

Hegemony, Habitus and Identity in Japanese University Men's Rowing

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A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Victoria University

Melbourne, Australia

August 2005

## **STUDENT DECLARATION**

I, Brent Douglas McDonald, declare the PhD thesis entitled “Hegemony, Habitus and Identity in Japanese University Rowing” is no more than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, references, and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

Signature

Date

## **ABSTRACT**

Investigating the intersections between sport, education, identity and culture provides insight into commonsense understandings of the social world and hence hegemony at play. Education in Japan is highly valued and is a site of not only academic learning but also explicit and implicit moral and social education. One of the primary vehicles of this moral and social education is located in sporting practice and the multitude of sports clubs that exist within the framework of the educational curriculum. Of significance is the 'cultural curriculum' embodied in the practices of members of a university rowing club.

This thesis draws on my personal experience as a rugby player in Japan. Using the symbolic capital I accumulated allowed my ongoing involvement with a university rowing club over a period spanning almost six years. The logics and ideologies behind the practice of rowing are explored through ethnographic techniques that emerged as contact with the field grew.

Reading the Japanese body opens a new and potentially enlightening paradigm of body culture and sport. Drawing upon theoretical perspectives of Gramsci, Bourdieu, Foucault, and others provides a 'mixed bag' of analytical devices, which, when fine tuned to Japanese sensibilities, offers to make sense of the regularities of the university rower's life. In particular Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field and capital prove powerful.

It is argued that University rowing, whilst not a major sport in Japan, occupies a unique space within sporting experience. Due to historical factors, its' pedagogical and hierarchical nature, and the day to day social and cultural interaction of its' members, university rowing facilitates the reproduction of a particular type of Japanese identity that has its roots in a particular past as much as a necessary present.

The mechanisms of reproduction of this identity and its enduring nature are of significance.

Being a member of the university rowing club is the central component of these student's lives. It is an all consuming existence that totally defines their use of time, body, and spirit. There is a 'coming from' and 'going to' trajectory involved in the habitus of each member and rowing is more than a sport for these young men. It is a home, family, foundation, social nexus and raison d'etre. Rowing is indeed a method par excellence for bodily discipline and spiritual development.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge a number of people without whom this thesis would probably never have been undertaken or finished.

Firstly I would like to thank my supervisor Chris Hallinan for encouraging me to undertake this project and for his guidance and wisdom over the past years in achieving its completion. Chris has allowed me to find my own path to completion and his patience and support during this period has been unwavering. I would also like to thank my co-supervisor Michael Burke whose support and editorial suggestions, particularly during the final write up have insightful and invaluable.

Secondly I would like to thank Terry Roberts, Head of the School of Human Movement, Recreation and Performance for his continued leadership in encouraging and supporting research such as this in the field of sociology of sport. Without this departmental support it is unlikely this project would have been able to begin.

I am indebted to the support and friendship of Professor Hajime Hirai from Shiga University in Japan. Hajime's openness, suggestions and guidance was particularly welcome during my times in Japan and his insight and scholarship continues to influence my thinking on sport in Japan. I am also grateful to Shiga University graduate students who helped with the process of reflexivity during the research periods, especially Hitoshi Tanaka, whose willingness to help out was exceptional.

I would like to acknowledge all those at BURC that I had the privilege of getting to know, live with and train with. The warmth and acceptance that I received at BURC will always be remembered with the fondest memories. I would especially like to mention Shigenobu Yagi for all those rowing discussions over a beer and katsu-curry and for setting up my stays in Japan.

Finally I would like to express my personal debt to Jane, for her unwavering support and patience. This project is a form of dedication to her belief, encouragement and love.

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## **Glossary**

Amae	dependence
BURC	Biwa University Rowing Club (fictional)
Bushidō	the way of the samurai
ganbaru	do your absolute best
Gaman	endurance, perseverance
Gakusei	student
Giri	responsibility, duty
Ie	traditional family system
Isshokenmei	give everything (regarding effort)
Jōge kankei	hierarchical relationships
Karada de oboeru	learning through the body
Koha	the embodiment of hard masculinity it is a traditional image of adolescent masculinity which combines violence, valour, and bravado with stoicism and chivalry
Kōhai	junior
Kojinshugi	individualism
Kokoro	heart
Konjō	guts/courage
Kosei	individuality
Kurō	hardship
kyō chō	cooperation
magokoro	sincerity
makoto	purity of motive
manga	Japanese comic books
MEXT	Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
ningenkankei	human relationships
Nihon taiiku do	way of Japanese physical culture
Nomihodai	all you can drink party
Rajio taisō	group exercise to music- similar to callisthenics
Ronin	literally masterless samurai, this refers to students who gain entry to university via private study, usually cram school
Ryokan	a traditional style hotel
Seishin	spirit
seishin kunren	spiritual training
seishin kyōiku	spiritual education
sempai	one's senior
senmon gakko	special vocational schools
shakaijin	person in society
suisen	recruitment or special entry to university
wa	harmony
wakon yōsai	Japanese spirit, Western technology

## **CHAPTER ONE:**

### **Going to Japan**

The body and body culture are central to understanding sport in Japan. Indeed, the concept of 'physical' education takes on a completely different meaning when placed in a paradigm that doesn't recognise the Cartesian mind/body dualism that dominates much Western inquiry into the body. In a Japanese context the 'physical' education of the body implies the training of the 'human being, the spirit or mind by training the body' (Yuasa, 1993: 7). In other words, training of the human body has the potential of perfecting one's spirit and enhancing personality - the overriding implication being that mind and body are inseparable. With this inseparability in mind, bodily activities take on a different meaning and purpose. That is, the project of education becomes one of self-cultivation. This thesis was initially driven by a desire to make sense of Japanese sport, and to use sport as a vehicle of insight into Japanese identity and the hegemony at work in day-to-day life. One of the best ways to understand the commonsense ideology at work in everyday life is to do so through those activities that are themselves regarded as commonsense, such as sport.

#### **‘At a Loose End’**

In 1994, having just completed an Arts degree and being fairly much ‘at a loose end’ as to what to do with myself, an opportunity arose to travel to Japan to play rugby and teach English. I had only a limited view of Japan and its culture and spoke absolutely no Japanese. Nevertheless, I decided to head off filled with a sort of blind optimism that everything would work out. The reality was that I actually had no job waiting for me (it would take about four months to find work). As a result, my initial and indeed enduring engagement with Japan was through my contact with a rugby club in the

port city of Shimizu. I had just completed a season of playing 1st Grade rugby in Australia and vividly remember arriving at training on my second evening in Japan, hoping to make an impression. I was warmly welcomed as a new member of the club. Those first months were marked by the forty minute ride through the humidity of late Summer and early Autumn along the beach front on an old 'mama chan' bike to the high school training ground. There was almost no English spoken by any of the members so we used to work out what was going on by drawing pictures and running lines in the gravel of the training ground. After the first few weeks we no longer needed to draw pictures - not because I had miraculously learnt the language, but rather because I had learnt the drills. Training was totally repetitious, physically demanding, and increasingly seemed to me (backed by my sense of cultural (rugby) superiority) to be pointless and inconsistent with developing skills and game sense. In fact, the longer I trained with the team the more confused and frustrated I became with this version of rugby. My first game seemed so far removed from my memories of my last game in Australia. I struggled with my own ethnocentrism as rather than address technical problems at training, the team went straight back into drills like the dreaded 'run, pass' exercise.

I was always treated with great kindness by most of the players and training often finished with drinking sessions at local Izakaiyas (workers bar/restaurant). The high school team trained before my team and, having nothing else to do, I started arriving earlier to training to offer assistance with the team. It was probably around this time (November 1994) that I began the process, of which this thesis is the culmination, of trying to make sense of what was going on. This process was driven by the power of reflexivity (being unemployed gave me plenty of opportunities to think) that challenged me to question my notion of commonsense. From this process it became

clear that the practice of rugby (and other sports) was generated from a variety of different prerogatives and influences, and that these ways of doing were reproduced at various (school, club, community) organisational levels. I finally gained full-time employment, kept playing rugby and left Japan eighteen months later intent on further and deeper understanding of what I had experienced. Returning to Australia I enrolled in another degree which had a subject titled 'Sport and Society' as a core requirement. This began an introduction to sociological thinking and methodology, and I found myself attracted to the work of Bourdieu and Gramsci and the ethnographic approach to field work.

So why is this thesis about rowing and not rugby? Prior to going to Japan I had been heavily involved in rowing both as a coach and a competitor. As is common in Australia I had grown up playing a winter (rugby) and summer (rowing) sport. I had been selected as a State representative in rowing in 1992 and continued competing up until my departure to Japan. Rowing training during the summer months typically involved six days a week and three to four hours a day. With the addition of coaching it was not uncommon to be active in the rowing environment five to six hours a day for several months at a time. Rowing as a social and physical practice was an environment in which I had great familiarity.

On returning to Australia I continued playing rugby. However, during the Summer I returned to coaching rowing. Casual coaching transformed itself into full-time employment and for the past eight years I've essentially been a fulltime rowing coach. Rowing was therefore a 'natural' sporting practice (in that I understood it on a deeper level) for me to utilise as a way in to Japanese university sporting clubs.

One of the areas in Japan that I have a great familiarity and social connection with is Otsu, in Shiga prefecture. Otsu is the home of dozens of rowing clubs and a major

area for rowing in Japan. My Japanese family lived close to the river and this allowed me the ease of riding down to the river whenever I wanted to watch the crews training. I had before me somewhat a marriage of convenience between my professional skill as a rowing practitioner and the entry point of my connections in Otsu. Further rowing in Japan is produced and reproduced almost entirely within the organisational framework of education. To para-phrase TV crime shows, I had now had the motive, opportunity and weapon to commit the research.

### **Sport and Commonsense**

From my experience in Japan sport was clearly a place where commonsense ideology was created and reproduced. Consider the following from the Japanese Ministry of Education, Sport, Culture and Technology (MOE) (2000, see appendix 1):

Apart from the life-enriching and fulfilling role of sport, it is also part of man's common culture in that it responds to an inherent human physical and mental desire. Sport as a cultural phenomenon affecting both man's physical and mental aspects is essential for the development of a happy and vigorous society and for the attainment of the individual's psychosomatic health. It is therefore of the greatest significance that people should engage in sports throughout their lives.

The language of MOE implies a 'taken for granted' approach to the merits of physical education and sport to enhancing the well being of society both collectively and for individuals. Such a commonsensical approach to sport, particularly that connected through biological (inherent) and psychological (psychosomatic) perspectives is indicative of a practice that operates largely unchallenged by its own participants.

The reproduction of power through the utilisation of institutions such as religion, family and education is central to the understanding of Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony and Foucault's (1972) discourse. Whilst there are some significant

differences<sup>1</sup> between the work of Foucault and Gramsci, for both 'the concern is with a dominant ideology which becomes progressively commonsensical and taken for granted, inscribed in practice, all pervasive, (and) embodied in institutions' (Werbner, 1997: 37). Cultural reproduction through education reinforces existing power relations and ruling ideas (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Furthermore, these authors believe that the pedagogic action of education (in its broadest sense) plays a significant part in the reproduction of culture and the whole social system. However, whilst the hegemonic discourses explored by Gramsci and Foucault persist over long periods of time (Werbner, 1997), change in this culture can occur. Gramsci (1971) suggests that culture is contested and therefore there is the potential for resistance or counter culture (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

Clammer (1995:1-2) discusses how explanations about Japanese society usually fall in one of two camps, either those analysts who 'exclude consideration of culture as part of their framework' or the *Nihonjiron* (Japanese studies) who tend to exclude structure and base ideas on 'cultural uniqueness'. There was a need to construct an appropriate multi-disciplinary approach drawing from phenomenology, critical studies, symbolic interactionism, structuralism, and cultural studies so as to provide provides the tools for sufficient understanding. Further, this assemblage of concepts and vocabulary must be re-oriented toward ideas that are central to understanding Japanese society such as 'nature, body, emotions and aesthetics' (Clammer, 1995: 3) as such ideas are, in fact, peripheral to the mainstream Western usage of social theory.

Modern education and educational institutions are considered to be at the forefront of cultural reproduction through the shaping and defining of students into socially

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<sup>1</sup> Foucault's notion of discourse and micro-power is different from Gramsci's hegemony in that Gramsci's notion of consent may align with the idea of 'false consciousness', which can be "corrected by showing people the truth". For Foucault, there is no truth, only truth effects (Danaher et al. 2000: 48).

functional individuals (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Gramsci, 1971; Foucault, 1977).

In approaching the institutional reproduction of society through the inevitable pedagogy imbedded in 'the school' we are dealing with the process of socialisation.

Coakley (2003: 98) provides an understanding of the concept of socialisation as

an active process of learning and social development that occurs as people interact with one another and become acquainted with the social world in which they live, and as they form ideas about who they are, and make decisions about their goals and behaviours.

That is, the process of socialisation is a two way relationship where the human being is active rather than passive, and where there is a constant adjustment of goals and values according to a myriad of variables.

Using Bourdieu's perspectives of field, capital and habitus to overcome the opposition between agency and structure provides an opportunity to make sense of the processes involved in the socialisation of individuals in the Japanese education system. Through these processes a person learns to become a member of society, and 'with a feel for the game' reap the benefits of such membership. The forces of economics and political powers, that is the historical construction of the field, serve to reinforce and replicate the status quo of those who practice in it. The reproduction of power is especially effective within the education system (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 114-115) as the relationships of power created are simultaneously pedagogical in nature. The state of play, being inscribed in the field, is therefore replicated by the field as the players attempt to play the game to the best of their ability.

### **Studying up on Sport**

Sport as an activity in social space is constructed by the historical, cultural, political and social forces at play in the broader space of society. As such, sport has been seen



to intersect with other sociological fields of interest. For example, sport intersects with gender, race, violence, socialisation, identity, economy, and exploitation, in some of the many emerging areas of analysis.

The study of sport in Japan has been focused on major professional sports such as Baseball (Whiting, 1977, 1990; Bikel, 1989; Hirai, 2001; Kelly, 1998; Kusaka, 1987; Loy, Curtis, & Hillen, 1987; Springwood, 1992) and Soccer (Watts, 1998; Horne & Manzenreiter, 2004), Martial Arts (Inoue, 1998), Sumo (Light & Kinnaird, 2002; Thompson, 1986, 1998; Yamaguchi, 1998; Amano, 2004). Other research has included leisure sports, participation rates (Kanezaki, 1993; Kanezaki & Hashimoto 1995; Yamaguchi, 1984) and general sports history (Guttmann & Thompson, 2001; Manzenreiter, 2001; Pempel, 1998).

Critical sports studies originating from Australia has developed over the past 20 years. The pioneering work of McKay (1991), Goldlust (1987), Lawrence and Rowe (1986), and Connell (1983) was followed up by areas of research that have included the sport media (McKay and Rowe, 1997), hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995; McKay, 1997; Rowe and McKay, 1998) race and ethnicity (Given, 1995; Hallinan, 1991; Hallinan and Krotee 1993; Hallinan, et al., 1991, 1999; Hughson 1992, 1997, 1998a, 1998b; Tatz 1995) critical feminist studies (Bryson, 1983, 1987; Burroughs et al., 1995), women's leisure (Boyle and McKay, 1995; Thompson, 1995), globalisation (Hallinan & Burke, 2005; Miller et al., 2001; Rowe, 2003) and policy (Kirk, 1996; McKay, 1997). While most of this work has been involved in Australia, a clear departure from this has been the work of Richard Light into Japanese high school rugby. Light, utilising ethnographic techniques and drawing upon six years of previous experience as a rugby coach in Japan, examines a Tokyo High School rugby team in particular from the perspectives of ritual (Light, 2000b), and the construction

of hegemonic masculinity (Light & Kirk, 1997; Light, 1999a, 1999b, 2000a, 2001). Throughout his research, Light explores the role of sport in Japanese secondary education in the construction of identity and the reproduction of ideology.

Through the utilisation of grounded theory, whereby the modes of analysis of any data gathered actually arise from the data itself (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), this thesis follows on from the work of Light's fieldwork, empirical studies and ethnographies by extending the realm of critical sports studies into the world of university sport and the sport of rowing as an extension of the pedagogical process central to Japanese education.

### **Naturalistic Perspectives of Sport in Japan**

Institutions are one of the major sites of cultural reproduction and hegemony. Educational institutions with their reliance on pedagogical practice are particularly strong sites for socialisation and the creation of an identity that understands the world in terms of commonsense and consent. Due to the nature of pedagogy these 'commonsenses' tend to be reproduced from generation to generation. Sporting clubs in Japanese University education are social and physical environments that demand high levels of student's time and effort and as such have the potential of being significant sites for the construction of identity.

This particular research involved a largely emergent ethnographic methodology so as to make sense of the meaning, identity, ideology and hegemony in operation at a Japanese University rowing club. Specifically, the research was concerned with a men's rowing club and how the social reality at BURC was defined and redefined, the role sport plays in the delivery of social and moral education in Japan and how this curriculum is communicated, the significance of sport as a vehicle for capital

investment, and the effect of the club experience on the individual identities constructed there.

## **Orientalism**

Edward Said (1978: 12), whilst pragmatically limiting his 'orient' to the 'near East',

traces the generational construction of the orient as a concept. Said defines

orientalism as:

an elaboration not only of a basic geographic distinction but also of a whole series of "interests" which, by such means as scholarly discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological description, it not only creates but also maintains; it is, rather than expresses, a certain will or intention to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different world; it is above all, a discourse that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political (as with a colonial or imperial establishment), power intellectual (as with reigning sciences like comparative linguistics or anatomy, or any modern policy sciences), power cultural (as with orthodoxies and canons of taste, texts, values), power moral (as with ideas about what "we" do and what "they" cannot do or understand as "we" do).

The practice of Orientalism is not limited to an understanding of only the near East.

Rather, as a concept it can be extended to any context outside of the Occident.

Orientalism is drawn from a body of work, (itself a construction, interpretation, observation) that creates an authority of knowledge between the Occident and the Orient and in turn determines power, domination and hegemony. Said suggests that these representations offer more insight regarding Western power over, then truths about, the Orient.

Commensurate with an understanding of hegemony as consensus via consent, Orientalism shouldn't be seen as some giant Western 'imperialist plot'. Rather as a production and a producer of commonsense it embodies meanings and significance, which via the very mechanisms of institution, tend to reproduce them.

As a field of discourse, the sociology of sport must also be wary of Orientalism, ethnocentrism, or as Lim (2001: 56) suggests from 'uncritically engaging in a neo-enlightenment global knowledge project of Westernisation'. Further he stresses the need for the sociology of sport to free itself from accusations of being a 'historically constructed realm of knowledge production that, in part, is rooted in Anglo-centric, andro-centric, and rationalistic cultural and political agendas' (Lim, 2001: 63). To achieve this end he recommends the need for self-reflexivity in research.

Thinking reflexively, where does an Australian researcher fit in all of this? Generally, and not without reason, modern Australia draws from Western epistemology<sup>2</sup>. However, due to historical conditions and geographical location (nearness to southernmost Asia), Australia could perhaps have the potential to offer new ways of seeing the world. The concept of globalisation in Australia could certainly have the effect of 'de-mystifying' or 'de-orientalising' Asia rapidly compared to Europe or North America. In many ways this study is born out of reflexive experience and a search to make sense of sport as culture. The methodology I employed was emergent. Ethnography can rely heavily on interview. However the various schools of ethnography and anthropology approach methodology with surprising diversity. Adler and Adler (1999) identify a multitude of varying ethnographic approaches including post modern ethnography, auto-ethnography, interpretive discourse analysis, realist ethnography, dramaturgical ethnography, grounded theory and visual sociology. Of particular salience is the notion that 'direct observation serves as the bedrock of human knowledge' (Adler and Adler, 1999: 445).

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<sup>2</sup> Legally and politically Australia draws heavily on English models. The way in which Australians come to have knowledge about the world is heavily influenced via these and other systems (education, religion, etc). Regarding sociological knowledge, Western epistemology influences the types and validity of methods utilised in its acquisition.

In a Japanese context how valid are interviews as a tool of inquiry<sup>3</sup>? Some interviews, despite the rapport I had (or thought I had) with the interviewee, turned out to be nothing more than monosyllabic, taciturn responses. None of those rich, symbolically loaded quotes here. However, the same individual in responding to a questionnaire wrote in detail and at length about his experiences as a BURC rower. Of course, many interviewees did provide detailed responses to questions during the four-year research period. My point is not to highlight whether people did or didn't speak, rather it is to question the hierarchy of techniques that one uses. Indeed, any hierarchy needs to be negated as it un-critically authorises more value to some forms of inquiry than to others.

The great power in being 'other' is the potential ability to see through commonsense. Just entering into an environment and opening one's eyes can't achieve this. If difference between one's self and the field is too great, then all that can be observed is meaningless difference because nothing can make sense. There needs to be a certain level of congruity between habitus and field. Indeed, using Bourdieu, one would require at least some capital<sup>4</sup> to be able to enter into the field, some habitus to be able to utilise that capital. Surely the idea should be to try at least to 'play the game', become part of the game. If you don't know the rules then playing the game will be hard to achieve. Capital that may or may not help one play the game in Japan (and in most every other case) is directly relative to the field and would include (in no particular order); age, gender, occupation, experience in the field (in this case sport),

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<sup>3</sup> Regarding the use and quality of interviews it is necessary to understand the cultural tendency to respond in a way that maintains superficial harmony (*tatemae*) as opposed to expressing one's real feelings (*honne*). As a result interview material doesn't guarantee a representation of participants' thoughts; rather it may often represent their understanding of what they think they should say. A more detailed understanding of *tatemae/honne* is provided in Chapter 3.

<sup>4</sup> Capital here refers to Bourdieu's understanding of capital being not only financial but also educational, symbolic and social. More detail about Bourdieu's notion of capital is found in Chapter 5.

ethnicity, class, previous experience (in this case living in Japan), language ability, marital status etc.

In addressing culture, Manzenreiter (1998: 370-371), insists that it is the 'total of common world experiences that provide implicit and explicit models for structuring life for a given community'. Further, he suggests that the prerequisite for understanding and proper behaviour in any contextual situation is knowledge of the 'cultural text - encoded in systems of symbols'. It is the 'complexity and compactness of the links that cohere the text' that produce the reality that something that to us is so 'absolutely strange' is 'most familiar' to those who have mastered the 'text' (Manzenreiter, 1998: 370-371). That is, one possesses enough practical mastery of the text to be able to make sense of what is going on.

One of the major goals of this research was to make sense of Japanese sporting experience without falling into ethnocentrism. In saying this, exposing commonsense logic and consensus ideology can appear as ethnocentric. However, the intention is to explain not to judge. Often in a bid to make the Japanese text comprehensible I have relied on a level of explanation that may indeed be expressing the most obvious and self evident of observations. In light of Manzenreiter's (1998: 371) explanation that in 'intercultural studies there is nothing that goes without saying' I have attempted to cover as many aspects of BURC life as possible.

Finally, in addressing Japanese culture it is necessary to make note of the phenomenon of 'Japaneseness' that pervades *Nihonjinron* (theories about the Japanese). *Nihonjinron* should not be seen as purely observations from foreigners interested in Japan (Ruth Benedict's (1967) Chrysanthemum and the Sword being a quintessential example of this) but more appropriately as generalisations from within to perpetuate the notion of Japanese uniqueness. An example of this is discussed in

Gordon (1998: 21) in his analysis of labour management styles in Meiji Japan where industrialists utilised the 'time honoured "beautiful customs" of obedience and loyalty from below matched by the sympathetic understanding from above that would suffice to solve problems such as resistance to factory discipline, low morale, or poor health'. The notion of 'we Japanese' and homogeny are very much the *omote* or outward expression of a collective identity that on the inside is far more diverse and heterogenous.

### **Overview of an Approach to Japanese Sport in Education**

Mindful of the potential failings inherent in accidental orientalism, it is necessary to map out the organisation of thoughts regarding my research into Japanese university rowing clubs. Chapter two begins by briefly tracing the various philosophical influences of Confucianism, Buddhism and Shinto from a historical perspective in regards to understanding the body and also to understanding the usage of ideologies to ensure the maintenance of power by certain groups. Of particular significance are the notions of bushido (the way of the samurai) and its influence on definitions of masculinity, Confucian hierarchy (both on a micro level of kohai/sempai and on a macro level of obedience to the Emperor), and the secular adoption of Zen Buddhism (particularly the notion of self cultivation of seishin through practice that aims for action below the level of consciousness). Tracing the education system from the Meiji restoration one can follow the introduction and transformation of indigenous martial arts and sumo and Western sports under the effects of invented tradition and *wakon yōsai* (Japanese spirit/western technology). At their very inception into education sport was expected to be instrumental in the moral and social education of students, particularly those elites (mostly now swordless samurai classes) who were to become

the leaders of a future Japan. Following the use of sport in education into the Pacific War illustrates the use of ideology to legitimate hegemony and highlights how the legitimate body can become instrumental and indoctrinated for the service of an Empire.

Chapter three utilises Government legislation, 'white papers' and press releases in an attempt to follow the progress of sporting clubs in education post World War II from the perspective of continued moral and social education, and in fact, as the decades pass, from a secondary curriculum intended to maintain certain forms of Japanese identity. Examination of the understanding of the group, of the importance of belonging, of social nexus and the inside/outside nature of expression, develops the concept of the individual in Japanese social interaction. Similarly common stereotypes of Japanese society usually derived from *Nihonjinron*, particularly those of total homogeneity and conformity, are addressed and can be perceived more as hegemonic devices that tend to deny the multiplicity of identity and diversity of existence in Japan. Finally, in introducing the modern university and the so called 'leisure land' experience provides an opportunity to continue with the examination of rowing clubs as sites for the development of identity, the expression of habitus and collection of capital, and the reinforcement of hegemony.

Chapter four aims at constructing an understanding of the process of creating a methodology for this project and how this methodology played out. Whilst ethnographic in a general sense the research evolved over the course of a six-year period. In constructing the reality of BURC life the element of reflexivity is absolutely essential. In particular, the notion of being 'gaijin' (foreigner) and the



processes of over coming this otherness are pertinent. By living, eating, sleeping and training with the BURC rowers on a daily basis it becomes possible to begin to understand and embody their experiences on a deeper level. Reflexivity becomes essential, not only in positioning one's self in the field relative to those around you, but also in constantly checking for elements of generalisation, ethnocentrism and misinterpretation. Systems such as double translation, routine data recording methods, peer debriefing and confirmability, all provide useful in avoiding the pitfalls in being 'other'. Further these processes allowed for the development of the direction of inquiry, the identification of the 'best players' and the formulation of research practice.

Chapter five introduces the theoretical approach of Pierre Bourdieu, especially the concepts of habitus, field and capital. In using these 'tools' Bourdieu is able to overcome many of the problems inherent in the oppositions of dualisms such as object/subject, mind/body and agency/structure. I apply Bourdieu's tools to a small case study in the form of an interview with the captain of BURC women's club. The concept of capital (in her case physical and symbolic) is particularly important as is her 'feel for the game' or her habitus which is demonstrated by her skills of appreciation and perception, not only physically in the boat but more importantly in the social space of the boathouse. From this example it is possible to develop the notion of a 'rowing habitus' that operates to indicate the logics at work at BURC.

Chapter six is designed to describe in as much detail what it is like being a member of BURC. To achieve this I have utilised large excerpts from field notes, interview responses, questionnaire responses, statistical breakdown of time usage, demographic interpretation, autobiographical experience and some historical and geographical

discussion. In particular, this chapter describes the various social groups that make up the entirety of BURC and their demographic background. Further, it investigates some of the belief systems under which members operate on a day to day basis.

Chapter seven continues the themes of the previous chapter by looking at the various rituals that mark the BURC experience. In describing these rituals the aim is to be exhaustive rather than narrow in observation and as a result description is made about everything from daily meals to celebration drinking parties; from the monotony of training to the excitement of regattas; from the use of time in training to the lack of time in studying; from individual relationships to the collective identity; from the individual to the entire collective hierarchy; and from the notion of sameness and solidarity to the belief in distinction and difference. This chapter does not attempt to discuss theoretically elements of the description. This is left for the following chapters. Throughout this chapter footnotes and other tools have been utilised to explain aspects of rowing and of my own experience, again in a reflexive way. This is not designed to be comparative rather it is to ground the direction of my observations.

Chapter eight examines the various modes of capital accrued by BURC rowers. By locating the 'body' in a historical/cultural sense, the practice of self-cultivation or indeed the belief in the value of this practice provides a starting point to understand the perceptions of members as to where the profits lie in the field. Through physical practice and social interaction members reinforce a conviction in the power and value of *seishin* as spiritual capital that they believe will hold its commodity across fields. This belief is totally justified when one investigates their embodied histories from the perspective of stable hegemony, the need to maintain some form of social positioning,

and indeed the investments made up until this point in their capital development (for example belonging to the rowing club at high school). Being a member of BURC needs to be seen in the light of a continuing project of the self and not some form of past-time or hobby. Seen in this way members engage in the field with the very specific goals of developing themselves in a way that will enhance their employability upon graduation.

Chapter nine approaches the influences of being a rower from the perspective of Gramsci's notion of hegemony. It is concerned predominantly with why the rowers do what they do and uncovers the commonsense logic at work in the field of University boathouses. I have utilised Foucault's typology on creating discipline, surveillance and his reading of Bentham's panopticon to look at the boathouse from a different perspective. Further the impact of Confucian based hierarchy on the perceived choices one has options to make at any stage of their life is considered from the point of view of loyalty and the notion of *shakaijin* or being a person in society.

Finally, chapter ten examines broader themes. Firstly, it looks at the legislated responsibility of education in the delivery of moral and social education and how this legislation can be seen to operate at BURC. The levels of agency members of rowing clubs possess is important to understand as it highlights the 'levels' of power at work at any given time in social interaction. Examining the construction of gendered identity and specifically BURC masculinity highlights both the hegemonic form of masculinity, as exemplified by the salary man model, and the existence of challenge to this form. The BURC man is one who is simultaneously tough and caring. This apparent contradiction is indicative of a malleable and different form of masculine

identity, which varies from traditional salary man forms but is nevertheless suited for a role in salary man employment. The final discussion involves the notion of 'the way of the rower' and the potential homogeneity of not only rowing clubs but of university sports clubs overall. In the delivery of the secondary curriculum, University sporting clubs are sites par excellence in the reproduction of identity, hegemony and habitus.

## **CHAPTER TWO:**

### **Historical Influences on Japanese Education and Sport**

In order to better understand Japanese education and the role of sport at the beginning of the twenty first century it is necessary to observe the influences that have shaped not only education but also concepts of the body throughout Japanese history. In examining Japan's rich and multi-dimensional history it is possible to track a pathway towards modern physical education that draws upon the tenets of Confucian thought and Buddhist philosophy. Further, it is established that there exists a connection between sport and the moral education of the individual in Japan (Light, 1999a; 1999b; Rohlen, 1983; 1986). This connection is not dissimilar to the concept of Muscular Christianity that explained the suggested value of sport in much of the Western world into the Twentieth Century (Dunning & Sheard, 1979). Understanding the way in which the body, education and sport have been constructed and interact is essential if we are to be able to make sense of the experiences of Japanese university rowers at the beginning of the twenty first century.

#### **Join the Club**

Modern education systems as an extension of the State are one of the primary sites where dominant (hegemonic) culture is reproduced (Gramsci, 1971). Hegemony is understood as a 'cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position' (Connell, 1995: 77) in social life. Hegemony is achieved via the effective use of ideology whereby those who are in subordinate positions actively consent to their position. Sports clubs and other club activities are some of the major sites of delivery of the cultural curriculum in Japanese education. They provide an intense socialising experience in terms of cultural, physical, moral and social identity. The membership

commitment required in belonging to university rowing clubs together with the near total autonomy of these clubs with respect to university control, makes for a hegemonic environment that effectively constructs the experience of membership. According to Gramsci (1971) the stronger the 'common sense' of groups and individuals within that group, the stronger the element of hegemony. Common sense may be understood as a 'series of stratified deposits', an 'infinity of traces without an inventory' (Adamson, 1980: 150). For example, the *budō*-isation (Kiku, 2000 in Manzenreiter, 2001:112) of rowing in Japanese universities illustrates how many of these deposits and traces come from the early periods of rowing. Gramsci (1971) argued that 'in short, hegemonies always grow out of historical blocs, but not all historical blocs are hegemonic' (Adamson, 1980: 177-178). Every field of power should similarly be seen as a historical product which, as such, generates the interest of its functioning from a precondition founded in an appropriate or significant past (Bourdieu, 1990: 88).

A significant debate in the emergence of modern sociological thought has been between the concept of the individual as a totally autonomous, conscious agent capable of free choice and the structuralist position of society's priority over the individual and the reduction or complete absence of individual agency. Pierre Bourdieu's use of the concepts of field and habitus are useful here in overcoming the potentially limiting dualism between structure and agency. According to Wacquant (1992: 16), Bourdieu's concept of the field consists

Of a set of objective historical relations between positions and certain forms of capital or power while habitus consists of a set of historical relations 'deposited' within individual bodies in the form of mental and corporeal schemata of perception, appreciation, and action

These concepts assist in explaining how sport such as university club rowing can remain so stable in its practice over a multi-generational time frame. The construction

of the Japanese body can be considered as influenced by the various deposits from Shinto, Buddhist and Confucian philosophy and practice that remain important in contemporary Japan. Major periods of political change such as the Tokugawa Shogunate, Meiji restoration and the end of the Pacific War highlight crucial 'historical blocs' where education and physicality (sport from post Meiji onward) are defined, contested and created. For university rowing clubs one of the historical blocs when dominant ideology was deposited was during this post Meiji period of modernisation. The Meiji restoration is significant in particular for the transference of certain values and ideologies of the Samurai classes into newly developed elite educational institutions. At a time when notions of Japanese identity were challenged by the effects of rapid modernisation, the successful universalisation and subsequent making commonsense of these values ensured their acceptance as dominant ideology as Japan leapt into the twentieth century.

Just as Gramsci (1971) suggests that strong (stable) nation-states have strong hegemony and little use of force in maintaining order so to the absence of outside regulation, be it from coaches, university staff or alumni indicates that university rowing clubs also operate under a similarly strong sense of hegemony. In many examples of sporting practice the levels of control and influence brought by a coach, a referee, parents, or an organising body are such that they act to regulate and control the sporting culture along particular lines. The reality that university rowing clubs in Japan don't experience such external regulation and control is not an indication that these organisations are anarchic, deviant or resistant. Rather, these regulations and controls are absent because they are not required. Gramsci's notion of hegemony is especially salient because it can be applied at the most mundane and everyday levels

of power. Indeed, it is at these levels that commonsense ideology is most effective by its very nature of operating below the level of consciousness.

### **Pre-Tokugawan Influences**

The complex hierarchies, linguistic and psychological set up, political, social and religious dynamics that are central to understanding modern Japanese life can be grasped by examining their past. The popular view of Japan as a longstanding, unified nation is far from accurate. Prior to the establishment of Tokugawa rule in 1600, Japan had been in a constant flux of power. Power was (and still is) controlled by the use of ideologies designed to indoctrinate the general populace in attitude and values, which could assist the maintenance of the dominant hegemonies. These ideologies were sufficiently altered in order to fit with the dominant framework of the “Japanese character”. As Nakamura (1964: 400) suggests in regard to the influence of foreign thought and technology, the Japanese 'try to recognise the value of each of these different cultural elements, and at the same time they endeavour to preserve the values inherited from their own past'.

An example of the recognition of value in foreign cultural elements can be seen in linguistics. Japan borrowed the Chinese number system and writing system (*Kanji*). Modern foreign words are adopted with the only changes being phonetic in order to fit with the established phonetics of Japanese language. Similarly, Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism have all been adopted and altered by Japanese culture. The cultural multiplicity of Japan exists at every level (Nakamura, 1964). This multiplicity can be seen in the historical analysis of many apparently 'indigenous' cultural practices where traces of 'other' (foreign or Japanese) cultural elements have been utilised, borrowed and assimilated to render a truly Japanese practice.



The indigenous religion of Japan is Shinto. As a religion it particularly stresses ancestor worship, is the corner stone of the unbroken imperial line, and was a primary force in Japan from 1868-1945. Whilst dating into B.C, Shinto lacked a solid ideological framework and rule based structure. In the 5<sup>th</sup> Century AD, Confucianism entered Japan from the Chinese mainland and was added to the Shinto tradition. Van Wolferen (1989: 203) suggests this 'fitting' between a 'borrowed' concept and Japanese culture by stating: 'Its precepts sanctifying a strictly hierarchical social order were blended with native practices as a justification for political organisation'. Confucianism lent itself well to feudal societies, and helped legitimise one's place within a social framework.

Buddhism arrived as a diplomatic gift from Korea in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century AD. Nakamura (1964: 362) offers the following insight about how the 'gift' was received by Japanese culture,

In confronting Buddhism as an imported system of culture, the traditional Japanese culture was too weak to resist it.... It was, however, impossible for Buddhism to change completely the inclination to this worldliness for the Japanese general public. On the contrary it was the Japanese themselves that transformed Buddhism, which they accepted from the continent, into a religion centred upon this world.<sup>5</sup>

Buddhism became propagated as the national religion sometime after 592AD during the reign of Empress Suiko. Following this, the Constitution written by Prince Shotoku contains large Buddhist overtones. The Prince begins by praising the nobility of the *wa* (basically translated as harmony). *Wa* espoused 'conciliation, gentleness, accord, accommodation, mellowness, moderation, mollification, peace, pliancy, amiability, appeasement, conformity, softness, order, unison, compromise and so on'

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<sup>5</sup> According to Nakamura (1964) Indian Buddhism wishes to be delivered from this world, whereas the Japanese Buddhist wishes to be reborn into it.

(Van Wolferen, 1989: 314).<sup>6</sup> Shinto, Buddhism and Confucianism actually served to strengthen each other. For example, being Buddhist meant rebirth into this world that strengthened the Confucian sense of loyalty as it could be applied through several lifetimes (Nakamura, 1964). *Hachiman*, the Shinto God of war, was transformed into a Bodhisattva of high rank. Buddhists could pray to the same figure as the Shintoists, resulting in a unifying experience.<sup>7</sup> The point here is to identify that from the fifth century onwards, elements of thought from China and Korea had made their way to Japan and were utilised by varying ruling groups to strengthen power and maintain control over their populations. Whilst it is important to note that there is no sense of Japan as a nation State or centralised government before the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1600 (van Wolferen, 1989: 35-36), the practice of assimilating foreign cultures and utilising them in a political fashion is apparent. The use of Buddhism, Confucianism and Shinto in this manner continues throughout Japanese history and into modernity though the emphasis of any of these doctrines was rarely equally balanced. Shotoku emphasised Buddhism, the Tokugawa utilised Confucian thought, and the Meiji Restoration used Shinto as a mandate for legitimisation of political power. However, the imbalances in the relative importance of Buddhism, Shinto and Confucianism occurred as a direct result of political posturing by the ruling classes to maintain power. For example, in the case of Prince Shotoku, Buddhism was utilised 'to promote popular obedience' (Van Wolferen, 1989: 203).

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<sup>6</sup> "Forget resentment, forsake anger, do not become angry just because someone opposes you. Everyone has a mind, every mind comes to a decision, and decisions will not always be alike. If he is right, you are wrong; if you are not quite a saint, then he is not quite an idiot. Both disputants are men of ordinary mind; who is decisively capable of judging an argument between them? If both are wise men or both foolish men their argument is probably a vicious circle. For this reason, if your opponent grows angry, you had better be all the more cautious lest you too should be in error. Although you might think you are quite right, it is wiser to comply with the other man." From the seventeen article Constitution attributed to Prince Shotoku X. (Nakamura, p.383)

<sup>7</sup> The mix of Confucian natural order blended with Buddhism was able to produce a type of Karmic Predetermination. Thus, being born into a warrior class, could serve to justify killing as a predetermined duty (King, 1993).

## The Importance of Zen

Buddhism in Japan broke into a variety of off shoots and sects that often fell into conflict. Ryonin (1072-1132) founded the Yuzu Nembutsu Sect, Honen (1132-1212) the Pure Land Sect, Eisai (1141-1215) the Zen Sect, Shinran (1173-1262) the Jodo Shinshu Sect, Nichiren (1222-1282) the Nichiren Sect, Dogen (1200-1253) the Soto Zen Sect (Nakamura, 1964). Whilst Pure Land Buddhism gained support amongst the general populace and some smaller esoteric sects fell in and out of favour with the nobility, it was Zen that became popular with the Samurai and other fighting classes. Zen is important to understand because it fit best with Confucianism and Tao (Van Wolferen, 1989; King, 1993). King (1993) believes that some qualities of Tao are central to Zen, particularly focusing and strengthening one's life energy through concentration of one's basic life force, the *hara* (belly) and not through the senses, which cause weakness<sup>8</sup>. Dogen's Zen emphasised that enlightenment was 'not a function of the mind but that of the body', and that in attaining the way 'one should follow a good teacher and practice in a group. Then since one is not relying on one's own resources one naturally attains the way' (Nakamura, 1964:366:453). Being concerned with enlightenment through 'sitting in oblivion', Zen was anti-intellectual and influenced strongly by Confucian properties such as strict rules and attention to minute detail. For example, on the battlefield 'soldiers were expected to get rid of their fears and worldly concerns. (For this purpose) Zen in particular was observed as a guiding doctrine' (Nakamura, 1964: 492). Zen particularly endorsed the warrior code of *Bushidō*. The practice of sitting in meditation to gain tranquillity for monks became a 'method for warriors and laymen to acquire mental training'. The practice of

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<sup>8</sup> In the context of sport participation and the reproduction of cultural hegemony, Zen has particular strength. This is discussed further later in this chapter regarding the concept of *seishin*, in chapter seven particularly regarding the concepts of the body and self-cultivation and in Chapter eight regarding loyalty and the aesthetics of the boat house.

Zen was, and is, a quest for self-cultivation, and methods to achieve this aim have been transmitted continuously throughout Japanese history, particularly influencing the development of artistry and the martial arts (Yuasa, 1993). Hendry (1997: 122) refers to the Zen practice of *zazen* or sitting in meditation as being used by several Japanese companies as a training method for new employees that is 'supposed to develop one's strength, or one's spirit (*seishin*)'.<sup>9</sup> Thus, not only are the ancient methods such as *zazen* put into use in a modern context, there is a modern day acceptance of the significance of such self-cultivation and of its philosophical underpinnings.

### **The Tokugawa Shogunate**

In 1600 the Battle of Sekigahara ended almost 300 years of intermittent civil war and placed Tokugawa Ieyasu as Shogun over all Japan (van Wolferen, 1989: 36). The Tokugawa Shogunate proceeded to rule Japan for over 250 years<sup>10</sup>. In times of relative peace, Zen became central to the maintenance of warrior values. The Tokugawa were to rule through Confucian ideals and Zen fitted well with these ideals. To maintain the purity of the warrior code (*bushidō*) the Samurai emphasised detail in every formality. As peacetime lengthened warrior codes became arts and the Samurai were encouraged to perform every duty as if it were his last living action (King, 1993: 129). According to King (1993: 163), 'truth and salvation in Zen lay

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<sup>9</sup> The practice of corporations to train new recruits in 'company culture' is not a uniquely Japanese phenomenon. Exercises that involve corporate jargon such as team building, problem solving, and work shopping are prevalent in much of Western corporate practice. The Japanese approach is unique because activities such as sitting in *zazen* draw directly from religious philosophy.

<sup>10</sup> It is important to note that the Tokugawa never established a truly centralised national government and held control over only approximately a quarter of Japan. They maintained peace through allowing independent domains to exist whilst ensuring that these domains remained isolated from other independent and potentially troublesome domains (van Wolferen, 1989: 36).

within the person, in one's own self and capacities. Truth was existential not intellectual; its realisation and practice were visceral not cerebral'.

The emphasis was on enlightenment through physicality that encouraged repetition to the point where responses would occur without conscious thought. There is the general perception in this mentality that physical capacities are limited by cerebral reasoning and that it is only through detachment from the conscious mind that perfection can be attained. The Yagyu School of martial arts suggests that mastery can only be achieved when 'technique works through your body and limbs as if independent of your conscious mind' (King, 1993: 172).

From the 17<sup>th</sup> century onward, Zen found its way from the warrior classes into wider secular life. The practice of Zen becomes an act of self-cultivation, a concept that is also at the heart of Confucian philosophy. If a man 'put his heart and soul in his own secular profession, then he was practicing nothing but the ascetic practice of Buddhism' (Nakamura, 1964: 507). For the Japanese, 'this worldliness' allowed the recognition of religious significance in seeking the ideal way in every day arts and crafts. This prompted the emergence of 'appellations such as the way of the tea ceremony, the way of flower arrangement, the way of calligraphy, the way of military arts, the way of fencing, the way of jujutsu etc' (Nakamura, 1964: 510). All emphasised the concept of oneness with the activity through interaction that serves to accommodate both ascetic and aesthetic sensibilities. The aim of most artisans became 'to go beyond a purely cognitive level of learning and to learn with the body' (Kondo, 1992: 47). Within this tradition of thought, physical knowledge is seen as permanent. As physical activity sport can be mastered following a similar approach to

learning through the body. An emphasis on repetition, learning through observation, and exhaustive use of time and effort are central to the secular Zen approach to self-cultivation whether it be the practice of a tea-ceremony, making furniture or rowing. Significantly, the permanent nature of this knowledge is not merely physical but rather it becomes a representation of one's spirit and character.

However, one cannot simply begin an activity at a level where 'the way' (mastery) could be attained. Rather, Zen combined with Confucian thought so secular acts could only offer enlightenment after moving through pedagogy. In the case of the confectionary artisan this means 'cleaning, sweeping, cooking and other tasks with no apparent relation to the trade' (Kondo, 1992: 46). Following this comes seeing and learning, based on the belief that there is some sort of osmotic relationship between observation and action. Essential within this 'apprenticeship' is the concept of *kurō* (hardship) often in the form of physical hardships and tests and varying forms of humiliation. *Kurō* aims at "tempering" the inner self. Hendry (1995: 174) refers to The Way of the Carpenter by Bill Coaldrake (1990) and a decade long apprenticeship which involves years of 'miscellaneous chores' and no instruction. Self-cultivation, repetition, *kurō* and learning through the body became a framework for education in all things from various traditional arts to trades. This framework endures into the twenty first century. At the time of the Meiji restoration formal education (in the form of schools and universities) was largely absent from Japan. As formal education was introduced in the process of modernisation, the Tokugawan framework for learning was transferred into these emerging institutions.

Extended formal education during the Tokugawa period was largely reserved for the Samurai classes and centred on Confucian learning. Temple schools were geared

around the education of the children of commoners based around the so-called Three R's, that is, reading, writing and arithmetic. According to Okano and Tsuchiya (1999: 14):

The education that children received was to equip them with the knowledge and skills that they would require in performing the tasks of their respective classes when they reached adulthood

After 250 years of relative peace and self imposed isolation the Tokugawa era began to come to an end. Before considering the Meiji restoration and the creation of modern university education it is necessary to understand some of the central identity of the Samurai classes. In the new Japan it would be the samurai who would shape the political landscape, who would change from warrior to bureaucrat, and put down the sword in exchange for a Western suit and pen. It was from the Samurai classes that the first university teachers and students originated. Therefore, it is necessary to consider Samurai masculinity and the concepts of *seishin* and *bushidō* so as to better understand the continuing samurai influence on education after the Meiji restoration.

### **Samurai Masculinity**

As in all societies, Japan presents a multitude of masculine identities. Connell (1995: 76-81) suggests that masculinity may be broken into several categories. Connell describes these categories as hegemonic, subordinated, complicit and marginalised. Subordinated masculinity occupies a position of opposition to dominant masculinity and Connell (1995: 78) supplies the example of the subordination of homosexual men by heterosexual men. Complicity masculinity describes men who support the 'hegemonic project but do not embody' it (Connell, 1995: 79). Marginalised masculinities refer to the interplay of masculinities with class and ethnicity. Only certain forms of masculinity are hegemonic. Hegemonic masculinity is, according to

Connell (1995: 77), the 'configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy'. Importantly hegemonic and other forms of masculinity are not fixed character types, rather they 'configurations of practice generated in particular situations' (Connell, 1995: 81). As with other societies, the 'culturally valued aspects of masculinity' (Messner, 1990: 99) are those that are sought after or hold the most social capital. Japanese popular culture tends to emphasise a particular brand of masculinity, which is based on Samurai identity. Eiji Yoshikawa's '*Musashi*' (based on a real life master swordsman) is the epitome of Japanese maleness and this image is seen replicated many times over, particularly in Samurai and Yakuza movies and literature. Van Wolferen (1989: 101) provides the Yamaguchi-gumi (famous Yakuza gang) directive regarding the "development of our country and our society according to the *kyōdō* spirit" as follows:

- preserve harmony in order to strengthen the group.
- love and respect people outside the group and remember what is owed to them.
- always be courteous and always be aware of senior-junior relationship.
- learn from the experience of seniors and work for self-improvement.
- show restraint in contacts with the outside world.

To paraphrase Connell (1995: 70)<sup>11</sup>, that few men 'actually match the blue print' of Musashi has no bearing on the power of such a blue print on gendered identity. This romanticised version of traditional manliness values actions and no words; it is taciturn and anti-intellectual. As such, it is the embodiment of hard masculinity (*koha*). *Koha* is 'a traditional image of adolescent masculinity which combines violence, valour, and bravado with stoicism and chivalry' (Sato 1991: 86 in Standish, 1998).

