

## New Steps in Japanese Studies

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# Visual Images of Japanese Culture in Geography Textbooks in Italy (1912-2014)

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**Abstract** This paper aims to demonstrate an aspect of images of Japanese culture in contemporary Italy and to this purpose examines what kinds of visual image of Japan have been drawn in Italian geography textbooks. In this paper, we focus on geography textbooks mainly for upper secondary education published in Italy (1912-2014), in order that we examine how visual images of Japan and Japanese cultures have historically changed and have been reproduced in these textbooks. Finally, we confirm the point of view of 'coexistence/contradiction between tradition and modern' in Japanese culture, as pointed out in recent Japanese studies, has also appeared and has also been reproduced in these textbooks.

**Summary** 1 Introduction. – 2 Geography Textbooks of Upper Secondary Education in Italy and the 'Visual Turn' of Cultural Sociology and Geography. – 2.1 Italian School System and Geography in Upper Secondary Education. – 2.2 The 'Visual Turn' of Geography and Cultural Sociology. – 3 Visual Images of Japan in Geography Textbooks of Upper Secondary Education in Italy. – 3.1 Kind of Maps – 3.2 Cities. – 3.3 Primary Industry and Nature. – 3.4 Economy. – 3.5 Belief and Tradition. – 4 Iconicity of Japan and Japanese Culture in Italian Textbooks. – 5. Conclusion.

**Keywords** Geography textbooks. Visual images. Italy. Japan.

## 1 Introduction

The objective of this paper is to examine how Japan and the Japanese culture have been visually portrayed in contemporary Italian geography textbooks.

These days, Japan's image in Italy seems to be influenced by mass media and popular culture, including Japanese animation. Education also seems to play a role in constructing the public image of Japan, especially in the subject of geography. As one of the most effective fields that teach different cultures, geography contributes to the construction of our image of various nations.

This paper is concerned with geography textbooks intended mainly for upper secondary education and published in Italy from 1912 to 2014. In particular, the focus is on visual images used in articles about Japan and

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Japanese culture that can be found in Italian geography textbooks. It aims to examine what kind of visual image of Japan and Japanese culture have been used, developed and reproduced.

Since the opening of Japan to Western trade, the relationship between Italy and Japan has gone through changes in the past one and a half century. The connection between the two countries went through two World Wars, the postwar boom period of the Japanese economy, and so on. With the progression of this relationship, the Italian perception of Japan has certainly changed over the passage of time.

## **2 Geography Textbooks of Upper Secondary Education in Italy and the ‘Visual Turn’ of Cultural Sociology and Geography**

### **2.1 Italian School System and Geography in Upper Secondary Education**

After several reforms in the 20th and also 21st centuries, the present Italian school system consists of the following (Dei 2012, Eurydice 2013, UNESCO-IBE 2012):

0. Pre-primary school (*scuola dell’infanzia*, for children aged 3-6);
1. The first cycle of education (lasting 8 years) made of:
  - 1.1 Primary school (lasting 5 years for pupils aged 6-11) and
  - 1.2 Lower secondary school (lasting 3 years for pupils aged 11-14);
2. The second cycle of education offering two different pathways as below:
  - 2.1 Upper secondary school (lasting 5 years for pupils aged 14-19);
  - 2.2 Vocational training courses (lasting 3 or 4 years).

After the second cycle of education, higher education is offered by universities and high level arts as well as the music education system. Alternatively, post-qualification and post-diploma vocational courses, higher technical education and training courses are also given after the second cycle of education.

Compulsory education basically covers a period of 10 years ranging from the age of 6 to 16. It covers the first cycle of education (primary school and lower secondary school) as well as the first two years of the second cycle of education. The upper secondary school is state-organised and is arranged into six types of lyceum (specialising in arts, classical studies, scientific studies, foreign languages, music and dance, and the humanities), technical institutes (mainly teaching economy and technology) and vocational institutes. Another pathway of the second cycle of education is offered by vocational education and training courses in each region. This structure of the second cycle of education has been established as a result

of recent education reforms. This education stage has featured other types of lyceum, schools, and institutes in the past (Dei 2012, 74-85).

In this school system, geography education starts from primary school (MIUR 2012). However, geography is taught in combination with science and history during these formative years. From lower secondary school, geography is taught as an individual subject. Geography subjects in the lower secondary school already cover world-wide geographical knowledge including that of other countries and continents.

In the upper secondary school, the number of hours to teach geography is, although depending on the type of school, up to ninety-nine hours in each of the first and second year, otherwise the sum of the numbers of hours to teach geography and history is up to ninety-nine hours in each of the first and second year (MIUR 2011). However, the numbers of hours and teachers for geography classes in upper secondary school, especially some types of institutes, tend to be reduced due to education reforms (De Vecchis et al. 2011, 9-12; De Vecchis 2011, 18-20).

