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## Hegemonic Nostalgia, Tourism, and Nation-Making in Japan

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## Hegemonic Nostalgia, Tourism, and Nation-Making in Japan

JENNIFER ROBERTSON

*University of Michigan*

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, nostalgia and tourism have been deployed in Japan and elsewhere as technologies of nationalism. Nostalgia is, in part, a state of being provoked by a dissatisfaction with the present on the grounds of a remembered, or imagined, past plenitude. It is a barometer of present moods. Nostalgia informs *furusato*, one of the most compelling Japanese tropes for cultural, social, and economic self-sufficiency in the face of vexatious domestic problems and the trials of “transnational capitalism.” *Furusato* literally means “old village,” but its closer English equivalents are home, heritage, and native place. The ubiquity of *furusato* derives from the manifold contexts in which it is appropriated, from the gustatorial (for example, advertisements extolling the “flavor of *furusato*”) to the political economic (for example, the domestic policy of then leading Liberal Democratic Party [LDP] introduced in 1984 as the Proposal for *Furusato* Japan).<sup>1)</sup>

The quintessential, if largely imagined, landscape features of *furusato* include forested mountains, fields cut by a meandering river, and a cluster of thatched-roof farmhouses. *Furusato* also connotes a desirable lifestyle aesthetic summed up by the term *soboku*, or artlessness and rustic simplicity. According to “image of *furusato* polls conducted by various government ministries and private enterprises, the majority of urbanites associate that word with “countryside” (*inaka*), followed by nature, mountains, and rivers. More than representing a range of public opinion per se, these results reflect the dominant, generic image of *furusato* popularized in the mass media and in so-called public opinion polls, and adopted by Japanese consumers. Since the 1970s, the evocation of *furusato* in a variety of media and contexts has been an increasingly cogent means of fostering place-consciousness

1) This paper draws from my book [ROBERTSON 1991], two articles [ROBERTSON 1987; 1988], and several years of fieldwork in Japan.

and belonging at local and national levels alike.

The process by which *furusato* is evoked into existence is called *furusato-zukuri*, or “old village-making,” a political project through which popular memory is shaped and socially reproduced. *Furusato*-making involves the nostalgia-inspired creation of a “living historical past.” Specifically, this entails the simulation and replication of the more “authentic” social relations that presumably characterized life in some earlier and allegedly more stable time. *Furusato*-making works to integrate present-day activities and interpretations with past events, and to activate a popular nostalgia informing the imagination of a “traditional,” “authentic,” more “Japanese” future.

## 2. THE TIME AND SPACE OF *FURUSATO*

A brief discussion of the temporal and spatial dimensions of *furusato* follows. The temporal dimension is represented by the word *furu(i)*, which signifies pastness, historicity, age, and quaintness. Furthermore, *furu(i)* signifies the patina of familiarity and naturalness that objects and human relationships acquire with age, use, and interaction. The spatial dimension is represented by the word *sato*, which suggests a number of places inhabited by humans. These include a natal household, a hamlet or village, and the countryside (as opposed to the city). *Sato* also refers to a self-governed, autonomous area, and, by extension, to local autonomy.

The written form of *furusato* also demonstrates its multivalent nature. 故郷 is the ideograph most commonly used today, but *furusato* frequently is rendered in *hiragana*, the cursive syllabary, as ふるさと [KÔJIEN 1978: 563, 895].<sup>2)</sup> The characters provide ideographic cues structuring the visual (mind’s eye) apprehension of *furusato*; namely, an “old village.” The syllables, *fu-ru-sa-to*, however, provide no such extra-textual referents but rather represent the sound *furusato* itself as a thing. That *furusato* today most frequently is written in the cursive syllabary is because the word is used in an affective capacity to signify not a particular place—such as a real “old village,” for example—but rather the generalized nature of such a place and the warm, nostalgic feelings aroused by its mention and memory.

Moreover, even when the ideographs are used, the current practice is to superimpose syllables above or alongside them to insure that the compound is read as *furusato* instead of as its alternative Chinese-style reading, *kokyô*.<sup>3)</sup> The ideograph, in effect, is divorced from its objective, extra-textual referents and

2) Other character compounds for *furusato* include 故里 and 古里.

