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# JAPAN REVIEW

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## CONTENTS

### **SPECIAL SECTION, edited by Bernhard Scheid, Stefan Köck, and Brigitte Pickl-Kolaczia**

Domain Shinto in Tokugawa Japan

#### INTRODUCTION

7 **Bernhard SCHEID**

Domain Shinto in Tokugawa Japan

17 **Bernhard SCHEID**

Domain Shinto as a Testing Ground of Early Modern Shinto

37 **INOUE Tomokatsu**

Domain Shinto: Religious Policies, Guiding Ideas, and Historical Development

57 **Stefan KÖCK**

Shinto Certification and Religious Differentiation:  
Domain Shinto in Early Modern Okayama

77 **Brigitte PICKL-KOLACZIA**

Domain Shinto in Early Modern Mito:  
Impacts on Village Populations and Rural Networks

99 **Yoshikuni IGARASHI**

Are We Allowed to Find Beauty in the Face of Death and Destruction?  
Ishiuchi Miyako's *Hiroshima* and Postwar Japan

131 **Beth M. CARTER**

Salt, Seaweed, and Grief:  
The Power of Suma-Themed Private Poetry in *The Tale of Genji*

- 157 **Jianda YUAN**  
 Japanese Nostalgia for Empire in China:  
 The Forgotten Story of Kangde Academy, 1935–1944
- 181 **Hirokazu YOSHIE**  
 The Imperial Portrait and Palace Conservatism in Occupied Japan
- RESEARCH NOTE**
- 203 **Noriko T. REIDER**  
*Demon Slayer Kimetsu no yaiba: Oni, Vampires, and Sexuality*
- REVIEW ESSAY**
- 221 **Frederick R. DICKINSON**  
 Empire on My Mind: Celebrating Three Generations of Anglophone  
 Scholarship on Imperial Japan
- 231 **BOOK REVIEWS**
- Licentious Fictions: Ninjō and the Nineteenth-Century Japanese Novel,*  
 by Daniel Poch  
**Reviewed by Stephen DODD**
- Japanese Perceptions of Papua New Guinea: War, Travel and the Reimagining of  
 History,* by Ryōta Nishino  
**Reviewed by Andrew ELLIOTT**
- Tsushima,* by Rotem Kowner  
**Reviewed by Clinton GODART**
- Mito and the Politics of Reform in Early Modern Japan,*  
 by Michael Alan Thornton  
**Reviewed by GU Jiachen**
- Women's Performative Writing and Identity Construction in the  
 Japanese Empire,* by Satoko Kakahara  
**Reviewed by Michaela KELLY**
- Handbook of Confucianism in Modern Japan,* edited by Shaun O'Dwyer  
**Reviewed by Ernils LARSSON**
- Precepts, Ordinations, and Practice in Medieval Japanese Tendai,*  
 by Paul Groner  
**Reviewed by Stephan LICHA**

*Japan's Empire of Birds: Aristocrats, Anglo-Americans, and Transwar Ornithology,*  
by Annika A. Culver

**Reviewed by Morris LOW**

*Designing Modern Japan,* by Sarah Teasley

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*Overseas Shinto Shrines: Religion, Secularity and the Japanese Empire,*  
by Karli Shimizu

**Reviewed by Kate Wildman NAKAI**

*Meanings of Antiquity: Myth Interpretation in Premodern Japan,* by Matthieu Felt

**Reviewed by Louise NEUBRONNER**

*Territorializing Manchuria: The Transnational Frontier and Literatures of East Asia,*  
by Miya Qiong Xie

**Reviewed by Joshua Lee SOLOMON**

*Writing Violence: The Politics of Form in Early Modern Japanese Literature,*  
by David C. Atherton

**Reviewed by Mario TALAMO**

*Tenkō: Cultures of Political Conversion in Transwar Japan,*  
edited by Irena Hayter, George T. Sipos and Mark Williams

**Reviewed by Nadine WILLEMS**





**SPECIAL SECTION**, edited by Bernhard Scheid, Stefan Köck, and Brigitte Pickl-Kolaczia  
Domain Shinto in Tokugawa Japan

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## INTRODUCTION

# Domain Shinto in Tokugawa Japan

**Bernhard SCHEID\***

This introduction combines an outline of the concept of “Domain Shinto” with a synopsis of the articles that make the Special Section. It centers on the Shinto-related “Kanbun reforms,” that is, policies of an anti-Buddhist character during the 1660s in the three domains of Okayama, Mito, and Aizu. At the same time it makes clear that these are only the best known and most visible examples of Domain Shinto.

**Keywords:** religious reforms, shrine policies, early Tokugawa *meikun*, retrenchment of Buddhist temples, Kanbun era, anti-Buddhism

The guest editors of this Special Section have coined the term “Domain Shinto” as an umbrella concept.<sup>1</sup> The term signifies neither a religious school nor an intellectual movement, but rather a cluster of religious policies and ideas that were directly or indirectly related to Shinto. The concept derives from the fact that in the mid-seventeenth century, several leading daimyo implemented quite radical religious policies in their domains. Institutionally, they strengthened shrines to become independent of Buddhist supervision, while intellectually they propagated a kind of proto nativism that preceded the eighteenth-century advent of what we now call *kokugaku* 国学 (national learning or nativism). Domain Shinto policies were guided by a mix of ideological trends: a critical stance toward Buddhism, a fascination with Confucianism, and a longing for Japan’s pre-Buddhist past, the “divine country” (*shinkoku* 神国), which served as a kind of retrospective utopia. As will become clear in the individual articles of this Special Section, neither Domain Shinto lords nor their intellectual tutors considered themselves “Shintoists” in the same sense as did, for example, members of the Hirata School in the nineteenth century. Domain Shinto is thus an analytical term that does not directly correspond to any Shinto designation used in the early modern period.

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\* Bernhard Scheid is a Senior Research Fellow at the Austrian Academy of Sciences. He has published widely on the history of Shinto, focusing on the medieval and early modern periods. The concept of Domain Shinto was developed as part of a research project at the Austrian Academy of Sciences conducted by Stefan Köck and Brigitte Pickl-Kolaczia under the supervision of Bernhard Scheid. It has been financed since 2016 by two successive grants from the Austrian Science Fund (FWF, P 29231-G24 and P 33097-G). The first results were published in Köck et al. 2021.

1 The concept may be rendered in Japanese as *hanryō shintō* 藩領神道.

From the viewpoint of intellectual history, Domain Shinto was based on Shinto-Confucian syncretism (*shinju shūgō* 神儒習合, also known as *shinju itchi* 神儒一致, the unification of Shinto and Confucianism). While this early modern intellectual current has become the subject of intense research, its influence on practical religious policies has been largely ignored. The concept of Domain Shinto simultaneously examines intellectual and institutional history to understand how Shinto-Confucian ideals were actually implemented in the religious life of the populace. As implied by the term itself, the assumption is that certain domains, rather than the Shogunal court (*bakufu* 幕府), played a leading role in this endeavor. The fact that we do not include Confucianism in our term reflects our understanding that in the end it was “Shinto”—or rather Shinto shrines—which profited, while Confucianism remained an intellectual program for the elites with few lasting effects on common religious practice. We might even say that Confucianism served as a catalyst for a heightened awareness of Shinto as the only native “Way” of Japan, which in the long run led to a rejection of both Buddhism and Confucianism. The term “Domain Shinto” is thus intended to highlight a politico-religious trend that constituted, according to our understanding, an important yet underestimated factor in the evolution of Shinto.

### Domain Shinto’s Historical Contours

The most spectacular events of Domain Shinto were preceded by a series of new religious regulations instated in 1665. First, anti-Christian inspection by Buddhist temples, generally known as the *terauke* 寺請 system, was made mandatory by the Tokugawa for the entire realm. Soon after, the *bakufu* issued new regulations for Buddhist temples and, for the first time, a Law for Shrine Priests (Shosha Negi Kannushi Hatto 諸社禰宜神主法度). The following year, three leading Tokugawa daimyo introduced religious reforms in their own domains, suggesting that these domainal reforms were a response to the novel realm-wide religious regulations put in place in 1665. The reformers, who later became known as “the three illustrious lords” (*san meikun* 三名君), were Hoshina Masayuki 保科正之 (1611–1673) of Aizu 会津, Tokugawa Mitsukuni 德川光圀 (1628–1701) of Mito 水戸, and Ikeda Mitsumasa 池田光政 (1609–1682) of Okayama 岡山. Within a few years, they reduced the Buddhist clergy in their domains by more than half and tore down shrines of uncertain pedigree, labelling them “illicit” (*inshi* 淫祠). Ikeda Mitsumasa even replaced the existing *terauke* system in his domain with *shintō-uke* 神道請, that is, certification by Shinto shrines.<sup>2</sup> There is a growing consensus that the common aim of these policies (hereafter the Kanbun reforms) was to conduct anti-Christian inspection without benefiting Buddhist institutions. This endeavor was supported by a strictly anti-Buddhist Shinto-Confucian ideology.

While we regard the three *meikun* as the prototypical agents of Domain Shinto, there existed predecessors, contemporaries, and successors who shared their Shinto-Confucian ideals. Even if these figures did not realize these ideals in the same radical way, they all put great efforts into revitalizing long-forgotten shrines of antiquity within their domains. As detailed in Inoue Tomokatsu’s contribution to this Special Section, these new efforts in shrine restoration can be traced back to Tokugawa Yoshinao 德川義直 (1601–1650) of Owari

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2 Some authors also use the term *shinsboku-uke* 神職請 for certification by Shinto shrines. Both terms can be found in Edo-period sources. We have decided to follow the authority of Okayama specialist Taniguchi Sumio 谷口澄夫 (1913–2001), who preferred *shintō-uke*.

尾張 domain, working from the 1620s onward in collaboration with the scholar Hayashi Razan 林羅山 (1583–1657). This cooperation between a scholar and a daimyo seems to have become a model for shrine revivals by later generations of the Tokugawa extended family and their vassals, including the aforementioned *meikun*. According to Inoue, Yoshinao's shrine restoration program, starting in the 1630s, and its ideological justification by Razan should be regarded as an initial manifestation of Domain Shinto.