Geography textbooks for upper secondary education cover physical and human geographies, dealing with all the pertinent subject matters. These textbooks are divided into three parts: the first part is oriented towards all the regions in Italy; the second part towards European countries; the third part towards extra-European continents and countries. This category has been adapted from old textbooks. For example, a textbook published in 1905-1906 (Pasanisi 1906, IX-XIV), consists of four parts: 1) general geography; 2) Europa; 3) Italy; 4) extra-European continents.

This paper refers to the articles about Japan contained in the fourth part of the text, especially in the chapters of East Asia.

## 2.2 The 'Visual Turn' of Geography and Cultural Sociology

The reason why this paper focuses in particular on visual materials in the articles about Japan in Italian geography textbooks is mainly because of the 'visual turn' presented in recent cultural sociology and geography. The visual turn in geography (Rose 2003; Thornes 2004) is closely related to the development of digital technology in recent years. As Thornes (2004, 787) said, the development of the hardware and software for computers that can be used for mapping and map display - for example, GPS, 3-D mapping, as well as the development of the Internet or World Wide Web - has a certain influence on, not only geography research work, but also geography education, teaching, and learning.

However, geography was originally called the 'visual discipline' and it was said that "geography is unique in the social sciences in the way it has relied and continues to rely on certain kinds of visualities and visual images to construct its knowledge" (Rose 2003, 212). Therefore, geogra-

phy education and geography textbooks have been using visual materials such as cartographies, drawings and photographs in the same way over the years. The fact that geography draws and relies on visual materials is one of the reasons why geographical knowledge is passed on to learners, via education.

In addition to the visual turn in geography, this paper deals with the conception of 'iconicity' presented in cultural sociology. The visual turn in both geography and cultural sociology has an impact based on the picture theory of Mitchell (1994, 2005) who claimed that such pictures in their own right – not merely as media of languages and meanings of creators – should concentrate on visual studies. Also Mitchell (2002) has introduced the notion of 'landscape as a medium of cultural expression'. Furthermore, some scholars in cultural sociology have developed the conception of iconicity as a hybrid of word and image, surface and depth (Alexander 2008; Bartmanski 2014). According to the explanation of Alexander, 'icons' are 'symbolic condensations' and "they root generic, social meanings in a specific and 'material' form". That is to say, "meaning is made iconically visible as something beautiful, sublime, ugly", and therefore "iconic consciousness occurs when an aesthetically shaped materiality signifies social value. Contact with this aesthetic surface, whether by sight, smell, taste, touch provides a sensual experience that transmits meaning" (Alexander 2008, 782). Bartmanski explains that such icons consist of "significatory structures that have a materially constituted surface and a discursively formed depth" and that there are "the dynamics of the surface/depth relation in icons" (2014, 175-8).

In this paper, the question being asked is what kinds of visual image in Italian geography textbooks have been applied as tools to understand Japanese people and culture, that is, represented as 'icons' that Japanese people hold in their minds.

This paper refers to the previous study about images of Japan in Italian school textbooks of geography done by Ueno (2010). Ueno's research deals with Italian geography textbooks published from the 1920s to the first half of the 1960s. It focuses on the aspects of politics and economics, especially on the changes brought about by the world wars. This paper additionally refers to Ueno's study (2011) on the images of Japan found in Italian school history textbooks published around 1960. Aside from these, the paper also refers to Wright (1979), Hong (2009), and Nan (2015) as studies of images of different cultures in geography textbooks.

### 3 Visual Images of Japan in Geography Textbooks of Upper Secondary Education in Italy

Before delving into visual images, one should have a look at the general composition of Italian geography textbooks for upper secondary schools. In the last hundred years, it has been seen with little variations and has not exhibited a dramatic change.<sup>1</sup>

In a textbook published in 1906, *Testo di geografia per le scuole secondarie superiori* (Pasanisi 1906), the chapter about Japan features nine sections: (1) the country name, location, and main islands; (2) physical characteristics of the archipelago (including landforms and natural phenomena such as earthquakes); (3) climate; (4) vegetation; (5) population of Japan (including race and religion); (6) short history of Japan (from the era of feudalism to the Russo-Japanese War); (7) occupations and industries; (8) external commerce and maritime communications since 1868; (9) cities in Japan, of which eight major cities in *Honshu* – Tokyo, Yokohama, Osaka, Kyoto, Nagoya, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Sasebo –, Hakodate in *Ezo* Island (Hokkaido) and Tainan in Formosa (Taiwan), which was included in Japanese territory at that time.