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<sup>11</sup> Connell (1995: 70), using Western examples mentions Bogart, John Wayne and Clint Eastwood.



Whitson (1990: 19) posits that sport is one of the 'central sites in the social production of masculinity in societies characterised by longer schooling and by a decline in the social currency attached to other ways of demonstrating physical prowess (e.g. physical labour or combat)'. However, it should not be seen that all sports produce the same type of masculinity. Rather, sporting cultures 'express different and frequently competing masculinities' (Kidd, 1990: 37). The type of masculinity produced is something of an intersection between the nature and history of the sport within a specific cultural context and the individual histories of the participants. In Japan, the concept of *koha* thus applies to the approach taken by some, but not all, sports (baseball, martial arts, rowing, rugby) in Japanese schools and universities. Light (2000a: 98) examined the type of masculinity developed from the practice of rugby in Japanese high schools and universities over the past century and suggested that this form of masculinity is one that holds qualities such as '*ganbaru* (do your absolute best), *issō kenmei* (give everything), *konjō* (guts/courage) and *gaman* (endurance, perseverance)' as admired and dominant. Even though some players believe this identity to be out-dated, they still consent to it through their practice. Light (2000b) is quick to point out that this form of 'samurai' masculinity is specific to particular groups, in this case rugby, in particular locations and may indeed be considered 'unfashionable' in modern Japan (though unfashionable is different to un-hegemonic). Coupled with *koha* is the quality known as *makoto* (purity of motive). Interestingly, *makoto* takes precedence over the production of efficiency (Standish, 1998). Thus the model of ideal masculinity is created according to traditional cultural values that clearly favour intent and execution of action rather than the actual result.<sup>12</sup> Closely

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<sup>12</sup> There is however a strong belief that the strength of one's *makoto* allows the individual to overcome stronger opposition. A clear example of this is the animated character 'Astro Boy', the pint sized robot whose sense of 'justice' (*makoto*) enables him to beat opponents of far greater size and strength. *Makoto* also allows the creation of the tragic hero that pervades much of Japanese culture.

linked with this form of Japanese masculinity are the key hegemonic concepts in Japanese society of *seishin* and *bushidō*.

### ***Seishin and Bushidō***

*Seishin* is the expression of one's spiritual strength. *Seishin* should not be regarded as spirit in a Western sense, as something separated from body or from mind. It is derived from the Buddhism that melds mind-body into an inseparable unity. *Seishin* is unquantifiable and potentially unlimited and is thus capable of overcoming impossible odds. One's *seishin* must be developed and cultivated usually through physical training and hardships. Moeran (1984) states 'both Confucian and Buddhist ideals are found in *seishin*', and suggests that a myriad of activities- art, sport, advertising, theatre, etc, can be defined under the umbrella of this term. Moreover, *seishin* is closely linked with the Japanese sense of aesthetics. The method of attaining *seishin* and its display is an austere and ascetic pursuit. In many ways *seishin* sums up the Japanese cultural affinity with minimalism and a sense of drama that is developed with the absence of vocabulary. It is interesting also to note that linguistically, the concepts of pleasure and play have no connection with *seishin* (Moeran, 1984).

The development of *seishin* through sport is not necessarily supposed to be fun, and games are approached at quite a serious level. Light (2000b: 99) suggested that it is the characteristics of *seishin* power (that is sacrifice, single minded commitment, total effort), which, developed over time and through training is believed to be the underpinning of any chance of achieving victory in a contest by members of Japanese sporting clubs.

*Seishin* whilst being developed through sport via conformity to an ethos and work ethic is nevertheless a reflection upon the individual. However, as Hendry (1995) points out, the expression of one's *seishin* is part of one's '*kosei*' (individuality) and not one's '*kojinshugi*' (individualism). The former is looked on favourably whilst the latter possesses an almost entirely negative meaning in Japanese culture. There is a subtle but important difference that allows the baseball pitcher, for example, to be the centre of attention without losing membership of the group. The pitcher uses his *kosei* to enhance the potential of the team, not himself.

*Seishin* is one of the central constructs in the concept of *bushidō* (Samurai code of conduct). *Bushidō* incorporated a range of Buddhist, Confucian and Shinto values and provided a framework of behaviour for becoming a Samurai. In more modern times, *Bushidō* has dispersed into the wider population and stresses 'such values as loyalty, self-discipline, reverence for nature, simplicity, modesty, and unquestioning obedience' (Light & Kirk, 1997). In many ways the pursuit of *seishin* through *bushidō* is no less a secular Zen experience than the tea ceremony or calligraphy. That is, all these pursuits/practices are commonly thought to share the processes of self discipline, learning through hierarchical observation, the long periods of time required, and the goal of action without conscious thought. On the other hand *bushidō* can be seen as merely a method to encourage systemised and predictable patterns of behaviour.

It is *bushidō* that is idolised in Samurai and Yakuza film and is seen, in its perfection, as an ideal code of behaviour. The ethic of *bushidō* finds its way into educational

institutions and from there into every activity. Collective knowledge and competitive conformity (Kuwayama, 1992) then provide a form of regulation of the pursuit. Certainly such general values as courage, benevolence, politeness, veracity, honour, loyalty, duty, and self control (Nitobe, 1905) can be applied generally to a multitude of disciplines from music to sport to poetry. Within schools and universities many clubs (whether sporting or other) can be seen to be based on a framework of *bushidō* whereby the goal of developing *seishin* is possibly achieved via its practice. Indeed, the very nature of *bushidō* is such that its' development must be of a spiritual and not intellectual nature. According to Nitobe (1905: 101) *bushidō* involves the education of 'character not intelligence', of 'the soul and not the head'. *Bushidō* as such should be seen as anti-intellectual.<sup>13</sup> As Yuasa (1993) insists, with self-cultivation as the goal, sport has the components to become a valid site for the development of *seishin*.

*Seishin* is thus a multi origin concept of Confucian, Shinto and Buddhist values that replicate traditional hierarchies and power relationships. It is paradoxical that *seishin*, which is anti-intellectual in nature, would be so widely practiced in institutions where one would assume that the encouragement of intellectual activity was important. This attitude indicates the differing approach of the Japanese toward the human being when compared to western philosophies. The mind and body are seen as an inseparable duality in Japanese culture, unified via the internal spirit of *seishin*. *Seishin* disciplines both mind and body to express real truth. Similarly pure physiology is not enough to gain respect or admiration. Though certainly officially toned down since the end of the Pacific War (Beauchamp & Vardaman, 1994) the Japanese belief that *seishin* is capable of guiding the body to overcome any obstacle

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<sup>13</sup> Regarding intellectualism and *bushidō*, Nitobe (1905:33-34) goes on to explain that samurai classes ridiculed intellectuals and that knowledge was only useful if it assisted in the attainment of wisdom which would be expressed through one's character.

is still widely held. Pure physiology may be distrusted (though often awed) for its lack of sincerity. This is where the close tie between *seishin* and aesthetics comes into play, as any human action/expression that lacks qualities of internal spirit will almost certainly lack beauty according to Japanese sensibilities. The sense of drama stems from the determination to appreciate the triumph of the individual against seemingly insurmountable odds. Consider Thompson's (1986) observations of professional wrestling and the victories had by the legendary Rikidozan over a succession of American, and physically far bigger, challengers;

After being mercilessly beat up and baited by a ferocious looking foreign wrestler, the Japanese wrestler in black tights finally ran out of patience. Indignantly rising to his feet with a furious look, he let loose a karate chop. "Go Riki! That's it" the crowd shouted at ringside... that night I saw a great man. Fighting spirit embodied in a pair of black tights, that was Rikidozan. He taught me that to win, you have to endure single mindedly, and when the right time comes, fight like a man, fearlessly and with everything you've got. He didn't just talk about it, he did it...(1986: 73)

This fan's description of events points toward many of the elements of *seishin* and hegemonic masculinity in Japan. Regardless of the good versus evil emphasis and overtures toward nationalism, there is no doubt that the fan has found a purity in Rikidozan's performance that embodies 'Japanese Spirit'.<sup>14</sup>

Expression through the body, whether occurring in the subtleties of a look or the physicality of a home run hitter, places implications on physical education and sport that run deeper than the more pragmatic Western models. Indeed, through the systematic application of an ethos such as *bushidō* one would assume that fairly uniform results were possible; that is, many/most practices sought collective spirituality, socialisation and submission. Many of the valued traits of *seishin*: such as patience, endurance, and harmony, require by definition, submission to be attained.

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<sup>14</sup> The irony being that Rikidozan was in fact Korean (though this was buried) and that the discovery was made in professional wrestling, where the wrestlers follow a scripted routine.

To become a good individual requires one to submit. In a Western sense individuality usually assumes freedom of expression and independence. As discussed later in chapter three, in Japan the individual exists only as a part of a bigger social group. Such social organisation requires individuals to behave in line with the expectations of the group. Therefore, whilst individuals experience freedom of expression and independence they do so in a way that is more sensitive or aware of those around them. In a sense one's identity is a relational construction with others within the group often based on various hierarchical relationships. The expectations of these relationships shape the potentiality of individual behaviour in a way that can be seen as submission. However, it should be noted that the use of 'submission' should not be construed as a negative connotation, rather it is an inevitable and accepted outcome of one's identity.

### **The Meiji Restoration**

The end of the Tokugawa Shogunate came shortly after Commodore Perry's ships forced the opening up of the country in 1859. The Meiji restoration in 1868 replaced the Shogun with the Emperor and reinstated Shinto into the position of dominance. The Emperor had the divine right to rule being the direct descendant in an unbroken line of the sun goddess. The influence of modern foreign thought and technology was tempered by the rapid propagation of ancient traditions that included the suppression of most forms of Buddhism, with the exception of Zen (Van Wolferen, 1989). With the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate and the opening of Japan's borders to foreign trade and influence, there came an immediate awareness of the need for rapid modernisation in order to 'catch up' with the rest of the industrialised world. Initially this saw the widespread adoption of many Western institutional models (Light &

Kinnaird, 2002), and foremost of these was the education system. However, with rapid modernisation, Japan also experienced a heightened fear of losing a cultural identity. Ito Y (1998: 84) provides,

The search for Japanese national identity became a serious issue in the mid Meiji period when the flood of Western culture had caused the destruction of traditional moral values in Japan....

Whilst Meiji leaders 'borrowed heavily from Western industrial, military, educational, legal and communication systems' they were also 'keenly aware of the advantages of keeping Japanese traditional values specifically for the maintenance of autocratic control' (Kawamura, 1994: 18).

The Meiji period is very important in terms of the Japanese representation of the body particularly as, by Western standards, many Japanese practices involving bodily functions were seen as uncivilised. As a result, these practices were altered to give further legitimacy to Japan's quest for international acceptance (Horne, 2000). From this, the concept of body and self-identity developed in a form of 'uniform individualization' (Clammer, 1997 in Horne, 2000: 76). The notion of 'uniform individualization' was facilitated by the newly introduced formal education system. This system, now accessing far greater percentages of the Japanese population, was well placed to inculcate bodily regimes of self-cultivation for all. The perceived demands of modernisation and industrialisation as observed from experience in Europe and America further encouraged the production of bodies of uniform function to man the production lines and expand the nation. The 'pugnacious body of elitist samurai' that had been the ideal during the Tokugawa period was replaced by the preferred 'docile body of the masses trained in Calisthenics' (Manzenreiter, 2001: 497). Bourdieu (1978: 826) suggests that through physical education the state is

responsible for 'defining the legitimate body and the legitimate use of the body in society'. This legitimate use of the body is achieved via moral cultivation and instrumental practice. Bourdieu particularly refers to physical education in totalitarian states, such as Japan leading into the Second World War. However, I would suggest that this legitimization of the body can be seen in most programmes of physical education.

The appointment of Mori Arinori as minister of education in 1885 brought with it a distinctive understanding of education in Japan such that the 'prosperity of the nation relied on the education of the masses rather than on the promotion of the individual.' (Manzenreiter, 2001: 497) The education system was redesigned around dual tracking. There was a system for those students, predominantly from Samurai classes (Kusaka, 1987), who were going to be leaders of the State (*gakumon*) and a system for the majority to become filial imperial subjects (*kyōiku*) (Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999). The effects of this dual tracking system on the capital associated with school sporting performance is explained by Abe, Kiyohara & Nakajima (2000: 19) who observe that for the imperial subjects:

though sports achieved their athleticism, they could not extend themselves beyond the elitist educational institutions and the upper middle class. The liberalism of sport was no more diffusive into the lower classes than the Western theory of play. On the other hand, the Dai Nippon Butokukai (Great Japan Martial Virtue Society) not only reconstructed diverse kinds of Japanese martial arts but also engrafted the traditional bushido into the modern military spirit.

Hence there were sports for the elites and calisthenics for the rest. As is seen when Japanese expansion through Asia increased, the docile bodies of the masses produced by calisthenics shifted toward the military body required to maintain the war effort.

From 1880 until the end of the Pacific War, Japanese education was ideologically driven by Confucian principles ordered by societal needs. The Imperial re-script on



education in 1890 emphasized 'five human relationships considered necessary by Confucians for a good society: loyalty to the Emperor, filial piety, affection among siblings, harmony between husband and wife, and trust among friends' (Beauchamp, 1998: 128). In keeping with the Imperial Re-script, the establishment of clubs (especially sporting) within the social framework of companies, schools, public offices etc, in turn 'developed into a characteristic trait of the social landscape of sport in Japan' (Manzenreiter, 2001).

### **Muscular Confucianism**

Just prior to and during the Meiji restoration education in England was undergoing its own changes. In particular, the rapid rise of school sports was used as a mechanism of education. The concept of Muscular Christianity has long been attributed to the great reformer of the English public school system, Thomas Arnold, who was headmaster of Rugby School from 1828 to 1842. Muscular Christianity expressed the belief that the rigours of physical activity, particularly codified activity in the form of games, would mould young boys into Christian gentlemen. Arnold was not a great believer in sports. However, he did see games as a useful method of maintaining control over his student body (Birley, 1993). Other headmasters pushed the cause of Muscular Christianity further and it was the driving force behind the proponents of sports such as cricket, soccer, rugby, rowing and cross country running during the games cult that swept the public schools of England from approximately 1850 onwards. Charles Kingsley advocated the value of sport as follows:

Through sports boys acquire virtue which no books can give them; not merely in daring and endurance, but better still, in temper, self restraint, fairness, honour, unenvious approbation of another's success and all that give and take of life which stand a man in good stead when he goes forth into the

world, and without which, indeed, his success is always maimed and partial. (Holt, 1990: 93)

Whilst sports had general acceptance as a positive influence on the character of young men in moulding them into fine Christian leaders, there is another side to their justification. For example, Earle (1977: 41) saw football as achieving two things. The first was the imposition of discipline which in the 'long run would turn them (the boys) into loyal obedient men who would serve or fight for England with the same thoughtless self sacrifice that they were expected to show when they played footer for their house at Harrow'. The second was that football would do for public school boys 'what stone breaking did for hooligans, keep them out of trouble in the day time and send them to bed exhausted'. The notion of building character through sport infers that one's original character is flawed or inferior. Indeed, one's body is thus seen as disobedient, rebellious and immoral and therefore in need of various bodily disciplines, of which sport is especially effective at delivering. The industrialisation of Europe and the emergence of nation states demanded that the resistant body and hence subject be regulated in order to provide a function in the modern world.<sup>15</sup>

The activities of English (and subsequently American) Public schools and Universities reached Japan. For example, Englishman Frederick W. Strange was particularly instrumental in the propagation of Western sports into the Japanese education system (Guttmann & Thompson, 2001). Filled with a strong Victorian conviction in the benefits of sport for students, Strange instituted a sports day in 1883 at the first higher middle school in Tokyo. In the same year he released a book '*Outdoor Games*' as an instructional manual into various Western sports. '*Outdoor Games*' was translated into

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<sup>15</sup> For an understanding of the evolution of the modern 'body' see Foucault (1977). A Foucaultian reading of Japanese university rowing is provided in Chapter nine.

Japanese in 1885. In 1884 Strange founded the Tokyo University Boat Club based on the Oxford/Cambridge Boat Club model and in 1887 organised intercollegiate rowing on the Sumida River so to 'provide Japanese students with an equivalent of the Henley Regatta' held in England (Guttmann & Thompson, 2001: 76). The establishment of the National Institute of Gymnastics in 1879 was designed to develop methods of physical education and to train instructors to carry out this curriculum. George Leland was an American advisor for this organisation who encouraged activities such as football, baseball and rowing, provided that the ultimate goal of such activities was 'not a strong body but a well developed *kokoro* (heart)' (Guttmann & Thompson, 2001: 91).

Not only did Japan import educators it also sent its own scholars abroad to bring back ideas. One such scholar was Kinoshita Hiroji who served as headmaster at Tokyo's first higher Middle school (later known as Ichiko) from 1889 to 1897. Ichiko was one of a small number of Elite, highly selective middle schools established by Monbusho in 1886. These schools were to 'serve as preparatory academies for the Imperial Universities, and their headmasters were inspired by the examples of Eton, Harrow, Rugby and other English Public schools' (Guttmann & Thompson. 2001: 81). A graduate of Tokyo University, Kinoshita was sent to study law in Paris. What impressed him most about his European sojourn, however, was not French law but rather the annual Oxford Cambridge Boat race on the Thames. Kinoshita was particularly impressed by the 'high minded ethos of fair play', which reminded him of the Japanese tradition of *bushidō*. Kinoshita saw that the rowers' early development in sport and the humanities at Eton and other public schools seemed to produce a lifelong devotion to national service. He concluded that: 'If Ichiko was to produce a

similar class of active young men eager to serve their country, sports had to be a central part of their school experience' (Guttmann & Thompson. 2001: 81).

It is important to note here that in the 1880's these high schools were boarding facilities promoting elitist perceptions, hierarchical structures and competitive behaviour (Manzenreiter, 2001). Again, in the spirit of 'borrowing and fitting' explained earlier in this chapter, Kiku (1983 in Manzenreiter, 2001: 501) saw Japanese education as combining the 'tradition of autonomous, self administration and physical self-discipline, that was borrowed from the English public boarding school system, and the neo-confucianist, samurai class background of the teaching staff merged into the ethos of "muscular spirituality"'. All teachers were required to belong to at least one sporting club during their training (Manzenreiter, 2001). This further enhanced the strength of the sports club model for cultural education from its inception. Kusaka (1987) points out that for the early games of baseball at universities to be accepted they had to be 'useful to the physical, spiritual, and moral development or cultivation of players'. In keeping with Confucian tradition that 'self-cultivation through the disciplined pursuit of knowledge is the path to human perfection' (Rohlen & Bjork, 1998: 9) it is likely that this belief could also be applied to sport. The concept was that harmony between mind and body could potentially be found in sport, and this harmony allows bodily practices to offer improvement to the whole individual and not just to one's physiology. As Yuasa (1993) mentions, the goal of self-cultivation can transform most practices into forms of Zen and this is supported by the multitude of secular Zen pursuits already in existence at that time.

The ethic of muscular Confucianism was at the forefront of all club sports in Japanese education. It encouraged students to run their own affairs and promoted rugged autonomy, self-sacrifice and self-imposed discipline (Kelly, 1998). One of the foremost advocates during the Meiji period of the usefulness of sport and the Father of modern *judō*, Kano Jigoro, advocated the 'moral and educational value of learning *judō*, maintaining that judo serves to cultivate people of ability who can make a contribution to modern society' (Inoue, 1998: 84). This concept, which became known as *budō*, was propagated not only through school education but also through popular culture. Kano made the significant decision to change *bujutsu* to *budō*. *Jutsu* refers to art or technique whilst the '*dō*' refers to the far more philosophical concept of way. As a Western sport assimilated into the education system, rowing was reshaped according to such pressures to reflect an identity appropriated by the now swordless Samurai classes. Inoue (1998: 172) offers the following explanation:

'While acknowledging that Western sports, like all imported culture, had certain strong points, Noguchi and other critics warned against the spirit of individualism and selfishness that lay at the heart of the Western conception of sportsmanship. By promoting such doctrines as *Nihon taiiku dō* (the way of Japanese physical culture) they attempted, in short, to replace the Western spirit in sports with the Japanese spirit of *budō*. In this sense what developed was an ultra-nationalistic version of *wakon yōsai* (Japanese spirit, Western Technology) conception of Japanese modernization. *Budō*, originally a modern hybrid typical of late Meiji culture was redefined as 'timeless' and utilized to infuse Western type sports with 'pure' Japanese spirit.'

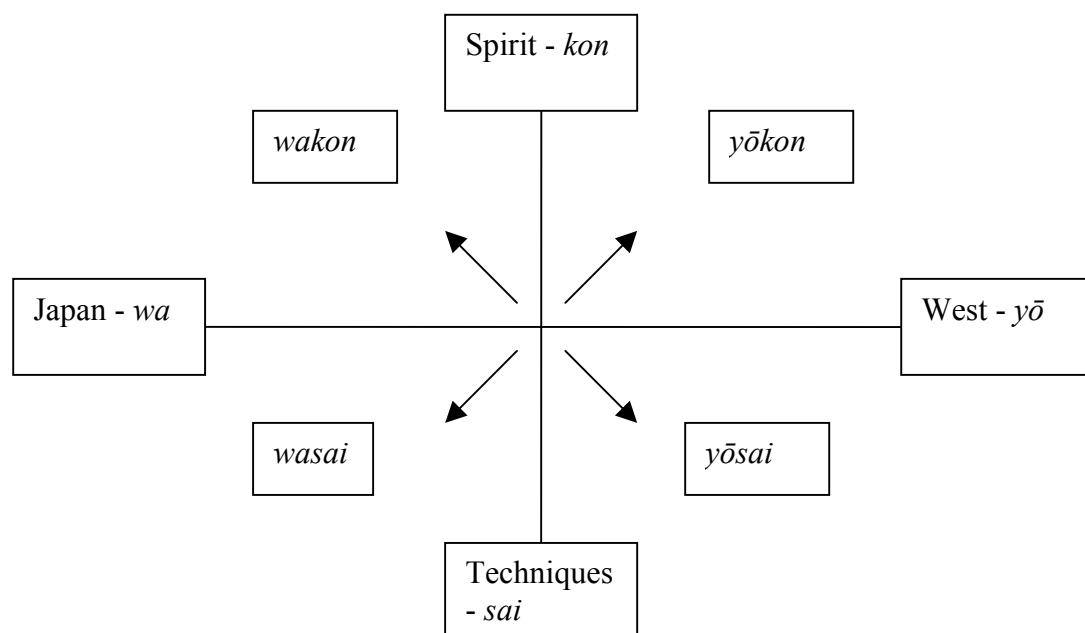
### ***Wakon Yōsai***

The Meiji era concept of *wakon yōsai* refers to Japanese spirit, Western Technology. As such, it provided a 'harmonious solution to the contradictory requirements of modernisation and tradition' (Kawamura, 1994: 16-17). Based on the work of Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983), during historical periods where modernity has threaten traditional identity in various communities there is the development of 'invented tradition' or more appropriately 'ritualistic and symbolic practices that are

used to inculcate particular values and behaviours by uniting current practices with a suitable past' (Light & Kinnaird, 2002: 141).

In Inoue Shun's (1998) analysis of the roots of the sport of *judō* and the concept of *budō*, the elements of invention of tradition are clear in its founder's, Kano Jigoro, level of success in propagating both current practice with traditional beliefs. Kano successfully combined elements of many martial arts within a modern games framework to produce a form of activity whose emphasis was on character building such that the educative aim was to 'cultivate people of ability who could make a contribution to modern society' (Inoue, 1998: 84). Whilst initially achieved through *judō*, the concept of *budō* was also applied to Western sport also. Kiku (2000) describes the *budō*-isation of Western sport, initially in educational institutions. In the same mid-Meiji (late 1880's and 1890's) timeframe Kelly (1998) discusses the ethic of 'muscular spirituality' expressed through the fighting spirit (*konjō*) of the baseball club of Tokyo's premier high school.

**Figure 1. *Wakon Yōsai*      Adapted from Kawamura (1994: 16)**



The mid-Meiji period is important in regards to sport in education because this was a period of rapid modernisation where the State, for example in the Imperial re-script of 1890, imposed ideology that provided a stabilising effect to the influx of the potentially de-stabilizing Western influence. In imposing ideology through legislation, such as the Imperial re-script, the re-invention of the past appeals to those in education as commonsensical and as such becomes hegemonic<sup>16</sup>. The fact that the codification process of many sports was still undergoing development at this time meant that there was the opportunity for greater variation in expressions of sporting practice. As such, Japanese sporting practice during this time becomes inscribed with meaning and the fluidity of sporting practices allowed for the development of sport in educational settings in Japan, the practices of which have perhaps (in the case of marginal sports such as rowing) changed only moderately over time. These original influences on sport in Japanese education, that is, elements of *bushidō* and strict Confucian hierarchy, can be seen as influences that have also endured in broader Japanese society.

As the Taisho period (1912-1926) progressed the focus of the education system simultaneously saw the rapid acceleration in the diffusion of modern sports as the education system became more mechanized toward militarism. The diffusion of Western Sports can be seen in the rise of international competition (1912 Olympic Games and 1913 Far Eastern Games), the inception of professional sport (baseball in particular) and the formation of National sporting federations (for example Rowing and Softball in 1920, Marathon in 1921, Track and field in 1925)(Guttmann &

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<sup>16</sup> This is not to suggest that all educationalists agreed with this or any other components of the State run education system. Okano & Tsuchiya (1999) mention several examples of conflict within education, often resolved by the use of coercion.

Thompson, 2001). This diffusion was further assisted by Japanese industry whose management believed that 'on the job productivity would increase and that sports would promote harmony between capitalists and workers. They (management) became advocates of the ethos of fair play, good sportsmanship, teamwork, and adherence to the rules of the game - all qualities of the ideal worker' (Guttmann & Thompson, 2001: 132). This use of sport as a vehicle for ideological diffusion became more prevalent as the 1920's progressed. In 1924 all educational facilities were ordered to hold an 'annual school event for the purpose of indoctrinating collective behaviour, moral training and aspiration of national spirit in students' (Abe et al., 2000: 10).

The meaning of *budō* shifted as demonstrated by Kelly's (1998: 105) fighting spirit as driven by Waseda coach Tobita in the 1920's as an example. Tobita, whilst maintaining an emphasis on spiritualization and self-sacrifice based on the tenets of *bushidō*, instituted the position of manager as the unquestioned authority controlling all aspects of the team. This is a departure from the rugged autonomy of sporting clubs in the Meiji period. The position of unquestioned authority is significant considering the rapid militarization the Japan was about to undergo. The Taisho period saw the systematic application of sporting models driven by a sense of Japaneseness and of homogeneity based on an appropriate past. From 1918 onward the education system shifted into 'war mode' with an increased emphasis on the demands of industry and militaristic nationalism (Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999).<sup>17</sup> According to Chiba et al, (2001: 208) there was a stated policy that 'Western sports

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<sup>17</sup> It is important to note that there was considerable resistance to this militarised model of education particularly from liberal educationalists who promoted open learning, self-reliance, independence and student centred learning. (Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999) The liberal educational model is far closer to Kano's original model of sport.



should embrace the Japanese spirit of martial arts during the war'<sup>18</sup>. As the war became a reality the *budō*-isation of sports in education became even stronger. During the 1930s and 1940s 'Western-style sports were discouraged and the state vigorously promoted a nationalistic and essentialist conception of *budō*. *Budō*, it increasingly stressed, had an ancient history and embodied *wakon*' (Inoue, 1998: 172). In 1931 *kendō* and *judō* became required subjects in all physical education classes. *Budō* in this case was particularly 'expected to mold the ideal of *bushidō*, which could serve for the patriotic spirit and help understanding of the origin of the nation and the dignity of the national constitution' (Abe et al. 2000: 4). In 1937 the Nation's schools were ordered to stress patriotism and spiritual training (*seishin kunren*) as well as physical conditioning. A Germanic exercise regimen and anthropometric measurement of all students followed (Guttmann & Thompson, 2001). In 1941 military drills became compulsory for all students from primary school to university (Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999). By the time that Japan entered into the Pacific war contests and games had been 'ritualised to indoctrinate militarism, patriotism, and above all, the ideology of the Emperor system. All kinds of physical activities were coloured by *bushidō* and *Yamato damashii* (Japanese spirit). Meanwhile, play elements and the liberalism of sports were decolourised' (Abe et al. 2000: 19).

It is significant to observe here the change in the meaning and subsequent usage of the concept of *budō* over the period of fifty years from 1890-1940. The significance is located not so much in the changes themselves, but rather how and why these alterations in definition occurred. The concept of *budō* is ascribed various meanings over time in a process that aims to counter the threat to identity or to power posed by

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<sup>18</sup> For example Guttmann & Thompson, (2001) explain how Professional Baseball had to change any terms derived from English to Japanese language.

internal and external forces. *Budō* becomes a 'naturalised' construct, which becomes highly persuasive and pervasive. *Budō*, as a cultural construct, demonstrates how culture can be contested and especially how it can achieve hegemony whilst being contested.

Chapter three continues the theme of the development of the Japanese education system after the end of the Pacific War in 1945. The chapter considers the implementation of moral education in schools and the sporting club as extra-curricula activity. As the chapter is concerned with the development of and changes to sport in the education system it is necessary to also consider the influences of globalization on sporting and educational practice. At the end of chapter three the historical background to notions of the body, sport and education have all been developed to allow us to then step into the specific world of the university rowing club.

## CHAPTER THREE:

### Sport and Education after the Pacific War

Immediately after the Japanese surrender in 1945 the United States went about reforming the education system. A single tracking system was introduced supported by increased liberalisation of education<sup>19</sup> (Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999). The new system adopted a 6 - 3 - 3 model consisting of elementary school, junior high school, senior high school was based on American schooling. Following high school four year undergraduate university degrees, two year junior college and *senmon gakkō* (special vocational schools) were offered. The US attempted a complete overhaul of the education system, especially as it had been one of the major sites for the development of the xenophobic nationalism and militarism that launched Japan into the war.

In September 1945 MOE put forward 'Education Policy for the Construction of a New Japan' (in Beauchamp & Vardaman, 1994: 57). Regarding physical education the policy read:

Many students have become mentally and physically strained by the mobilisation for factories and evacuation during the war.....we will also encourage the holding of athletic events for students in order to revitalize sports. Such an attempt will help young people return to normal life and enhance the spirit of sportsmanship. Furthermore, it will contribute to preparations for opportunities to participate in international athletic competitions in the future and foster international friendship and understanding among the youth of the world

The role of sport prior to the war was particularly noted for its militaristic overtones.

As a result the United States completely banned all martial arts (*judō*, *kendō*, *karate*

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<sup>19</sup> 'The Fundamental Law of education' in March 1947 stated that, 'education should aim at the full development of personality, striving for the rearing of people sound in mind and body, who shall love truth and justice, esteem individual value, respect labour and have a deep sense of responsibility and be imbued with the independent spirit, as builders of a peaceful state and society' (in Beauchamp & Vardaman, 1994: 109). This is a large departure from the Imperial Re-script on Education from 1890.

etc) from school curricula for about 10 years after the war for fear that they would be breeding grounds for traditional Japanese values which encouraged nationalism and militarism. Sports such as baseball, volleyball, etc were actively encouraged with the intention of creating 'democratic individuals'. 'The Revision of the Japanese educational system' (Beauchamp & Vardaman, 1994: 99) in 1947 stated that,

classical sports 'such as kendo, which encourage the martial spirit should be totally abandoned. Physical training should no longer be associated with spiritual education (*seishin kyōiku*). Greater emphasis should be placed on games and other recreational activities than on pure callisthenics and drill

Rather than the 'docile' bodies of the pre-war era, Japanese education now took on physical education from the perspective of egalitarianism, its aim to reshape individuals through the democratisation of sport.

The initial educational liberalism of the early post war period started to be reigned back in as early as 1955. The MOE began to retighten its power over the system with various controls including stricter authorisation of school texts, revision of the social studies curriculum and the re-introduction of moral education (Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999: 39). Reminiscent of the use of *wakon yōsai* in the 1880's and 1890's, during the 1960s emphasis on moral education continued to grow, motivated by the challenge to identity that imported systems and structures threatened to bring. The MOE's Moral Education for Junior High school in 1969 for example took on a "Meiji" Confucian theme emphasising amongst other things the need to 'establish good human relationships with friends, male or female, understanding, respecting and encouraging each other' and 'to understand the significance and aims of the groups to which you belong and try to enrich community life' (in Beauchamp & Vardaman, 1994: 169). Much of the education system became re-gearred around the needs of industry and Japan's rapidly increasing economic growth. Tertiary education became geared

around an ideology of educational credentialism and merit. The prestige and reputation of the school attended became a direct influence on chances of progressing to higher education with a similar reputation. There developed direct links between the relationships of companies, universities, schools and even kindergartens which often forms the justification for inclusion or exclusion in entering them (Sugimoto, 1997) (Nakane, 1972). Curriculum became based around passing the entrance exams and required wrote learning and memorisation skills. The approach to creativity may best be described by the adage that all children learn; “The nail that stands out will be hammered in.”

## **Modern Education**

Kuwamura (1994) suggests that the slogan of *wakon yōsai* has re-emerged since the 1970s in Japan. Prime Minister Nakasone's request in 1984 that:

Educational reform must also aim at fostering our country's own traditional culture and encouraging young people to be aware of their Japanese identity in contributing to the international community. We must help them learn social codes of conduct that are universal to mankind, pursue high ideals and maintain good health, and develop their personality and creativity (from the 1st general meeting of the provisional council on educational reform, September 5 1984, in Beauchamp & Vardaman, 1994: 269).

The formal education system has become geared solely around entrance to University, which have a hierarchy based on a complex ranking system according to prestige and affiliation. Some of these links reach all the way down to kindergarten level. As such pre-university culminates in 'exam hell' (although less than 50% of eligible students actually sit) (Sugimoto, 1997:110). 'Exam hell' is warranted due to extreme difficulty of the examination process and the associated stress that is attached to the importance of succeeding at these exams. Academically the system lends itself to the production of:

Generations of disciplined workers for a techno-meritocratic system that requires highly socialised individuals capable of performing reliably in a rigorous hierarchical and finely tuned organisational environment (Thomas Rohlen 1983 in Van Wolferen, 1989:83)

The current system develops the ability to memorise facts, events, numbers, to solve mathematical equations and scientific exercises and neglects creative thinking, original problem formulation, critical analysis, social issues and political debates (Sugimoto, 1997). As the Japanese economic miracle has started to waver over the past decade, monbusho has stressed the need to reform the education system (see for example Japanese government publications including; 'The education reform plan for the 21st Century - the rainbow plan (MEXT, 2001); 'Higher education to support a knowledge-based society full of creative vitality: New developments in higher education reform' (MEXT, 2004a); 'Reforming Compulsory Education' (MEXT, 2004b)).

### **Moral Education**

In 1983 MOE published its Moral Education Policy for school children. Amongst other things it emphasised an ethos that is reminiscent of Kano's *budō* (Beauchamp & Vardaman, 1994)<sup>20</sup>. Japanese children are starting younger and spending more time in controlled educational settings such as Kindergartens, Jukus<sup>21</sup>, cram-schools, pre and post school training etc (Sugimoto, 1997). At the same time the Japanese family has

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<sup>20</sup> For example: 2/ 'to observe good manners and to live in an orderly manner' 8/ 'to endure hardship and persist to the end for the accomplishments of one's aims' 20/ 'to understand other's feelings and to forgive other's faults generously' 23/ 'to appreciate the value of work, and to cooperate actively in the service of others' (MOE - Moral Education 1983 in Beauchamp & Vardaman, 1994).

<sup>21</sup> Education is big business in Japan. It is generally accepted that in order to be successful in the entrance examinations to universities, and prestigious high schools the student must study outside of school time in a formal environment. Jukus and cram schools are similar to after school tutorials that often involve large amounts of the students' time. Here the emphasis is on being able to answer the questions one is likely to receive in exams. However Jukus and cram schools also provide a venue for students to study, especially considering the limited space facing most Japanese at home. Rohlen (1980) indicated that 1 in 4 elementary and 1 in 3 Junior high school students attended juku.

become more fragmented, often with the absence of a male influence in the house as the father/husband bends under the weight of his employment expectations (Doi, 1971). Single child families are becoming more the norm, and the tradition of several generations living under the same roof, though still common, is decreasing. Early socialisation in Japanese families is almost exclusively between the mother and the child. Lebra (1976: 138) points out how early socialisation, which reinforces interdependence and solidarity, is achieved through “physical contact, appeasement, and sensitisation to loneliness and dependency,” is always facilitated via the mother. Traditionally this relationship between child and mother continues until another child is born or until the child reaches school age. With less time spent at home and the absence of traditional larger families, especially male members, the role of moral and cultural education in the process of socialisation is increasingly moving away from the home, and toward an educational environment. If, as Yasumura (1998: 81) contends, 'younger generation in Japan has little understanding or experience of traditional Japanese spirituality and has become accustomed to a more international and materialistic lifestyle', then does education have role in enhancing this understanding?

Schools and teachers in Japan are openly entrusted with the development of these moral and cultural sensibilities and in many cases given an open book in their conveyance, particularly in terms of discipline (Lebra, 1976; Sugimoto, 1997; Van Wolferen, 1989). As Hill (1996: 294) notes, 'Japanese schools are allocated more responsibility to the moral education and discipline of children with legitimate authority extending to domains of behaviour and methods of correction'. In particular, the strictness absent from the home is expected to be practiced by teachers. Many teachers see education

as a way of fostering in pupils '*konjō*, fighting spirit, tenacity and doggedness' and rationalise the use of violence (often with parental consent) as a way of achieving these goals (Sugimoto, 1997).

The Spartan nature of high schools (Sugimoto, 1997) aims to produce a 'strong, manly and austere' personality that also fits into minimalist aesthetic sensibilities (Moeran, 1984). Hierarchies evolve within schools, where uniformity (dress, hair length and colour etc) is valued along Confucian lines. *Raijō taisō* (group exercise to music- similar to callisthenics), sporting teams, music groups, etc, serve to reinforce the individual's sense of their place in society and the adoption of the correct thought processes in order to accept this role. Sporting teams are especially well known for their role in developing Japaneseness. (Sugimoto, 1997)

## **University**

'University educated male managers have been the vanguards of Japan's post WWII corporate expansion' (Hamada, 1996: 171). This is a fascinating observation considering, after the 'examination hell' of high school, university is regarded as 'leisure land' and therefore lacking in the academic rigour that one might perceive as necessary in producing 'world's best practice' (Sugimoto, 1997). As Hayes (1997: 197) observes university is not a 'continuation of the intense learning environment that they (the student) experienced through high school. The role of universities in generating and imparting knowledge is less important than their capacity to define social status'. Although approximately 97% of Japanese youth complete 12 years of formal education less than 50% opt for 'examination hell' and entrance into university (Sugimoto, 1997). Of the number of students who sit the exams



approximately 38% enter into university (Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999). This figure includes students known as *ronin* (masterless samurai) who attend special cramming (intense preparation) schools but are attached to no formal educational institution. Therefore, whilst the image of an egalitarian and largely classless nation pervades much of Western understanding of Japan, the reality is that University students are, based on enrolments, in fact somewhat elite. The importance of making it in to university, or indeed the 'right' university cannot be understated. Meritocracy through education is perhaps the 'major source of status difference' (Clammer, 1995: 117) in Japanese society. Of the some 700 higher educational institutions in Japan, there exist a few who have far higher status than the rest and it is therefore where you graduate from, not what you graduate in, that confers the most prestige.

Despite the extreme efforts made by students to gain entry into university, the reality is that, once there, 'the course work is not demanding and once admitted, a student is virtually guaranteed a diploma' (Hayes, 1997: 198). Japanese universities have been criticised as being inefficient and a waste of time. However, MOE policy suggests that the role of universities has more to do with social than academic education. For example,

much importance is placed on extra-curricular education in the universities, one form of which is the self-governing activity of students. This is recognised by the universities as a reliable extra-curricular means of education to foster a spirit of independence among students, to develop their social consciousness and to assist them in their efforts at mutual improvement (MOE White paper 1964, In: Beauchamp & Vardaman, 1994: 190).

As Nakane (1972: 3:113) observes the criterion by which Japanese people classify individuals socially tends to be based on the particular institution they attended rather than an attribute (type or quality of degree) they may possess. For many university

students, therefore, their social trajectory is a *fait accompli* regardless of what they undertake during their tertiary years. Indeed, belonging to a particular university 'clique' can allow one to 'cut across departmental and institutional divisions'. Whilst the reality of university in Japan for many students may indeed be the 'leisure land' experience, it is important to be cautious with generalisations as not every student will go through the motions for the duration of their degree. Indeed, as will be documented and discussed in later chapters, the everyday life of Biwa University Rowing Club (BURC) rowers, although academically relaxed can hardly be seen as leisure.

### **Sport and Education**

It is essential to understand the influences and philosophies of the Japanese education system in order to understand sport and its function. Sport exists almost entirely under the format of school club activities. Further, to make sense of sport at any level of education it is important to position that level within the framework of the educative process as a whole. Due to the homogeneity of educative practice<sup>22</sup> and the group model encouraged through a moral curriculum based on Confucian values, the socialising effect of one's educative experience can be profound. The embodied knowledge or *habitus* imbued in an individual by the time they reach university can be seen as extremely enduring. The paradigm of the body in Japan adds even greater weight to the function and importance of club activities. From the earliest age schooling is designed to provide whole person education including moral education and a school routine based on the 'repetition and practice of procedural skills or non-

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<sup>22</sup> There is no guarantee that the homogeneity of education will produce the results intended. Indeed the inflexible nature of the education system has resulted in many disturbing trends amongst young people including youth suicide, *ijime* (bullying), school refusal, early drop-out and violence. (See Yoneyama, 1999 & Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999)

academic and physical skills' (Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999: 58). From an early age children are made aware of the benefits and expected to engage in physical activity. *Raijo taisō* generates an atmosphere of unity and solidarity. All schools have *undō-kai* (sporting day) which Hendry (1995:51) sees as emphasising cooperation over individual competition where 'children are encouraged to exert themselves for the sake of the class, or the area where they live, rather than for their own glory'. Furthermore, the schools have thorough physical examination programmes to evaluate the health of their students and statistically map various anthropometric measures. From an early age children are taught the benefits of behavioural correctness (That is how to bow, sit, stand etc) (Sugimoto, 1997; Lebra, 1976).

Whilst culturally significant physical skills are important in the socialisation process so too are social skills. Sport clubs cannot be understood unless we consider the social skills that are developed in practice. The task of becoming a better person is according to Confucian thought a life long process. As stated in 'Social Education in a rapidly changing society',

social education should encompass everyone from children to senior citizens, levels from basic to advanced, means from individual learning such as reading a book by oneself to group activities such as discussion groups and group sports, and content from intellectual, to cultural to physical (Social Education Council, 1971 In: Beauchamp & Vardaman, 1994: 215).

At the earliest opportunity children are introduced to the concept of group activity and collective identity. The first instance is the use of *han* at pre-school and elementary school. In keeping with the ethos of self governance, *han* are small groups of students put together by teachers which 'comprise a mixture of abilities in that they may include children with leadership qualities, problem children, caring children, and both fast and slow learners' (Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999: 59).

Group members come to define themselves in terms of their group affiliation and incorporate aspects of the group into their own individual identities. This sense of collective identity enables the group members to adopt the goals of the group as their own and to feel a sense of personal pride and achievement with the attainment of these collective goals. The strong emotional bonds and sense of collective identity which the Japanese feel toward their group motivate the desire to work for the sake of the group. These group orientations do not spring forth fully developed when the individual reaches adulthood, but rather are the product of a socialisation process that begins in early childhood and is reinforced throughout the individuals lifetime (Kotloff, 1996: 67)

Sport club activities are the next extension of the *han* learning process and development of collective identity. At Junior and Senior high school a deeper appreciation and practice of hierarchy is developed. The concept of hierarchy (*jōge kankei* - literally up and down relationships) is closely connected to human relations (*ningenkankei*). As sports clubs are a site of moral education 'due consideration should be given to establishing closer human relationships between teacher and students and among students themselves, and to guiding thoroughly the practice of moral codes' (MOE in: Finkelstein, 1991: 79). Sport club activities at high school serve to instruct students about the value of perseverance, to develop physical strength, to learn the discipline of group life and to encourage students to identify with the school community (Fujita, 1991).

The most important relations in these sports clubs are the *kōhai* (Junior)/ *sempai* (Senior) relationships (*jōge kankei*). Rohlen (1991) sees the *kōhai/sempai* relationship as the same as basic family relationships. As such *jōge kankei* comprises 'interdependency and continuity', 'a prescription of gratitude to past generations and obligations to assist future ones', 'affection and hierarchy...as mutually reinforcing' and an understanding that 'dependency of the younger weaker party is not only accepted, it is the focal point of the relationship' (Rohlen, 1991: 23).

By the time that a student qualifies for entrance into university their identity has been well and truly shaped via the academic rigour required to survive 'exam hell' and the 'moral lessons' learned through procedural skills, collective identity and hierarchy.

### **Considering Conformity and Homogeneity - Breaking Stereotypes**

Japan is depicted as a highly conformist and homogenous country and this depiction goes a long way in helping observers explain Japanese social phenomenon. Under the surface, however, there is evidence of heterogeneity and levels of conformism and anti-conformism. Regardless of the extremely strong hierarchies that exist in almost every aspect of Japanese life, 90% of Japanese people view themselves as middle class. However, economic, social mobility and income studies point to Japan as having higher inequalities than Western countries (Sugimoto, 1997). This trend toward inequality has been developing since the 1970's due to the reform of the wage system along the lines of merit based evaluation, the consumption tax, and the widening incomes derived from assets. Inequalities are reproduced through asset inheritance, socialisation and marriage (Sugimoto, 1997).

Japan is seen as highly homogenous both ethnically and culturally. Whilst to a large extent this is true there are examples of the construction of such homogeneity and the existence of culturally and ethnically unique groups within Japan. A unified Japan is a relatively recent phenomenon and 'prefectural character types are so diverse and often contradictory that one can hardly speak of the national character of the Japanese as though it were cast from a single mould' (Sugimoto, 1997: 55). There are the Ainu from Hokkaido (the northern island), the under caste of Burakumin<sup>23</sup>, generations of Koreans, and Chinese, not to mention the growing numbers of other foreign workers

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<sup>23</sup> The burakumin refers to those Japanese who occupied professions such as grave-diggers, tanners, cleaners etc. It translates roughly as hamlet people, as the burakumin lived in isolation from the rest of society. As such they developed some of their own cultural characteristics.

trying to cash in on the Japanese economy. However, whilst this is evidence of the undoubted cultural multiplicity of the Japanese there are definitely several underlying essential elements that produce the appearance of homogeneity. These elements are the understanding of an apparent Confucian feudalism, coupled with the practicalities of the *wa*.<sup>24</sup>

Submission and conformity are supposed traits of Japanese society yet such terminology is problematic as it can be construed as ethnocentric. Certainly there are strong cases to suggest the existence of both. However, from a Japanese perspective neither terms have the negative connotations implied in a Western context. The notion of conformity should be viewed in many respects as a moral decision, the understanding of which has been socialised through education. As such, this moral education views the 'self that is social but not exposed', sees freedom as 'depths rather than extensions of self' and expects sensitivity to others 'combined with self-sacrifice' (Clammer, 1995: 96). This style of conformity is effected from within and not from external forces.

There is a degree of different expression in Japan which in some cases it would be described as deviance. However, many of these subcultures are mostly accepted by mainstream society. Even apparently deviant or delinquent sub-cultures appear to conform to aspects of dominant culture such as adhering to Confucian hierarchies or *wa* within their groups. Sato's (1991) ethnographic studies on delinquent youth sub cultures such as the *bosozoku* and *yanki* and the comparison with the movie *Akira* points to these groups reaffirming

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<sup>24</sup> That is considering the limited space for so many people it is only through the acceptance of harmony, even if it requires the sacrifice of some individual desires, that the country can remain peaceful and prosperous.

recognised core values of traditional Confucian society (which) provides a continuity of morality which is felt to be lacking in the outside “de-industrialising” world where traditional values are threatening to disintegrate (1998: 69)

The Confucian model of social life coupled with the concept of harmony (*wa*) results tends to hide elements of difference in Japanese society. The current day usage of '*wa*' can be seen as:

a basic spirit regulating the way of life in community. This spirit permeates our families, and our workplaces, not to mention our villages, cities, states, and today the whole world. Needless to say it is important to maintain '*wa*' in each of these communities (Tamaki, In: Ito Y, 1998: 38).

Conformism or groupism is further understood by the importance of belonging to a social nexus. Critical in understanding this social nexus are the concepts of *tatemae/honne*, *omote/ura*, and *soto/uchi*. *Tatemae* represents the outer opinion about oneself, how you want to be portrayed, and *omote* (face) is the medium through which *tatemae* is expressed. *Omote* can be considered as things that are essential or formal, rules and principles that are natural and proper. *Tatemae* is contrasted with *ura* (mind) and what is hidden there; *honne*, which amount to one's own motives and opinions as distinct from the group. The 'knowledge needed to shift fluidly back and forth between *omote* and *ura*' is known as *kejime* and understanding of this occurs in preschool years (Tobin, 1992). In this way the child develops a two-fold consciousness. Doi (1971) suggests that whilst Western orientation is to the individual, Japanese is to the group. The collective orientation and need for human nexus provides the individual with a sense of social security and mutual assistance. Doi describes this as *amae* (dependence) psychology. The group is central without which the individual cannot exist. The individual therefore adjusts their values to be in line with those of the group:

Having assimilated the norms, values, sentiments, and standards of one's peers, one employs these as a frame of reference for self-appraisal. If one

finds oneself comparatively lacking, one is compelled to restore one's self esteem. The sense of deprivation and personal inadequacy which arises from comparison with the achievements of significant others is often so intense that the failure to reduce disparities ones perceives to exist between oneself and the others would affect one's whole existence (Kuwayama, 1992: 137).