3) Professor Robert J. Smith mentioned to me that during his period of fieldwork in Shikoku in the 1950s, most Japanese of his acquaintance referred to their “native place” as *kokyô*. By the “miracle 1960s,” the relentless pace of industrialization, urbanization, and urban migration, had significantly reduced the number of viable “old villages.” Thus, when localism emerged as a movement in the mid-1970s along with the revaluation of indigeneous customs and ceremonies, it was not the “physical village” that was

becomes available for use in a connotative capacity. Moreover, as a *yamato kotoba*, or “really real” Japanese word, *furusato*, unlike *kokyō*, appears to be natural, familiar and culturally relative. *Yamato kotoba* denotes—with more than a hint of ethnocentricity, particularly when rendered in the indigenous *hiragana*—a native Japanese word as opposed to a Chinese loanword. Thus, whatever *furusato* names or is prefixed to is suffused with cultural authenticity; that is, a definitive “Japanese-ness.” *Furusato-mura* (villages), for example, are usefully characterized as *in situ* tourist installations whose featured farmers represent (for tourists) a more pristine, “authentic,” and “Japanese” lifestyle.

*Furusato* also appropriates a special past: *mukashi*. *Mukashi* signifies a past of indefinite chronology and duration, and resonates with nostalgic overtones. It contrasts with *kako*, a compound used to denote a definite, unambiguous, ir-retrievably “passed” past. *Mukashi*, on the other hand, alludes to the Good Old Days, as in the expression, *mukashi no omokage*. It refers to modes and contexts of sociability long since transcended, abandoned, or dismantled in the wake of urbanization, but reconstructable and revivifiable in a selective form through nostalgia and for tourism.

From the perspective of urban Japanese, who constitute 75 percent of the population, the qualities of both *mukashi* and *furusato* are embodied by the countryside and its inhabitants—or rather, by the “traditional” community (*kyōdōtai*) imagined to persist in the proverbial hinterlands (*okuchi*). As I will discuss, *furusato-zukuri* programs, like National Heritage in Britain, redefine the countryside (and also rural remnants within urban landscapes) in terms of tourism at a time when the majority of the population is dissociated from a primary (i.e., agricultural) relationship to the land [BOMMES and WRIGHT 1982: 282].

### 3. NOSTALGIA

Nostalgia figures as a distinctive way of relating the past to the present and future. It does this by juxtaposing the “uncertainties and anxieties of the present with presumed verities and comforts of the...past” [DAVIS 1979: 10]. Nostalgia is not a product of the past, for what occasions it resides in the present, regardless of the sustenance provided by memories of the past.

To refer to the past, to take account of or interpret it, implies that one is located in the present, that one is distanced or apart from the object reconstructed. In sum, the relationship of prior to present representations is

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resuscitated, but rather the affective potential of “old villages.”

*Kyōdo* is an often encountered word signifying local or native place, and, in fact, its dictionary definition is *furusato* [SHINMURA 1978: 575]. It appears that *kyōdo* is used primarily when location is the primary aspect emphasized. Thus, *kyōdoshi* is the word for local history, while local patriotism is referred to as *kyōdoai*. Unlike *kokyō* (i.e., *furusato*), *kyōdo* has no alternative syllabic reading.

symbolically mediated, not naturally given; it encompasses both continuity and discontinuity [HANDLER and LINNEKIN 1984: 287].

Nostalgia is provoked by a dissatisfaction with the present on the grounds of a remembered, or imagined, past plenitude. The cogency of *furusato*, as a sentimentally evoked topography, increases in proportion to the sense of homelessness experienced by Japanese individuals or groups. In this regard, some Japanese social scientists have suggested that with the rapid urbanization of certain rural areas since the postwar period, the Japanese "can't go home again." And, since there is no particular place to go home to, there is no particular place to feel nostalgic toward.