In a textbook published in 2014, *Conoscere il mondo. Geografia dei paesi extraeuropei* (Sofri, Sofri 2014a), the chapter about Japan consists of two parts: part 1) physical geography and population, Japanese living in cities, the lines of communication, internal politics; part 2) economy, agriculture and fishery, industrials and service sectors, and in addition several columns: ‘The Religions’, ‘Towards a Cautious Rearmament’, ‘The Secret of Demographic Records’, ‘Industry and Banks in the World Rankings’ and ‘Japanese System and the Attachment of Workers to the Company’.

As seen above, the articles about Japan in the Italian geography textbooks that have been mentioned consist of descriptions of physical geography and human geography, the latter mainly about population, cities and economy.

In the third volume of the oldest textbook wherein visual materials were observed, i.e. “Asia in generale ed in particolare” (Corradi 1912), the chapter on East Asia (named ‘Imperio del Giappone’) featured eight subsections: general notions; boundaries, surface, population; appearance of the country; products, climate; industry, commerce; government; military

<sup>1</sup> Each textbook seen below was consulted mainly in the National Institution of Education Document, Innovation and Research (INDIRE, in Florence), libraries of Ca’ Foscari University of Venice (in particular its department of economy) and the University of Padua (in particular its department of geography), national libraries such as the National Central Library of Florence and the National University Library of Turin, and other public libraries in Venice and Padua. A part of the later textbooks could be acquired in book stores.

forces; cities. In addition, there are six drawings and pictures (figs. 1-6).<sup>2</sup> It might be noted that three opened and military ports are presented.

Table 1. Classification of Visual Materials

TIME	NUMBER OF BOOKS	TOTAL OF VISUAL MATERIALS									
			TABLES AND GRAPHS	MAPS	PICTURES AND DRAWINGS	CITIES	NATURE AND CLIMATE	AGRICULTURE FORESTRY AND FISHERIES	INDUSTRIES AND COMMERCIAL	CULTURES	
1910-20s	4	12	0	5	7	4	1	0	0	2	
1930-40s	4	16	1	7	8	3	2	0	1	2	
1950-60s	9	42	1	12	29	3	8	4	2	12	
1970-80s	5	75	4	15	56	13	8	9	16	10	
1990-2000s	6	163	19	27	117	16	8	9	43	41	
2010s	1	26	10	6	10	5	0	1	3	1	
Total	29	334	35	72	227	44	27	23	65	68	

In the 35 geography textbooks published between 1906 and 2014 which have been referred to in this research, 32 textbooks adopted different kinds of visual materials. Except for three textbooks, including the same contents from another edition of the textbooks (Corradi 1912, 1917; Sofri, Sofri 2009, 2014a, 2014b), 29 textbooks published between 1912 and 2014 placed 227 visual images (pictures and drawings), 35 tables and graphs, and 72 maps. They can be classified as Table 1, according to the age of publication.

### 3.1 Kind of Maps

The maps used in these textbooks can be divided into physical maps and human maps, the latter including population and industrial maps. These are the maps showing the entire Japanese archipelago as well as certain regions in Japan. In the 29 textbooks mentioned, each featured Japanese maps except for the books from the 1910s, the twenties, and the fifties. The other three textbooks have also Asian maps that show Japan as well as world maps that, of course, include Asia.

A map is one of the most important materials used in geographical knowledge and it is a valuable tool in geographical research. It builds an image of different states and nations. In the textbooks, there are maps of certain areas in Japan, brief maps of Japan, and physical maps of Japanese islands.

<sup>2</sup> All the figures are from the second edition of the text book by Corradi, *Testo atlante di geografia* (1912). Its first edition has been published in 1907. However, it cannot be referred to in this research. Moreover, the above drawings and pictures have been adopted from the five editions of this textbook (1917), all the drawings are the same as the ones in the second edition, including descriptions attached with drawings and pictures. It is the second edition which has been referred to in this research.



Fig. 53.  
Cantante girovaga giapponese.

1



Fig. 54.  
Il Fusijama.

Questo vulcano fin dal 1707 è in riposo. È la montagna sacra dei Buddisti, ed è rappresentata su tutti i biglietti d'arte giapponesi. Alle-duee pendici, coperte di nevosità, segnano le foreste, poi la montagna non è molto popolata di abitatori, per lo meno dell'anno, la cima rivestita di neve ricoprendo sul tutto tutto del cielo.

CORRADI. — Tuto atlante di geografia, III.

2

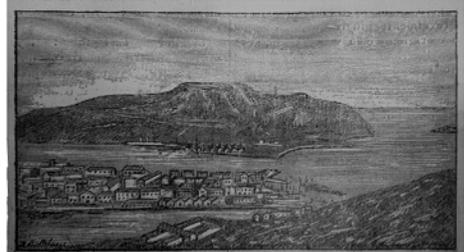


Fig. 57.