The three *meikun*, as well as others, shared Yoshinao's theoretical and practical interest in Confucianism. They established new centers of learning within their domains and attracted leading Confucian intellectuals as tutors. Some of these Confucian tutors were even given leading positions in domain administrations. Naturally, traditional vassals and the local Buddhist clergy harbored secret, unspoken objections to this Confucianization. The daimyo, on the other hand, looked for allies in the world of Shinto to strengthen their Confucian program.

Within their own families, the *meikun* broke away from the traditional Buddhist monopoly on funerals and ancestor cults, replacing these with Confucian substitutes. While Okayama and Mito took their rites from neo-Confucian traditions, Aizu adopted a new mix of Confucian and Yoshida Shinto 吉田神道 ritualism. As argued by Bernhard Scheid in his contribution to this Special Section, the choice was not a question of principal orientation toward either Shinto or Confucianism, but rather a question of availability. Both Confucian and Shinto ancestor rites required specialists, of whom there were very few. As also detailed in Scheid's article, the Tokugawa daimyo had surprisingly little contact with the Shinto authorities at the imperial court, in particular with the Yoshida 吉田 family, who were at that time the highest authority in Shinto matters. While the Yoshida interfered in the ranking of local shrines, they were reluctant to share their most secret traditions with the warrior nobility.

In 1687, a *bakufu* decree forced the abandonment of some of the most radical Domain Shinto reforms, such as *shintō-uke* in Okayama. By that time, two of the *meikun*, Hoshina Masayuki and Ikeda Mitsumasa, had already passed away. And two years later, the youngest, Tokugawa Mitsukuni, handed over leadership of his domain to a successor. After this, interest in Shinto by key figures of the Tokugawa elite seems to have cooled. Shinto-inspired daimyo reemerged only in the nineteenth century, for instance in the guise of Mito's Tokugawa Nariaki 徳川齊昭 (1800–1860). Nonetheless, the reforms initiated by the Domain Shinto lords of the seventeenth century had set new norms and precedents. While most shrines of the medieval and early modern period were run either by Buddhist monks (*shasō* 社僧) or village officials, Domain Shinto created a new demand for ordained Shinto priests. This initiated a slow but steady increase in the status and self-esteem of non-Buddhist shrine personnel, as shown by Stefan Köck and Brigitte Pickl-Kolaczia in their contributions to this Special Section.

### Previous Research on Domain Shinto

Research on Domain Shinto-related phenomena can be traced back to Tsuji Zennosuke 辻善之助 (1877–1955), who was the first to point to the seventeenth century “retrenchment of Buddhist temples” (*jin seiri* 寺院整理) by Tokugawa Mitsukuni, Hoshina Masayuki,

and Ikeda Mitsumasa.<sup>3</sup> Japanese studies on these figures are now abundant, including biographies and local histories of their domains.<sup>4</sup> At the level of intellectual history, studies on Hayashi Razan, Kumazawa Banzan 熊沢蕃山 (1619–1691), Yamazaki Ansai 山崎闇齋 (1619–1682) and Yoshikawa Koretaru 吉川惟足 (1616–1695) have evidenced the efforts by these intellectuals to combine Confucian ideas with Shinto mythology. Yet in all these cases, studies of individual figures or localities prevail over attempts to arrive at a comprehensive picture.<sup>5</sup> Notable exceptions include the work of Tamamuro Fumio 圭室文雄, the doyen of early modern religious history in Japan, who has published widely on both local and general aspects of Tokugawa religion from a socialhistorical perspective. Tamamuro also devoted much attention to the Kanbun 寛文 (1661–1673) reforms in Mito, Okayama, and Aizu.<sup>6</sup> More recently, Inoue Tomokatsu 井上智勝 has established himself as a leading authority on questions of early Tokugawa Shinto.<sup>7</sup> Among other topics, he has done a great deal of research on the revival of so-called *shikinaisha* 式内社 shrines in the seventeenth century. As explained in Inoue’s own contribution to this Special Section, the question of when, how, and why *shikinaisha* shrines attracted attention in Tokugawa Japan is intimately related to the Kanbun reforms and should therefore be included in the conception of Domain Shinto.

As regards studies in Western languages, monographs on phenomena related to Domain Shinto are virtually nonexistent and specialist articles are few and far between.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, there exists a kind of standard narrative about Shinto-related reforms in the three domains of Okayama, Mito, and Aizu during the Kanbun era. Herman Ooms’ *Tokugawa Ideology* (1985) may be regarded as the *locus classicus* in this respect. Based on research by Tamamuro Fumio, Ooms summarizes the Kanbun reforms in one paragraph, concluding that the three daimyo in question opposed the official line of Tokugawa religious policies, since they “implemented strong anti-Buddhist policies,” and yet at the same time “they achieved what the bakufu wanted,” namely anti-Christian certification, even if they charged Shinto shrines with this task.<sup>9</sup>

In his study of early modern and modern Shinto, Klaus Antoni stresses the “separation of Shinto and Buddhism (*shinbutsu bunri*) during the Kanbun era” in the three *meikun* domains, mentioning in passing the restoration of Izumo Taisha 出雲大社 during that period. Similar to Ooms, Antoni maintains that “the *terauke* system was temporarily disabled in influential *han* like Okayama.”<sup>10</sup> Moreover, he regards the Kanbun reforms as “interesting

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3 Tsuji 1961. The translation “retrenchment” for Tsuji’s *seiri* 整理 in the sense of reduction plus consolidation follows Namlin Hur.

4 For the former, see for instance Taniguchi 1964; Taniguchi 1995 for Okayama; Tamamuro 1968; Tamamuro 2003 for Mito; and Aizu Wakamatsu-shi 2001 for Aizu. For the latter, there is Nagoya 1986 and Suzuki 2006 for Tokugawa Mitsukuni; Taniguchi 1961 and Kurachi 2012 for Ikeda Mitsumasa; and Koike 2017 for Hoshina Masayuki.

5 For recent Western attempts toward a more integrated approach, see Bowring 2017; McMullen 2020.

6 See Tamamuro 1968 for Mito, Tamamuro 1991 and Tamamuro 1996 for Okayama, and Tamamuro 1977 for a general overview.

7 Inoue 2005; Inoue 2008; Inoue 2009; Inoue 2013; Inoue 2017; Inoue 2021.

8 Notable exceptions are Natalie Kouamé, who devoted a monograph to the destruction of religious institutions in Mito (Kouamé 2005); and James McMullen’s recent monograph on the worship of Confucius, including the case of Ikeda Mitsumasa (McMullen 2020). Relevant articles include Bodart-Bailey 1993, Antoni 1997, Scheid 2002, and Scheid 2003; see also Köck et al. 2021.

9 Ooms 1985, pp. 192–193, based on Tamamuro 1971.

10 Antoni 1998, p. 66.

counter movements” to the Law for Shrine Priests of 1665, which confirmed Yoshida authority in Shinto matters.<sup>11</sup>

A more detailed account is found in Nam-lin Hur’s monograph on the *terauke* system. Hur points out differences among the domains in question, arguing that certification by shrines was only conducted in Okayama, where it turned out to be “a short-lived political experiment.”<sup>12</sup> Hur regards the Kanbun reforms as ultimately futile attempts to conduct anti-Christian certification without unwanted benefits for the Buddhist clergy. In doing so, he draws a difference between the proclaimed aim of Tokugawa religious control—the suppression of Christianity—and the necessity to put this control into the hands of Buddhists—the only religious institution with a tightly organized clergy capable of conducting such a task. Thus, the anti-Buddhist stance of the Kanbun reformers did not result in opposition to religious control *per se*, but rather in attempts to optimize religious control without Buddhist interference. Hur does not go into any details, however, when it comes to the question of whether the development of Shinto as such was influenced by the Kanbun reforms.

In their *New History of Shinto*, John Breen and Mark Teeuwen essentially repeat received findings about the Kanbun reforms. Like Antoni, they point to the Law for Shrine Priests of 1665, but according to their interpretation, the acknowledgment of Yoshida Shinto in this important legal document actually paved the way for the Kanbun reforms. Consequently, their depiction evokes the impression that Yoshida Shinto was the driving force behind the religious policies of the three *meikun*.<sup>13</sup>

In Helen Hardacre’s 2017 monograph on the history of Shinto, a whole chapter is devoted to Shinto in the early Edo period.<sup>14</sup> While she mentions the Kanbun reforms in passing, Hardacre puts her emphasis on ideas and teachings. She traces a gradual evolution from medieval Yoshida Shinto to the Shinto-Confucian concepts of Hayashi Razan, Yoshikawa Koretaru, and Yamazaki Ansai. In essence, Hardacre regards the incorporation of Shinto into Confucianism as a tool used by Confucian intellectuals to naturalize Confucianism and make it attractive for rulers. However, “[t]his expedient use of Shinto was not central to Confucians’ ongoing work.”<sup>15</sup> All in all, Hardacre sees the seventeenth-century trend of identifying Shinto with Confucianism as an intellectual dead end with no significant consequences for later developments in Shinto.

While not necessarily at variance with our understanding of Domain Shinto, standard depictions of the Kanbun reforms in Western secondary sources suffer from several simplifications that deserve closer examination. In our view, common shortcomings include the following points:

- With the exception of Hur, standard narratives tend to ignore differences between the domains in question, in particular regarding the question of whether all *terauke* temples were replaced by shrines, or only a few.

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11 Antoni 1998, p. 65.

12 Hur 2007, p. 94.

13 “In several domains, Aizu in the north, Mito in the east, and Okayama in the west of Japan, Yoshida authority was established virtually overnight” (Breen and Teeuwen 2010, p. 54).