A diffuse sense of homelessness—what might be called a nostalgia for the experience of nostalgia—is an important socio-psychological motive for *furusato-mura* projects and the symbolic reclamation of the landscape of nostalgia. As MacCannell [1976: 15, 56] has perceptively noted, tourism makes a place for all the "unattached individuals in modern society." Organized sightseeing helps existentially "homeless" people construct totalities from their disparate experiences by linking one tourist attraction to another and to the nation. "Even if only a single linkage is grasped...this solitary link is the starting point for an endless...system of connections" [MACCANNELL 1976: 56] which constitutes the imagined community of the nation, in this case, *Furusato* Japan [c.f., BOMMES and WRIGHT 1982: 26]. In this way, as I discuss below, the various regional events performed and local artifacts produced for urban tourists in search of "traditional" Japan contribute toward the creation of a common cultural genealogy.<sup>4)</sup> Moreover, when regional and local cultural performances and productions are incorporated into a "national heritage," the forces that sustain distinctions and differences between not only urban and rural sectors, but also between and within localities, are depoliticized and neutralized.

#### 4. INVESTING IN *FURUSATO* FUTURES

A series of savings bonds advertisements published in the mid-1980s by the Ministry of Finance illustrates the process by which "the nation" is imagined and levels of difference elided in the context of tourism—in this case, passive sightseeing. All of the advertisements feature scenes from Shinto festivals. An early (1983) version appearing in the *Asahi Shimbun* consists of a color woodblock print of a shrine festival in progress. In the right margin is a poem celebrating the tutelary deity of an archetypical "old village." The poem is sandwiched between the slogan: *Ii naa, Furusato Nippon*, which may be translated, with a touch of

4) By genealogy, I follow Foucault in meaning a procedure by which events are linked or juxtaposed contiguously and continuously (but not necessarily chronologically) to create or begin an open-ended record of relationships. Popular memory is shaped through the creation of genealogies, which display or re-member the "manifestations of power that permeate all social relations" [O'BRIEN 1989: 38].

wistfulness as: "Ahh, it's so fine. Old Village Japan." The generic quality of this festive scene is further connoted by the use of the *hiragana* (i.e., *yamato kotoba*) form of *furusato* in the slogan.

A later (1985) edition of the same savings bond advertisement features photographs of costumed children taking part in their respective hometown festivals. Whether the festivals in question are long-standing or recently revived is immaterial. The caption of these later ads reads *Watashi no furusato, watashi no Nippon* (My old village, my Japan). This slogan unequivocally identifies native-place with the nation and conflates localism and nationalism. In this connection, the syllables *fu-ru-sa-to* inserted alongside the ideograph effectively assimilate each "old village" featured within the larger and largest community, *Furusato* Japan. The caption determines and guides the reception of the photographic image: *Furusato* Japan may exist only within the framework of the advertisement itself, but the use of photographs of actual hometown festivals and faces helps to bridge the ideological distance between locality and nation.

These savings bond advertisements gloss over the often divisive and exclusionist nature of shrine festival participation at the local level, and leave unacknowledged the often problematic relationship between local politics and the central bureaucracy. The festivals, photographed for commercial purposes, are severed from their singular, local contexts, and re-presented—or re-membered—as metonyms of an "authentic" national community.<sup>5)</sup> The local is also rendered a metaphor for the national.

The continuous generational transmission of local folkways is advocated quite literally in the above advertisements through the portrayal of children re-enacting presumably historical festive rituals. This device effectively traditionalizes the new while simultaneously perpetuating seemingly old traditions. The advertisements also equate the survival of "tradition" with the solvency of the central government. "Tradition" is a relationship of prior to present representations which is symbolically mediated and not naturally given. Neither pastness nor givenness defines something as "traditional." "Traditional" is "an arbitrary symbolic designation; an assigned meaning rather than an objective quality" [HANDLER and LINNEKIN 1984: 285-286]. Although promoting sales of government savings bonds, the advertisements at the same time urge an emotional investment and participation in that exclusive, imagined community, *Furusato* Japan. The implication is that nostalgia is as redeemable as government savings bonds, and that in the remaking of the past is the making of the future. The *Furusato* Japan advertisements offer Japanese citizens cum investors a cultural, cognitive bargain that the Ministry of Finance believes they cannot and will not refuse.

In promoting civic insideness by implicitly encouraging the staging of shrine-

5) The same can be said about the several television quiz shows created in the mid-1980s, in which celebrity contestants (usually based in Tokyo) try to correctly guess the logic behind certain historical local and regional practices, usually of an agricultural nature.

like festivals as a style of citizen participation, the central government (bureaucracy) and local municipalities resemble their Meiji-period counterparts. But where the latter created shrine-centered administrative villages in a concerted effort to foster national spiritual unity,<sup>6)</sup> the present government is deploying local festivals and tourism toward a similar end. The outcome is both the cultural and political appropriation of the local by the national, and the permeation of the national by the local.

