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Visual Culture, Representation, and Uranihon

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Though now somewhat forgotten, there is a word called Uranihon.[1] It originated in the late nineteenth century as a geographic term for the coastal region of Honshu facing the Sea of Japan. Conversely, Omotenihon was the term used to indicate the area of Honshu along the Pacific coast. However, before long, Uranihon also began to insinuate destitution and lack of modernization. By the 1960s, the term was deemed derogatory and unsuitable for broadcast, and has since fallen into disuse.

Previous research regarding Uranihon has focused on the development of its negative connotations, through analyses of domestic population shifts, industrial advancement, expansion of transportation networks, and the distribution of capital from the perspectives of geography, history, and economics. Meanwhile, very little research has been done from the standpoint of visual culture. In this essay, I will conduct a comparative analysis of representations of Uranihon, beginning with the photobook *Uranihon* (1957) by the photojournalist Hiroshi Hamaya (1915–1999), followed by the works of artists based primarily in Tottori Prefecture, including photographers Teikō Shiotani (1899–1988) and Shōji Ueda (1913–2000), as well as painters Mamoru Sumi (1943–) and Mana Satō (1961–). Finally, I will also refer to the work of interdisciplinary artist Cindy Mochizuki (1976–) who is based in Vancouver, Canada, but has spent time creating and exhibiting work in Tottori which is relevant to the history of Uranihon.

Research in the field of visual culture in Japan has tended to focus on artistic activity in and around Tokyo. As a result, the academic understanding of the state of visual culture in non-urban areas remains sparse and insufficient. Research on artists based outside of major cities has typically been limited to studies of authorship, and their works are rarely considered outside the context of their respective genres. This essay aims to break away from this tendency. I will argue that the visual culture engaged in this essay can shed light on cultural

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[1] Uranihon 裏日本 is sometimes translated into English as “the backside of Japan”. The meaning of ura is “backside” or “rear”, while the prefix of the antonym Omotenihon 表日本 denotes “front”. Nihon is the Japanese word for Japan.

and transnational dimensions of Uranihon which could not be grasped through hitherto studies based on numerical data and statistics.

1. Theorizing Uranihon

The term Uranihon appears in vast amounts of literature across many genres and disciplines. For example, in the first half of the twentieth century, there were studies conducted on the climatic conditions of Uranihon, travelogues published recounting visits to coastal areas along the Sea of Japan, as well as publications urging for the development of the region.[2] In all these cases, the word Uranihon is used first and foremost as a geographic term to indicate the area of Honshu along the coast of the Sea of Japan. However, gradually, the word also began to connote a lack of modern development in the region in a negative manner. In the second half of the twentieth century a number of scholars began researching how and why such a destitute situation had developed in the first place. An early influential example is the essay "Iwayuru 'Uranihon' no Keisei ni tsuite" (1964) by the geographer Tokuji Chiba.[3] Chiba refers to the Hokuriku region of Japan as Uranihon and conversely the Tokai region as Omotenihon. For him, the disparity between these two opposing regions was the result of the decision made by the local Hokuriku leadership to prioritize traditional rice farming and resist the introduction of new technologies and industries.[4] To corroborate this thesis, he points out that the Tokai region willingly adopted machine-driven paper production technology in 1903 which allowed the development of a modern paper industry around the base of Mount Fuji.[5]

A counterargument to Chiba's theory was put forth by the historian Tsunehisa Abe in the early 1970s, and was subsequently published as a book entitled *"Uranihon" wa Ikani*

[2] For an early example of a study on climate see: Ishida, Masao 石田雅生, "Tōki Uranihon ni okeru Kōsui Tokutai ni tsuite" 冬季裏日本ニ於ケル降水特態ニ就テ, *Kishō Shūshi* 氣象集誌, No. 1, Vol. 27 (6), 1908, pp. 207–216. Travelogues from this period include: Fujishima, Aisen 藤嶋愛泉, *Ryokō Shōhin Hakuun Yūyū – Uranihon no Sansui* 旅行小品白雲悠々―裏日本の山水, Yamaguchiya Shoten 山口屋書店, 1913, and Kume, Kunitake 久米邦武, *Uranihon* 裏日本, Kōmindōmei Shuppanbu 公民同盟出版部, 1915. The latter is a book that combines a travelogue of Kume's visit to the San'in region as part of Shigenobu Ōkuma's electioneering campaign, along with ancient regional history, and commentary on the state of development of the local industries.

[3] Chiba, Tokuji 千葉徳爾, "Iwayuru 'Uranihon' no Keisei ni tsuite – Rekishi Chirigaku Shiron" いわゆる「裏日本」の形成について―歴史地理的試論, *Rekishi Chirigaku Kiyō* 歴史地理学紀要, No. 6, Nihon Rekishi Chirigaku Kenkyukai 日本歴史地理学研究会, 1964, pp. 165–180.

[4] Ibid., p. 174.

[5] Ibid., p. 169.

Tsukuraretaka in 1997.[6] In order to determine how regional disparities had arisen in Japan, Abe analyzes domestic population shifts from the late nineteenth century onwards, as well as government policies for industry advancement, regional distribution of capital, and the establishment of educational institutions throughout the country. His analysis infers that each of the factors worked in favor of the regions along the Pacific coast, and in turn, became the cause for the poor quality of life in Uranihon.