Port Arthur. — Città, docks e rada.

3



Fig. 55.  
Tokio — L'entrata del Parco Ueno.

4

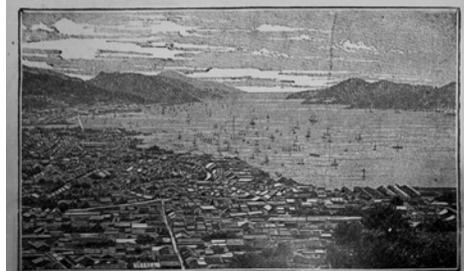


Fig. 58.

Nagasaki. — Il porto.

5

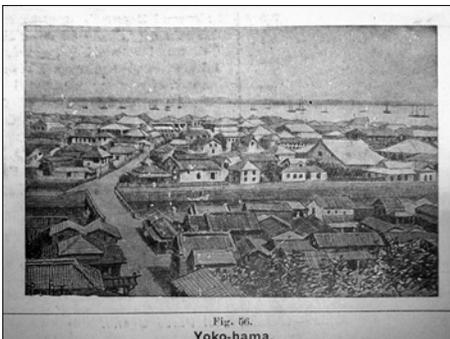


Fig. 56.  
Yoko-hama.

6

- Figure 1. Japanese wandering singer
- Figure 2. The Fujiyama
- Figure 3. Port Arthur. City, docs and harbor
- Figure 4. Tokyo. The entrance to the Ueno Park
- Figure 5. Nagasaki, the port
- Figure 6. Yokohama

### 3.2 Cities

Pictures of cities are familiar scenes in geography textbooks. Forty-four pictures in the textbooks focus on cities (if the pictures that partly feature city backgrounds are also included, the number of photos increases).

The textbooks mostly focused on Tokyo, particularly the areas of Ginza and Shinjuku.<sup>3</sup> Taking the second spot, far below Tokyo, is Osaka.<sup>4</sup> Kyoto, Nagasaki, and Yokohama were also featured several times.<sup>5</sup> Kyoto was presented as the place for temples and shrines while Nagasaki and Yokohama were defined as opened ports and industrial spots.

### 3.3 Primary Industry and Nature

Images of nature, environment and agriculture, forestry and fisheries usually appear in combination with each other. Since the fifties, these scenes were presented every decade.<sup>6</sup>

The topmost spotlighted images of nature were mountains (mainly Mount Fuji), bays, and small islands. The major images of agriculture, forestry and fisheries that were highlighted are scenes of tea picking, rice planting and rice terraces, aqua-farming and fish markets. In particular, the images of tea picking, rice planting and rice terraces were shown in South-East Asia as well as parts of East Asia aside from Japan.

### 3.4 Economy

Because of the Japanese economic growth, pictures of industries and commercial establishments have increased since the seventies.

In these pictures, the most frequent images are factories and industrial machines; for example, vintage manual assembly shops; then, they rep-

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3 See *Tokyo: Ghi[n]za, the Main Artery of the Metropolis* (Landini, Fabris 1963, 131); *Tokyo* (Sofri, Sofri 2009, 288).

4 See *The port of Osaka* (De Marchi, Ferrara 2003, 105).

5 See *No Title* [Kyoto, around Toji] (Fedrizzi et al. 2002, 81); *Nagasaki in the Island of Kiusciu* [Kyushu] (Gribaudo 1935, 44 ff.); *The Port of Yokohama* (Sofri, Sofri 2009, 291).

6 See *Tea Picking. In the Background, the Majestic and Very Regular Cone of the Volcano Fuji* [Fuji] (Almagià 1962, 71); *The Bay of Ago* (Valussi, Barbina 1974, 121); *Rice Terraces in a District in the North of Tokyo* (Sofri, Sofri 2009, 289); *The Fish Market in Tokyo* (Cornaglia, Lavagna 1978, 59).

resented automation lines, and finally, modern industrial robots.<sup>7</sup> Large industrial and transport facilities, such as petrochemical complexes, dockyards, cargo ports, motor highways and high-speed railways, have also found their way into these textbooks. Moreover, social phenomena, such as excessive crowding of commuter trains during rush hour,<sup>8</sup> company cultures, such as morning assemblies and gymnastics,<sup>9</sup> as well as corporate governance systems, for example the so-called *zaibatsu* or *keiretsu*, were sometimes highlighted with accompanying illustrations.