That *urusato*-making recalls in spirit early twentieth-century efforts to achieve a cultural and national identity in a modernizing context, may be partially due to the fact that, as historian Carol Gluck [1985: 16] argues, "Japan's modern myths were made in and from the Meiji period." There are, however, crucial differences between *urusato-zukuri* today and Meiji-period myth-making. Most important is the absence in the *urusato-zukuri* project of an appeal to the preservation of an agrarian economy. Farmers presently constitute less than 8 percent of the working population, as opposed to an average of 60 percent during the Meiji period, and agricultural production today accounts for less than 4 percent of the GNP [NÔRIN-SUISANSHÔ DAJIN KANBOU CHÔSAKA 1989: 10-11]. The general design of *urusato-zukuri* projects throughout Japan, as I discuss shortly, aims, on the one hand, to recreate an "old village" ambience in cities, towns, and villages alike, and on the other, to revitalize as tourist attractions, actual villages verging on depopulation and impoverishment.

Finally, the socio-psychological catalyst for *urusato*-making is a nostalgia for nostalgia. This contrasts with the political ideology of the emperor system during the Meiji period, an ideology whose wider applications in the attempt to achieve and maintain national unity and identity included the effort to secure an agrarian system of both production and social relations [see GLUCK 1985, especially Chap. 6; also HAVENS 1974]. For this last reason especially, *urusato* should not be regarded as isomorphic with the Meiji construct, *kokutai*, the organic national polity. The politics informing the *urusato-zukuri* project are those belonging to a postindustrial, "postmodern" society, in which:

...the form of hegemony lies in the power to master signs of styles and periods, the ability to read/construct 'codes of distinction'...order and power do not have to be imposed, or authored, but are already embodied in the very order of objects as they are presented [STEWART 1988: 232].

## 5. TRAFFIC IN FURUSATO

*Furusato*-making is the process of imagining a post-postwar Japan and in-

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6) The Meiji government inaugurated the shrine merger program in 1906. The plan was to have a single, central shrine as the exclusive focus of both communal solidarity and national consciousness [see FRIDELL 1973].

volves a redefinition or reconstruction of the countryside—itsself a metaphor for “traditional” Japan—and its constituent social relations, most often in the context of tourism. For the Liberal Democratic Party, this process included the adoption of *urusato-zukuri* as the cornerstone of domestic cultural policy. The policy, referred to as *Nippon rettô furusato ron* (Proposal for *Furusato* Japan), was introduced in 1984 in a televised speech by then finance minister, Takeshita Noboru. Takeshita subsequently served as prime minister from 1987 to 1989, when he resigned following charges of corruption. His brainchild, the *Furusato kon no Kai* (Spirit of *Furusato* Association) was inherited by the following prime minister Kaifu Toshiki—and presumably by subsequent prime ministers, —as an advisory committee.<sup>7)</sup> Political factionalism aside, the LDP in particular regards *urusato-zukuri* as the means by which to forge a new “cultural state” (*bunka kokka*) in tandem with a “new Japanese-style welfare state” (*Nihonsei no atarashii fukushi kokka*) [TAKESHITA and KUSAYANAGI 1986: 10; see also KOKUDOSHÔ KEIKAKU CHÔSEIKYOKU 1987: 44; JIYŪ MINSHU TÔ 1984]. LDP interest in revitalizing rural areas through *urusato-zukuri* programs doubtless is tied to the Party’s dependence on a rural constituency.

The creation of *urusato-mura*, or “old-village villages,” as tourist destinations for urbanites in search of an “agricultural” (read “traditional”) experience, is a major way in which the post-postwar project has been introduced. The *urusato-villages* project is an apt example of how a national heritage—that is, a genealogy of *Furusato* Japan—is created from a diverse collection of localities linked together by tourism. This project has been implemented in nearly two thousand provincial cities, towns, and villages as a strategy to check economic stagnation and depopulation. In this connection, I will draw brief comparisons between *urusato-zukuri* and the National Heritage campaign in Britain.