Most of Abe's book focuses on Niigata Prefecture as Uranihon. However, in the sixth chapter he examines the development of Uranihon in the San'in region. According to Abe, the problem of Uranihon was acknowledged for the first time in the context of San'in during an Imperial Diet meeting held on January 22nd 1902, after an assembly member elected from Shimane Prefecture raised issues regarding a local agricultural school and the lack of national security in the region.[7] For Abe, a decisive factor that led to the problem of Uranihon in the San'in region was the conspicuous delay in establishing a railway system in that linked San'in to Tokyo. He concludes that this was the result of apathy towards promoting regional development on the part of the Meiji government.[8]

In the same year as Abe's *"Uranihon"*, the historian Tadao Furumaya published the book *Uranihon – Kindai Nihon o Toinaosu* (1997).[9] Furumaya, who also focuses primarily on Niigata Prefecture, adopts an economic perspective to reconsider the lack of investment provided to Uranihon. Contrary to Abe, Furumaya contends that money and labor was siphoned from Uranihon and invested towards developing Omotenihon. For example, he explicates how land tax, one of the primary sources of revenue during the Meiji period which Niigata was at one point generating three times more of than Tokyo, was used to establish infrastructure in areas along the Pacific coast.[10] Since the process of Uranihon was a prerequisite for the rapid economic growth of Omotenihon, Furumaya asserts that a resolution to the problem of regional disparity requires thinking which moves beyond a binary opposition between Ura and Omote.[11]

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[6] Abe, Tsunehisa 阿部恒久, *"Uranihon" wa Ikani Tsukuraretaka* 「裏日本」はいかにつくられたか, Nihon Keizai Hyōronsha 日本経済評論社, 1997.
[7] Ibid., pp. 253–284.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Furumaya, Tadao 古厩忠夫, *Uranihon – Kindai Nihon o Toinaosu* 裏日本―近代日本を問いなおす, Iwanamishinsho 岩波新書, 1997.
[10] Ibid., p. 39.
[11] Ibid., p. 169.

The aforementioned literature constitutes the generally accepted theories of Uranihon. As this research concentrates on the economic disparity and diminishing population which resulted from uneven development, in some ways, it emphasizes the destitute image of Uranihon. This very image was being produced and disseminated by one photographer even before scholars such as Chiba and Abe were publishing their first essays on this subject.

In 1957, the Tokyo-born photojournalist Hiroshi Hamaya (1915–1999) published the photobook *Uranihon*, consisting of seventy-nine photographs of the twelve prefectures between Aomori and Yamaguchi along the coast of the Sea of Japan.[12] In terms of individual regions, scenes of Aomori (nineteen) are the most numerous, followed by Akita (sixteen) and Niigata (sixteen). The least represented prefectures are Kyoto, Hyogo, Tottori, and Shimane, with only one photograph of each included in the collection. The photographs depict rigorous physical labor being conducted under harsh climate conditions, people living outmoded lifestyles in dilapidated rural villages, and undeveloped landscapes. Hamaya's interest in Uranihon can be traced back to 1939, when he visited Niigata Prefecture as a freelance photographer in order to shoot a military ski training exercise.[13] In Niigata, Hamaya met the local folklorist Shinji Ichikawa who introduced him to the agricultural rituals being conducted in the prefecture's snowy rural villages.[14] This became the subject of the photobook *Yukiguni* which was published in 1956.[15] In order to further document the kind of lifestyle he discovered in the rural villages of Niigata, in 1954, Hamaya set out to photograph the entire area of Honshu along the coast of the Sea of Japan. This became the subject for the photobook *Uranihon*.

Although *Uranihon* was published in 1957, the photos were circulating widely before that time through serialization in photography magazines and other popular publications such as *Camera* in 1955, *Nihon Camera* and *Shashin Salon* in 1956, as well as the January 1956 to April 1957 editions of *Chuo Kōron*.[16] Among these photos, the *Awara no Taue* (Awara Rice Planting) series which appeared in the September 1955 edition of *Camera* as well as the May

[12] Hamaya, Hiroshi 濱谷浩, *Uranihon* 裏日本, Shinchosha 新潮社, 1957.
[13] Hamaya, Hiroshi 濱谷浩, "Jidai no Uzu" 時代の渦, in Tsuguo Tada 多田亞生 ed., *Tanjō Hyakunen Shashinka Hamaya Hiroshi* 誕生 100 年 写真家・濱谷浩, Crevis クレヴィス, 2015, p. 8.
[14] Hamaya, Hiroshi 濱谷浩, *Senzō Zanzō – Shashin Keiken 60 nen* 潜像残像―写真体験 60 年, Chikumasōsho 筑摩叢書, 1991, pp. 32–36.
[15] Hamaya, Hiroshi 濱谷浩, *Yukiguni* 雪国, Mainichi Shimbunsha 毎日新聞社, 1956.
[16] Iizawa, Kōtarō 飯沢耕太郎, *Shashinshu no Tanoshimi* 写真集の愉しみ, Asahi Shimbunsha 朝日新聞社, 1998, p. 58.

1956 edition of *Chuo Kōron* elicited a major response.[17] The photographs depict scenes of female famers in Toyama Prefecture planting rice in deep swamp-like paddies with most of their bodies submerged in muddy water (Fig. 1). According to Akira Hasegawa, the rice production per unit in Toyama between 1954 and 1956 was lower than the national average due to the low temperature of the irrigation water as well as a lack of effective microorganisms.[18] In addition, a health survey conducted in 1956 at a hospital in Kamiichi Town where the *Awara* photographs were taken reveal that farmers working in the Awara paddies were seeking two to three times more treatment for joint pains, back pains, and neuralgia compared to farmers who worked in dry rice fields.[19] Hamaya's photographs can be interpreted as a critique of such poor working conditions. Although perhaps not a direct result of the photographs, land reclamation efforts enforced in this region during the 1960s led to the demise of Awara rice planting.[20]

Photograph by Hiroshi Hamaya /©Keisuke Katano

Figure 1: Hiroshi Hamaya *Arawa no Taue* (photograph) 1955

Photograph by Hiroshi Hamaya /©Keisuke Katano

Figure 2: Hiroshi Hamaya *Yotsude Ami* (photograph) 1955

The single photograph depicting a scene shot in Tottori Prefecture entitled *Yotsude Ami*

[17] Hamaya, Hiroshi 濱谷浩, "Awara no Taue o Miru" アワラの田植を見る, Chuo Kōron 中央公論, May 1956, pp. 7-8.
[18] Hasegawa, Akira 長谷川明, *Shashin o Miru Me – Sengo Nihon no Shashin Hyogen* 写真を見る眼—戦後日本の写真表現, Seikyusha 青弓社, 1995, p.14.
[19] Ibid., p. 15.
[20] Ibid., p. 20.

