Introduction

This essay has three part, the premodern Japan's shudō (衆道) culture, the Meiji anti-queer culture and Mishima's last debate with death. Premodern Japan has three parts, *Hagakure*, Mishima's favorite book, *The Great Mirror of Male Love(*男色大鏡*)*, Love of Men in Tang Song Dynasty. I briefly introduced The book of Nature, Christianity and Magnus Hirschfeld in the Meiji period. I connect Mishima's death with his right wing idea and his pursuit of being a man in Confession of a Mask. Any of the subtitles above can be written in a 2000 words of essay, or into a book. Because I didn't read many books of Mishima and other authors, it's hard to write every chapter long with strong proof. This essay is more like an introduction/guidance to every topic. Last, I might cite 300 words in this 2200 words essay.

Premodern

Hagakure, Mishima's favorite book

Hagakure (1716), the Bible of male-love and the samurai ethic including the non fear of death, the pursuing personal spiritual and physical strength, and maybe pursuing the nation's independ and prosperity, was one of Mishima's favorite books.

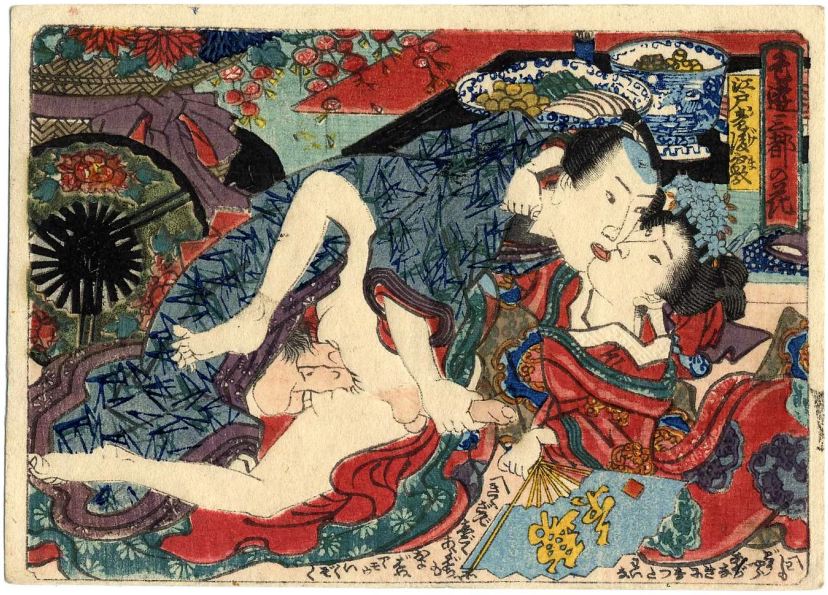
> One should understand that a woman is faithful to only one husband. Our feelings go to one person for one lifetime. If this is not so, it is the same as sodomy or prostitution. This is a shame for a warrior. Ihara Saikaku has written a famous line that goes, "An adolescent without an older lover is the same as a woman with no husband." But this sort of person is ridiculous. A young man should test an older man for at least five years, and if he is assured of that person's intentions, then he too should request the relationship. A fickle person will not enter deeply into a relationship and later will abandon his lover.(p45, Hagakure: Book of the Samurai)

The characteristics of the samurai tradition were its emphasis on loyalty between lover and beloved and the mutual aid each, as a samurai, could provide the other.(mirror p7) The interesting thing is the narrator in *Confessions of a Mask* only had sexual desire, koi 恋 to males, but shudō means that a Samurai needs to prepare to sacrifice their life for each other and trust the lover his more than wife and parents. Due to Confucianism, the *wakashudō*

reflects the strict hierarchy in Japan based on age, so the elders usually play the active role, which might explain why the narrator never actively expresses his desire (paper's page 131). *"When there is a choice of either dying or not dying, it is better to die."(page 39)*. The narrator was afraid to die as a Samurai, he had many "good" reasons to die, like he was too weak to join the army, didn't know how to love Sonoko or Omi. The narrator was a complete loser by samurai standards. In real life, Mishima died exactly as a true Samurai, he didn't choose to live in a cowardly nation with no independence after a failed sedition.