Doi (1971) explains the difficulty in transcending the group and acting independently because of the feeling of treachery that one experience's when trying to do so. Kuwayama (1992) on the other hand believes it is not a problem of individualism or conformity, rather behaviour in a crowded environment becomes regulated by a 'mechanism of mutual observation'. In any case the *tatemae/honne* relationship is not one of opposition but rather of unity. Lebra (1992: 114) sees them operating within a Japanese personality made up of 3 parts: the interactional self, which is 'defined, sustained, enhanced or blemished through social interaction'. The inner self has at its centre one's *kokoro* (heart, sentiment, will, etc). The inner self is largely voiceless (real truth is inexpressible) and believes in 'triumph of the spirit over the material world, of mind over matter, the heart over technology'. The boundless self regulates the other 'selves' according to a state of consciousness that is absent of subject-object differentiation. The skill of moving fluidly from *tatemae* to *honne* and back is gained through the process of socialisation and is aided by clearly defined and multilayered social hierarchies. (In an employment context *tatemae* would be appropriate, with a close friend more *honne* may be acceptable.) This ability for fluidity between selves and *tatemae/honne*, also allows for the person to be a conformist and an individual simultaneously without any recognition or problem of the apparent contradiction. Groupism according to Clammer (1995: 61-62) is based on the principle that community is 'the natural setting for the achievement and realisation of human beings', and that individuals are 'not autonomous' but is 'created and sustained in a social nexus that gives language, meaning, values and a kind of fulfilment that can



only be found in social relationships'. For Yuasa (1987: 37) it is the sense of 'betweenness' of human beings that is central to the definition and understanding of the individual in society. The self can only have complete meaning as part of a referential structure that inscribes meaning.

The motivation for briefly touching on the concepts of *tatemae/honne*, is to highlight these concepts as singularities or unities and not as dualisms or opposites. This understanding of the self as simultaneously inner and outer and the amount of harmonisation between the two is an indication of one's *seishin*. Therefore, just as the practice of action without conscious thought can be the demonstration of *seishin* so too can the unconscious shift from *tatemae/honne*.

### **Sport and Club Activities**

During the 1960's and 70's the role and prevalence of sports clubs in educational institutions grew dramatically. A profound lack of wealth in the community at large resulted in the only available facilities and equipment existing in these places. *Monbusho* saw its role as filling the need for 'right thinking and moral education' (Van Wolferen, 1989). Group activities requiring cooperation and harmony were emphasised. With the negation of the individual as a singular entity, activities (or the way they were practiced) that produced a sense of belonging and loyalty were introduced. As Beauchamp (1998: 145) offers, 'the individual in Japan seeks self fulfilment not as an autonomous individual, but as part of a group. This is not only true in the classroom, but also in the world of business, government, sports and crime'.

The Tokyo Olympics of 1964 re-awakened Japan's sense of national pride and the realisation that to do well on the international stage the country must have a strong, modern and efficient training system. MOE became the body responsible in identifying, training, and funding, prospective international athletes and there was a slight move away from an emphasis on character building to one of body building. The switch to performance based merit caused complications as young athletes with talent were constantly expected to perform at regular prefectural and national tournaments and over training resulted in high levels of burnout. Coaches and schools became interested with short-term success and the prestige the school received for producing good performances. In this way student's physical capital was taken possession by his/her institution and invested with little regard for the long-term rewards. When MOE became hard pressed for cash it enlisted the assistance of companies that in turn brought about the professionalisation of many athletes.<sup>25</sup> Pempel (1998) argues that there has been a decline in Japanese competitiveness on the international sporting scene since the end of WWII. This is partly due to a rigid education system intent on maximising the Nation's economy, which results 'for the most part, that school teams are weakly encouraged' (Pempel, 1998:132). I would disagree in that sports, as with all club activities, are encouraged strongly and adhered to rigorously. According to MOE statistics in 1962 over 68% of university students were involved in sport or cultural clubs (Beauchamp & Vardaman, 1994). Even with recent decline in participation rates over 50% of high school students are involved in club activities (Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999). The difference is that the actual skill and performance level are secondary outcomes of an overall learning strategy that does in

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<sup>25</sup> For example, prior to the official professionalisation of rugby, many companies employed players into bogus positions. They worked for the company but spent most of time on the training track. This is similar to the Soviet model of the semi-professional athlete referred to as a 'state amateur'.

fact aim at 'maximising national economic growth' (Pempel, 1998: 131). As with the original founders of the modern Japanese education system, (See, Inoue, 1998: Manzenreiter, 1998: Van Wolferen, 1993) the goal of producing productive, contributing *shakaijin* (people in society) is still the major function. Critics of the system would observe that schools in Japan don't necessarily educate as much as train students to primarily pass exams and secondly to conform in social groups. Sports clubs must be seen as highly successful at promoting the 'cultural curriculum', the later of these two goals.

In contemporary Japan, there is increasingly less interest shown in formal sport, especially in adolescent age groups (Yamaguchi, 1984). In some ways sport in schools today are concerned with neither body-building or character building, but rather they have become a way of administering students. Perhaps an aim of sport club activities is to 'keep students busy and serve to diminish delinquency' (Fujita, 1991: 157). Controlling and regulating the students' time, often before and after school literally means keeping teenagers off the streets. Students have become disinterested for several reasons. Firstly, there exists a dislike for competition due in part to the excessive competition of the university market. Also, there is an unwillingness to beat or be beaten, which has lead to a great increase in the popularity of recreational sports such as fishing, hiking, skiing etc. These activities are non-competitive, have an attractive image (equipment) and are only available outside the control of educational bodies. Thirdly, the element of fun is often removed by drill based activities rather than games and the rigid hierarchical nature of sports clubs results in the discouragement of many students. Recently MOE has instituted policies to try to counter these negative trends toward sports participation such as the Basic Plan for the Promotion of Sports (see Appendix 1. MOE: 2000) and the Rainbow Plan

(MEXT, 2001) that aims to enrich the school environment by encouraging sport clubs.

Commitment and adherence to a sport appears largely dependent on the students' closeness of relationship with other members of the group (Kanezaki & Hashimoto, 1995). Furthermore Kanezaki & Hashimoto (1995), found that of those students highly committed to sport 60% were involved, for participation in athletics or improvement of personal record, and another 25% were involved for physical fitness. Most students with a high level of commitment recorded gaining pleasure from their involvement, and indicated a high probability that they would continue sport once they left school. Yamaguchi (1984) suggests that there exists a strong relationship between Japanese youth and socialisation through school sport.

### **Sports in Japanese Universities**

The majority of students who enter Japanese universities will be those who have successfully managed their academic requirements within the expected conformity of High school and the identity that is created there. The ability to fit in or socialise during high school has a large connection with actual graduation. More recently, with the increased importance of intercollegiate athletics, high school students may be recruited to a university for their athletic ability. The practice of *suisen* or special entry, has become more common and is a goal of many students who may not have the academic ability to go to university. It also gives students the ability to subvert the usual merit based entry system by gaining acceptance to a higher ranked university than their exam results would warrant. Of the 24 male members at BURC almost half had gained entry to the University via *suisen* as rowers.

Once into university life students have the opportunity to further develop their social and cultural capital through the participation in various activities including sports clubs. After high school, university is more like a vacation for students, a 'welcome pause before entering the pressured environment of employment or married life' (Hayes, 1997: 199). Further, university life offers the opportunity to experience things 'forbidden up to this age like alcohol, sex and gambling' (Linhart & Frühstück, 1998: 8). Many students become involved in diversions including 'social clubs which appropriately emphasize group loyalty and personal discipline. These social clubs usually involve athletics or various kinds of recreational activities. Few have anything to do with academics' (Hayes, 1997: 199).

Whilst it is likely that races between boats, including rowing types, predates Western involvement in Japan, rowing in the European style began in Yokohama in 1866 when foreigners imported a boat. This was followed by the founding of a regatta and athletic club in 1870 in Kobe and the subsequent construction of a boathouse and gymnasium (Guttmann & Thompson, 2001). The Emperor was present at a Navy organised rowing regatta in 1883 whilst the first intercollegiate rowing regatta was held in 1887. Guttmann & Thompson, (2001) also show the spread of 'rowing fever' to Kansai as demonstrated by the organisation of the All Japan Joint Rowing Meet on Lake Biwa by the governor of Shiga Prefecture in 1895. Throughout the Meiji period it continues to be encouraged as a worthwhile educational sport in Monbusho policy. The Japanese Amateur Rowing Association was founded in 1920 and it was one of 14 events that were held at in 1924 at the Meiji Shrine Games (commemoration of the Meiji Emperor). Japan also sent a rowing team to its first Olympic games in 1912.

Universities offer a diverse range of club activities. Rowing, for example, exists almost entirely within the domain of universities. Because of its connection with educational institutions (the boat race - Oxford v Cambridge) rowing clubs are seen to bring prestige to an institution. Many universities, which have no direct access to water, have rowing clubs often based a great distance from the campus. In joining a club members are expected to give total commitment to that activity. In the example of rowing this means four years of involvement. Training incorporates ten months of the year and is for most of that time six days a week. Whilst rowing may be at the extreme end of the scale in terms of commitment and requirements many other sports occupy a similarly central role in their member's university experience. From such involvement it is easy to comprehend how this extra-curricular education can succeed in delivering its moral and social agenda.

### **Globalisation and Change**

Globalisation has become one of the most discussed topics in both sociology and the sociology of sport. Globalisation itself is ambiguous in definition and is now often placed in a context with other terms such as 'world system' (Giddens, 1993), 'imperialism' (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1998), 'democratisation' (Giddens, 1999), 'McDonaldisation', 'celebrity' (Andrews & Jackson, 2001), and 'Americanisation' (Jameson & Miyoshi, 1998). Globalisation is not necessarily a modern phenomenon. As Miyoshi (1998: 248) suggests the only difference between now and when 'Columbus sailed across the Atlantic' is the 'degree of expansion'. This expansion has been driven primarily due to developments in technology, which has affected the transfer of information and capital, consumption, labour and production. As previously discussed, Japan has employed different tactics through recent history to

'control' the influence of globalisation. The Tokugawa essentially closed the country from foreign influence for 250 years, the practice of *wakon yōsai* and other assimilative practices have been applied significantly since the Meiji-restoration as a method of controlling the influence of globalisation, whilst the concept of the invention of tradition would seem to have been employed to maintain identity and power when challenged by foreign influence. Neither should globalisation be perceived as a one way flow from the West to Japan. As the world's second largest economy, Japan is somewhat of an economic miracle and has greatly influenced models of manufacturing, not to mention elements of culture such as art, fashion, literature and film.

Gramsci (1971) argues that, whilst hegemony is maintained via the active consent of those it controls, as this form of power occurs at a cultural level, it is therefore subject to change. Culture is contested space. Globalisation has been an active process for Japan over the last one hundred and fifty years, and the practices of *wakon yōsai* and invented tradition have largely shaped sporting practice within Japan. However, the advent of professionalism in sport and the power of mass communication have come to challenge even the most traditional of practice. Global events such as Olympic games in Tokyo and the Winter Olympics in Nagano, the 2002 Football World Cup, to name a few expose Japanese sport to a myriad of 'other ways' of doing. Added to this, the increased professionalisation of Japanese sport, the advent of the J-League (Watts, 1998) and the migration of Japanese baseball players to the Major leagues in America (Hirai, 2001) have, through the medium of mass media, opened a multitude of ways of 'doing' sport. These 'ways of doing' have challenged traditional notions of sporting practices and masculinity in Japan (Light, 2000b). However, globalisation of sport has in most cases in Japan had the effect of actually strengthening notions of

homogeneity and tradition. Hirai (2001) traces the controversial move of Japanese baseball star, Hideo Nomo, to the Major league in 1995. Nomo's move into the major leagues was initially a topic of enormous public debate as he was viewed either as a pioneer or a defector. Subsequently he has been able to create a highly successful career in the major leagues and has been followed not only by other base-ballers but talented Japanese sports people from many sports. Although Hirai (2001: 195-197) suggests that Nomo's actions were a catalyst for change in sport in Japan that has subsequently changed the 'values, norms and standards among players and fans', he also argues that the original detractors or sceptics of Nomo's move to the United States shifted their view of Nomo into one of a national representative, 'a saviour fighting against the conqueror'. In this way notions of nationalism are reinforced. According to Horne and Manzenreiter (2004: 198), research into the rise of football, in particular the 2002 Football World Cup co-hosted by Japan and Korea, points to 'new ideals of masculinity, attitudes to full time paid work, attitudes towards place of residence and expressions of national identity'. However, whilst the 'cyber cultural' practices of volunteer groups offer a greater degree of 'cultural pluralism', their organizational structure suggests that only 'slight alteration to dominant principles' occur. In fact, 'new kinds of social groups' actually 'revived traditional cultural values' as opposed to challenging them (Horne & Manzenreiter, 2004: 198). Finally Mega events such as the World Cup actually serve dominant forces and elites within (Japanese) society as they control social and cultural meaning, in particular national identity.

The globalisation of sport has also resulted in the migration of foreign athletes and coaches into almost every sport in Japan. In the Japanese indigenous sport of Sumo, foreigners had to satisfy strict requirements, that is, 'only foreign wrestlers who are



sufficiently "Japanese", could compete (Light & Kinnaird, 2002: 153). Exclusory tactics were employed even further as foreign wrestlers threatened to reach the top Sumo rank of Yokozuna (Light & Kinnaird, 2002: Thompson, 1998). However, since the rise of Akebono (Hawaiian born Chad Rowan) to the rank of Yokozuna in 1993 the number of foreign Sumo has increased with the emphasis shifting instead to the Japaneseness, in terms of spirit, of these wrestlers (Amano, 2004). Chiba et al, (2001) track the processes of naturalisation and assimilation on foreign players to many sports in Japan so that they are perceived as 'more Japanese than the Japanese'. They point to the reality that in strengthening National teams in international competition foreign athletes actually 'strengthen nationalism' and reinforce the 'imagined community' of Japanese identity (Chiba et al., 2001: 215). Foreign players can be particularly useful in this role as they act as floating signifiers. This means that a Brazilian born, Japanese naturalised footballer, for example, can be described as Japanese when performing well or exceptionally, and can be referred to as Brazilian when he misbehaves or fails to perform.

The above examples demonstrate how the global hegemony of sport can be challenged particularly via the connection created between National identity and practice identity. This is a challenge that actually reinforces that which is commonsense and hegemonic within Japan, especially ideas about 'Japaneseness'. Yet, there are other examples of how there has been a shift in sporting practice based on global practice, especially through concepts of celebrity (Hirai, 2001) and commodity (Horne & Manzenreiter, 2004). Can Japanese culture (in this situation through sport) maintain its perception of uniqueness through current 'assimilative' methods as the global sports phenomenon continues to gather speed? Perhaps the challenge posed by the effects of globalisation will only affect some sports, whilst

those within educational settings may remain largely unchanged. Specifically can globalisation change the '*budo*' elements and cultural curriculum of sport in Japanese education? Just because little boys in Japan might grow up wanting to 'bend it like Beckham' doesn't mean that these boys will adopt all things English or learn to play the way he did (in fact this is clearly impossible). The connection with celebrity such as a Beckham is so abstract and distant that it is inconceivable to think that watching such players will alter values and ideology in Japan. Even if training revolves around left footed free kicks from outside the box, and everyone had Mohawk haircuts and wears Nike clothes, the whole system of learning based on Confucian hierarchy and models of observation isn't going to be suddenly replaced by some form of Judeo-Christian, European model.

Perhaps globalisation will have its least effect in the more conservative and marginal sports clubs in Japanese education such as martial arts, rugby and rowing. In 2002, Daito University rugby club became the first of its kind to employ a foreigner as its head coach. (Daily Yomiuri, 2002, May 17) This would seem strange based on the number of foreign coaches involved at the elite level of Japanese sport at the time, including rugby and football. The Tongan born coach, Sinali Latu, actually represented Japan at three Rugby world cups and played university rugby at Daito. Whether he changes practice at Daito remains to be seen though there is no doubt that this is a significant move away from traditional channels of coaching. However, Latu is already in possession of a strong Japanese rugby habitus, which is unlikely to produce directions of action outside of the field. Certainly several university rowing clubs have utilised foreign coaches or advisors in recent time, but the amount of actual power they have is negligible as the clubs are still strictly student run and the coaches are largely absent from their day to day existence. Indeed, even if actual

practice were to change it would be unlikely to affect the delivery of the moral and social curriculum which occurs predominantly out of the boat.

Rowing at BURC would appear to currently exist in the realm of traditional practice. Due to its essentially insular nature, rowing can continue to reproduce a hegemonic masculinity that values a traditional ethos. The physical capital earned through four years as a university rower is currently still converted into cultural forms that have their origin in Confucianism and that rejects or assimilates the challenges posed by globalisation. Whether the identity of the muscular Confucian man imbued with an understanding of *seishin* continues to hold currency is again a bigger threat to the current sport model than the influx of foreign coaching.

Why does University rowing represent a particular hegemony that some other sports may not? Will this hegemony resist the influences of Globalisation or will it change according to pressures exerted on it from other models of sport? For example, soccer has had a rapid rise in Japanese popular culture in the past 15 years, particularly since the inception of the J-League in May 1993 (Watts, 1998). With its rise has come a change in its tactics and styles of play, particularly from the influences of foreign players and managers. In this case there 'seems to be a willingness by soccer officials to recognise that foreigners can and will make a substantial contribution to the improvement of the Japanese game' (Pempel, 1998:135). Foreigners are not in themselves Globalisation, rather they represent the transfer of alternate ways of doing. It follows that a sporting organisation doesn't have to have foreigners in it to experience change through nor does the presence of a foreigner/s guarantee a change in practice. Rather, with Kelly's (1998) study of baseball, the dominant way of practice is a contested terrain. The baseball style of the Yomiuri Giants in the 1960's was so successful (9 consecutive championships) that it became the dominant model

of practice. It is important that there were other ways being practiced. However the dominant model becomes the blueprint for every aspiring (high school and university) coach in the country. This would coincide with BURC coach Nakamura's observations earlier that in rowing the Toray style is the Japanese style. Toray's style, generated in a period of their dominance, becomes dominant and hegemonic. It becomes adopted by school and university clubs throughout Japan and even though Toray have changed many of their practices in recent years using foreign techniques (just as no doubt the Yomiuri Giants have changed theirs), the dominant model of the past endures in education into the future. So therefore does the impact of the J-League threaten the hegemonic practices in educational sport in Japan? For the most part I believe the answer is no, particularly in rowing. The first important differentiation to make is that of educational sports versus professional sports. Although Horne & Manzenreiter, (2004: 197) argue that mega events provide an opportunity to 'witness the de-nationalisation' of playing styles and the 'creolization of fan cultures', does the example of elite sport effect grass roots and educational practice? Whilst pro-sports are reinventing themselves to capture a market (Watts, 1998), many sports clubs in education gain their prestige through their tradition. Rowing certainly relies on its position as a founding competition with a hundred plus year lineage to hold its place in the world of educational sports. It finds its niche in being this and members justify their identity based on it.

Whilst professional sport in Japan may involve many foreigners as participants, the reality of University sport, and in particular rowing, is the essential absence of foreigners. In rowing the closest foreign influences usually arises in the brand of boats used and clothes worn.

Perhaps the greatest challenge to sporting practice in universities in Japan is not the effects of globalization on sport, but the globalization on education. If proposed monbusho reforms are understood as a response to criticism of university practices based on comparison with foreign universities then the challenge comes not from the way sport is played but the role sport should have, especially the time allotted (by default of easy matriculation requirements) to it. The comparative mentality of maintaining standards based on some form of international scale attacks the notion of a national ambivalence to performance on an international stage. The comparative mentality may see the tightening of academic standards at university and this potentially poses the greatest threat to the value of BURC capital.

## **Conclusion**

By the time of the Meiji restoration in 1868 the Japanese conception of the body had been shaped by a variety of initially imported philosophies such as Tao, Confucianism and Zen Buddhism. Rapidly assimilated into a Japanese format these philosophies also held influence over ways of learning. Tokugawan Samurai classes, particularly shaped by Zen and Confucian thought, repositioned themselves in modern Japan in the offices of bureaucrats, educators and politicians. The consequently rapid modernization of Japanese society was countered by the invention of traditions such as *bushidō* and an emphasis on *wakon yōsai*. Industrialisation at the end of the 19th century went hand in hand with modern military might. The education system was re-structured to further train elites and to subjugate other classes into functional members of industry and the armed services.

In order to modernise the education system foreign teachers were employed whilst simultaneously Japanese scholars traveled to Europe and America to study foreign ways. As was the case in European and American education during the late 19th century, sports had become a major component of the educative process. It can be argued that the concept of muscular Christianity from the public schools of England was transformed into a type of muscular Confucianism in Japan.

Over the course of the 20th century physical education, sport and education continued to have a symbiotic relationship. There appears a strong belief in the functionalist qualities of sport in education and at different times it can be seen as a vehicle for nationalism and militarism, democracy, traditional values, harmony etc. Whilst the belief in the 'character building' nature of sport is easily seen in other education systems, it is the type of characters that are 'built' in Japanese education that offers insight into Japanese identity and society. As is clearly seen in MOE policies post the Pacific War, there is strong emphasis on student autonomy in sporting clubs and a belief in such club activities as sites of socialization into broader Japanese society. The influences of globalization on Japanese education and sport remain to be fully resolved though it is evident through practices at BURC that little has changed over time.

Rowing as a sport has its roots in a Meiji period where the emphasis is on the maintenance of 'samurai' values. These values endure into the 21st century as students choosing to become members of rowing clubs do so in the knowledge that there is an emphasis on particular aspects of Japanese identity. With this overview to help decipher some of my experiences at BURC, chapter four outlines the creation of an emergent methodology and describes who the research is about and how and when it was conducted.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: Methodology**

### **Gaijin Research**

The study of sport in Japan has been focused on major professional sports such as baseball, soccer, and golf, and on leisure sports, participation rates, and historical analysis. Most of this work utilised quantitative methodology as distinct from a theoretical-qualitative approach. Though with some exceptions (Light, 1998, 1999a, 1999b; Kelly, 1998; Manzenreiter, The study of sport and the politics of identity based on a more holistic viewpoint are largely untouched. Bourdieu (1990) suggests a constructivist approach to the study of the sociology of sport. This approach operates within grounded theory which accepts the existence of multiple realities (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Fetterman, 1998; Carspecken, 1996).

### **The Ethnographic Approach**

Ethnography as an approach best allows and facilitates the experiential insight and interpretations of Japanese sporting activity in tertiary education. Multiple philosophies and ideologies assimilated to a Japanese format suggest a historical practice of locating cultural hegemony in the dominant doctrines of Confucianism, Buddhism and Shinto (Nakamura, 1964; Van Wolferen, 1989). These influences produce an understanding of the body that is unique within the constructs of this hegemony. The various ideological and philosophical influences that lead to the construction of the 'Japanese body' as a specific cultural concept similarly affect practices in which the body is used. Sport, as a bodily practice in Japan, is therefore similarly influenced by the forces that construct the 'Japanese body'.

Ethnographies aim to describe social and cultural activities and groups in ways that offer insight and interpretations of these worlds. The ethnographer, as observer and eventual constructor of this space, becomes immersed in the world that they wish to describe and the associated (Erlandson et al, 1993; Bourdieu, 1990). Wacquant (1992: 30) discusses the methodological 'polytheism' or pluralism, espoused by Bourdieu and insists that 'the array of methods used must fit the problem at hand and must constantly be reflected upon in actu'. This approach toward choosing and using methodological tools is essentially the process opted for in this project. To apply a constructivist approach required the use of holistic perspectives and necessitates multiple data types and methods (Fetterman, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Weber 2001). Weber (2001: 478) discusses the use of methodological interactionism, which 'enables it to take individuals into account not as basic atoms of description but as themselves the products of pre-existing interactions and processes'. In order to create a participant observation research design, prolonged engagement with the subject is required to allow persistent observations (Erlandson et al, 1993). The specific involvement with the Biwa University Rowing Club (BURC) extends over a five-year period, with four visits: in 1999 as a guest, in 2001 as a rower, in 2002 as a live in technical advisor, and in 2004 as a return guest and advisor.

### **Constructing Rowing Reality**

The multiple methods of Fetterman (1998) result in a matrix of methodology that allows for multi-dimensional analysis of data. Whilst multi-faceted, these methods came under the general titles of observations, locating key informants, document analysis, and questionnaires (see appendix 2). As the research progressed the observations became focused on elements such as the setting, the important members,



alumni and supporters, activities and interactions such as training and competition, social events and daily routines (including frequency and duration), and nonverbal communication in the form of bodily dispositions, spacing, and usage. Following on from Bourdieu's (1998) recommendation, informants were purposefully selected and were those individuals who possess substantial levels of capital and therefore embodied the most developed forms of habitus. The documents analysed included monbusho legislation, governmental white papers into sport and education, the university constitution and various literature, such training programmes, recruitment pamphlets and mission statements made available from university rowing clubs. Finally, a questionnaire was constructed during the third period at BURC to provide a better description of the demographic of BURC members. (See Appendix 2)

### **Trustworthiness in Ethnography**

Researcher understanding of the context of the setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) requires a compatibility between 'the constructed realities that exist in the minds of the (researcher's) respondents with those that are attributed to them' (Erlandson et al, 1993: 30). Transferability is a measure of the inquiry's ability to be applied to other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It allows for the formation of 'working hypotheses' (Erlandson et al, 1993) by which further research is guided not by generalisations but rather the detail of the description. Central to establishing trustworthiness is evidence to suggest that, if the study were replicated with similar subjects and context, the results would be repeatable. The dependability of the research is thus enhanced by the research methodology and data collection being subject to external audits (Erlandson et al, 1993). Confirmability of the research seeks to ensure that the observations

emanate from the field of inquiry and not from researcher bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This is achieved once again by allowing external scrutiny of the research.

Credibility and worth in research according to Bourdieu requires another departure from the traditional oppositions that have been the basis for modern Western thinking. Further, Bourdieu's rejection of oppositions (such as structure versus agency, or subject versus object) also stretches to his approach to methodology, which rejects the split between theory and research (Wacquant, 1992). Therefore, in opting for a Bourdieusian theoretical outlook, one simultaneously becomes equipped with the tools to utilise these theories.

Key to Bourdieu's methodological pluralism is reflexivity. The use of reflexivity has taken on various meaning: self-reference (Bloor, 1976); self-awareness (Berger, 1981) or self-fascination (Marcus and Fisher, 1986; Clifford and Marcus, 1986) (quoted in Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1992: 72). It is important to ensure therefore that whilst grounding oneself in the field as an active participant, one remains mindful of potential narcissism that may emerge from the over use of 'I'. Weber (2001: 478) describes such methodology as 'narrative ethnography', which 'ends up diluting itself in the rhetorical accounting of the field inquiry and its limits'.

Bourdieu approaches reflexivity from three perspectives generated from the desire to monitor three potential biases. The first of these perspectives, according to Wacquant (1992: 39), are the 'social origins and co-ordinates (class, gender, ethnicity, etc of the individual researcher'. The second area of reflexivity involves the researcher's position in the academic field. This refers to the position that the researcher puts

him/her self in the academic field, that is the 'difference and distance from certain others with whom they compete' as cultural producers. Finally, Bourdieu postulates reflexivity as a necessity to regulate 'intellectualist bias'. The concept here does not involve one's position inside an academic field, rather it represents the researcher's tendency to 'construe the world as a spectacle', as signs to be interpreted, 'rather than as concrete problems to be solved practically'.

In applying the use of regular peer debriefing, self-reflection and confirmation with respondents, the methodology hopes to remain conscious of Bourdieu's three biases.

### **When Does the Research Begin?**

Whilst the findings from such research are emergent, it is important to also acknowledge that engagement with the research environment is ongoing (see Hallinan and Hughson, 2001). For example Bricknell (2001:7) stresses the importance of acknowledging agency, 'that is, as a social agent, I interacted with the data, both in the field, and at a level of social analysis to develop the critique offered.' As a social agent, my engagement with this field, sport in Japan, has been ongoing for almost ten years. In this time the opportunity for reflexivity and the reality of subjectivity have caused research (design) or focus (questions) to change and shift. Rather than a weakness, the ability to see oneself in the analysis further adds detail and validity to observations.

As the secondary source research and deep reading progressed, interpretations of events shifted in line with this research. By 'making sense through theory' (Wedgwood, 2001) the actions, thoughts, indeed habitus, of members of BURC is progressively understood with greater clarity and depth. As Clifford & Marcus (1986)

suggest the very nature of participant observation determines that participant observers appear in their own research as subjects. Rather than this being a limiting factor, it can be seen as a powerful methodological tool as ‘they can experiment with effecting social change at the practical as well as the theoretical level’ (Wedgwood, 2001: 25).

### **Ethnographic Setting**

The setting for this research was a university rowing club in Shiga prefecture which is located in central Honshu, Japan. It is situated on Lake Biwa, the largest in Japan. Lake Biwa is also the training venue for University rowing clubs from both Shiga and neighbouring areas, particularly Kyoto and Osaka. For the purpose of the research, a fictionalised name was created to represent the rowing club. As such, The Biwa University rowing club (a fictionalised name) was chosen to represent the rowing club at a Buddhist university dating back to the late 1800’s.

The Kansai region of Japan where Lake Biwa is situated was the historical centre of Japan until the Tokugawa relocation of power post 1600. The nearest city of Kyoto was largely spared WW2 bombing campaigns and its architecture and layout is of historical and cultural significance. The language spoken in Kansai is seen as a form of dialect called Kansai *ben*. The most significant battle that took Tokugawa Iesaysu to power occurred close by at Sekigarahara, and the shrine of Ishiyamadera overlooking the river is where Murasaki wrote the famous *Tales of Gengi*.

Biwa University was established as a private school for the education of Buddhist priests established in the mid 17th century, took on the title of university as part of the Meiji restoration reforms to education in 1876. Since then the university has grown in

numbers and campuses. During the period of this research the university had approximately 18,000 undergraduate students enrolled annually. Important in the choice of BU as the site of this research is the fact that it is a Buddhist university with its educational philosophy openly grounded in the Jōdō Shinshū teaching of Shinran Shonin.<sup>26</sup> As a university grounded in Buddhist tradition, BURC provided an opportunity to examine whether this tradition was also expressed in the identity and values of its members. Further, Biwa University's transformation from private school for Buddhist priests to University in the Meiji period allows for a connection with the significant educational influences that shaped modern education and educational sporting practice (as introduced in Chapters two and three). In tracing the concept of hegemonic blocs influencing social, educational and sporting practice the continuity of BU's history is significant. The philosophical underpinnings of BU are based on the key teachings of Jōdō Shinshū. Some are as follows:

The spirit of equality respecting the life of every living being  
The spirit of independence searching for the truth and living in truth  
The spirit of self-introspection reflecting continuously on what one has done  
The spirit of gratitude to be alive  
The spirit of peace encouraging all human beings to communicate and  
coexist in peace  
(Quoted in the 1st article of school regulations, 2002)

Whilst not suggesting that students, in particular rowing club members, are consciously engaged in following the teachings of Jōdō Shinshū on a day to day basis, the school regulations are nevertheless significant in that they have the effect of shaping practice. As the rowing club is a deliberate extension of the education process, these philosophies may indeed be reflected in the daily practices of the BURC members. Further, as many members come from a Buddhist High School

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<sup>26</sup> The teachings of Shinran Shonin date back 400years and are the core to the university's charter. From BU's 1st article of school regulation: 'BU asks all persons involved with the university as the spirit of school establishment that they can discern what is true at all times without wavering in falsehood and can grow into true self who disciplines himself by learning Shinran Shonin's life as a guide'. (translation of the school regulations 2002)

background (such as the Okayama school), the philosophical underpinnings of BU may be seen as a continuation of a particular ideological process or indeed habitus for many members.

As the research is based on naturalistic inquiry methodology, it is necessary to acknowledge the possibility of multiple realities. These realities are constructed in reference to the individual's values, background and beliefs. It is important, therefore, to contextualise the researcher's experience of the subject. According to Agar (1996: 41-42):

Objectivity is perhaps best seen as a label to hide problems in the social sciences. The problem is not whether the ethnographer is biased: the problem is what kinds of biases exist. How do they enter into the ethnographic work, and how can their operation be documented?

Why does one find interest in a subject? As mentioned earlier, it came about through a common practice, rugby. I had previously lived in Japan for eighteen months between 1994-1996 working as an English teacher. During this time I played for two rugby teams in Shizuoka prefecture and assisted in coaching the local high school team. This experience led me to become intrigued with cross-cultural differences in sporting practice and the hegemonies they reflect. The choice of rowing as the setting for this research was purposeful on many levels. I have rowed in Victoria, Australia, at varying levels including State representative, for approximately sixteen years. During this time I have also had extensive coaching experience in school environments, am familiar with the latest in training and technical methodology and for the past four years have been director of the largest schoolgirl-rowing programme in Australia<sup>27</sup>. I have also had the opportunity to organise and design rowing

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<sup>27</sup> Rowing in Australia varies from Japan in that rowing clubs post-high school have little connection with education. Most rowing clubs are community clubs and members come from a broad cross section of age groups and levels of participation. Most clubs offer social rowing, learn to row and elite or semi

programmes for touring Japanese universities from Tokyo that have travelled to Australia for their Winter training camps. Rowing seemed particularly appropriate due to its traditional and conservative history in terms of expressing a particular form of hegemony. Rowing was the first inter-university competition in Japan and, due to its amateur background, exists today almost exclusively in tertiary education. It has strong connections with the concept of Muscular Christianity and in its practice in Japanese universities offered a small, but unique, subculture to enter. Due to my background it also offered perhaps the most accessible sporting field for me to enter without receiving significant resistance.

### **Reporting the Research: Fictionalised Identities and Amalgamated Data**

Not only is the university a fictionalised institution for the sake of confidentiality and anonymity so too are the respondents. Notwithstanding the fact that University rowing is a relatively minor sport where the limited number of participants make it impossible to abide by the condition of anonymity guaranteed to respondents. To overcome this problem the use of fictionalised amalgams was used. As Grenfell and Rinehart (2003: 80-1) noted:

As researchers, we found that we needed to be clear as to where we stood in relation to those whom we researched. To protect confidentiality and anonymity of the subjects, the institutions, and the context of those we studied, fiction seemed an appropriate tool

That is, the use of fictionalised identities and amalgamated data provide a method for reporting ‘subjective’ information, including data based upon their informants’ words and actions. Therefore, not only are the subjects or informants identities ‘fictionalised’ in order to preserve anonymity, but their narrative accounts/reports

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elite programmes. Certainly members do not live at the boat house and the role of coaches is more prevalent.

were amalgamated/blended so as to minimise detection of identities and more acutely capture the knowledge. Therefore, although it is important to locate each respondent within the hierarchy of BURC, the respondents can be seen as thematic rather than literal. Similarly I have opted to refer to the various time frames of engagement with the field as periods as opposed to dated references. For anonymity to be maintained, the nature, its intimacy and relative minority, of the rowing environment, requires the removal of markers that would position me in a particular time frame and therefore, through inference, identify the participants.

## Introducing the Best Players

**Table 1: The Best Players**

BURC Players					
Name	Home prefecture	Year	Major	Crew	Years rowing
Hiro	Kyoto	4	Economics	1st	7
Kobe	Osaka	3	Sociology	1st	6
Musashi	Shiga	4	Business	4th	7
Sato	Okayama	3	Economics	Sculler	6
Taka	Okayama	1	Undecided	1st	4
Tana	Hiroshima	2	Mathematics	3rd	2
Nana	Ehime	4	Sociology	1st	7
Fuji	Saga	OB	Economics		7
Haruki	Mie	1	International Studies	4th	4
Yoshio	Kyoto	5	Education	N/A	N/A
Nakamura	Shiga	Coach	N/A	N/A	N/A
Midori	Niigata	Manager	Sociology	N/A	N/A

Hiro is Captain of BURC and came to BU on *suisen*. He has a strong rowing pedigree from high school and is physically the strongest<sup>28</sup> member of the club. Hiro's possesses a certain presence that exudes a quiet confidence. He is thoughtful and

<sup>28</sup> Strength is measured on a rowing machine (ergo) that simulates the rowing movement and uses a computer to translate power output into distance and time. Ergo scores are always well known within the history of rowing clubs, that is, who has the fastest time etc. There is a certain amount of prestige conferred to the holder of the 'biggest ergo'. This reputation carries enormous capital in rowing circles as something to be in awe of because it is one of the few opportunities in rowing to make a direct comparison of individual performance.



during no rowing events (such as *nomihodai* or other social occasions) is fairly reserved. When it comes to his rowing, preparation and performance he always carries himself with an air of seriousness that makes him seem even older than he is. Rowing has been his university life.

Kobe is technically the most talented rower at BURC and also came to BU on *suisen*. He graduated from a high school (OHS) that is well known for its rowing programme and his younger brother is set to follow in his foot steps. Kobe is predetermined to be the next captain after Hiro, though he is far more of a party boy and likes to have a drink. Kobe is more informal than Hiro though he is very driven for success at the major regattas. Kobe considers his rowing experience as very important but it represents only a component of who he is as a university student.

Musashi is the epitome of the BURC rower in all respects except that he lacks technical ability. Musashi is nevertheless somewhat of a presence and personality in the boathouse because he is very earnest and sincere. His work ethic is exceptional but he just rows so badly that he has been relegated into one of the lower ranked boats. Musashi's *koha* attitude should hold him in good stead though as he plans to join the Tokyo Metropolitan Police.

Sato is somewhat of an anomaly at BURC because he has chosen to be a single sculler (solo performer). One reason for this may be because he is very talented and came from a high school where he was also a sculler. He came to BURC on *suisen* and has ambitions to hopefully reach national representative standard. Satoshi operates with complete autonomy though he must adhere to the training times and group life of the

other members. Unlike most of the other members Satoshi intends to gain employment working in manufacturing for a rowing boat builder.

Taka is like a 'Samurai boy' (Yoshio's - introduced later - observation). Taka is first year but his ability to demonstrate superior attitude and his no frills simplistic approach has seen him selected in the number one boat. He is a straight talker who without a rowing *suisen* would not be at university. Academically he is not very bright, only thinks about rowing, and doesn't even know what he is studying at BU. Intellectual short comings aside he is liked by all and unlike most first year students, he is quite the personality at the boathouse. (Taka will not make it past second year at BU and by the time of my final visit he is working back in his home prefecture at a car manufacturer)

Tana is another anomaly at BURC as he had never rowed prior to coming to BU. He was a member of a sports club at high school but they didn't have a rowing club. As a result he has only been rowing for three years less than just about everyone, but he is quite competent and has made the second boat. Tana doesn't quite fit in like some of the other members as he is lacking some of the embodied knowledge taken for granted by other members. Tana also does a lot of casual work to supplement the cost of being a member.

Nana is captain of the women's club and is exceptionally well respected by all. She comes from a very famous rowing high school, ('rowing at BURC is easy compared to the training at UHS'). She is technically and physically very talented and has outsourced some of the programme writing to a company coach from across the river.

Nana hopes to get a job in Tokyo, probably as an 'office lady' when she graduates. She intends to target companies that have rowing teams in a bid to enhance her chances of employment and maximise her rowing capital.

Fuji is an 'old boy', though enrolled in graduate school and, therefore, still enrolled at BU. Not allowed to row according to BURC rules he spends quite a lot of time 'hanging out' at the club. Fuji's role when he was a member was that of the mood maker (bit of a joker) and he continues this on in his current role of assistant coach.

Hariyuki is a first year student who comes from a relatively obscure high school. He has rowed but is not at BURC on *suisen*. It is Hariyuki's first time away from home and he keeps an extremely low profile. Physically he is the weakest of the male members and rarely speaks to anyone.

Yoshio is a graduate student and friend from another university who offered to act as a translator at various times. He has a strong background in high school sport, football, and is very well placed in terms of age, gender and social position, to be the most appropriate option for translating at BURC.

Nakamura has been coaching<sup>29</sup> at BURC since the 1960's and is a bit of a cult figure. He works as an engineer with a company that also has a professional rowing club that

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<sup>29</sup> Coaching at BURC is not coaching based on a Western definition. As members suggest 'BURC is good because we have no coaches'. This is not entirely true as Nakamura and several OB's engage in coaching at BURC. However as coaches their presence is intermittent as opposed to regular or constant and their feedback is more advisory than directional. The coach has no bearing on selection, programme, motivation or diet. Rather his input is purely technical, based on observation of practice. Not all rowing clubs in Japan operate this way as is mentioned later. Nevertheless the role of the 'coach' as such would appear to be closely in keeping with the idea of university clubs as opportunities for student autonomy.

he was once heavily involved in. Now he is very busy with work travelling overseas often but whenever he has some free time he will be down at the boathouse giving advice about the technical aspects of the rowing. He is quite philosophical about his role and influence and is very perceptive as to the needs of the members. His family lives nearby the river and if asked he would say his hobby was rowing coaching.

Midori is one of the senior managers at BURC and is planning to find a career in social work once she graduates. She has never rowed but was attracted to the sport after watching a TV show on the sport. She finds the club a good environment to meet people and spend time. She loves to cook and being a manager gives her this opportunity.

### **Gaijin Research – Accessing the Field**

Gaining access to the field is problematic. As with Geertz's (1972) experiences in a Balinese village, the time taken to open up an environment can be indeterminate and precipitated by accident, in his case a police raid. Geertz's (1972 :43) offers 'getting caught, or almost caught, in a vice raid is perhaps not a generalisable recipe for achieving that mysterious necessity of anthropological field work rapport, but for me it worked very well'. To predict a time frame for access to occur or to simply expect 'rapport' to be complete and unfettered is foolish. Access can be at best unpredictable, may vary across the individuals involved, and its completeness is impossible to determine. As Gaijin in the Japanese setting this is particularly the case and there are constant pitfalls in the forms of ethnocentrism and misunderstanding. However, as Magola (2000: 216) recommends, one must 'continually seek out one's subjectivity'. Ensuring this is part of the ongoing process of reflexivity, being 'alien'

should not be seen as a shortcoming, rather it can be seen as allowing unique insight. As the research is predominantly concerned with the nature and form of hegemonic ideologies existing in Japanese education, it is those from outside this hegemony that are in the best position to make these observations. The very nature of hegemony is that it is commonsensical and consensual, and this suggests that critical analysis of practices within this ideological framework can be difficult for those who also come from this background. According to Spradley (1979: 61-62), 'the less familiar you are with social situations, the more you are able to see the tacit cultural rules at work'.

It is important to recognise that the relationships that are the focus of the field-work exist prior to one's arrival and will continue after one's departure. Field-work is not 'an action performed on passive respondents: it is a vast chain of interdependences which lasts for the duration of the study, which starts off in a particular manner (the initial stages are decisive) and follows its own dynamic' (Weber, 2001: 481). Access to the field is therefore ongoing and once established does not require the researcher to 'renegotiate her presence in each interaction' (Weber, 2001: 481). This is important in terms of the research undertaken at the university rowing club because interactions occur over an extended period and after prolonged, physical, absences. The fluidity of returned entrance into BURC once the initial relationships were forged is crucial in the success of the project.

For me, accessing the field has been ongoing since my first Rugby training with the Shimizu Minami Old Boys in 1994. Even though the research project didn't exist until 1999, the 18 months playing rugby provided an essential grounding in understanding some aspects of Japanese sporting culture. As Hendry (1997: 82-83)

notes, her previous absorption into Japanese culture, gave her an 'intangible advantage' in a more recent project. She describes her continual engagement with the culture as 'long-term fieldwork' during which time knowledge is acquired, often intuitively, and at a 'non-linguistic' level. In the context of sporting experiences of Japanese men and the way that the body can be experienced, I too, had acquired a certain amount of 'knowledge' which would prove invaluable in later analysis of the university student's rowing experience.

### **Accidentally in Ishiyama**

In the context of rowing I have been involved in Ishiyama (the area where the research occurs) for over ten years. My relationship with the BURC began on a trip to Ishiyama in period one and was further developed during another trip two years later in period two. The choice of BURC was simultaneously accidental and purposeful. My approach at the time had been to source a university-rowing club by simply going down the river at 5.30am and seeing what happened. Wearing clearly identifiable rowing gear and being in the right place at the right time would hopefully facilitate at least first contact with potential gatekeepers. Fortunately this approach succeeded more than I could have hoped. Essentially my initial contact with BURC was through a conversation with their coach, Nakamura, on the riverbank. I was riding in one direction, he in the other. The crew he was following was missing one rower so I politely stopped him and inquired where the missing member was. Apparently a bout of food poisoning had struck and so I asked whether he would mind if I filled in. We struck an immediate rapport and after which I spent the next week rowing in place of the sick crewmember. As with Geertz (1972) during the police raid, it was his instinctive response – to run – that opened the village to him. Being offered the

opportunity to row involved a similar instinctive response. In taking off the habitus of researcher (though for Nakamura and the rest of BURC at this time I was merely *gaijin*) and exchanging it for one of rower, I carried with me a different capital that was more readily recognisable to the other rowers and facilitated the development of my rapport within the practice field of Japanese University rowing. Further my previous experience (rugby) of physical practice in Japan allowed for some of the intuitive knowledge I possessed to be expressed. Such non-verbal communication proved invaluable, insightful and immediately created linkages with the other rowers in a manner that were unique and may have been impossible without it.

At this point I had to make sure that BURC was the right type of rowing club. In terms of what I was looking for it was perfect. It is a strong, mid-size rowing programme with over one hundred years of history. It has its own shed complete with dormitory and kitchen, and is located on the bank of the Seta River surrounded by other university-rowing clubs. The club comprised approximately 24 male and ten female members. There were also about fifteen other students making up the management group. On top of this are five or six major alumni, three or four old boy coaches and Nakamura. The club produces crews primarily for the All Japan Inter-Collegiate held annually in Tokyo in August. Its target event in the men's club has been the coxed four, which it has had a history of success in, having been All Japan champion several times and making the A final regularly. Such success for a club this size brings a great deal of pride to current members and also a determination to maintain to continue this tradition. As a result of BURC's relatively successful results it offers the strong possibility that the club operates under a similar programme from year to year - if it isn't broken it doesn't need fixing.

### **Staying in the Field: Living at BURC**

In period three I returned again, this time with a group of Australian schoolgirl rowers to compete in a regatta in Ishiyama. Following the departure of the schoolgirls I stayed on to act as a technical adviser (*jogensha*) to BURC for another six weeks. I had organised with Nakamura prior to my arrival that I was interested in staying at BURC. He spoke to some key alumni and my tenure was assured. During this time I lived solely at the boatshed with the rest of the rowers and engaged in coaching and advising at every session till my departure. I was able to develop a profile in periods one and two, as a rower, a head coach of the touring team, and in contact with the BURC coach and other coaches in the area allowed me fairly smooth access to the environment. Again I was very fortunate that one of the major gatekeepers, Nakamura, was the person responsible for granting me entrance to BURC. I have no doubt that had my introduction come through the university in a formal sense I would not have been as welcome as I was.

As is described later, the living arrangements at the shed provided a unique opportunity. I was allowed the balcony room during my stay, a small space at the end of the dormitory area. As I had asked to live at the shed, I was therefore subject to the daily regime of the rest of the members. This included meals, showering, laundry and of course training. When Hiro did his wake up rounds of a morning they were directed at me as much as the other rowers. This arrangement afforded me the opportunity to be around almost every moment. Particularly as the members had non-residential days this meant that I became part of the shed, in a way a constant. Further, I made a point of training myself everyday in a bid to maintain parity with the experiences of the other rowers. I believe that my experience of BURC would have been totally different (superficial) if I had opted not to maintain a physical (training) identity. Further



training with or as regularly as the other members gave me an insight into the levels of fatigue they endured. The disciplined, trained body requires special care otherwise sickness and injury are inevitable. To empathise with this discipline one had to live it. Rather than being distant or removed, I therefore made a point of being involved on a physical level. Again, expressing one's self as a physical identity was useful because it became a common identity which carried with it forms of communication and understanding that would have been otherwise absent.

### **Multiple Gatekeepers**

As Gaijin, the response I received from members, especially those in a position to be considered gatekeepers, varied initially. Just as Nakamura and I developed a strong relationship because of common interest and his generous nature, some of the other relationships took longer to develop. One of the other major gatekeepers at BURC was the captain, Hiro. Hiro was initially reluctant to engage on more than a polite level. I think that this occurred because, as adviser, I may have posed a threat to his position of authority in the club. Further I believe that Hiro probably thought of my presence initially as a distraction from his goal of getting the crew going as fast as it could. Many members were immediately interested in the Australian Technical perspective and training methodology, however Hiro was far more reserved in his interest. He may have been concerned that I might only succeed in confusing the club members in regard to their training and fitness. Being conscious of this potential barrier I made a point to keep my advising within a certain frequency of concepts and technical drills. This frequency was defined by what I had already ascertained were the important concepts used at BURC. At no stage did I ever try to coach any of the members from a motivational point of view, nor did I try to 're-invent the wheel' in

regards to their training regime. I found Hiro's taciturn nature was stereotypical of a particular style of Japanese leadership. Indeed Hiro saw his own leadership style as follows:

Since they are not children I let them think for themselves and respect their individuality and let them take responsibility for their actions, however when we have to be together I have to be quite tough. They are part of the team so depending on the case I need people to concentrate or give effort so I have to direct also

This style of leadership indicates that there is no need to be overly verbal, rather that the quiet approach is more desirable.