14 Hardacre 2017, chapter 9.

15 Hardacre 2017, p. 249.

- The anti-Buddhist rhetoric of the Kanbun reformers is sometimes interpreted as a criticism of *bakufu* religious policies. This renders the daimyo in question as rebels or opponents of the Tokugawa government, rebels who were ultimately forced to abandon their reforms.<sup>16</sup> Again, a closer look at local details reveals great differences between the respective domain lords in this respect.
- There is hardly any attempt to relate the Kanbun reforms to other religious developments in the seventeenth century, such as the systematic revival of ancient shrines or the search for non-Buddhist ancestor cults. While both of these phenomena occurred in the three domains in question, they were also found to a lesser or greater degree in other domains as well. Prominent examples include the separation of Shinto and Buddhism in Izumo and Ise, which also reached a peak during the Kanbun period.
- In contrast to the common understanding, the relationship between Kanbun reformers and Yoshida Shinto was ambivalent and indirect. The propagation of Shinto as the original “Way” of Japan that had to be restored at all levels of society was part of the Shinto-Confucian agenda. Yoshida Shinto certainly prepared this discourse, but was not directly engaged in spreading it, let alone in putting it into practice. Rather, the Yoshida house remained a passive beneficiary from the Confucian interest in Shinto, at least in the seventeenth century.
- The impact of the Kanbun reforms at the grassroots level, such as on religious practice in villages, has remained a largely unexplored field.

Attempts to overcome these deficiencies in the field of early modern Shinto history can be found in our edited volume *Religion, Power, and the Rise of Shinto in Early Modern Japan*, which also contains a first introduction to Domain Shinto by Bernhard Scheid.<sup>17</sup> The concept is further developed in chapters by Mark Teeuwen, Stefan Köck, and Brigitte Pickl-Kolaczia.<sup>18</sup> Inoue Tomokatsu analyzes what may be termed the ideology of Domain Shinto under the label of “Shinto as Quasi-Confucianism.”<sup>19</sup> The present Special Section continues the discussion of Domain Shinto initiated by this volume.

### Contributions to the Special Section

Bernhard Scheid further develops this introduction by addressing the usefulness and scope of the term Domain Shinto. Scheid starts with the *terauke* system and the question of how anti-Christian religious inspection was related to Domain Shinto. He goes on to qualify the alleged influence of Yoshida Shinto on Domain Shinto, demonstrating that this influence was only indirect and that the common term for Yoshida Shinto, *yuiitsu shintō* 唯一神道, did not always signify the teaching of the Yoshida. In the renovation project of Izumo Shrine, for instance, *yuiitsu shintō* referred to a Domain Shinto project completely independent of Yoshida Shinto. Scheid finally discusses the quest for ritual autonomy as a consistent feature of the various forms of Domain Shinto. According to Scheid, it is this aspect that led to conflicts between agents of Domain Shinto and the *bakuban* power structure.

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16 See the interpretation by Beatrice Bodart-Bailey analyzed in Scheid’s contribution to this Special Section.

17 Köck et al. 2021.

18 Teeuwen 2021, arriving at slightly different conclusions than in the summary in Breen and Teeuwen 2010; Köck 2021; Pickl-Kolaczia 2021.

19 Inoue 2021.

Inoue Tomokatsu presents another broad picture of Domain Shinto, starting with the restoration of ancient shrines initiated by Tokugawa Yoshinao in the 1630s. According to Inoue, these measures should be regarded as the starting point of Domain Shinto, since they were grounded in the same ideology that we find at work in the Kanbun era. Inoue goes on to present lesser-known examples before and during the Kanbun years that also fit into this ideological pattern. He insists that Shinto and Confucianism were indeed regarded as identical and of equal value at that time, which also explains the simultaneous interest in Shinto and Confucian ritualism. In conclusion, Inoue proposes defining the end of Domain Shinto as the time when this ideology no longer inspired religious reforms, that is, the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Stefan Köck deals with Shinto-related reforms in Okayama from the mid- to late seventeenth century, focusing in particular on religious certification via Shinto shrines (*shintō-uke*), the most radical of all Domain Shinto measures. Using a wide range of detailed sources, he demonstrates the relationship between the domain-wide *shintō-uke* in Okayama and the radical retrenchment of Buddhist temples there. In contrast to received scholarship, this article points out continuities between the religious policies of Mitsumasa up to 1672 and the subsequent regime of Ikeda Tsunamasa 池田綱政 (1638–1714). While Tsunamasa abandoned Mitsumasa's system of mandatory *shintō-uke* for the common populace, a functional differentiation between Buddhist and Shinto clerics persisted, exemplified in mandatory *shintō-uke* for shrine priests, even at the village level. This sheds a completely new light on Okayama as a pioneer region in terms of priestly professionalization at village shrines.

Brigitte Pickl-Kolaczia examines Domain Shinto's impact on the popular religion in Mito. Through a case study of the village of Noguchi 野口 in the center of Mito domain, she shows that the impact of Tokugawa Mitsukuni's measures on the population's religious practice was in fact quite slow. While the number of Mito's tutelary shrines almost tripled and the number of temples was reduced by more than half between 1666 and 1700, these measures did not always immediately affect the daily religious life of every village. In particular, in villages that already had a tutelary shrine, such as Noguchi, Mitsukuni's policy to separate shrines from Buddhist supervision was slow to take root. It seems, however, that from the late eighteenth century onward, this plan gained new momentum. Pickl-Kolaczia demonstrates that Noguchi's tutelary shrine was at the center of a network going far beyond the village itself, and that changes in shrine policies were connected to changes in the social structure of Noguchi and its neighboring villages.

Taken together, the contributions to this Special Section map out what we call Domain Shinto by relating it to the already well known Kanbun reforms of the 1660s in the following ways: first, we trace the intellectual and institutional background of the reforms back to the generation before the actual reformers indicating that the reforms in Okayama, Mito, and Aizu were part of a larger trend; second, we analyze the reforms themselves including their local variations, their cross-domain effects, and their differences from the prevailing religious policy of the Tokugawa *bakufu*; and third, we discuss the long-term successes and failures of the reforms. By bringing all of this together under the expression "Domain Shinto," we are creating a designation for experimental religious policies outside the political mainstream of Japan's seventeenth century. The term Domain Shinto should prove useful here in assessing the significance of the respective experiments for further developments in the history of Japanese religion.

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**SPECIAL SECTION**, edited by Bernhard Scheid, Stefan Köck, and Brigitte Pickl-Kolaczia  
Domain Shinto in Tokugawa Japan

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## Domain Shinto as a Testing Ground of Early Modern Shinto

**Bernhard SCHEID\***

This article develops the introduction to this Special Section by addressing the usefulness and scope of the term “Domain Shinto.” It starts with a discussion of the *terauke* system and the question of how anti-Christian religious inspection was related to Domain Shinto. The article goes on to qualify the alleged influence of Yoshida Shinto on Domain Shinto, demonstrating that this influence was only indirect and that the common term for Yoshida Shinto, *yuiitsu shintō*, did not always signify the teaching of the Yoshida. The article finally discusses the quest of local lords for ritual autonomy as a consistent feature of the various forms of Domain Shinto.

**Keywords:** *terauke seido*, anti-Christianity, Yoshida Shinto, Yoshikawa Shinto, *yuiitsu shintō*, *ryōbu shintō*, Yoshikawa Koretaru, Hagiwara Kaneyori, ritual autonomy

It is probably impossible to determine one guiding ideology within the so-called Great Peace of the Tokugawa regime, which spanned roughly from the seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century. Rather, different ideological currents competed for supremacy. However, a certain measure of uniformity was present in the guise of anti-Christianity. Anti-Christian dogmatics were not only a *sine qua non* for any theological discourse, anti-Christianity also provided the basis for a kind of loyalty pledge to Tokugawa rule, exemplified by the system of temple certifications (*terauke seido* 寺請制度). Under the pretext of fighting Christianity, this system forced every Japanese to become a certified member (literally “patron,” *danka* 檀家) of a Buddhist parish in order to confirm his or her non-Christian religious status. Thus, for the first time in Japanese history, the question of religious belief became part of a political endeavor to ensure and enforce the political loyalty of the entire populace.

Ironically, the period when the *terauke* system gradually took shape, the seventeenth century, was also the first time in Japanese intellectual history when explicit anti-Buddhist reasoning became conceivable. Starting from neo-Confucian schools, anti-Buddhist discourse led among other things to a reconsideration of the nation’s pre-Buddhist past,

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which was imagined as a time of “pure Shinto,” often associated with the notion of Japan as a “divine country” (*shinkoku* 神国).<sup>1</sup> While such nostalgic ideas later turned against both Buddhism and Confucianism in the form of nativism (*kokugaku* 国学), leading seventeenth century intellectuals regarded Shinto and Confucianism as virtually identical, united in their opposition to Buddhism. Proponents of this Shinto-Confucian syncretism also included members of the ruling elite. Although they were free to criticize Buddhism, they were still subject to the general obligation to join a Buddhist community. What we call “Domain Shinto” comprises a range of efforts to resolve this contradiction between theory and practice.<sup>2</sup>

The characteristics of Domain Shinto come to the fore most clearly during the Kanbun 寛文 era (1661–1673), particularly through roughly simultaneous religious reforms occurring after 1666 in the domains of Okayama 岡山, Mito 水戸, and Aizu 会津 (hereafter referred to as the Kanbun reforms). While they privileged shrines of pedigree and tutelary village shrines, their overall aim was to reduce the numbers of both Buddhist temples and so-called illicit shrines (*inshi* 淫祠) in a most radical way. These reforms were initiated and organized by strong-minded domain lords in a style comparable to “enlightened absolutism” (as it later occurred in Europe), albeit strictly confined to their respective domains, hence *Domain Shinto*. The most spectacular case is probably Okayama, where *terauke* was turned into *shintō-uke* 神道請 (or *shinshoku-uke* 神職請), that is, religious certification by Shinto shrines. Mito and Aizu experimented with similar reforms of *terauke*, but for Shinto priests only. Most of these attempts had to be withdrawn in 1687, when the *bakufu* explicitly demanded that religious certification be done by Buddhist temples only. The period from the inception of the Kanbun reforms in 1666 to their partial withdrawal in 1687 is therefore, in our conception, the peak of Domain Shinto (although this periodization is most applicable for Okayama).<sup>3</sup> Extending this metaphor, we could also call the Kanbun reforms the tip of an iceberg—our Domain Shinto—whose full dimensions, both temporal and spatial, are still being surveyed.

