

## **War and the latent public:**

### **Shimizu Ikutarō on rumours and public opinion in transwar Japan, 1937-1960**

#### **Abstract**

This article explores the relationship between rumour and public opinion in Japan across the middle decades of the twentieth century. By situating Shimizu Ikutarō's 1937 theory of rumour as 'latent public opinion' in comparative perspective, I show how he articulated an original vision of individual agency in an emergent mass-mediated society characterised by mobilisation, surveillance, and censorship. I then examine how Shimizu's theory served as a reference point for discussions of rumour across the wartime divide. During the war, state officials drew on Shimizu's work as part of research into the efficacy of efforts to suppress rumourmongering. This ambivalent discourse on rumour provides into tensions between obedience and initiative during the mobilisation of the home front for total war. After the war ended, the legacy of the wartime discourse on rumour was palpable in an undercurrent of skepticism directed toward quantitative approaches to public opinion promoted by the Allied Occupation. This skepticism shaped attitudes toward postwar democracy, leading some progressive intellectuals to turn to the rumours theorized by Shimizu as a possible basis for mobilized resistance against the sway of the mass media during the heyday of postwar protest movements.

This article focuses on the relationship between rumour and public opinion research in mid-twentieth century Japan. It takes as its starting point a canonical treatise on rumour from 1937 by the prominent sociologist and public intellectual Shimizu Ikutarō (1907-1988). I argue that Shimizu inaugurated a tradition of thinking of rumours as expressions of 'latent public

opinion' (senzaiteki yoron) rather than primitive belief or mass psychology. This meant that for Shimizu and other researchers who followed his lead during and after the Second World War, rumours were a better gauge of public opinion than quantitatively rigorous polls – including those promoted by the Allied Occupation – which were understood as simply conveying what members of the public believed the authorities wanted to hear.

In 'Sensational Rumours, Seditious Graffiti, and the Nightmares of the Thought Police,' the historian John Dower showed how rumours ensnared in a military surveillance net during the final years of the Second World War revealed elite paranoia toward popular revolution and popular exhaustion toward the war effort in Japan.<sup>1</sup> Building on Dower's argument, this article fleshes out the historical and legal framework in which rumours were handled during the war, while also revealing another, more affirmative dimension to the transwar discourse on rumour.<sup>2</sup> By taking seriously Shimizu's argument that rumours were conveyors of latent public opinion, I highlight strands of continuity between the wartime discourse on rumour and postwar social scientific and democratic ideals.

Theoretical and empirical research on rumour and public opinion contributed to the formation of a shared social imaginary in midcentury Japan, one that took shape across the prewar, wartime, and postwar years. If, as Sarah Igo has argued, public opinion polling in the United States contributed to Americans' belief that they were atomised individuals living in a 'mass society,' rumour research and public opinion research came together in Japan to produce the widespread belief that the Japanese public also lived in a mass society, albeit one with a differently inflected dual structure.<sup>3</sup> The public world of polling and officially-sanctioned news came to seem dominated by conformism, hierarchical relationships, and social pretense. Yet across the same period, Japanese social scientists drew attention to a parallel communicative

universe characterised by horizontal bonds, individual initiative, and secrecy: the world of rumour as an expression of authentic belief.

This midcentury discourse on rumour was shot through with ambivalence. Rumours were ideal barometers of wartime morale, but they also threatened to lower it. Critically analysing rumours was thought to contribute to wartime spiritual mobilisation and imperial subjectification, but the spectre of nefarious rumourmongering could also justify an exclusionary and uncritical focus on official media channels. Rumours were threats to public safety and the social order, but they were also held up as purer expressions of the democratic popular will than the results of public opinion polls.

Inquiry into the relationship between rumour and public opinion bolstered the persuasive power of a dualistic understanding of Japanese society. Historicising such inquiry shows how it was a contingent product of the rapid development of the mass media through decades of mobilisation for war followed by military occupation, rather than the outcome of timeless cultural differences between Japan and the West.<sup>4</sup> Radio and print communicated the results of opinion polls during and after the war, and both state and non-state actors like Shimizu spread awareness of rumours via those same media channels, encouraging skeptical media consumption habits in the process.<sup>5</sup> By the end of the war, evidence of widespread skepticism of official media channels clashed with official Allied Occupation-backed narratives of the war after it ended – narratives that portrayed the people as duped into supporting a hopeless conflict on the basis of uncritical acceptance of government propaganda. The resulting contradiction between public performance and private experience encouraged a tendency to view postwar society through a bifurcated lens, generating debate over the nature of Japanese democracy and its relations with the United States. This bifurcation was inseparable from the entangled relationship among

wartime mobilisation, military occupation, and the optimism and disillusionment associated with postwar democratisation efforts. The way rumour and public opinion in transwar Japan expressed this entangled relationship across the middle decades of the twentieth century is relevant to understanding political and cultural change in other post-authoritarian societies.

After briefly contextualizing and summarizing Shimizu's treatise on rumour from 1937, I situate his work in relation to two other classic works on the subject, *The Psychology of Rumour* by Gordon Allport and Leo Postman and *Improvised News* by the Japanese-American sociologist Tamotsu Shibutani.<sup>6</sup> I then turn to explore how rumour research conducted in Japan during World War Two was influenced by Shimizu's text in the early and late stages of the conflict. Finally, I conclude with a section that considers the legacy of wartime rumour research on discussions of public opinion after the war ended.

### **On Shimizu's *Groundless Rumours***

Shimizu Ikutarō (1907-1988), was one of the most prominent public intellectuals in mid-twentieth century Japan. Trained as a sociologist at Tokyo Imperial University in the 1920s, he began his ascent to fame as a journalist in the 1930s. He published *Groundless Rumours (Ryūgen higo)* in December 1937, a year after an attempted coup d'état by hardline military officers who occupied central Tokyo for four days starting in 26 February 1936, and just a few months after the full-scale invasion of China in July 1937.<sup>7</sup> Rumours had proliferated throughout the government-ordained media blackout that took place during the so-called '2/26 Incident,' and Shimizu's analysis of 'abnormal' rumours (ryūgen higo) – as distinct from everyday gossip (uwasa) – was based in part on his experience living in Tokyo during the failed February coup.<sup>8</sup>

Controls on the media were tightened during and after the 2/26 Incident, and the invasion of China led to new efforts to prosecute individuals for spreading rumours as well.<sup>9</sup>

Intellectually, in 1937 Shimizu was in the process of turning away from the German-influenced sociological models he had encountered during his student years toward a more subjectivist approach to social action associated with the American pragmatist philosopher John Dewey.<sup>10</sup> The influence of the American journalist and Dewey critic Walter Lippmann's *Public Opinion* (1922) was also palpable in Shimizu's effort to grasp the phenomena of rumours from the first-person perspective of an individual ensconced within a mass-mediated 'pseudo-environment' (*giji kankyō*).<sup>11</sup> As he put it years later, Shimizu experienced this new interest in American thought as a turn from a 'telescopic' perspective on society, the state, and revolution to a 'microscopic' one focused on childhood education, habits, and rumours.<sup>12</sup>