Generally speaking, the term *urusato-village* designates economically and demographically unstable villages seeking to attract “honorary villagers.” Honorary villagers are short- and long-term tourists from the city who can enjoy picking mushrooms, slopping hogs, and transplanting rice seedlings without having to actually depend on agriculture for a living. Neither do the resident villagers, since tourism is regarded as a more lucrative and desirable enterprise.

The *urusato-village* project was initiated on the national level. The *Furusato* Information Center (*Furusato jôhō sentā*), for example, was established in Tokyo in May 1985 under the auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and was assigned the task of facilitating the rehabilitation of depopulated rural communities through the creation of city-country networks. (The director

7) In September 1989, Kaifu announced that Suzuki Eiji, director of Nikkeiren (Japan Federation of Employers), would head the association, whose twenty-two members include university professors, local and national politicians, and business executives. Only two of the members are female, as noted in the *Asahi Shimbun*, International ed., 14 and 15 September 1989.

and affiliated consultants include elderly and established businessmen, politicians, former cabinet officials, and actors.) The Center's annual operating budget averages over ¥ 4,000,000, part of which is spent computer-networking with nearly two thousand cities, towns and villages; sponsoring symposia; installing a *furusato* information "hot line"; distributing slick public relations pamphlets, newsletters, and guidebooks; and conducting surveys on popular *furusato* images. I visited the Center in October 1991 and found that these networking activities were now categorized under the affective rubric, *Furusato* Family (*furusato famiri*)—"family" in this context referring to the imagined and relational community of the nation.

A predecessor and competitor, the Japan *Furusato*-Village Center (Nihon *furusato*-mura sentô), opened in Tokyo a year earlier. Plans to establish this center began in 1981 under the auspices of the "green draft" (*guriin dorafuto*), a program designed to provide urbanites a chance to experience firsthand, mountain village life. The program also sponsors lectures given by farm village heads to urban audiences. In short, the Japan *Furusato*-Village Center serves as a "clearinghouse for people in search of *furusato*." Pamphlets for each of the six hundred odd villages registered with the Center are distributed free of charge to "homeless" urbanites, whose membership fees and tourism are earmarked toward revitalizing village economies [ASAHI SHINBUN, Tokyo/ eve. ed., 13 March 1984]. Just as the central government adopted *furusato* only after its rhetorical and symbolic usefulness had been established by local and regional agencies, the *Furusato* Information Center was founded following the initial success of its predecessor.

The two *furusato* information centers described above create and serve the needs of both prospective *furusato*-villages and honorary villagers. An example of typical advertising copy prepared by a village for perusal by urban clients and publicized by the *Furusato* Information Center is translated below. The site in question was newly renamed *Kôzuke-mura* after the pre-Meiji name for the area now encompassed by Gunma prefecture.

Pursue the romance of "*Kôzuke-mura*," Gunma's secret frontier (gateway). The pristine currents of the "*Kanagawa*" flow through the center of the village, which is encircled by mountains. Ninety-four percent of the land abounds in beautiful forests—which is why it is called "Gunma's secret frontier."

*Kôzuke-mura* has a history spanning more than 200 years: the Kurozawa family house was designated a national treasure...Petrified rocks impart the romance of the Age of Dinosaurs. Many natural monuments—national and prefectural treasures—are found here.

Moreover, traditional seasonal events...and folk arts...are still passed on from generation to generation in their original form.

Natural wonders and pure traditions have been preserved in their original state. Those things unnurtured in a city, like a "restful heart-mind" and "poetic sentiment," are reawakened here [NAKAJIMA 1986: 105].

Most of the so-called "traditional" village activities performed in *furusato*-

villages are either recently invented or newly revived as recreation for domestic tourists. Among them are seasonal festivals, folk kabuki, storytelling and folksinging sessions, handicrafts exhibitions, nature hikes, and glutinous rice-pounding contests. Honorary villagers, who pay an annual fee of about ¥100, enjoy other amenities as well. Back “home” in the city, they are provided with *urusato* newsletters and local produce—and even canned fireflies (*hotaru*) which when released, recreate a *urusato* ambience on a high-rise apartment (*danchi*) balcony [ASAHI SHINBUN, Tokyo/eve. ed., 13 March 1983; FURUSATO JÔHÔ SENTÂ 1985; KAWASHIMA 1984: 121-126; SAKADA 1984: 353-419]. Local residents, on the other hand, are entrusted with the custody of an irreplaceable (if imagined) community; they are the custodians of the landscape of nostalgia. For natives and honorary villagers alike, what is experienced in *urusato-mura* is not village life, but a village-like life.