The Great Mirror of Male Love, an premodern popular homo noval

The Great Mirror of Male Love, 男色大鏡 published in 1687 by Ihara Saikaku, is a book of describing male-male samurai love. The first 4 parts is the romance of older Samurai and younger monks or the Samurai's younger squire, the last 4 parts is the comrade love of kabuki actors and citizens. This relationship is shudō (衆道) or wakashudō (若衆道). A feature of premodern Japanese culture was that male homosexual relations were required to be between a man and a boy, called a Wakashu, young boys between age 12 to 20. (P1, Schalow) There were men who had sex with kabuki, and had sex with their wife at home, who were like nowadays bisexual. Also, there were male who only had sex with kabuki. Ihara Saikaku wrote many books on *shudō*, a side note that *shudō* was very common and not a taboo and sensitive topic.



1845 Surimono Shunga Japanese woodblock print Nanshoku Gay

1845 Surimono Shunga Japanese woodblock print Nanshoku Gay | shungaisart

The word Wakashu was replaced by Shōnen in the Minji period, and Shōnen in Japanese culture represents energetic young boys from 15 to 20 high school students, who are tall and good at sport. “I” was the younger teenager, and Omi was the older one. In “my” further sexual fantasies for men, nearly every men were older than him like a teacher, a new student and the bus driver. The only exception is “I” was interested in a young blond German boy before Mishima kissed Sonoko, but that time “I” was about 23 years old, which plays an older adult role in male-male relations. In conclusion, these exactly matched the love of samurai.

In my opinion, the wives in premodern Japan were only a tool for sexual desire and preganet, men-men’s bond was more like the modern western love 愛. In both Chinese and Japanese culture, women are regarded as lacking wisdom, so men can only share their thoughts with men. *A woman’s heart can be likened to the wisteria vine: though bearing lovely blossoms, it is twisted and bent. A youth may have a thorn or two, but he is like the first plum blossom of the new year exuding an indescribable fragrance.(page 9)*. In premodern Japan, women were hated from spirit to body. The attraction of sweat flesh was an important portion in *Confessions of a Mask*, while these detailed descriptions on male body and having sex at least existed from 1687.

Love of Men in Tang Song Dynasty

Mishima mentioned in Genroku woodblock prints, male and females were similar. Not only in Japan, In Tang dynasty paintings, the beauty of women was white and “fat”, which implied they had good nutriations, so men and women in paintings were similar too. China has a long history in men’s love. Chinese officials in Song loved to have sex with male male actors in traditional operas, same as the 歌舞伎 in Japanese. The government officials were proud and willing to had sex with famous and beatiful male actress in Song’s capital Hangzhou. The anti-queer may a pretty new idea in China after Qing dynasty too. We know that the Perry Expedition event began the modernization of Japan. Japan would envy and learn all things about the strong. Thus, as a homosexual tradition in both Japan and China, Japansese might saw them is unonrmal and backword, the thing need to be abandoned.

Wakashu 若衆 was a historical japanese used particularly during the Edo period term. It was replaced by Shōnen in Meiji. The pronunciation and writing is exactly as the Chinese 少年 which

was first appeared long ago to Three Kingdom. We know the Meiji period saw the Qing Dynasty as a failed state with a strong nationalism and tried to not use Chinese words (there was a Japanese character reform in Meiji), but they still chose the Chinese word Shonen to replace Wakashu. This might imply the anti-homo trend in the Meiji period, which was even more than the hatred of China.

Modern, Meiji period

By the first years of the twentieth century, however, as exclusive and compulsory heterosexuality became associated with an enlightened modernity, love between men was increasingly branded as either "feudal" or immature. Shudō became abnormal or sexual inversion (in Hirschfeld theory) due to imported western science and ethics.

Book of Nature(造化機論) was a book introduced from western might as a symbol of science and civilization in Meiji. This book and the western science behind it might influenced the Japanese that the hetersexual sexual intercourse was the "correct" thing from the clear anatomy of the human body. Book of Nature likely proven male - female coitus represents the yin and yang, which matched the important(or key) idea Sangang Wuchang of Confucianism, "*The lord is yang 陽, the retainer is yin 陰; the father is yang, the son is yin; the husband is yang, the wife is yin."(marran book).* In the support of western medical science and sexology and Confucianism, did Japanese in Meiji still think homosexuality normal? The western knowledge can be a weapon to persecute the hated group, like the Book of Nature was a strong proof that Oden was a demon. Thus, they may do the same thing to the homosexuals.

