

早稲田法学部 Theme 16 春 P.A.C. O'CONNOR	<b>WEEK 10: THE BRIGHT NEW LIFE</b>
<b>The Idea of Japan [I]</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Tokyo Olympics, sports stadia and bullet trains</li> <li><b>Tora-san:</b> 男はつらいよ</li> </ul>

### READING 1: 明るい生活 THE BRIGHT NEW LIFE

**WHEN THE OCCUPATION ENDED IN 1952**, the abiding Western image of Japan was a composite of MacArthur's patronising "twelve-year-old boy" and a protégé – child in tutelage to the godlike United States and its agent on earth, MacArthur. By the late 1960s, Japanese goods were surging into Western markets and everything had changed. The little boy was yesterday's image. Now Japan was a "superman", a "miracle man" in a business suit. From 1960–1980 a hybrid sumo/samurai/salary man image would alternately seduce and alarm the world.

**FOR MANY JAPANESE**, the 1960s were the beginning of brighter days, with nearly full employment, better housing, improved education prospects and improved roles for women at work and in the home. Many Japanese moved out of their old *shitemachi* (downtown) Tokyo homes to spacious modern houses in the western suburbs and further out in Saitama and Chiba, with a refrigerator and a television and an automatic bath. There was space for a car, spare cash for family holidays. Industry was hungry for graduate trainees and more women went to university than ever before. These were the bright new days indeed.

### READING 2: THE 1964 TOKYO OLYMPICS

**明るい生活 THE BRIGHT NEW LIFE** For many Japanese, the 1960s were the beginning of brighter days, with nearly full employment, better housing, improved education prospects and improved roles for women at work and in the home. Many Japanese moved out of their old *shitemachi* (downtown) Tokyo homes to spacious modern houses in the western suburbs and further out in Saitama and Chiba, with a refrigerator and a television and an automatic bath. There was space for a car, spare cash for family holidays. Industry was hungry for graduate trainees and more women went to university. The bright new days indeed.

**THE TOKYO OLYMPICS OF OCTOBER 10-24** was the first ever Olympic Games held in an Asian country. The games had originally been planned for Tokyo in 1940, but were postponed because of the Japan-China war. Ninety-four countries 5,500 athletes took part. Forty-seven world records were broken. Preparing for the games, Japan completed huge infrastructure and construction projects: hotels, highways, sports facilities, and best known of all, the Tokyo-Osaka Shinkansen, built between 1959-1961 for the Tokyo Olympics, with service beginning on October 1, only nine days before the start of the Tokyo Olympics.



**THE TOKYO OLYMPICS WAS ALL ABOUT SYMBOLS** the Yoyogi sports complex, the Nippon Budokan, main gym for the games, and the Shinkansen all symbolized Japan's recovery from the ashes of defeat, her extraordinary modernization, and her welcome back into the community of nations and the world economy.



**NOT ALL THE SYMBOLS WERE FORWARD LOOKING.** The original (1940) Tokyo Olympics, canceled because of the war, haunted the 1964 Games. Memories of the Asia-Pacific War also weighed heavily on the events in Tokyo. The Olympics were held in the area formerly called Washington Heights, the housing area used for U.S. military members. Some building contractors in charge of the construction projects for the 1964 Olympics even used the term *gyokusai* – 'shattered jewel', a wartime metaphor for mass suicide in battle - to describe the huge Olympic project.

**THEN THERE WAS ATOM BOY.** The last torch carrier in the long journey from Athens, who ignited the Olympic fire in the opening ceremony of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics bore the special identification of "atom boy," as he was born in Hiroshima prefecture on August 6 1945, the day of the atomic attack on that city. With Atom Boy, Japan showed that she had not completely succumbed to the West's historical interpretation of the last thirty years.

'Bullet Train' is the best known English translation of 弾丸列車 [dangan ressha], the name given to Japan's fast train project in the 1940s. Shinkansen means 'New Trunk Line', and thus should refer to the lines and not the trains, which are officially referred to as 'Super Express'.

### READING 3: TORA-SAN



**FROM 1969-1996 KIYOSHI ATSUMI (-1996) WAS TORA-SAN**, star of the longest -running movie series in the world. Directed by Yamada Yoji, *Otoko wa Tsurai yo* (It's Tough Being a Man) ran for twenty-seven years and was seen by about eighty million people.



**TORA-SAN BEGAN AS IT MEANT TO GO ON.** The plot of the first film went like this: Born and raised in a poor family and he has come to make his living as a racketeer. One day he returned to his old neighborhood in Shibamata and found that Sakura, his younger sister, has grown into a lovely young woman living with their uncle's family. She married to Hiroshi, a factory hand. Tora-san himself is in love with Fuyuko, daughter of a priest from a nearby temple. Unfortunately, she tells him that

she is engaged to another man and Tora-san leaves his old neighborhood.

**WHY WAS THE SERIES SO POPULAR?** Tora-san was an itinerant peddler, traveling across Japan in pursuit of riches through a various doomed schemes. Neither successful nor entirely unsuccessful, Tora-san has something of the *naniwabushi*: the sort of middle-aged man to be found trying to impress the *karaoke* hostesses, but he is more than that. Tora-san is always in character, always in his sports jacket, trademark hat and *zori*. Every movie follows the same plot lines: Tora-san arrives in a remote Japanese town, chasing his latest hare-brained scheme. There he meets a local beauty and falls in love. On the eve of marriage he gets cold feet and heads back to his sister's house in Shibamata, Tokyo, to drink sake and have a rethink.

#### READING 4: TORA-SAN SPINACH



the spinach after him.

**This is Tora-san spinach**, now on sale in Britain and the US. As anybody can see, Tora-san is a quick growing hybrid, with light green juicy, tender stems and dark green glossy leaves. Like Tora-san, Tora-san spinach is highly 'cold tolerant' and ideal for autumn, winter and spring growth. **And here is Tora-san** It's not difficult to see why they named



<b>QUESTIONNAIRE</b>	CLASS NAME	WEEK No.
NAME	STUDENT NO.	DATE
<b>1. WHAT WAS THIS CLASS/FILM ABOUT?</b>		
<b>2. WHAT ARE THE MAIN QUESTIONS IT RAISES?</b>		
<b>3. WHAT IS IMPORTANT ABOUT THIS SUBJECT?</b>		
<b>4. ANY OTHER COMMENTS?</b>		