*Urusato*-villages provide access to another, presumably more “authentic” world, but they must also be sufficiently of this world to be accessible by public or private transportation. Japan National Railways (JNR, privatized since 1987 as Japan Railways, [JR]) early recognized its potential to traverse past and present. From “Discover Japan” in the 1970s to “Exotic Japan” in the 1980s, the Railways advertised its world-bridging services to “homeless” urbanites. The railroad brings people back to both the countryside and a nostalgic frame of mind. What is ironic, in this connection, is that where rail service to isolated rural stations is being phased out gradually, nostalgia-evoking steam engines are making newly scheduled runs as tourist attractions in themselves. Moreover, the landscape traversed by a steam engine is imbued by association, with nostalgia, just as the view from a window of a chugging steam engine, as opposed to a whizzing bullet train, is framed in nostalgia. Similarly, special tourist maps for motorists and pedestrians which point out key *urusato* vistas and local landmarks also work to historicize certain areas, transforming them into enclaves redolent of nostalgia.

Those who are unable to travel can take advantage of the post office’s “*urusato* parcel post” service inaugurated in 1985 and still going strong. Customers can participate in the discourse on domestic tourism by choosing from a variety of regional foodstuffs and handicrafts, colorfully advertised in “*urusato* parcel post” catalogues. The parcels are then posted directly to them from local craftspeople and farmers.

To capture an audience somehow not reached by these various *urusato*-making strategies, there are also the ubiquitous (and touristic) television quiz and game programs, and “Discovery Channel” sorts of shows that regularly feature rice paddies and farmers as representative of an “authentic,” “traditional” Japanese lifestyle. Railway companies, the post office, and developers of *urusato-mura* alike, recognize that the tourism industry constitutes, in part, an anodyne realm in which gratification is offered in compensation for the disturbing consequences of postwar industrial growth and urban sprawl, including air pollution and a dearth of affordable, desirable housing.

The magazine *Furusato-Mura Jôhô*,<sup>8)</sup> first published around 1985, combines domestic tourism with rural real estate sales and pragmatic solutions to environmental pollution. Issue No. 9 (1987), for example, carries articles on the use of human feces as fertilizer, medicinal herbs, and the legal definition of farmland (*nôchi*), and includes an illustrated catalogue of farmland and farmhouses for sale throughout Japan. In short, like the *furusato* parcel post system, the magazine promotes both the vicarious and firsthand appreciation and acquisition of the proverbial countryside. So do television documentaries and game shows which fetishize the countryside and its unurbane inhabitants as the epitomes of *Furusato* Japan.

## 6. MOTHER AND MISS *FURUSATO*

A discussion of the popular association of “mother” and *furusato*, and the very recent emergence of Miss *Furusato*, is pertinent at this juncture. The association of “mother” and *furusato* is so tenacious that some Japanese social critics—the ubiquitous *hyôronka*—insist that the two words are synonymous. However, they add, because of the rampant urbanization and so-called Americanization during the postwar period wrought by rapid economic growth, *furusato* no longer exists as a “concrete entity” (*jittai*). Likewise, the critics continue, “mother” no longer symbolizes the countryside (*inaka*), the farm village, the land and soil, or rice.<sup>9)</sup> Having lost their external referents, both *furusato* and “mother” are “dead words” (*shigo*) [MATSUMOTO 1980].

“Mother” names a gender role, a semantic construct unconstrained by the experiences (parturient or otherwise) of real females, who, moreover, are not all “female” in the same way. The imagination of both *furusato* and “mother” is independent of the existence or absence of either; both constructs gain cogency from the process of privileging nostalgia and ideology over historical and experiential reality.