The abnormal rumours of interest to Shimizu were quintessentially modern phenomena rather than remnants from an earlier age of face-to-face communication, and they presupposed ostensibly modern habits of media consumption. Shimizu argued that in contemporary society, individuals became increasingly habituated to understanding and navigating the environment in which they were ensconced through the media. News media had become a taken-for-granted prosthesis that extended the range of the senses.<sup>13</sup> Rumours multiplied when these taken-for-granted sources of information were disrupted by man-made or natural disasters or – as in the case of the 2/26 Incident – by strict government control over the media.<sup>14</sup> By characterizing the origins of rumour in this way, Shimizu implicitly rejected the notion that gradually rising average levels of education would lead to the elimination of rumours as a social problem. Instead, a better educated public was arguably more likely to engage in rumourmongering due to the media consumption habits of its members.<sup>15</sup>

Shimizu was however reluctant to characterise rumours as a social problem in the first place.<sup>16</sup> He argued that rumours were expressions of individualism in an epic struggle against totalitarianism (*zentaishugi*). This struggle, which Shimizu also portrayed as a struggle between the individual and society and between theories of natural rights and those of society-as-organism, was not limited to wartime Japan but had been unfolding across the globally interconnected capitalist age as a whole.<sup>17</sup> Yet as we shall see when we consider the reception of Shimizu's work, his individualistic defense of rumour did not imply direct criticism of wartime policy.

For Shimizu, the individualistic side to rumours had less to do with their hypothetical 'authors' and more to do with the circumstances surrounding their circulation and transmission. He argued that individuals became highly susceptible to suggestion during a crisis – defined here as an event that suddenly interrupted the flow of media habitually consumed by these individuals. He likened their desire for information about the crisis situation in which they found themselves to someone on the verge of starvation.<sup>18</sup> In this context, disconnected facts pertaining to the crisis could come together in the form of a rumour; which, in contrast to other news media, was unverified, uncensored, and spread by word-of-mouth.<sup>19</sup> This meant that any individual who transmitted a rumour to someone else shouldered a risk, but this risk was mitigated by secrecy and the quotation marks ('I heard that...') within which the content of the rumour was conveyed.<sup>20</sup>

This bracketing and secrecy bestowed the transmitter of a rumour with a significant degree of freedom. This freedom enabled transmitters to consciously or unconsciously connect the dots separating fragmentary facts pertinent to a crisis in ways that reflected their underlying interests vis-à-vis that crisis. Diverse and contradictory interests in relation to the same incident

could give rise to numerous variants of the same rumour, and these different variants were received – and could spur action – in ways that reflected the specific interests of those who heard them.<sup>21</sup> The state might then try to suppress or ban the publication of rumours that reflected latent social conflicts in the name of order and harmony. Shimizu suggested that this could backfire however, since state repression might exacerbate the uncertainty and sense of crisis that had been a prerequisite for rumours to proliferate in the first place.<sup>22</sup>

At this point in his argument, Shimizu crossed an epistemological boundary. He went on to argue that rumours were not merely reflections of opposed socioeconomic interests. Like great art and nomothetic social science, the content of individual rumours, based on fragmentary facts, could actually be ‘truer than a given reality,’ because, unlike news media, rumours typically avoided dealing with complicating empirical details that stood in the way of grasping the essence of the social totality.<sup>23</sup> Individual transmitters of rumours unintentionally conveyed essential truths about society precisely because they did not have access to certain facts pertaining to the incident that the rumour was ostensibly about. Shimizu reflexively asserted that this was akin to the way that he had abstracted from complicating details related to particular rumours in order to work out a general sociological theory of them.

In roughly parallel fashion, rumour could also be a truer expression of public opinion than what was openly recognised as public opinion at any given time. This was because the transmitters of rumours were ‘free’ – given the secretive, bracketed, third-person form in which rumours travelled – to express opinions that were beyond the pale of what was acceptable in a not-fully-democratic political regime.<sup>24</sup> Rumour could thus be a clandestine vehicle for the expression of an as-of-yet unvoiced ‘latent public opinion’ (*senzai-teki yoron*), which Shimizu contrasted with what was actually a matter of public debate, or ‘manifest public opinion’

(kenzai-teki yoron).<sup>25</sup> It followed that the bearers of rumours collectively constituted a ‘latent public’ (senzai-teki koshū), which Shimizu contrasted with both the manifest public and ‘the crowd’ (gunshū) analyzed by the French pioneer of mass psychology Gustave Le Bon.<sup>26</sup> He suggested that latent publics circulated ideas that could be far superior to the ideas debated within officially-sanctioned institutions and media channels. Yet Shimizu believed the ideas conveyed through rumours were unlikely to be discovered or taken up by politicians, ‘unless politicians adopted the attitude of someone willing to ask a widow wandering around a poor neighborhood at midnight what she desires and believes.’<sup>27</sup>

Shimizu ended his treatise by asserting that he had not set out to write a full-blown ‘apologia for rumour’ (ryūgen higo no aporogia) but merely wanted to correct biased and ‘emotional’ views that portrayed this sociological phenomenon in purely negative terms.<sup>28</sup> This distinguished Shimizu’s overall take on rumours from Gordon Allport and Leo Postman’s classic *The Psychology of Rumour*. Allport and Postman, who approached their subject from the standpoint of wartime experimental psychology, presented rumours as ‘dangerous and pathological.’<sup>29</sup> In contrast, Shimizu portrayed rumours in mostly positive and constructive terms, remarkably so when we consider that the spread of rumours was widely blamed a decade earlier for massacres of Korean residents in Tokyo in the aftermath of the 1923 Great Kantō Earthquake.<sup>30</sup> Shimizu had much more in common in this regard with the optimistic standpoint of the Japanese-American sociologist Tamotsu Shibutani, who wrote the second classic work on rumour in the English language, *Improvised News*.<sup>31</sup> Yet whereas Shibutani argued that rumours arose out of collective discussion and problem-solving, Shimizu maintained a standpoint of methodological individualism throughout *Groundless Rumours*. True, Shimizu’s ‘latent publics’ shared rumours in common, but his emphasis on the creative contributions of individual



transmitters was closer to Allport and Postman than Shibutani. ‘Latent publics’ were a more loosely united grouping of individuals than crowds, manifest publics, or the ostensibly democratic groups that engaged in collective problem solving in Shibutani’s work.

Though written at different times and in different places, the theories of rumour promoted by Shimizu, Allport and Postman, and Shibutani were all related in different ways to the global conflict of the Second World War. Allport and Postman’s *The Psychology of Rumour* opened with the observation that ‘Rumour became a problem of grave national concern in the tense years 1942 and 1943,’ and it made use of data derived from ‘rumour clinics’ aimed at monitoring and containing rumours that threatened wartime morale.<sup>32</sup> Shibutani’s *Improvised News* was influenced by the author’s experiences with rumours circulating in the internment camp for Japanese-Americans he was detained in during the war.<sup>33</sup> Finally, Shimizu’s *Groundless Rumours* was inspired by the information blackout during the 2/26 Incident, a failed military coup that contributed to the breakdown of civilian governance in wartime Japan.

