to go abroad, is unclear. Disregarding the enduring families discussed above, the trouble of maintaining the family unit in an international context is something that is brought up, as in the following segment (Asahi Shimbun, March 27 2014).

熱い視線を送るのは現地で就職した日本人女性。意中の男性と結婚し、日本に戻る「寿帰国」にあこがれているという。結婚したら帰国したいという発想がおもしろい。

‘The ones showing great interest are the Japanese women who have sought work in the [international] field. Longing to marry an intended man and returning to Japan, [they] call [it] “return upon marriage”. Wanting to return home upon marriage is an interesting idea.’

Here, the subjects are those who have postponed their family life and are now aiming to return to Japan upon marriage. One may interpret this as a longing to belong once again by fulfilling the social contract that they are, in part, exempt from during their expatriate period. The article continues.

別の友人いわく、駐在員男性との出会いを求め、日本から「お見合いツアー」でやってくる女性もいるというから驚く。企業や観光客を引きつけるシンガポール。今度は婚活スポットにもなるのかな。妻子持ちには関係ないが。

‘I was surprised that, according to another friend, there are women looking to meet men stationed abroad and arrange “matchmaking tours” from Japan. Singapore is [already] attracting business and tourism. Will it become a matchmaking spot from now on? It certainly isn’t for married men.’

Here the point is reinforced, that international engagements may act as gelling point for men and women who are on the road alone. However, as the family unit is described as deserving of the security of your homeland, it is encouraged that you end your “road warrior” period upon marriage.

Therefore this myth of the lone wanderer who will eventually find his way home will be accepted as an artefact.

4.3 Heroes

4.3.1 Returners, benefactors and supporters

One would expect stories such as these to be riddled with the success stories of those working abroad, however this has proven not to be the case. Rather, foreign experience is discussed with reference to subjects who have returned from their foreign endeavours. Furthermore, positive experiences abroad tend to be evaluated in relation to domestic applications. For example, take the case of a seminar on foreign opportunities by Recruit Holdings (Mainichi Shimbun, January 21 2014).

セミナーに参加した都内の私立大3年の男子学生（21）はすでに、国内のインターネット関連企業の内々定を得たが、シンガポールの企業で働くために就活を続けているという。「海外の厳しい環境で働いて将来は起業したい。日本の行く末が不透明なので、国内にとどまることに危機感もある」と話す。

‘A male, third year student (21[years old]) of a Tokyo private university, although already having an informal job offering by a domestic, Internet related business, says he has already resumed his job hunting in order to work for a Singapore [based] business. He says: “I want the entrepreneurial [experience] of working in a harsh foreign environment. Since the direction taken by Japan is unclear, there is also a sense of impending crisis associated with staying in the country.’

The segment illustrates a criticism of Japanese working society and relates very well to the concerns voiced by Dr. Smith in the introductory chapter. However, in the next segment, the author pulls the narrative back on the common track.

米国の大学院に進学して現地で仕事をした経験のある建築家の遠藤真由さんは「若い時に海外でキャリアを積みれば帰国後の選択肢も広がる。日本で求められるような（グローバル）人材になれる」と応援する。

‘Having attended graduate school in the United States and with experience of working abroad, the architect Mayu Endou supports [this reasoning] saying “If you gain [experience

from] a foreign career abroad while young, prospects upon returning are broader. One becomes a Global Talent, who are in demand in Japan.”

As this is toward the end of the article, the interpretation of the wording becomes that it is an attempt to divert the narrative toward returning.

As this section is named “heroes” and the subsection deals with returners, the question becomes one of defining the ideal returner. The answer lies, not surprisingly, in those who have returned and are continuing their success domestically. Returning to Ms. Fujimaki’s sister (Asahi Shimbun, January 16 2014), this is her continued story.

今は2歳半になる子どもを育てながら、都内で人事系コンサルタントの仕事をしています。

‘Now she is raising a 2½ year old child while working as a human resources consultant in Tokyo.’

The tone of this passage implies that after the previous international forays, the sister has finally settled back into her in-group. That is, the responsible, yet successful modern woman. The indication seems to be that her foreign endeavours have been helpful in her career, i.e. being able to work as a consultant, but the important thing is that she is fulfilling her duties by raising a family on her home soil.

However, taking this reasoning one step further, those who are putting their experience toward helping entire communities, such as Mr Katsumoto Saiki, (Asahi Shimbun, June 4 2014), must be considered.