This article expands on the outline of Domain Shinto offered in the introduction to this Special Section by dealing specifically with the question of how we might posit Domain Shinto in relation to Tokugawa religion in general, including Confucianism, Buddhism, and other forms of Shinto, as well as in reference to religious legislation. The first section is devoted to Buddhism, focusing on the knotty problem of whether anti-Buddhist rhetoric, a salient feature of Confucian Shinto and, by implication, of Domain Shinto also, should be regarded as fully in line with the religious policies of the Tokugawa *bakufu*, or whether it implied some sort of political insubordination that eventually resulted in Domain Shinto’s decline.

The second section deals with Domain Shinto’s relations with established currents of Shinto in this period, in particular Yoshida Shinto 吉田神道. I will take a look at religious terminology in the early Edo period, arguing that Yoshida Shinto was not as ubiquitous

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1 Sonehara Satoshi 曾根原理, for instance, has stressed the continuity in the application of the term *shinkoku* in letters of diplomacy written by Hideyoshi (1591), the ban on Christianity by Ieyasu (1614), and later eulogies to Ieyasu by his successors (Sonehara 2021).

2 On the genesis of this concept, see the introduction to this Special Section.

3 As shown by Brigitte Pickl-Kolaczia in her contribution to this Special Section, Shintoization in Mito was less radical but more enduring. It spanned at least two generations of daimyo and continued well into the eighteenth century (also see Pickl-Kolaczia 2021).

as the widespread use of its terms may suggest. I go on to show the difference between the traditional, “medieval” approach to Shinto embodied by the Yoshida, and the new Confucian approach embodied by the Yoshida-trained Yoshikawa Koretaru 吉川惟足 (also known as Koretari; 1616–1695), who became an important Domain Shinto intellectual. According to the medieval paradigm of the Yoshida, the sacred traditions of Shinto (whatever they actually consisted of) should remain secret, while Koretaru’s Confucian paradigm demanded that they be made public. In this section, I also provide a brief overview of the historical process by which Yoshida practices found their way into the Domain Shinto of Aizu.

I go on to discuss the non-Buddhist funeral rites that Domain Shinto leaders designed for themselves and their families. I compare the Confucian rites of Okayama and Mito with the Yoshida-inspired rites in Aizu, arguing that they were motivated by a common quest for ritual autonomy. My conclusion is that if there was any contradiction between Domain Shinto and the central government at all, it evolved from the desire of Domain Shinto lords to sacralize their rule in the form of a self-contained ritual system outside the control of both Buddhist temples and *bakufu* administration.

### ***Terauke* and Domain Shinto’s Relation to Buddhism**

In recent decades, increasing research on the *terauke* system has led to a clearer image of how and when Buddhism became a stabilizing factor in Tokugawa rule. We have come to understand that before the Shimabara Rebellion (*Shimabara no ran* 島原の乱, 1637–1638), anti-Christian sectarian inspection (*shūmon aratame* 宗門改) was applied in former Christian communities only. Important way points in its implementation nationwide include the establishment of the Office for Religious Inspection (*shūmon aratame yaku* 宗門改役) in 1640 and the decree of Kanbun 4(1665).11.25 to conduct religious inspection in all domains.<sup>4</sup> Eventually, the *terauke* system also included the legal obligation to give alms and perform funeral services at Buddhist temples in order to qualify as a good Buddhist parishioner, but this was an even later development.

Earlier scholars of Tokugawa religion, however, tended to trace all these elements back to the founder of Tokugawa rule, Ieyasu 徳川家康 (1543–1616). This was largely because of a law on religious inspection, dated 1613, that set out the *terauke* system in great detail, including the obligation of Buddhist parishioners to receive a Buddhist funeral. The historicity of this law, reproduced in the authoritative *Tokugawa kinreikō* 徳川禁令考, was unquestioned until the 1990s, when scholars began to detect anachronisms.<sup>5</sup> In fact, according to Tamamuro Fumio 圭室文雄, the text is a forgery that actually represents legal norms of the eighteenth century. According to this revised view, it was crafted to confer greater legal weight to the mandating of duties to Buddhist parishioners.<sup>6</sup>

The existence of different models of *terauke* development is important to keep in mind when talking about the significance of the Domain Shinto reforms from 1666 onward. Should they be regarded as an expression of open criticism of the *terauke* system? Were they directed against Buddhism as a whole? Did they involve a critique of the whole government system? In approaching these questions, it makes an enormous difference whether the *terauke*

4 Elisonas 1991, p. 370; for a recent summary of *terauke* development, see Hur 2021.

5 The *Tokugawa kinreikō* is a collection of Tokugawa laws compiled by legal scholars during the Meiji period.

6 Tamamuro 2001, pp. 265–266; see also Hur 2007, pp. 221–222.

system is at an experimental stage at the time the reforms took place, or whether it had already been firmly established for half a century.

My own understanding of the Kanbun reforms was long based on the older model of *terauke* development. It was underpinned by an article written by Beatrice Bodart-Bailey with the telling title “The Persecution of Confucianism in Early Tokugawa Japan,” an interpretation that can also be found in her monograph on the “Dog Shogun,” Tokugawa Tsunayoshi 徳川綱吉 (1646–1709).<sup>7</sup> Her theories are of particular relevance for our topic since she bases her evaluation on the reign of Ikeda Mitsumasa 池田光政 (1609–1682), interpreted by us as a Domain Shinto leader.

Bodart-Bailey’s analysis starts from the famous firsthand report by Engelbert Kaempfer (1651–1716), who stayed in Japan for two years (1691–1692) and wrote about Mitsumasa in surprising detail. Kaempfer portrays Mitsumasa as an enlightened Confucian ruler who, while oppressing Buddhism, installed, among other things, a kind of common education system based on Confucian teachings.<sup>8</sup> However, as Kaempfer continues,

... the emperor and the shogun were so angered about this matter that they were about to deprive this honest patriot of his inherited fief and would have done so had he not taken the precaution of retiring in favor of his son to prevent his family from falling into disgrace.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, Kaempfer sees the case of Mitsumasa as an example of the adverse circumstances Confucianism faced in the early Tokugawa period. In order to evaluate this observation, Bodart-Bailey finds confirmation in a text by Arai Hakuseki 新井白石 (1657–1725), written some thirty years after Kaempfer’s journey.<sup>10</sup> Like Kaempfer, Hakuseki deplors the general decline of Confucianism and links it to the clash between Christianity and Buddhism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Since the government had chosen to fight Christianity with the help of Buddhism, even Confucians were forced to pose as Buddhist believers and could not spread their teachings freely. Those who criticized Buddhism were suspected of adhering to Christianity, or, as Hakuseki put it, “even superior persons mistook those who spoke about Confucianism for followers of Christianity.”<sup>11</sup> Bodart-Bailey admits some subjective hyperbole in such depictions, but adds the cases of suppressed Confucian intellectuals like Kumazawa Banzan 熊沢蕃山 (1619–1691) and Yamaga Sokō 山鹿素行 (1622–1685), as well as ritualists such as Nonaka Kenzan 野中兼山 (1615–1663) in order to conclude that early Edo Confucians were indeed outsiders, and that official support of Confucianism by the *bakufu* started only from the time of Shogun Tsunayoshi onward.<sup>12</sup>

This thesis has serious implications for any evaluation not only of Ikeda Mitsumasa, but also of other Kanbun reformers, that is, our Domain Shinto agents. In Bodart-Bailey’s view,

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7 Bodart-Bailey 1993; Bodart-Bailey 2006, pp. 50–68.

8 This is in fact a reference to schools called *tenaraisbo* 手習所, which were indeed established on a domain-wide scale during Mitsumasa’s reign. They eventually lost their support due to economic and political pressure.

9 Cited from Bodart-Bailey 1993, p. 307.

10 *Honsaroku kō* 本佐録考, a short essay discussing the *Honsaroku* 本佐録, a moral instruction attributed to Honda Masanobu 本多正信 (1538–1616), a retainer and advisor of Tokugawa Ieyasu.

11 Bodart-Bailey 1993, p. 301.

12 For a critical evaluation of these findings, see Walthall 2007.

they were “rebellious,” since they opposed the prevailing *terauke* system, which demanded not only temple registration, but also “supporting the temple financially, attending Buddhist festivals, and receiving a Buddhist burial.”<sup>13</sup> This implies that the Kanbun reforms occurred when the *terauke* system had already reached maturity. Such a supposition, however, accords precisely with the outdated understanding of *terauke* development mentioned above, an understanding based on the supposed existence of a law that is indeed cited by Bodart-Bailey.<sup>14</sup>

According to my present understanding, the Kanbun reforms were triggered in a different way by the *bakufu* legislation. In addition to the fact that nationwide *terauke* was made mandatory only in 1665, we must consider that the *bakufu* was also interested in reducing the number of religious institutions. To this end it prohibited the construction of new temples or shrines in decrees issued from 1631 onward. These orders were repeated frequently during the Kanbun era. This was clearly to counterbalance the privileges Buddhist temples were gaining from their role in the anti-Christian inspections.<sup>15</sup> The severe reduction in the number of Buddhist temples in Okayama, Mito, and Aizu—one of the most radical Domain Shinto measures commonly known as *jin seiri* 寺院整理 or “retrenchment of temples”—was therefore backed by official legislation.<sup>16</sup>

At the same time, the Kanbun reforms did not follow a consistent plan to replace Buddhism altogether. Stefan Köck’s detailed reconstruction of the events in Okayama shows, for example, that the famous transfer of religious inspection to the custody of Shinto shrines (*shintō-uke*) was not part of Ikeda Mitsumasa’s original agenda. Initially, he intended to install *shintō-uke* as an alternative for those who did not adhere to Buddhism, particularly for Confucians like himself and Shinto priests. *Shintō-uke* only became a domain-wide institution in Okayama after Mitsumasa took steps to eliminate the Fujufuse 不受不施, a subsect of Nichiren Buddhism also considered heretical by the Tokugawa.<sup>17</sup> Before their persecution in late 1666, they had provided more than 40 percent of the Buddhist clergy in the domain. According to Köck, Mitsumasa’s oppression of this unwanted Buddhist group was so radical that it resulted in a lack of manpower for the *terauke* system. Only at this point did *shintō-uke* offer a solution to the question of how to conduct anti-Christian inspections without Buddhist monks. In this radical form, *shintō-uke* existed only under the reign of Mitsumasa. Under his son and successor Ikeda Tsunamasa 池田綱政 (1638–1714), the practice gradually reverted to *terauke*, starting in 1674. In Mito and Aizu *shintō-uke* existed as well but on a lesser scale. Similar to Mitsumasa’s original intentions in Okayama, the Shinto-variant of *terauke* was meant for shrine priests and Confucians only. When the *bakufu* demanded in 1687 that religious certification be done exclusively by Buddhist temples, Mito and Aizu followed suit.<sup>18</sup> In Okayama, however, *shintō-uke* for shrine priests continued to be practiced.<sup>19</sup> This indicates that *shintō-uke* was not a consistent feature of the Kanbun reforms, as secondary sources in Western languages generally insinuate.