Christianity, as introduced from the West, was anti-queer. However, during the Meiji period, the most rapid growth was Shinto as a national religion, so Christianity may not be the main reason why Japanese anti-queer. Christianity may be studied by the Japanese widely so that Mishima could learn Saint Sebastian, and saw a lot of Italian/Greek male pictures during his childhood. Mishima also knew the Platonic love, which is pretty similar to Samurai's Wakashu, like greek believe love of men is the most pure and spiritual.

Magnus Hirschfeld, a german sexologist who created the concept of sexual inversion. Mishima confused on his sexual inversion for several times. This implied he knew some ideas of modern homosexual theroeis. Hirschfeld found that homosexuals were more likely to suidide, that over ¼ queers tried to suidide at sometimes in their lives. Hirschfeld once said "*Homosexuality was*

part of the plan of nature and creation just like normal love.” in a testimony. If Mishima knew homo was a part of nature and a conduct of Samurai, why didn't he bravely have a shudō with a man? Hirschfeld was the sexologist who understood homosexuality best in Germany at the time, but was not widely accepted by the Prussian/Weimar people. In 30s, Hirschfeld’s office was destroyed by Nazi and was expelled to France and died there. Nazi was extremely anti-queer, and Japan as its allay, the Honorary Aryan, must learned the sexology from germany. The sad story is, Mishima borned at 1925, and became a Wakashu around 1940, that time might not good for a queer teenager.

The Last Debate, with Mishima’s Death.

At the age of Mishima’s 19, the Shōwa imperial gave his Mishima a silver watch due to Mishima’s excellent performance in high school. Same year, Mishima went to the plane factory to produce Zero, the suiside squadrons. Every soldier wanted to die on the battlefield with the honor of Shōwa. It seems like the Confession of a Mask didn’t have many connections with his right wing movement. Mishima created 楯の会 in 1969, a personal military group to protect Shōwa imperial and the old Japan Imperial’s honor. Thinking back to the round table one, many officials believed the 20s Japan, the Taishō government was the best. One draft of the new Constitution of Japan was just a little revisement on the Taishō constitution. Many class A war criminals chose to die voluntarily to protect Shōwa and the old system. In the documentary *Mishima: The Last Debate 2020,* part III, Mishima said the Taishō imperial and its congress was a good way to express the people’s voice and 日米安全保障条約 was not acceptable. In 1970, the treaty was renewed. Same year, in front of the thousand members of the Japan Self-Defense Force, Mishima made the famous speech.
YUKIO MISHIMA LAST SPEECH (worldfuturefund.org)
If you are a man, how could a man’s pride allow this? Even after enduring and enduring, rising up with firm resolution once the last line of what you are supposed to protect has been crossed is what it means to be a man, what it means to be a warrior. We desperately strained our ears. But from nowhere in the SDF did we hear a man’s voice rise in response to the humiliating order to “protect that which negates you.”

Yet although it is clear that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which concerns the long-term security of the nation, is the rebirth of the 5:5:3 Unequal Treaty, not one general from the SDF has cut his stomach in protest.

I have to cite this part. Look, Mishima always wanted to be a real man, a Samurai. A man can protect his home country from the Unequal *Treaty* and the foreign occupation. This is the Shōwa spirit! At the age of 14, was I not good enough for omi because I'm too skinny? When Mishima was a little boy at age of 19, he walked timidly and fearfully toward the recruiting office, dragging his white, thin body. “You cannot even lift 2 bags of rice like a countryman!” The recruiting officer said with contempt. I viewed this unexpected pneumonia as a disgrace, but I was surprisingly glad I didn't die as a soldier. Real men are not afraid to die. Thus, Mishima committed ritual suicide on November 25, 1970.

Citation list:

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Two-Timing Modernity Two-Timing Modernity Homosocial Narrative in Modern Japanese Fiction The introduction part.

Mishima, Confessions of a Mask

Wikipedia of Magnus Hirschfeld, Mishima, Japanese wiki 楯の会.