Yet Shimizu’s work appeared a full decade earlier than Allport and Postman’s in 1947. Shibutani’s appeared even later in 1966. This meant that discussions of rumours among Japanese sociologists and psychologists – who invariably referenced Shimizu’s foundational work – were more sophisticated than their American counterparts during the war and subsequent Allied Occupation of Japan. In contrast, American social scientists had devoted more time and energy into formulating independent theories and empirical methods related to the measurement of public opinion, whereas their Japanese counterparts treated public opinion research as a derivative inquiry into the effectiveness of propaganda or – as in Shimizu’s case – the nature of rumours.<sup>34</sup> The comparatively precocious development of a discourse on rumours in wartime Japan thus affected the postwar reception of American research on public opinion. At any given

time, public opinion could be relativised as ‘manifest public opinion,’ a subset of a much larger pool of opinions that had not risen to the surface of public debate.

### **Rumours during wartime**

After World War Two, Shimizu appended a new preface to *Groundless Rumours* that characterised the work as a protest against wartime government censorship.<sup>35</sup> This was not an accurate portrayal of the reception of his work among government officials during the war. Indeed, a year after its publication, Shimizu’s treatise was taken up by an official concerned with the spread of rumours after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident and full-scale invasion of China in 1937. Nishigaya Tōru, a district prosecutor in Tokyo, was tasked by the Home Ministry with drafting the report ‘On Rumours (zōgen higo) related to the China Incident’ in 1938. In the preface, he thanked Shimizu for the ‘profitable instruction’ he had gleaned from his work on rumours.<sup>36</sup>

Nishigaya’s report was commissioned in response to the new legal framework within which rumours were to be prosecuted after the escalation of the war with China. Officials stepped up their efforts to clamp down on rumourmongers at this time by broadening the interpretation of obscure turn-of-the-century articles in the army and navy penal codes related to rumours. These articles would henceforth apply to civilians and topics not directly related to the military.<sup>37</sup> As Nishigaya noted, the military police (kenpeitai) processed 659 cases involving 789 people suspected of violating these articles, with 237 individuals formally accused during the period from the time of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident in July 1937 to the month before the publication of the report in December 1938.<sup>38</sup> 15% of the recorded felonies prosecuted during the first sixteen months of the war were related to rumours.

Nishigaya mostly concurred with Shimizu's advice regarding the prevention of rumours. Shimizu argued that cracking down on rumours and tightening controls on acceptable speech could backfire by exacerbating the sense of crisis that formed one of the conditions for the spread of rumours in the first place. Nishigaya agreed. He wrote that 'excessive control of the media and excessive repression of speech would only create opportune conditions for the generation of even more rumours.' Overzealous application of the law against rumours would undermine trust in the state, which would in turn diminish the state's ability to preempt rumourmongering by promulgating the 'true interpretation of the facts' (*jijitsu no shinsō*) behind events like the Marco Polo Bridge Incident. In addition, Nishigaya argued that prosecutors ought to focus on the gross distortion and fabrication of 'the facts' in ways that were clearly detrimental to the war effort, rather than on incorrect interpretations of those same facts.<sup>39</sup>

In his report, Nishigaya included examples of rumour investigations that ran against his recommendations. For example, one Nakaiwa Shikazō of Wakayama was investigated for calling the invasion of China 'stupid,' 'a waste of resources,' and the 'outcome of a childish argument.'<sup>40</sup> Nishigaya appeared sympathetic to such interpretations by suggesting in his introduction to the report that the official reasons behind the mobilisation of troops after the Marco Polo Bridge incident were far more difficult to grasp than those behind earlier conflicts like the Russo-Japanese War.<sup>41</sup> Nishigaya suggested that the military police erred in focusing on the spread of 'incorrect' interpretations of events like the Marco Polo Bridge Incident (i.e. seeing it as a pretext for an aggressive invasion) because they wanted to use the anti-rumour articles of the army and navy penal codes to suppress the activities of leftists during the war.

Nishigaya's report revealed broad tensions running through Japan's wartime mobilisation effort related to rumours, freedom of speech, and imperial subjecthood. On one hand, the report

suggested that the military police invoked the anti-rumour articles in the army and navy penal codes as a pretext to clamp down on speech that portrayed Japan's war effort in a negative light from the top-down. On the other, Nishigaya drew on Shimizu's theory of rumour to insist on the need to build a trusting relationship between the people and the state. This complemented other efforts to enlist imperial subjects on the home front in counterintelligence (bōchō) and propaganda (senden) operations from the bottom-up.<sup>42</sup>

For example, a month after the launch of Prime Minister Kono Fumimaro's wide-ranging "National Spiritual Mobilisation Campaign" in 1937, the Cabinet Information Office released a pamphlet calling on national subjects to "acquire the know-how to critically analyse rumours."<sup>43</sup> The pamphlet contained a series of questions and examples to facilitate the acquisition of this critical acumen. Further context was conveyed by the article 'Five Rules for Daily Life during the War,' published in February 1941 in the Tokyo Nichinichi newspaper. The rules in question related to diligence and tranquility at the workplace, cooperation with local air-raid defense efforts, and saving and thrift in the interest of purchasing war bonds. The second rule was to 'not be misled by rumours' (ryūgen ni mayou na) and to 'act in accordance with the leadership of the authorities in all things' (nanigoto mo tōkyoku no shidō ni shitagatte kōdō seyō).<sup>44</sup> The ideal subject would be able to see through both enemy propaganda and groundless rumours, sparing the state the trouble of strictly regulating speech in ways that would counterproductively create the conditions for the spread of more rumours. The flipside of Nishigaya's critique of the state's overly strict application of laws to suppress rumours was thus a call for subjects to take a more proactive role assisting the state authorities in counterintelligence activities, not unlike the proactive ideological role undertaken by former left

wing activists who had ‘converted’ to the imperial cause after being detained under the Peace Preservation Law (tenkōsha).<sup>45</sup>

The idea that civilians were invited to become proactive participants in counterintelligence campaigns was also apparent in the Tokyo Imperial University-educated psychologist Nakamura Kokyō’s book *The Anatomy of Rumours* (Ryūgen no kaibō) from 1942. Nakamura referred to rumours as a ‘powerful enemy hiding in the heart’ that ‘each and every one of us had to confront.’<sup>46</sup> For Nakamura, the ‘serious wartime problem’ of rumourmongering was an opportunity for civilians on the home front to become more psychologically invested in the war effort. This entailed understanding the ‘concept of the home front’ (jūgo naru kannen) in a new way. Belonging to the home front now meant proactive involvement in a ‘thought war’ (shisō-sen) against external enemies and a ‘nerve war’ (shinkei-sen) against rumour, the enemy within.<sup>47</sup>

Like Allport and Postman, Nakamura’s portrayal of rumour was overwhelmingly negative. Nakamura was aware that wartime mobilisation of the home front – which entailed the creation of new systems of rationing, surveillance, and disaster readiness – created new opportunities for the generation and spread of rumours. He argued for example that the regular meetings of newly organised neighborhood associations (tonari-gumi) were prone to becoming “breeding grounds for rumour” (ryūgen no onshō). He blamed this on the large number of housewives who attended these regular meetings, asserting that they transformed them into “hives of chit-chat” (zatsudan no su).<sup>48</sup> Nakamura held this development up as evidence that the mental and spiritual transformation of individuals into proactive ‘imperial subjects’ (shinmin) lagged behind institutional changes associated with the wartime ‘new order’ (shin-taisei). Much of the populace was thus susceptible to being made into the pawns of spies who might plant

rumours damaging to Japan's war effort. Nakamura was however ambiguous as to whether rumours were more likely the products of idle talk or spies, as well as whether the ideal imperial subject was a critical and outspoken consumer of information or simply defined by the maxim 'silence is golden.'<sup>49</sup> In part this was due to the multi-vocal nature of Nakamura's text, which included long quotations from foreign correspondents and military officials who understood the role of the individual in the global 'nerve war' differently.

