

Selected Writings on the Invention of the Modern Japanese Man

Part A: Documents

Directions: Read the following three excerpts by Japanese writers Fukuzawa Yukichi and Yosano Akiko and answer the questions in Part B. Note that in Japanese, name order is family name first, given name second, and that order has been used for these writers.

1. *The Essence of Civilization* by Fukuzawa Yukichi

The community of the family does not exhaust the possibilities of human intercourse. The more social intercourse there is, the more citizens of a nation meet one another; the more human relationships broaden and their patterns evolve, so much the more will human nature become civilized and human intelligence develop. Hence the term “civilization” in English. It derives from the Latin *civitas*, which means “nation.” “Civilization” thus describes the process by which human relations gradually change for the better and take on a definite shape. It is a concept of a unified nation in contrast to a state of primitive isolation and lawlessness.

Source: *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*, David A. Dilworth and G. Cameron Hurst, trans. (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1973).

2. “*The Value of Work*” by Yosano Akiko

For example, today’s men all want money and strive to make a material profit. For that reason many business enterprises arise, and they enrich numerous capitalists, and many laborers are working, but there are very few people thinking about the fundamental question of why money is necessary. This is just blind following. . . . Thus today’s riches and economy are not being used for the sake of the most important human needs. . . . Also, in the great Russo-Japanese War a great number of human souls and goods were lost by both the enemy and ourselves, but in the face of this truth, Japan’s men only saw the victory, and their concern with winning, with what outcome came from these sacrifices, with the beauty of war, was in truth far from a civilized and not far from barbaric—and there were very few people who even thought of such criticisms or carefully reflected on this.

Source: Quotations from essays written between 1909 and 1930 by Yosano Akiko. Unpublished translation by Laurel Rasplica Rodd. Used by permission of Laurel Rasplica Rodd.

**3. “My Brother, You Must Not Die”
by Yosano Akiko**

My young brother, I weep for you.
My brother, you must not die.
You, the last born,
Apple of our parents' eyes.
Did they teach you to hold a sword,
Teach you to kill?
Did they nurture you for twenty-four years
And send you to kill and die?
...
My brother you must not die.
Let the Emperor himself go
Off to war.
“Die like beasts,
Leaving pools of human blood.
In death is your glory.”
If that majestic heart is truly wise,
He cannot have such thoughts.

Source: Laurel Rasplica Rodd, trans., “Meiji Women's Poetry,” in *The Modern Murasaki*,
Rebecca Copeland and Melek Ortobasi, eds. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 42-
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