13 Bodart-Bailey 1993, pp. 302, 311.

14 Bodart-Bailey 1993, p. 302, and Bodart-Bailey 2006, pp. 53–56.

15 Maeda 2002, p. 339; Hur 2007, p. 248.

16 Hur 2007.

17 Köck 2021, p. 170; see also Köck’s contribution to this Special Section.

18 Pickl-Kolaczka 2021, pp. 180–184.

19 Köck 2021, p. 173.

The tendency to generalize from the Okayama Kanbun reforms must be put into perspective in other respects as well. It is true that retrenchments in Mito also started in 1666 and affected more than 50 percent of all Buddhist institutions. But the purge there was less abrupt and mainly concerned temples without a traditional parish, that is, temples that were useless for *terauke*. In other words, Mito did not disregard the need for Buddhist infrastructure to conduct anti-Christian inspections.

All this leads us to the conclusion that the Kanbun reforms were less anti-Buddhist and controversial than they are depicted in Bodart-Bailey's analysis or, to a lesser degree, in Herman Ooms's classic depiction of Tokugawa ideology.<sup>20</sup> In particular, they were not directed against *terauke* as such, but instead modified the mandatory *terauke* in ways that accorded with the anti-Buddhist Shinto-Confucian worldviews of the respective daimyo. Thus, they corresponded to a trial-and-error phase of *terauke*. Since Christianity had been virtually extinguished by this time, the *terauke* system was no longer directed against real Christians but against an imaginary Christian threat. The Kanbun era was in fact the period when the government used this threat as a pretext for controlling the religious institutions and ways of thinking of the populace all over Japan. Domain Shinto was no exception in this respect. Anti-Christian inspection provided the pretext for the aims of Domain Shinto leaders as well. Based on a Confucian understanding of religion, they reduced the numbers of temples *and* shrines. The simultaneous strengthening of certain select shrines, on the other hand, curtailed the institutional power of Buddhism, an effect not in itself at variance with Tokugawa interests. In this sense, Domain Shinto can be seen as a testing ground for a kind of sacred kingship, a style of government that gave the respective lord absolute power over both the secular and the sacred. From the 1670s, however, the ruling elites seem to have shifted towards a consensus that effective religious control of the population could not be done without the proactive involvement of Buddhism.

### **Bypassing Yoshida Shinto**

As mentioned in our introduction, the rise of Yoshida Shinto in early modern Japan is often directly related to phenomena such as the Kanbun reforms that we classify as Domain Shinto. John Breen and Mark Teeuwen, for instance, maintain that in "Aizu in the north, Mito in the east, and Okayama in the west of Japan, Yoshida authority was established virtually overnight."<sup>21</sup> Luke Roberts even proposes that "daimyo tried to force . . . people under their rule to adhere to an exclusivist Yoshida Shinto."<sup>22</sup> These statements, however, overshoot the mark. As I will discuss in the following paragraphs, the relationship between Yoshida Shinto and Domain Shinto was indirect and ambivalent.

#### *Yoshida Sources of Authority*

Yoshida Shinto dates back to Yoshida Kanetomo 吉田兼俱 (1435–1511), a traditional Shinto priest and scholar at the imperial court who claimed to possess a pure Shinto from the Age of the Gods that had never "tasted a single drop" of foreign teachings.<sup>23</sup> This notion certainly

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20 Ooms 1985, pp. 192–193. For a detailed bibliographical overview, see the introduction to this volume.

21 Breen and Teeuwen 2010, p. 54.

22 Roberts 2012, p. 140.

23 Scheid 2001, p. 249.



foreshadowed the anti-Buddhist critique of Shinto-Confucian scholars.<sup>24</sup> However, the specific form of Shinto that Kanetomo passed on to his successors had little in common with a Shinto-Confucian “Way” for the entire populace. The core of his “One-and-Only Shinto” consisted of a system of secret rites crafted on the model of esoteric Buddhism, rites primarily intended for the use of a small circle of people and family.<sup>25</sup>

The actual authority of the Yoshida rested on their traditional functions in the imperial Office for Shrine Deities (Jingikan 神祇官), which Yoshida Kanetomo cleverly enlarged by means of invented traditions. Over the sixteenth century, Kanetomo’s successors established relations with various shrines in the provinces by distributing certificates of shrine rank (*sōgen senji* 宗源宣旨), priestly licenses (*shintō saikyojō* 神道裁許状), and protective talismans (*chinsatsu* 鎮札) that increased the prestige of local shrines and allowed them to change traditional customs according to their needs. These documents and ritual implements appeared to derive from ancient court rituals, but in fact the Yoshida sold them on their own initiative, without further imperial endorsement. Thus, the Yoshida acted as a quasi-private company within the quasi-state framework of the court. While this business resulted in a growing number of Yoshida-related shrines, the prices for these licenses were much higher than ordinary village communities were able to afford, and the priests who were indeed licensed were only introduced to bits and pieces of Yoshida ritualism.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, in 1665 the *bakufu* acknowledged the Yoshida’s position as the only institution with authority over shrines outside the scope of the imperial court, when it issued the first Law for Shrine Priests (Shosha Negi Kannushi Hatto 諸社禰宜神主法度, or the Shrine Clauses). This greatly enhanced the Yoshida trade in pseudo-imperial shrine rank certificates and licenses.

In addition, the Yoshida held privileged access to the so-called classics of Shinto, the mytho-historical accounts of the “divine age” (*jindai* 神代, also read as *kami no yo*) contained in chronicles like the *Kojiki* 古事記, *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, and *Kuji hongji* 旧事本紀. These texts were of crucial importance for Japanese Confucians as they came to be regarded as historical documents from which the existence of a Japanese Way could be deduced. Access to these sources was, however, difficult for people outside the courtly elites. Although the first printed versions became available in small numbers from the early seventeenth century onward, reading and understanding the archaic language of these texts required the training of court scholars.<sup>27</sup> And court nobles, including the Yoshida, jealously watched over the preservation of their secret intellectual capital. The mythological stories of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* were known to some extent, since they had been incorporated into shrine chronicles outside the sphere of the imperial court, but, as Confucians at the time noted, such later shrine histories were inevitably imbued with Buddhist eschatology. As such, in the early Edo period actual knowledge of imperial mythology was limited to specialists at the imperial court.

24 There is even a personal connection between the Yoshida and Confucianism, since one of Kanetomo’s sons was adopted by the Kiyohara 清原, a family of Confucian learning (*myōgyōdō* 明經道) at the imperial court; he then headed that family as Kiyohara Nobukata 清原宣賢 (1475–1550). Nobukata’s son was later readopted, becoming the head of Yoshida Shinto as Yoshida Kanemigi 吉田兼右 (1516–1573).

25 For a comprehensive analysis of this system, see Scheid 2001.

26 Bardy 2021; Inoue 2013; Maeda 2002.

27 The first two volumes of the *Nihon shoki* (dealing with the divine age) were printed by the court in 1599 (Kornicki 1998, p. 130); the first print edition of the *Kojiki* appeared in 1644.

Confucian intellectuals repeatedly criticized the “selfish use” of religious authority by the Yoshida, but it is doubtful whether the Yoshida were even aware of such criticism. Conversely, even Confucian-inspired priests were dependent on the Yoshida when they sought legitimation in the world of Shinto shrines.

*Two Kinds of Shinto*

Among other things, Yoshida Kanetomo introduced new categories of Shinto that gained common currency in the Edo period. In his *Yuiitsu shintō myōbō yōshū* 唯一神道名法要集 (Essentials on name and law of one-and-only Shinto, ca. 1484), he defined his own tradition as *yuiitsu shintō* 唯一神道 (one and only Shinto), which he contrasted with two forms of Buddhist Shinto. One of these he called *honjaku engi shintō* 本迹縁起神道, referring to the vast majority of shrines, which regarded their deities as deriving from an “original Buddha” (*honji* 本地) in the form of “manifest traces” (*suijaku* 垂迹) or avatars. The other form of Buddhist Shinto he called *ryōbu shūgō shintō* 两部習合神道, literally “Shinto combining two parts.” This expression referred essentially to esoteric Buddhist interpretations of the Ise Shrines, which equated the double structure of Ise’s main sanctuaries (the Inner and the Outer Shrines) to the dual (*ryōbu* 两部) mandala of Dainichi Nyorai 大日如来.<sup>28</sup>

In the Edo period, however, Yoshida Shinto’s tripartite construction of Shinto traditions was simplified into a binary pair of *ryōbu* and *yuiitsu*. At this stage, the terms should be translated as syncretic or Buddhist Shinto (in practice, almost all shrines) and pure Shinto. This understanding is plainly reflected in the report of Engelbert Kaempfer, cited above, which describes Shinto as “the most important [religion] in status, but not as regards the number of its adherents.”<sup>29</sup> Within Shinto, Kaempfer claims the existence of “two sects”:

The first is called *yuiitsu*, meaning “orthodox,” and they keep the ancient belief and customs of their fathers without deviating even the breadth of a hair from the old path of darkness. But there are so few of them that there are more *kannushi* than followers. The second is called *ryōbu*, and they are syncretists. . . . Most adherents of Shinto belong to this sect.<sup>30</sup>

Kaempfer got most of his information about religious matters from scholars with Confucian backgrounds who must have had some interest in Shinto as a whole and in the orthodox “Juitz” sect (to quote Kaempfer’s original spelling) in particular.<sup>31</sup> At the same time, his understanding of “sects” was clearly based on a Eurocentric model of religion. Therefore, claims for the actual existence of two sects of *ryōbu* and *yuiitsu* must be taken with a grain of salt.