(Scoop Net) portrays a young fisherman attempting to catch fish in the summer heat (Fig. 2). While only the man, the boat he stands on, and the rippling water in the background are visible within the frame, the text accompanying the photograph elucidates the message which Hamaya wanted to convey: "The young man continues to cast a large net in the blazing heat, but is only able to catch one or two small fish".[21] A similar critique to that which is conveyed in *Awara* can be read from this description of difficult and unproductive labor being conducted under harsh climate conditions.

Theories of Uranihon have a degree of significance as they demand a consideration of modernization in Japan from a standpoint other than Tokyo. At the same time, in order to depict the regional differences between Uranihon and Tokyo, Hamaya chooses to focus his lens on rigorous labor, harsh climate, and cultural aspects that were persisting due to lack of modernization. As a result, *Uranihon* risks putting forth a one-sided representation of the area of Honshu along the coast of the Sea of Japan. There are many aspects of Uranihon which do not appear in Hamaya's photographs. For one, there was a wide variety of artistic activity happening in areas within Uranihon before Hamaya even set foot in the region.

2. Modern Art and Culture in Tottori

It goes without saying that there is ample literature on modern art in Japan written from divergent perspectives. However, there is also a fundamental problem that is shared by a large proportion of that work. Most writing on modern art or visual culture in Japan has a tendency to focus on activity in Tokyo, leaving other regions underrepresented. As the title of Hiroshi Uno's book *Modan Toshi Tōkyō*: *Nihon no 1920 nendai* (1988) suggests, Tokyo often serves as a metonym for Japan.[22] A rare example of an effort to include artists from different regions in Japan is Teiichi Hijikata's book *Nihon no Kindai Bijutsu* (1966). Whereas Hijikata does describe influential people from Tottori Prefecture such as Yasuo Hashiura, Kanji Maeda, and Kazuo Fukuda, he focuses on their activities in Tokyo or overseas.[23] In other words, Tottori is only mentioned as their birthplace.

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[21] Hamaya, op. cit., 1957, p. 9.
[22] Uno, Hiroshi 海野弘, *Modan Toshi Tōkyo – Nihon no 1920 nendai* モダン都市東京―日本の一九二〇年代, Chuokōron Shinsha 中央公論新社, 1988.
[23] Hijikata, Teiichi 土方定一, *Nihon no Kindai Bijutsu* 日本の近代美術, Iwanami Shoten 岩波書店, 1966, pp. 186–188.

As in the case of any region in Japan, there are artists and authors from Tottori Prefecture who became widely known for the work they accomplished in Tokyo. However, little attention has been given to the artistic and visual culture within Tottori. This is likely due to the assumption that there was not much artistic activity needing attention in the first place. In 1960, the Ministry of Education conducted a survey and produced a report entitled *Shōwa 34 nendo Chihō Geijutsu Bunka Gyōsei no Jōkyō* which assessed regional characteristics in regard to different artistic genres.[24] For example, in regard to fine arts, the report refers to Tōnō pottery and Hidan woodblock prints in Gifu, Nihonga painting in Kyoto, Hizen ceramics in Saga, but in the case of Tottori, it states that "aspiring youth rush to the capital, which hinders the fostering of any new generation of artists".[25] Although the methodology used in the survey is unclear, the message is transparent—the state of artistic culture in Tottori is substandard compared to that of other regions.

In spite of such assumptions, modern artistic and cultural activities were taking place in Tottori Prefecture from an early stage in the twentieth century. By the turn of the century, local newspapers such as *Tottori Shimpō*, *Inpaku Jihō*, *Yonago Kakuban Nippō*, and *San'in Nichinichi Shinbun* featured a culture section where modern literary writing could be published, while the introduction of the letterpress allowed for the printing of local literary magazines such as *Mio* (1911).[26] Such media allowed for the development of a locally-based modern literary scene. During this time, modern painting was introduced into the Tottori school system by the educator Tadasu Endō, who had acquired technical training at Yuichi Takahashi's Tokyo art school Tenkaisha.[27] Additionally, in 1920, an artistic society known as Sakyū-sha (Sand Dune Society) was established in Kurayoshi City in the central region of the prefecture by a local painter and middle school art teacher, Kanzō Nakai. In addition to literary writing and painting, the members of Sakyū-sha also held music and dance events as well as film screenings. Moreover, as will be elucidated later, several amateur photography groups were also formed in Tottori around this time. In short, though small in scale, modern cultural activity was alive in Tottori Prefecture during the first half of the twentieth century.

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[24] *Shōwa 34 nendo Chihō Geijutsu Bunka Gyōsei no Jōkyō* 昭和 34 年度地方芸術文化行政の状況, Monbushō Shakai Kyōikukyoku Geijutsuka 文部省社会教育局芸術課, June 1960.
[25] Ibid., p. 56.
[26] Takeuchi, Michio 竹内道夫, *Furusato Bungeikan Vol. 37 Tottori* ふるさと文学館 第三七巻 鳥取, Gyōsei ぎょうせい, 1995, pp. 650–662.
[27] Tottori-ken 鳥取県, *Tottori-kenshi Kindai Vol. 4 Bunka-hen* 鳥取県史 近代第４巻 文化篇, 1969, p. 11.

As can be seen through the scope of activities undertaken by Sakyū-sha, different genres of modern culture did not necessarily develop separately. Rather, in many cases, artists would straddle multiple genres simultaneously. For example, the first documented "western-style painting exhibit in Tottori", was held in 1914 at the Tottori Library featuring works by members of a literary circle.[28] As many amateur writers were also artists, local literary magazines often featured many drawings and illustrations. Even if a writer did not draw, they most likely knew someone who did. In 1921, the literary magazine *Mio* was reestablished as an art collective known as *Suimyaku* which expanded their activities beyond visual art and writing to include theatre and music.[29] Furthermore, many artists and writers who had moved to large cities, such as the sculptor Shindo Tsuji and novelist Kenji Ōe, moved back to Tottori to seek refuge during World War Two. After the war, such people formed the group Rokujinkai at the foot of Mount Daisen, further advancing local artistic culture through holding art exhibits, lectures, and publishing magazines.[30]

Nevertheless, there was a temporal lag in terms of the development of modern culture in Tottori, compared to Tokyo and its surroundings. The primary reason for this discrepancy was the delay in the construction of a railway line that would connect Tottori to the Tokyo area. The first train to run in Japan departed Shinbashi in Tokyo for Yokohama in 1872. Whereas the railway network quickly expanded from this first connection, it took an additional forty years for the railway lines to reach Tottori. In 1912, the San'in line was finally realized between Kyoto and Izumo. However, it is important to note that this was not constructed for the purposes of regional advancement or the improvement of living conditions in the Uranihon region. Rather, the San'in line was constructed with the military aim of overseas expansion.[31] While the construction of the San'in line allowed for a rapid increase in the movement of people, goods, and information between Tottori and Tokyo, which gave way to the development of modern culture, this was the result of something that was initially implemented for military purposes.

