







The Spartan Beat Mas Manbo



**Nippon or Nihon**

TOKYO—Is it preferable to call Japan "Nippon" in the Japanese language? Or should it be "Nihon?"

Prime Minister Eisaku Sato, at a Cabinet meeting the other day, said the Japanese Government hereafter would use "Nippon." But he added that "Nihon" was not wrong.

As the Yomiuri Shimbun points out, however, it would be rash to think that this has put an end to the controversy over which should be employed.

"Nippon" and "Nihon" have been traditionally used in Japan to suit the taste, the paper says.

Osaka, it notes, has a bridge known as Nippon-bashi while Tokyo has Nihonbashi.

In describing Mount Fuji, as it towers above the clouds, "Nippon ichi" (best in Japan) sounds better than "Nihon ichi."

On the other hand, the paper says, to use "Nippon ryori" in the reference to Japanese cuisine is grating to the ears.

Members of the Japanese race, especially those abroad, have always been touchy about the word "Japanese" shortened to its first three letters.

The shortened version of "Nipponese" is no improvement.

Thus, over the years, the newspapers have been without a suitable space-saving handle for the Japanese, though there are plenty for the peoples of other nations, such as Yank, ROK, Thai, Kiwi, Canuck and Aussie, to name a few.

This is where "Zippanguese" would come in handy. When trimmed to a snappy "Zip," it would easily fit into the headlines.

There should be few objections among the Japanese about such abbreviation. According to Webster's, the word "zip" means "full of vim," making it downright flattering.

(Of course, "zip" can also mean "a sudden hissing or sibilant noise as that made by a flying bullet," but we can just forget that.)

The controversy over Japan's name is really old stuff. Before the Tokyo Olympics of 1964, it is recalled, there was a big debate over whether the name of this country should officially be "Nihon" or "Nippon" for the Games. (The athletes of Japan's national teams have "Nippon" on their sweatshirts today, so you can see which version was picked.)

At that time, this writer came up with a suggestion for another kind of change in the country's name. It was completely ignored, but might be worth repeating.

What was suggested was that while it was at it, the Government should give the English version of the country's name the boot and re-

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