### 3.5 Belief and Tradition

As for the cultural sites and institutions of Japan, Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples have been continuously portrayed as locations representing Japanese belief and tradition since the earliest versions of the books. For example, the temples of Kyoto, such as *Rokuonji* or *Kinkakuji* (the 'Golden Pavilion') and *Tōji* Itsukushima Shrine in Miyajima, near Hiroshima, and *Tōshōgū*, prominently in Nikkō figures.<sup>10</sup>

As for illustrations of the Japanese traditional ways of life, the Japanese-style house and rooms – timbered, floored in straw mats (*tatami*), and divided by paper doors (*shōji* or *fusuma*) – were constantly shown since the early ones as well. These were also sometimes related to the tea ceremony.<sup>11</sup>

In later textbooks, supposedly designed with expanded spaces for geography and their articles on different countries including Japan, both traditional cultures such as *ukiyo-e*, *kabuki* or *sumo*, and popular, modern cultures, such as cinema and comics, were illustrated.<sup>12</sup>

7 See *A Japanese Modern Factory of Radios* (D'Alessandro 1966, 69); *No Title* [The Automatic Assembly in a Factory of Videocassette Recorders] (Annunziata et al. 1999, 285).

8 See *Overcrowded Subways* (Sofri, Sofri 2009, 288).

9 See *Group Exercises in a Japanese Company* (Fedrizzi et al. 2002, 86).

10 See, for each case, *The Magnificent Golden Temple of Kyoto in a Picturesque Setting of Green* (D'Alessandro 1966, 71); *Shinto Temple in Miyajima* (Gribaudo 1957, 49); *No Title* [A Five-storey Pagoda in Nikko] (Sofri, Sofri 2014a, 254).

11 See *Tea Time in a Japanese House* (Landini, Fabris 1963, 129); *The Inside of a Japanese House and Its Garden* (Nice 1986, 232).

12 See *No Title* [an illustration (among the oldest) in a scene from the Tale of Genji] (Annunziata et al. 1999, 279); *No Title* [The sumo] (Annunziata et al. 1999, 282); *Kabuki Theater* (Sofri, Sofri 2009, 301); *An Image from the Film Seven Samurai by Akira Kurosawa* (Annunziata et al. 1999, 278); *No Title* [The comics (manga)] (Annunziata et al. 1999, 294).

## 4 Iconicity of Japan and Japanese Culture in Italian Textbooks

With the imagery presented in this work, what kind of image is built to represent Japan and the Japanese culture?

As a classic image, the picture of Mount Fuji is most frequently adopted in Italian geography textbooks published from 1912 up to 2014 (23 pictures in 17 textbooks). If we add textual descriptions, Mount Fuji has been mentioned much more times (24 out of 32 textbooks published in 1906-2014).

For example, a textbook published in 1906 states:

The highest peak [in Japanese mountains] is the cone of *Fusiyama* [*Fuji-yama*] (3750m), which is on the horizon in Tokyo and is hooded with snow for much of the year. It has never erupted after 1707 and it is the holy mountain of Japanese Buddhists. The artists reproduce its soft curve on folding screens, porcelains and paper fans as mandatory background of these genres of pictures. Volcanic eruptions and earthquakes are frequent and cause terrible disasters. (Pasanisi 1906, 835)

Also in a textbook published in 1912, the following description was attached to a drawing of Mount Fuji (fig. 2):<sup>13</sup>

The volcano has been at rest since 1707. It is the sacred mountain of the Buddhists, and is represented on all objects of Japanese art. The lower slopes are covered with vegetation, forests. Bushes are inhabited by monkeys. For 10 months of the year, the top is covered with snow which shines at the bottom of the clear sky. (Corradi 1912, 25)

Over a hundred years later, a textbook published in 2014 had this description:

Japan is a rugged and mountainous archipelago which consists of more than 3000 islands. The area is geologically young, still in the process of

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13 The same drawing of Mount Fuji had been already adopted in the volume on East Asia of *Nouvelle Géographie Universelle* by Eliséé Reclus (originally published in 1882; Italian version published in 1892), in the opening part of the article about Japan (Reclus 1882, 687 = 1892, 773). Herein, Reclus noted that this drawing was illustrated by Franz Schrader, a French geographer and alpinist, and then transformed into a photograph. According to the Japanese translator of Reclus (1882, 687 = 2015, 649), its original photograph was taken by Felice Beato in 1860s (Yokohama Archives of History 2006b, 40). Beato is an Italian-English photographer born in Corfu; that photograph was included in his photo album titled *Views in Japan*, which has been sold mainly as a souvenir for foreign tourists in Yokohama and has been one of those called 'Yokohama Photography' later (see: Yokohama Archives of History 2006a, 4-11; 2006b, 108-117; cf. Bennett 2006, 86-97). Thereafter, a very similar photograph was taken by Suzuki Shinichi I, a photographer having had a photo studio in Yokohama in 1870s (Kohara 2011, 90; cf. Bennett 2006, 165-71).