Shimizu Ikutarō was less ambiguous than Nakamura on this point. In the final chapter of *Groundless Rumours*, on 'Silence and Language,' he argued that preferring silent conformity over the noise and chatter of a rumour-prone society was tantamount to anachronistically longing for an idealised feudal past.<sup>50</sup> History was inseparable from the active use of language for Shimizu. That meant that if silence connoted historical stasis or even reversion to an earlier age, then rumours could be vehicles for the transition to a new era. Nonetheless, the arguments of Nishigaya, Nakamura, and Shimizu all overlapped to a certain degree. Like the fateful challenge represented by the war itself, wartime rumours represented an opportunity to realise a disaster utopia through the transformation of everyday social relationships.<sup>51</sup> As a result, reading Shimizu's *Groundless Rumours* solely as a protest against the suppression of free speech under the guise of rumour prevention downplays its complex reception during the war.

### **Rumour and public opinion research across the wartime divide**

Shimizu's treatise offered agents of the wartime state other ways to relate to rumours besides suppressing them or ignoring them. In particular, Shimizu recommended taking them seriously

as expressions of ‘latent public opinion’ (senzai-teki yoron). The sheer volume of rumour transcriptions and statistics compiled by the police during the war suggests a mindset not entirely unlike Shmizu’s.<sup>52</sup> As Nishigaya’s report from 1938 already indicated, most rumour investigations did not lead to arrests, yet details of those investigations were recorded and compiled, particularly during the final years of the war. The number of rumours recorded by the military police rose sharply during the second quarter of the forties, as the destruction caused by war came to be experienced more palpably on the home front, and officials turned their attention to ‘preparing for defeat.’<sup>53</sup> It was not clear how much the uptick in recorded rumours was due to an increase in the number and range of rumours in circulation, and how much was due to intensified efforts at surveying and compiling them. Growing numbers of recorded rumours might have been a better measure of the anxiety of officials than that of the populace at large.<sup>54</sup>

There is evidence to suggest that the main rationale for rumour surveillance shifted from the prosecution of rumourmongers and spies to a concern with public safety after US firebombing campaigns on Japanese cities ramped up in the final years of the war. Well before this time, the 1937 Cabinet Information Office pamphlet on rumour prevention and analysis had foregrounded and devoted more space to “intentionally” (sakuitekiki) spread rumours than to those spread “unconsciously” (muishiki) – even as it acknowledged that most rumours fell into the latter category.<sup>55</sup> In June 1942, public prosecutor Hiraide Hiizu published an early article on the relationship between rumours and air-raids, just two months after the Doolittle Raid became the first American bombing run on Japanese soil. Hiraide correctly argued that the intended psychological and propagandistic impact of this raid was more significant than the material damage it had caused, and he warned against the spontaneous spread of rumours that might sap home front morale in its wake.<sup>56</sup> The situation changed again after US bombing campaigns

intensified after 1944, killing hundreds of thousands of civilians. Military police, who had conducted rumour surveillance throughout the conflict, began to work with social scientists who sought ways of preventing the spread of rumours during these devastating air-raids.

Their research is not unrelated to the fact that the archive contains much more extensive records on rumours from 1944 to the end of the war. Much of this was due to the preservation efforts of Ikeuchi Hajime, a Tokyo Imperial University-based sociologist who gained access to military police records through his affiliation with the Naval Technological Research Institute (Kaigun gijutsu kenkyūjo). In 1944, a rumour research group was organised within the Institute's applied psychology division, which had previously focused on the development of psychological aptitude tests for the military. A number of prominent postwar thinkers were affiliated with this rumour research group during the final years of the war, including Shimizu Ikutarō, social psychologist Miyagi Otoya, literary critic Nakano Yoshio, and the sociologists Hidaka Rokurō and Ikeuchi Hajime. The group was given access to military police records on rumours, which Ikeuchi preserved and used as the basis for postwar academic articles on the social psychology of wartime rumours.<sup>57</sup> The Institute thus served as a bridge between wartime and postwar rumour research. Indeed, what little we know of its rumour research group comes to us from postwar publications and recollections.<sup>58</sup>

One early postwar publication by a member of the group, Miyagi Otoya, suggests the group sought to find ways to prevent the spread of rumours that posed a threat to public safety. Miyagi's *Man in Crisis* (Kiki ni okeru ningen), a collection of essays from 1947, contained a chapter on rumours that drew upon research conducted at the Institute. In it, Miyagi described rumours in highly pathological terms, as the human equivalent of a panicked bird furiously trying to find a means to escape from a room it is trapped within by repeatedly colliding with



windows. The difference for Miyagi was that while birds expresses panic via the entire body, humans express it verbally, in ways that facilitated the creation and circulation of rumours.<sup>59</sup> Miyagi then analysed a late wartime rumour that eating pickled radish (rakkyo) would spare one's dwelling from calamity during an air-raid. Miyagi argued that this rumour arose from the similarity between the word for pickled radish (rakkyo) and a word used in air-raid drills that meant to evacuate the area (dakkyo).<sup>60</sup> Miyagi's straightforward analysis, which could have conceivably led to the recommendation to substitute another word for 'dakkyo' in air-raid drills, suggests a practical reason why the military police shared rumour records with the Institute during the final years of the war.

Research conducted under the auspices of the Institute was a springboard for former affiliates like Miyagi to bolster the prestige of postwar social science. This was true of Ikeuchi Hajime's 1951 analysis of wartime military police (kenpeitai) records on rumours from 1944 and 1945. Ikeuchi's article was full of criticism of the less than rigorous methods by which this data was gathered and compiled by the authorities. For example, it was difficult to determine whether multiple entries in the records referred to the same rumour at different points in circulation or different rumours that arose spontaneously under similar circumstances.<sup>61</sup>

Nevertheless, Ikeuchi believed certain inferences regarding the circulation of rumours could be drawn on the basis of the military police records. Using language similar to Shimizu's treatise from 1937, Ikeuchi argued that the military police data showed that war had created ideal conditions for the emergence of a large 'latent rumour group' (senzai-teki ryūgen shūdan). This group came together because the shared experience of the war transcended socioeconomic and regional boundaries. Ikeuchi's evidence for the existence of such a group consisted of police records that showed that 1109 recorded rumours, or approximately a quarter of the total, were

reported to have been conveyed to the individual under investigation by a stranger.<sup>62</sup> If these statistics were accurate, rumours might have played an important role creating new networks of association across class boundaries, setting the stage for postwar democracy. Yet Ikeuchi diverged from Shimizu's theory in seeing this development as a sign that the autonomy of individuals was weakening due to stress.<sup>63</sup> He also substituted the more neutral-sounding term 'latent rumour group' (senzai-teki ryūgen shūdan) for Shimizu's normative 'latent public' (senzai-teki kōshū). Like both Shimizu and Nishigaya, Ikeuchi surmised that the increase in rumours was a barometer of growing skepticism toward official media at the end of the war.<sup>64</sup>

Ikeuchi's article appeared as the Allied Occupation of Japan was drawing to a close. His findings revealed a more skeptical wartime public than the one portrayed in victimisation narratives promoted by the Occupation authorities in the war's immediate aftermath. As the media historian Satō Takumi has argued, these narratives tended to portray the public as having been completely duped by official propaganda.<sup>65</sup> They were part of a broader Cold War strategy that emphasised the rupture between wartime and postwar eras and downplayed strands of experiential continuity, such as those that might connect the wartime censorship regime with its Occupation-era counterpart. Yet rather than drawing out the critical implications of his analysis of wartime rumour records toward the Occupation, Ikeuchi contributed to the narrative of discontinuity separating the wartime and postwar eras in his writing on public opinion.