Kaempfer’s principal dichotomy, however, is confirmed by Japanese sources as well. An early witness is the Zen monk Bonshun 梵舜 (1553–1632), a member of the Yoshida family who became Tokugawa Ieyasu’s leading informant in Shinto matters.<sup>32</sup> Bonshun reports

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28 Teeuwen 1996.

29 Bodart-Bailey 1999, p. 103.

30 Bodart-Bailey 1999, p. 108.

31 Bodart-Bailey 1999, p. 15; Antoni 1997, p. 97.

32 Bonshun acted as the Buddhist administrator (*bettō* 别当) of Toyokuni sha 豊国社, the shrine for the deified Hideyoshi, which existed from 1599 to 1616 and was run by the Yoshida. Formally a member of the Rinzaï

in his diary in 1613 that he was questioned by Ieyasu about the “difference between *ryōbu* and *yuiitsu*.”<sup>33</sup> This question may have been related to Ieyasu’s own deification, which was performed immediately after Ieyasu’s demise in 1616 by Bonshun according to the *yuiitsu* rites of his family.<sup>34</sup> In the following year, however, Ieyasu’s cult was transferred to Nikkō 日光 under the supervision of Tenkai 天海 (1536?–1643), another religious advisor of Ieyasu.<sup>35</sup> In the process, the cult took on a distinctly Buddhist Shinto format seen as *ryōbu*, as can be testified, for instance, in the writings of Hayashi Razan 林羅山 (1583–1657). Despite his anti-Buddhist rhetoric, Razan was also a professional Buddhist monk in the service of the Tokugawa. At some point in time, he became involved in the management of Nikkō. In this context, he called Ieyasu’s divine spirit a “deity combining the two parts, dimming its light with dust” (*ryōbu shūgō wakō dōjin no kami* 兩部習合和光同塵神).<sup>36</sup> This expression combines Kanetomo’s term with an alternative metaphor for the conception of *honji suijaku* 本地垂迹.<sup>37</sup> Razan regarded Ieyasu’s spirit to be a Buddhist Shinto deity, but disregarded Kanetomo’s differentiation between *honjaku* and *ryōbu*.<sup>38</sup>

In Bonshun’s case, the term *yuiitsu* was clearly a reference to his own brand of Yoshida Shinto. However, there are several cases in the seventeenth century where *yuiitsu shintō* was used differently. A well-known example is the campaign to restore Izumo Taisha 出雲大社, which was eventually returned to its former glory in 1667. This restoration must be included in the phenomena of Domain Shinto, since it entailed a local separation of Shinto and Buddhism—probably the first case of this in Japanese shrine history—undertaken with the explicit support of the daimyo, Matsudaira Naomasa 松平直政 (1601–1666).<sup>39</sup> Under the motto “Restore One-and-Only Shinto” (*yuiitsu shintō saikō* 唯一神道再興), Buddhist elements at Izumo Taisha, such as subsidiary chapels and icons, were removed from the shrine’s precincts, and the shrine’s traditional ties to Gakuenji 鰐淵寺, the supervising temple of Izumo, were cut.<sup>40</sup> In this case, *yuiitsu* did not refer to Yoshida Shinto, since there is no trace of any intervention by Yoshida priests at Izumo.<sup>41</sup> Rather, it signified Izumo’s own supposedly pre-Buddhist practice. *Yuiitsu shintō* was interpreted quite literally as a “kami only tradition.” Moreover, we also encounter the expression “Shinto combining two parts” (*ryōbu shintō*) in the context of Izumo. This expression was used, for instance, in a eulogy to Naomasa stating

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臨濟 temple Nanzenji 南禪寺, Bonshun was also affiliated with the powerful Nanzenji abbot Sūden 崇伝 (1569–1633), Ieyasu’s most important religious advisor.

33 Hagiwara 1975, p. 687.

34 Boot 2000, pp. 149–150.

35 For details, see Boot 2000; Sugahara 1996. For a more recent evaluation, see Sonehara 2021.

36 Taira 1966, pp. 52–53.

37 That is, the buddhas are too bright for humans to look at them and thus “dim their light with dust.” The metaphor is itself of Daoist origin but was conventionally applied to explain the need of the buddhas to reveal themselves only as “traces.”

38 Razan thereby also disregarded the doctrine of *Sannō ichijitsu shintō* 山王一実神道 created for Ieyasu by Tenkai and his followers. However, outside the sphere of scholastic discourse even among these Tendai monks, Ieyasu’s cult was loosely associated with “*ryōbu shūgō*” (Sugahara 1996, p. 65, n. 4).

39 See Teeuwen 2021, who also sees the restoration of Izumo as a Domain Shinto phenomenon.

40 Nishioka 2000, pp. 202–205.

41 There is, however, an indirect influence by Hayashi Razan via his student Kurosawa Sekisai 黒澤石齋 (1612–1678) (see also the contribution by Inoue to this Special Section).

that he “put all his efforts into replacing *ryōbu* and reviving the customs of old at Kizuki Taisha.”<sup>42</sup> Thus, *ryōbu* was clearly understood as the opposite of *yuiitsu*.<sup>43</sup>

Synonyms for the *ryōbu-yuiitsu* dichotomy also existed. *Ryōbu* was sometimes called *ryōbu shūgō* 兩部習合 (as in Kanetomo’s original definition) or simply *shūgō*, while *yuiitsu* could be replaced by *sōgen* 宗源, literally “original source,” a term also used as a self-description by Yoshida Shinto. For instance, the preface of the *Shintō shūsei* 神道集成 (1670), which documents religious reforms in Mito during the Kanbun era, contrasts “pure *sōgen*” with “filthy *ryōbu*,” applying value statements similar to those in the aforementioned eulogy to Matsudaira Naomasa.<sup>44</sup> Here too, the term *sōgen* is not confined to Yoshida Shinto but designates a more general, ideal form of ancient Shinto.

The fact that the *ryōbu-yuiitsu* dichotomy did not correspond to the original definitions of the terms did not go unnoticed by the Yoshida. The *Shingyō ruiyō* 神業類要, an apologetic Yoshida Shinto text written in 1779, puts it the following way:

Today, “shrines of two parts” (*ryōbu no yashiro*) has become the usual term for shrines administrated by both priestly lineages and Buddhist shrine monks. However, it is a mistake if, by analogy, shrines that are administrated solely by priestly lineages are called “one-and-only shrines” (*yuiitsu no yashiro*). When we say *yuiitsu*, we do not mean “single” as opposed to the “combination of two parts” (*ryōbu shūgō*); we mean *sōgen shintō* 宗源神道. . . . Keep well in mind that *yuiitsu* is not [just] the opposite of *ryōbu*.<sup>45</sup>

This passage reminds the reader that *yuiitsu* refers to Yoshida (*sōgen*) Shinto, not to any other Shinto current claiming to be different from *ryōbu*. At the same time, this criticism reveals that *yuiitsu* had in fact become a slogan for the (re-)creation of self-contained shrine traditions independent of Yoshida Shinto.

Domain Shinto agents usually either sided with such *yuiitsu* movements or initiated them, as in the case of Izumo Shrine. They also used Yoshida expertise for, for instance, the shrine renovation projects detailed by Inoue Tomokatsu in his contribution. Nevertheless, this did not mean that Domain Shinto agents themselves became adherents of Yoshida Shinto. Shrines of the *ryōbu* category, on the other hand, were sometimes called “illicit shrines” (*inshi*), a label that classified them as targets for elimination. Thus, early modern sources on Shinto exhibit a great flexibility in their terminology. The analytic concept of Domain Shinto should make it easier to avoid confusion in these cases, particularly when Yoshida terms are used outside the scope of Yoshida influence.

42 *Tokugawa shoka keifu* 徳川諸家系譜, vol. 4, cited from Nishioka 2000, p. 189. Izumo Taisha was known as Kizuki Taisha until the Meiji period.

43 The issue gets even more complex in the case of Hiesha 日吉社. Yoshida Shinto obviously had a strong influence on the group of priests who tried to emancipate themselves from supervision by the Tendai temple complex of Mount Hiei 比叡. This resulted in a legal conflict in 1685, after which the Hie priests were forced to cut their affiliations with *yuiitsu*, that is, Yoshida Shinto (Teeuwen 2021). Nevertheless, some priests still adhered to a Shinto only tradition, which they now labeled Miwa-ryū Shinto (Satō 1993, pp. 143–146).

44 ST 1, p. 4. For a detailed discussion of this preface, see the contribution of Inoue to this Special Section.

45 *Shingyō ruiyō* in ST 95, *Ronsetsu hen* 8, pp. 233–234.

*Yoshikawa Koretaru and Domain Shinto in Aizu*

As we have seen, Yoshida Shinto created a kind of shrine network all over Japan by selling licenses and rank certificates to local shrines. Initially, these shrines were forced to assume a type of *yuiitsu* identity by adopting specific rites from the Yoshida tradition. From the time of Yoshida Kanemi 吉田兼見 (1535–1610) onward, however, commercial aspects gained priority over doctrinal issues and the Yoshida even licensed *ryōbu* shrines without insisting on a removal of their Buddhist elements.<sup>46</sup> In addition to this trade, the Yoshida also maintained a genuine “Shinto-only” lore protected by strict rules of secrecy, but its transmission remained confined to the family and select members of the court aristocracy.