It was only after the freshmen's *nomihodai* (all you can drink party) that Hiro allowed me into his world. Once Hiro had opened his gate to me many other members followed suit.

Drinking, as with many other cultures, is a clearly identified aspect of Japanese social interaction where the day to day barriers and hierarchies existing in the social relationships are temporarily put on hold (Hendry, 1994). These events are often seen as compulsory requirements of being part of the group and certainly this was the case at the rowing club. In many ways they also operate as hazing rituals as practiced in other sporting environments in Western settings (Coakley, 2003: Donnelly and Young, 1988), with intentions ranging from building solidarity in the group, public humiliation, sanctioned fraternisation with female rowers and manager and legitimating one's masculinity. I had the 'benefit' of attending two drinking parties at BURC. The dual opportunity to train and drink with the BURC members undoubtedly enhanced my acceptance within the group. I now possessed multiple identities within the group from rower, to adviser, to drinker. Multiple identities allowed for interaction with the same group at multiple levels. Acceptance into the BURC world

had to be granted through a multiple of rituals for any new member. Whether it be in a demonstration of pain tolerance during an early training session, a willingness to stay behind and stretch until after the 4th year students had finished or to consume a jockey of beer in one gulp, I was fortunate to establish my position having gone through the very same rituals. Certainly the morning after the *nomihodai*, the degree of familiarity within the group, not only for myself but also the freshmen, had greatly increased. 'The team that drinks together stays together' and such events give the newcomers an opportunity to create or express an alternate identity that enhances the closeness of the group.

### **Coffee and the Research Ritual**

Being 'onsite' 24 hours a day posed as many challenges as it did advantages. As Hendry (1997: 82) notes:

in a society separate from his/her own, there is immediately an important difference in the total absorption of the situation. It is never possible really to cut out from the project. Even in the privacy of our own home, we could be telephoned or called upon

The primary challenge was finding time and space for reflexivity. The closeness of the living conditions meant that it was difficult to find quiet space in which to make sense of the mornings observations. Just as the training and day to day life of the BURC members was highly ritualised, so it became evident that the most effective form of reflexivity was achieved through ritual. The average training morning began at 5am and finished after breakfast at approximately 9.30. Following this my daily ritual of primary data analysis would occur in one of the three local coffee shops along the river. Usually this would involve a couple of hours of reviewing notes from the morning observations, reconstructing the minutiae of the morning, and building a

base from which to drive the next observation session. Rather than forcing this process the time and the caffeine gave me the opportunity to relax and let thoughts find their way onto the paper. In the afternoon sessions I allowed myself to just be part of the BURC experience, acting as advisor, doing some training, assisting with rigging (preparing the boats) and other activities. This time 'off' gave me a greater opportunity to immerse myself further into the environment without being preoccupied with what people said or did. I discovered quickly that in order to 'see the wood through the trees' I needed an on/off switch. After dinner and the evening viewing of the Hanshin Tigers (local baseball team), I would usually write down a few notes regarding the evening on my balcony.

Monday was a non-training and non-residential day. This weekly programme became quite convenient in that it allowed for secondary reflexivity where the observations of the previous week could be further collated, combined and coded. I took the opportunity to spend most Mondays at another local university where I had access to greater resources but could also discuss ideas, observations and interpretations with Japanese graduate students and some other colleagues. I found Monday invaluable as the peer debriefing sessions generated a variety of perspectives and gave real impetus to the next cycle of training. Schoepfle and Werner (1999: 159) emphasise the importance of debriefing as a methodological tool in the research process; 'in general, any person, ethnographer, or native who experiences something significant or knows something of value to the research process is a potential source of debriefing'. As such, debriefing proved a crucial part of the emergent collection and interpretation of the data.

Returning to Australia provided the third phase of reflexivity. The data was further encoded and taped interviews translated and discussed in terms of the linguistic nuances expressed. The translation process formed a further component of debriefing.

### **Interviews - Finding the Best Players**

Whilst informal interviewing had been basically ongoing throughout my times at BURC, identifying those who could perhaps give greater insight into the logics motivating members took more time. As Bourdieu (1998: 25) notes, it is the best players, with a feel for the game, with the 'art of anticipating the future of the game which is inscribed in the present state of play', who are the best to watch to understand the habitus of the field. It was these 'players' whom I was hoping to uncover in my time at BURC. Once I had identified these individuals I decided to formulate more structured interview questions. The problem was how and when to conduct these interviews. Up until now I had largely existed as the foreign rower and adviser not the university researcher. Would this potential change in my identity alter the responses of those I was hoping to interview? Further I was aware that if the interviews were to be fully informative then I would require a translator to basically run each interview? The type of detail that I was hoping for would be largely impossible to glean if I were constantly fumbling through my Japanese. Rather than seeing these aspects as limitations, they should be seen more as challenges that if overcome would yield a thorough reading of being a member of BURC. I had been spending most Mondays of period three at another local university and had made friends with a few of the post-graduate students studying education and sociology. Several of these students spoke excellent English. During the weeks I had been discussing with them some of my research and getting their feedback. As a result they

were quite "up too date" with my experiences and also somewhat fascinated in life at BURC. As my eventual translator, Yoshio, put it, 'this rowing thing sounds totally bizarre, I mean I never heard of this sort of thing.' I asked Yoshio if he would be interested in acting as a translator for my project of conducting interviews with some of the members of BURC. Thankfully he said 'yes'.

I chose Yoshio to assist with the translations purposefully for several reasons. Firstly, being male, I felt that there would be greater openness in response then if I had a female translator. Secondly, Yoshio was a student, had belonged to high school and university sports clubs (football) and was of a similar age to some of the older members. I felt this was important as he could be seen by the interviewees as being similar to themselves. In many ways, although not a rower, he was their peer. Interestingly, I think that had he been a rower his effectiveness as translator would have been reduced. Whilst exceptionally communicative within the group, members were well versed in the art of taciturn when dealing with those outside it (example being dealing with non-familiar alumni). Further, the fact that Yoshio was genuinely interested in the responses meant that his delivery and feedback was very inquisitive. Someone from within the rowing community may have been far more interested in trying to second guess what I was looking for and attempt to provide such answers. I had considered asking one of the university professors to act as translator but felt that being an outsider and existing in a different social position may cause the responses to be particularly cagey. Yoshio was the one, he was up to date with what had been going on with my observations and I believed could best fit in with the rowers and the rowing club. I asked Yoshio to come down to the boathouse a few times prior to the

interviews occurring so that he could get a 'feel' for the place and that I could also introduce him to various members so that they had at least some familiarity with him. I held off on interviews for as long as possible into period three. The key informants were chosen because they had, were, or were going to be, the best players at BURC. The interviews were conducted over a weekend at the boathouse in the manager's office after training sessions as was convenient for each member. Yoshio and I had met previously to brief the process and to organise the potential questions that may arise (See appendix 2). All these interviews were taped and lasted approximately one hour. Beginning with some general small talk we proceeded with each interview in a fairly standard format. I would begin by asking questions in English, which Yoshio would then translate into Japanese. I felt that it was important that the questions came from me as well as Yoshio as it was a way of reaffirming the relationship that I had with each individual. Question and answer would follow in this basic format, sometimes Yoshio would translate the answer for me, other times if I was confident I had a good grasp we would continue to the next question. If we reached a point where departure from the intended list of questions might prove advantageous we did so without great need to pause. In part of the briefing Yoshio and I had discussed the potential direction the questions may take so that we could follow these avenues as smoothly as possible. During each interview we took time to allow the roles to reverse and for the questions to come from the members. This was important as in my years of contact to BURC many of the relationships that had developed were very friendly. I was very aware that I wanted to maintain these relationships throughout all my interactions with the members. The development of trust was crucial in the amount of openness and candour in their responses and to change my personal approach to the members now could potentially close down their openness.

Following each interview Yoshio and I would discuss the responses and prepare for any themes that were forthcoming that hadn't been initially considered.

### **Another Layer of Reflexivity**

Upon returning to Australia I began round two of the interviewing process that I had designed. The tapes were given a re-listening and a secondary translation. Again I called upon the assistance of a Japanese colleague who is a high school Japanese language teacher. Yuri had been teaching in Australia for several years and the time spent decoding the interviews with her was invaluable. This process involved listening to all the tapes sentence by sentence and translating into English. Often sentences, once put together, were then smoothed out to give a more natural feel to the reading. Of even greater value was Yuri's assistance with the linguistic nuances of the responses. This added even more richness to the responses and also acted as a useful reflexive tool. The need to go over the tapes again, even though laborious, actually produced some small variations to the interpretations that assisted the validity of the interview process. It was through drawing out thematic threads during the multiple translation process that the creation of the fictionalised identities was possible. Characters were created based on the emergence of feedback reflecting hierarchical positioning in the group, background and goals.

Perhaps the strongest reflexive element in the research has been the dual nature of being engaged simultaneously in two projects. At the end of each research period I returned to Australia, not to the university and the lecture theatre, rather to my job as a fulltime rowing coach. This continual shift from Japan to Australia created a type of 'multi-sited' ethnography (Wacquant, 2004b: 396), where the insights of being an



insider (in Australia) facilitated a transfer of understanding in Japan. I clearly remember my initial encounters with BURC and interpreting the boathouse from the framework of an Australian boathouse. To para-phrase Bourdieu (2001 in Wacquant, 2004b: 396), I could not help but think 'if this were in an Australian rowing club, what would I make of it?' Recognising these interpretations resulted in a constant process of turning observations back on me. This reflexivity allowed me to find myself in my observations as opposed to misrepresenting the field. Wacquant (2004b) highlights this type reflexivity in Bourdieu's dual projects in Algeria and his home in Bearn. The multi-sited process had the effect of encouraging a more detailed and systematic approach to gathering information as this type of reflexivity highlighted the potential problems of reporting in the form of an exotic postcard, full of colour and quirks but low on substance and insight. Further, being undertaken over a six year period, the longitudinal approach produces a longitudinal reflexivity whereby each return to Japan was undertaken from a shifting, as opposed to static, perspective.

### **Confirmation: Returning to BURC**

In periods four and five I returned to BURC for two weeks and a week respectively which allowed for the confirmation of some of the responses and observations from previous field work periods. Period four coincided with a major regatta for BURC it provided a unique opportunity to formally and informally catch up with previous informants whilst during period five I returned to my position of *jogen* and my balcony room in the manager's office at the boathouse. Many of the original informants had now graduated from University but were attending the regatta as all good alumni do. As with all previous periods of research, re-entry began with re-establishing contact with Nakamura prior to arriving. Nakamura ensured that my

return was not a shock or 'out of the blue' but rather something that the members were prepared for and expecting. I made a point before arriving to check over photos and names of all the members that had been around in period three so that the level of familiarity would be immediately apparent to new members.

The freshmen from period three were now moving into leadership positions at the club and a new crop of beginners had entered the fold. The cycle of repetition and renewal had occurred and even in two weeks it was easy to see that few practices had changed. Further, being able to discuss predicted outcomes with actual ones, in terms of employment or success in the boat, proved invaluable. In many ways this visit gave the members their own opportunity to validate and verify observations from previous periods. To what level had the time at BURC actually contributed to their cultural capital?

Fortunately BURC had a big win at the regatta and I was invited to another *nomihodai*. The traditions and rituals present in period three were still the same. Race preparation, supporting, post race antics, all were in keeping with my previous experience. Finally living back at the boathouse in period five and 'being one of the boys' provided a certain symmetry to the entire process. Waking up to the encouragement of the captain, wandering downstairs to the ritual of preparation and practice, miso, rice and fish for breakfast, all these aspects of life at BURC remained relatively unchanged. Reflexively I realised that the strength of embodied knowledge, of history, of the space, the habitus of BURC had endured in me also, that I could still play the game and that the capital I had with me remained of currency in the field of the university rower.

## **Emergent Methodology**

Throughout my contact with BURC ways of understanding and making sense of this world constantly evolved and mutated. Reading in certain fields often resulted in a search for literature which proved fruitless. At other times a chance reading of other material would suddenly shed light and meaning on a whole area of the study. The duration of the project afforded the opportunity to rethink situations from different perspectives. Some of the greatest successes, meeting Nakamura for example, were stumbled upon and can best be described as being in the right place at the right time. Necessity forced other options in methodology to be chosen or discarded. The double translation process is an example of this. The key to the project was that, whilst methodologically I was often flying blind, culturally I was well versed and prepared. It is as result of this preparedness that I am confident in the methodology that did eventually emerge. The element of reflexivity in particular provides the necessary rigour and structure with which to make sense of BURC and attempt to place the role of the sporting club in Japanese university life. It has allowed the discussion of clubs and their function as a site of cultural reproduction, construction of identity and hegemony.

## **Conclusion**

In order to make sense of what emerged from the methods applied to investigating BURC, that is, comprehend the 'fuzzy logics' and commonsense ideology at play, the necessity to find a useful theoretical perspective became apparent. Initially attempts were made to find a 'total theory' for analysis, however it quickly became apparent that in the context of the study, as Andrews (2002: 116) notes, what was required was critical 'engagement with theory; a grappling with theory to see what is useful and

appropriate within a particular empirical context, and discarding/reworking that which is not'. The power of ethnography and cultural studies is found in the uncovering of what Jameson (1986 in Bhabha, 1994: 201) describes as the 'situational consciousness,...where the telling of the individual story and the individual experience cannot but ultimately involve the whole laborious telling of the collectivity itself'. In this way the telling of the BURC story can potentially assist in the telling of a broader cultural story involving identity, the body, pedagogy and cultural reproduction. Understanding the sporting body in a Japanese educational context from the perspective of the lived experiences and day to day routines of members of a university rowing club poses several issues. This was overcome by examining the historical context of the sporting body in post-Tokugawa Japan and identifying some of the relevant 'historical blocs' that influenced hegemony in sporting practice at a macro level and then applying ethnography inside the BURC at a micro level. Finally, the theoretical approach of Pierre Bourdieu became 'useful and appropriate' to find the truths and make sense of being a member.

## **CHAPTER FIVE:**

### **A Bourdieusian Boathouse**

In Pierre Bourdieu's opening lecture at Tokyo University in 1989 he stated his intentions to present a 'model of social space and symbolic space' (1998: 1) applicable not only to France, but also to Japan. Further, he immediately distanced his intentions from those of whom he describes as wishing to talk about the 'Japanese miracle' or the 'curiosity for exotic particularism' that has driven much of the previous work on Japanese society.

As I searched for a theoretical perspective with which to make sense of my experiences in Japan, I became increasingly aware of the large amount of Western scholarly interest in Japan that was seemingly grounded or motivated by exactly what Bourdieu describes as a 'curiosity for exotic particularism.' For the large part this occidental interest in the oriental has been generated through cultural comparison (often ethnocentric) and/or has used Western perspectives to make sense (commonsense) of the data. Whilst these perspectives may be useful, one must be careful of the potential paradigmatic confusion that can follow. Bourdieu is one of few major sociologists (Norbert Elias being another) to have written seriously about sport. Bourdieu's interest in sport is generated because of the centrality that the body receives in his theories (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 93). The body for Bourdieu is a site where research can uncover the logic of practice sense.

Of particular concern are the varying paradigms of the body that can be found in various cultural practices. It seemed paramount that in order to make sense of the use of the body in education in Japan, one would require a theoretical perspective that

departed from traditional Cartesian<sup>30</sup> understanding of self, that is, the dualism of mind/body, and accounted for the other ways of perceiving the body.

The construction of social agents is central to understanding how Bourdieu overcomes the dualistic opposition of structure/agency. He explains social agency as such:

There is action and history and conservation or transformation of structures only because there are agents, but agents who are acting and efficacious only because they are not reduced to what is ordinarily put under the notion of individual, and who, as socialized organisms are endowed with an ensemble of dispositions which imply both the propensity and the ability to get into and to play the game (Bourdieu, 1989 in Wacquant, 1992: 19).

Whilst mindful of Hughson's (1996: 267) disclaimer of, whilst using Bourdieu 'no great claim is made to being a scholar of his work', it became increasingly clear that Bourdieu offered a unique perspective from which to better understand the complexities of Japanese university sporting experiences. The direction provided from Bourdieu's key concepts of habitus, field, capital and practice gave the opportunity to access the social space of the university rowing clubs, a 'space of differences'. Further, Bourdieu makes the refreshing break from the limitations of oppositions of dualism, from subject versus object, of agent versus structure, mind versus body. In overcoming these dualisms, Bourdieu breathes life into the analysis, and provides the 'conceptual tools' (Harker et al., 1990: 196) with which to make sense of the complex social arrangements of the University Boat Club.

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<sup>30</sup> In rejecting Cartesian dualisms, Bourdieu also overcomes other dualisms such as agency/structure and object/subject. In particular he is quick to reject the positions of the likes of Satre (Bourdieu, 1977: 73) and Derrida (Bourdieu, 1998: 95) and what he describes as the concept of the 'logic of consciousness and the free choice of the isolated individual'. The important recognition for Bourdieu (1992: 73) is that it is the 'coincidence of objective structure and embodied structure' which allows the 'illusion of spontaneous understanding' of a given situation. Criticism directed at Bourdieu is often aimed at what is described as the 'prison cell' of the habitus, which is seen as nothing more than a mechanistic determinism. As he counters, habitus are durable, not eternal dispositions.

## Conceptual Tools

Through the concepts of habitus, field and practice, Bourdieu is able to overcome the oppositions posed by phenomenology and structuralism. In essence he has created a set of concepts that simultaneously allows the individual free will whilst being acted upon by a structured reality. The key to agency is one's habitus which can be seen as a,

system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor (Bourdieu 1977: 72)

The habitus allows one to transcend the opposition between agency and structure and refers to a;

set of dispositions, created and reformulated through the conjuncture of objective structures and personal history. Dispositions are acquired in social positions within a field and imply a subjective adjustment to that position. For instance, in the behaviour of a person, such an adjustment is often implied through that person's sense of social distance or even in their body postures. Thus one's place and one's habitus form the basis of friendship, love and other personal relationships (Harker et al., 1990: 10)

Habitus 'are generative principles of distinct and distinctive practices' (Bourdieu, 1998: 8) which serve to express difference and solidarity. As a set of 'historical relations deposited within individual bodies in the form of mental and corporeal schemata of perception, appreciation and action' (Wacquant, 1992: 16) those who share a similar habitus occupy a similar sense of place. Most importantly the habitus operates at a level below that of consciousness and can be expressed by the simplest and automatic of action. What the individual eats and 'especially the way he eats it, the sport he practices and the way he practices it, his political opinions and the way he expresses them' (Bourdieu, 1998: 8) all act to instruct as to the individual's difference from some and similarities with others. In the context of France, Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 73) sees those as possessing the same or similar

habitus as being expressed in class difference, and suggests that the 'mechanisms of class reproduction' in this way are present in many countries (US, Sweden and Japan) who superficially and culturally may seem very different. The habitus is the expression of the individual's personal history acted out at any given moment and as such unites the past with the present to become the 'embodied history' (Bourdieu, 1990: 56) of the individual.

Habitus together (that is combined or collectively similar habitus) produce a 'commonsense world endowed with the objectivity secured by consensus on the meaning of practices' or the 'harmonization of agent's experiences' (Bourdieu, 1977: 80). As such this 'homogeneity of habitus' allows agents to immediately make sense of practices in the present and predict these practices future. This predictability is perpetuated from an embodied knowledge of history and therefore both past and present are taken for granted, unquestioned. The opposition between agency and structure for Bourdieu, that is, the objective versus subjective, is best countered by the idea of the individual engaging in 'regulated improvisations' (Bourdieu, 1977: 79). The outcomes of agency, as expressed through the habitus, are guaranteed because of the (historically) self-imposed limit of options. The perceived possibilities in any field (structure) are generated from the same historically grounded sense of probabilities. As a product of history, habitus produces 'individual and collective practices, and hence history, in accordance with the schemes engendered by history' (Bourdieu, 1977: 82). Put plainly history has a tendency of repeating itself.

Part of this 'embodied history' or what one brings with oneself into structure is the concept of capital. Capital is essentially a form of power and therefore can manifest itself in various forms of varying worth and power depending on the situation. Thus



the same form of capital can have different value in different fields. For example an individual possessing new (self made man) economic capital may have a strong positioning within the field of small business owners, however he may possess a relatively weak standing amongst old wealth. Capital alone is not enough to represent power, rather having the required habitus to convert this capital in the social field is paramount, and thus capital relies on a valuing process 'founded on cognition and recognition' (Bourdieu, 1990: 22) from the field into which it is being put. The value of a 'species of capital, hinges on the existence of a game' or field, in which this competency, that is appropriate habitus, can be employed (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 98). The evolution of this capital, that is, its development, structure, volume, viewed over a period of time becomes something akin to the 'social trajectory' of the individual.

Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992: 98) argue that the 'hierarchy of the different species of capital varies across the various fields', whether this capital is economic, physical, social, educational, cultural, etc. The fundamental nature of power, or having power is possessing capital that holds its power across all fields. For Bourdieu, the most powerful form of capital is symbolic capital as it legitimates the individual within the field. Symbolic capital is

any form of capital whether physical, economic, cultural or social – when it is perceived by social agents endowed with categories of perception which cause them to know it and to recognise it, to give it value (Bourdieu, 1998: 47)

According to Bourdieu (1984) educational capital is guaranteed cultural capital and in the Japanese context the cultural capital inherent in educational credentials is often weighted higher relative to other (economic) capital. For Bourdieu, the key to utilising such capital, that is being able to convert it into other forms, is the link between the notions of habitus and symbolic capital, and the suggestion that the

individual must work with 'a specific logic towards the accumulation of this type of capital' (Hughson 1996: 272). Habitus provides the 'know-how' of how to utilise one's capital, it provides the ability to work one's connections to maximise its conversion. To borrow Bourdieu's game analogy, the player possesses capital in the form of skills. The habitus of the player then tries to maximise the outcomes of these skills, (for example scoring points, winning the game, being a prominent player) within the structure of the rules of the game. The player with the more developed habitus (practical knowledge and experience) is better equipped to appreciate his and others strengths and weaknesses and play accordingly. Thus with a feel for the game, habitus becomes the 'art of anticipating the future of the game which is inscribed in the present state of play' (Bourdieu 1998: 25). Therefore, one 'invests oneself and one invests not where the profit is, but where it will be' (Bourdieu 1998: 79).

The structure where the habitus and capital is expressed is the field. The field 'consists of a set of objective, historical relations between positions anchored in certain forms of power' (Wacquant, 1992: 16). These positions in turn impose upon the field a structure of the distribution of 'species of power' based on an agent's 'present and potential situation' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 93). Access to the specific profits of a field are determined by one's possession of such species of power. The field is the site where social practice occurs. Social practice occurs within a multiplicity of fields, each an historical product, a social space that functions, both as a site 'where competence is produced and of one of the sites where it is given its price. One might expect each field to set the highest price on the products created within it' (Bourdieu, 1984: 88). Just as agents in the field are partially autonomous, so too does a 'field constitute a potentially open space of play whose boundaries are

dynamic borders which are the stake of struggles within the field itself" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 104).

### **Defining the Field**

In following Bourdieu's model of analysis of the field we must first position the field of the university rowing club in the broader field of power. The role of institutions and the meritocracy afforded to education in Japan is such that the field of higher education, that is university, possesses enormous power. Discussed earlier, successfully gaining entry to the right university can be an almost guarantee of employment once one has graduated. The university itself is the final step in an exhaustive educational process that may begin as young as six months as parents strategically<sup>31</sup> place their children into educational environments in a bid to maximise their chances of success (embodiment of habitus and accrual of capital), both in results and in the school one attends.<sup>32</sup> University degrees hold great cultural capital in Japan. Whilst definitely not a classless society (despite responses to the contrary - Sugimoto 1998), Japan doesn't fit under the same concept of class as in the United Kingdom or France, rather difference in Japan is better understood as defined by status and the resultant hierarchy that it creates (Clammer, 1995). Being status driven, Japanese society affords therefore even greater importance to the accrual of the appropriate educational qualifications, which in turns enhances one's status. For example attending Tokyo University produces a type of capital that holds power across multiple fields in Japan and not just within academia and some branches of industry. Indeed the capital from a degree from Tokyo University can carry itself into

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<sup>31</sup> According to Bourdieu such 'strategic' decision making is in fact the 'quasi-conscious' operation of parental habitus in the field of education and parenting. As such each field 'calls forth and gives life to a specific illusion as tacit recognition of the value of the stakes of the game and as practical mastery of its rules'. (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 117)

all fields of public life, politics, business, family, and maintain its power. Existing within the realm of the University, various sport and cultural clubs are imbued with their own capital determined most often by the prestige, history, success etc of the particular club. The fact the BURC is well known, can offer *suisen* to freshmen, and has a long and proud history infers therefore that this field holds significant potential capital for its members. As a series of symbolic spaces therefore, the university rower is embodied at the level of the physical practice of the sport, at the symbolic field of the boathouse and as a student at the university itself. Therefore, the objective relations which in turn structure the field include the members and especially the hierarchy of those members, functionaries, that is managers and alumni and particularly those who may possess capital in other fields (business owner, ideal future partner or wife, connections to employment), the architecture and geographical location of the boat house itself, university staff involved in conferring one's degree, and indeed the boat itself which possesses it's own symbolic capital (the 1st ranked crew or the last, Japanese made or European, one's position in the boat). It is important to remain mindful that even in a 'universe par excellence of rules and regulations' such as BURC there is always the potential for change, resistance, diversity and unpredictable outcome as 'playing with the rule is part and parcel of the rule of the game' (Bourdieu, 1990 in Wacquant, 1992: 18).

### **Using Bourdieu at BURC**

Bourdieu opens avenues to begin to make sense of what being a member of BURC involves. He encourages the 'relational' use of his theoretical approaches, and as such acknowledges the diversity of potential contexts that such theories may be applied to. Indeed, Bourdieu's work operates from the same realisation as that of the habitus, that

is, that the possible outcomes and actions of theory are structured via their own embodied history and capital. Rather than limiting, Bourdieu offers his theory as a departure point, as a generative link, whereby each application becomes a 'particular case of the possible' (Bourdieu in Webb, Schirato, Danaher, 2002: 106) and hence opens up a new space of possibilities and applications. Using the analogy to 'a feel for the game' life at BURC is a game within a game. There is the self-reflexive and embodied level of the actual physical activity of rowing which is obviously central to being a rower and there is the corresponding social level of being specifically a member of BURC. To play the 'game' at BURC requires one to aim for practical mastery of the implicit principles of the physical, technical and social world of the university rowing club. The lived experience of BURC members or the strength of this *illusio*, is demonstrated by

the fact of being caught up in and by the game (of being a member), of believing that playing is worth the effort, to participate, to admit the game is worth playing and that the stakes created in and through the fact of playing are worth pursuing; it is to recognize the game and to recognize the stakes (Bourdieu, 1998: 76-77)

Envisioning rowers as actors within the 'space' of BURC also requires the realization of their roles in spaces outside of BURC. Space here is simultaneously physical, practical, symbolic and social and this space exists simultaneously with other such spaces of varying degrees of relation or autonomy. As such, all members occupy multiple roles and possess multiple identities in various fields that become constitutive of their status, class and social position. BURC members' exist largely in very few 'spaces' during their four years of university. Primarily the very nature of living at the boathouse and training almost all year round severely limits the opportunities to 'act out'. Further, the relationship between rowing member and university student is rarely autonomous. Indeed for members of BURC opportunities to 'act out' so to speak come predominantly in the form of family and part-time work

(for most members, family visits and work are infrequent due to the demanding nature of the programme). As such the field is significantly narrowed and results in an even greater investment in the game as, for this four year period, the stakes become entirely centralized to performance in the boat and more importantly the boathouse.

### **Putting the Tools to Work - Women's Captain Nana**

With these conceptual tools in mind consider the following long excerpt from an interview with the BURC women's captain, Nana.

Brent: You come from a very strong rowing high school. Is there much difference between UHS and BURC?

Nana: That's easy. Training at UHS was physically much harder. I went to UHS and my high school teacher recommended I come to BURC because it also had a strong team. A big difference with UHS is since we don't have coaches at BURC, when we face difficulties, hit the wall, we need to find a way to improve. We have to think by ourselves how to solve this problem. We have to be very independent in our approach to achieve this. For example, when I wrote the programme<sup>33</sup> I began by looking for the various members weaknesses. Some lacked endurance, others power, some skill. First I had to know these weaknesses. Then I ask sempai and other teams for ideas. BURC have had a traditional programme but I found that maybe it doesn't work. So I asked Chuo University and Meiji Life (rowing team whose membership comes from the Meiji Life Insurance company's employees) and some others about their programme, about training workload and technique. I then created my own programme based on a combination of different ideas.

Brent: Your opposition give you ideas on training?

Nana: Many rowers from UHS go on to join university rowing clubs. I have friends at Chuo and Meiji Life.

Brent: No doubt you have some big goals at BURC. What are they?

Nana: We have won the previous 2 Intercollegiate Championships, I've been a member of those crews, so for the team my goal is to make it 3 in a row and win again. But personally I would like to beat all the company teams (all comers) at the All Japan Championships. Personally I have a feeling that the university clubs will not be so strong and I want to race the strongest opposition. Recently at the Asahi

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<sup>33</sup> The training programme incorporates all aspects of training for the coming 12 months. This would include weight training, water work load and technique, rowing ergo work, physiological testing etc. Essentially the programme incorporates the "what to do and when to do it" for the rowing season and needs to be mindful of the different requirements for different periods of the year, particularly regattas and camps. Basically the programme is broken into 4 phases of differing durations and differing intensities and outcomes over the season and generally these are summarized as: Preparation 1, preparation 2, pre-competition and competition. At the elite level in Australia, this type of programming is the realm of sports science and physiology.

regatta we were beaten by Meiji life insurance and Sony. To beat these crews would be a really great achievement though to do this will be very difficult.

Brent: I saw the Meiji Life crew, they looked really strong. How are you going to beat them?

Nana: The capacity and ability of the team (BURC) is not so good to overcome the company teams. Achieving this goal is my greatest and hardest challenge. So we need to have strong spirit and train hard. The only way is to have the same approach, the same goals and thinking. All members have to think one thing. If we can beat Meiji then we will prove ourselves as a very good crew.

Brent: You have a lot of respect and admiration for the Meiji Life crew.

Nana: My sempai is now in the Meiji life insurance crew. She is my idol. I would like to be like her. Get a job at Meiji Life insurance and row in their crew.

Brent: So you think that your position here (being captain) and your rowing career will help you get a job. Why do you think this?

Nana: Even if the company doesn't have a rowing team the answer is yes. Being champion for 2 years is a big achievement you know, this is a very strong team plus I'm the captain. The fact that we won, even without mentioning or being captain, demonstrates that I can work very hard. At the moment I am going through the job search process. At the beginning of the interview I have a chance to introduce myself and tell the interviewers something about myself. I have about four pages, like an album, of pictures and newspaper articles about my rowing history. Pictures from the semi final and final and presentation ceremony, plus newspaper articles. I have 2 certificates for sports achievement from the Kyoto prefectural government. The panel will be impressed by this. Then I begin to talk about my rowing strengths. I'm a very competitive person. When I was in my first year at university I would start training 1 hour before the rest of the members and I would always do more after everyone had finished. I will show them that I can work.

Brent: But are you really that different to a BU student who didn't row?

Nana: Other students may be smarter than me but in a job interview I have far more energy and positivity. I'm very lively and genki I can express my personality better than other students.

Brent: How would you describe your personality as captain?

Nana: Sometimes I can be very angry other times I'm very talkative with the other members. I mean I'm happy showing how I feel. So if I'm angry I let the other members know and if I'm happy I do the same. I'm emotional but consistent and I try to be very clear about this. When we are rowing I'm always serious, tough, and focused. Sometimes we might have a disagreement or issue that needs to be communicated or discussed and fixed. This is very important and so I am serious. When I'm out of the boat and relaxing then I like joking around and laughing. I suppose it's like there's a time and a place for most things.

Nana has invested in the game and for her it is a game worth playing. To a large extent she has constructed an identity based on her embodied habitus of a rower. Her habitus as a rower is strengthened by the fact that she has been and is so successful at this sport, not only in terms of her physical capacity as demonstrated from her victories but also from social ability as indicated by her position in the group, that is, captain and her ability to row in the best boat when she was still *kōhai*. The habitus that she has embodied through constant hours of training, *ningenkankei* and strong *jōge kankei* has allowed her to accrue a symbolic capital that is very powerful in the field of the boat club. In her estimations of her potential trajectory, Nana is strategic in her intentions to use or convert this symbolic capital in other fields. This conversion is part of the game as it is her habitus which allows her to perceive and appreciate her next actions just as it is other agents' habitus which allows them to appreciate this symbolic capital. Her symbolic capital is grounded not in the fact that she has been very successful, a winner that is. Rather, her symbolic capital is derived from perceptions of what is required to be a winner. Culturally defined and indeed expressed with a certain degree of elegance by Nana herself, to be a winner is to work together and have collective single mindedness, to train hard and do the extra work, to lead and respond to obstacles constructively, to approach the goal of victory very seriously, and to consider others opinions. With this habitus the victories across the years are like a self fulfilling prophecy. Unlike most of her peers, Nana's capital as a rower is so strong that it appears likely that she may be able to remain in the field longer than most. Rowing to her has become a case of common sense, her body responds to the requirements of membership automatically, without prodding or question and her actions have the naturalness and confidence all players aspire to.



Further Nana has been able to build her habitus through the pedagogical action of those above her (her friend at Meiji Life, her high school coach) and those below her (her *kōhai*). Those below reinforce the value of this symbolic capital which, in turn, further enhances Nana's commodity in the field.

### **The Rowing Habitus**

When Wacquant (2004a: 16) talks about the *pugilistic habitus* he refers to the 'specific set of bodily and mental schemata that define the competent boxer'. This competence is not limited to one's ability to throw an uppercut or a jab, but incorporates a complex coordination of disciplined time and bodily management with implicit and almost entirely practical learning. At the same time, the *pugilistic habitus* which is so inherently solitary and individual cannot be formed, maintained and profited from without collective involvement and direction. What then defines the 'competent rower' and the *rowing habitus*? Seeing bodily and mental schemata as one in the same is essential in developing this understanding. How does one actually learn the complexities of muscle coordination, biomechanics and use of levers required to demonstrate competency in the boat? In the Japanese educational context the process is certainly more implicit and less codified than in examples from Australia and the United States.<sup>34</sup> At BURC and other university rowing clubs learning bases itself on prior knowledge gained at high school and a large reliance on ability to imitate actions that one sees around oneself. As the knowledge of the sport at BURC is held

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<sup>34</sup> Having been involved in coaching in both these countries over the past 15 years there has been a large push at most levels to standardise coaching approaches. The development of coaching accreditation levels and systematic applications of this knowledge has produced a band of sports science that relies of scientific reductionism as its mode of analysis. At the elite level in Japan this western style of coaching and systemisation has been applied variously either through importation, the current head coach of the national team is Italian or exportation, the head coach at Toray spent three years coaching in Canada. Educational practice has followed the elite model in Australia, in Japan it has not.

collectively by the final year students and passed down from year to year the methodology of learning the sport becomes something akin to aural history given from generation to generation, occasionally subject to alteration from 'Japanese' whispers or changes perceived in the panoptic environment in which the rowers habituate. Training regimes are directed mostly from the intuition of the final year students whilst technical advice is self and group reflexive or may be an outside observation from a coach or technical advisor. Government of individual bodies becomes the central concern of BURC as novices to the group must quickly understand and adopt the strictures of the collective. The boat becomes the symbolic centre piece of what it is to be a rower. It is the location where individuals can best demonstrate their habitus strength, in terms of technical ability, physical strength, and mental toughness. As with the pugilist, the time spent in real competition is tiny compared with the enormous hours spent training in preparation for competition.

The individual must learn to overcome his own inclinations and act in the best interests of the collective, both in terms of sacrifice in training and in the close collective living environment of the boathouse that dictates the consideration of others before oneself. The development of an identity that is group oriented is not something that begins at BURC but that has been ongoing since early socialization. The fact that one becomes a member of BURC is in itself a demonstration that one possesses a habitus that has already embodied much of the schemata required of the successful rower.

## **Conclusion**

It is Bourdieu's conceptual tools of habitus, field and capital that promise to provide insight into the practice of being a university rower. The pedagogical reproduction of culture through institutions such as the university and the rejection of Cartesian

dualisms positions Bourdieu as having the practical where for all required to not only make sense of rowing practice but also identify the hegemony found there in.

As Noble and Watkins (2003: 522) observe:

the logic of our practice is embedded in the requirements of the field, practically mastered by its participants. This is true of a field of sporting practice as it is of the field of higher education. But habitus is also the embodiment of our social location - class, gender, ethnicity and so on. This habitus manifests in our actions, our modes of appearance and through bodily hexis - posture, manners, ways of speaking - that is among the outward signs expressing social position

Members at BURC display a level of practical mastery derived from an exceptionally disciplined and singular existence. Indeed their bodily hexis expresses the social position of a particular type of student and as such is one that seeks and achieves distinction from others in the field of higher education.

The following chapter aims at description. The detail of being a member of BURC has been approached from the perspective of interviews, questionnaires, field notes and reflexive writing. I have attempted to be as exhaustive as possible in this process. In doing so it becomes clear, as Bourdieu attests, that it is in the most ordinary of actions where the habitus is most obviously at work. Embodiment occurs through a repetition of practice that becomes somewhat of a historic inventory of the individual. I have attempted to let the best players play, and through their skill, come to understand the game.

## CHAPTER SIX:

### **Being a Member of Biwa University Rowing Club**

The following two chapters attempt to describe in as much detail the day to day existence of being a member of BURC. Large sections of field notes have been employed to convey a sense of reality and reflexivity to the field. Observation and field notes contributed to a majority of the information gained during the research and have been accorded sufficient space in this chapter and the next to convey a sense of people and place. The following field note extract sets the scene for an average day at BURC.

It has been one of those May days in Shiga. It started raining around noon and hasn't relented since. It's the constant soft rain that deadens sound and creates a calm, quiet numbness. The rowers from BURC arrive for their evening training session to the darkness of Seta-kawa, to this muffled world. The occasional Shinkansen crosses the river, like it's a magic carpet, its momentary impact on the scene noticed only from the sparks from its conduits that briefly shower the river below in light. The rowers prepare and then head out into the dark, into the millpond. They warm up silently, passing Ishiyamadera, under the imaginary gaze of Murasaki who wrote the Tales of Genji from this spot. They turn and move into full crew rowing, striking out toward Lake Biwa. As they do they pass a dozen or more boathouses similar to their own. Beacons of light in the gloom. Under the Shinkansen bridge, the Tomei - both icons of Japan's modernisation after the Pacific war. Under the Seta karahashi, the famous bridge from pre-Tokugawa Japan that formed an important part of the trade route from the old capital Kyoto to the new capital Tokyo. The crew passes or is passed by several other crews, kayakers, fishing vessels and coaching launches. They reach the opening into Biwa ko, turn again and head home.

Despite the rowers being on the water the boathouse is humming with activity. The managers have been there since mid afternoon preparing the evening meal. The windows of the dining room are totally steamed over and on entering the boathouse one is instantly welcomed to a sense of warmth and comfort. The gentle fragrance of miso, rice and chicken fill the space. The rowers return, via the shower, to the dining room, to the background of managers in conversation. The rowers plough into their meals with gusto, animated conversation and joking, the Hanshin Tigers are playing arc rivals the Yomuri Giants on the rather enormous TV which sits next to the small Buddhist shrine. The managers depart without fuss to appreciative nods and grunts. The game on the set enters the 9<sup>th</sup> innings and it's still close. The Tokyo team prevails and for those not already there, bed calls. Outside the rain continues to fall and inside the effect is soporific. Upstairs to the bunkrooms. Within moments all is silent and dark and sleep comes effortlessly.

The following morning at 5am it's up again for training. Within minutes of the captain's rounds of the dorms, he goes past each room only once, the whole boathouse has mobilised. Five minutes after the wake up call all the rowers are running along the river warming, and waking, up. On return to the boathouse every member begins stretching rituals. Blankets are brought out of a large box and each rower places his on the ground in two lines starting at the front of the boat storage boathouse and working toward the back. The captain always positions himself at the front left hand side with a variety of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students taking the other side. With the exception of the golden boy Taka, who always is directly behind Hiro, the 1<sup>st</sup> year students are all positioned down the back. However whilst the BURC rowers engage in their own personal preparation experience, it is always only once Hiro has finished that the others finish. Whilst the stretching is going on the two coxswains prepare the breakfast that was made the previous night by the managers. Once Hiro has finished stretching the group breaks into its respective crews and, after a short crew briefing, its hands on the boats and training on the water begins.

After training, debriefing, stretching and breakfast it's off to university or, in most cases, back to bed, many rising only after noon. At 4pm the boathouse fills again with managers and rowers and the preparation for the next session begins again.' (Fieldnotes)

Before continuing to describe the day to day existence of the university rower it is important to make a brief departure from description and contextualise what follows.

Rowing in Japan is definitely a minority sport yet it possesses a long history and tradition generated by its early organisation into a nationally governed body, the Japan Rowing Association in 1920. There is a national company based competition. Opposite BURC is the very famous and strong Toray company boat house. Most of Japan's international representatives will come from one of the company crews, for example during period three Toray had eight members make the national selection team of which two managed to represent Japan at the World Championships. However, these are far from professional sports people in the modern sense. As coach Nakamura explains:

Most Toray members are expected to work in the factory between 8 or 9am and 5.30pm and before and after this they train

Although Japan will host the World Championships in Gifu in 2005, the popularity of rowing is very much limited to its practitioners.

Seen as a pursuit of education, the majority of rowing in Japan occurs at universities. Of the approximately seven hundred universities, colleges and junior colleges in Japan, there are almost one hundred rowing clubs. It would be wrong to assume that these clubs operate on the same model. There is a variety of sporting experience expressed through rowing. Some clubs employ fulltime coaches (these clubs are still student run), often from overseas whilst others operate on a more recreational and casual basis. University rowing clubs like BURC are best described as mid-size, mid-range clubs. They have a strong reputation from past performances and have the ability to recruit the better rowers due to the use of *suisen*. However, they find it continually harder to compete with the bigger universities who with even more pulling power have the ability to recruit the best rowers. For the men at BURC membership involves a monthly fee of 18000Yen, which covers all aspects of their training, board and meals. The equipment, which is state of the art, is funded predominantly via the donations of OBs with assistance from the university. The competitive rowing season is really only between June and August. For BURC the season revolves around three events. The Asahi regatta in early May, the All Japan Championships in June and this season culmination the National Intercollegiate Regatta held in late August in Tokyo on Toda, the site of the Olympic rowing course in 1964. Whilst the season proper is only three months long, training continues most of the year round. Freshmen join the club in April shortly after the beginning of the academic year and remain members of the club until the National Intercollegiate Championships in their senior year. Training continues during university holidays often in the form of rowing camps where members travel to training venues in Japan or overseas (well funded clubs will travel to Boston to race in the Head of the Charles,

to Europe or to Australia) in order to increase not only their workload and hone their skills, but also to enhance their prestige. Such tours are packaged as marketing tools to attract new rowers to the university<sup>35</sup>.

Ritualised training and highly formatted practice is not uniquely Japanese. It is a universal of sport that the training and practice environment becomes highly ritualised and formatted. Rather, it is the form of ritual and what it represents in terms of identity and culture that are of interest. Influences on the ritual of practice may have their origins from a myriad of possible locations. Historical influences, the strength of personalities (for example, captain or coach), the varying experiences of members from other backgrounds (for example time in a foreign country), observations of other practices and sports (both locally, nationally and internationally), can all influence the structure of the practice environment. The emphases and complexity of the format becomes the signature of that sport and more importantly the source of difference between practitioners and alternate practices. As Bourdieu (1984: 209-211) suggests 'it would be naïve to suppose all practitioners of the same sport confer the same meaning on their practice or even, strictly speaking, that they are practicing the same practice'.

In the case of BURC the field (in the Bourdieusian sense) should include geography and architecture as part of the structure. The training environment is 'loaded' with symbolism and icon that may play a part in the subconscious functioning of rowers at

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<sup>35</sup> For example a Tokyo university who have there annual camp in Australia produced a DVD of the trip which they saw as a great device to 'win new members' to their club. A club from Sendai in northern Japan includes on their website as part of the major history of their club the training camps held in Boston along with the reappointment of their Belarusian coach. These are far more sophisticated recruiting devices than the free *yaki-niku* (meat BBQ) that attracted Tana to become a member of BURC.

BURC. Whether invented tradition, custom, or 'cheerful history', the fact that these students operate in such a highly symbolic environment requires acknowledgement. Ishiyamadera is famous in Japan as the location where 'Tales of Genji' was written. Whilst it is unlikely that many (if any) of the students at BURC have read this text, they are nevertheless aware of its importance and connection with pre-Meiji, feudal Japan. Similarly significant in the subconscious recognition of space and surroundings for members of BURC is the fact that the Tokugawa came to power with victory in the nearby fields of Sekigarahara in 1600. Again anchors the subconscious in an environment of historical allegory. As discussed in Stephen Vlastos' (1998) 'Mirror of Modernity', the last one hundred years of Japanese history has seen many examples where customs, values and social relationships supposedly from an ancient past are actually recent inventions. In most cases such 'invention' occurs in response to the challenge of rapid change to existing identity. Carol Gluck (1998: 263) argues particularly of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century reinvention of Edo and its emphasis on 'happy feudalism' (and its hierarchies), and "Japanese-y culture" (such) as kabuki, sushi, zen, and tea ceremony'. One can travel anywhere in Japan and meet locals who are always keen to express that 'this area is famous for its'... In the case of the Seta River it is Ishiyamadera, the seta karahashi, sekigahara and those little sweet rice cakes. Once this history becomes lived below the subconscious it becomes embodied and taken for granted, in a way commonsense.

### **Becoming a Member - *Suisen* and Kindness**

Becoming a member of a university club can be part of a career pathway in some regards. Whilst the pedigree or genealogy of members is discussed later, the process of *suisen* or special entry is important to understand. *Suisen* is the practice whereby



high school students can attend a university based on references from high school coaches and a special exam rather than satisfying the standard entrance exam requirements (that they may or may not have been able to do). *Suisen* is not a full fee paid scholarship. Rather the advantage of *suisen* is it allows high school students to enter a university that they may have otherwise been ineligible, due to academic requirements, to attend. If one gains entry into university on *suisen* for rowing then they will be expected to continue rowing during their university career. The process of *suisen* becomes a valid and realistic pathway for high school students to gain access to university, and depending on their ability, the University of their Choice. The practice of *suisen* places value on the notion of bodily intelligence and as a result the body becomes a vehicle for a social mobility specific to the value ascribed in Japanese society to a meritocratic education system. In a system where the hierarchy of institutions can determine the type of job one has access to and the amount of educational capital one can accrue, the possibility of gaining an advantage through a sport may be particularly attractive.

The practice of *suisen* becomes not only an option for talented athletes to gain entry into (a better) university, it also becomes a vehicle for high school coaches to enhance their reputation and hence capital within the field of education. During periods two and four I had the opportunity to talk to and observe a well known coach from well known school in Okayama prefecture organise meetings and act as an agent for students with recruiters from various universities. There are literally dozens of graduates from this particular school actively rowing in university boat clubs

throughout Japan.<sup>36</sup> This particular coach had a method of pushing two students to recruiters by offering one of his top ranked students with a lesser ranked student as a combined proposal (buy one get one free).

Other than *suisen*, rowing clubs have open days attracting new students. There are many clubs whose membership is largely made up of students who have no rowing background prior to joining. However, most of the major or prestigious clubs will have a strong *suisen* bias. Tana is the only member at BURC who did not row during his high school years:

I've always liked sports and I wanted to do a sport at university so I joined the rowing club. Actually I chose rowing because the club had an introductory day and free yakiniku party. So I suppose that the feeling of the rowing club was good for me to begin with. But I had no idea that rowing was going to be this tough, it has been far, far more difficult than I would have ever expected.

It has been more difficult for me than for other members I guess because they have strong rowing backgrounds so they knew what to expect. It took me a while to be able to deal with the training. (interview with Tana)

Tana's experience is unique at BURC (having no rowing background) and he expresses the initial gap between his expectations and the reality of being a member. In discussions with members from Tokyo based university rowing clubs the notion of kindness and relationships<sup>37</sup> is often mentioned as a motivator for joining the club. As with Tana's experience, the expectations of kindness is initially incongruous with the reality of hardship and pain that one is required to endure through training. However, over time this incongruity is harmonised as one becomes accustomed to the physical requirements and develops friendships and a sense of solidarity with the group. The

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<sup>36</sup> It's quite easy to track the genealogy of university rowing clubs. Many clubs have webpages which introduce members in regards to the high school they attended.