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[28] Andō, Naofumi 安東尚文, "Tottori no Bijutsu" 鳥取の美術, *Kyodo to Hakubutsukan* 郷土と博物館, Vol. 28-2, Tottori-kenritsu Hakubutsukan 鳥取県立博物館, 1983, p. 8.
[29] Ibid., p. 9.
[30] *Tottori-ken no Bijutsu VI – Rokujinkai no Sakkatachi* 鳥取県の美術 VI—麓人会の作家たち, Tottorikenritsu Hakubutsukan 鳥取県立博物館, 1998, p. 1.
[31] Abe, op. cit., pp. 277–280.

3. Uranihon and Photography in Tottori

While photographic technology was introduced to Japan in the mid-nineteenth century, the first known photograph taken in Tottori was shot around 1877. A Tottori-born photographer living in Osaka, Kanshirō Kitamura, was called upon to photograph the Tottori Castle after it was determined that it would be torn down.[32] Meanwhile, the use of photography for artistic purposes in Tottori began after 1910, through the activities of locally-based amateur photographers.

A great number of amateur photography groups formed in and around Tokyo from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century. The appeal of creating photographs spread to regional areas soon after. The first amateur photography club in Tottori was formed by a high school art teacher Fukuei Kume, who had moved to Tottori from Tokyo in 1913 to teach at Tottori Middle School (the current Tottori Nishi High School).[33] In 1919, he established the Kōei Club, while a second club devoted to using only small Kodak Vest Pocket cameras (the Akasaki Vest Club) was formed in the central part of Tottori Prefecture in the same year. Furthermore, in 1925, the Yonago Shayūkai was established in the western part of the prefecture.

Unlike professional photographers who devoted their time to shooting portraits as their line of work, amateur photographers engaged in photography for the purpose of artistic expression. As the photography historian Ryuichi Kaneko explains, at the beginning of the twentieth century, many amateur photographers had a tendency to shoot unspecified rural landscapes which were accompanied by literary titles such as *Kiro* (The Return Home) or *Haru no Yūhi* (Spring Sunset).[34] In addition, amateur photographers would often use gum bichromate or bromoil printing techniques along with excessive soft focus in order to produce photos with aesthetic qualities akin to oil paintings.[35] This form of photography came to be known internationally as pictorialism.

There are a number of different interpretations regarding the subject of the unspecified or

[32] Fukuda, Yōichi 福田陽一, *Taishō Jidai ni Hanasaita Kōei Kurabu no Kiroku* 大正時代に花咲いた光影倶楽部の記録, 2007, p. 69.
[33] Ibid., p. 5.
[34] Kaneko, Ryūichi 金子隆一, *Hidaka Chōtarō to Aiyū Shashin Kurabu* 日高長太郎と愛友写真倶楽部, Nagoya Shiritsu Bijutsukan 名古屋市立美術館, 1990, p. 5.
[35] Ibid.

anonymous landscape. For example, according to the art critic Tomohiro Nishimura, the propensity to produce unspecified landscapes can be regarded as being influenced by the landscape paintings of the prominent Japanese painter Seiki Kuroda.[36] Meanwhile, visual cultural theorist Morihiro Satow argues that the anonymous landscapes of Japanese pictorialism functioned to arouse nostalgia among viewers at a time when sixty percent of the population in Tokyo was comprised of people who had left the countryside for the city following the 1906 Railway Nationalization Act.[37] Moreover, he goes on to state that pictorialism, along with the song *Furusato* written in 1914, worked to strengthen national identity by evoking nostalgia and homesickness at a time when Japan was moving towards becoming an imperialist state.[38]

Whereas Satow's contentions regarding pictorialism and nostalgia are insightful, they are based on the standpoint of viewers in Tokyo. Meanwhile, as explicated in the above section, there were both producers and viewers of visual culture living in non-urban areas of Japan during this time. According to data published in the 1927 edition of *Nihon Shashin Nenkan* (Japan Photography Almanac), there were four amateur photography clubs active in Tottori Prefecture that year with a total of 515 members.[39] Among these photographers, Teikō Shiotani (1899–1988) was documenting the natural landscapes and lifestyle of people in Tottori nearly thirty-five years before Hamaya started working on his *Uranihon* project. However, the regional representations of Tottori (and by extension Uranihon) produced by Shiotani, differ greatly from the images of hardship produced by Hamaya, and prompt a reconsideration of the critique of pictorialism outlined above.

Although Shiotani lived in the small seaside town of Akasaki throughout his life, by the 1920s he was exhibiting works in Tokyo as a member of major photography associations such as Geijutsu Shashin Kenkyūkai and Nihon Kōga Kyōkai, and was publishing photos in magazines such as *Asahi Camera* and *Photo Times*. In 1975, he published his first photobook,

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[36] Nishimura, Tomohiro 西村智弘, *Nihon Geijutsu Shashinshi – Ukiyoe kara Dejikame made* 日本芸術写真史―浮世絵からデジカメまで, Bijutsu Shuppan 美術出版, 2008, p. 150.

[37] Satow, Morihiro 佐藤守弘, *Topogurafi no Nihon Kindai – Edo Doroe, Yokohama Shashin, Geijutsu Shashin* トポグラフィの日本近代―江戸泥絵・横浜写真・芸術写真, Seikyūsha 青弓社, 2011, p. 180.

[38] Ibid., p. 184.

[39] Iizawa, Kōtarō 飯沢耕太郎, *"Geijutsu Shashin" to sono Jidai* 「芸術写真」とその時代, Chikuma Shobō 筑摩書房, 1986, p. 109.