宮崎県五ヶ瀬町が今月、新たな教育基金「翼」を立ち上げる。元手は、10代半ばまでこの町で育ち、いまは徳島県に住む佐伯（さいき）勝元さん（85）が寄付した1千万円。太平洋戦争のさなかに進学できず、海外で働きながら語学を身につけた佐伯さんの「広く世界へはばたいて」との思いをくみ、町内の小中学生の海外研修などに使われる。

‘This month, in the town of Gokase in Miyazaki prefecture, a new educational fund (Wings) has been instituted. Mr. Katsumoto Saiki, who was brought up in this town and lived here

until his mid-teens, now living in Tokushima prefecture, is donating the funds of 10 million yen. Unable to attend school during the Pacific War, Mr. Saiki who acquired proficiency in language while working abroad and drawing upon his sense of “fluttering around the wide world”, is putting [these funds] toward the town’s elementary and junior high schools overseas training.’

The article does not really elaborate on his foreign experience apart from listing the countries he visited but it does emphasize his actions upon returning home.

／…／イタリア、英国と12年間の欧州生活のあと帰国。東京の法律特許事務所で翻訳の仕事に就いた。

‘/.../Italy and England, after 12 years of European life, [he] returned home, taking up a position as translator for the Tokyo patent office.’

In this section, the domestic applications for his foreign-acquired skills are immediately expressed. The interpretation therefore becomes one of the returner bringing new skills back to serve his countrymen. Mr. Saiki, as a successful returner who is also donating to the community is allowed some social comment toward the end of the article.

「親が干渉しすぎる日本と違い、ドイツでは小さな子どもでも自主性がある」と、海外体験の必要性を語る佐伯さん。「故郷を忘れない、社会の役に立つ大人に育ててほしい」と願っている。

“Unlike Japan, where parents are too intervening, in Germany even small children have autonomy” Mr. Saiki says of the importance of international experience. [He] desires to “[help] raise adults who will be of benefit to their community and remember their hometowns”.’

Which, in turn, certainly strengthens the argument. As his wishes reflect his own actions of local patriotism and care for one’s own community.

Yet another Hero, in the sense that he is working for his community is Mayor Masaki Miyaji who is shown as drawing upon his international experience in the management of the town of Toubetsu, In Hokkaido.

2008年三菱商事を退職し、当別町に移住。3年後に町議に当選、昨年8月町長に就任する。町内での起業など民間資本を導入し、農産物をブランド化して素材から加工まで手がける6次産業化の方針を打ち出す

‘In 2008, I retired from Mitsubishi and moved to Toubetsu. Three years later, I was elected by the city council and assumed the office of mayor in August last year. Bringing investment capital and entrepreneurship to the town, branding agricultural products from raw materials through processing, [I] undertook the devising of a sixth industrialisation plan.’

This section is definitely intended to show Mr. Miyaji as a competent policymaker and industrialist, continuing his work beyond retirement and in the public sector for the public good. So whence the foreign influence? It is obvious in a section below.

まず一番の課題は基幹の農業をどう活性化するかだ。モザンビークのように民間の力を活用すれば、農業ばかりでなく、豊かな森林資源を活用した木質バイオマスや太陽光などの再生可能エネルギーの供給基地になれる。札幌と隣接する当別町はポテンシャル（潜在能力）は高い。商社での経験やアイデアが、少しでも町のために役立てばと願っている。

‘The first and foremost challenge is how to activate basic agriculture. Leveraging the ability of the private sector, as in Mozambique, not only agriculture, but also utilising such biomass from the abundant forest resources and solar power it can become a source of renewable energy. Neighbouring Sapporo, Toubetsu has a high potential. I hope [my] experience and ideas from trade, may be at least of some benefit for the town.’

Here is a literal example of bringing experience from abroad into service at home, as Mr. Miyaji is drawing upon experiences from Mozambique and applying them to a Japanese town. And, naturally with a polite finishing statement, indicating that he is merely showing the opportunities to the community.

Also, the precipitation of knowledge about foreign business for use in a domestic context is shown as beneficial. The point being that it is brought back and disseminated, as Mr. Kimihiro Itoki (Mainichi Shimbun August 9 2013) illustrates.

私は、スキルよりも異文化や現地の人たちとの向き合い方といった赴任者の姿勢を重視している。自分の経験からこの部分が多く海外進出企業の弱点であると感じており、そしてまた、私自身が、そこに傾注することで難しい赴任先でも成功を収めることができたと思っているからだ。自分の経験と教訓をシェアしよう
とこの1年間、さまざまな企業に伺って研修やコーチングなどを行っているうちに、少なからずの企業で共通の弱みが見えてきた。

‘Beyond [raw] skills, I emphasize expatriates having an open-minded attitude towards foreign cultures and peoples. From experience, I feel that this is a weak point for many overseas businesses; also personally, I believe that it is my devotion to this [open-mindedness] that has allowed me to succeed in difficult locations [I have been despatched to]. As I have been sharing my experiences and lessons this year, while being asked to supply training and coaching to a variety of companies, I have, to no small extent become aware of common weaknesses among businesses.’