<sup>37</sup> It had been suggested from several Japanese colleagues that Rowing clubs actively target students with no experience who may seem lonely or quiet because they are more attracted to the 'warm-heartedness' of the recruiting tactics. Further they will fit more easily into the expectations of the club and will develop more of a dependence on the group as they lack other social outlets. This ensures that over the course of their membership they develop very strong identities within the club that ensure stability of practice and relationships.

predominantly *suisen* based membership of BURC may join as a 'logical' or 'natural' continuation of their sporting careers and an extension of their rowing habitus. However, it is entirely likely that new members, whether experienced or not, also join as part of a broader self cultivation project. The following is the invitation put out to prospective freshman rowers from a famous Tokyo university:

The value of spending four years  
I want to develop myself  
I want to make life long friends  
I want to be engaged with something with my whole energy  
I want to step forward into society with confidence  
It promises to make your university life one more than expected  
Your future will start here - ..... boat club

With belief and acceptance of this logic, that is, the notion of self-cultivation, in mind, students are attracted to and join the rowing club and begin their journey of being not only a rower, but a BURC member.

### **More than Just a Boathouse**

The term boathouse is grossly inadequate in describing the living arrangements of the male members of BURC. Whilst almost living with the boats, the boat boathouse serves a combination of functions for which it is fully equipped. Downstairs is split into two equal sized spaces, one housing the boats and the other comprising of kitchen, dining room, shower area, toilets, laundry/basins space and an eight mat tatami room. There is a door connecting the laundry/basins with the boat storage area, however for the most part rowers accessed the boats via the front. This means exiting the living quarters and walking about five metres to the front of the boat area. Each time a member leaves or enters the living area they change their shoes in keeping with custom. Although the option is available to discreetly move into the boathouse via the rear the front option is preferred. Thus, while physically connected, a symbolic

separation is made between the two areas. All stretching, preparation, briefing and debriefing occurs either in the boat area or outside it. The living quarters side acts as a type of sanctuary from the ever present reality of rowing. Conceivably, when living in a boathouse, surrounded by other boathouses and training daily some form of escape, however manufactured, is required.

From the downstairs we climb the stairs to the dormitory area on the second floor. A common passage links the stairs with all the bunkrooms. Each room contains eight to ten bunks of which only half are occupied with the extra bunks serving as storage for clothes, books etc. the rooms appear more cluttered than they actually are due to the clothesline setup in each. Hanging from the ceiling in every room is the greatest array of training gear conceivable, a veritable jungle of lycra, spandex and cotton. Each room has a small balcony which allows the breezes to blow through stopping mould and drying the gear. At the river end of the communal passage is the 'manager's room'. This space is long and narrow, housing two small couches and coffee table. Lockers line the walls and in one corner there is a computer. The room has a balcony just large enough to stand on. The way this room was set out was reminiscent of any standard meeting room in a school, university, or small business. It was used only when important matters needed resolving. For example, the crew selection issues relating to 4<sup>th</sup> year student Musashi (discussed later) required the use of this space. Again a symbolic space is created out of nothing that has associated meaning with other fields of social interaction. When required this space offered an appropriate amount of dignity to facilitate important discussion.

The boathouse can thus be broken into clearly demarcated zones which create a sense of difference in the appropriate usage of each. The boat storage area, washing and toilet facilities, kitchen and dining area, dormitory and manager's room all possess varied function and are separated not only spatially but cerebrally. Movement from one area to another, for example the boathouse to the toilet required entry past the kitchen and a change of shoes, down the hall to another change of shoes and into the toilet. The reverse footwear swapping ritual was required on the way out. The only other room was the eight mat *tatami* room that belonged to the women's club and was out of bounds for the men.

Surprisingly the men are not permitted to reside at the boathouse all the time. Though not always the case (head Alumni Matsuhiko lived full time at the boathouse during his university career in the 1960s) the men only stay overnight on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday evenings. Monday is the universal day off for Japanese rowing. Not one of the many clubs on Seta trains on Monday. Interestingly the same practice is adhered to in Tokyo also. Therefore, on Thursday, Sunday and Monday the rowers stay at home. In some cases members who come from some distance away are forced to rent accommodation in nearby Seta or Kyoto, which means they have living quarters at the boathouse and close by. Kentaro actually has an apartment across the road about 200metres from the boathouse (he still rides his motor bike to and from). Clearly it would be perhaps just as practical and certainly cheaper just to live in the apartment. However, part of being a member of BURC means living in at the boathouse is compulsory. Kobe (stroke of the 4+) is from Osaka and rents a place in Seta where he lives alone. Even on non-residential days he is down at the boathouse at some stage – to wash his car, do some laundry, to pick up

some clothes. It would be cheaper and more convenient for Kobe if he lived solely at the boathouses. However, every member keeps their distance on non residential evenings.

### ***Ningenkankei* – The Dynamics of BURC**

*Ningenkankei* refers to the concept of human relationship. Many of the members of BURC perceived the development of *ningenkankei* was one of the major outcomes of belonging to the club. *Ningenkankei* as discussed by the rowers refers to one's ability to communicate and coexist with other people. Inside the nexus of identity that is BURC, individuals develop their sense of *ningenkankei* grounded in the Confucian understanding of hierarchy or *jōge kankei* (literally up and down relationships). The form of *jōge kankei* practiced at BURC provides the structural blueprint of relations depending on whether one is *kōhai* (junior), *sempai* (senior) or *dōkyūsei* (the same rank). Working in unison, the *ningenkankei* that develops is heavily influenced by the concept of *wa* (harmony). Whilst Ito (1998) argues that the meaning of *wa* has varied throughout history, he suggests its modern day definition is a combination of 'a traditional practice of mutual assistance embedded in everyday life', 'freedom and equality in a community', 'decision by consensus', and 'a non-idealistic and emotional tie' (Takagiwa in Ito Y, 1998: 38). The *wa* is an overriding influence in the BURC members' understanding of what *ningenkankei* should be.

When asked about his experience of *jōge kankei* in his first year Musashi offered:

I had a sempai, Matsuda, who, when I was a freshman was very good to me. In the boat he trained so hard it was amazing and during parties and things like that Matsuda was a crazy man, you know, he would get very drunk and he was a lot of fun, but during private time he was very different. He was considerate and caring (*ki ga kiku*) to all *kōhai*. He made me feel very comfortable around him. He encouraged

me to speak and express my opinion. His idea of *jōge kankei* was very relaxed and he treated me like we were *dōkyūsei*.

Musashi describes, in Matsuda, an identity that combines the *kōha* man with a man of feelings and compassion. What Matsuda and consequently Musashi develop is the ability to balance the necessities of time and place, when to be *kōha* and when to be *ki ga kiku*. To play the game the BURC man needs to be able to manage his *omote/ura* habitus (Doi, 1971). In Matsuda's case he demonstrates appropriate expression of *omote* in various forms based on the situation whether training or drinking and similarly expresses his *ura* in quiet moments with Musashi. A strong habitus is therefore expressed in and through the quality and appropriateness of one's *kejime* or the ability to shift from *omote* to *ura* and back again (Tobin, 1992).

The challenges of living away from home for the first time are big enough for Japanese university students, many of whom migrate across the country to attend university. For BURC members not only do they move away from home, they find themselves living in close quarters with another twenty men. A first year student on *suisen* may know a couple of older members especially if they came to BU on *suisen*. For example, Fuji has been Kobe's sempai for six years, first at high school and now at BU. Kobe's younger brother is set to come to BU in two years so there is a type of continuity to this genealogy. However, for non *suisen* members, one can be a complete unknown and have no point of reference to guide them through their initial engagement with the field. Most Japanese university students don't leave home to go and live with twenty plus strangers. In such an environment the freshman's ability to embody the necessary *ningenkankei* to find his place in the group is magnified by the extreme nature of the experience.

That members believe this ability to interact with others in a culturally appropriate fashion must be learnt and developed at this stage of their lives is indicative of a collective sense of difference to other members of their generation (discussed later as distinction). It also serves to reinforce popular ideas of Japanese youth as increasingly socially defunct, anti-social and even nihilistic (Ito. Y, 1998). Mathews (2003: 110-115) insists that older generations see young Japanese as lacking fighting spirit, devotion to work, appreciation of history and to a large extent take most things for granted. To be intent on developing *seishin*, *ningenkankei* and *jōge kankei*, which is part of the self cultivation project, therefore means aligning oneself with a more traditional view of Japanese identity and in a way responding to the criticisms of older generations in a way that validates these criticisms.

As such, the social structure of BURC reflects a microcosm of Japanese social interaction. However, it would be dangerous to see this social nexus as a reflection of all Japanese social interaction. Rather, the field that is BURC reflects a very particular social organisation, with a very particular habitus. Whilst it can be seen as relatively static over time, the degree of agency and autonomy experienced by members of the group is surprisingly high. To this end this may reflect an extremely effective form of hegemony where commonsense and the closeness of the group allows the guaranteed accrual of capital and conversion of this capital into other forms without internal resistance. In some ways the framework under which BURC operates represents the concept of the extended family. However, it would be more accurate to relate it to the romanticised 'Japanese Village', a site of 'classlessness and group harmony', of 'mutual aid' and devoid of 'authoritarian intrusiveness' (Scheiner, 1998: 67-78). The



natural and commonsense approach that operates regarding group activity such as that of BURC is indicative of a highly successful hegemonic process. Whilst there is no doubt that various groups indeed seek to be different from other student groups, that is, demonstrate distinction from others, in the case of BURC this is achieved by reaffirming an identity constructed through very 'Japanese' concepts. By 'Japanese' concepts I refer to the ideologies of harmony, hierarchy and collectivity. The collective 'we Japanese' is often used to express a sense of homogeneity and cultural uniqueness that is somehow apparently genetically encoded in a way that provides a type of cultural determinism. Regardless of the list of apparently 'invented tradition' (Vlastos, 1998: Inoue, 1998: Light & Kinnaird, 2001) that makes up many aspects of Japanese cultural experience and group life, such 'tradition' is an indication of the strength and structure of apparatuses of power such as the education system and their effectiveness at naturalising to an almost biological level even the most recent concept of 'Japaneseness'.

The rowing club has several groups operating within it at the one time, each with their own internal hierarchies, each with their own roles, responsibilities and functions. Remove any one of the groups and the whole BURC community would cease to function. Whilst there are the men's and women's clubs there are two other groups whose function is vital to the success of the other groups. These are the managers and the alumni organisations. Before continuing with the social groups operating at BURC it is useful to develop some form of demographic overview of the membership.

### **BURC Members - a Brief Demographic of Thoughts**

As part of the process of making sense of BURC a questionnaire (see Appendix.2) was designed to create a demographic picture of the members and to also examine,

amongst other things, some of their fundamental thinking regarding why they row, what they hope to learn or develop from their rowing and their appraisal of the most important aspects of a successful rowing experience. It should be noted that of the twenty six questionnaires that were distributed twenty four were returned completed. The questionnaires were distributed during week five of period three in the research plan and this was done on a casual level over the course of a Friday afternoon training session. I was in no hurry to get them back but, nevertheless, all twenty four were received back before the end of Sunday's training sessions and all were handed back in person, every member not seeing any reason in keeping their responses anonymous. The questionnaires were only distributed to 'active' members, that is, either rowers or coxswains from the men's or women's club. No managers, 'old boys' or coaches were included in this process. Based on my experience of surveys and the like in Australia I was not sure what to expect in terms of the quality of response or the level of care taken to complete the task. I was more than pleasantly surprised with the level of detail and the thorough nature of the responses and I doubt that members would have returned their forms in person had they not felt like they had applied themselves appropriately particularly considering the relationships that had developed over my various periods at BURC. I think most of the members approached their task with the questionnaire seriously perhaps out of respect for my position at the club on various levels (that is advisor, rower, drinker, friend of Nakamura's etc).

The one hundred year history of BURC refers to the history of the men's club at the boathouse. It is the flagship of the club, has the largest number of members, and essentially the boathouse operates to support this group. The men's club has a proud and successful history and as a result can attract members from some of the best rowing high schools, particularly from the Kansai region. The membership at the time

of this questionnaire consisted of nine women and eighteen men. The majority of students came from Kyoto, Shiga and Osaka prefecture, though there was a strong connection with a high school in Okayama, schools in Shikoku and as far South as Nagasaki and Oita in Kyushu. Interestingly over 75% of all members attended public high schools. This goes against the Western perception of rowing as being an elite (in terms of class background) sport. Rowing in Japanese secondary education would seem to have more to do with the proximity of suitable water to the school than the wealth of its student's families. Indeed, Japanese high school sporting programmes are determined by the pragmatism of what sports the environment will facilitate. Of the nine members at BURC on *suisen*, eight were from public school backgrounds and half of this number was recruited from outside of Honshu. This serves further to redefine rowing in Japan under the umbrella of egalitarianism, a classless society. The average age of the membership is nineteen and a half and there is even representation between first, second, third and fourth year students. As all but one member had rowed at high school the average number of years members have been engaged in rowing was five. Considering the nine sessions a week that makes up the training routine, it was not surprising to find that although most students averaged eleven contact hours at university per week, the average number of extra curricula study hours was only two, with as many as eight rowers indicating that they did absolutely no study outside of class time. Yet, even taking these study patterns into account, eighty eight percent of BURC members believed that their membership would assist and be an advantage when applying for work after graduating. In some regards this response reflects a certain mistrust or anti-intellectualism toward formal education that has its origins in a cultural rationale that perceives value in activity only if it has the effect of improving the individual. The potential for tertiary education to be

viewed skeptically due to its 'leisure land' reputation produces, through the choices made by BURC members, an appreciation of the profits to be gained through a more disciplined and physical past-time.

Members were asked to indicate what they want to most get out of their rowing time at BURC. The strongest responses were for building friendships and fitness, winning, having fun and developing *seishin*. These responses are interesting as they have the effect of correlating fun and friendships with the concept of *seishin*, which according to most definitions is developed through hardship, sacrifice and suffering. More accurately, however, is the notion that the appropriate use of time should include elements of both enjoyment and hardship. From this perspective members are accepting as normal or commonsense the notion that, for their experience to have merit or value, it requires a good degree of pain as well as the pleasure. Significantly nearly all members had no aspirations to go further with their rowing, that is, either through job opportunities as a company rower or as a potential National team member.

Each member was given an inventory of factors that contribute to a successful rowing experience (in regards to racing). They were asked to choose three in order of importance. The feedback from this inventory is presented below in table 1.

**Table 2. Factors Needed For Successful Rowing**

Factors	Percentage of responses
<i>Seishin</i>	75%
Teamwork	63%
Physical strength	46%
Group identity	42%
Technique	38%
More training than the opposition	29%
Fitness	12%
Quality of Coaching	8%
Quality of the Equipment	0%

*Seishin* was deemed by members to be the most important factor in a successful rowing experience and as such spirit is therefore perceived as more valuable and trusted than physicality or skills. Not surprisingly, the quality of the coaching, as there really is very little, is largely irrelevant as to the quality of the equipment. I would suggest, however, that if BURC had old and sub-standard equipment then this could be a concern, but as they have the very best technology in their boats, this is not the case.

Fuji helps explain the mentality behind the member's perceptions of the sport:

Feeling is the most important component. Skills are important, that's another thing. You can't think subjectively because you need to treat other people objectively. You have to take care of the other members, there are a lot of types of feelings involved. Skills, *seishin ryoku*, *seishin*, things like that are most important

Fuji's response makes the connection that the most important factor in rowing is that the feeling is right and that this feeling is related to the *seishin* in the crew. *Seishin* is therefore a far more complex consideration than just 'spirit'. It is simultaneously a reflection of the individual and of the group. According to a BURC understanding of *seishin* this incorporates the ability to feel together, whether that feeling be in the boat, in the boathouse or in collective forms of suffering and discipline.

Finally, over two thirds of the membership indicated that they would not row after university. They believe their work will restrict them and they may be living in a location where there is no opportunity to row. Termination of their rowing career is not something members necessarily willingly choose to do (Fuji discussed later) rather it is something that they feel is inevitable and they have to do. Similar to Sato's (1991) *bozozoku* who reach a certain age and terminate their involvement with fast cars and illegal behaviour, the completion of university and rowing career is akin to

'growing up' whereby the societal demands on individuals over-ride or overwhelm the individual's wants.

## **The Women**

It was not the intention<sup>38</sup> of this study to examine the women's rowing club at BURC. However, a few observations are necessary to properly position the men's club. The women's club has usurped the men's club in recent years in regards to success and championship victories. Although smaller in numbers they are extremely dedicated and most come from exceptionally strong rowing pedigree. The entire boathouse is essentially the domain of the male rowers with the exception of an eight mat *tatami* room that serves as the women's change room and meeting place. The women live away from the shed and travel in for every session. The managers who provide meals for the rowers don't cater for the women. When asked whether she thought this was a fair and acceptable agreement Nana explained that;

it's fine with us really. We all live close by and I think we eat much better than the men because we cook for ourselves. Our fees are only 1200Yen per month which is really cheap when you consider our equipment. The men live here so they need more space and I guess most of them can't cook

Even though they don't live at the boathouse the women's club operates on the same schedule as the men. Their routines of training and decision making processes are almost identical to those of the men. However there are some differences in approach. The women have out-sourced aspects of the programme writing to professional coaches at Toray company club over the river. The men's club has never entertained such action. Further, the women take proportionally less time with their

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<sup>38</sup> This was not because I thought that information gained would not be as interesting a reflection on identity, power and hegemony in Japanese education as the men's data. Rather, considering the time frame I had and the opportunities that arose the men's club was initially much easier to access. On reflection the women rowers were very open to ideas and discussion as evidenced by Nana's willingness to discuss her experiences.

briefing and de-briefing during training sessions and, therefore, spend less time at training (even though their on water time may be considerably longer than the men). One reason for this is likely to be as a result of living away from the boathouse. However, the women rowers appear much more organised and disciplined on the whole. Their sense of *jōge kankei* is much more obvious than that of the men's club and they are more inclined to engage in acts of respect such as bowing to the water at the end of each session. A Japanese colleague once suggested that if I wanted to see Confucian discipline at work in its purest form then one need go no further than a girl's junior high school volleyball team. Certainly BURC women are an example par excellence of muscular Confucianism and the embodiment of *budō*.

According to the questionnaire motivation for rowing is very similar between men and women though their intentions once they graduate can vary. Whilst some, such as Nana, intend to establish working careers, others see their future differently. Tsugano is the women's coxswain, she is 21 and is in her final year at BURC. Her plans are very different to her friend Nana:

I'm looking forward to getting married next year. I'm engaged to a former BURC rower who graduated two years ago. He's 23 years old now and is a fireman. I'm definitely not planning on working (when I graduate)...I just can't wait to get married

The responses from Nana and Tsugano highlight various naturalisation of a gendered identity. Whether regarding their access to the shed (limited to the eight mat room), prospects for the future (work or marriage), intense discipline and sense of order (muscular Confucianism), willingness to outsource the programme (the men across the river will know more) or in their (unequal) relationships with the male members, there exists a concept of gender based on experience of 'a sexually ordered social order' (Bourdieu, 2001: 95). Bourdieu considers the understanding of gender as an

internalisation, below the level of consciousness of various schemes of appreciation and perception that lead women to;

find the social order such as it is, normal or even natural and in a sense anticipate their destiny, refusing the courses and careers from which they are anyway excluded and rushing towards those for which they are in any case destined (Bourdieu, 2001: 95)

This sense of 'destiny' is expressed through a habitus which operates in a way that perpetuates such a commonsense approach to identity. Whilst quite often there is little verbal interaction between the men and women before, during and after training, as was seen at the *nomihodai* and other social events there is a good deal of fraternizing between the two groups and there were several 'blossoming' relationships between some of the members.

### **Behind the Scenes**

The agents who make up the field of BURC are more than just its membership. There is a behind-the-scenes support network in operation which ensures that from equipment to dinner, the BURC rowers are always looked after. This network is made up of managers, OBs, Alumni, coaches and university staff. Each one of these sub-groups exists in its own field simultaneously to being part of BURC. Of these the most hands-on and powerful in the day to day operation of BURC are the managers.

The supporter group prefers to refer to themselves as managers. These are BU students, all female, with no rowing background, who join BURC to prepare meals, support, clean etc.

Midori is a 4<sup>th</sup> year Social Welfare student

I joined the rowing club because I saw a TV programme (when at high school) about university rowing. I wasn't allowed to be a rower because I didn't row at high school but I still wanted to be involved so I became a manager. We are a very strong group. I help with making food, supporting at regattas, carrying oars and other things like that



Essentially the major role the managers play at BURC is preparing dinner and breakfast on all the days when the rowers have a residential night. The managers are a group within a group, rotating the workload depending on the position of the manager within the hierarchy of the group. As with the rowers, the more senior managers are the leaders of the group. They decide on the menu for the evening and breakfast and are responsible for the overall result, whilst the junior managers assist with preparation and cleaning. As with other groups at BURC, the men's or the women's club, the managers operate under a similar understanding of *jōge kankei*. Ordinarily the head manager of the day arrives at approximately 3pm to begin making the evening meal and breakfast. As the afternoon progressed other managers arrived to assist. The evening meal sticks to an unerring format of soup, a main dish – usually chicken or fish accompanied with pickles, rice and milk. Great care and effort go into the presentation of the meals, most often they tend to look like a picture out of a cooking magazine. In fact, the recipes usually come from such magazines and the daily meal is advertised in advance for the rowers on notices throughout the boathouse. The managers also prepare breakfast the evening before which is always some variation of fish, soup and rice<sup>39</sup>. The head manager for the day rarely left the shed before 9pm. During the time the managers were at the boathouse there was a subtle shift in the balance of power. The kitchen became almost a no go area for the rowers and any that did enter the area were exceptionally quick to get out again. The managers were held in very high respect by the rowers, particularly the older members. As Taka explained,

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<sup>39</sup> Cwiertka (1998) points out that the combination of fish, pickles, miso soup and rice has its origins on the menus of well to do Japanese during the Edo (1600-1868) period. The traditional nature of the food prepared for consumption at BURC is yet another example of the 'below the level of consciousness' embodiment of the habitus.

They (managers) do a fantastic job. Yuri (head manager) is a very good cook. She cooks like my mother. Tonight's meal was delicious. Did you like it? It's a very traditional Japanese meal

Even when there is no dinner provided a couple of managers arrive at about 4.30pm to prepare breakfast. Asked why she does it, Midori offered:

I've got nothing else to do today. This gives me something to do plus I enjoy cooking....we have a chat and a laugh. It's better than sitting at home by myself.

Midori indicates here that social engagement is difficult unless one belongs to some form of group (whether club, work, cultural hobby activity etc). Midori, as with many members, have the perception to appreciate that BURC provides 'genuine' social interaction because it incorporates all the elements, longitudinal and latitudinal hierarchy and hierarchically determined roles that define the traditional Japanese understanding of group.

Of all the elements of Japanese educational sport the role of the manager is perhaps the most unique and intriguing. The high school rugby team I coached also had managers who were involved in assisting the team. They would attend training and games and provide refreshments. In particular, they were responsible for a large kettle that was filled with water and used to distribute water to the whole team. Other than this they provide support from the sidelines. In both my rugby experience and at BURC their involvement is totally peripheral. Yet without these groups the social nexus of the club is not complete. For the experience of the rowers to be genuine they require this support group, which acts not only in the functionary role of caterer but more importantly as providing validity about and around the rowers' experience. The very underpinning of the group or collective is the existence of the levels of membership which facilitate the *ningenkankei* necessary for the sport to have its full moral and social educative effect.

One afternoon, ex-manager Mari (23 years old) was at the boathouse with 2 other ex-managers, one of who is now in a relationship with one of the ex-rowers. Asked why she became a manager, Mari suggested,

I saw rowing and immediately wanted to be involved. But the women's club was very strong and I had never rowed before. The best I could do was become a manager.

In Mari's case she didn't possess the appropriate habitus to become a rower. However she saw merit in becoming a manager. The managers, as with Mari's friend, also provide an important social network within which there is the potential for sexual relationships to blossom. Several of the 'old boys' had married or were in a relationship with managers from their rowing days and during events such as the freshman's party there was a fair amount of flirting between the rowers and managers, far more, in fact, than between the male and female rowers. The presence of the managers in the boathouse and the social organisation of the club undoubtedly had a strong effect on the gendered roles ascribed to the various groups. Indeed, the notions of masculinity as held by BURC rowers were reinforced and legitimated by the presence of women who provided the function of homemaker. The inference from Taka that Yuri's cooking reminded him of his mother anchors both male and female in a familiar gender appropriate environment. Again, it is a traditional concept of femininity and matches well with a more traditional concept of masculinity.

### **Once an Old Boy, Always an Old Boy**

Another group in the network behind the scenes is the alumni or OBs'. This includes graduates who have been out of the club for a year to members who finished rowing 40 or 50 years ago. As the years pass, the OBs' roles change. Those such as Fuji, operate as a link between the final year students and the employment process. Fuji (a

graduate student and therefore ineligible to continue competing) as *sempai* to all current members validates their experience by giving it so much credence (it is a game worth playing). He comes down to the river often to do some coaching because he is at a bit of a loss as to what to do with his time and clearly misses his rowing days. The following example from field notes is indicative of Fuji's use of time on most weekends:

It's Saturday and Fuji has been at the boathouse since 6.15am but has done very little coaching. He hasn't followed any of the crews out training on the bike and has spent the entire morning just inside the boat storage area. As crew come off he offers a couple of jokes but that's about it, no debrief or talk about the session. Whilst most of the members finish their sessions and head off to sleep or go out for a while, Fuji remains at the boathouse. At 1pm there's no one around except a couple of female members and Fuji. He puts on a little show for them in front of the boathouse, exposing his backside and doing a bizarre little Betty Boo pose. Earlier as other crews would finish their session he would quickly point at two of the first year rowers who were already off the water. Instantly they would jump to their feet and run to meet the boat coming into land and assist it. Functionally this action has little significance as the crews rarely have any problem landing the boat. However it is once again to affirm action of group identity. We will look out for you and make sure everything is OK. This happens everytime a boat comes in and the urgency of the running to meet the boat signifies a certain desire to create a sense of unity in the club. Obviously Fuji needs to ensure this lesson is passed on. Fuji drove off at about 2.30pm that day. He seems like a lost soul. (fieldnotes)

No longer able to express himself through his rowing, Fuji takes on a role of entertainer and carrier of the code. More significantly, however, is Fuji's inability to utilise his time now that he is no longer able to row. Years of having his time regulated for him by the sport have not equipped him well for dealing with the notion of 'free time'. Fuji explains his feelings of being in a type of limbo as follows:

BURC was most of my university life. I miss rowing badly and if I could I would be back in a boat without hesitation. I want to join in more but I think the fourth year students are the leaders now so I shouldn't bother them with my ideas

The termination of Fuji's rowing career, although not at all unexpected, produces a temporary sense of dislocation in his individual identity. Being in between rowing and

employment has left him in a type of void because, although still part of the social nexus of BURC, he is no longer an affective member of a group (once he gains employment his affectivity will be restored in the collective identity that will operate in the workplace). This is the first time since he began rowing at Junior High school that Fuji has not been daily involved, in a meaningful way, in the particular *jōge kankei* of a rowing club.

Fuji is important to BURC. He attends the *nomihodai*, supports at regattas, sometimes coaches and offers advice and more often than not just hangs around.

I guess I'm a bit of a mood maker, actually I've always been this way, it just comes naturally.

I would love to be involved at BURC in the future as an advisor. We don't have coaches at BURC so the OB's can be quite important in helping out when there are problems with the programme (interview with Fuji).

There are some other OBs who do the same, to varying degrees, as Fuji. The OBs' role shifts once they leave university for the work force. As they become income earners their purpose shifts to financial supporter and social conductor. Kobe notes:

Because BURC is very relaxed in terms of *kōhai/sempai* the alumni don't put pressure on us. The best thing of this rowing team is the relaxed atmosphere. The OBs' understand the system so they give us a lot of freedom. If we buy a new boat they assist with funding. They are good supporters because they don't tell us what to do. They are very kind and generous.

The OBs' support must be unconditional, no strings attached. For example, when Matsuhiko visits the boathouse he always brings some form of gift, like fruit or cake and is met with great respect by the members. He's not interested in their programme (that is, he keeps any opinions to himself and doesn't suggest various techniques with current members unless directly asked), only that the members are continuing the BURC way. Matsuhiko also attends the important regattas and the freshmen's *nomihodai* as a key functionary, making an important speech and subsidising some of

the costs. Finally, he forms a useful connection into employment after graduation into manufacturing where he has some contacts.

The managers and OB's provide the very important function of completing the social structure and hierarchy at BURC. In particular the OB network ensures that being a member is never just a four year experience but can continue on throughout one's life. Any OB of BURC will always have a place, that is, a social position relative to the rest of the OB's and membership. The OB's realise and expect genuine power at the club to remain with the current active members, in fact their involvement ensures this.

### **Natural Selection**

BURC is intentionally student run and driven. Most of the direction for the season comes from the senior fourth year students, particularly the captain. Perhaps the most contentious period in every season comes about when crews have to be finalised and selection completed. In this process we see in Hiro an ability to 'play the game' like no other. His identity and habitus so embodied reflect an innate comprehension of the past as present and of where the deferred profits lie. His actions throughout the selection process further enhance his spiritual and symbolic capital in the manner with which he operates regarding the big decisions of who is in or out.

Selection is an exhausting process, beginning with the number one boat and working down from there. The number one boat is the coxed four. The primary method at BURC to select the crews is a process known as seat racing. Ordinarily (according to its practice in Australia, Europe and America as a selection device) this would be conducted over a straight course involving two or more crews whereby individuals are

pitted against one another via the subtle manipulation of the crew combinations the end result being the selection of the individual who consistently makes the boat he/she is in go faster than the other boat. For all this complexity, BURC operate their seat racing differently. Three positions are already decided based on consensus, age and ability. Only one boat is used and three potential members are each given a chance to row in the crew. The test is a sub-maximal workout of about 600metres, or more appropriately the Shinkansen bridge to the Seta karahashi. This stretch of river is not straight, but it is directly in full view of the boathouse. As Ito espouses, 'this (method of crew selection) is the BURC way, its very important. We do it here (in front of the boathouse) because the water is much smoother. Feeling is very important. Hiro and the others will decide which one (rower) feels better and they will be selected.' The concept of 'seat racing' was designed and is used throughout the rowing world to bring some form of objectivity or science to the selection process. In the case of BURC the concept has been adopted and adapted to serve another purpose whilst still holding the trappings of 'best practice' and objectivity.

At no stage is 'which one makes the boat go faster' mentioned. When asked later as to the selection of the first year, Taka, into the final position in the number one boat those involved offered that he was 'very flexible at fitting into the dynamics of the crew, he adapted quickest of all the rowers' (interview Kobe). The captain was willing to go into more depth:

Hiro: At the time Taka had the basic skills and passion, plus he is improving all the time. His attitude is very good. He has the enthusiasm and is very keen to do well. I have seen Taka since he came to the university and he has improved most out of all the others.

Brent: Do you feel you are an example for Taka?

Hiro: It's hard to answer. I think I should. I think I should be good example for Taka (said reluctantly).

There can be no doubt that Hiro and Taka have a very special *kōhai/sempai* relationship. Firstly, Hiro is four years older than Taka and most of the other direct *kōhai/sempai* relationships are more between first year and second year, second year and third year and so on. Taka's status within the club dynamics is special. Regarded by most as a 'samurai boy', Taka's approach to all things rowing and BURC is very uncomplicated and straight forward. The capital afforded him by the mantle of 'samurai boy' has allowed him to excel within the dynamics of BURC. Coming from a very strong Buddhist rowing school carries a certain identity that fits seemingly well within a Buddhist university. His high school produces many *suisen* rowers for university and his high school coach is eccentric but well respected with a strong reputation for producing graduates imbued with strong *seishin* and *bushidō* qualities. Although fairly taciturn, and academically challenged, Taka is no fool regarding his social awareness within the group. When asked about the challenges and expectations of rowing in the number one boat at BU, Taka expresses surprising conviction and ambition coupled with an awareness of what is required for success that is very much in keeping with the overall philosophy of the boat club:

Taka: After 3 years, when I am a leader, I want to win all the regattas in Japan. At the moment I don't want to think just like a freshman though. I want to try my best and train hard. I want to think like a fourth year student, the feeling should be like a fourth year student. I have to be positive. The result comes after the effort.

Brent: What are the important aspects of this 'effort'?

Taka: You must have the desire to win the winning spirit and to show that feeling through performance. Spiritually wanting to win, heart, plus of course a large amount of practice.



Comments regarding Taka mention his *magokoro* (sincerity) and he always wears his 'heart on his sleeve'. In his relationship with Hiro, Taka is indeed like his retainer. Consider the following observations from field notes:

At dinner Hiro puts his cup forward for milk. Taka jumps into action only the carton he goes for is empty. I saw this before it happened and have a carton on hand to fill Hiro's cup. Taka apologises, first to Hiro and then to me for not being prompter. He promises to be more attentive next time. (fieldnotes)

This form of action reaffirms Hiro's position not only as sempai but also captain. Taka realises that the benefits that he receives from Hiro's guidance require reciprocal acts of appreciation, even one as seemingly insignificant as pouring a cup of milk.

At the back of the shed Hiro is again taking special interest in Taka and has rigged up an oar next to the ergo (rowing machine) to make it more realistic. As Taka is first year he is new to sweep<sup>40</sup> rowing and is having some trouble with the concepts. Hiro barely says a word to any of the other first years, but to Taka he is almost like a big brother or father figure. He stands next to Taka, physically modeling his movement, demonstrating and explaining in detail. Hiro is very positive and encouraging as Taka starts to make progress. Taka is total attention and mimics the movements long after Hiro has gone. (fieldnotes)

Noticeably this *sempai/kōhai* relationship is very different to the one of brutality described by Light (1998) in his observation of high school rugby. Light recounts the physical beatings metered out to kohai players (responsible for looking after training equipment) on a rugby tour to Australia when some of the team training gear was stolen. The university *sempai/kōhai* relationship is more sophisticated and caring. There is a genuine feeling of admiration and mutual respect between the two.

Hiro has definitely earmarked a first year rower as his *kōhai*. Taka has managed to make the number 1 boat despite having some obvious technical flaws. During meals Taka organises the food for Hiro even to the point at one stage of actually feeding Hiro with his own chopsticks. (fieldnotes)

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<sup>40</sup> There are 2 types of rowing, sculling which involves the rower having 2 oars, one either side of the boat moving in symmetry and sweep rowing which involves each member having one oar and moving in an asymmetrical movement. The difference between the 2 is not necessarily great, however the initial change from one to the other can be quite difficult.

The selection of Taka also breaks with the stereotype of Japanese selection solely based on one's position within the hierarchy. However, in all of the crew selections, another 4<sup>th</sup> year student was indirectly appointed as the group leader. Hence of the two to miss out on this boat, Kentaro fourth year went on to be in charge of the coxless pair.

Variability and the assumed scientific method inherent in seat racing were even further compromised in the selection of the number two boat, the coxed quad scull. This time the seat racing took place over the rowing course some three kilometres from the boathouse. The process went all through Saturday and into Sunday morning using Tana as a constant in a double scull and trialling a different partner each time. Whilst conditions in the morning were good, in the afternoon they were quite difficult, further Tana was nearing exhaustion by the end of the day. As a result, times recorded for each seat race are largely meaningless because of the lack of control of the variables. Still the group was narrowed down from seven to five with three being selected and on Sunday afternoon the two remaining candidates vying for the last seat engaged in the bridge to bridge selection. The final part of the selection process appears in the field notes as follows:

The selected members, Tana, Ochi, Yama, as well as Hiro, Fuji and Yoshi, meet in the dining room and pour over the video of the two combinations. Hiro is in control of the process, however he allows Tana to run the discussion. Each person is expected to contribute some opinion, though the younger the member, the less they say. The comments all revolve around how it felt<sup>41</sup> with the different combinations. *Seishin*, feeling, length, are the key areas of concern for the crew, though each person is careful not to mention only one of the candidates, and no one actually says anything negative about them, only that one was better than the other. Finally after 30 minutes of intense discussion, the members of the quad cover their eyes and raise their hands

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<sup>41</sup> When referring to 'feel and length', the rowers are interested in aspects of the overall movement of the crew. Feel refers to whether or not the boat is balanced, if the force created from each member is consistent and even. Even small individual movements can affect the balance, speed and movement of the boat. Length refers to the size or the arc that the rower is capable of achieving. This is determined by his height, limb length, flexibility and general coordination. Potentially the bigger one's arc through the water the greater the boat speed.

to vote for one or other of the candidates. The vote is unanimous for Takahiro. Hiro validates the decision. Both Muri and Takahiro are called into the dining room where it is left to Tana to convey the decision. After almost two days of process the announcement takes less than a couple of minutes. No celebrating or weeping, just a nod of acceptance, and the meeting is over.

There are undoubtedly easier and fairer (that is objective) ways to go about the process of crew selection. However, in the case of BURC the process has come to symbolize more than merely who rows in what crew. The exhaustive and inclusive nature of process apparently exposes the individual's *seishin* to scrutiny. The feeling that Tana and other members refer to is as much about the spiritual feeling individuals bring to the boat as it is about the physicality they bring. Further, the process allows Hiro to distinguish his leadership style. He encourages discussion and allows others, particularly Tana, to have a voice. This form of decision making, though very time consuming, results in a sharing of power in keeping with the concept of *ningenkankei*.

The next chapter continues the exploration of being a member at BURC. In particular it considers the ritualisation of training and the embodiment of practice both in regards to the mundane aspects of BURC life and the 'special' events (regattas, drinking parties, choosing a new leader) that punctuate the year. The BURC man is one whose every action, due to stylized repetition and club social structure, enacts a process of embedding valued cultural traits into the habitus of the individual.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN:**

### **The Ritual of Training**

As an all encompassing experience, being a rower at BURC requires the adherence to and practice of a variety of rituals at the various levels of practice. Ritual should be understood from the perspective of the everyday actions in which people engage to give their interaction meaning. The primary level of practice for being a rower is in the boat. The boat becomes a venue where through repetition and time rowers develop their practical understanding of being an oarsman. The boat becomes central to the practical meaning of being a rower and is thus transformed into a symbolic vessel where action and inaction, skill and inability, strength and weakness, take on a broader and enduring social significance than holds after training finishes. The ritual of training adds consistency to attempts to demonstrate action, skill and strength because it limits the probabilities and possibilities of outcomes for the rowers involved. As these outcomes are limited the identity created through the training rituals are narrowed to produce in the rowers a strong doxic attitude to the requirements of their sport. The training ritual at BURC is time consuming and multilayered, physically and mentally exhausting.

The training programme is best summarized in the following tables:

**Table 3: Weekly Training Regime of BURC**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Am	Off	Off	Training	Training	Off	Training	Training
Pm	Off	Training	Training	Off	Training	Training	Training

**Table 4: Daily Training Regime of BURC**

Monday	
Day Off	
Occasionally Members will come to the boathouse to wash clothes or collect some items from their rooms but no one stays over night	

Tuesday	
Am	No training. Members attend university or remain at their other accommodation
2-4pm	Rowers begin to arrive at the boathouse
5.00-30pm	Training begins - incorporates warm up, etc
7.00-8.00pm	Training finishes
8.30pm	Dinner
10.30pm	Lights out

Wednesday	
4.55am	Wake up call goes around the boathouse
5.00am	Wake up run followed by stretching and training
7.00-30am	Training finishes
7.30am	Breakfast
8.00am	Members begin leaving for university or go back to bed
2-4pm	Rowers begin to arrive at the boathouse
5.00-5.30pm	Training begins - incorporates warm up, etc
7.00-8.00pm	Training finishes
8.30pm	Dinner
10.30pm	Lights out

Thursday	
4.55am	Wake up call goes around the boathouse
5.00am	Wake up run followed by stretching and training
7.00-30am	Training finishes
7.30am	Breakfast
8.00am	Members begin leaving for university or go back to bed
By the end of the day everyone has left the boathouse. No one stays overnight	

Friday	
Friday morning is no training	
2-4pm	Rowers begin to arrive at the boathouse
5.00-30pm	Training begins - incorporates warm up, etc
7.30-8.00pm	Training finishes
8.30pm	Dinner
10.30pm	Lights out

Saturday	
5.55am	Wake up call goes around the boathouse
6.00am	Wake up run followed by stretching and training
10.00-30am	Training finishes
	Breakfast
Most members remain around the boathouse, some sleep others work on their monkey bikes. People leave the boathouse to get some lunch at a local restaurant or convenience store.	
1pm	Rowers begin to arrive at the boathouse

2.00pm	Training begins - incorporates warm up, etc
6.00pm	Training finishes
Saturday is a non-compulsory night so some members stay away. However most stay in, or return later in the evening.	

Sunday	
8am	Wake up or members begin arriving
9am	Training begins
Sunday involves 2 sessions and there is much greater flexibility involved in these. Essentially everyone remains around the boathouse all day. No time constraints result in most of the rituals of training taking even more time. There's a lot of down time, hanging around, collecting food from down the street.	
2.00-6.00pm	Training finishes - each crew works far more independently on Sunday and there is much greater flexibility in training times
7pm	Most members have left or are leaving. Non-residential night so no one stays in.

Each training session varies from approximately two to four hours in duration. This includes the incorporation of all components of training such as warm up, stretching, ergo and weight training. Sessions are rarely shorter than two hours and may often exceed four hours in evenings or on weekends particularly if video footage is being taken and analysed.

The highly stylised training ritual at BURC lends itself to a greater understanding of the influences behind and the outcomes of such training. Of particular interest is the habitus developed through this training process. Morning sessions always begin the same way with the captain waking the boathouse with the resounding ‘*Ohayo*’. On weekdays this is before 5am, though on weekends a sleep in until 6am is deemed acceptable. The follow excerpt from field notes captures the first minutes of the rowing day:

Within minutes of the captain’s rounds of the dorms, he only goes past each room only once, the whole boathouse has mobilised. Five minutes after the wake up call all the rowers are running along the river warming, and waking, up. On return to the boathouse every member begins their stretching rituals. Blankets are brought out of a large box and each rower places his on the ground in two lines starting at the front of the boat storage boathouse and working toward the back. The captain always

positions himself at the front left hand side with a variety of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students taking the other side. With the exception of the golden boy Taka, who always is directly behind Hiro, the 1<sup>st</sup> year students are all positioned down the back.

Ogasawara (1998) points to the significance of seating arrangements in office meetings as designating a hierarchy of those involved. The stretching positioning acts similarly in designating the hierarchy at work at BURC. Walk along past any boathouse area at 5.30am would enable a glimpse at the dynamics of each club.

Unlike many group sport activities in Japanese education that I have witnessed (nearly all sporting teams I have been involved with engage in stylized group preparation) the stretching routine is not a collective experience at BURC, rather each member stretches at their own pace according to what they feel they need. This is contrasted with the Ritsumeikan University kayak team who form a giant circle at the beginning and end of every session to perform a series of stretches reminiscent to watching workers or school children engage in *rajio taisō* (like calisthenics to music). This circle includes national representatives alongside complete novices and is performed in an open space between BURC and its neighbouring club. It is a very public display of solidarity.

However, whilst the BURC rowers engage in their own personal preparation experience, it is always only once Hiro has finished that the others finish. Whilst the stretching is going on the two coxswains, prepare the breakfast that was made the previous night by the managers. Once Hiro has finished stretching the group breaks into its respective crews and, after a short crew briefing, its hands on the boats and training on the water begins.

## **Putting in the Hours**

Simply by following training sessions either on the bicycle or in the speedboat, it was quite easy to time the various components of the session. The time components of training sessions were recorded consistently over all of the five periods of contact with BURC. The breakdown of how time was used at training followed almost unchanging regularity. These components fell under certain categories and a relative breakdown was possible whether the training session lasted two hours or four hours by applying the components to a percentage of the overall training time. The session was defined as the period of time from when all crew members have appeared in the boat storage area to when the crew has dispersed and left the boat storage area. The components were broken into;

1. Warm up - land: this includes running, rowing machine, stretching, briefing, boat adjustment
2. Warm up and drills on water: this incorporates part crew rowing, technical exercises, stationary exercises
3. Work on the water: this includes any continuous all crew rowing, race practice, interval training and start practice
4. Turning time and Discussion: The river is able to be rowed over approximately a seven kilometer stretch, though often crews use less of this distance. Therefore, if a crew were to complete a twenty five kilometer session they would have to turn around at least four times. This component incorporates time taken to turn and any other stoppages during the session where discussion occurs
5. Warm down off the water and debrief: this includes stretching, debrief, video analysis, rowing machine practice.



**Table 5 - Summary of Relative Time Spent on Each Training Component**

Warm up –Land	31%
Warm up and drills on water	16%
Work on the water	20%
Turning time and discussion	8%
Warm down off water and debrief	25%

As is clear, somewhere between 50-60% of the training session is spent off the water. (Interestingly, the women are far more efficient in their use of time, usually arriving after and often finishing before the men whilst completing longer on water training.) Therefore, during a weekend session that may last two hours on the water the actual total duration is well over four hours. Preparation for and discussion of the training process occupies great importance for the members at BURC. To be a rower requires the commitment of great amounts of time. In fact, there is little time for anything else.

### **Japanese Rower/Western Boat**

The ritual of training is far more involved than just water time, de-brief and stretching. Great care is taken of the equipment both before and after training. Most of the equipment along the riverbank is imported. The boats are mostly from Germany and Italy, the oars from America and Australia despite the fact that Japanese boat builders exist. The major Japanese builder is based in Seta. Rather it's a case of mimeticism. State of the art European equipment is 'flavour of the month' and therefore everyone must and does have it. Small programmes without the financial backing might use the Japanese boats but their poor results become a self-fulfilling prophecy for the equipment. That is, it's no good. The philosophy of Japanese rowing

in regards to equipment is definitely *wakon yōsai* (Japanese Rower/Western Boat). Before most sessions the boat will be placed on trestles and examined thoroughly by the crew. The rowers make sure everything is right, that nuts and bolts are fastened, that all the moving parts are running smoothly. More often than not they check over the rigging<sup>42</sup> and make small adjustments based on their feeling from the previous row. Every time I check the rigging on the boats it's always different from seat to seat. In some cases it is so varied that the difference between crew members in their movement will ensure the boat never feels right. This individualisation to the rigging of each seat in the boat is part of the BURC way. Each member has the prerogative to set things up as they see fit.

Cleaning the boat at the end of the session takes on similar ritualistic practice. Each crew cleans their boat with such thoroughness that boats a year old can look almost new. The art of rowing is found in all the trappings of the sport. The ritual of cleaning and the sequence of the act becomes of itself an embodied experience. It embodies respect for equipment, attention to detail, being mindful of all aspects of an activity no matter how small. Neat, tidy and meticulous marries with traditional aesthetic sensibilities of minimalism and efficiency. Further, this carries symbolic capital readily converted in other fields (in manufacturing for example) where pride in one's work and attention to detail (even when fatigued) are highly sought.

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<sup>42</sup> Rigging involves the geometrically setup of the boat. Various parts of the boat and oars can be adjusted to change the geometry of the rowing movement. Usually this involves the size of the arc of movement and the resultant potential force this arc is capable of producing. The optimum 'rig' differs depending on the physiology and dimensions of the individual, however when rowing in a crew boat the rig needs to be fairly standardised so that all rowers are rowing the same arc. Varying geometry in the boat results in problems with timing, force generation, balance and most importantly speed. Rigging is a veritable art form. With different body types in the boat the rig is usually standardised to maximise the speed of the boat, but not necessarily the power output of any one individual.

## **Drills and Exercises**

There are literally hundreds of technical exercises and drills designed by rowers and coaches over the past hundred years to improve technique or overcome learning or conceptual problems. BURC rely on no more than about ten to fifteen technical drills to improve their technique. Rowing, as an un-natural (as in it requires equipment to facilitate it) bodily movement must be conceptualised cognitively and transmitted into action. In keeping with traditional practices, learning through observation is one of the foremost methods of instruction at BURC. The drills that are used revolve around the pausing for balance, some forms of compartmentalizing or breaking down the movement and, most popular of all, rowing in pairs (smaller crew components) in a slow motion fashion to get the 'feel' of the boat and the water. These drills are fairly universal in the region and one can observe crews from many clubs involved in the same exercises. This mimetiscm is explained by coach Nakamura:

The Japanese rowing style and techniques are based on the Toray style. It's an old way of rowing, but Toray are very successful. This has always been the way and it's very difficult to change it because it has been so strong for so long.

Coach Nakamura is no automaton of rowing technique. During my time at BURC we engaged in many conversations about the various merits of different techniques and he had a keen eye for detail. He also lamented the observations he made about the technical ability of the rowers and their movement. In particular he was always disappointed that BURC rowers did not make more of the opportunity to learn 'Australian' technique on the occasions I lived at the boathouse. As he explained at the end of my final stay at BURC:

Nakamura: I don't understand why they don't make more of the opportunity to learn as much as they can from you. It's very disappointing really, they seem content to continue the same way.

Brent: It doesn't worry me really Nakamura, they don't have to take my advice, only I think that because they are not as (physically) strong as their opposition, like RU,

HU and TU, the only way they will have any chance of competing is to row technically better.

Nakamura: Absolutely, I agree. This club is not as strong as it used to be and if they (seniors) continue the way they are going it won't improve. Back when Hayashi was here they would listen more but not now. Many of the Tokyo Universities are getting the best *suisen* (high school graduates), plus they are beginning to change their ways. You know there are several foreigners who coach in Toda.

Brent: Really! You know the HU have been having winter training camps in Australia and employing Australian coaches.

Nakamura: Yes I heard that. I would like to organise such an experience for our students.

Brent: I think that would be a great opportunity for them plus I can help out with organising equipment, accommodation and transport. It wouldn't be that expensive, probably not much more than going to the Fuji lakes like they do now.

