



Secrets, Sex, and Spectacle: The Rules of Scandal in Japan and the United States

Mark D. West

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A leader of a global superpower is betrayed by his mistress, who makes public the sordid details of their secret affair. His wife stands by as he denies the charges. Debates over definitions of moral leadership ensue. Sound familiar? If you guessed Clinton and Lewinsky, try again. This incident involved former Japanese prime minister Sosuke Uno and a geisha.

In *Secrets, Sex, and Spectacle*, Mark D. West organizes the seemingly random worlds of Japanese and American scandal—from corporate fraud to baseball cheaters, political corruption to celebrity sexcapades—to explore well-ingrained similarities and contrasts in law and society. In Japan and the United States, legal and organizational rules tell us what kind of behavior is considered scandalous. When Japanese and American scandal stories differ, those rules—rules that define what’s public and what’s private, rules that protect injuries to dignity and honor, and rules about sex, to name a few—often help explain the differences. In the cases of Clinton and Uno, the rules help explain why the media didn’t cover Uno’s affair, why Uno’s wife apologized on her husband’s behalf, and why Uno—and not Clinton—resigned.

Secrets, Sex, and Spectacle offers a novel approach to viewing the phenomenon of scandal—one that will be applauded by anyone who has obsessed over (or ridiculed) these public episodes.

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