adjustment: earthquakes are frequent and there are numerous volcanoes, many of which are still active. Just a volcano, Fujiyama (or Fujisan, 'Mr. Fuji', as the Japanese prefers to call it) is, with its height of 3776 meters, the traditional symbol of Japan. Fujiyama is inactive for more than three centuries. (Sofri, Sofri 2014a, 253)

As seen above, from past to present, Mount Fuji was referred to as an indication of how Japan is an earthquake archipelago situated in a volcanic zone. It was also an object of Japanese belief as well as a traditional symbol of the country. That is to say, it has been perceived as a physical landmark and as a cultural icon of Japan for a long time.

However, the images of Fujisan are featured with numerous changes. In particular, the images are usually featured in combination with another object. This is because those images are seen as Japanese icons, and Fujisan is viewed as a background or framework. The objects viewed against the backdrop of Fujisan create certain patterns and changes that complete the so-called Japanese scenario.

The first combination is Mount Fuji and another landform, such as a lake, a bay and a forest. This pattern can be found much more often in earlier textbooks.<sup>14</sup> This combination of images was reproduced most of the times.<sup>15</sup> This kind of image seems to have created more of an impression as expressed in its description: "the sacred mountain with many names, the symbol of the people and millenary civilization" (Landini, Fabris 1963, 121).<sup>16</sup>

The second pattern is Mount Fuji with rural and agriculture scenery, for example, a tea plantation, a rice field, or an old folk house.<sup>17</sup> In this combination, the agriculture scenery and the view of the country are seen as the main objects in the foreground with the mountain in the background. The way that Mount Fuji was placed in the background is normal in Japanese pictures and drawings and, therefore, this kind of image was adopted

<sup>14</sup> See *The Fusi-yama* (Gribaudo 1935, 44); *The Volcano Fusi-jama (3776m)* (Crinò 1941, 154); *No Title* [The Fuji Yama] (Almagià, Migliorini 1961, 38); *The Mount Fuji During the Winter* (D'Alessandro 1966, 67); *The Fuji* (De Marchi, Ferrara 2003, 103).

<sup>15</sup> See *The Mount Fuji During the Winter* (D'Alessandro 1966, 67) is seen in a later textbook (Cornaglia, Lavagna 1978, 53); an image of the mountain and its reflection on a lake, as seen in *Japanese Rural Life: Rice Planting. in the Background, the Fujiama* (Olivi Terribile 1967, 89).

<sup>16</sup> The picture attached with this description is also of Mount Fuji with a lake and a boat. The picture *The Fusi-Jama* in Crinò (1941, 153-5), where the mountain is described as a Japanese traditional symbol, was taken from the *Nouvelle Géographie Universelle* by Reclus [1882] 1892.

<sup>17</sup> See *Japanese Rural Life: Rice Planting. in the Background, the Fujiama* (Olivi Terribile 1967, 89); *No title* [A Japanese landscape: The characteristic shape of Mount Fuji] (Annunziata et al. 1999, 267); *A Japanese Snowy Volcano* (Fedrizzi et al. 2002, 80).

also in Italian geography textbooks. As if to show the origin of this kind of combination, see the picture *The characteristic shape of Mount Fuji* and the painting *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* in line (Annunziata et al. 1999, 267).<sup>18</sup>

Then, the third combination started being used since seventies. This pattern of images connects Fujisan with bullet trains, *Shinkansen*, which have been running since 1964.<sup>19</sup> In this combination, the *Shinkansen* is presented as a new means of transportation and the mountain stands in the background. In addition, this ‘bullet train’ has been often referred to as “a symbolic image of modern Japan” (Colussi et al. 1985, 267). It means that this composition placed the *Shinkansen* as a Japanese modern symbol located at the foreground with Mount Fuji as a Japanese traditional symbol on the background. It is thus represented as a contrasting pair of Japanese symbols.<sup>20</sup>

As seen above, images of the mountain are continuously adopted as the foremost Japanese icon. The images were reproduced in pictures combined with other various elements of Japanese nature, lifestyle, culture, and industry. Its reproductions seem to have strengthened the impression of the mountain as an icon even more.

While images of Mount Fuji were used over and over again, and its combination with other elements has become diverse, the mountain has held its image as a Japanese traditional symbol as well as a Japanese modern symbol. This refers to the bullet train or the *Shinkansen* in particular. In later textbooks, such an image showing the contrast between traditional and modern symbols in Japan is also well adopted.