Nakamura: Believe me I have suggested this to the captain for the past three years and no one seems interested. Everyone seems content just staying here and doing the same old things. Matsuhiro supports the idea as do many of the OB's but the current students don't seem to care. (sighs with an air of resignation) But what can we do? I can give them advice but it's up to them whether they accept it, it's their choice.

Nakamura's frustration is rarely expressed as he does above. He is caught between the potential conflict between what he sees as important for their education and what is important for their ability to row faster.

Based on responses in the questionnaire one should not be very surprised by the lack of engagement shown by rowers toward both mine and Nakamura's suggestions. Only two members actually rated the quality of the coaching as important factors in a successful crew and one of those was Sato who, having competed at an international level has obviously developed according to some solid direction. Sakamoto is the head coach at the local community club. He is coaching a squad of about eight athletes, many of whom are still university students but are not members of their university rowing club.

Sakamoto: These athletes choose to row at SRC rather than at university because they have aspirations of making national teams or becoming All Japan champions and they know that if they row at university this is very unlikely to

happen. The goals of university clubs don't really aim at producing quality oarsmen. They have a different motivation.

The patterns of ritual and routine embodied in training are enduring. During my residence at BURC there were several occasions where on Nakamura's recommendation I introduced a variety of new drills and exercise designed to overcome some of the technical difficulties the rowers were experiencing. Initially these drills seemed incompatible with dominant practice as the rowers had trouble conceptualizing how to execute them, however with a fair degree of perseverance and demonstration the rowers managed to perform the drills with some competency. This was the one and only time that I saw these drills used in training. Despite the fact that Nakamura suggested that perhaps crews should do these daily, there was no demonstration of this. Even though competency was achieved, the components<sup>43</sup> that justified genuine training for members of BURC didn't contain these exercises and therefore the drills had no place in the routines and rituals. The habitus of rowers in training is enduring and changing this habitus is very difficult. A change in habitus could produce an incongruity with the field that would negatively affect the rower's sense of capital.<sup>44</sup>

### **Village Life – Hierarchy and Affirmation**

Part of the attraction of being a member of the rowing club is found in the almost romanticised sense of community that members experience. The security and

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<sup>43</sup> In the mid nineties I had a similar experience when I introduced a series of drills and exercises to training at the OB rugby club where I was a player. At one training session we did these drills, designed to develop certain skills, and I was under the impression that the players seemed to enjoy the experience. After this session however the club never engaged in these exercises again, preferring to do more traditional, repetitious and exhaustive exercises such as the 'run-pass' drill.

<sup>44</sup> Having coached Japanese rowing teams from Tokyo universities on camp in Australia for periods of up to two weeks straight, the strength of this rowing habitus comes to the fore. Even with 2 or 3 sessions daily of successfully completing new drills change to overall movement and practice is negligible. The slight change to habitus to the new field of Australian rowing doesn't endure on return to the Japanese field as the rowers skilfully re-adjust their habitus for the structure and requirements of Toda.

familiarity that membership affords each individual is evident in the following field note:

'It's 12pm on Saturday in early June and it's a beautiful day. The men are stretching away on their blankets, the women are just finishing their sessions. The CD is playing the soundtrack to the movie 'The Piano' by Michael Nyman, really lyrical atmospheric solo piano. There is a very relaxed and contented atmosphere within the group. The women's double looks at a video of their session quietly through the view-finder, the women's quad do a set of sit ups and abdominal work and the men keep on stretching away. There are no coaches or alumni around. The group seems so integrated. People go through their routines, stretching, getting equipment out, exercising, with little communication. The whole scene is so calm and harmonious. The various crews come and go without the need for encouragement, everyone knows their job, their place. It's as if the timeframe has been slowed down temporarily. It's that sort of dreamy, automatic movement and at that moment I feel unaware of the next move or the previous morning but only of the now and present as the minutes of the ritual of training unfold effortlessly. In this environment one is home, one belongs and one doesn't need to worry about how to act or what to do. It's a certainty that breeds a comfort and a sense of place or belonging. The mundanity of days like this are the very essence of being'. (fieldnotes)

Whilst the boat is central to the rituals involved in being a rower, it is the secondary experiences, that of the day to day living with the other members that genuinely creates and affirms the bodily hexis of the BURC boys. According to Goffmann (in Manning, 1992: 133):

ritual is essential because it maintains our confidence in basic social relationships. It provides others with opportunities to affirm the legitimacy of our position in the social structure while obliging us to do the same. Ritual is a placement mechanism in which, for the most part, social inferiors affirm the higher positions of their superiors. The degree of ritual in a society reflects the legitimacy of its social structure because the ritual respect paid to individuals is also a sign of respect for the roles they occupy

The social structure at work at BURC is one of relationships reinforced and affirmed via a multitude of rituals. For most members it is the central component of their identity. Members gain an understanding of self-based on a relational understanding of others. Being part of this semi-feudal social nexus is not transitory, it's permanent.

Musashi explains:

The main point, the foundation (*daikokubashira*) of my university life has been being a member of BURC. It is like a family (*kazōku*). We are a very close family here. It has been a very special place for me.

When I graduate BURC I will definitely be involved. The level of involvement will depend on my job. Whether I can come down and help out and teach some of the new members or if I'm working far away just donate money I know I will remain involved in the club. (Musashi interview)

BURC operates similarly to a family based on the *ie* (traditional family system) model.<sup>45</sup> The elements of the continuity of the club and hierarchy within it are part of the members' practical understanding of membership. The old boys, alumni and various memorabilia are constant reminders to current members of the glories of the past or of notable events.

In 1966 we were all Japan Champions. Nakamura (current coach) was a young man and came on as coach. We were hopeless before he arrived. Isn't that right Nakamura? (Nakamura humbly accepts the compliment) Thanks to Nakamura we became very tough. Back then we lived here everyday and Nakamura had some ideas on training that were different and we just trained so hard. It was during that time that we developed the BURC way and spirit. I hope that today's members can recreate that spirit and win again like we did all those years ago. (Alumni Matsuhiko reminiscing at a *yakiniku* party - fieldnotes)

Although Matsuhiko isn't always around the boathouse (in fact, he lives several hours away) when he returns to it or to other functions, he automatically takes up his place in the hierarchy of the club. He occupies a position within the group even in his absence. Membership means that you will always belong somewhere. As Doi (1971) suggests, it is this sense of *amae* (dependence) that creates the strength in such social nexus.

According to Hamabata (1990, in Clammer, 1995: 95) in his study of Japanese company life:

In a universe consisting of relationships the focal point is the '*ie*', as the ever contextualized '*uchi*'. The Japanese self does not relate to the Japanese other as I or You, as one individual to another individual, but as *uchi* to *otaku*, as member of one group to a member of another group. Furthermore, the opposition between *uchi* and

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<sup>45</sup> Hendry (1995) discusses the elements of an *ie* as featuring; 1. Continuity - 'it is the duty of living members at one time to remember their predecessors, and to ensure that the house will continue after they die'. (p.24) 2. Hierarchy - 'relations between members were hierarchically organised along lines of distinction based on age, sex, and expectation of permanency in the house'. (p.25)

*otaku* disappears as the social context changes. This is how Japanese see the universe as a social, political and economic field, where in the *uchi* (us, who we are) is constantly negotiated.

As a frame of management and residence the social construction of the '*ie*' is such that human relationships within the '*ie*' are considered more important than any and all other human relationships (Nakane, 1972). There is fluidity in the *uchi/otaku* relationships in play at BURC. Adapting the Bourdieusian perspective of field, as the field changes so too do the tacit rules of engagement. Rowers from Ritsumekan are at one time *teki* (the enemy) and at another as *uchi*, as rowers and therefore versed in a commonality of experience. For such groupism to function effectively there must always be *otaku*, the out group. Without *otaku* there is no distinction, no difference and therefore no definition in the collective identity for it is an identity that relies on difference to define it.

### **Suffering and Sacrifice**

The ability to endure pain and discomfort and continue is a highly valued ethos in sport. The discipline required to push through the pain barrier or to do the extra work is perceived as a major characteristic of those who succeed in sport and Japanese rowing is no different. There is a certain solidarity that forms from the collective experience of suffering. Leading into a major regatta I actually found myself rowing in the boat due to the serious illness (food poisoning) of another member. Although only a few days away from competing, and against what might be considered fairly universal periodisation<sup>46</sup>, we completed what can best be described as the 'session from hell'.

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<sup>46</sup> Periodisation refers to the planning out of training over a prolonged period so as to achieve maximum performance on the day of the event. This session occurred inside the time frame of what



It's about 6.15am when we push off the landing and head out for our session. It's going to be a fairly hard session though the workload was a bit ambiguous so I'll just have to wait and see. We warm up for about 20minutes and then do a couple of steady state pieces (heart rate about 160) for around 7 minutes each. The boat feels fresh and there's a fair bit of life in the movement, the boat speed feels good. Taka turns around to me at the end of the second steady state and lets me know that we are about to begin sprint training; one minute of over-speed (maximum number of strokes per minute) with thirty seconds rest repeated 6 times. Yoshii, the coxswain, yells '*saiko*' (maximum effort, heart rate at 200 plus) and we begin the work.

The first minute is over before you know it but we hit about 46 strokes per minute and the lactic acid in my legs already tells me we are going to really hurt. '*Saiko*' and again we are into it. At some stage Hiro yells 'faster legs' and is met with a raucous '*hai*' affirmation from one or two members in the boat. The rating goes higher and I can feel a burning sensation in my forearms as I start to lose my sense of grip on the handle. '*Lasuto*' (last stroke) yells Yoshii and we rest again, this time there are a couple of exasperated yells from other rowers that means 'my legs are on fire, my lungs are burning'. '*Gambatte, fai-to*' (do your best, fight) yells Yoshii as we begin number three. This time Kobe yells something met with the appropriate reply. I can't make it out though, I can taste blood in my mouth and my hamstrings are burning from trying to pull myself up the slide to stay in time with the rest of the crew. The final ten seconds feel like an eternity and finally we make it and rest. The number of screams has increased from the last minute.

The coach in me thinks 'we need more recovery time' but before I can engage the internal dialogue we are off again. Fatigue is starting to take its toll and the precision of the movement and power is starting to fall away. After about thirty seconds it becomes more noticeable and Hiro goes into another motivational rant '*fai-to!!!!*' 'How the hell can he speak, I feel like I'm breathing through my ears'. '*Lasuto*' and Taka slumps over his oar in obvious distress. I'm absolutely hurting but try not to allow it to show. We're on again and after about 30 seconds I go into survival mode, just hang on and get through. Kobe slumps instantly the last stroke is completed as do a couple of other members. 'Ok, this is it, one last minute', we're away and the intensity and precision has returned somewhat compared to the previous two. Everyone lifts for the final effort and in unison they respond to Hiro's urgings. '*Lasuto*' and it's over. I'm sitting in the bow so can see all the crew. Instantaneously each member collapses either over their oar or lying backwards. There are screams coming from almost everyone. I'm suffering too but can't scream or lie down. 'My God that was hard'. (fieldnotes)

Done very publicly and just before the big regatta, the session described above achieves several goals and points to several key habitus of the BURC rower. Firstly, it is a demonstrating in front of potential opposition that BURC has the right spirit and toughness. Rather than being seen as a weakness (as indeed it might in a different field) screaming out or collapsing at the end of each minute demonstrates the level of

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would usually be considered a taper or lightening off of intensity and workload. The intention being to freshen up for the event.

commitment and intensity the BURC members make towards their training. This very open display of pain reinforces how tough they are. Of course, I am unable to follow this lead because the habitus inscribed in me doesn't see this as a viable action, in fact that which would lose me capital in the Australian rowing field can actually gain capital in the Japanese rowing field. An action that would be construed as 'soft' and place the exponent under suspicion in Australia can have the opposite effect in Japan as it reaffirms the individual's willingness to suffer for the group and suggests that their *seishin* is strong as they are able to endure the pain and finish the job despite their suffering. The fact that the intensity and precision lifted for the last minute is an indication, however, that many rowers in the crew, myself included, opted to play it safe as to guarantee that the session could be completed. This ability to read the requirements of the game, that is to ensure you can complete the session without appearing to weaken nor failing to go on, is a delicate balance of self management.

Collective action is coupled by an understanding of the need for individual training above the standard programme. The perception and appreciation to do more than stipulated and train individually is an example of the strength of the rowing habitus.

Taka explains his approach to the matter:

I want to put in a big effort, put in the effort when no one else is watching. For example I have seen some sempai practicing after training and I think this is very important. You have to do the extra work. I have the passion to train harder and want to win more than anyone else.

Whilst seemingly an independent act, individual training is in fact one of the more likely moves for those with a feel for the game. Indeed not to do the training would be more indicative of independence. The ability to conform one's individuality to the collective necessity, of extra training, is suggestive of action that is acutely aware of the requirements of the field. The reality is that, although Taka intends to do the extra

when no one else is watching, this is a display to the other members and particularly *sempai* that one possesses the right spirit and attitude. This is not so different to the office worker who arrives at work before and leaves after his superior in a demonstration of the right work ethic and understanding of hierarchy.

### **Expectations and the Insurance Policy**

As mentioned previously almost all BURC rowers come from strong high school rowing backgrounds. Success as a rower is a central part of one's identity within the Boathouse and is one of the more powerful forms of capital. With only one exception all members expressed their major goal from being at BURC was to win the All Japan Intercollegiate Rowing Championships (AJIRC) in Tokyo. The solidarity produced from this collective goal could be seen on the surface as the major motivational factor behind the large volume of training achieved and the position rowing holds in their lives. The concept of competition drives many of the members and as an external notion, triumphing at the AJIRC outweighs less tangible goals such as developing *ningenkankei* or *seishin*. The build up to and ritual of regattas, being so few and far between on the calendar, take on special importance suggestive of high expectations of a return for the physical investments made through months and even years of training.

However, there are several incongruities in more detailed responses to the concept of becoming an AJIRC Champion. Hiro sums up the problem facing his chances of achieving his goal:

This year is my final year at university; it's my last chance to win. But the other members, some of them are freshmen, second year (etc) so they have the chance to win next year or in two years. But I want them to work harder to help achieve my goal. I don't want the other people to think that they have other years ahead to

achieve these goals. However I don't want them to set the same goal as me. I hope that they will choose the same goal as me but if they don't there isn't much I can do about it and I must respect their choice.

The reality for Hiro is that everyone's goal is to be in the champion crew in their final year. Hiro recognises the difference in year levels and infers the belief that one's last chance enhances effort to the cause. This theme appears throughout Light (2000) and his observations of a high school rugby team. The last chance, the very last race becomes a focal point for BURC rowers. The symbolism and dramatic ending to a career in one last act is anticipated by most rowers. The problems with this build up occur when crew members are not in their final year or the crew is not competitive and has no realistic chance of making the final. Whilst members mention the importance of the development of such things as *seishin* they are not entirely convincing in their belief in its powers. The focus becomes, rather than winning, doing one's best, giving everything, getting the process right, finishing with 'no regrets' (Light, 2000b: 457).

### **Regatta Day**

After the year long training regime the season is highlighted by a few important regattas. The major championships are the Intercollegiate Championships held in late August or early September in Tokyo and are followed by importance by the All Japan Championships also in Tokyo in August and the local Asahi regatta held in May. All these regattas take place over a 3 to 4 day format usually involving an elimination format with heats, repechages, semi-finals and culminating with the major final on the last day of the regatta. During the week up to and including the regatta, BURC members become totally committed to being at the boathouse. In the case of the Tokyo regattas the team travels together and stays at a *ryōkan* (traditional hotel) near

the regatta course, where they have their annual booking. The team travels over to Tokyo a day or two early and makes preparations for the event, training on Toda<sup>47</sup>. The local regatta follows the same format only without the travel. As with most periodisation leading into major events the training load decreases as the regatta gets closer. However the rowers spend even more time at the boathouse, rarely attending university and spending great periods of time re-rigging their boats, checking other equipment, discussing race plans and pouring over video of recent training sessions in search of some improvement that may be able to give some advantage. On the first day of the regatta and every day following that the boathouse becomes a centre of activity. Managers are in attendance early, cleaning cooking and creating a generally positive atmosphere. Crews go out early for a warm up row, touch up on a few of their skills before returning to the shed to wait for their time to head off to the start of their race. It takes the crews approximately twenty five minutes to get up to the starting zone of the regatta course. The following is an excerpt from field notes describing the final day of the Asahi regatta:

It's an absolutely beautiful day, the cherry blossom finished a couple of weeks earlier but spring is still in the air and the Sun has generous warmth without being too hot. There's a light breeze as I ride into BURC which suggests the racing will be under difficult conditions later in the day as the actual course is closer to the lake and less protected to the influence of the wind. As I pull up in front of the boathouse there's a sense of something special. A giant purple flag has been hoisted from the flag pole and is swaying proudly in the breeze, as does the universities' nearby. The boat storage doors are open as are the windows to the dining room and as I enter the boathouse it has a fresh feeling, like spring cleaning.

As the regatta is the Seta kawa the boathouse takes on even greater significance and symbolic power. The air of calm and quietness that pervades the boathouse is presenting a public face to the other boat clubs both local and from around Japan, that

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<sup>47</sup> Toda was originally built for the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo. It is the site for all the major championships in Japan and the ultimate environment for mutual observation in Japanese rowing. There are literally dozens of boathouses along the banks of Toda and being only 2500metres long and 100metres across its akin to doing laps of a swimming pool. It is totally surrounded by concrete and during training sessions at regattas it resembles Tokyo roads during peak hour.

the BU rowers are confident and ready. The atmosphere has a stoic feel to it, as if the rowers are about to go into battle, and indeed metaphorically this is the case.

It's about 9.30am, and returning from a bit of shopping, I find the boathouse kitchen a hive of activity. Sakura, Midori and Yuri are cleaning away whilst some of the other managers are sweeping out the hall and entrance area. The shoes at the entrance have been reorganised into perfect and precise order, left to right as if awaiting inspection. All the boats that are racing today are out the front of the boat house on trestles, in pristine condition, freshly washed and scrubbed, from the morning training session that had occurred earlier. I walk upstairs to my 'managers' office where I live and the dorms are quiet and full of waiting rowers. I put my head in to say '*Ohayō gozaimasu*' and notice Hiro and Taka reading *manga* quietly. Everyone is just killing time and there's a noticeable tension in the air. Conserving energy and mental preparation are important factors in maximising one's chances in a race, yet it's an unnatural state of being and you can almost feel the unease in the room. I adjourn to my room and start writing my notes.

Externally the boathouse exudes nothing but a quiet confidence and although regattas like this happen only once a year the membership, be it rower, manager, OB or coach has their own role to play and in doing so they inscribe meaning into the event that serves to satisfy the aesthetic sensibility of the moment.

At 10.30am there's movement outside my room so on cue I head down stairs. It's going to be a big afternoon for BURC. Four crews have made the finals and of them two, the women's quad scull and the men's four have a chance of winning. Finals will begin at 11.00 with some high school races. The BURC crews are due to race from 1pm onwards with the women's quad at 2.00 and the men's four at 2.30pm. It's three hours before race time and the women's quad is beginning to get ready. They come out of their *tatami* room and for probably the fifth time in three days begin to check over their boat to make sure everything is in order. The men are down shortly after to follow suit. Meanwhile the men's double of Musashi and Koichi have put their boat on the water and are about to go for a warm up. They're racing at 1.45pm and a warm up at this time seems a little illogical. Iwata is obviously a little over-aroused though and needs to get in the boat to calm the nerves. Coach Nakamura is down at the landing and insists they just go out for a very short row (Nakamura is worried Musashi will get a little too excited and row bit too hard prior to the race). The managers have finished cleaning but somehow have created new jobs for themselves in the bid to remain busy and not become a hindrance. I can't work out what they're doing but it seems to be a case of establishing normality to the boathouse. Musashi and Koichi return at just before 1pm. Koichi looks like he is exhausted. Ochi and Mata, both are 1st years who didn't make the finals run to the boat as it approaches the landing and ensure it arrives without incident. They carry the oars to a suitable place and return to the back of the boathouse. Nakamura goes over to Musashi and Koichi to reassure them and offer advice as they stretch on the blankets at the front of the boathouse. Race day is the only time anyone, in this case Musashi, has stretched in Hiro's position.

Suddenly it's all happening. The women's quad is out and running as warm up, the men's four is going over the boat, the women's single sculler, Risa is due to be the first finalist to compete at 1.30 is pushing off the landing. The entire women's team are there to wish her luck. Before getting in the boat Nana turns to her peers and goes into a deep bow. She then faces the water, bows again gets in the boat and is gone. As she rows away the women members and some of the managers do a type of war cry chant which breaks down further into individual shouts of '*gambatte*' (do your best). The river seems congested with rowers making their way to the start of the regatta course. The landing 50metres up the river erupts into chant after chant as their representatives head out to race. Across the river it's the same, whilst crews from upstream boathouses cruise past in all this action, focused and unperturbed by all the noise.

The entire ritual of pre-competition is a vital component in the dramatic performance of the racing about to unfold. Light (2000b) refers to the speeches, meetings, and preparations of his Tokyo rugby team leading into the Hanazono final and the emotion and tension that these events evoke. There is a similar shape and form to all the action on the final day of this regatta. The public displays of reference and support have the effect of creating a greater solidarity within the group and also reaffirm to the OB's present that the traditions of the BURC way are being upheld.

The women's quad is about to put on the water and the men's four is waiting patiently behind as if in a queue. Musashi and Koichi have gone already. From the carpark behind the boathouse a group of cheerleaders march onto the path above the landing. Dressed entirely in black uniforms with white gloves the group of seven or eight men and women strike a bizarre contrast to the boathouses, river and crews pushing off. One of the cheerleaders is carrying a massive flag that is supported by some form of harness around his waist. They stand to attention in two lines at the water's edge as the women are about to go and begin a highly stylised and stoic performance of a chant.

These students belong to the BU cheerleading club. Essential this is another of the myriad of club activities available to students. Their role is basically to support other BU clubs when they are in major competition and the style of performance is highly choreographed and stylised.

Although it's only about 2km away the traffic is deadly and the setakarahashi is at a grid lock. I wonder whether they'll make it to the other end to get another chant in during the race. Nakamura and I have subverted the traffic as we are on bikes as are most of the BURC supporters, not to mention those from other clubs. As we cross the bridge a veritable peleton has formed as rowing supporters negotiate the traffic to get to the course.

By the time we make it to the course Risa, Musashi and Koichi have raced. As expected the open water from the lake has turned the water choppy and made conditions difficult. The women's quad is away and racing. Battling the worst of the lanes the BURC women drop behind early but as the race develops they begin to pick up speed and pull in the rest of the field. At 250m to go Nana has a look over her right shoulder and sums up the opposition, particular the leading crew from arch rival Waseda. She shouts something to the crew which I can't hear because of the noise of the crowd and the cheer-squads but they give an almighty effort. The rating lifts from 36 to about 40-41. Nakamura gets excited and almost rides off the path into the river. They pull in 4th and then 3rd but the line comes up too quickly and Waseda hold onto 1st place by about half a length (1.5 seconds). The race has lasted less than three and a half minutes, but as a sprint all the competitors are exhausted. The first three place getters are required to turn around and pull in at the finish line to receive their medals and certificates and all three are exceptionally emotional. The Waseda crew are crying as if in disbelief that they won (they were clear favourites beforehand) whilst the BURC and third placed crew are crying because they got so close.

Nakamura and I head back up to the start of the men's four. BURC have the good lane in this one and the conditions are so bad now that this is a major advantage. They lead from start to finish, holding off their rivals from the neighbouring university boathouse. As each crew crosses the line there is a uniform physical collapse from each rower. Slumping over the oar or lying in or out of the boat, the finish performance is a classic example of impression management. This very dramatic display of universal fatigue serves to reinforce the massive levels of effort and pain that the competitors had gone through.

In many ways this is pure drama and it's the sort of thing I had seen before at tough training sessions when rowers would scream in pain or grimace as if in agony, in many ways as a show of their commitment to the crew and toughness. Whilst in another cultural setting such a display might be read as weakness in the Japanese university setting it is read as discipline and endurance.

Shortly following the painful anguish comes the out following of emotion as tears begin to roll. There's a sizable (several thousand) crowd in attendance and the post race demonstration of emotion is warmly received by appreciative applause. The men pull in and receive their medals before re-boating and heading back to the boathouse. The men's eight is the final event of the day and this is dominated by company crews from Toray and Meiji Life.

Interestingly the winners of this race, Toray, are very matter of fact about their victory. On crossing the finish line and receiving their medals they display very little emotion and it is interesting to juxtapose this response with the university rowers' responses only minutes earlier.



Nakamura and I head back to the boathouse to arrive as the medal winning crews return. There's quite a crowd of managers, rowers and friends outside the boathouse and the mood is really up. However as the crews return they return to a low key response to all the support. The women's quad get out, bow to the water, bow to the boathouse and then pick up their boat and carry it to the boathouse to wash it and put it away. They then engage in a long debrief that lasts about 30 minutes. Other members carry their oars up during this time.

The men's four arrive but are reluctant to react too boisterously in front of their second placed neighbours. They too go into a long race debrief, though they are clearly excited about their result. Nakamura gives his advice and hopes that the good draw and lucky lane will not breed complacency. 'You need to train harder and better. Our finishes were not as strong as they could be.' All agree with Nakamura's summation and discuss it for another 10 minutes before heading into the showers.

I go upstairs to write my notes and then head into the showers. It's now almost 5.30pm and there's a *nomihodai* about to begin. (field notes)

After weeks of routine, the ritual of training is broken by the ritual performance. Both components are crucial to the being a member as both carry different forms of capital which become embodied in the habitus of the rowers. The capital gained from racing is maximised when members can maintain their emotional and physical responses in order to compete to the best of their ability. The few regattas per year punctuate the routine inherent in being a member and offer the opportunity for the demonstration of one's level of self cultivation. Practitioners in the field are knowledgeable and therefore performance in the race is indicative of the levels of discipline, suffering and especially *seishin* that one has developed over time.

### ***Nomihodai* One - Getting Drunk**

According to Hendry (1994: 179-180) 'drinking in Japan has some vital applications in everyday life'. In particular the knowledge of others gained through the drinking experience is seen to be 'vitally important for the communication of no-verbal messages; for smooth running of the group; and for the general well being of colleagues'. Particularly for men, non-drinking can result in marginalization and stigmatization. A BURC member's ability to drink, and thereby engage in 'social nudity through deliberate violations of conventional manners and etiquette' is seen as

an aspect of Japanese manliness (Ben Ari 1990 in Hendry 1994: 185). For many young Japanese, university is the first time drinking is sanctioned and encouraged.

*Nomihodai* literally refers to all you can drink for a set price in a set time. At BURC there are several official *nomihodai* sanctioned for the year but the most important are for freshmen and the other for the graduating members. There are other times when drinking parties may occur but it is at the *nomihodai* that all the club members, rowers, alumni, managers, are gathered. The *nomihodai* is a highly structured and ritualized event, in the case of the freshmen designed to get them drunk, but not too drunk. Tonight is the freshmen's welcome party or *nomihodai*. The event starts at 6.30pm.

I travel with Hiro, Nakamura and some other members from the boathouse by train to Kyoto. On arriving at our destination we are met by an entourage of freshmen and managers. A couple of them lead us off to the venue for the *nomihodai*. Along the way other members of the rowing club are stretched out at all the important turns to the venue from the station ensuring that no one is lost in transit. As the major party passes they fall in behind. Everyone is in attendance – all rowers, all alumni, all managers and coach Nakamura.

The Freshmen's welcome party provides the opportunity to reaffirm one's position in the group. Many OB's attend who will rarely be seen again during the year. The event is partly designed to impress the freshmen with the realization that they now belong to a social nexus that is much bigger than just those living at the shed.

We enter a building and go into a second storey room. The space is a large *tatami* mat room with low tables around the walls. There is no head table or focus point in the room and we move in filling floor space around the tables. Although there is no head table the seating arrangements have the alumni sitting together. The evening begins as the head alumni make a short speech. It is fairly formulaic stuff as Matsuhiro mentions the proud history and tradition of BURC and of the subsequent responsibilities of the new members to continue this tradition. Following his speech there is the group *kampai* (toast) and the evening is officially underway. The freshmen then move around to the alumni table and pour each alumni a beer and have one poured in return.

This is a highly symbolic action as it creates the sense of egalitarianism that BURC wants to foster. As a result the freshmen feel very welcomed, as Taka explains at a later stage:

There is a much greater fondness for the *sempai* at university than at high school. I was moved by the gesture of the *sempai* pouring my drink.

The rest of the room is becoming lively as the beer starts flowing. Food is brought out to accompany the beer. At approx. 7.15 the evening kicks back into official format mode with all freshmen having to get up in front of the room and scull a jockey of beer (400-500ml) to the chanting of the rest of the room. This freshmen ritual includes the freshmen managers. As each freshmen makes his introduction speech they also nominate other people from inside the room to scull with them. In this way all the alumni, men's and women's captains, head manager and myself scull at least once. Many of the freshmen are particularly inexperienced drinkers and the beer is having a rapid effect. Taka and new manager Sakura have very red cheeks. Drunkenness or the caricature of drunkenness takes over.

However the format and formality of the event is designed to maintain some elements of respectability. Significantly no one makes a fool of themselves and the party aims to welcome not humiliate. This is certainly no hazing ritual.

8pm is last drinks and 8.30 the evening is over. By the time the speeches and sculling is over it is time to go. The bill is split equally amongst all members though it is subsidised by the OB's. Coxes from the men's club control the formatting and scheduling of the event. Men scull from jockeys but the women scull from glasses. Whilst there is an 'official table', the movement of members around the room is very relaxed and all the barriers that hold the group in check hierarchically are temporarily on hold.

There is no problem with individuals going home at this point and many, including the OB's and Hiro do just that. The others head off in 2 general directions – karaoke and bowling. I head off with the bowling crowd. We weave through a few back streets in an incredibly efficient version of follow the leader. By the time I arrive with Musashi and Takahiro the game is already set up to begin. Somehow an advanced party had gone ahead to organize everything. The bowling crowd continues on with minimal amounts of beer, but many are drunk and there are increasing levels of fraternizing and drunken behaviour. (sliding down the alley on one's chest) Even so, nothing overtly offensive or destructive occurs and the group is for all intents and purposes happy drunks. Bowling finishes up at about 10.30pm and bearing in mind that the trains finish up at approx. 11.30-12.00pm most people head home. Musashi and Takahiro continue on further and I stick with them. As we leave they point out the potential blossoming relationships of some of the freshmen and managers. "Ochi and Sakura! Sure. I thought so." Yet in reality I was completely oblivious to their mutual attraction. Most of the rowers are fairly tired from a hard day of training. Monday is an off day. I get a cab with Musashi and Takahiro as the trains have stopped and head back to the boathouse. (fieldnotes)

The legal age for drinking in Japan is 20, so without exception all the freshmen are under age. Drinking is a very standard form of social interaction where the day to day hierarchies are relaxed. It is common practice for office workers to be expected to attend office parties and get drunk. This is seen as an opportunity to let off steam and interact with each other in a different light. It is not uncommon to see drunken white collar workers passed out on park benches or staggering around the streets late at night. Tolerance of such public displays of inebriation is also very high. To be considered a big or strong drinker is a compliment that infers masculinity and strength of character. Whilst the *nomihodai* is a sanctioned event the rowers don't limit their drinking to only such events. As Taka suggests, 'so far I have lost consciousness 3 times. University students drink a lot more than at high school'. During such drinking sessions there were instances where members passed out, vomited or injured themselves. At one such event Koichi, after being cajoled into sculling his fourth beer, vomited, apologised and disappeared. About an hour later he returned and continued drinking. This effort of his was highly praised by his peers as demonstration of spirit and toughness. Prior to this event his position in the club was very marginal and he spent little time interacting with the other members, however after it his position in the club was definitely enhanced and the older members actually began speaking with him. On the same night Kobe severely burnt his hand after attempting to perform a joke that backfired. The injury caused him to miss the next week of training, a result that did little to impress his fellow crewmembers.

### **Nomihodai 2 -*Getting Really Drunk***

Whilst the freshmen's party was a fairly formal affair other *nomihodai* offers a different insight into BURC life. After a major regatta where BURC had moderate

success (a couple of placings in races) a *nomihodai* had been organized at a local venue.

The venue is a large room in a youth hostel not more than 200 metres from the boathouse. I've been elsewhere and arrive about 40 minutes late. No need to ask for directions in this building. There's a party going on and you can hear it. I head upstairs and into the room and am met with a massive roar of welcome. Before I can even focus on the room a long neck is pushed into my hand and one of the many songs for sculling is taken up by everyone in the room. The bottle empties and the room erupts with applause. The empty is whisked away and replaced with a fresh one. Having completed the right of passage I move into the room and seeing Tana, head over to his corner.

This *nomihodai* is completely different to the freshmen's party. Noticeably absent are the alumni, coaches, OB's and university people. Though there seem even more people. The managerial group has trebled in size and there are many managers that I have never seen before. There is also another university rowing club from Shikoku present which has bolstered numbers.

The mission of this *nomihodai* was clear - get as drunk as possible. Many members were exceptionally successful in this regard. Rather than pouring each others drinks and making speeches, members drank from long necks of Asahi and Sapporo (brands of beer). Sculling games and competitions occurring constantly and any member who re-entered the room immediately was required to scull a long neck to the singing and cheering of the entire room. With the exception of some potato chips and *ika* (dried squid) there was almost no food served throughout the evening. After an hour 1 manager had already passed out. Several of the male members had stripped down to their underwear and began to engage in various homoerotic acts, pouring beer over each other, pinching each others nipple, simulating felatio on the bottles and in one case on each other. These displays were either largely ignored by other parts of the room or met with raucous encouragement from those around. At one stage a female rower was held down and had beer poured into her mouth and all over her clothes.

After two hours several bottles have been smashed on the *tatami*, several members had vomited, and another two managers had passed out. The entire *nomihodai* proceeds at a frenetic pace. Added to the fact the all the members have been in a solid preparation for the regatta (i.e. disciplined eating and drinking) the levels of excitement means the beer hit its mark with great success. And yet the time ends and immediately so does the party. Yoshii and a couple of others, who 5 minutes earlier were surely very drunk (or at least acting that way) are suddenly sober and in clean up mode. (I spoke to Yoshii after and turns out he was nursing a lemon sour all night. He actually doesn't like drinking. It would appear that in order to fit in he has acted drunk for the past two hours) His role of clean up man was designated from the beginning and within thirty minutes the room is remarkably clean. The rest of the group has dispersed, some home but many back to the boathouse where they have the intention of continuing the drinking. I help Yoshii out with the clean up and once finished decide to go and see how the party is progressing. The boathouse is almost totally quiet. A couple of second year rowers are watching baseball, some people are brushing their teeth, all the female rowers and managers have vanished. Yoshii suggests that everyone has gone or is going to bed, though maybe a few may have headed off to a local bar. In any case the evening has come to a sudden end. I decide to go for a ride and get something to eat. By the time I return an hour later all the lights are off and there's not a sound. (fieldnotes)

Whilst binge drinking cannot be seen as unique to rowers or indeed other sporting clubs, it has a particularly strong effect on rowers because of its contradiction with the internal disciplines required for training and competing. The ability to hold one's drink is, however, a valued trait linked to the strength of one's masculinity. In many ways the ability to consume above average quantities of alcohol and remain coherent is perceived as an extension of one's *seishin ryoku*.

## **Leadership**

The concept of leadership is one of the fascinating elements of life at BURC. The captain has a huge responsibility for the duration of his reign. Not only is he the figurehead of the group he is almost totally responsible for the harmony and happiness of the club. Being an effective leader in this environment means having a good understanding of the needs and sensitivities of the members around you. As the club is almost entirely student run there is no higher authority to defer to in case of problems. Essentially the buck stops with the captain. Further, the position doesn't come with a blueprint or guide book rather it is learnt through observation during the previous three years of membership in the club. To become captain is to be an exemplary player in the Bourdieusian sense. The captain is not elected by popular vote rather he is appointed. Hiro describes the process:

here the final year sempai decide who will be captain. They look for the person with skills and confidence, the right personality including all of the things that the leader needs and then they are appointed. They are looking for a person of integrity.

Further, it can be said that they are looking for a captain who will continue leading the club in the manner of past captains. In Hiro's case he has been groomed for the position and there is a high probability that the core values of the club will stay constant. In the following season Kobe will become captain:

I want to make other people very comfortable, talk together with other people. I will look after the other members in detail; not only training but also in their lives, because we live together. I want to care about all the members.

What is the habitus of leadership at BURC? Taka offers:

Hiro has the ability to talk to people and when they talk to him he can listen and think and then give advice. I was the captain at high school and so I know what is required to lead. Hiro is dignified and can present his strong opinion to the members.

Hiro puts his own spin on the type of leadership he is trying to provide:

Hiro: Since they are not children I let them think for themselves and respect their individuality and let them take responsibility for their actions. However when we have to be together and united I have to be quite tough. They are part of the team so depending on the case I need people to concentrate or give effort so therefore I have to direct also.

Brent: Would you describe your leadership style as strong and direct?

Hiro: I have the final decision, it depends on the situation. I will ask for the others opinion and if I am happy with that then that is the way we will go. However if I disagree, I have the final decision so I will override the decision if I think it is necessary. Tonight in the boat I yelled at the crew. I was trying to re-invigorate them. The other members were not concentrating so I encouraged them to try hard and concentrate harder. Sometimes I have to get into the other members, other times I want them to feel comfortable and I stay quiet. How I act depends on what we need on the day.

In discussing Japan's success in business as hinging on the high degree of commitment Japanese managers can get from their workers, Kotloff (1996: 73) suggests that this is due to the practice of routinely extending the 'decision making processes to their workers, enabling them to feel a sense of participation and personal investment in their work'. Indeed, this approach can be seen in the attitudes of Hiro toward his leadership role. Always at the end of each training session the crew will gather in a circle and de-brief or discuss the good and bad points of the training and make suggestions for the next session. All crew members are expected to be involved in this process and are encouraged to speak. As such there develops a strong sense of collective ownership and identity in the crew as all members can feel some control over the direction (in terms of training) the crew will take. Musashi offers:

I think that BURC needs to have relaxed *jōge kankei*. This way it encourages all members to speak and express their point of view without fear. This is the only way for everyone to feel comfortable and for us as sempai to know what people really want and expect. If we allow good communication then everyone will feel good with any final decisions that are made.

Kobe discusses his vision of captaincy:

For the programme I will consult with the coxes, other senior members and training diary from the previous year. I think we should change some routines. For example we can improve winter training to become more effective and improve everyone's skill level, but many things will stay the same.

Living at the boat boathouse is more fun than living by yourself. But some things annoy me. (for example) Lights out time. The previous captain was stricter with lights out than Hiro. Recently it has become slacker. We don't go to bed and be quiet. I want to bring lights out back to the old fashioned way, stricter. I think that *jōge kankei* is very important so it should become stronger again. Hiro is too gentle. More discipline is needed.

Interestingly, Kobe sees that discipline and being tough are complimentary with caring for the members and providing a comfortable atmosphere. Kobe's style is suggestive of the friendly authoritarianism characteristic of business leadership style.

### **Distinction**

Being university students, members of BURC are already part of an elite. The meritocracy of Japanese education operates on a vertical hierarchy where it is 'less the content of the degree' and more the possession of certain kinds of education which, converted into 'esteem', are transformed further into 'social and symbolic power' (Clammer, 1995: 118). The education process can be seen as a 'mechanism of distinction' which operates to create difference. The meritocracy of university ranking is a form of distinction between universities, but does the mechanism of distinction operate within university? Consider Kobe's observations:

I guess I am different to normal university students. I have gained many things like patience. In most cases if someone doesn't like something they quit easily but I stick things out. I got a scholarship to come to BU for rowing so I have no choice but to stick things out. I have learnt the importance of continuing something. These skills are related to my future. (Kobe interview)



Part of this mechanism of distinction is the capacity to distinguish one's self from others. In this case Kobe is highlighting a difference based on the possession of symbolic capital, in this case the highly valued traits of patience and perseverance. In the case of the current captain, Hiro highlights the following:

The ordinary university student goes to class and has a routine. However, I am learning something that university cannot teach me. I have a special experience here so after graduating or in the future it will make sense, maybe not now but later it will help. The skill to make the teamwork together cannot be acquired just from studying at university. (Hiro)

Hiro infers the possession of a symbolic capital that he recognizes as having power but is unable to specify how or when this capital will confirm such distinction. Although he is ambiguous and uncertain about exactly what it is that marks his distinction he is clearly confident that this capital exists and has value. Further Hiro points to his identity being grounded simultaneously in apparently contradictory ways. On one he belongs to and adheres to the expectations of the club whilst on the other hand he has a sense of being different to the regular student population. Fuji demonstrates that this sense of difference to other students endures after one's rowing career finishes:

'Most students at university don't want to do hard work or get up early or show commitment to something. I have chosen this option so that does make me different to most students.

I am the type of person who can advise other people without making them uncomfortable. The type of person who has the right mentality and social skills to be effective. I'm the sort of person who has a strong will and determination to stick things out and finish the job. Rowing has taught me this.'

## **Conclusion**

I have attempted to show in as much detail as possible through description and interview exactly what it is to be a member of BURC and how this membership

becomes an all encompassing occupation in the university student's life. Through ritual and routine, rowing (all aspects of membership) becomes a vehicle for the delivery of a secondary curriculum<sup>48</sup> whose aim is to instill social and moral values, derived from a particular historical origin, in its participants. These ideologies exist at the level of commonsense for members and are embodied at every level of social and physical activity. The theme of self cultivation and the habitus required to practice such cultivation is brought out in the structural dynamics of boathouse life whether drinking, training, racing, sleeping, eating, in fact in essence in almost every aspect of being. The process of self-cultivation has been ongoing for most members since their earliest socialization in childhood, but more appropriately the symbolic capital they have imbued in their bodies is of a nature fully convertible in the field of university rowing. We can see how members are simultaneously individuals and part of the collective, how their ability to act consciously or independently is generated from a range of likely possibilities inscribed in the field and by the field. Further, we can see that, chosen purposefully as part of an academic career (rowing is far too involved to be considered a hobby or recreation) the strategic trajectory (that is not to say that this is some highly calculated plan by individuals, rather such strategies are predominantly operated at a subconscious level and are in fact expressions of habitus) of rowers is to maximize their capital (again this should not be read as some literal conversion of capital as in a transaction, rather capital is maximized because the logic of the field demands this). Moving from this field to others, members will 'naturally' go where the logics of the new field are coherent and where as a result the capital of the previous

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<sup>48</sup> The Secondary curriculum here refers to what falls outside of the formal academic curriculum, that is, moral, social and cultural education. Club activities exist, as is argued in chapter three for specific reasons and are encouraged because it is popularly believed that they achieve their aims of this form of non-academic education.

field has currency as they move forward into other fields of hierarchy and relationship.

The following chapter investigates the Japanese, as opposed to the Cartesian, concept of the body and how that impacts of the BURC members' use of their bodies. Further, it explores Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital as accrued through the logic of self-cultivation. Rowing at university offers members the potential to develop a form of symbolic capital that can be best described as *seishin* capital. Seishin capital is inscribed with meaning and has the potential to be converted into other forms of capital if utilised in an appropriate field.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT:**

### **SPIRITUAL CAPITAL**

Bourdieu (1984) suggests that educational capital is guaranteed cultural capital. Thus, the accrual of degrees, diplomas, and other educational credentials has, in itself, a certain wealth that can be measured in terms of status, potential earning ability and relevant dispositions in taste. Sport occupies an important place in the Japanese educational curriculum, in the form of club activities in schools and universities. To what extent is university based rowing in Japan a field of practice whereby forms of capital can be accrued. Can this particular form of physical education help to accrue capital, can this capital be specified and can it be transferred into cultural and economic capital? Further, is this capital in the same mode as that of academic education?

The concept of economic capital through physical education here is not concerned with the prospect of a professional sporting career as a result of this education. A recent Canadian study suggests that there is a relationship between participation in sport and future earning capacity (Curtis, McTeer and White, 2003). Their results emphasise also the cultural, social and physical capital accrued as an outcome of involvement sport. Although there is opportunity to work for companies that have rowing clubs, these are not professional athletes in the modern sense of the word. They are more like amateur athletes of old who overcame the problem of professionalism by working for a company in undisclosed jobs and also representing that company in their chosen sport. The company rower in Japan may have been

recruited for their rowing ability, but they are still required to work the normal hours and job description of other employees.

To view sports such as rowing as possessing a greater capital potential than just skill acquisition and physical fitness it is necessary to examine how the body is viewed or conceptualised in Japan.

### **Valuing the Japanese Body**

The dominant paradigm in Western culture routinely emphasises the Cartesian differentiation between mind and body and, as such, separates the two into exclusive areas. Cartesian logic has shaped much of Western sociology of the body though there has been a shift from such dualism toward fresh and 'embodied' approaches. As Shilling (2005: 19) suggests, the 'structuration' theories provide a new, 'middle way between social constructivist accounts of govern-mentality and phenomenological accounts of lived experience'. However, sporting practices are still largely dominated by the deterministic nature of the scientific method and the need to rationalise and quantify human action continues to force oppositions such as mind/body, subject/object, sociology/biology. To envisage the body as merely a physical structure housing a consciousness places a roadblock to understanding the potentialities of ourselves as beings. As such the more we rationalise our understanding of the body through such methods as biology or medicine the more we actually inhibit the understanding of the 'lived body'. Human beings **are** physical existence.

How does a BURC rower perceive his body and its potentialities? It is clear from previous information that the historical and philosophical construction of the individual in Japan is different to that of Western-Christian based thought. The

influences of Buddhist and Confucian thought have constructed a paradigm of the individual that not only runs counter to Cartesian logic in not recognising the mind/body dualism but also presents a model that may indeed enlighten and inspire our understanding of the body universally.

Ishikawa (1991 in Ozawa-DeSilva, 2002: 22) explains the issue as 'we should say that we do not **have** the body but that we **are** the body'. Central to this realisation of the self are the concepts of *ki* (spiritual energy) and *mi* which refers to the body as a potential whole, 'as the self, the heart, and lastly the whole existence' (Ozawa-DeSilva, 2002: 28). Ishikawa sees the 'body as spirit' (in Ozawa-DeSilva, 2002: 23) and that 'spirit and mind are nothing but two names given to the same reality' (in Ozawa-DeSilva, 2002: 25). The strength of one's *ki* can be expressed in one's health or lack thereof, and may be remedied or strengthened through diet, meditation, morality, exercise etc. Meanwhile, one's *mi* is the natural and spiritual, the social and the self, existing simultaneously.

Mind and body are seen as one, unified by the concepts of spirit and harmony, which allow bodily practices to improve the whole individual and not just physiology or appearance. This cultivation of the self is found in aesthetic practice, meditation and the martial arts (Horne, 2000). Yuasa (1987: 24) suggests the 'oneness of the body-mind is thus a goal or an ideal for inward meditation as well as for outward activities'. Examples of these 'outward activities' can be seen from the 17th century onward as Zen Buddhism found its way from the warrior classes and into wider secular life. Yuasa (1993: 26) observes that 'Eastern self-cultivation places importance on entering the mind from the body or form. That is, it attempts to train the mind by training the

body. Consequently, the mind is not simply consciousness nor is it constant and unchangeable, but rather it is that which is transformed through training the body'. Yuasa (1993) observes that the harmonisation of mind-body is not always apparent, as for example when learning a new activity. Whether sport, dance, theatre, calligraphy etc, at a beginners' stage the mind and body are incongruous as intellectual understanding of what is required is not met with exact physical reciprocity. As training continues mind-body oneness is achieved and action becomes no longer directed by the mind but rather free and unconscious. The issue of whether mind-body oneness is achieved rests for Yuasa in the intention or goal of the activity being undertaken. A practice must be undertaken in the right spirit if one is to develop *seishin*.<sup>49</sup> Thus sport can be seen from varying perspectives as to its role in education as Western practices tend to focus on enhancing bodily capacities. However, if the practice of Western sport has, as a goal (perhaps directed initially by teachers or coaches) spiritual training, then it is 'conceivable that perseverance of hard training can bring forth the effect of strengthening spiritual power and nurturing strong will power' (Yuasa, 1993: 8). Sporting clubs such as BURC, offer therefore a physical practice that can operate as a method of self cultivation, particularly as a practice of *Karada de oboeru*, that is, learning through the body. Physical knowledge is seen as permanent. Brownell (1995: 12-13) explains her experiences as an athlete in China as 'practice makes permanent' which tends to reiterate the largely unconscious nature of Bourdieu's habitus, the extension of which is its durability that 'reinforces social order' and becomes the 'ultimate source of social stability'. Thus self-cultivation in this way is indeed social cultivation as the body provides habituation of the permanency of social relations. Recognising this concept of the body is crucial in addressing the

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<sup>49</sup> Yuasa (1993) uses spirit as his translation for *seishin* in all situations.

question of transferring educational (in this case physical) capital into forms of cultural capital. Ozawa-DeSilva (2002: 36) indicates that the 'Japanese tend to see bodily practice as cultivation, seeking as its end not power, but the recognition of mind-body integration, the natural expression of which can be seen in activities such as Zen archery' (for example see Herrigel, 1953).

Clammer (1995: 88) argues an acceptance of the Japanese body with associations to concepts relating to

purity, and the view of self development as cultivation of character, moral qualities, endurance (which in Japan is a moral quality) and spirit which leads to an expansion of responsibility and human heartedness which ultimately defines the ideal person.