This situation changed only due to a series of personal coincidences. A key figure in this respect was Yoshikawa Koretaru, a merchant with purported *buke* 武家 ancestry from Edo. As a kind of amateur scholar of mythology, he managed to make personal contact with Hagiwara Kaneyori 萩原兼従 (1588–1660), at that time the highest authority of Yoshida Shinto. Hagiwara was in possession of the secrets that constituted the Yoshida’s tokens of legitimacy and could only be passed on to one person at a time.<sup>47</sup> For various reasons, Koretaru was chosen as the “vessel” to transmit these secrets to future Yoshida generations. This he did, if only partially: in violation of Hagiwara’s original plan, he also leaked them to members of the Tokugawa elite and their Confucian tutors, in particular to Daimyo Hoshina Masayuki and his Confucian advisor Yamazaki Ansai 山崎闇齋 (1619–1682).<sup>48</sup> In all probability, Masayuki was largely ignorant of Shinto before his encounter with Koretaru in 1661.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, Yamazaki Ansai, who joined Masayuki’s intellectual “salon” at about the same time, only became immersed in Shinto matters after he had received Koretaru’s instructions. In the end, this resulted in the creation of Ansai’s own brand of Confucian Shinto, known as Suika Shintō 垂加神道, which was to become a major intellectual trend from the later seventeenth century onward.<sup>50</sup>

Koretaru himself also left a couple of treatises on Shinto heavily influenced by Confucian ideas. They became the core of what is now known as Yoshikawa Shinto.<sup>51</sup> Koretaru’s main asset, however, was the fact that he had been initiated into Yoshida secrets of a more ritual nature, known under labels such as *himorogi-iwasaka denju* 神籬磐境伝授. There is still a great deal of mystery about these rituals, but unlike later Confucian critics, contemporary authorities—the imperial court, the *bakufu*, and concerned daimyo—accepted the professed antiquity of these secrets. They firmly believed that they dated back to the age of the gods and conferred a spiritual authority on their possessors, regardless of whether they were Yoshida priests, Confucian scholars, powerful daimyo, or Edo merchants.

46 Hagiwara Tatsuo’s seminal study of medieval shrine ritualism contains very detailed excerpts of Yoshida sources on the beginnings of this trade (see in particular Hagiwara 1975, pp. 655–718). For a good case study of the interactions between the Yoshida and village shrines in the eighteenth century, including local “shrine monks” (*shasō* 社僧), see Bardy 2021.

47 Hagiwara was the oldest grandson of Yoshida Kanemi, the dominant Yoshida figure during the reigns of Hideyoshi and Ieyasu. The fact that Hagiwara as the logical heir of the Yoshida house became the head of Hideyoshi’s shrine and opened up a branch family (Hagiwara 1975, p. 684) indicates that initially Hideyoshi’s shrine promised even more prestige than the traditional Yoshida functions at court.

48 The go-between figure who introduced Koretaru to Masayuki was Hattori Ankyū 服部安休 (1619–1681), a samurai scholar who had also received instructions from Hayashi Razan.

49 Hayashi 2021, p. 135.

50 Ooms 1985, chapter 7.

51 Scheid 2002; ST 97, *Ronsetsu hen* 10; Taira 1966.

Why Hagiwara Kaneyori passed on these tokens of Yoshida legitimacy to an outsider is a complicated story. According to the biography of Yoshikawa Koretaru, Hagiwara himself was inspired by a kind of Confucian consciousness. He is quoted as saying:

The Way was never transmitted from our family to another one, which has led to a decline of the Way. Since it is the Way of the realm (*tenka* 天下), its vessel must be sought far and wide.<sup>52</sup>

Whether this quotation can be taken at face value is of course doubtful, but the biography is probably correct in reporting that Hagiwara continued to pass on secrets to Koretaru even after the latter had started his career as a Shinto advisor to the Tokugawa elite. Prior to that, Hagiwara himself seems to have initiated Tokugawa Yorifusa 徳川頼房 (1603–1661) of Mito, the father of Mitsukuni, into some Yoshida rituals and established contact with Mito priests.<sup>53</sup> In other words, a precedent for Koretaru's actions existed, and it is plausible that Hagiwara purposefully chose Koretaru to continue nurturing the seed of Yoshida Shinto that he himself had sown in the east.

On the other hand, Hagiwara's relations with the main Yoshida lineage were strained. In his youth, he was made the head of a new branch family created to run the ill-fated shrine of Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 (1537–1598).<sup>54</sup> When this shrine was expunged in 1616 in the aftermath of Ieyasu's elimination of the Toyotomi lineage, Hagiwara Kaneyori only barely escaped exile. After this loss in status, Hagiwara rebuilt his position as scholar and guardian of the Yoshida house with some success. Yet, when he met Koretaru in 1653, he was struggling with an intra-family problem: Yoshida and Hagiwara had only infant heirs at their disposal and a debate was underway as to who would be better suited to receive the secrets of the house. Replacing the heir with a non-relative until a suitable successor was available was a provisional solution that had been previously applied in the Yoshida house.<sup>55</sup>

These circumstances brought Yoshikawa Koretaru into possession of two things: first, an understanding of the "divine age" that surpassed even the knowledge of historian scholars such as the Hayashi, and second, a ritual competence that was tied to the mystic aura of Yoshida secrets. Koretaru passed these two elements on to a number of Shinto adepts, who thus not only acquired knowledge of Japan's divine past, but also gained access to "genuine" Shinto rituals, in particular death rituals first conducted for Hideyoshi in 1599 by Yoshida priests.<sup>56</sup> The creative adoption of these funeral rites *cum* deification enabled Yamazaki Ansai, for instance, to establish a cult for his own deified spirit while he was still alive.<sup>57</sup> More importantly, they inspired Hoshina Masayuki to order a Shinto funeral in his will and a subsequent deification as Hanitsu Reishin 土津霊神 (or Hanitsu Reisha 土津霊社), through rituals performed by Yoshikawa Koretaru. Due to their origin in Yoshida Shinto, these

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52 *Aremidō sensei gyōjō*, cited in Taira 1966, p. 11. This text, which is also known as *Yoshikawa Areminoya sensei gyōjō* 吉川視吾堂先生行状 (The Accomplishments of Master Yoshikawa of the Aremi Hall), was written shortly after Koretaru's death by his disciples under the guidance of his adoptive son and successor, Yoshikawa Yorinaga 吉川従長 (1654–1730).

53 Taira 1966, p. 9.

54 Hagiwara was in fact a grand-nephew of the aforementioned Bonshun.

55 See Scheid 2001, pp. 100–102.

56 Scheid 2004.

57 Ooms 1985, pp. 231–232; Hayashi 2021, pp. 142–143.

rites were closer to the precedent of Hideyoshi than to the Shinto-Buddhist deification of Masayuki's own ancestor, Tokugawa Ieyasu.<sup>58</sup>

It seems plausible that Ikeda Mitsumasa and Tokugawa Mitsukuni, who initiated Confucian death rituals for themselves and their families in their domains, may have also preferred Shinto rites had they had access to them.<sup>59</sup> Due to the Yoshida regime of secrecy, however, this was only possible thanks to the bold breach of courtly taboos by Yoshikawa Koretaru. Koretaru may have been motivated by selfish interests, as the Yoshida later claimed, but his breach was also based on a new understanding of Shinto as a moral “Way” and a public good. According to Koretaru's biography, he had already revealed this new interpretation in 1657, in a meeting with Tokugawa Yorinobu 徳川頼宣 (1602–1671), daimyo of Wakayama, that marks the start of Koretaru's career as Shinto teacher to the Tokugawa. On that occasion, Koretaru explained the difference between ceremonial Shinto dealing with shrine matters and his own teaching, *rigaku shintō* 理学神道, which emphasized “morality, family, and ruling the country” (*shūshin seika chikoku* 修身齐家治国).<sup>60</sup> This Confucian mindset, which combined Shinto with the art of governance, was instrumental in spreading “Shinto only” ideas and practices beyond the old elites of court society.

As regards the Yoshida themselves, their infamous trade with *sōgen senji* shrine ranks was not tied to a specific ideology, let alone a moral Way. It was simply the marketing of prestigious titles. Incidentally, this business developed on a large scale only after the Kanbun era and was particularly successful in eastern Japan in the early eighteenth century.<sup>61</sup> As mentioned above, the Shrine Clauses of 1665 were certainly a prerequisite for this development. This legislation, however, may be a side effect of Domain Shinto. It occurred at a time when Hoshina Masayuki had received his first initiations into Yoshida Shinto by Yoshikawa Koretaru while still wielding considerable influence on the central government. It is known that not only the Yoshida, but also the imperial court protested when they got wind of this breach of Yoshida taboos. The legal recognition of Yoshida privileges might thus be explained, at least in part, by Masayuki's need to compensate the Yoshida for their loss.<sup>62</sup>

In this way, Domain Shinto paved the way for the spread of Yoshida ideas and practices throughout the country. However, this development was not planned by the Yoshida themselves or by the agents of Domain Shinto, nor was it enforced from above. Rather, it was due to a new need for self-contained Shinto ritualism, triggered by the idea that Shinto shrines had to be freed from Buddhist supervision.

58 Tsugaru Nobumasa 津軽信政 (1646–1710), daimyo of Hirosaki 弘前 in today's Aomori Prefecture, was another daimyo who was deified according to Yoshida rites. He was deified in 1695 as Takateru Reisha 高照靈社 by Koretaru's successor Yoshikawa Yorinaga; see ST 97, *Ronsetsu ben* 10, pp. 83–86.

59 In fact, the Ikeda added Shinto deifications *à la* Yoshida/Yoshikawa to their Confucian ancestor cults under Mitsumasa's successor Tsunamasa, as noted by Stefan Köck in his contribution to this Special Section.

60 Taira 1966, pp. 21–22.

61 Maeda 2002, pp. 332–338; Inoue 2007, pp. 164–167.

62 There is only circumstantial evidence for this connection, but Taira Shigemichi emphasizes in this context that Koretaru was requested in Hagiwara's last will and testament to “revive the Yoshida house.” This may have been realized in 1665 in the form of the Shrine Clauses, which coincide with a visit of the young Yoshida scions in Edo. The *Tokugawa jikki* 徳川実記 also mentions that on this occasion, the idea arose of reviving Hideyoshi's Toyokuni Shrine, which had been in the custody of the Hagiwara (Taira 1966, p. 41).