Shiotani Teikō Meisakushū 1923–1973.[40] As mentioned above, there were many amateur photographers active in Tottori during the same period as Shiotani. Nevertheless, information regarding these individual photographers and their works is sparse, and on the whole, very limited.[41] In contrast, Shiotani's photobook features around forty photos shot in the 1920s, and approximately fifty taken in the 1930s, with details regarding the date and location of each work.[42] For this reason, the photobook serves as an important collection of regional representations from that era.

Of the 121 photographs in this collection, approximately seventy can be described as landscapes. There are also about twenty-five portraits as well as some still lifes and photos of animals. The fact that more than half of the photos are those of landscapes seems to reflect the general trend of pictorialism. However, the landscapes shot by Shiotani are not necessarily anonymous. In fact, about half (thirty-six) of the landscape photographs in the collection refer to the name of the location in the title of the work. In addition, works such as *Matsue Yukibi* (1925) include the name of location not only in the title, but also in the photograph itself, through a visible sign ("Matsue Eki Nakashi") with the name of the location written on it (Fig. 3). Furthermore, Shiotani's landscapes are not exactly "timeless" or "static" in the way Satow's argument against pictorialism suggests.[43] Although certainly not comparable to Tokyo, photos such as *Agei Eki* (1929) and *Akasaki Sekkei* (1932) show that modernity was not something found only in the city, by including trains, railway tracks, and electrical posts within the frame (Fig. 4).

One of the chief characteristics of pictorialism is the deformation of the image made possible through pigment printing techniques. In the case of Shiotani, Uranihon was not only

[40] Shiotani, Teikō 塩谷定好, *Shiotani Teikō Meisakushū 1923-1973* 塩谷定好名作集 1923-1973, Nihon Shashin Shuppan 日本写真出版, 1975.

[41] There are however two books worth mentioning which feature important information about early photography in Tottori Prefecture. The first is *Geijutsu Shashin no Jidai – Yonago Shayūkai Kaikoten* 芸術写真の時代―米子写友会回顧展 (1990), a catalogue published by the Yonago Bijutsukan (Yonago Art Museum) for an exhibit they held in 1990, showcasing the works of amateur photographers that were active in the Yonago City area in the western part of Tottori Prefecture between 1925–1935. The second is Yōichi Fukuda's *Taisho Jidai ni Hana Saita Kōei Kurabu no Kiroku* 大正時代に花咲いた光影倶楽部の記録 (2007), a collection of data and materials on the Kōei Kurabu amateur photography group established in Tottori City in 1919.

[42] A second photobook, *Shiotani Teikō Shashinshū - Uminari no Fūkei* 塩谷定好写真集―海鳴りの風景 was published in 1984. Of the ninety-five photos, forty were already published in Shiotani's first photobook.

[43] Satow, op. cit., p. 182.

the subject matter he was shooting, but it was also influencing the way he was processing and developing his photos. In an interview, Shiotani reveals that he was blending ink with bull semen which he acquired from his job at a nearby cattle ranch in order to edit noticeable blemishes in his photographs.[44] Thus, a very rural local industry, in many ways representative of this area of Uranihon, held the key to the finishing touch of Shiotani's aesthetic.

Figure 3: Teikō Shiotani
Matsue Yukibi (photograph) 1925

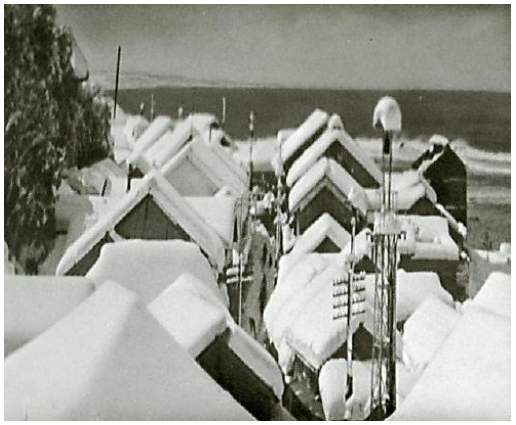

Figure 4: Teikō Shiotani
Akasaki Sekkei (photograph) 1932

By the 1930s, the popularity of pictorialism was waning, and a new avant-garde style known as Shinkō Shashin was being pursued by artistic photographers. However, Shōji Ueda (1913–2000), another photographer who spent most of his life living in Tottori, decided not to follow this new trend, but rather create his own original style which became known as Enshutsu Shashin (Performative Photography). The first photo Ueda ever shot was of the sands of the shoreline near his home in Sakaiminato City.[45] While many photographers from Tottori have chosen the sand in Tottori (especially the Tottori Sand Dunes) as the subject matter for their work, in the case of Ueda, the sands of Tottori have been the primary setting for some of his most famous works including *Shōjo Yontai* (1939) and *Kogitsune Tōjō* (1948) (Fig. 5).

The frequent appearance of sand in the works of photographers in Tottori may be related

[44] Miki, Jun 三木淳 ed. *Shiotani Teiko Shashinshu – Uminari no Fūkei* 塩谷定好写真集―海鳴りの風景, Nicōru Kurabu ニッコールクラブ, 1984, p. 117.
[45] Ueda, Shōji 植田正治, "Watashi to Sakyu" 私と砂丘, Kaneko, Ryuichi 金子隆一 ed. *Ueda Shōji – Shashin no Sahō* 植田正治―写真の作法, Kōrinsha 光琳社, 1999, p. 40.

to something more than just the fact that the prefecture is home to one of the largest sand dunes in Japan. As the novelist Kōbō Abe states in his essay "Sabaku no Shisō" (1965), sand suggests the notion of remoteness, and the quantity of sand necessarily effects the caliber of that remoteness.[46] For example, a large desert connotes the idea of remoteness much more strongly than a small sand box in a park. In line with this logic, the frequent use of sand in Tottori as the subject matter of photography equates to a quantitative increase of sand at the level of representation, which in turn, emphasizes the remoteness attributed to the region.