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18 This picture was taken by Dallas and John Heaton for National Geographic. The painting in the right was titled *Kanagawa oki nami-ura* (The Great Wave off Kanagawa) in *Fugaku Sanjūrokkei* (Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji) by Katsushika Hokusai.

19 See *No Title* [The Train Called Tokaido with the Cone of the Fuji Yama in the Background] (Cornaglia, Lavagna 1978, 60); *No title* [The Bullet Train of Tokyo-nagoya Line, in the Background the Famous Volcano Fuji] (Colussi et al. 1985, 267); *No title* [The Ultrarapid Train: the Line of Tokaido] (Leardi, Barozzi 1986, 320); *No title* [Shinkansen Train, Between Tokyo and Osaka. in the Background, the Fuji] (Annunziata et al. 1999, 270); *No title* [Shinkansen Train, Between Tokyo and Osaka] (Sofri, Sofri 2009, 288); *No title* [A Japanese High-speed Train (shinkansen)] (Sofri, Sofri 2014a, 181).

20 In addition, this kind of contrasting combination placing Mount Fuji in the background has been also found in pictures wherein a group of buildings in Tokyo and elsewhere are on the foreground (Leardi, Barozzi 1986, 320; Sofri, Sofri 2014a, 124).

## 5 Conclusion

In the previous section, it was assumed that images of Mount Fuji were continuously chosen as an icon in representing Japan and Japanese culture. These images are perceived as the foremost symbols of Japanese nature and mentality.

Needless to say, the adoption of those images in Italian geography textbooks seems to have been influenced by other Western language books, mainly in Europe. For example, the picture of figure 2 was also taken from Reclus's *Nouvelle géographie universelle*.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, many textbooks since the 1960s referred to the *National Geographic*. And today, many of the pictures in the textbooks were borrowed from photo stock websites, such as *Imagestate* and *Alamy*. It could be assumed that the adoption of images by textbooks in the 1960s was influenced by the geographic encyclopedia in French. The more modern textbooks were influenced by the English tourism geography styles. Obviously, Japanese themselves presented such images outside of their country, especially those of Mount Fuji.<sup>22</sup> However, Italian geography textbooks have also chosen their subjects by themselves and have reproduced and changed the said images.

Meanwhile, the third combination of Mount Fuji as a Japanese traditional symbol with another object as a Japanese modern symbol is presented as an example of the idea of 'Japan as oxymoron' (i.e. hyper tradition and hyper modernity) or as double orientalism as classical orientalism and techno-orientalism in previous Japanese studies (Miyake 2011, 180-2).

Although this idea of Japan as a duality or as contradiction of tradition and modernity is not exactly new in Italian geography textbooks, it was strengthened as time went by.

<sup>21</sup> As for other drawings in the same textbooks seen above (Corradi 1912), the drawing of figure 5 showing Nagasaki has been also quoted from Reclus (1882, 817 = 1892, 907). Looking at its inscription, this drawing has been made by a person named Taylor from a photograph and engraved in wood by Kohl, probably published in Paris in 1880 (its original photograph cannot be identified in this paper). The painting of figure 6 shows Yokohama foreign settlement in 1870s - 1880s, probably from the so-called Yokohama photography. The exactly similar picture to figure 6 has been archived in the International Research Center for Japanese Studies (2012). For reference, see Kusakabe Kimbei *Yokohama Foreign Settlement* (ca. 1880s), in Bennet (2006, 206). Kusakabe worked for Felice Beato and then produced souvenir albums containing hand-coloured views and costumes for foreigners in his own studio (Bennet 2006, 203).

<sup>22</sup> For example, paintings of Mount Fuji were displayed in the World Exposition of 1873 in Vienna, the first international exposition in which the Japanese nation participated. After then, images of that mountain have been used to represent and, so to speak, advertise Japan by Japanese (Kohara 2011, 37-57).

The following images, as *Contrasts of civilization in Asia* (Gribaudo 1957, 65), *Traditional clothes next to Western costume* (Leardi, Barozzi 1986, 331), *Japanese woman wearing the traditional kimono [with a camera]* (Annunziata et al. 1999, 286), *Young women observing stars* (Annunziata et al. 1999, 280), and *A robot that prepares the sushi* (Sofri, Sofri 2009, 303),<sup>23</sup> might have implicated that idea.