With an overview of the self that combines a mind-body unity requiring constant cultivation and attention to develop, the individual can be seen indeed as 'a work in progress' as is the case with BURC rowers. The daily regimes intended on integrating the intellectual theory of rowing with the somatic practice of rowing are a case in point of the acquisition of mind-body unity. As embodied practice BURC rowers invest their time in a training and living environment that on a level of *mi* develops a habitus which demonstrates *ki* capital, a capital that endures, it is assumed, long after the days in the boat are over.

### **I Know Where You're Coming From**

As previously mentioned, becoming a member at BURC is part of a continuation of a project begun at high school or even junior high school. Most members arrive already possessing physical capital (rowing ability) in the field and a strong understanding of concepts such as *jōge kankei*. This pre-history is crucial for the function of the



boathouse, the delivery of cultural curriculum and the maximal accrual of symbolic, in this case *seishin*, capital. As Bourdieu et al (1990: 99) insist:

An education system based on a traditional type of pedagogy can fulfil its function of inculcation only so long as it addresses itself to students equipped with the linguistic and cultural capital - and the capacity to invest it profitably -which the system presupposes and consecrates without ever expressly demanding it and without methodically transmitting it.

Many of the BURC members are there on *suisen* which suggests that they had a strong rowing background from high school. Several members come from F High School (Light, 1998) an industrial high school in the Kansai region. Until relatively recently FHS was a hopeless school, terrible graduation rates, poor entry to university and bad discipline. However, the influence of a particular teacher changed the fortunes of FHS and its graduates. The establishment of a very successful and rigorous rugby club altered the schools private and public perception and it was seen that this reformation through rugby began producing graduates highly sought after by university rugby teams. Since this time many members of the Japanese rugby team have been FHS graduates, the high school team has competed in multiple Hanazono<sup>50</sup> finals, and a TV serial was made about the enigmatic coach and his teams. The sports led reformation of FHS spread into other sports including rowing. The highly traditional approach taken to sport participation at FHS therefore becomes embodied in a sporting practice and part of the physical capital graduates take with them. With FHS as their background, new members to BURC begin their careers slightly ahead of other freshmen. As a result FHS graduates are in a position to dominate particular aspects of club life. Indeed, there is a strong chance that leadership positions and subsequent power are given to graduates of either FHS or the other school mentioned

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<sup>50</sup> Hanazono is the annual all Japan High school rugby championship, held on the Hanazono field in Osaka. Teams from all over Japan are involved in elimination style qualification matches until only two teams remain to compete for the Hanazono title. This form of national championship exists in most high school sports.

earlier KHS<sup>51</sup>. These students possess the highest levels of capital in the field of rowing due to their high school experience. Therefore they are imbued with the best habitus with which to play the game and are most likely to instil on the field capital qualities based on their experience of rowing.

### **Self-cultivation**

Whilst on a superficial level all members express becoming AJICR champions as their goal for rowing, the reality of this outcome is highly unlikely except for one or two crews who have an outside chance at best. On a deeper level the notion of self-cultivation becomes a more genuine project for members. None of the members specifically stated that their goal at BURC was 'to become a better person' or 'I row to harmonise my mind and body'. However, there exists a strong understanding that their experience is actually self-cultivation. Consider some of the following responses when asked to explain why membership of BURC would hold one in good stead for future opportunities:

When I am in a hardship I can overcome it because I have gone through painful hard times in rowing, I can overcome hardship. (Musashi)

I can sell that I have devoted my self to one thing for 4 years. It's a sales point. (Tana)

I have *seishin* because I have continued with rowing and I can sell that at the job interview. (Sato)

I have developed *seishin* through perseverance, harmony and co-operation. (Kobe)

Several themes come through these responses that are important. Firstly, because they demonstrate the subconscious belief in self-cultivation and, secondly, because

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<sup>51</sup> There are of course exceptions to this unwritten pedagogical rule. For example a Toyko university rowing club that I have had much contact with was captained by a '*ronin*' - a student who had entered university via a post high school education system. However, even in this situation, this captain had been a rugby player at high school, and although spending two years working and then trying for entry into university, had experienced the type of high school club activity, that is, disciplined, hierarchical, physically demanding etc, common to most rowers.

they express how this self cultivation is developed. In all the responses there is an expression of having improved oneself through being a member of the rowing club. In particular, the development of *seishin*, which according to Yuasa (1987: 1993) is in essence self-cultivation, has been seen to be developed through rowing. Further, *seishin* has not been developed through rowing per se, rather through persevering at rowing or the hardship of rowing or of dedicating (done one thing) ones self to rowing. Not only is this acceptance of self-cultivation significant so too is the sense of difference it creates from other students:

At my age not many people live such a disciplined lifestyle (Tana)

I have experienced many things that other club activities don't offer (Takahiro)

The company will think I have been positive and very active at university (Daisuke)

There is the inference here that university students are or are perceived as lacking in certain qualities and that this lack of 'spirituality' or purpose is something to be frowned on. In a way BURC members are taking the moral high ground so to speak and rate their university experience in a way that creates a sense of superiority. These responses break away from the stereotype of Japanese conformism as the students actively chose a path that makes them different to students who do not engage in rigorous club activities (here I would include martial arts, baseball, soccer, rugby, etc). Of course it may be suggested that rowers are merely showing hyper-conformity to a field of Confucian based sport. However, I would argue that in the field of university education they are in many ways anti-conformist but are driven by the strength of their habitus, often in the form of *suisen*, toward the rowing club where they can use their capital, a capital which may not hold so much currency in the broader student population.

It is significant also that *seishin* outranks teamwork and group identity as factors that create a successful crew. This information goes against the stereotype of collective conformity as the development of *seishin* or self-cultivation is an inherently personal and individual pursuit. Whilst *seishin* may be developed via group activities, the very nature of such cultivation is inward looking and revolves entirely around self reference. As with any form of self-cultivation (remember that it is the goal of the activity not the cultural origins that makes it a valid site for self-cultivation), whether origami, ikebana, kendo, confectionary production, etc, the relationship that is most important is between the individual and the object of their action, the goal of which is to harmonise so that individual and object become one. The demands of a team oriented sport such as rowing may indeed create conflict between the goals of self-cultivation and working as a crew. However, conflict of this form could be explained as just one of the many hardships faced in the process of spiritual improvement. Indeed, the greater the hardship the greater the self-cultivation potential.

Our particular concern is cultural capital in the form of employment or more accurately *shakaijin*, a person in society. To fulfil this identity of *shakaijin* one must not just be an adult, rather one needs to exist within a social field which gives meaning and structure to all the relationships and interactions one is likely to engage in. Japan is a group oriented culture, and belonging to an organization not only provides an income but more importantly, fixes the individual within the security and identity of the group. Doi (1971) suggests that while Western orientation is to the individual, Japanese is to the group. The collective orientation and need for human nexus provides the individual with a sense of social security and mutual assistance. As Kuwayama (1992) suggests, belonging to the group allows individuals to fix

themselves within a framework of reference that offers a known template of behaviour and hierarchy based on Confucian concepts. Additionally, Clammer (1997, in Horne, 2000:76) describes a person's body and self-identity as being developed through a process of 'uniform individualisation'. It is important to note here, that for the purpose of this paper, it is the feedback of male members that is of interest. The capital that is developed in one's time as a member of the rowing club is indeed gendered as too are the concepts of *seishin*, *budō* and *samurai*. The forms of capital expressed are masculine. Investments made bodily in the accrual of these forms of cultural capital are intended to have value in a gendered world, workplace, family etc. Whether real or imagined, it is the belief in the worth of belonging to a sports club in Japan, in this case rowing, that is paramount. As Bourdieu (1984: 212) suggests;

'Variations in sporting practices are due as much to the variations in perception and appreciation of the immediate or deferred profits they are supposed to bring, as to the variations in costs, both economic and cultural and indeed bodily.'

It is the 'perception and appreciation' of the profits of being a member of BURC that are of interest. In many ways these profits are discovered via two questions; 1) Do you think that being a member of BURC (that is the experiences had and lessons learnt) will help you attain a job?<sup>52</sup> and, 2) What are the most important aspects of your rowing experience? In answering these questions it is important to recognise the Japanese understanding of the body as being inseparable from the mind. In fact, both mental and physical action can be seen as an expression of one's spirit.

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<sup>52</sup> This question does not assume a direct transference from sporting capital to employment. Rather there is an indirect relationship between the various cultural and physical capital accrued whilst rowing and this capital's ability to hold its value outside of the educational setting and in other settings such as the work place, family etc. As such the profits of rowing are therefore the accrual of various forms of culturally specific and significant capital.

Almost 90 percent of current members believed that their membership of BURC would assist them in their future search for employment. When asked if he thought being captain of BURC would help finding a job, Hiro answered:

Yes and no. Directly no, the Alumni will not get me a job. However, the experiences here will help me. For example, living here has taught me many things. When I go for a job interview I will be able to respond to the questions, such as: 'Were you involved in clubs?' with confidence that I was the captain. That the team I belonged to was really traditional and strong. I will be very proud of my position in the rowing team. Even though it is a small club, the skills to lead the team are really important to lead in society. Because I was a leader once I know both sides (of hierarchy). Once I work for the company, even if I am a lower employee I will know how the leader feels to the employees. Both sides, how leadership works and how other people work. I will understand how the boss feels or what the boss expects and I understand how to work as a team.

The fact that Hiro perceives BURC as being traditional and emphasises his leadership role cannot be understated. Rohlen (1986) examined the spiritual education of bank employees, the basis of which was the bank's desire to educate its employees in the correct groupthink to best enable them to fit into the company. The fact that the bank engages in this process also indicates a lack of faith in the education system to provide graduates with this knowledge. 'At a formal level, major companies hold intensive training sessions for several weeks for new employees, in an endeavour to infuse company policies and practices into their minds' (Sugimoto, 1997: 92). As a traditional club, BURC provides members with the development of spiritual capital as defined in various tenets of Confucianism and Buddhism and in particular the development of one's *seishin*. These core tenets revolve around the *kōhai/sempai* (junior/senior) or *jōge kankei* (hierarchical) relationships, the concept of self-sacrifice and learning through *kurō* (hardship), the concept of *wa* (harmony) and *kyōchō* (cooperation), and the qualities of patience, endurance, perseverance, and discipline. As described previously, the rowing club environment, social set up and practice routines are all relatively traditional stemming from a conservative sport. Members of

BURC have no doubt about the benefits and significance of living in such a 'proper, disciplined way.' (notes)

The captain for the next year, Kobe, adds to Hiro's sentiments:

'Yes, the experiences here will help in a job. As a member here sometimes you have to be very, very patient, but this skill will help when it comes to get a job. I have confidence in what I have done in rowing, compared to the normal university life I have learnt trust and cooperation with other people and I think these skills are useful in getting a job. I will express these things at the job interview.'

Kobe also makes the significant statement of differentiating himself from the 'normal' university student. It is clear that many of the members at BURC are members because of their desire, not to be the same as their peers, but to be different from them.

'Compared to other people who don't do club activities I think I understand more about physical strength, *jōge kankei*, and *ningenkankei* (human relationships) and I can sell those skills at the job interview.'

Hiro adds:

The ordinary university student goes to class and has a routine. However, I am learning something that university cannot teach me. I have a special experience here that after graduating or in the future will make sense, maybe not now but later it will help. The skill to make the teamwork together cannot be acquired just from studying at university.

OB Fuji who is doing fifth year and can no longer row adds to the sentiment of employability through rowing:

I think being an ex-member of BURC will help me get a job. The experience here has been very good. When I was a *kōhai* I wanted to catch up with the *sempai* and the process of trying to achieve this is very good for my prospects.

Fuji is also reflective however that this might not actually result in his 'dream' job:

My ideal job would be to get a job related to rowing, like at a company that had a rowing team, but realistically this is unlikely. I'll probably end up working in a public office or something like that.

As suggested by several observers in Japan, the capital accrued through rowing doesn't hold currency in any field of employment, rather it has its greatest value in specific fields of employment.

### **Social Positioning**

Although few informants see future employment, or the belief that the alumni network will assist in this quest, as their primary motivation for joining the rowing club, there is the belief that being a member of BURC will in some way give them an edge in the highly competitive job market. Certainly, in the case of some sports, success at a high school or college level can greatly assist one's chances of employment. Pempel (1998: 131) offers: 'a talented baseball player or volleyball player who has gone to a mediocre high school or college can often land a job at a prestigious company anxious to capture his or her athletic talents for the company sponsored team. Many of the BURC members received encouragement to attend the university based on their high school rowing, and sporting scholarships do exist in the university system. However, in rowing, as with many clubs (not just sporting), there is no professional league to which to aspire. There are some companies that have rowing teams, but these are few in relation to the number of graduates. Unlike Pempel's (1998) example, graduates would rarely be employed solely due to their sporting talents. Nevertheless, members see the potential in gaining social positioning through rowing. Here social positioning does not refer to a rise or shift in class status, as most Japanese people refer to themselves (perhaps falsely) as middle class (Sugimoto, 1997). Rather it is the important step of moving from *gakusei* (student) to *shakaijin* (person in society) and therefore positioning oneself in the social nexus. Individuals who become members of the BURC are indeed making an investment through



physical sacrifice in their *seishin* (spiritual) capital. The strength of this capital is not, however, measured by results in any regatta or championship, nor in the ability to row a boat. The boat and boat club are merely the environment which facilitates the development of *seishin* capital and, as such, the actual rowing is of peripheral importance.

I think that the process to win is most important so if I don't achieve the goal but the process is good then I am happy. Even if we lose the race but we do our best then I will be very satisfied. So far I have been happy with the process. (Hiro interview)

'Not only rowing but also from other sports I think people understand *jōge kankei* and live in proper disciplined way' – (Sato)

'I have *seishin* because I have continued with rowing and I can sell that at the job interview' - (Haruki)

As with martial arts or secular forms of Buddhism, the actual activity is only a vehicle to allow the tempering of one's spirit and the mastering of oneself. As Hiro puts it above, it is the 'process' that is paramount. Therefore, as the opportunity to engage in the activity is removed, it is believed that the *seishin* developed endures. As with most of the informants, they saw little, if no, opportunity for rowing once they graduated from university, nor did they seem particularly disappointed about this.

The spiritual capital accrued through rowing is believed to be stable and enduring across various fields. One of the primary reasons for the strength of this capital is the level of investment required. Being a member of BURC requires total commitment for four years of the student's life. This includes living for over half of that time with a group of people who never previously met, in the less than spacious living arrangements at the boat shed. There is very little time to be involved in anything else. The concept of committing to one task or activity is fairly standard throughout Japanese education, regardless of what the club activity it might be. However, at university the level of adherence to this model usually weakens. University is often

described as ‘leisure land’ (Sugimoto, 1997) and is generally considered an opportunity to relax after the ‘exam hell’ of high school and prior to entering the work force. Rowing is intentionally brutal and tough in practice. In part this is due to the nature of the sport, but also to expectations of the practitioners who have the acquired understanding that the greater the hardship, the suffering and the pain, the greater the challenge to endure and to persevere, the greater the *seishin* that is developed. As there are so many clubs within the university, BURC intentionally positions itself on the extreme end of the scale. This is in part to achieve a sense of difference or distinction from other clubs by being the toughest or hardest. It is also to demonstrate to any potential members that the rowing club is not for the fickle or fainthearted. If you are not prepared to operate under the collective rules of the club and adhere to a strong *kōhai/sempai* relationship then this is not the club for you.

The belief in the power of one’s *seishin* is also clearly expressed. As mentioned previously not only did members regard the development of *seishin* as a desired outcome of their rowing experience, they also perceived that *seishin* was the single most important factor (more so than technique, teamwork, and certainly more than coaching quality) in a successful crew. Even further there is large consensus in responses that this *seishin* is recognisable, not in itself necessarily, but as understood as inscribed in rowing practice. Based on the origins and tenets involved in the conception of *seishin*, one would suggest that the more conservative the environment, the stronger the belief in *seishin*. Taka is a freshman, rows in the number one boat and was described by the translator as having the ‘Samurai spirit’.

‘You must have the desire to win, the winning spirit (*seishin*) and to show that feeling through performance. Spiritually wanting to win, heart, plus of course amount of practice, these are the most important aspects of rowing.’

‘The most important components of rowing are strength, coordination, a strong mind, and *seishin*.’ (notes)

‘Try hard whatever situation you are in, improve yourself little by little.’ (notes)

‘Cooperation (*kyōchō*) with other people, wanting to win, and.....?; (notes)

Taka’s perspective is clearly not unique and there are relationships between what are seen as the important components of rowing, the sense of difference to the average university student, and a belief in *seishin*.

One of the key tenets of developing *seishin* is the need for a good *kohai/sempai* relationship as this is the foundation of learning through observation. The Confucian concepts of hierarchy or *jōge kankei* are particularly clear and accepted at BURC. Of course, this is not to say that this is in any way unique to the rowing club, in fact such concepts are normal through social organization in Japan. However, it is the intensity of the experience, the absence of members older than 23, and the voluntary nature of BURC that makes the *jōge kankei* so important and strong. At BURC there is a close relationship in the understanding of *ningenkankei* (human relationships) and *jōge kankei* (upper and lower relationships). Of his goals at BURC Kobe suggests:

‘I want to win the inter college championship. Also I want to make more friends here and when I graduate I will have to go into the community so I hope I understand people more. I want to learn human relationships (*ningenkankei*) by living with other people because that’s really important in society. I want to learn the skills of living with other people.’

Interestingly there is variation in the perception of how strong the *jōge kankei* is or should be.

I had no expectations. Before coming here I knew nothing. It is very different from high school particularly from the point of view of being more individual and self motivated. At university you are more independent, the *kohai/sempai* relationship is stronger because you have to learn more from your *sempai*, as there are no coaches. (interview with Taka)

Living at the boat shed is more fun than living by yourself. However I would change some things as captain. For example lights out time. The previous captain was stricter

with lights out than Hiro. Recently it has become slacker. We don't go to bed and be quiet. I want to bring lights out back to the old fashioned way, stricter. I think that *jōge kankei* is very important so it should become stronger again. Hiro is too gentle. More discipline is needed. (interview with Kobe)

The *sempai/kōhai* relationship is not necessarily one of strict obedience to one's elder. In many ways at BURC it operates more as a mentoring system, as Taka suggests the relationship for him is actually one of greater freedom and genuine interaction.

I have a much greater fondness for the *sempai* at university than at high school. At the freshmen's party I was really moved by the gesture of the *sempai* pouring my drink. (Taka interview)

The accrual of spiritual capital for members at BURC does not begin with their joining the rowing club in university; rather BURC can be seen as the continuation and intensification of the *seishin* building process. With few exceptions, members of BURC rowed at high school and those who did not engaged in some other club activity with similar commitment requirements (questionnaire). As a result, the spiritual capital developed at BURC is particularly strong. It has its roots in traditions that have changed little over time. As an organisation it is almost completely autonomous and member driven. For most members, it is the most important part of their lives at this time:

Rowing has been my university life, all of it. I have been rowing for a long time; it's my university life. (interview Hiro)

My high school teacher recommended that I go to BURC. I didn't know much about the teaching here but I was aware of their rowing programme. I came to BURC to become a member of the rowing club not to be a BU student. I don't care about university only rowing. (interview with Taka)

Of course the totality of the importance of rowing in one's university life is subject to variation. As Kobe states:

It has been a large part of my university life, but I also like to do other things. I want to improve my academic performance. I want to work in interior design and I like to make time to concentrate on this. The boat club is one part of my life, it's important, but I have other interests too. (interview with Kobe)

Kobe sees himself in a broader perspective, or at least wants to see himself this way. Kobe develops these alternative identities but the reality is that he has little time to follow them.

### ***Seishin Capital***

As a field, university rowing 'presents itself as a structure of probabilities - of rewards, gains, profits, or sanctions - but always imply(ing) a measure of indeterminacy' (Bourdieu, 1990 in Wacquant, 1992: 18). These probabilities exist on varying levels of predictability based on the strength of the habitus of the agents action in the social space. The 'profits' from the field are expressed in forms of capital, though there is never a guarantee that this capital will hold its currency when it is used in different fields. Of all the forms of capital it is symbolic capital that has the greatest potential to maintain its currency.

This ethnographic research permits insight and interpretations of the 'fuzzy logic' of Japanese sporting activity in tertiary education. Multiple philosophies and ideologies assimilated to a Japanese format suggest a historical practice of concealing hegemony in the dominant doctrines of Confucianism, Buddhism and Shinto (Nakamura, 1964; Van Wolferen, 1989). These influences produce an understanding of the body that is unique within the constructs of this hegemony. Just as the body may be viewed differently depending on the cultural format, so too may bodily activities such as sport.

Spiritual capital is expressed in what Bourdieu (1984: 466) would describe as habitus.

As such habitus:

schemes of habitus, the primary forms of classification, owe their specific efficacy to the fact that they function below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny or control by the will. Orienting practices practically, they embed what some would mistakenly call values in the most automatic gestures

or the apparently most insignificant techniques of the body – ways of walking, or blowing one's nose, ways of eating or talking – and engage the most fundamental principles of construction and evaluation of the social world, those which most directly express the division of labour, or the division of the work of domination, in divisions between bodies and between relations to the body, which borrow more features than one, as if to give them the appearance of naturalness.

Spiritual habitus is constructed at BURC; it does not result merely from being a member, but emerges / develops at every level of existence, or as Bourdieu (1984: 466) suggests 'below the level of consciousness and language'. These practices include such elements as; the type of meals made by the managers, for example the daily breakfast of rice, soup and fish (never any deviation); the small Buddhist shrine in the corner of the dining room where the bowl of rice is replaced each day; the long prayers before and after meals; the option for traditional and not Western style toilets – even though the boatshed is only about 25 years old a choice has been made as to the type of toilets used and therefore the daily act of defecation is in a way a reaffirmation of traditional values; the collective water bottles, frozen and wrapped for each crew, the stretching routines and the individual positioning of each member according to a clear understanding of the *jōge kankei*; the living arrangements, cramped and exposed to the other members, constantly under surveillance. All of these practices contribute to the *seishin* habitus.

In all of the responses it was impossible to differentiate between the rower's experiences of the sport as a physical activity and the rower's engagement with the sport as a living, 24-hour a day experience. This suggests that the activity is experienced holistically in keeping with a Japanese conception of the body where the development of one part of the individual is seen as the development of the whole. Indeed, the important themes of *ningenkankei* and *jōge kankei* appear to be developed predominantly outside of the boat. Therefore, it is the complex social nexus of the club, in its physical and spatial relationships, which effect the greatest appreciation of

the *seishin* habitus. There is clearly a physical investment made by members of BURC in their future spiritual capital. It was suggested by a Japanese observer that many employers in certain industries prefer employees who are 'physically strong and mentally stupid' and that perhaps rowing clubs did a good job at producing such potential employees. The inference was made that *seishin*, being a 'traditional' concept was dated and that *seishin* training actually negates critical thinking. I don't believe, however, that these students are as one dimensional as such an appraisal suggests. The very social dynamics of club life results in the development of highly socialised individuals who are constantly utilising their habitus to maintain *ningenkankei* and harmony within the boathouse. Certainly their abilities in this regard may be much stronger than other students who have limited interaction with other people. Their ability to think critically is always balanced with consideration with what is best for the group. Further the entire education system in Japan has tended to disregard critical thought (Van Wolferen, 1989: Sugimoto, 1997). In choosing to be members of BURC, these students hope to graduate with an identity that will strike a chord with prospective employers - that they are ready to operate in the highly socialised world of *salary-man* employment.

The following chapter discusses being a member at BURC from the Foucaultian perspective of the internalisation of morality. The functions of an entire cultural apparatus are examined as commonsense is internalised to produce each individuals understanding of the world.

## **CHAPTER NINE:**

### **Hegemony and the Internalisation of the Critical Gaze**

As a sport, rowing is an exemplar of the muscular Christian and muscular Confucian ethos. Rowing, through its repetition, inscribes not only the motor patterns of movement but also the 'morality' of that movement. Rowing exists in a unique realm of team sport almost devoid of individualism, tactics or rules. In a physiological way it is closest to pursuits such as cycling, athletics and swimming in its reliance on the repetition of a basic pattern of movement. The reality of rowing is that, once technique is developed, each crewmember is simply required to repeat that same movement again and again. In training and competition the potential for variability in experience comes from either the weather and/or the crewmembers' ability to repeat the rowing movement. Variability from rule interpretations, game tactics and the relative game skills required and individual acts of brilliance or incompetence are essentially irrelevant in rowing. In rowing individual expression in performance is limited to the biomechanical repetition of the same movement. Individual ability required in other sports and demonstrated by other sport practitioners, such as a football player's skill on their left side or a tennis player's anticipation of where the ball is going to next, are mostly imperceptible in rowing. Even though greater strength and technical capacity are valued and significant in rowing performance, these abilities are largely unnoticed except within the internal dynamics of the crew.

#### **There's Something about Rowing**

The morality inscribed in the highly repetitious action of a rowing race, where each crew member might take approximately 240 strokes in a 2000metre event, is the



ability to endure and conquer pain in order to maintain the efficiency of the movement with as much power as the rower can muster. This morality revolves around the intrinsic understanding of members regarding their mutual obligations, collective responsibilities and the notion that failing these or letting the crew down is just about the morally worst act a rower can perform. The dialogue of rowing is internal, the question of, 'I can or I can't do it?' or 'I must do it' is central to the torment experienced by each member. To stop rowing, either by lessening effort or stopping altogether, goes against the habitus of probable actions and results in that individual with two potential responses. In the first example, lessening one's effort is not always detectable from within or without the boat. Here morality is attacked from within. The individual must reconcile this anomaly in habitus by either proving themselves to themselves at the next opportunity or readjusting how they play the game. Readjustment may result in the rower playing the field differently, such as exaggerating other methods that indicate effort, screaming in pain, exaggerating fatigue or collapsing, in a bid to trick oneself into believing they can take it. In the second situation observations about the rower's morality are made externally, as failure to continue is obvious. It is paradoxical that the sport entertains the notion of effort until total exhaustion yet is wary to ever accept that this state may indeed be possible to achieve. Collapse in the boat is unlikely to be seen as the ultimate effort and affirmed. Rather, it will be perceived as the ultimate weakness and condemned. Therefore, for a person to actually stop during either training or racing is an indication that their habitus has been developed with a few circuits missing. Inferred here is the internal judgement that it's impossible to push yourself so hard that your body shuts down. A rower with a good feel for the game is, therefore, most likely to feign fatigue and suffering rather than actually putting themselves into a position where this pain

could prove career ending. As with many sports, rowers develop a strong understanding of their physical capacity and ability to endure and control pain. The best players (rowers) are those who can best regulate their pain levels, enduring as much as possible without running the risk of collapse, and incrementally increasing the levels of pain so as to increase performance over time.

The internal morality of the boat inscribes an unconscious embodiment of this reality of dealing with pain, which is a central component of the sport. The crew demands the same conformity in thinking as it does in rowing action. The adage 'the chain is only as strong as its weakest link' is applicable in this particular sport and the necessity to move together at all times means that this link will stand out if broken. The dominant ideology of the boat transfers into other aspects of life as the distinction between training and boathouse life is often blurred. Being a rower stretches much further than the confines of the river as the nature of the membership ensures the creation of a bodily identity that is carried into university, work and family life. The body becomes a symbolic space of stoicism, pain tolerance, *ningenkankei*, *jōge kankei* and conformity. Rowing at a Japanese university is repetition upon repetition - in the boat, in the timetable, in the meals, in all aspects of life. Its predictability produces players who seem totally at ease in the game, relaxed and carefree.

As Bourdieu (1998: 81) posits: 'When embodied structures and objective structures are in agreement, when perception is constructed according to the structure of what is perceived, everything seems obvious and goes without saying'. The harmonisation of the 'embodied' and 'objective' produces a commonsensical understanding, a naturalising of action, relations, power, expectations, and indeed reality. BURC is a

site par excellence where this harmonisation has occurred. The use of one's body, the values ascribed to it and expected of it, its management in time socially and spiritually have been naturalised through individual experience of multiple structures that have reinforced this identity throughout one's life. As social agents with a feel for the game the BURC rower does not 'need to pose the objectives of their practice as ends' (Bourdieu, 1998: 80). Rather, totally engaged in the field, rowers are constantly anticipating the next move, that is, the immediate future or soon to be present. The game is continuous, sometimes easy to play, sometimes challenging, but only rarely (if ever) would the game challenge the agreement between habitus and field that produces the commonsense of practice. This agreement is produced through a broad education provided by the rowing clubs.

### **Pedagogic Action**

Loic Wacquant (2004a) refers to the 'pugilistic pedagogy' that exists at the Woodlawn Boys Club. He notes that this pedagogy aims at more than just the transmission of boxing technique but rather has a *secondary curriculum* instructing one's rational expectations, progress through the boxing hierarchy, risk minimisation and bodily discipline and sacrifice outside the gym. Further, this 'knowledge is transmitted outside of his (the coaches') explicit intervention' (Wacquant, 2004a: 113) through the 'silent and practical communication from body to body' (Bourdieu 1990, 166 in Wacquant 2004a: 113). The pedagogical action of BURC operates on a similar multi curricula level. The transmission of rowing technique is in this case usurped by a *secondary curriculum* that reinforces hierarchy, demonstration of bodily discipline and self sacrifice, cultural conformity, and harmony. Not only is knowledge transmitted outside of the coaches' explicit intervention at BURC, as the coach is

largely absent and thus has no opportunity for intervention. The absence of coaches is not accidental but intended as student autonomy in university sporting clubs is common. Further coach Nakamura suggests that:

it's not my place to control the rowers. I think it is very good for the boys' development as people that they are responsible for their own decisions and those of the group. They have the ability to operate as a group and rowing gives them the opportunity to learn this. I think these are important lessons. I will give them advice about technique and help them as much as I can but in the end it's up to them, particularly the senior members, to organise the programme, select the crews and run the boathouse. (interview with Nakamura)

The strong levels of mimeticism at BURC are facilitated via pedagogical observation, imitation, and the 'mutual correction by the group' (Wacquant, 2004a: 124). The 'pedagogical tools' of the boat club are more than just the boats and oars but encompass the entirety of artefacts that collectively identity BURC. The Buddhist shrine in the dining room, the posters of important regattas, the framed photos of previously successful BURC crews, the training gear hanging from every space in each of the bunk rooms (a collection of lycra rowing suits and commemorative regatta t-shirts), the spatial arrangement of blankets in the boat area during warm up. Considered out of context or individually these artefacts are potentially meaningless. However, collectively they possess a silent and constant reinforcement of the little *milieu* of BURC. As Wacquant (2004a: 127) observes

the self-regulated pedagogical machinery constituted (by the gym) resides in the indivisible system of material and symbolic relations that obtain among the different participants, and particularly in the arrangement of their bodies in the physical space of the gym and in its specific time

Even more so than at the Woodlawn Boys Club, BURC operates in some respects as a total pedagogic institution, one in which bodies are mutually and individually regulated. I use 'total' as the BURC experience is entire, intense and lived. The BURC

rower is manufactured via the singular identity that is produced and maintained from living at the boathouse. A rower's diet is controlled by the portions prepared by the managers. How a rower spends his free time is monitored by the collective gaze of those who sleep in the same bunkroom. Failure to get enough (out on the town) or restricting others sleep (making too much noise, coming to bed late) is strictly sanctioned. The nightly curfew enforced by the captain reduces members to reading *manga*, watching baseball or sleeping early. Bodies are constantly on display, not only in training but also in the shower block, changing for bed, sleeping, semi-naked at meal times. In such an environment bodies that were too fat or soft would stand out. The constant comparison of physiques produces in turn a homogenous body of the BURC rower.

Central to the strength of the pedagogic action at play at BURC is the role of hierarchy. As Clammer (1995: 106) offers 'hierarchy is self reproducing and the ritualization of its functioning ensures that it is rarely challenged'. This is the case not only because hierarchy is respected and taken seriously but also because as a social construct it is recognised, not as being a restriction of *communitas*, but rather it reproduces it 'at a society wide level'. Just as with Wacquant's (2001: 181) boxers, BURC rowers are not 'naïve, overcredulous, incomprehending or ill-informed as to the real nature of their occupation'. They are not hierarchical 'dupes'. Rather, they are aware of the function and the need for *jōge kankei*. This productive form of disciplined behaviour may be further explained by borrowing from Michel Foucault.

## **Discipline**

Michel Foucault (1977: 138-139) describes discipline as a 'political anatomy of detail' with the potential to produce 'subjected and practiced bodies, docile bodies'. Using

Foucault's typology for the art of distributions leads us to a framework to help explain how discipline 'proceeds from the distributions of individuals in space' (141). The discipline practiced at BURC is embodied to the point of naturalness by its members, although the structures that contain this discipline may be observed by following Foucault's typology. The first element in the production of a disciplined body is the notion of enclosure or 'a place heterogenous to all others and closed in upon itself' (Foucault, 1977: 141). In the boathouse this can be seen, both as a physical and symbolic structure. The boathouse is indeed unique as a 'space' for university students and only those with the required habitus have the practical knowledge to operate and maximise their position within this world. Rather than being walled up away from the outside world, entry behind the boathouse's walls is based upon one's physical and symbolic capital as a rower and therefore it is a world that produces exclusion more than inclusion. Beyond this level of enclosure is the level of partitioning where 'each person has his own space' (Foucault, 1977: 143). Each group of members has their own space: the managers have the kitchen, the women have the *tatami* room, the men have the dormitory. Inside the space of the dormitory each man has his own space, like a capsule, a space of sleep, which is a time when the habitus can rest.

Further to this partitioning of space, discipline requires functional sites, the creation of 'useful space' (Foucault, 1977: 144). These sites extend from the boathouse and into the training environment. There is clear demarcation of space inside the boathouse for eating, sleeping, stretching, training, washing and cleaning. Similarly there are spaces outside the boathouse on the land and river with specific function. The mountain path up to the temple at Ishiwayamadera is a site of training used to expose one's toughness and strength, the stretch of water between the Shinkansen bridge and Island becomes

a very public and visible site for seat racing and crew selection, the rowing course functions as the place to verify boat speed against the clock, long rows toward the weir facilitate technical improvement and the development of aerobic capacity. To perform within a timeframe requires use of the body in a specific and instrumental manner. Rowers, motivated by making the boat faster and the personal best mentality (improving one's times on the ergometer or over a running distance), become conditioned to or by the clock which in turn facilitates a keen awareness of the bodily functions required to satisfy time restraints. Time is a disciplining agent of performance and as such levels of pain and time become synonymous. With the mentality of 'against the clock', time becomes a moral standard and shapes all levels of movement, intensity and unity in any rowing performance. The pre-occupation with time shapes not only performance but also activity leading into performance. For example, to achieve a certain time during a rowing ergometer test will not only determine levels of exertion during but, more significantly, how time is spent in preparation, the type of food consumed before the test, and the amount of rest and types of social activity engaged in leading into the event. The longer a rower (or any athlete) is engaged in the mentality of 'beating the clock' the greater the power of the clock to shape and determine one's actions and behaviour beyond a performance of the sporting practice.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly for the Japanese rowers in this typology of discipline is the concept of rank or 'the place one occupies in a classification' (Foucault, 1977: 145). Whilst Foucault was initially referring to military rank, this concept of hierarchy has as much power and significance in the Japanese community. As we have seen the notion of *jōge kankei* is important not just at BURC but is

emphasised at all levels of interaction in Japan, from the use of honorific language to the individual awareness of one's position relative to another in terms of *kōhai*, *sempai* or *dōkyūsei*. The Confucian notions of hierarchy operate extremely well at BURC because they are the continuation of an understanding developed from one's earliest years which members have clearly excelled in using. The embodiment of *jōge kankei* is a prerequisite for membership of any rowing club, not just at university, but also in high school. Those who have managed to arrive at BURC on *suisen* (special entry) are those who have excelled in their ability to master the dynamics of *jōge kankei*. In this way the *jōge kankei* of BURC shapes the members just as the *jōge kankei* of the members shapes BURC.

Foucault offers a set of criteria to optimise the outcomes of any activity in terms of the production of a disciplined body. Timetabling or the control of time is one of the enduring and constant components in being a member of BURC. In many ways the organisation of time is a rhythm in the daily life of members. Not only are sessions broken down into time categories such as warm up, technique, workload, but each day is also separated into time components such as training time, sleep time, meal time, university time. The repetition of this routine day has the effect of regulating all time in the field, even to the extent of non-rowing time (Monday). Within the framework of the timetable is the 'temporal elaboration of the act' (Foucault, 1977: 151). From the perspective of rowing technique, the movement is broken down or compartmentalised into individual movements to be mastered and connected to other movements to produce an overall movement of a stroke cycle. Whilst the compartmentalising of movement and learning via part per whole methodology is not unique to Japanese sport, this method does have particular resonance with the *kata*



style of practice present in martial arts training and adapted to rowing practice. Further to this physical practicality of the boat, BURC members demonstrate a mastery of other embodied knowledge that can be similarly compartmentalised. The evening meal, for example, follows a sequence of its own which demonstrates a habitus of individual moves. The washing of hands, prayers before eating, sequence of dishes, use of implements, end of meal salutation, cleaning of utensils, are all components of an overall activity that produces a certain bodily discipline. Arising from this temporal elaboration is the correlation of body and the gesture. This refers to the combination of movements to produce an overall movement or efficiency. As Foucault (1977: 152) suggests the 'well disciplined body forms the operational context of the slightest gesture'. A Japanese rowing habitus produces a correlation between all aspects of bodily function. Whether stretching, carrying equipment, eating, washing (a highly sequential and thorough act), the individual moves combine to create meaning.

The body as simultaneous subject-object, is inscribed with a relationship between each movement, the manipulation of these movements and the probable outcomes of such action. The level of discipline achieved, its durability and strength depends finally on exhaustive use or repetition. Whether in the boat, or around the boathouse, all action is largely part of a broader routine or ritual which is engaged in on a movement to movement, minute to minute framework ensuring the disciplined embodiment 'sticks' and stays 'stuck'.

## The Panopticon

Unlike other team sports<sup>53</sup>, competing rowing teams participate on a shared environment. Suitable water for rowing is difficult to find and as a result Lake Biwa and the Seta River are, as previously mentioned, heavily utilised. The riverbank is densely populated with residential boat-sheds similar to that of BURC. There are no fewer than 25 such boathouses within a three kilometre radius of BURC. The shared training environment results in opposing crews training at the same time on the same water. In fact, all teams seem to accept a type of unwritten timetable for river usage. Uniformly across all of Seta, and for Tokyo also, no club will train on Monday. The unspoken collective agreement as to when (and when not to) train means that training times become peak times on the river. The consensual regulation of training time ensures the maximum opportunity to view others and to be viewed. Such understandings also serve to regulate training so that clubs feel they can have a rest day without falling behind the workload of another club. In a way this mechanism of control over training time actually protects rowing clubs from over-training. If training times were random and non-uniform the tendency would be very strong to anticipate what the opposition is doing and try to match or out do it. The amount of training (that is, more is better) is one of the components involved in the development of *seishin*. If clubs perceived that they were doing more or less training than others this would create a sense of superiority or inferiority. As discussed earlier from questionnaire responses, the individual's strength of *seishin* out ranks technique and fitness as the most significant factor for evaluating successful rowing. Successful rowing (as it is connected most through *seishin*) must, therefore, be read as not

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<sup>53</sup> Other team sports in educational settings in Japan may share space. For example it is not uncommon for baseball, volleyball and soccer teams to share different ends of the same gravel field. Rowing is different however because different and competing clubs share the same training venue. The nature of the training venue for rowing results in all training coinciding with the training of your opposition. Knowledge of your oppositions' training is gathered on a direct and daily basis.

necessarily winning races but rather 'doing one's best' and 'getting the processes' right. As such, the removal of quantitative analysis of what defines good or bad practice (that is, winning or losing) establishes a field where all rowers can achieve equally. This equality is partly determined by the equality in the training environment in terms of volume and scheduling. By regulating time this way university rowing clubs ensure that homogenised experience produces the homogenised identity of rowers. This action can be seen to work as a type of 'quality control' of the product, the self-cultivated, *budō*-ised, socialised rower, with a guaranteed minimum of *seishin* capital imbued in the individual.

The rowing environment is largely self-regulatory. Foucault (1980: 39-40) insists that the notion of the prison was linked to a 'project for the transformation of individuals' and is comparable with 'the school, the barracks, or the hospital' in its ability to act with 'precision upon its individual subjects'. Bentham's panopticon worked on the concept of the inward looking prison whose design and architecture with prison cells facing towards a central and buffered surveillance tower, resulted in prisoners being unaware if they were or were not being watched. The assumption of the panopticon is that prisoners will act as if they are being watched always and, therefore, there is no necessity to have staff to operate the prison. The notion of being constantly on display, with the potential of being watched is very evident in the rowing environment. It is a panopticon without bars, walls or for that matter, locks (this is discussed later). The rowing environment has an interconnectedness whereby, like living in a village, everyone knows everyone (directly or indirectly). This acts as a neighbourhood watch programme (that actually works) that keeps an eye on cultural property and social capital. At any time that one is being observed, the observer is

more likely than not also a rower or connected with rowing. As a result, this becomes surveillance backed by knowledge, which in turn implies that judgements made by the observer possess a certain power. Whilst training the BURC members make a very public display of their physical capital, that is, their strength and technique, and also their *seishin* habitus as demonstrated by the way they go about their training. The noticeably standardised drills and exercises of most rowing clubs in the area can be viewed as, not so much wanting to fit in, but more not wanting to stand out. The level of risk inherent in adopting other forms of training practice invites attention and scrutiny from other practitioners and therefore the potential of ridicule, exposure and ostracism (the nail that stands out will be hammered in). Thus all rowers are subject to the critical gaze. The critical gaze extends from what Kuwayama (1992) describes as the ‘mechanism of mutual observation’. This mechanism becomes extremely cogent in the world of the university rower and extends from the river and into the more mundane day to day self-disciplining activities of the group.

However, the real strength of the panoptic model is not its external force but rather the way these mechanisms are internalised by members so as to become self-regulatory. Bodily discipline and bodily control become central to the identity of the rower. Self-regulation extends from training, to diet, to effort given during a session, to the appropriate way of expressing that the effort has been given (postures and facial expressions that designate effort, strength and sacrifice as opposed to weakness, or lack of commitment or hardness). Interestingly one needs to possess the faculties of appreciation to recognise these actions. For example, screaming out in pain could be construed as weakness. However, in the context of a very difficult session, it can be an expression that one has really committed oneself to the task, to really pushing

through the pain barrier. Similarly at the end of the final of the regatta the outpouring of emotion, in the form of weeping, by the competitors would be seen as weakness in the training environment but completely appropriate in the competitive one as this expression indicates the importance of the event and the disappointment of having given every last ounce of energy and failed or indeed having given every last ounce of energy and succeeded. As Light (1999a, 1999b) suggests from his observations of high school rugby in Japan, 'it is the value attached to restraint and emotional control that makes the shedding of tears, whether of joy or despair, a meaningful sign of total physical, emotional and spiritual commitment'. In all cases the internal regulation aims at impression management, of maintaining one's identity within the group and reaffirming one's commitment to its' collective values. The skill of impression management is an expression of the fluidity of each member's *kejime*, that is, the ability to shift from *honne* (one's real feelings) to *tatemae* (appropriate outward expression).

### **Keeping up Appearances through Covert Resistance**

Such conformity to the identity of being a BURC rower can involve risk. During the periods that I was at the club there was always some member who was injured or sick. Usually these situations were not managed particularly well. Several members continued training whilst injured, running the risk (and in one case actually achieving the outcome) of a more permanent injury and a prolonged time out of the boat. Playing with injury is in some ways part of the glorified ethos of most modern sport and BURC is no different. It was, however, always the youngest members who were carrying injuries and attempting to prove their commitment and *seishin* by ignoring their bodies' signals. Older members, due in part to better conditioning, but also to a

more stable identity, managed any injuries in a healthier manner. Sato is a single sculler and, therefore, his missing a session doesn't impact directly on any other team member. However, there are rules and Sato knows his way around them.

I have to get up at the same time as all the other members because they're the rules. If I break the rules I could be out of the club. So when the club has a long session planned or something like that I might start the session but stop somewhere and rest, like under bridge or come back in and go back to sleep. Sometimes I don't feel well or maybe have a small injury. It's pointless and stupid to train under such circumstances so I just pretend to be training. That way everyone is happy.

Sato has a feel for the game that allows him to act in a way that subverts the expectations of BURC identity without causing his ostracism. Such an ability to 'act the part', to pretend one thing and actually do another, is a form of covert resistance to the dominant ideology at play – an ideology that stresses the need to endure and 'take the pain' regardless of one's individual feelings. Sato is able to successfully achieve this level of resistance - that is, not training hard all the time or if his body is not ready (injury, fatigue, lack of motivation) due to his ability to maintain an illusion of training. He is aware that to not be seen to be training would seriously bring his position (identity) at BURC into question, just as it would undermine the position of BURC amongst the other clubs along the bank. Such actions (or inaction) are suggestive of a flawed collective identity. Sato's feel for the game is similar to Yoshii's performance, such as pretending to be drunk at the *nomihodai*. Yoshii's strategy to his aversion to alcohol is not to appear to abstain from alcohol but to act drunk, which is an act that allows him to remain a part of the group. In his case this act is further allowed because of his role as the clean up man and bill payer. This function in the group is important and allows the rest of the members to fully engage in their *nomihodai* without having to worry about what happens once it is all finished. Similarly, Sato is able to 'get away' with his act of resistance because he has been

highly successful as a rower, and this individual success brings prestige to the entire boathouse and its membership.

There will inevitably be decisions that, regardless of how collective the process, could potentially lead to considerable disharmony at the BURC. For example, during the selection process Musashi is overlooked (for good reason) for the quad scull. Musashi is a final year *sempai* and this decision leaves him very disappointed. Initially, he storms out of the boathouse. However, he returns later that day and after another hour of conciliation with Hiro, is in a far better frame of mind. I asked Musashi a couple of weeks later about this:

I was disappointed not to make the quad scull. Initially, very disappointed. To have *kōhai* selected before me was hard to take. But after a while I realised that this was probably for the best. Now I'm in the double scull and have Koichi to look after and teach. Even though I have been writing the programme I have asked for Koichi's opinions so that he feels comfortable and that our *jōge kankei* is relaxed. Now I have a job to ensure that Koichi learns the BURC way.

Musashi demonstrates how he reconciles his disappointment by readjusting his goals. As a player with a feel for the game, Musashi's actions and behaviour indicate the subconscious processes that operate to maintain and maximise his position in the field. His initial reaction required harmonisation within the field and this was done by re-affirming the concepts of *jōge kankei* and the BURC way as core to his identity, and not only his position as a rower. His position in the double scull gives Musashi an opportunity to become a 'significant' *sempai* in the club rather than just a crewmember. Alternative responses such as quitting the club or continuing to protest the decision are exceptionally unlikely because such action would go against the structuring of the BURC habitus. The implications of such conscious and intentional resistance to the BURC habitus would also cause the loss of cultural (spiritual)

capital, and essentially result in the individual's permanent dislocation with the game and the club. The greater level of investment (in Musashi's case seven years) the greater the reliance on a habitus created through practice and, therefore, the greater the reliance on the field as a space of personal expression and meaning. In short, the longer one is engaged with the field the less likely it is for the individual to act in a way incongruous to the field. Musashi's agency is determined via the structure he has invested in. He makes choices and he acts independently, but these actions and choices are increasingly influenced by the nature of the game which is now played at a level where his very *raison d'être* operates subconsciously and unquestioned. The production of individual subjectivities at BURC can be examined further through looking and the forms of dress and appearance that are dominant at the club.

### **Looking the Part - The Cult of Paraphernalia**

Although on the surface BURC rowers seem ambivalent about the clothing they wear, closer observation reveals a deep consideration as to how one looks and what one wears. Uniformity, one of the apparent conforming aspects of Japanese culture, is absent from rowing practice in Japan. This was unexpected as the image of uniformity fits not only the stereotype of Japan but also of rowing. This apparent lack of uniform is only superficial and BURC members go through a careful process of paraphernalic decision making before every session. This process has the effect of creating solidarity and togetherness on a deeper level.

Lack of uniformity on the part of BURC members is initially an opportunity to express difference, not with other members but from their history as high school rowers. Choosing not to wear the same thing as the next crew member is an



opportunity to express a perception of maturity or independence from the identity that is more tightly constructed through high school sport. Rather than wearing the same garments, BURC rowers wear an assortment of bright coloured rowing suits, usually of silky lycra in the European style of design and usually from other rowing clubs, either university or company based. The body is then layered with an assortment of long and short sleeved t-shirts (normally with rowing slogans or commemorating a particular regatta), more often than not long leggings under the suit and a spray jacket (again derived from another club). In this way the rowing body goes out on display (to train), wrapped as it were in layers of symbolic significance. The gear has multiple meanings to other rowers. For example, Hiro wears a Toray rowing suit, a t-shirt with 'eat, sleep, row' (in English) on the back, and a towel in the traditional style wrapped over his head. Hiro was given the Toray suit by one of its rowers who was his *sempai* at high school. Toray is one of the strongest company clubs in Japan and their rowing uniform is not easy to obtain (both rare and expensive). When Hiro wears this particular combination of training gear he also makes a non-verbal statement about his connections in the rowing world and via these connections allows inferences to be drawn about himself.