Figure 5: Shōji Ueda *Kogitsune Tōjō* (photograph) 1948

In 1940, Ueda published an instructional handbook entitled *Den'en no Utsushikata* (How to Photograph the Countryside). In the preface, he makes the following remarks:

> (...) the photographic examples I have presented in this book have been taken from where I live in the Chugoku region of Uranihon, the rural landscapes along the Sea of Japan (…). As a result, there are many atmospheric differences from the warm farming villages in the south, and the Tohoku region far to the north. This is rurality, but not a generalization (…).[47]

Here, Ueda identifies the area where he lives as part of Uranihon, while simultaneously stating the peculiarities of his region, in relation to other rural areas. Ueda became famous for his Enshutsu Shashin, which are comprised of a calculated positioning of people and objects within the frame. Like Shiotani, Ueda was able to produce great works of photography while

[46] Abe, Kōbō 安部公房, "Sabaku no Shisō" 砂漠の思想, *Abe Kōbō Zensakuhin* 安部公房全作品, Vol. 14, Shinchōsha 新潮社, 1973, p. 32.
[47] Ueda, Shōji 植田正治, *Denen no Utsushikata* 田園の寫し方, Arususha アルス社, 1940, p. 3.

living in Tottori Prefecture, during a time when the region was known as Uranihon. In fact, both photographers were able to see beyond the negative factors of Uranihon, and take advantage of regional characteristics in their artistic production.

4. Uranihon and the Image of Darkness

In addition to a lack of modernization, rurality, and remoteness, there are other meanings which are connoted by the word Uranihon. In 1958, the year following the publication of Hamaya's *Uranihon*, the writer Toshio Suzaki began a literary magazine in Tottori entitled *Uranihon Bungaku*. In the afterword to the first edition, he comments on the title of the publication in the following manner:

> The meaning of the title is a manifestation of our will to no longer turn away from the dark and dank natural features of the San'in region, but rather to stare fixedly at these features in a paradoxical manner to bring about a bright future.[48]

Here, Uranihon is also indicative of the "dark and dank natural features of the San'in region", an area which consists primarily of the prefectures of Tottori and Shimane. The name San'in is written in Japanese with the characters for *yama* (mountain) and *kage* (shadow). As a result, the name is said to give a dark impression of the region. The mountain referred to in the name is the Chugoku mountain range with Mount Daisen located in Tottori Prefecture being the highest peak. The Chugoku mountain range runs across the Chugoku region like a wall, dividing the area into opposing sections of San'in to the north, and Sanyō to the south. And just as San'in consists of the characters for mountain and shadow, Sanyō is literally written as "mountain light".

From an early stage in the twentieth century, the name "San'in" also reflected the weather and climate in the region. In 1926, the owner of a bookstore in Tottori, Keijirō Yokoyama, published a book entitled *Inpaku Ninjō to Fūzoku* in order to introduce the region to outsiders. In the book, he provides the following description:

[48] Suzaki, Toshio 須崎俊雄, "Henshū Koki" 編集後記, *Uranihon Bungaku* 裏日本文学, First Edition, 1958, p. 61.

> The climate of Tottori Prefecture is, in general, quite gloomy... The low atmospheric pressure always collides with the Chugoku mountain range, causing rainfall in the San'in region. Especially around September and October, the winds bring about dark clouds and torrential rain which threatens the region with the risk of floods...[49]

To be sure, the weather and climate in the San'in region have no doubt changed in the more than ninety years that have passed since Yokoyama wrote the above passage. At the same time, data regarding average amounts of precipitation, daylight, and cloud coverage in Tottori between 1981 and 2010 compiled by the Japan Weather Association suggests that there still may be some truth to the message Yokoyama was trying to convey. According to this data, the annual average precipitation in Tottori is 1,914 millimeters.[50] To compare, the average figures for Tokyo amount to 1,528 millimeters, while in the case of Osaka it is 1,279 millimeters.[51] In short, Tottori experiences much more rainfall than these two major cities. In regard to the annual average hours of daylight, in Tottori it is 1,663 hours, while in Tokyo it is 1,876 hours and in Osaka 1,996 hours. The hours of daylight in Tottori are comparatively less.

In particular, a monthly comparison of the hours of daylight in Tottori and Tokyo shows that the widest discrepancy can be seen in the winter. Data analyzed by sociologist Hiroshi Takemura shows that in fact, between the months of April to October, the hours of daylight in Tottori are actually slightly greater than in Tokyo.[52] However, between November and March, Tottori experiences far less daylight. The figures for December are about eighty hours less than Tokyo. In January, Tottori falls more than one hundred hours behind. This long period of dreary weather is often noted as one of the characteristics of the San'in region, and more generally, Uranihon.

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[49] Yokoyama, Keijirō 横山敬次郎, *Inpaku Ninjō to Fūzoku* 因伯人情と風俗, Yokoyama Keijirō Shoten 横山敬次郎書店, 1926, p. 3.

[50] Ippan Zaidan Hōjin Nihon Kishō Kyōkai Chūgoku Shiten 一般財団法人日本気象協会中国支店, *San'in no Kishōreki to Chōseki* 山陰の気象暦と潮汐, 2015.

[51] Data regarding the average annual weather in Tokyo and Osaka is available on the Japan Weather Agency website: http://www.data.jma.go.jp/obd/stats/etrn/view/nml_sfc_ym.php?prec_no=44&block_no=47662&year=&month=2&day=&view=p1 (accessed on June 26, 2016)

[52] Takemura, Hiroshi 竹村弘, "'Chiki Imēji' wa Kaerareruka – 'Ura', 'Kage', 'Kurai' to Iwareru San'in Chihō no Kokoromi" 『地域イメージ』は変えられるか―「裏」「陰」「暗い」といわれる山陰地方のこころみ, *Aichi Shukutoku Daigaku Gendai Shakaigakubu Ronshū* 愛知淑徳大学現代社会学部論集, Vol. 3, 1998, p. 50.