As time passed, new images, especially related to the economic and industrial development of Japan, were developed, although traditional images were also preserved. This coexistence of images partly made contradictory impressions. The reproduction of images for traditional icons strengthened such an impression of contradiction, because other images connected with those icons became much more diverse.<sup>24</sup>

Furthermore, this type of duality of images was not limited to images of Japan and has been widely found in those of Asia to some extent. See, for example, the pictures *In Insular East Asia: A Village in the Philippines and an Area of Tōkyō* (Leardi, Barozzi 1986, 309), *Old and New Technologies are Alongside Each Other and Alternatives in Textile Production, One Used in Asia, the Other Exported More* (Sofri, Sofri 2014a, 151), *In Dammam* (Sofri, Sofri 2014a, 150), and *Globalization of Consumption* (Sofri, Sofri 2014a, 167).<sup>25</sup>

Textbooks tend to lack substantial changes from the previous ones, as shown in quite a lot of textbooks that adopted the same – or, at least, very similar – photographs or descriptions as those from several decades ago.

23 The picture *Traditional Clothes Next to Western Costume* has an attached description “Japan, definitely at the forefront of technological development, has preserved ancient local costumes. On the streets of Tokyo there are usually traditional robes next to increasingly widespread western costumes” (Leardi, Barozzi 1986, 331). The picture *Japanese woman wearing the traditional kimono [with a camera]* is also seen in Sofri, Sofri (2009, 300) and this picture of a woman wearing a kimono with a camera or mobile phone in her hand is popular in National Geographic Traveller (see: Bornoff 2005, 11). The painting of *Young women observing stars*, titled “Hoshi wo miru jyosei (Women observing stars)” and it was published by Ota Chou in 1936. Annunziata et al. (1999, 280) said that this painting was “probably painted in the twentieth century, when Japan had already started to become a modern industrial power, this image seems to symbolize the contradiction between tradition and modernity. The first symbolism is based on the clothes that the young women were wearing; the second from the activities which were seen: to observe the stars with a modern telescope”.

24 In contrast to the reproduction from the outside, there have been responses and conformities to it from the Japanese. Self-orientalism is one of those responses. For a relation between orientalism and self-orientalism in Japan, see Miyake (2011, 182-8).

25 To the picture *In Insular East Asia: a Village in the Philippines and an Area of Tōkyō*, the following description is attached: “In Insular East Asia, as indeed throughout the continent, different ways of living coexist and they are often conflicting. On the left we see, for exam-

In geography, more clearly shown in tourist geography in particular, differences between one's own culture and other cultures are emphasised and reproduced at the present time as well. To contrast images of Japan, particularly those of modernity to those of tradition, further development starting from today should be tracked continuously. It might be observed that the Japanese should seriously consider the possibility of portraying contradictory images of volcanoes and earthquake islands, atomic-bombed country and the promotion of nuclear electricity generation.<sup>26</sup>

In addition, issues that need to be further clarified are the actual influence on students, comparative study with other countries' textbooks and, moreover, what images of Japan and the Japanese culture have been seen in other fields in contemporary Italy, that is, other than geography textbooks. These issues should be examined in further studies.

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ple, a village of a primitive tribe in the Philippines, next to an aerial view of Tokyo, one of the largest metropolises in the world" (Leardi, Barozzi 1986, 309).

**26** See *Kobe Earthquake* (De Marchi, Ferrara 2003, 105); *Effects of the Tsunami* (Sofri, Sofri 2014a, 14); *Major Earthquakes in Japan in This [20th] Century* (Annunziata et al. 1999, 265); *The Conquests of Japanese Imperialism in the Late 19th Century and the Second World War* (Annunziata et al. 1999, 280); *Effects of the Atomic Bomb* (Sofri, Sofri 2009, 295); *Hiroshima* (Sofri, Sofri 2014a, 75); *A Nuclear Power Plant Near Fukushima* (Annunziata et al. 1999, 291); *The Problems of Pollution* (De Marchi, Ferrara 2003, 107). As mentioned above, Italian geography textbooks from the earlier one have a lot of descriptions – and sometimes photographs too – about Japanese volcanoes and earthquakes. Pasanisi (1906, 835) already said: "Eruptions, and especially earthquakes are frequent and cause terrible disasters", including the latest Hanshin-Awaji and East-Japan earthquakes (see *Kobe Earthquake* and *Effects of the Tsunami* pictures). Sometime after World War II, these textbooks have added photographs of the nuclear bombing, in addition to the descriptions of the Japanese invasion (see *The Conquests of Japanese Imperialism in the Late 19th Century and the Second World War*, *Effects of the Atomic Bomb*, and *Hiroshima* pictures). Those textbooks have also come to refer to the Japanese promotion of nuclear electricity (see *A Nuclear Power Plant Near Fukushima* and *The Problems of Pollution* pictures) and the nuclear accident in Fukushima 2011. In the recent ones, these were mentioned too. Sofri e Sofri (2014a, 257) wrote: "The severe reactor accident in Fukushima (2011) appears to have led to a rethink of the use of nuclear power, which however seems to come back sometime after".

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