Every member at BURC would have at least ten to fifteen training suits and an unknown number of t-shirts and other clothing. Rowers are obsessed by gear and accumulating more of it. Certainly the amount of training necessitates the need for several 'kits', but the volume of garments owned by BURC members is excessive to their training requirements. At every opportunity including regattas, tours and chance meetings, BURC rowers seek to build their wardrobe by purchasing gear, swapping with other rowers from other clubs, or designing their own (one of my favourites was

'No Row. Too Tired!' which was a club t-shirt designed by the 4th year rowers). To the outsider, sport specific clothing may all seem the same. To those with the capacity of apprehension and appreciation, a rower's training gear can signify all of the following; one's position on the meritocracy of rowing high schools (for example Nana's UJHS rowing suit is famous and indicates her background), regattas rowed at (Sato is fond of his world junior championship t-shirts which indicates his higher level of proficiency), and one's connections outside of the club (for example swapping with a friend at another university or club). These connections indicate capital in the field of Japanese rowing as opposed to just BURC rowing. Of course, it is possible for members to use this knowledge of inference to construct an identity of themselves not necessarily grounded in their lived history but in an imagined one. By acquiring various gear, a rower can construct a façade of their own history which may pass unless put under careful scrutiny. Such ploys can lead one to make assumptions about one's educational background and level of success and ability. Assumptions of this nature can then empower the individual further, in the field of university rowing. In this regard the wearing of clothing (what and when) is part and parcel of playing the game, as the wrapped body is inscribed. What to wear and how to wear it becomes a highly stylised function of a habitus, which calculates the possible garments to be worn based on symbolism, fashion and the appropriateness of context. It is this process, not the actual clothes, that becomes uniformed in BURC practice. The longer one has rowed the more gear has been collected and the more skilled one becomes at choosing what to wear. Further, the longer one is engaged with the field the more genuine is the symbolism behind the garments and the greater the perception of what to wear based on an unconscious response to the structures within the field.

Hendry (1995: 93) in her studies of wrapping in Japanese culture makes the observation that the wrapping of language, the body, space and time, may 'be used to manipulate status and exercise power'. The accessorising of BURC rowers can be seen in this light as the purposeful wrapping of the rowers' bodies provides communication on a subtle level. Similarly the unwrapping, for example walking around the boathouse in boxer-shorts, of the body expresses other forms of status and power. Musculature becomes another layer of paraphernalia. The resultant physical development derived from rowing practice is an indication of the levels of self-cultivation (see Chapters two and seven) and, therefore, extends to symbolise a whole range of meanings from morality to aesthetics.

### **Making it Look Right - The Aesthetics of the Boathouse**

Understanding the aesthetics involved at BURC is significant as it allows insight into both the habitus and the morality of membership. Again, breaking from the Cartesian paradigm, we are able to recognise that the 'aesthetic component in Japanese culture carries over not only in social organisation but also into fields like ethics which in turn effect social ideas and practices, by perhaps seeing the Japanese social project as a huge anti-alienation device and as such as a profoundly Utopian one' (Clammer, 1995: 7). The aesthetic of harmony is as powerful in the spatial organisation of a room, or the arrangement of flowers as it is in the organisation and relationships in a group of people. Even within apparently delinquent activities such as *bosozoku* and *yanki* subcultures (Sato, 1991) there exists harmony within the group and a sense of hierarchy and place. Indeed when this structure is broken, for example being *bosozoku* past a certain age, the individual is met with ostracism and negativity in a bid by the group to return its structure to normality, and therefore, harmony (Sato, 1991). The

harmony and structure of the social dynamics at BURC operates also at a particular aesthetic level which is inherent in the comprehension of what makes a club. By this I am referring to a desire to create a club that presents a group model which meets the criteria of an '*ie*'. Seen in this light, concepts such as *ningenkankei* and *jōge kankei* are as much aesthetic concerns as social ones. If club activities at university serve the purpose of acting as 'anti-alienation devices' then the agenda cannot be random involvement or participation. Such an agenda cannot meet the purpose of being anti-alienation. Instead, the agenda must be one of total social occupation, that is, one that supplies the necessary culturally recognised social and hierarchical setup, without which a person remains alienated. With the required dynamic and social framework in place a novice rower is able to comprehend his place and future places in the group. Similarly such a blueprint is recognisable from outside and in meeting the aesthetics of group activity, is given validation via the continued and unchecked support of those around, including both the University and the rowers' families.

Aesthetic sensibility, particularly as a theme evoked through the concept of suffering, and the nobility of hardship, is particularly strong in Japanese culture. Importantly here the nobility of hardship draws from the tenets of *bushidō* and *seishin* which I have argued are important components of the identity and practice of BURC and its members. These themes prevail throughout much of popular culture particularly in Samurai and Yakuza drama. The concept of the tragic hero, immortalised in the classic *chushingura* (the forty seven *ronin*)<sup>54</sup>, emphasises the notion of *giri* (obligation). In samurai literature (Buruma, 1984: 170) the more hopeless the fight the

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<sup>54</sup> According to Buruma (1984) the forty seven *ronin* is the most popular play ever written in Japanese. Essentially it is a story of revenge for one's master by his retainers who must bide their time, live in deprivation and show great patience, until finally the opportunity arrives when they can accomplish their mission. Following their revenge they are ordered to commit *seppuku* (ritual disembowment).

greater the sincerity required and therefore the more nobility gained. This theme is continued into Yakuza movies where the central element of dramatic tension is often the conflict between the protagonists sense of *giri* with his *ninjo* (feelings of humanity). Buruma (1984: 183) makes a connection of this sense of *giri* with the experiences of the salaryman who is obliged to sacrifice his private life, family etc for the company. He states: 'Human relations on the shop floor are bound by similar restraints of hierarchy and loyalty to those of cinema yakuza'.

One can identify the significance of elements of BURC life by observing the degree of effort that occurs when this aesthetic sensibility is applied. For example the kitchen is strewn with pots and pans, empty boxes, beer crates and plastic bags full of rubbish, yet the meals produced in the kitchen are presented as if out of a glossy magazine, the proportions of the servings, arrangement on the plate and combination of flavours, meeting the criteria one would set on a cooking show. Although cooking for the masses, the managers approach the presentation of each plate with concentration, diligence, and care. The space of the kitchen is irrelevant but what comes out of it (the multitude of meals) is most relevant. Similarly, there is juxtaposition between the sleeping quarters, strewn with rowing apparel, and the meticulous care taken in cleaning the boat at the end of each session. The boat is afforded importance as a site central to the identity of being a rower, how one looks after their boat and in particular their seat reflects on ones' self. Sleeping quarters at the boathouse on the other hand are strictly perfunctory and therefore have little relevance in terms of an expression either of the individual or collective aesthetic morality. From observations of where effort is taken in maintaining the aesthetic, in this case cleanliness and order, it becomes possible to identify the location of moral significance. In this respect the

body becomes the primary site of practice to create an aesthetic. The aesthetics of the body at BURC are found in ascetics. Such sensibilities produce a homogenised physique of the BURC rower loaded with meaning. The defined, lean, muscular body of a BURC rower is imbued with moral qualities based on codes of discipline, sacrifice, hardness, endurance, perseverance, and most aesthetic of all, *seishin and kokoro*. Yano (2003: 88) contends that if one 'acts with *kokoro*, with seriousness of intent and sincerity of purpose, then that justifies, even aestheticizes, any action'. With this in mind the performative nature of being a rower is determined by, not necessarily the rower himself, but by those around (other rowers, manager, OB's) and their ability to legitimize action based on their aesthetic sensibilities.

An Australian approach to sport and the body, at the level of practice and commitment demonstrated by BURC members, would tend to see the latter in mechanistic terms and, as a result, treat the construction of athletic performance in a mechanistic way. An Australian rower engaged in a similar volume of training as a BURC member would almost certainly measure performance via a multitude of quantitative tests, the measures of which would be used to identify compartmental weaknesses in the rower's overall structure. These compartments may be addressed individually through the various branches of sports science (sociology excepted) and the potentiality of the athlete is thus enhanced. Such mechanics are seemingly absent from the practices of BURC rowers. In what could be described as a holistic sporting experience, the rower is apprehended as an entirety. Certainly a BURC rower may engage in weight training to increase strength or run more to build endurance, however none of this is directed via the opinions of sports science experts. In the absence of such sports sciences the oppositions which enhance the mechanistic model

of sport fall away. The body therefore has a greater potential to be expressed in other ways. It can become a site where the existence of morality, nobility, physicality, harmony and expression occurs simultaneously so that the individual automatically transcends mechanism and is, in itself, reflected at any time in any and all components of existence. If morality is understood as aesthetic and morality can be expressed through physicality then physicality can become aesthetic. Not necessarily for beauty of movement, but for purity of action and as an expression of virtue.

As observed in individual instances in club life, such as meal presentation, the need to satisfy aesthetics follows on into more complex activity. This is most evident in the practice of aesthetic rituals during a regatta. Light (2000b) describes the pre-game performance in Japanese high school rugby as highly ritualised in a way that the behaviour of the players comes to meet the requirements of a dramatic performance. In the same way the pre and post regatta ritual of BURC satisfies both an internal and external expectation of the dramatic. From the type of training done during the lead up, to the build up on race day, the giant purple flag unfurled in the wind, the *oendai* (cheersquad) with their highly stylised moves, to the race (itself a drama within a drama), to the post race demonstration of emotion, and finally finishing with the *nomihodai*, each part of the ritual produces its own form of dramatic expression. Remove any of these components and somehow the significance and symbolism of the ritual of competing is reduced, the aesthetic potential is lessened and therefore so too is the power of the capital the event is capable of carrying.

### **'Ichi, ni, Yoshi' - An Open Boathouse**

One of the most striking features of BURC is its openness. The front door to the boathouse was never locked unless it was totally vacant, like on a non-residential night. On such occasions the door was locked by wrapping a flimsy combination bicycle lock between the two handles. The code 1,2,4,4 or *ichi, ni, yoshi* as it is remembered, is known by all members. If for some reason one forgot the code you could simply pull up the roller door to the boat storage area and enter through the adjoining door. The rest of the boathouse is totally devoid of locks of any form (except the toilet and the women's *tatami* room). The lack of locks works as a metaphor for the openness of all interaction inside the boathouse. This infers an exceptional level of trust between those who live in the boathouse and indeed members from the surrounding boathouses. The degree of openness is representative of the strength of the hegemony at work at BURC. Sleeping in the open (dorms of eight), showering in the open (no cubicles), eating in the open (meals are always served communally), and training in the open expresses an internal regulation of behaviour.

As Gramsci's concept of hegemony suggests, the lower the need for coercion via various apparatus the greater the level of consent and, therefore, hegemony. Security systems, constraining space, locking public and private items are all apparatuses of coercion employed in situations where hegemony is not secure. For example, the community rowing club further up the river is securely locked, sometimes even when people are there. Consider further boathouses in Australia with their security codes, alarm systems, and auto-locking doors. The openness of the BURC boathouse is an example of the unconscious expectation of harmony in and around both the physical



and social dimensions of the structure, which does not result in the statement: 'We don't have locks because...' rather, there is no statement because there is no consideration of a need for security. The open boathouse is an indication of the levels of homogeneity of its members and also the successful internalisation of the critical gaze. It is the assumption of surveillance that reduces any need for locks. This assumption is internalised by subjects as partially definitive of rowing subjectivity. The absence of locks is a further example of the panoptic effect on the creation of the BURC identity. Hence, their identity, like Klein's (1993) bodybuilders, is organised around the ever-present potential to be gazed at, and the need to constantly adopt poses that reflect well on the club.

### **Loyalty**

The concept of loyalty to one's group or organisation is a very strong hegemonic device in Japanese society. Traditionally employment has been based on the belief that loyalty to the company, in the form of a job for life, will naturally yield rewards in terms of position and salary due to a seniority based wage system (Gordon, 1998). This concept of 'for life' is similar to that of the relationship between a Samurai retainer and his master (in this case for life was literal as at the death of one's master the expectation of Seppuku was common until the practice was outlawed). This is backed by Zen, the most secular and pragmatic of the Buddhist doctrines, (Suzuki, 1969) and its concepts of purity of motive and perfection through repetition. The implication was that one has to stick at something in order to master it (enlightenment is not gained by being a Jack of all trades). Further, the concept of loyalty is reinforced by Confucian concepts of hierarchy, particularly the *kōhai/sempai* relationship. Belief in hierarchical progression is strengthened by the belief that if one

adheres to the system, and does the right things then eventually one will be rewarded. Finally, this is backed by the *gambaru* mentality of 'be patient and endure' which is espoused from a young age. With this background it is unlikely that an individual will openly complain or challenge the status quo, even though they may well disagree with others. Placed under the constant scrutiny of the critical gaze (Foucault, 1977) or 'the mechanism of mutual observation', it is easy to see how the stereotypes of Japanese group think and conformity (Sugimoto, 1997) are created and maintained.

In the context of club activities in education, the concept of loyalty operates in a similar fashion and is strengthened by the fact that you can only belong to one club, that club activities are almost twelve months a year, four to six days a week. Whilst activities in clubs only last four years there is a hyper-Confucian reliance on hierarchy during this time. This is in some ways confusing as most respondents stated that it was unlikely that they would ever row again after university. Nevertheless, if one were to change clubs the issue or fear would be 'where do I fit in?' According to Nakane (1972: 105) as the 'group' is based on a rigid hierarchical order, entry for all individuals is only from the bottom. Entry from 'any other point would disrupt order and the links between existing members' and as such it is more advantageous to remain in one group than to move from one to another. A similar fear works at keeping employees at the one company. According to Sugimoto (1997: 141) 'the Japanese social system is supported by the notion of *seki*, the view that, unless one is formally registered as belonging to an organisation or institution, one has no proper station in society'. To lose one's place in the hierarchy would often necessitate beginning again at a junior level. Also, those who do move may be looked on with distrust, even though the labour market in Japan is increasingly one of fluidity, change

and uncertainty. The recession of the late 1980's and early 1990's allowed for the restructuring of many business hierarchies resulting in the abandonment of past doctrines and the development of a work culture that is 'much more diverse than that of workaholism, job dedication, company loyalty and group orientation' (Sugimoto, 1997: 102). As Gill (2003: 145) observes, whilst the 'salaryman has undoubtedly dominated images of Japan out of all proportion to his role in real life society' there has been more recent challenge to this model frequently in the form of derision from popular culture. The hegemonic masculinity of the salaryman is not only challenged from the margins. Ishii-Kuntz (2003: 212-213) highlights the challenges coming from salarymen who have altered their priorities to become more family oriented and involved with their children in the process 'constructing their humanity'.

In a way the uncertainty of future employment can act as another hegemonic device because instead of recognising the new trends in employment and developing multi-skilling, flexibility and an eye to change, the over-riding fear of not being *shakaijin* - 'a person in society' - causes over-conformity to the group loyalty model. The notion of being *shakaijin* is crucial to understanding the individual in Japanese social groups. As Nakamura (1964) puts it the prevailing atmosphere of Japanese social life is that of 'close intimacy and alliance' most manifest in a limited, closed nexus, for example family, company or club. Being *shakaijin* is important not only for the individual's status but also so that other people know where to position that person in society, how to speak to that person, and where that person fits in the social group.

The total acceptance of the termination of one's rowing career is a further example of the strength of hegemony operating at BURC. It should be noted that in most cases, the termination of a rowing career produces considerable angst, as exemplified by Fuji. Most members respond that they would continue their sport if they could but

don't perceive that they will have any opportunity to do so. The serious responsibilities of becoming *shakaijin* are such that it is commonsense to relinquish many activities of younger life upon one's graduation. In Sato's (1991) ethnography of *bosozoku* culture he finds a similar phenomenon in the form of voluntary disengagement with the gang when members reach twenty. The termination of one's *bosozoku* career is described and understood from a functional perspective. The energy and unpredictability of adolescence is supposedly 'burned out' during gang activity and, at the age of twenty, the young man is 'supposed to be reborn as a *shakaijin*' (Sato, 1991: 85). The rebirth for members of Sato's *bosozoku* is the same for BURC members. At their graduation one was expected to have 'grown up' and therefore be ready to make the next step in society (which means shedding the past). In the context and structure of a society based on Confucian hierarchy, entry points to the next level of social development, whether high school, university, employment, or marriage, are specific and momentary. One's *seki* can be challenged or negated by failure to follow the clearly marked pathways of being *shakaijin*.

In analysing Gramsci, Adamson (1980: 142) suggests that

every relationship of hegemony is necessarily an educational relationship...it exists between intellectual and non-intellectual sections of the population, between rulers and the ruled, elites and their followers, leaders and the led, the vanguard and the body of the army.

The concept of common sense is therefore contested and will vary depending on the habitus that one possesses (Bourdieu, 1984). Gramsci (in Adamson, 1980: 150) makes the distinction here between common sense which may be 'very far removed from the real needs and interests of the masses of ordinary people who hold it' and good sense that 'satisfies real needs and interests'. Common sense is 'not something rigid and immobile, but is continually transforming itself' (Adamson, 1980: 150).

These transformations occur in a historical context or as Gramsci (in Adamson, 1980: 177-78) puts it 'hegemonies always grow out of historical blocs, but not all historical blocs are hegemonic'. As Clammer (1995) suggests Japanese social reality is constantly defined and redefined by its' members. A captain with a particularly strong or weak personality, or great success or terrible failure by a team under a particular programme, or a group of *suisen* from the same high school, or a coaching style etc, can all be factors that can shift the hegemony within BURC. One could argue that the BURC way was shaped during Matsuhiko's time under the influence of Nakamura in the mid-sixties. This can be seen as a historic bloc that has endured through the identity and practice of BURC members.

Therefore, if we can identify the important historical blocs in the emergence of particular styles within the practice cultures of university rowing clubs, we should be better able to understand the hegemonies dominant in these blocs. In this respect the development and implementation of the education system and sporting clubs in the mid-Meiji is very important. It is from this historical bloc that some ideologies, that still prevail today, emerged. In this situation I am referring to the budo-isation of rowing and the subsequent approaches to the sport not only in practice but more significantly in social practice. Through the dimensions of certain identity or social group that operate relatively unchanged it is possible to see a constancy of ideology. I am not suggesting that all graduates of BURC have the same identity. Rather that their 'rowing identity' is fairly uniform, as is the capital imbued in this identity. The semi-cloistering of rowers at BURC allows for an identity that operates under a type of 'hegemonic bubble'. The relative repetition of practice combined with the limited and traditional nature and opportunity of the sport results in the construction of

identities based on dominant ideologies that may be absent or old fashion in other social groups. Not only does the social organisation of BURC seem commonsensical to its members, its values are deemed desirable in certain areas of Japanese employment. In a sense the hegemonic bubble produces an identity that appeals to a particular market in the economy. Emerging from this ‘bubble’, the identity can be seen as particularly hierarchical and in many respects resistant towards the current dominant identity of Japanese youth (discussed earlier in Chapter two and three). The identity created at BURC cannot be seen as typical of most Japanese. In fact the notion of a typical Japanese identity is erroneous. The hegemonic bubbles operating at BURC reflect hegemonies that emerged from the Meiji period. As Inoue (1998) points out in his analysis of the practice and culture of *judō*, the ideology that it came to represent was as much derived from an invented tradition as any actual ones. These ‘invented traditions’ were facilitated, according to Inoue, as a way of countering the potential risks of rapid modernization and were transferred from *judō* into education and into sports in education. The invented traditions thus became enduring traditions and represent ideologies that became and may remain hegemonic. Pempel (1998: 132) alludes to a belief that the sporting model in Japan is not strong, nor organised (relative to other nations), and that this actually reflects the ‘relative strength of Japanese national identity’. The premise here is the belief that Japan doesn’t have to justify its identity on the international sporting scene. This is important, therefore, in our understanding of the role of sport at universities as it infers that sporting practices would therefore be designed to reinforce this identity. Whilst rowing in an Australian setting at a comparative level has become governed by the mentality of maximising performance and therefore driven from scientific and quantifiable perspectives,

Pempel's comments support that understanding that rowing, and perhaps other sports in Japan, and particularly in Japanese education, have a different *raison d'être*.

### **An Enduring Effect**

The internalisation of surveillance embodied through the identity and actions of members of BURC has been developed through a prolonged engagement with particular structural mechanisms present in the club, in education, and in other social contexts. These mechanisms are physical, such as the boathouse and the living quarters, the demands of the sport or the river and training environment; cultural as demonstrated through hierarchical relationships and harmony; and philosophical, such as notions of self-cultivation and spirituality and aesthetic sensibilities. These mechanisms have an enduring effect as through the ritual of daily labour they eventually operate below the level of consciousness and as such become embodied by the BURC members. Based on this extensive framework of influence it is significant that, whilst rowing is important to its practitioners, the sport only makes a small contribution to the totality of disciplining structures acting on members of BURC.

Once members have graduated and rowing is no longer an activity, the internalisation of surveillance is likely to endure due to the continuity and embodiment of the physical, cultural and philosophical mechanisms that remain in place in other social (neighbourhood, employment, family) settings. As Brownell (1995) mentions earlier, 'practice makes permanent', and the embodied responses to probabilities in the game that were learnt so effectively during membership at the rowing club are reflected in

each graduate's habitus, the expression of which endures because it continues to develop capital in future fields of practice<sup>55</sup>.

The following chapter explores the connection between the habitus developed during membership and the formal expectations of what has become largely an autonomously delivered curriculum of moral and social education. The next chapter considers the gendered nature of *jōge kankei* and examines the levels of autonomy at work in the decision-making processes of BURC members as they develop the rowing habitus. Finally I reflect on the entire experience and suggest 'where to next?'

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<sup>55</sup> During the research periods I have organised six rowing tours to Australia from two Tokyo universities. Three were groups and three individuals. Interestingly the rowing habitus, that is hierarchy, hard work, discipline, etc, which continued to operate in Australia for the group tours, completely fell apart in the case of the individuals. The solo tours were embarked on by scullers with the intention, at least at the beginning, of maintaining a strict training regime during their stay which coincided with the winter university holidays in Japan. All three began their stay training twice a day. However, by the end of the first week adherence to this regime had stopped. In all cases the final two weeks of their three week stay were highlighted by a complete absence of training, sleeping in until mid-morning and general inactivity bordering on lethargy. Although these examples provide nothing more than anecdote, they are suggestive of the power of the cultural, physical and philosophical mechanisms, which when absent to shape practice, result in an inability to continue with rowing in a context in which these structures have little meaning and develop no capital.



## **CHAPTER TEN:**

### **The Secondary Curriculum**

This chapter explores the delivery of a curriculum that occurs outside the classroom or lecture theatre. The delivery of what Singleton (1991:121) describes as the 'cultural curriculum', is achieved via various avenues not the least of which are the relatively autonomous club activities of university students. During my time with BURC I had always marvelled at the successful management of club activity (training, parties, budgets, meals, travelling to regattas) and the harmony and solidarity within the club, especially considering the absence of some form of governing body or director. What became clear was the curriculum transmitted to and by the day to day activities of members was extremely powerful and enduring. All relationships within the club generated from a gendered hierarchical structure which were embedded with deeper meanings and values derived from a broader cultural perspective. The moral and social 'lessons' learnt at BURC could be located in almost every aspect of being a member.

### **Moral and Social Education**

In 2001 the Japanese Ministry for Education, Sport, Culture and Technology (MEXT) put forward the 'Education Reform Plan for the 21st Century' or as it was labelled 'The Rainbow Plan' (MEXT, 2001). The 'Rainbow Plan' comprised seven priority strategies to achieve this reform<sup>56</sup>. These strategies included the encouragement of

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<sup>56</sup> 'Education in Japan since the end of World War II has embodied the principle of equality of opportunity, raising the education level of the people and serving as the engine of social development, nurturing human resources in response to the changing demands of time. However, given the state of education today, it is evident that confidence in education is eroding.

cultural and sports club activities and the improvement of moral education. MOE goes on to add that social education is 'a general term for organised educational activities not covered in the regular curricula of elementary schools, secondary schools and institutions of higher education'. Such reforms are in response to continuing growing concerns regarding the education systems' effectiveness and the perceptions of the loss of morality of youth.

Taken in the context of an educative process that has been at least 12 years in the making, university is the continuation of the broader curriculum. Singleton (1991: 121) describes Japanese universities as

home to a small high-status elite....where students can relax for the first time since they were in elementary school and put their energies into intensive student club activities - whose demands often take precedence over class attendance.

Further he goes on to add (122) that

the real content of any educational process is the cultural curriculum, that is, *seishin* (individual spirit and character development) *shudan ishiki* (group consciousness, belongingness) or *dantai ishiki* (organisational consciousness).

*Shudan ishiki* in particular encourages exclusive group solidarity, commitment, achievement and egalitarianism. The member's appreciation and perception of the inherent value of this 'moral' education is indicated by the total self-administration of

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Firstly, that the educational ability of families and local communities has declined markedly against a backdrop of urbanisation and falling birth-rates. Bullying, truancy, school violence and serious criminal acts by young people are frequent. Many problems are also occurring in the home such as child abuse. Secondly, social awareness and respect for rules and morals among our young are deteriorating. This reflects not just the tendency of society to overemphasize individual freedom and rights, but the drastically changing environment that children find themselves in and the decline in opportunities for them to polish themselves in relationships with people and the community.

Thirdly, as others point out, the standardization of education and excessive drilling of knowledge brought about by an egalitarianism gone too far may mean that the current education system is unable to maximise students' individuality and talent.

Fourthly, dramatic progress in science and technology, economic globalisation and the march of the IT revolution are accelerating change in society and the economy. Therefore, many consider that the education system overall and the knowledge of those associated with it are not necessarily equipped to deal with the changing conditions of time and the society.

It would thus appear that education, as it stands, is not responding adequately to economic and social change or to the changes in the environment that children are growing up in. Fully dealing with the various issues of education requires systemic reform and improved strategies, principally of schools, as well as educational reform in the context of society as a whole including school, households and communities. (MEXT, 2001)

club life. The perception of difference to other students is significant in that it expresses a type of moral and social superiority over other, non-rowing, students. A recurring theme for BURC members was the notion of *merihari* (modulation) or proper use of time and subsequent comparison with other students who are seen as idle and lazy. In some respects having idle time is perceived as a form of immorality. That is, an 'empty space of time that is not spent in activity is not supposed to be' (Kato, 1984 in Manzenreiter, 1998: 366). Hence organising ones time and having discipline is a blueprint toward a moral life. Tana, who initially found the expectations of rowing life to be much more difficult than expected offered:

The experience will be helpful to get a job. Not that I have graduated, but that I have been a member of the rowing club. The experience of being a member of the rowing team. I learn about *merihari*, an everyday routine, I mean everyday I get up and train and then go to class and then more training or work. A lot of university students don't know what to do everyday. They sleep in, muck around, they don't have any daily routine, but at BURC we have a strong routine and schedule so we have a better lifestyle then other students. We learn these things from the many great sempai at BURC, students that don't belong to clubs don't have any of these things. I'm very proud of my time at BURC.

Tana indicates an experience that he perceives as more worthwhile than the choices of other students. Not only in his belief that this experience will assist in gaining employment but he makes the point that routine and schedule are important components of a moral lifestyle.

Being part of the elite that make it to university and in particular into the rowing club is indicative of a strong academic habitus. To make it this far generally means that the student has managed to avoid the barriers that the Rainbow Plan suggests are endemic in the system. These barriers include bullying, school refusal, delinquency, truancy, violence, stress related illness. Many of these barriers to further education occur because such students have been unable to develop the appropriate habitus for the

game. As a result, the field doesn't recognise or value their capital and they are unable to continue on to higher education.

Another important consideration of MOE reform is the Rainbow Plan's intention to 'implement a strict grading system for university students and focus on the teaching abilities of academics'. This proposal suggests that club activities may be at risk under their current format in the future. The effectiveness of the BURC experience and the expectations from the club on members relies very much on the continuation of the current status quo of university being 'leisure land'. The implementation of a strict grading system into universities would certainly have an impact on the current *laissez-faire* approach to study that rowers at BURC have. It is difficult to imagine that a more rigorous form of assessment would still allow students to study less than 4 hours a week, which is the BURC average, sleep during class, not attend class, or have no idea what subjects they are studying. Stricter academic standards at university may also affect the type of *suisen* coming to the university. For example students with similar academic (dis)ability to Taka would seriously struggle to meet academic requirements and therefore stay in university. Would such a reform therefore affect the value of the symbolic and physical capital of the small percentage of students enrolled in University based on their sporting prowess? It is conceivable that reforms of this nature would change the experience of being an extra-curricula club member at university, particularly in conservative sports such as rowing which demand total involvement. Whether such reforms would be good or bad is irrelevant. They would however, alter the game and as a result demand a shifting habitus to the one currently valued at BURC. The role of repetition, ritual and embodiment as educative forces of a secondary curriculum would potentially be weakened as a result of such changes.

MOE therefore runs the potential risk of contradicting its' goals as on the one hand it values the role of club activities as an important arena for social and moral education, whilst on the other it puts into place academic requirements that would effect these clubs to continue to function as they currently do. The other potential contradiction would be reduced participation rates in club activity due to the increased importance of academic performance to define one's university career.

### **Levels of Power**

BURC members are not, to again para-phrase Wacquant (2001), 'cultural dupes'. They are not powerless automatons, being prepared as cogs in the machinations of Japanese industry. Rather, being a BURC member involves being actively engaged with power and discourse, simultaneously playing multiple games requiring multiple skills of perception on multiple levels of social interaction. Consider Hiro's view of how he utilizes his power as captain:

I have the final decision; it depends on the situation. I will ask for the others opinion and if I am happy with that then that is the way we will go. However if I disagree, I have the final decision so I will override the decision if I think it is necessary. Tonight in the boat I yelled at the crew. I was trying to re-invigorate them. The other members were not concentrating so I encouraged them to try hard and concentrate harder. Sometimes I have to get into the other members, other times I want them to feel comfortable and I stay quiet. How I act depends on what we need on the day.

This year is my final year at university; it's my last chance to win. But the other members, some of them are freshmen, second year (etc) so they have the chance to win next year or in two years. But I want them to work harder to help achieve my goal. I don't want the other people to think that they have other years ahead to achieve these goals. However I don't want them to set the same goal as me. I hope that they will choose the same goal as me but if they don't there isn't much I can do about it and I must respect their choice.

Hiro demonstrates here that he employs his powers of social perception in determining the type of power required for a particular situation. Frequently Hiro allows other members to use power in various forms, such as during selection. He is also aware that in other relationships, such as with alumni or former *sempai* the power

relationships shift and change. Further he is conscious of the reality that those below him have the power to directly effect his aspirations and goals.

Foucault (1980: 98) insists that power:

must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application.

Power as such is a system, as opposed to a set, of relations. Being placed in this system of relations, the individual becomes the site where power is both enacted and resisted. Power is performative. As Mills (2003: 34) suggests, Foucault's understanding of power focuses on the way power relations 'permeate all relations within a society' and the way this permeation, in enactment and contest, helps account for the 'mundane and daily ways' of power in action. The strong hierarchies in place at BURC create chains of power with a tendency to act vertically, however this sequence can and is constantly reorganised. The power in bodies and in personal histories ensures that the performance of power varies from individual to individual depending on the context. The perception of Japanese social structure within groups as stiff and unchanging may instead be regarded as an 'extremely flexible rigidity' (Clammer, 1995: 69).

In discussing Bourdieu's notion of field, Fiske (1993: 12) observes that there are always potential areas within the field where 'agents or groups of agents may engage in free expression and potentially subvert the dominant interest of that field'. For BURC members these examples may be seen at the *nomihodai* or in Sato's avoidance of training, although these very same agents will also 'engage in accordance with the prerogatives of the dominant groups or individuals within that field' (Fiske, 1993: 12).

In a Bourdieusian sense, most (but not all) action at BURC should be seen as being derived not from intention but rather from 'acquired dispositions' whereby individual's actions should be interpreted as 'oriented toward one objective or another without anyone being able to claim that that objective was a conscious design (Bourdieu, 1998: 98). The important point in Bourdieu's understanding of action is that, although mostly below the level of consciousness, there exist moments and opportunities where individual intention is the source of action. Power at BURC can be expressed through one's capital based on physical capacity, educational genealogy and position in the hierarchy. However there is also the opportunity for the occasional subversion of these dispositions. For example when the managers are in the kitchen power momentarily shifts within the boathouse.

### ***Jōge kankei* - Up and down Masculinity**

Body reflexive practice such as rowing, and indeed all sports, involve 'social relations and symbolism' that, in this case, is institutionally based. Through these practices 'particular versions of masculinity are constituted' in the form of 'meaningful bodies and embodied meanings. Through bodily reflexive practices, more than individual lives are formed: a social world is formed' (Connell, 1995: 64). The social world at BURC is constructed by the meanings inscribed in the bodily practice of rowing and the interaction of these bodies through daily social practice. Bourdieu (2001: 11) observes that conversely:

The social world constructs the body as a sexually defined reality and as the depository of sexually defining principles of vision and division. This embodied social programme of perception is applied to all things of the world and firstly to the body itself, in its biological reality.

The biological paradigm therefore naturalises all aspects of gender to a chromosomal level so as to make commonsense of all gendered relations. In particular, the 'strength

of the masculine order is seen in the fact that it dispenses with justification' (Bourdieu, 2001: 9). In 'Dislocating the Salaryman Doxa', Roberson and Suzuki (2003: 1) challenge the taken for granted stereotype of the Japanese salaryman, that is, the workaholic, after work drinker, weekend golfer, offering little or no contribution to home and family life, identity. The 'socially sanctioned' ideal for Japanese men still holds its position of dominance despite the Heisei recession, which has made this model 'increasingly difficult to attain' (Gill, 2003: 145). Roberson & Suzuki (2003) explore a multitude of 'masculinities' at play in Japan today that contradict this traditional view. Borrowing from Connell's (1995: 35) understanding, gender is 'not fixed in advance of social interaction, but is constructed in interaction'. Further, it is essential to see that 'masculinity and femininity are inherently relational concepts' (Connell, 1995: 44) not just between each other but also within each other. As such, a relational understanding of masculinity produces masculinities that are hegemonic, subordinate, complicit and marginalised (Connell, 1995: 76-81). The body in this context must be understood not as an object that is solely acted on but as an agent that is capable of acting. In social practices such as sport bodies are 'substantially in play' (Connell, 1995: 58) resulting in individual masculinities that are often 'translated into.....postures, positions, and the feels and textures of human bodies in concrete place, time and occasion' (Hamada, 1996: 162). As with most sporting cultures (Connell, 1995; Messner, 1990) the masculinity found therein tends to be of the culturally dominant and valued nature. BURC masculinity carries forms hegemonic and complicit masculinity and simultaneously marginalises the masculinity of other, non-club members and students.

In an institutional environment such as BURC where the totality of mind-body expression enters into every aspect of one's existence, the concept of *jōge kankei* is



particularly important in the definition of BURC masculinity. Whilst there are female managers and rowers, the nature of the *kōhai/sempai* relationship is entirely homo-social. Notably in their responses, BURC members rarely, if ever, mention and the notion of their 'masculinity'. Ishii-Kuntz (2003:212) observed a similar level of response in her study of salarymen who also care for their children. She suggested that these salarymen see their identity and actions as part of their '*ningen rashisa*' (humanity) as opposed to their masculinity. The notion of humanity in the construction of identity was also to the fore in BURC expression. Just because the rowers don't mention their masculinity specifically didn't diminish the construction of their masculine identity at BURC. When rowers talked about the importance of *jōge kankei* and *ningenkankei* they were referring almost always to relationships between other men. Tana, in talking about leadership, explains something of the nature of the bonds between men:

My leadership style? I try to pull up the other members, motivate them, encourage them. As a rower I am probably not the best, I mean I don't have that much skill, but sometimes I have to be the leader in the boat. This means speaking up when things are no good, technically or in terms of effort, and trying to do something to fix the problem. I guess I learnt this from my *sempai*. They taught me how to express myself and what to feel for. I had many *sempai*, I took aspects of their styles that I thought were good and combined them into my style. Fuji for example has good skill, so I try to row like him plus he was always very good and kind to the *kōhai*, so I try to be like Fuji in these respects. (interview with Tana)

The pedagogic nature of the *kōhai/sempai* relationship ensures that what has been taught and what you teach occurs in a totally 'man to man' basis. Consistent valued human (masculine) traits according to Tana (and consistent throughout responses) are the qualities of caring on one hand and toughness or directness and physical ability on the other. The type of masculinity that is valued at BURC is one of individual toughness but collective empathy. As a metaphor the rowers hands which are blistered on one side (often blisters on blisters from holding the oar) and manicured on the

other (most of rowers file their nails) is indicative of this particular form of masculinity.

There are elements of the *koha* model of masculinity present in BURC men, however, the *koha* model represents only part of the valued traits that make up identity and gender at the rowing club. The BURC man is expressive when necessary and unlike the *koha* model is far more group oriented than the rugged individualist. The *kōhai/sempai* relationship at BURC is noticeably more relaxed than those existing at high school sports clubs where there is often a strict enforcement of hierarchical relationships (Yoneyama, 1999; Shimahara, 1991). As Taka expressed earlier not only does he have 'greater fondness' for his *sempai*, he also thinks the *jōge kankei* is 'stronger' than at high school. By 'stronger', Taka is referring to the level of guidance and direction (and not the level of discipline) shown from his *sempai*. In understanding *jōge kankei*, it is important to note that rather than being contradictory, affection and hierarchy should be seen as 'mutually reinforcing' (Rohlen, 1991: 23). In some ways this is reminiscent of the "traditional" Japanese management style that Gordon (1998: 21) describes as warm-hearted, sympathetic and paternal on one hand and obedient and loyal on the other. When Ogasawara (1998) pointed out the highly gendered and demarcated nature of employment in Japanese companies, she highlighted the exclusive vertical hierarchies that exist between men and other men, women and other women. The gendered *jōge kankei* of BURC socializes the appropriate masculinity to exist in a homo-social work place. It is important to note that I am not suggesting that men and women don't work together or that men and women at BURC don't interact together. Rather, I am highlighting the reality that

almost all significant/powerful relationships between individuals whether in the office or at BURC are solely masculine or feminine in nature.

The display of masculinity at BURC can therefore be highlighted in several instances. In addressing the hardship of training and the pain of racing the BURC man is able to demonstrate the appropriate masculine habitus valued by the field. This is further displayed through the physical presence of BURC bodies at training and in the boathouse, the musculature and hardness. Every stance of the BURC body is 'pregnant with meaning' (Bourdieu, 1977: 11). Such bodies are not just valued at BURC but indeed have become hegemonic in Japanese culture (not to mention Western culture) according to Miller (2003). In this situation the results of self-cultivation through rowing, that is, the muscular body are the same as the demands of popular culture for the beautification of the body. Not only are BURC bodies muscular but they also fit Miller's (2003: 41) ideal 'smooth' or hairless body. All the men at BURC were devoid of any chest hair or back hair. The smoothness of these bodies indicates that members were sensitive to and aware of the expectations of the heterosexual body in Japan. Further Miller (2003: 45) suggested that the majority of young male beauty work was devoted to styling and dying of hair. Just over two thirds of the members at BURC had dyed hair, some peroxide blonde, but mostly brown. In regards to physique and hair, the BURC man is homogenous with the hegemony of popular culture.

The naturalisation of gender is also seen in the dynamics, choices and language of BURC members (both male and female). Japanese folk ideologies naturalise gender roles and attributes (Roberson et al. 2003: 8) and it is significant, therefore, that

members see life at BURC as 'traditional' and 'proper' in regards to relationships which operate there. Further, as a masculine institution, BURC takes on, as Musashi suggests previously, the role of *daikokubashira*. *Daikokubashira* is the description given to the head of a traditional Japanese family (Gill, 2003). As a result it is apparent that members come to view the institution of BURC in the light of this masculine role and the collective that is the membership and OB's becomes as a father figure. This connection with traditional identity was enhanced even further through member's belief in *seishin* and elements of *bushidō*. According to Roberson et al (2003) linkages made with occupations, whether the salaryman, artisan, or rower, and the Samurai, serves to legitimize the position and prestige of the former by utilising Japanese tradition. Even though BURC members were far from samurai or zen Buddhists, the fact that they directly and indirectly adopted elements of these identities serves not only to legitimise their choice to be rowers but also the construction of their masculinity. As Bourdieu (2001: 56) offers:

'it is through the training of the body that the most fundamental dispositions are imposed, those which make a person both inclined and able to enter into the social games most favourable to the development of manliness - politics, business, science etc'.

The regimes of the body that were so central to identity at BURC are gendered and therefore engendered and inscribed aspects of masculinity on members. Members invested their bodies in developing this particular mode of masculinity in light of social games that value physicality. The capital in physicality and discipline was not only valued during the current field of rowing but was perceived to hold its value in the future in alternate fields.

## **BU-dō – The Way of the Rower**

The illusio of being a member of BURC, that is, being caught up in the game, produces and is produced via practice which relies upon the harmonisation of individual's habitus. The continuity of practice at BURC is stable and guaranteed due to a type of romanticism of tradition perpetuated by members sense of gratitude to present generations and obligations to assist future ones (Rohlen, 1991: 23). Social reality at BURC is defined and redefined based on the close and all consuming nature of being a member. This reality relies heavily on the collective notions of *jōge kankei* and *ningenkankei* and also on the individual appreciation on the value of self cultivation. The reproduction of reality at BURC can be seen through Bourdieu's definition of the effects engendered within fields which

are neither the purely additive sum of anarchical actions, nor the integrated outcome of a concerted plan...It is the structure of the game, and not a simple effect of mechanical aggregation, which is at the basis of the transcendence, revealed by cases of inversion of intentions, of the objective and collective effect of cumulated actions (Bourdieu, 1987 in Wacquant, 1992: 17).

The strength and value (capital) of an identity created at BURC is maximised when this identity is the result of an individual trajectory whereby membership is a field within a field and the capital accrued can be transferred from one field to the next. Of all the forms of capital accruable at BURC, the most powerful are forms of symbolic capital. Symbolic capital is an

ordinary property (physical strength, wealth, valour (*seishin*)) which perceived by social agents endowed with the categories of perception and appreciation permitting them to perceive, know and recognise it, becomes symbolically efficient, like a veritable magical power (Bourdieu, 1998: 102).

Symbolic capital in the form of spiritual or *seishin* capital is especially valued as it is demonstrative of having undergone a particular process, the project of self cultivation, which required commitment, discipline, endurance and sacrifice, in short a 'moral' use

of time. The universality of the self cultivation framework (that is how to achieve it) means that one can appreciate the value of the BU-*dō* capital without having to understand rowing.

The role of sports clubs in the delivery of a moral and social curriculum in Japanese education continues to be effective as demonstrated by the autonomous operations of clubs such as BURC (Light, 1998, 1999a, 1999b). The levels of commonsense produced through BU experience are based on the type of values that monbusho encourages such as traditional Japanese values, harmony, cooperation and a sense of humanity. Dominant ideologies are just that because they are largely uncontested and don't require enforcement to be adhered to. The secondary curriculum is effective because it is internalised by members and expressed below the level of consciousness.

The experiences of members at BURC are best summed up by this sentimental reflection from OB, Fuji:

Brent: Do you feel that because you didn't win the AJICR Championships that your time here had been a waste?

Fuji: No, absolutely not. At the club we have some much freedom, so much fun. I liked the independence of being a member here. Doing our own thing. Making decisions by myself. My best friends are rowers here. Plus, my girlfriend is a member here. I've learnt so many things about myself here, especially about the importance of the group. We have laughed together and cried together. The group is so important for that sort of support. I think that BURC is special and different compared to other boat clubs but then again if I was at another boat club I might think the same thing about them. Chances are all boat clubs are the same. They are special places.

Bourdieu (1984: 209-211) insists that it is 'naïve to suppose all practitioners of the same sport confer the same meaning on their practice or even, strictly speaking, that they are practicing the same practice'. Rowing as a practice at Japanese universities is certainly different from my experience of rowing in Australia. However, Fuji's last assertion that all boat clubs (in Japan) are the same seems quite plausible. In fact, I would suggest that similar practices and values may be found throughout a multitude

of Japanese university sports clubs. Certainly the one hundred or so rowing clubs in Japanese universities operate on similar grounding that they are student driven. The capital derived from rowing is only guaranteed as long as its product (graduates) is homogenous. It is in the practitioner's interest to ensure that the investment of four years is recognisable, and nothing works better in this regard than generalisation, that is that all rowers are the same. The entirety of the rowing experience, as has been demonstrated, is designed to create a homogenised body, an awareness of particular cultural identities, a skill in operating in a collectively based vertical hierarchy, an individual sense of discipline and an appreciation of hard work and suffering as a necessity of self improvement. Whilst winning at the AJICR Championships is the superficial goal of every rower, there are deeper motivations at work generated via a sub-conscious secondary curriculum. Unlike winning at the AJICR championships, the chances of which to a large extent are extremely variable, dependent on the quality of the opposition, and in most cases improbable, the probability of graduating with the habitus and capital of a rower are very high as all that is required is to essentially see the experience (albeit a very demanding, painful and time consuming one) through to the end.

It is the habitus that maintains a social life that is 'so regular and predictable' (Wacquant, 1992: 18). The structuring mechanism of the rowing habitus of BURC members operated from within each member. The seemingly uniform nature of these individual histories and the stability of the field in which they are enacted, resulted in the consistent reproduction of identities and values year in year out. The BU-*dō* (way) is indeed a method par excellence of self-cultivation.

## **Conclusion - Looking Back**

Almost twelve years since my first experience of playing rugby in Japan there is finally a feeling of having made sense of my sporting experience there. I entered BURC with some ideas about what I would find there. I expected discipline, hierarchy and conformity. Whilst these qualities were found in abundance it was the degree of harmony and contentedness at BURC that really stood out. In particular the notion of *ningenkankei* had added importance as members literally undertook the process of learning how to live with other people.

It also became clear that the rowing club at Biwa University, and undoubtedly at other universities, provided an autonomous experience for students where the reproduction of identity and cultural hegemony could be achieved. My experience at BURC certainly confirmed elements of Gramsci's notion of hegemony in that the 'autonomy' of students reflected a level of consent and commonsense understanding of their world whereby the reproduction of this identity and hegemony was guaranteed. Whilst derived from a multi-dimensional (meaning of the body, hierarchy, harmony, self-cultivation etc) and historical (tracing these influences from a particular past) foundation the identity of BURC members is not fixed. Rather the social dynamics of the group and major members constantly cause subtle shifts in how the 'game' is played. I began to understand that the BURC rower had much in common with my rowing experiences, not in terms of training or technique, but in regards to the necessity to suffer to improve, the acceptance of extremely hard work, and the discipline to conform to the expectations of the group.

The students at BURC recognise that they possess a physical capital that when used effectively in the action of rowing allows them to 'be someone'. This sense of belonging was a consistent observation of the social dynamics of the club. Belonging



at BURC is facilitated via the security of a Confucian based hierarchical system and reaffirmed through the certainty created through the ritualising of almost all forms of action. The ritual of training, of performance, of celebration all provide a blueprint for members to follow, eventually below the level of consciousness. In many ways being a member is a right of passage. In an uncertain world of future employment and a changing Japan the rowing club creates a temporary sanctuary from these pressures and instils in its members a sense of difference bordering on hubris.

I found the boathouse to be a place of genuine caring and fraternity. I was often struck by the powerful relationships which developed at BURC and at times considered the merits of such an educative sporting experience to be lacking from my own experience of sport after high school. I found myself more and more at ease amongst the members in the boathouse and felt the warmth of its community envelope me. The question of what sporting models one utilises in education has been a constant source of internal debate since my experiences.

Whilst hindsight is always 20/20 I have been very happy with how the research unfolded. Other avenues to add to the research such a comparative study with Australia, the use of multiple rowing clubs, a comparative study with another university sporting club such as *kendō* or longer field placements all have merit and would further enhance the collection of knowledge on the role of sport in education in Japan.

It would be interesting to continue tracking members of BURC after graduation to follow the development and use of the cultural capital accrued whilst rowing and to investigate whether there are patterns in the type of employment graduates receive. Similarly studies into the women's club and indeed the managers' club would provide an insight into notions of gender in Japan. Indeed a comparative study about ideas on

femininity between the female rowers and female managers at BURC could provide some deeper understanding on 'women's' work in Japanese society.

This thesis has explored the intersection of sport, education, identity and culture and how this intersection is experienced and embodied by the members of BURC. As the best players, such as Hiro and Taka, emerged from the field, our understanding of the field is therefore shaped by their direction. The first section of the thesis acts as an introduction and literature review, and places both myself and sport in the context of the field, that is rowing at Japanese universities. The next few chapters explain the how and why of the methodology involved in engaging with the field of Japanese university rowing. Importantly this requires placing my self in the research both as a practitioner and a foreigner. The methodology of this thesis is original and evolved over time in response to experiences in the field.

The central chapters of the thesis aim at the description of what it is to be a BURC man. This section utilises both field notes and interview excerpts. Throughout this exposition the power of the Japanese sporting model as demonstrated at BURC has an intense socialising effect and shapes the individual identities found there. Whilst this section may be seen as results, a discussion usually follows simultaneously to expand on the themes that come to life from the data.

The final chapters of the thesis continue the discussion of being a BURC member and contrast the type of identity at BURC with other identities, indeed masculinities, in Japanese society. Of particular interest is the internalisation of controls which members adopt on a sub-conscious level in order to remain in the field. The power of physical practice in shaping both cultural and social identity is clearly identified. Being a member of BURC is more than just playing a sport. It is a total experience

that educates on a variety of levels that proves enduring and important in the social trajectory and identity of the BURC man.

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