*Furusato-zukuri* projects are premised on a nostalgia for an “authentic” community symbolized, for men at least, by *ofukuro-san*, one of the most affective expressions for “mother” used by males. *Ofukuro-san* literally means “bag lady” and, consequently, refers connotatively to the notion of females as repositories, in this case, of “traditional” values deposited for safekeeping by the (male) engineers of *furusato-zukuri* programs. Female bodies, literally and figuratively, are the containers for male-identified “babies,” from human infants to things such as “family

8) There is no overt connection between this magazine and either the *Furusato jôhô sentâ* or *Nihon furusato-mura sentâ*.

9) Regarding the symbolic association of “mother” and rice, and agriculture in general, see Robertson 1984b. In the booklet accompanying the 1983 movie *Furusato*, the director links “mother” to *Furusato* Japan: “*Furusato* is the ancestral land (*sokoku*). My/our (*waga*) ancestral land is Japan, it is Gifu prefecture, it is Saigô-*mura*, it is the village-section (*aza*) of Hachiôji, it is [my] household, it is mother.”

values” and gender ideologies.

When these social critics attribute the death of “mother” to urbanization and Americanization they are—in effect—alluding to the crumbling of male certainty about the virility of “traditional” values. Although the same “traditional” values—mutual culpability, familistic ties and bounded, homogeneous communities—were eschewed in the immediate postwar period as backward, cumbersome, and undemocratic, they are now being implanted into the landscape of nostalgia, the isomorph of which is the female body qua “mother,” where they can be cultivated (or gestated) and harvested (or delivered). An ideology of sexual difference and gender role segregation informs the image of a “back-to-the-future” *Furusato* Japan. By conflating *furusato* and “mother,” nostalgic men—from social critics to LDP politicians—can proclaim the inclusion of precisely what they exclude from the process of post-postwar nation-making; namely, female-identified subjectivity and self-representation. Such men may be nostalgic for the Good Old Days, but they remain very much a part of the present.

Several years ago, “Miss *Furusato*” contests were inaugurated in many of the provincial cities, towns, and villages comprising the *Furusato* Information Center’s *Furusato* Family network. Only a few of the winning young women are actually called Miss *Furusato*; most of the titles allude to a local site or product. For example, to name a few, there is a fruit series: Miss Tangerine, Miss Peach, and Miss Apple, and a travel series: Miss Tourism Okayama, Miss Japan Railways Yamagata, and the enigmatic Miss Airport Companion. Obviously, these titles have nothing to do with either female subjectivity or self-representation. Given the relative dearth of young women in rural areas, the Miss *Furusato* contests can be understood as part of a *furusato-zukuri* strategy to contain that which is the most antagonistic, in this case, women reluctant to put down roots in the countryside. It is as potential mothers that the Miss *Furusato* are celebrated collectively as the wife of the national body politic, Mr. *Furusato* Japan. Like the actual (as opposed to honorary) villagers of *furusato-mura*, the Miss *Furusato* are both custodians of the landscape of nostalgia and travel companions on a packaged tour of *Furusato* Japan.

Lowenthal’s [1985: 4] words provide an apropos transition at this point to a comparative consideration of Britain’s National Heritage: “If the past is a foreign country, nostalgia has made it ‘the foreign country with the healthiest tourist trade of all.’”

## 7. NATIONAL HERITAGE AND *FURUSATO* JAPAN

The National Heritage campaign in Britain provides a timely and apt comparison to *furusato-zukuri* programs in Japan.<sup>10)</sup> The National Heritage Act,

10) My insights and information come from two texts in particular, Bommers and Wright [1982] and Lowenthal [1985].

drafted by Parliament in 1980, amounts to a “publicly instituted structuring of consciousness” of the national, “British” past. Under the aegis of National Heritage, diverse sights and sites, or landscapes and landmarks, are linked as parts of a unified, national sphere. But, as Bommès and Wright [1982: 260] point out, “no such unified sphere actually exists, except as an *impression* of unity.” Thus, although National Heritage was introduced by “Thatcherites” and Tory conservatives, its cogency is not solely attributable to the Tory party [BOMMÉS and WRIGHT 1982: 266]. In other words, National Heritage, like *Furusato* Japan, projects a unity which tends to override social and political differences and contradictions at the national and local levels. In both cases, the macro-heritage of the nation encompasses and co-opts the micro-heritages of diverse localities.