Like most writing on the concept of public opinion (yoron) published during and shortly after the Allied Occupation of Japan, Ikeuchi began his article on the subject from 1948 by emphasizing its newness. He asserted that public opinion research was only three years old. This alluded to the promotion of such research by the Occupation, which had established a Public Opinion and Sociological Research Division (PO&SR) in early 1946.<sup>66</sup> Ikeuchi was however

aware that public opinion had already been subject to much discussion in the context of wartime research centered on rumour and propaganda. Japanese newspapers reported the results of American public opinion polls during the war and even conducted a few of their own.<sup>67</sup> He thus qualified his statement about the newness of public opinion research by asserting that what was actually new was research that treated public opinion as an independent branch of social inquiry. He suggested that this was because in the ostensibly undemocratic wartime and prewar eras, it was unthinkable that quantitative research on public opinion could be conducted without the mediation of a theory of propaganda or rumour.<sup>68</sup>

The substance of Ikeuchi's arguments regarding public opinion conveyed a nuanced picture of the relationship between the wartime and postwar eras. The postwar era was defined here by the encounter between Japanese social science – with roots in the traditions of continental Europe – and American social science – which had experienced precocious development in the realm of quantitative public opinion research. The difference between the European and American social scientific traditions could be found in the fact that whereas the holistically-oriented European tradition treated public opinion as an issue pertaining to a collective will or spirit, the American tradition approached it – not entirely unlike how Shimizu approached rumours – from a standpoint of methodological individualism.<sup>69</sup> For Ikeuchi, the encounter with American social science meant unlearning and relearning research methods rather than mastering an entirely new body of scholarship.

Methodological individualism facilitated American quantitative research on public opinion. Yet Ikeuchi noted that this research was criticised by sociologists who accused the exemplary Gallup polls of measuring the opinions of disconnected individuals rather than that of a cohesive and normative public, one whose opinions emerged out of a process of rational

deliberation.<sup>70</sup> From this critical ‘continental’ standpoint, surveyors of public opinion ought to play a more proactive role in its collective formation – by including a detailed cost-benefit analysis in a survey pertaining to public policy for example – rather than simply taking it as something out there to be measured. Ikeuchi dismissed this normative concept of public opinion as overly idealist and contrary to the American spirit of empirical research. This concept evoked wartime discussions of the close relationship between propaganda and the molding of public opinion (yoron shidō).<sup>71</sup> Propaganda purported to collectively enlighten imperial subjects about their ostensibly ‘true’ interests during and after the war. This was thought to contribute to the formation of public opinion (yoron), the measurement of which could then be understood as measuring the effectiveness of propaganda techniques. The US Strategic Bombing Survey, which sought to measure the effect of US carpet-bombing campaigns on German and Japanese morale in the immediate aftermath of the war, could also be understood in a broadly similar ‘stimulus-response’ fashion. Allied Occupation authorities drew heavily upon the expertise of Japanese wartime propaganda efforts in order to conduct the survey in Japan.<sup>72</sup>

Ikeuchi tried to make a fresh start by reorienting Japanese social scientists, educated in the critical European tradition, toward the ostensibly ‘naïve’ assumptions of American public opinion research.<sup>73</sup> Yet it was impossible to entirely disentangle the tight connotative relationship between propaganda and public opinion that had formed prior to the end of the war. As a result, for many critics, public opinion continued to connote – as a matter of commonsense – the expression of the superficially ‘correct’ answer in response to a propaganda campaign.

### **The postwar relevance of Shimizu’s theory of rumours**

Echoes of the wartime relationship between public opinion and propaganda could still be perceived decades after the Occupation ended. In a book looking back over three decades of opinion and attitude research in Japan from the vantage point of the 1980s, the preeminent data scientist Hayashi Chikio took it for granted that most people commonsensically assumed that the results of quantitative polling were mere *tatemaie* – or ‘social pretense’ – in implicit contrast to *honne* – or ‘true intentions.’<sup>74</sup> The paired concepts of *tatemaie* and *honne* expressed the imagined relationship between society and the individual that was implied by postwar understandings of public opinion. These specific terms became widespread after the Second World War, but historical developments that formed the basis of their postwar popularity predated its end.<sup>75</sup> In the early 1960s, the influential political theorist Matsushita Keiichi invoked *tatemaie* to criticise Japan’s ‘mass-mediated democracy’ as superficial and inauthentic.<sup>76</sup> One of the examples that the psychologist Doi Takeo used to illustrate these paired concepts brings together ostensibly postwar ideals of free speech with a manipulative campaign evocative of wartime propaganda:

As a more concrete example, consider the case of a news media campaign to stir up popular opinion. These campaigns are permitted because freedom of speech is guaranteed by the constitution. In this sense, freedom of speech is the *tatemaie* of mass communication. But when a given news organisation launches a media campaign on a given issue, it may be because the company secretly wants to manipulate popular opinion in ways that will prove profitable to itself; or, because the reporter or editor in charge wants a promotion. In this case, Japanese would refer to these hidden motives by saying that they are the *honne* of the situation.<sup>77</sup>

Doi focused on the standpoint of those in charge of a campaign intended to mold public opinion, but the concepts *tatemae* and *honne* could also be applied to the respondents of a survey that measured the success or failure of that campaign. Insofar as respondents are asked to make their private views public, the survey operates within the realm of *tatemae*. The ostensibly ‘true intention’ (*honne*) for choosing a particular answer on the survey would not be reflected in the published results, yet that did not stop consumers of the survey results from skeptically understanding it in terms of the *tatemae* and *honne*. This dyad was an expression of a transwar social imaginary, reinforced by the tension between the official narrative of the war promulgated by the Allied Occupation and broad patterns of wartime experience that clashed with it. In short, Occupation authorities tended to portray the Japanese populace as having been duped into supporting the war on the basis of wartime propaganda. However, this characterisation clashed with evidence – including statistics on rumours and initiatives intended to prevent their spread – that suggested that skepticism of official media channels was widespread before the war ended.<sup>78</sup> The gap between official postwar narratives and wartime experience affected the reception of ideals and reforms promulgated by the Americans, compartmentalising them within the sphere of *tatemae*.

The critical valence of Shimizu’s equation of rumour with ‘latent public opinion’ (*senzai-teki yoron*) can be understood through Doi’s popular argument that *tatemae* and *honne* roughly corresponded to the difference between the public and private spheres after World War Two. In the case of a public opinion survey, the true ‘private’ intentions and motivations of the atomised individuals who responded to the survey were diverse and obscured by the superficial results of the survey. Shimizu’s theory of rumours could then be understood as holding out the possibility of a non-atomised, collective expression of true public opinion – in the form of ‘latent public

opinion' associated with a 'latent public.' Unlike the 'manifest public,' members of this 'latent public' were spontaneously bound together from the bottom-up rather than the top-down, via the transmission of rumours, a secretive process that Shimizu nonetheless associated with the expression of individual autonomy and responsibility.