The January 1st 1965 local edition of Mainichi Shinbun featured a full page interview between the Governor of Tottori Prefecture and the president of the Yonago Takashimaya department store, wherein they discuss ways to "brighten up" the gloomy image of the San'in region.[53] The page also included editorials on the same subject, as well as an open call to all readers to propose a new, "sunnier" name for the region. The contest was organized by a committee consisting of local private enterprises, public administrators, and politicians. On July 11th of the same year, "Hokuyō" (Northern Light) was selected as the new name to replace San'in.[54]

Nevertheless, this new name never took root. In 1989, another attempt to change the name of San'in, this time to "Minami Nihonkai Chihō" (Southern Region of the Sea of Japan), was made by the Association of Corporate Executives of Tottori and Shimane. This attempt to eliminate the use of the name San'in also failed. These endeavors were no doubt motivated by the hope that a new, brighter name might help increase tourism, and by extension, positively stimulate the local economy. Meanwhile, there are works of art produced by people living in San'in that express a very different attitude towards the element of darkness and its relation to the region.

Mamoru Sumi (1943–) is a painter who has been creating works of art in his hometown of Sakaiminato City located in the western part of Tottori Prefecture since the 1970s. His early works depict fishermen and merchants working at the ports during the early hours before dawn. The subject matter is closely related to Sumi's life as his family ran a marine transport business.[55] The artist has commented that he chose this theme because he wanted to paint something that reflected his life in San'in, rather than follow some big city trend.[56] Paintings from his fishermen series such as *Kagura-san* (1977) (Fig. 6), are composed almost entirely of black and Prussian blue tones. On the surface, this could be interpreted as producing a dark impression of the San'in region. However, Sumi had no intention of creating a negative image.

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[53] *Mainichi Shinbun* 毎日新聞, January 1, 1965, p. 1.
[54] "Akaruku 'Hokuyō' to Yobimasho" 明るく〝北陽〟と呼びましょう, *Mainichi Shinbun* 毎日新聞, July 12, 1965, p. 16.
[55] Yamamoto, Haruo 山本晴男, "'Kankan Butai' no Obasantachi to Najinde" 「カンカン部隊」のオバサンたちと馴染んで, *San'in no Bijutsukatachi* 山陰の美術家たち, Ri-do Renmei リード連盟, 2000, p. 401.
[56] Artist statement during special lecture "Sumi Mamoru Kōenkai – Uchinaru Uchūkan o Miru" held at Torigin Bunkakaikan on February 16th 2013 (Hosted by Tottori University Department of Regional Sciences Art Center).

Though the fishermen series is dark in terms of its use of color and the time of day being depicted, it is also burgeoning with life, with the representation of fishermen and merchants hard at work together handling fresh sea produce.

Figure 6: Mamoru Sumi
Kagura-san (oil painting) 1977

Figure 7: Mamoru Sumi
Kawaita Umi (oil painting) 1995

Following the fishermen series which Sumi continued throughout the 70s and 80s, in the 1990s he began a new series consisting of a dystopic future where the sea had dried up, leaving only a barren landscape. Works from the waterless sea series such as *Kawaita Umi* (1995) (Fig. 7) depict scenes in broad daylight, but the images consist of only one woman sitting amongst garbage and dried carcasses of dead sea creatures scattered across a parched seafloor. Whereas Sumi's earlier work document a past reality which has all but disappeared due to advances in industry, the waterless sea series portrays a fictional world which may become a future reality if we are not careful of the ways we engage with the environment.

While Sumi's fishermen series focuses on life during the dark hours before dawn, another artist, Mana Satō (1961–) produces work which represents the evening and night. At first glance, the main theme of Satō's work may seem to be Hinamatsuri, as young girls dressed in kimono as well as hina dolls appear frequently as motifs. In the town of Mochigase in Tottori, the important Hinamatsuri event Nagashibina takes place on March 3rd according to the lunar calendar. Although most Hinamatsuri events and celebrations take place in the daytime, there is something tenebrous about works by Satō such as *Sōshun* (Fig. 8). Satō was born in Tokyo, but moved to Mochigase when she was a young child. One of the major differences she

perceived from life in Tokyo was the lesser degree of artificial lighting used at night in Tottori.[57] Since there were no abundant street lighting and neon signs like Tokyo, the experience of night in Tottori was much darker. In addition to the Nagashibina motifs, Satō's paintings can also be understood as a representation of this experience.

Figure 8: Mana Satō
Soshun (oil painting) 2006

For better or worse, regional governments and local enterprises invest a large amount of effort towards advertisements and promotions in the hopes of invigorating the economy and attracting tourism. Such activities are showcased as local news which in turn saturates the region. According to the political scientist Benedict Anderson, the origins of the nation state and nationalism are linked to the invention of the printing press which allowed for the spread of information in a common language and the creation of a shared consciousness of space and time.[58] Anderson refers to such communal consciousness as an "imagined community". Whereas he developed this notion in relation to the nation state, a similar process can be seen at work at a regional level, through the dissemination of information in local newspapers and regional news broadcasts on the television and radio. Meanwhile, artists such as Mamoru Sumi and Mana Satō reference regional and local subject matter at a more subjective and personal level, which does not necessarily contribute towards a shared consciousness.

[57] Artist's statement made during Tottori Gas Salute Culture Lecture "Satō Mana – Dōshin o Egaku" held on November 15th 2013.
[58] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, 1991.

5. Conclusion: Beyond Uranihon

Hitherto research regarding Uranihon has for the most part been conducted within the context of binary relations such as Ura and Omote; periphery and center; countryside and city; as well as darkness and light. However, there are elements of Uranihon which cannot be contained within such binary oppositions. For example, the outward migration of people from Uranihon is generally understood as the movement of workers from the countryside to the city. And while there were no doubt people moving in this direction, this was not the only vector of migration occurring at the outset of the twentieth century. In the case of Tottori Prefecture, people were also moving to places as diverse as Hokkaido, Brazil, and North America in search of economic opportunities and to fulfill dreams. In the place of a conclusion, I will turn to an example of art that engages the history of people who migrated to Canada from Japan, in order to draw connections which will encourage a reconsideration of previous ideas regarding Uranihon.