The interpretation of this article becomes that Mr. Itoki is portrayed as a supporter of domestic businesses acting internationally by sharing his experiences allowing them to compete more readily in an international environment. Although the emphasis is on soft skills, the implication of their application is more efficient business.

As implied from the lack of stories about success where the subject is currently abroad, and the lack of stories about failure, it is upon completion of a successful foreign endeavour, and return to Japan, that your story becomes relevant to the media. However, it is by the time you are using your foreign experience for the benefit of your countrymen that you may be promoted to a role model, which coincides with the “hero” artefact.

5 Discussion and conclusions

5.1 Sub-cultural ideals

As stated, what is sought is the media image, it therefore follows that the findings do not necessarily reflect the values of the subject “expatriates”, rather it is representative of an image projected by the media. Therefore, it follows that the image is closer to a standard set by journalists and editors. So in summary, the proof presented is not of what the expatriate group “actually is”, but rather what it is “supposed to be”.

5.2 Consolidating the artefacts

The underlying theme of the articles is primarily one of success. Indeed, no stories of failure have been located at all. However, several prerequisites are apparent in the sub-cultural artefacts identified.

The ideal expatriate is a good student, well prepared and diligent in their acquisition of knowledge, relevant for success abroad. They are liable to face adversity, which will be regarded as self-inflicted; in which case overcoming these challenges are of paramount importance. This facing of adversity is a particular problem for young women with children due to a perceived clash with Japanese family values. Therefore the ideal expatriate is enduring and resilient in the face of adversity.

Being an expatriate is temporary. Whether one uses it as a stepping-stone to further one’s career or, as an alternative to gaining entry to the domestic labour market, it is a period in one’s life that is characterised as being one of insecurity and postponing of the traditional path. It is upon return, and re-assimilation into mainstream society, that one is allowed to reap benefits of the experience acquired abroad, provided one actually deploys the knowledge to further a company’s business or one’s community. It is as a supporter and benefactor one may become a paragon of society.

In summary, an expatriate shall leverage *education* to perform as an *elite* in the face of *self-inflicted adversity* during a *limited time*, in order to *return* in possession of new skills and knowledge to *further domestic interests*.

5.2 Norms and values

Our analysis and characterisation points toward what might best be described as an attitude of freedom under responsibility. There is no proof of encouragement for foreign endeavours, however granted a positive outcome it will be deemed acceptable. Whether or not this is dependant on performing equally or better than those who remain in the domestic setting, it does come with added responsibilities.

Where a westerner would likely see going abroad as an expression of emancipation and in essence the definition of freedom (Morita 2011), in case of the Japanese we are instead seeing the subjects under yet more social scrutiny. In a sense they are judged by how well they retain their “belonging” to their domestic peers.

Therefore, theorising that media is protecting the institution of *giri*, defined as “socially contracted dependence” Moeran (1986) is supported. On a deeper level still, consider *amae*, explained by Takeo Doi (1992) as a sense of spontaneous affection towards one’s peers. In this context, the dependence and adherence to one’s peers and elders to further society.

So, with reference to Schein’s model and this additional input, the media image is extending traditional Japanese values of academic diligence, hard work and responsibility for one’s family into a foreign setting. This is done in the anticipation of return and re-integration of the subject with respect to the norm of social cohesion.

5.3 What lies below

If one considers the published articles as an official stance, or *tatemaie* (Lebra & Lebra 1974, Doi 1973), by the newspapers, it’s owners and society at large. It is plausible that they are an expression of belief perseverance (Mercier & Sperber 2011) through which, only evidence in line with favoured belief is preserved.

Therefore the authors' true attitude, *honne* (Lebra & Lebra 1974, Doi 1973) remains hidden, which represents a definite problem for any attempt to research the true attitudes toward working abroad. This observation explains why one is much more likely to find much more relaxed, and enthusiastic opinions within one's social circle.

In summary, there is a state of dissonance between the public and private discourse on this matter. Following Schein, this is indicative of a, likely generational, gap in assumptions about reality. Where the media as a whole promotes a Japan centric worldview based around work, family and duty toward society, a younger individual may instead see themselves as part of, or rather striving for participation in, a global community.

5.4 Conclusions

The Japanese media image of expatriates is one that favours a temporary engagement, more for the purpose of importing foreign knowledge and experience to the domestic market. This reflects a conservative media that espouses traditional values and seeks to preserve conformity.

The media image stands in stark contrast to private discourses, which, in the author's experience, are instead more geared toward the autonomic shift as a component of a new economic paradigm.

Japanese media is opaque on narratives not adherent to the identified image. There is a high probability that this is yet another expression of social cohesion, if not outright authority. Thus, the countermovement with respect to non-traditional employment claimed by Dr Colin Smith (2013) cannot be confirmed to exist in major newspapers and for the subcategory "expatriates".

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