When *Groundless Rumours* was republished during the early years of the Allied Occupation, Shimizu's new foreword that implied that the 'latent public' of the 'dark' wartime years could now come out into the open, becoming the 'manifest public.'<sup>79</sup> This hopefulness was short lived however, and by the time the Occupation ended, the academic discourse on rumours had come full circle. Far from treating rumours in a pathological way – along the lines of Miyagi and Nakamura – sociologists whose approach to rumours had been influenced by Shimizu now openly lamented the fact that there were not *more* rumours in circulation.

For example, in an edited collection of essays on key social psychological concepts from 1953, the progressive sociologist Inaba Michio concluded a chapter on 'Rumour' by arguing that, 'in a society in which the interests of almost all of its members are opposed to those of that class whose interests are reflected in the mass media, we must proactively cultivate rumours' so that 'members of society do not blindly submit to stimuli from its upper echelons as transmitted via the mass media...'<sup>80</sup> As the post-Occupation era began, Inaba suggested that only rumours had the power to unite a populace divided up into a collection of atomised individuals susceptible to being swayed by the Cold War rhetoric transmitted by mass media organisations. Two years later, the social psychologist Minami Hiroshi argued that postwar rumours were vehicles for abnormal sexual fantasies projected upon female members of the Allied Occupation in some cases, and part of a top-down conspiracy to suppress the Japanese Communist Party in others. He nonetheless held up the principle of 'where there's smoke, there's fire' with respect to

rumours and argued that they could play a crucial function exposing injustice and expressing popular discontent.<sup>81</sup>

The mid-fifties to early-sixties represented the apex of progressive efforts to sway public opinion in connection with campaigns against American military bases on Japanese soil and a revised Mutual Security Treaty with the United States. Shimizu Ikutarō played a leading role in these campaigns, but he began to veer to the right of the political spectrum after large-scale protests in 1960 failed to stop the renewal of Japan's Mutual Security Treaty (AMPO) with the United States.<sup>82</sup>

It is tempting to relate Shimizu's disillusionment with the progressive left after 1960 to the hopes that he placed on the latent public in his work on rumours. That year was marked by competing efforts to represent the 'voiceless voices' (koe naki koe) of Japan by both supporters and opponents of the revised security treaty. The Prime Minister and architect of revised security treaty Kishi Nobusuke claimed to speak on behalf of the silent majority when he dismissively compared the number of protestors outside the Japanese Diet building to the number of spectators at the Tokyo Dome baseball stadium. When Kishi stepped down as Prime Minister after the contentious passage of the revised security treaty, some high-profile opponents of the treaty declared victory and argued that the protest movement represented the maturation of Japan's postwar democracy. Shimizu dismissed such arguments as expressions of 'social pretense' (tatemae), akin to a political party declaring victory after losing an election because it received more votes than last time.<sup>83</sup> In Shimizu's eyes, postwar progressives repeatedly failed to channel popular energy into effective organisations.

With Shimizu's early work on rumours in mind, we can better understand his frustration with the left. The spread of rumours showed how latent publics could spontaneously organise



themselves into diffuse networks during times of crisis. This led Shimizu to place very high demands on the organisational prowess of the progressive camp, bolstering the sense of disillusionment he felt after the AMPO Protests. Shimizu believed that he had glimpsed the potential for a profound social and political transformation from the wartime crisis of the 1930s to the anti-base movement of the 1950s, and he became frustrated with the inability of his comrades to transform that potential into actuality amid the political upheaval of 1960.

## **Conclusion**

Shimizu's *Groundless Rumours* (Ryūgen higo) was reissued by the publisher Chikuma Shobō in 2011, in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disaster that struck the Tōhoku region of northeastern Japan on March 11<sup>th</sup> of that year. The timing of this new edition, as well as the fact that it also included essays based on Shimizu's experience of the 1923 Great Kantō Earthquake, might give the impression that Shimizu had rumours in the aftermath of a natural disaster foremost in mind when he wrote *Groundless Rumours*. As we have seen, this was not the case. State-imposed controls on the media after the 2/26 Incident of 1936 formed the immediate reference point for Shimizu's work. Yet natural disasters can lead to the disruption of regular media channels. Within Shimizu's theoretical framework, they can create the conditions for the proliferation of rumours and the emergence of a latent public loosely tied together by shared secrets.

Shimizu's treatise on rumour can be read as an argument against censorship, and this might seem newly relevant in light of new efforts to regulate the spread of rumours over the internet in the aftermath of 3/11.<sup>84</sup> At the same time, the way that way in which he made this argument also resonated with at least some officials during the Second World War, a period

associated with strict censorship and the suppression of political dissent. For example, Shimizu's suggestion that efforts to suppress rumours via censorship and repressive laws were doomed to backfire was echoed in Nishigaya's Tōru's report on rumours following the full-scale invasion of China in 1937. Shimizu's work clearly touched on tensions among state officials who alternated between seeing imperial subjects on the home front as the passive object and proactive subject of wartime propaganda.

After the war ended, Shimizu's arguments regarding the relationship between rumour and public opinion seemed forgotten amid the onrush of new American scholarship pertaining to the quantitative study of public opinion. Shimizu's work, and wartime rumour research more generally, would have complicated efforts to see the Allied Occupation as an entirely new beginning and portray the populace of Japan as duped into supporting the recently ended war. The broader legacy of discussions of rumours during the war can be glimpsed in critical understandings of public opinion polling after its conclusion. Shimizu's work thus remains relevant to historicizing the present-day relationship among rumours, public opinion, and crises natural and man-made.

## **Bibliography**

Allport, Gordon and Leo Postman. *The Psychology of Rumour*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1947.

Coast, David and Jo Fox. 'Rumour and Politics.' *History Compass*. Vol. 13, no. 5 (2015): 222-234.

Cotkin, George. *Morality's Muddy Waters: Ethical Quandaries in Modern America*.

Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

Takeo Doi. *The Anatomy of Self*. Tokyo: Kōdansha International, 1986.

Dowd, Gregory Evans. *Groundless: Rumors, Legends, and Hoaxes on the Early American Frontier*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015.

Dower, John. *Japan in War and Peace*. London: HarperCollins, 1995.

Gordon, Andrew. "Consumption, Leisure and the Middle Class in Transwar Japan." *Social Science Japan Journal* 10, Issue 1 (April 2007): 1–21.

Guha, Ranajit. *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999.

Hiraide Hiizu 平出禾. "Kūshū to ryūgen higo" 空襲と流言蜚語. *Chisei* 知性 5, no. 6 (Jun. 1942): 52-56.

Honji Yūkichi 品治佑吉. "Shimizu Ikutarō Ryūgen higo saidoku" 清水幾太郎『流言蜚語』再読.

*Shakaigaku kenkyū* 社会学研究 no. 93 (Jan. 2011): 125-151.

Honma Hiromitsu 本間弘光. “Shoki no yoron chōsa” 初期の世論調査. *Yoron yorōn*, no. 76 (Nov. 1995): 4-20.