Both *furusato* and National Heritage are powerful and compelling ideologies which appeal to people representative of a wide spectrum of social and political interests and persuasions, from environmentalism to protectionism. The National Heritage campaign, like *furusato-zukuri*, conjoins through tourism the preservation of “traditional” social relations and the conservation of “authentic” landscapes and landmarks. In Britain, the Shell Oil Company has been especially active in producing National Heritage advertisements which center on the theme of preserving “the past” and “the countryside.” The irony or paradox is how a company (Shell) so dependent upon the automobile, among other technological (and polluting) devices, should present itself as the “guardian of ‘nature’ and ‘historical sites’” [BOMMÉS and WRIGHT 1982: 281].

In the early 1960s, Shell produced a series of touristic advertisements called “Explore the Roads of Britain with Shell,” in which the road itself was depicted as “prehistoric” (the Roman Steps) and “natural” (the Berkshire Ridgeway). The tone and content of the ads resemble the copy for *Kôzuke-mura* and the Finance Ministry’s savings bond advertisements. All of these advertisements have in common the equation of “rural” and “the past,” and the use of “traditional” performances to lend the advertising campaign “substance, resonance and credibility” [BOMMÉS and WRIGHT 1982: 284]. Through tourism then, regardless of the economic benefits to either Shell or to any given *furusato-mura*, the countryside becomes a “utopian zone which in its ‘historical’ capacity still holds residues of a former world” [BOMMÉS and WRIGHT 1982: 282].

Bommès and Wright [1982: 289-290] maintain that National Heritage—and for that matter, *Furusato* Japan—involves the extraction of history from everyday life and its restaging and display through tourism as nostalgically coded sites, images, events, and social practices. By creating a tourist enterprise out of “the past,” the planners of and participants in *furusato-mura* campaigns, and in the making of *Furusato* Japan, are in effect subscribing to a notion of history as entropy; that is, the perception of historical time as movement toward socio-political disarticulation and economic uncertainty.

The entropic view of history, like the experience of nostalgia, is accompanied by a sense that the future is foreclosed; a sense that the future will be colored with

the same vexation and insecurity that plagues the present [BOMMES and WRIGHT 1982: 291; ZWINGMANN 1959: 199]. "Under the entropic view of history... 'the past' is revalued and reconstructed as an irreplaceable heritage—a trust which is bestowed upon the present and must be serviced and passed on to posterity" [BOMMES and WRIGHT 1982: 291]. Similarly, the residents of designated *furusato-mura*, along with the many Miss *Furusato*, have been transformed through tourism into custodians of the landscape of nostalgia.

## 8. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The cogency of *furusato*, as a sentimentally evoked topography, increases in proportion to the sense of homelessness experienced by Japanese individuals or groups. In this regard, several Japanese sociologists have suggested that with the rapid urbanization of certain rural areas since the postwar period, the Japanese "can't go home again." And, since there is no particular place to go home to, there is no particular place to feel nostalgic toward. What might be called a nostalgia for the experience of nostalgia, then, is recognized as an important socio-psychological motive for *furusato*-village projects together with the reclamation of the symbolic landscape of *Furusato* Japan. MacCannell [1976: 168] has noted that "tours are circular structures, and the last destination is the same as the point of origin: home." The effect of tourism under the auspices of *furusato-zukuri* is to make "home" synonymous with "nation."

The various festive events performed and local artifacts—including savings bond advertisements—produced for tourists in search of *Furusato* Japan contribute toward the creation of a common cultural genealogy. Consequently, the forces that sustain distinctions and differences between not only the urban and rural sectors, locality and nation, but also between and within localities, are depoliticized and neutralized. Lines of difference are drawn instead between a purportedly homogeneous Japan and the rest of the world.

The nostalgic potential, sentimental value, and apparent historicity of *furusato* imbue it, and whatever it is prefixed to, with authenticity and cultural relativity. *Furusato* Japan conjures up a far more endearing image than does *bunka kokka*, or cultural state, the abstract term popularized in the 1950s to characterize immediate postwar Japan. Appropriated at different administrative levels and popularized in the mass media, *furusato* is evoked in nostalgic memories, just as *furusato*-making incorporates the remembering of nostalgia. Prefixed to Japan, *furusato* facilitates the collective re-remembering of a nation dis-membered by defeat in war and, more recently, by the uncertainties of a transnational, late-capitalist economy, which have rendered the "future" a vexing problem.

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