Between 1895 and the onset of the Pacific War, over 1,500 people moved to the west coast of North America from the Yumigahama (Sakaiminato and Yonago) region of Tottori Prefecture.[59] Approximately 120 years after the first migrants from Tottori set foot on the west coast of Canada, in 2014, the Vancouver-based contemporary artist Cindy Mochizuki (1976–) took part in an artist residency in Yonago to create a speculative science fiction piece entitled *Paper*. The narrative interweaves allusions to the history of the people who migrated from Yonago to British Columbia to work in the lumber industry, with a story about a teahouse on a small island off the coast of Yonago based on fragmented memories of local residents. *Paper* was an art project comprised of an audio narrative voiced by Mochizuki which was listened to by participants of a boat tour around the island where the tea house once existed, as well as a separate installation consisting of documentary footage of early migrants to Canada from Japan. After creating *Paper*, Mochizuki continued to work in both British Columbia and Tottori in order to expand the story into *Rock, Paper, Scissors* (2017) (Fig. 9), a time travel trilogy, spanning between the early 1900s and the year 2100.

[59] *Hokubei Ijū to Adachi Giyomatsu* 北米移住と足立儀代松, Sakaiminato Kyoikuiinkai 境港市教育委員会, 2012.

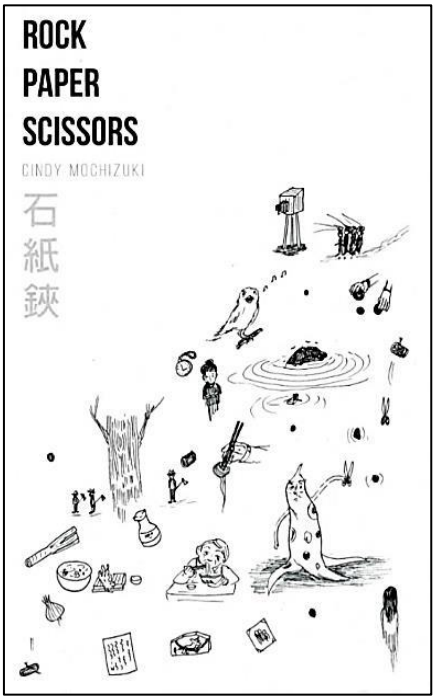

Figure 9: Cindy Mochizuki
Rock, Paper, Scissors
(Nikkei National Museum and
Cultural Centre Exhibition Flyer:
Feb. 4 – April 30, 2017)

Just as *Paper* engaged the theme of lumber (hence the title "paper"), the new chapter *Rock* references the coal mining work which many Asian immigrants to Canada took on during the early twentieth century. The title of the third part of the trilogy, *Scissors* alludes to the Japanese *tatara* method of iron and steel smelting, while the story itself is set in a distant future dreamscape. The three stories are linked through the character of K, who works in a restaurant on the small island off the shore of Yonago. One day, K discovers a pathway to travel through time and encounters people who immigrated to British Columbia at the beginning of the twentieth century, as well as the historical circumstances they lived through.

As the historian Masako Iino explains, people who migrated from Japan to the west coast of Canada at the turn of the century were initially received as cheap physical labor, but as their

numbers increased, they came to be perceived as a threat to white society.[60] In September 1907, the members of the Vancouver chapter of the Asiatic Exclusion League marched into the local Chinatown and Japantown, causing a massive riot. This triggered the Canadian Government's decision to enforce policies to restrict Japanese immigrants, and fueled racist sentiments which expelled children of Japanese immigrants born in Canada from economic opportunities.

Following the December 7th 1941 (Pacific Standard Time) attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese army, the Canadian Government declared all people of Japanese ancestry to be enemy aliens, confiscating the assets of anyone who fit that description, and requiring them to either repatriate to Japan or face forced relocation and incarceration in internment camps.[61] As a result of the long efforts of the redress movement, in the 1980s, the Canadian Government acknowledged the financial losses and deprivation of human rights caused by the forced eviction and internment with a formal apology and compensation to surviving citizens who went through that experience. Meanwhile, Mochizuki's trilogy draws attention to discrimination which existed in Canada well before the outbreak of World War Two.

As previous research regarding Uranihon focused on statistically measurable data such as domestic population shifts, the advancement of industry, the expansion of transportation infrastructure, the establishment of education facilities, and the distribution of capital, in many ways it emphasizes a backwards and destitute regional image. Conversely, this paper turned to examples of photography, painting and other art produced in Tottori Prefecture, in order to reexamine the notion of Uranihon from the perspective of visual culture. The place names and bull semen incorporated into the photography of Teikō Shiotani, the repetitive use of sand by Shōji Ueda, the documentation of early morning fishermen and merchants at work by Mamoru Sumi, and the depiction of evening darkness by Mana Satō are all references to elements of Uranihon. These artists harness the regional characteristics of Uranihon and channel them towards their creative activities. By focusing attention on the work of artists in Tottori Prefecture, this essay also aimed to demonstrate the need to branch out from an urban-centered approach to visual cultural research.

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[60] Iino, Masako 飯野正子, "Nikkei Kanadajin no Ayumi – Kunan o Norikoete" 日系カナダ人の歩み――苦難を乗り越えて, Iino, Masako and Yutaka Takenaka 飯野正子・竹中豊 eds. *Gendai Kanada o Shiru tame no 57 sho* 現代カナダを知るための 57 章, Akashi Shoten 明石書店, 2010, pp. 90–99.
[61] Ibid., pp. 96–97.

Finally, this paper also turned to Cindy Mochizuki's *Rock, Paper, Scissors* in order to reconsider the meaning of Uranihon. Mochizuki's work reminds us that people in search of new opportunities were not only migrating from Uranihon to Tokyo, but also to a variety of regions both in Japan and overseas. In this sense, the prefix "Ura" and the word "Nihon" are misleading, as they skew the movement of people which spread across the globe, as something to be interpreted only in a national context comprised of binary oppositions. The works examined in this essay show that regions like Tottori Prefecture should be regarded as one of many focal points, where visual culture was and continues to be alive, and from where migration did and continues to ebb and flow in all directions.

(Author's note: This paper is an abridged English translation of a research paper originally written in Japanese and published as: "Shikaku Bunka to 'Uranihon' no Chiiki Hyōshō" 視覚文化と「裏日本」の地域表象, *Nihongakuhō* 日本学報, Vol. 37, 2018. All text, including quotations, was translated by the author. All names in the main text appear in the order of first name followed by last name.)