Igo, Sarah. *The Averaged American: Surveys, Citizens, and the Making of a Mass Public*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Ikeuchi Hajime 池内一. “Taiheiyō sensō-chū no senji ryūgen” 太平洋戦争中の戦時流言. *Shakaigaku hyōron* 社会学評論 2, no. 2 (Aug. 1951): 30-42.

Ikeuchi Hajime 池内一. “Yoron to ningen” 輿論と人間. *Shisō* 思想 287, no. 5 (1948): 29-38.

Inaba Michio 稲葉三千男. “Ryūgen” 流言. In *Shinrigaku kōza* 社会学講座, edited by Nihon ōyō shinrigakkai, vol. 10, 18-30. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1953.

Iwamoto Yutaka 岩本裕. *Yoron chōsa to wa nani darō ka* 世論調査とは何だろうか. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2015.

Kasza, Gregory. *The State and Mass Media in Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

Kawashima Takane 川島高峰. *Jūgo: ryūgen, tōsho no “taiheiyō sensō”* 銃後 流言・投書の「太平洋戦争」. Tokyo: Yomiuri shinbunsha, 1997.

Kersten, Rikki. “The Social Imperative of Pacifism in Postwar Japan: Shimizu Ikutarō and the Uchinada Movement.” *Critical Asian Studies* 38, no. 3 (2006): 303-328.

Kushner, Barak. *The Thought War*. Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 2006.

Lefebvre, Georges. *The Great Fear of 1789: Rural Panic in Revolutionary France*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982.

Makita Minoru 牧田稔. “Yoron chōsa no keishiki” 世論調査の形式. *Shisō* 思想 287, no. 5 (1948): 39-48.

Matsuda Misa 松田美佐. *Uwasa to wa nani ka* うわさとは何か. Tokyo: Chūō Kōron, 2014.

Matsushita Keiichi 松下圭一. *Gendai Nihon no seijiteki kōsei* 現代日本の政治的構成. Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1962.

Minami Hiroshi 南博 ed. *Kindai shomin seikatsu-shi 4: ryūgen* 近代庶民生活誌 4: 流言.

Tokyo: San-ichi shobō, 1985.

Minami Hiroshi 南博. “Midare-tobu dema” 乱れ飛ぶデマ. *Bungei shunjū* 文藝春秋 33, no. 8

(Apr. 1955): 168-171.

Miyagi Otoya 宮城音弥. *Kiki ni okeru ningen* 危機における人間. Tokyo: Hakujitsu shoin, 1947.

Morris-Suzuki, Tessa. “Ethnic Engineering: Scientific Racism and Public Opinion Surveys in Midcentury Japan.” *Positions: east asia cultures critique* 8, no. 2 (Fall 2000), 499-529.

Naikaku jōhōbu 内閣情報部. *Ryūgen dema no shōtai* 流言・デマの正体. Tokyo: Naikaku jōhōbu, 1937.

Nakamura Kokyō 中村古峯. *Ryūgen no kaibō* 流言の解剖. Tokyo: Ai no jigyō-sha, 1942.

Nishigaya Tōru 西ヶ谷徹. *Shina jihen ni kan-suru zōgen higo ni tsuite* 支那事変に関する造言飛語について. Tokyo: Tōyō bunka-sha, 1978.

Okada Naoyuki 岡田直之. *Yoron no seiji shakaigaku* 世論の政治社会学. Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 2001.

Pollock, Friedrich and Theodor W. Adorno. *Group Experiment and Other Writings: The Frankfurt School on Public Opinion in Postwar Germany*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011.

Satō Kenji 佐藤健二. *Ryūgen higo: Uwasa-banashi o yomitoku sahō* 流言蜚語—うわさ話を読みとく作法. Tokyo: Yūshindō, 1995.

Satō Takumi 佐藤卓己. *Yoron to seron* 輿論と世論. Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2008.

Satō Takumi 佐藤卓己. *Ryūgen no media-shi* 流言のメディア史. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2019.

Schäfer, Fabian. *Public Opinion, Propaganda, Ideology*. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

Shibutani, Tamotsu. *Improvised News: A Sociological Study of Rumour*. New York, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1966.

Shimizu Ikutarō 清水幾太郎. *Waga jinsei no danpen* 我が人生の断片. Vol. 2. Tokyo: Bungei shunju, 1985.

Shimizu Ikutarō 清水幾太郎. *Ryūgen higo* 流言蜚語. Tokyo: Chikuma shobo, 2011.

Solnit, Rebecca. *A Paradise Built in Hell*. New York: Penguin, 2010/

Takeuchi Yō 竹内洋. *Shimizu Ikutarō no haken to bōkyaku* 清水幾太郎の覇権と忘却. Tokyo: Chūō Kōron, 2018.

Ward Max. *Thought Crime: Ideology and State Power in Interwar Japan*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2019.

White, Luise. *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

Yamada Shōji 山田昭次. *Kantō daishinsai-ji no Chosenjin gyakusatsu to sono ato: Gyakusatsu no kokka sekinin to minshū sekinin* 関東大震災時の朝鮮人虐殺—その国家責任と民衆責任. Tokyo: Sōshisha, 2011.

Young, Louise. *Japan's Total Empire*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.



---

<sup>1</sup> Dower, *Japan in War and Peace*, 101-154. Beyond Japan, scholarship relevant to the historiographic treatment of rumour includes Lefebvre, *The Great Fear*; White, *Speaking with Vampires*; Dowd, *Groundless*; and Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, 220-277. Broadly speaking, much historical scholarship on rumour is associated with the effort to construct new “histories from below” through the cross-disciplinary application of social scientific methods and theories. While attending to the specificity of different fields and institutional locations, the approach I adopt seeks to historicise – rather than apply – theories of rumour and public opinion with reference to wartime projects related to rumour surveillance and prevention. It thus treats theories of and sources for rumour on the same broad historical plane.

<sup>2</sup> On the transwar approach to mid-twentieth century Japanese history, see Gordon, “Consumption, Leisure and the Middle Class in Transwar Japan”

<sup>3</sup> Igo, *The Averaged American*, 20-21.

<sup>4</sup> On the rapid growth and development of the media during the early years of the war with China, see Young, *Japan’s Total Empire*, 55-114.

<sup>5</sup> On opinion polling during the war, see Satō Takumi, *Yoron to seron*, 65-73. See also Satō Takumi, *Ryūgen no media-shi*, 137.

<sup>6</sup> On the classic status of these three texts, see Matsuda, *Uwasa to wa nani ka*, 39-40.

<sup>7</sup> *Groundless Rumours* was based in part on articles Shimizu wrote the previous year in the magazines *Chūō kōron*, *Bungei shunjū*, and *Chūgai shōgyō shinpō*. Satō Kenji, *Ryūgen higo*, ii.

<sup>8</sup> Schäfer, *Public Opinion, Propaganda, Ideology*, 30.

<sup>9</sup> Satō Takumi, *Ryūgen no media-shi*, 116-118.

<sup>10</sup> Honji, ‘Shimizu Ikutarō *Ryūgen higo* saidoku,’ 126.

- 
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid., 131.
- <sup>12</sup> Shimizu, *Waga jinsei no danpen*, 41.
- <sup>13</sup> Shimizu, *Ryūgen higo*, 125.
- <sup>14</sup> Shimizu, *Ryūgen higo*, 12. On control of the media during the 2/26 Incident, see Gregory Kasza, *The State and Mass Media in Japan*, 144.
- <sup>15</sup> Satō Takumi, *Ryūgen no media-shi*, 104-105.
- <sup>16</sup> After the war Shimizu referred to his treatise as a ‘defense of rumours’ (ryūgen higo no bengo). Shimizu, *Ryūgen higo*, 13.
- <sup>17</sup> A concern with the struggle between individualistic theories of natural right and totalitarian theories of social organism is visible in Shimizu’s earliest work.. Shimizu, *Waga jinsei no danpen*, 34-36. Takeuchi, *Shimizu Ikutarō no haken to bōkyaku*, 125-126.
- <sup>18</sup> Shimizu, *Ryūgen higo*, 28-31.
- <sup>19</sup> Matsuda, *Uwasa to wa nani ka*, 55.
- <sup>20</sup> Shimizu, *Ryūgen higo*, 35-37.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., 33-34.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., 38-39, 52.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., 43-44.
- <sup>24</sup> On the difference between democratic and undemocratic regimes as regards public opinion, see Ibid., 148.
- <sup>25</sup> Shimizu, *Ryūgen higo*, 103-106. See also Schäfer, *Public Opinion, Propaganda, Ideology*, 31.
- <sup>26</sup> Shimizu, *Ryūgen higo*, 140-148.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid., 144.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., 172-173.

---

<sup>29</sup> Coast and Fox, ‘Rumour and Politics,’ 225.

<sup>30</sup> See Yamada, *Kantō daishinsai-ji no Chōsenjin gyakusatsu to sono ato*.

<sup>31</sup> Shibutani, *Improvised News*.

<sup>32</sup> Allport and Postman, *The Psychology of Rumour*, 1. Coast and Fox, ‘Rumour and politics,’ 224.

<sup>33</sup> Coast and Fox, ‘Rumour and politics,’ 225.

<sup>34</sup> See for example Makita, “Yoron chōsa no keishiki,” 295.

<sup>35</sup> Shimizu, *Ryūgen higo*, 12-14.

<sup>36</sup> Nishigaya, *Shina jihen ni kan-suru zōgen higo ni tsuite*, ii.

<sup>37</sup> Satō Takumi, *Ryūgen no media-shi*, 141-142. The articles in question were Article 99 of the army penal code (rikugun keihō) and Article 100 of the navy penal code (kaigun keihō).

<sup>38</sup> Nishigaya, *Shina jihen ni kan-suru zōgen higo ni tsuite*, 1-2

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 135-136.

<sup>40</sup> Nishigaya quoted in Matsuda, *Uwasa to wa nani ka*, 58.

<sup>41</sup> Nishigaya suggested that the Russo-Japanese war was embedded in a clear-cut narrative of national redress-seeking for the humiliation Japan suffered in the ‘triple intervention’ after the First Sino-Japanese War. Nishigaya, *Shina jihen ni kan-suru zōgen higo ni tsuite*, 2-3.

<sup>42</sup> On bottom-up approaches to propaganda, see Kushner, *The Thought War*.

<sup>43</sup> Naikaku jōhōbu, *Dema ryūgen no shōtai*, 2-17.

<sup>44</sup> Kawashima, *Jūgo*, 44.

<sup>45</sup> Nishigaya, *Shina jihen ni kan-suru zōgen higo ni tsuite*, 137. Here Nishigaya concludes his report by mentioning the alternative legal arrangements used to elicit the conversion of Leftists

---

detained under the Peace Preservation Law. On the ideological role played by the rehabilitation of converted Leftists during the war, see Ward, *Thought Crime*.

<sup>46</sup> Nakamura, *Ryūgen no kaibō*, i.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 3, 178.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 67-85.

<sup>50</sup> Shimizu, *Ryūgen higo*, 161-171.

<sup>51</sup> The concept of disaster utopia comes from Solnit, *A Paradise Built in Hell*. On the application of this concept to the discourse on rumours, see Satō Takumi, *Ryūgen no media-shi*, 60-66.

<sup>52</sup> See for example the compilation of sources in Minami ed., *Kindai shomin seikatsu-shi 4: ryūgen*.

<sup>53</sup> The idea that officials began ‘preparing for defeat’ during the final years of the war comes from Kushner, *The Thought War*, 156-183.

<sup>54</sup> Satō Takumi, *Ryūgen no media-shi*, 154.

<sup>55</sup> Naikaku jōhōbu, *Dema ryūgen no shōtai*, 2, 12.

<sup>56</sup> Hiraide, “Kūshū to ryūgen higo,” 52-56. On the Doolittle Raid, see Cotkin, 40-43.

<sup>57</sup> Ikeuchi, “Taiheiyō sensō-chū no senji ryūgen.”

<sup>58</sup> Satō Kenji provides an overview of the history of the Naval Technological Research Laboratory in Satō Kenji, *Ryūgen higo*, 60-74.

<sup>59</sup> Miyagi, *Kiki ni okeru ningen*, 72-73.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 76-77.

<sup>61</sup> Ikeuchi, ‘Taiheiyō sensō-chū no senji ryūgen’ 36.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

---

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>65</sup> Satō Takumi, *Ryūgen no media-shi*, 192-197.

<sup>66</sup> Iwamoto, *Yoron chōsa to wa nani darō ka*, 23-25.

<sup>67</sup> Honma, “Shoki no yoron chōsa”

<sup>68</sup> Ikeuchi, “Yoron to ningen,” 285.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 286-289.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 287. Ikeuchi’s self-consciously skeptical embrace of American social scientific research is reminiscent of the Frankfurt School’s contemporaneous critical intervention into the realm of quantitative public opinion research in postwar West Germany. See Pollock and Adorno, *Group Experiment and Other Writings*.

<sup>71</sup> On these transwar discussions and wartime precedents for postwar public opinion research, see, Satō Takumi, *Yoron to seron*, 40-82. For more on the relationship between wartime propaganda research and postwar public opinion surveys, see Morris-Suzuki, “Ethnic Engineering: Scientific Racism and Public Opinion Surveys in Midcentury Japan.”

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 74-75.

<sup>73</sup> Ikeuchi, ‘Yoron to ningen,’ 289.

<sup>74</sup> Hayashi, *Nihonjin kenkyū sanjū-nen*, 34.

<sup>75</sup> Doi, *The Anatomy of Self*, 41.

<sup>76</sup> Matsushita, *Gendai Nihon no Seijiteki-na kōsei*, 90, quoted in Okada, *Yoron no seiji shakaigaku*, 129.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>78</sup> Satō Takumi, *Ryūgen no media-shi*, 137.

<sup>79</sup> Shimizu, *Ryūgen higo*, 12-14.

---

<sup>80</sup> Inaba, 'Ryūgen,' 29.

<sup>81</sup> Minami, 'Midare-tobu dema,' 168-171.

<sup>82</sup> Kersten, "The Social Imperative of Pacifism in Postwar Japan," 304-305.

<sup>83</sup> Takeuchi, *Shimizu Ikutarō no haken to bōkyaku*, 250-284.

<sup>84</sup> See the paper on internet rumours released by the Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications at [http://www.soumu.go.jp/menu\\_news/s-news/01kiban08\\_01000023.html](http://www.soumu.go.jp/menu_news/s-news/01kiban08_01000023.html).