### Ritual Autonomy

As we have seen, the retrenchment of shrines and temples during the Kanbun reforms was less controversial than hitherto believed, since the reforms were compatible with the overarching ideological agenda of extinguishing Christianity and controlling the religious beliefs of the populace. On the other hand, the importance attributed by Domain Shinto leaders to non-Buddhist funerals, ancestor cults, and deifications created fissures inside the ruling elite of shogun, *bakufu* officials, and leading local lords—the so-called *bakuhau* 幕藩 regime. The first tensions emerged in 1650 in the context of Tokugawa Yoshinao's funeral. Yoshinao had been the daimyo of Owari 尾張 and was an uncle of both Mitsukuni and Masayuki. As described in detail in Inoue's contribution to the Special Section, he can be regarded as a role model for later Domain Shinto lords, since he worked in close cooperation with Hayashi Razan to reestablish ancient shrines in his domain. In line with his Confucian convictions, he ordered that his funeral be conducted exclusively in a Confucian way. *Bakufu* officials, on the other hand, considered the reading of Buddhist sutras indispensable for the funeral of a Tokugawa leader and overruled his last will, resulting in a mixture of Confucian and Buddhist rites at his funeral.<sup>63</sup> Mitsukuni, among others, criticized this decision.<sup>64</sup>

Ikeda Mitsumasa and Tokugawa Mitsukuni subsequently managed to replace the Buddhist ancestor cults of their families with Confucian rites. These were introduced gradually and confined to their own domains, as both daimyo were obviously aware of possible *bakufu* intervention. More controversial was Hoshina Masayuki's Shinto funeral in 1673, already noted above. Masayuki was a grandson of Ieyasu from a minor branch of the family. He had exerted considerable influence on the government as the "guardian" (*bosa* 補佐) of the child Shogun Ietsuna 徳川家綱 (1641–1680, r. 1651–1680). It is certainly no coincidence that this political constellation enabled Domain Shinto to produce its most remarkable reforms. Nevertheless, Masayuki's will mandating a Shinto funeral met with similar opposition by *bakufu* officials as had the Confucian funeral of his uncle in 1650.

After complicated negotiations led by Yoshikawa Koretaru, Masayuki's Shinto funeral was tolerated on the condition that all of the rituals were carried out in Aizu rather than Edo, although the latter is where Masayuki had spent most of his life, including his last days.<sup>65</sup> His deification at the newly built Hanitsu Jinja 土津神社 required a further two years of lobbying and was granted under similar conditions. Two generations later, Aizu went a step further by asking the Yoshida (not the Yoshikawa!) to promote Masayuki's spirit from a *reishin* 靈神 to a *daimyōjin* 大明神 title (the same divine title that Hideyoshi had received). While the Yoshida approved this elevation, senior councilors (*rōjū* 老中) of the *bakufu* objected when they were informed in 1735, arguing that this action was "selfish and showed disrespect to Tōshōgū 東照宮." This implied that an exalted title such as *daimyōjin* for a deified lord would call into question the uniqueness of the Tōshōgū, the site of Ieyasu's apotheosis. Aizu was consequently only allowed to use the *daimyōjin* title within the domain and among house retainers, but not in communication with outsiders or with the *bakufu*.<sup>66</sup>

63 *Aremidō sensei gyōjō* in ST 97, *Ronsetsu hen* 10, p. 472; see also the contribution by Inoue to this Special Section.

64 Tamamuro 1968, pp. 871–873.

65 Hayashi 2021, pp. 138–142; Roberts 2012, pp. 143–150; Scheid 2002, pp. 315–316.

66 Roberts 2012, pp. 148–149.



In the cases of Tokugawa Yoshinao and Hoshina Masayuki, it was high *bakufu* officials such as senior councilors and magistrates of temples and shrines (*jisha bugyō* 寺社奉行) who voiced objection to the ritual extravagances of their posthumous cults. These officials held domains of their own, although most of them were of so-called *fudai* 譜代 (vassal) status, with their territorial privileges due to long-standing vassal relationships to the Tokugawa. In particular, the *fudai* Sakai Tadakiyo 酒井忠清 (1624–1681), who served as Great Councilor (*tairō* 大老) from 1666 to 1680, seems to have regarded innovations that we now classify as Domain Shinto with suspicion.<sup>67</sup> This is said to have arisen from Tadakiyo's particular aversion to Confucian learning, but it could be also related to a structural “balance of power.”<sup>68</sup> While *fudai* houses had access to the highest posts in the government, they were denied the position of shogun. In contrast, the Tokugawa branch families—in particular the Three Houses (*gosanke* 御三家) of Kii 紀伊, Owari, and Mito—had the explicit task of providing shogunal successors for the main lineage if needed, but were excluded from high administrative posts.<sup>69</sup> Thus, the *fudai* bureaucracy kept a watchful eye over all daimyo under Tokugawa rule, including lords from the extended Tokugawa family. They formed a natural conservative element within the *bakuhan* power structure, in particular in the area of ritual propriety.

As concerns the propriety of ancestor cults, a tacit convention existed that daimyo cults should not compete with the ceremonial or spatial dimensions of Ieyasu's Tōshōgū. Established Buddhist institutions became natural allies in maintaining this standard, in particular the Tendai 天台 school, which oversaw both Tōshōgū in Nikkō and Kan'eiji 寛永寺, one of the two Tokugawa funerary temples (*bodaiji* 菩提寺) in Edo. Domain Shinto, on the other hand, adopted ritual procedures which were distinct from Buddhism or Buddhist Shinto (*ryōbu*), and turned the worship of the local lord into a “Way” meant as a model for the entire Tokugawa realm. Confucianism and Shinto provided ideological and ritual foundations for these cults, but unlike Buddhism, they lacked the institutional power to be recognized by the shogunate as authorities in matters of religious orthodoxy and political hierarchy. Therefore, new “Ways” of Shinto-Confucian ancestor worship raised suspicion among the *bakufu* administration. New ways meant claims to authority beyond the established cooperation between Buddhism and the state. And indeed, it remained ambiguous whether Shinto-Confucian daimyo cults contributed to the prestige of the Tokugawa regime in general or to the increased status of the respective local lord. In this sense, Domain Shinto contained a subversive element deriving from its quest for ritual autonomy.

Another point where Domain Shinto was at variance with the *bakuhan* structure the *fudai* sought to maintain relates to Confucian meritocracy. Ikeda Mitsumasa, for instance, installed “talented men” from other provinces in his own domain, leading to conflicts with his own house vassals.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, in the case of the funerals of Tokugawa Yoshinao

67 In the case of Okayama, it is probable that Tadakiyo personally urged Ikeda Tsunamasa to withdraw his father's most unusual innovations (Bodart-Bailey 2006, p. 65; McMullen 2021, p. 128), even if Köck proposes alternative scenarios in his contribution to this Special Section.

68 Bodart-Bailey 2006, p. 65.

69 According to Hall, this structure developed from the specific house rules of the Matsudaira 松平, the extended Tokugawa family (Hall 1991, pp. 163–169).

70 See McMullen 2021, as well as the contribution by Köck to this Special Section.

and Hoshina Masayuki, some of their house vassals clearly opposed these departures from Buddhist tradition. House vassals thus constituted another conservative element in Tokugawa society, since they jealously watched over the preservation of their feudal rights of inheritance that also pertained to their offices. Vassals in the domains and *fudai* in the *bakufu* were similar in this respect. Taking this into consideration, it seems plausible that the opposition, which eventually caused the failure of Domain Shinto's "enlightened absolutism," arose mainly from the intermediate echelons of the warrior elite, who felt threatened by Confucian meritocratic principles and insisted on feudal inheritance.

### Conclusion

The present article starts from a series of most radical religious reforms initiated in the Kanbun era of the later seventeenth century in the domains of Okayama, Mito, and Aizu. These reforms are seen as the tip of an iceberg we refer to as Domain Shinto, meaning a number of Shinto-related religious policies introduced inside and outside the three domains. This expansive conception leads us to a new understanding of the reforms' significance, both at the time and within the span of Japanese religious history. I argue that the *terauke* system, which was also extended to the entire country in the Kanbun era, influenced these reforms in ways other than is commonly understood. All Domain Shinto leaders were in line with the anti-Christian policies of the *bakufu*, but they also all tried, to varying degrees, to make non-Buddhist forms of anti-Christian certification an option. At the same time, the full integration of anti-Christianity and Buddhism was not yet completed in the Kanbun era, and consequently Domain Shinto was not as controversial as generally assumed. Rather, it served as a testing ground for new forms of ruler legitimization from an ultimately Tokugawa-centric perspective.

One point that may be raised against the concept of Domain Shinto is the fact that the Kanbun reforms were not intended as reforms of Shinto. When we put the focus on the minds of Domain Shinto's primary agents, Confucianism may indeed have been the prime motivation. Their understanding of Shinto, on the other hand, was vague and amounted to not much more than a glorification of Japan's pre-Buddhist past. At the same time, we must bear in mind that Shinto and Confucianism were in no way mutually exclusive at that time. If we look at the concrete measures highlighted in the articles of Inoue, Köck, and Pickl-Kolaczia in this Special Section, we indeed find Confucian daimyo paying an unexpected amount of attention to the details of shrine organization. In terms of religious history, the Kanbun reforms had a greater impact on Shinto as they produced precedents, such as the forceful separation of shrines and temples that we can later observe at the national level. Both intellectually and institutionally, Domain Shinto created space for non-Buddhist religious activities, which was successively filled with innovations in the realm of shrine worship.

This leads us to the relationship between Yoshida Shinto and Domain Shinto. While scholars have often regarded Yoshida Shinto as the driving force behind the Kanbun reforms, my understanding arrives at the opposite conclusion, namely that Yoshida Shinto was actually a passive beneficiary of these reforms. The traditional understanding is based on straightforwardly equating *yuiitsu shintō* with Yoshida Shinto, but closer inspection reveals that the label *yuiitsu* was also applied to shrine emancipation movements outside the scope of Yoshida influence. *Yuiitsu* could therefore encompass phenomena that I would classify as Domain Shinto. Domain Shinto was thus a factor in the nationwide rise of Shinto. Yoshida

Shinto profited from this development, despite the fact that it adhered to medieval patterns of secret transmission that Domain Shinto, or the Confucian ideology underpinning it, sought to overcome.

In addition to a non-Buddhist mode of anti-Christian ideological control, Domain Shinto leaders also sought to introduce non-Buddhist ancestor cults and funerals. It is this aspect of Domain Shinto that reveals the greatest potential for conflict with *bakufu* religious policies, since these ancestor cults resulted in a quest for ritual autonomy that contradicted the unspoken laws of ritual propriety. This put the ritual innovations of Domain Shinto, whether inspired by Shinto or by Confucianism, in opposition to the conservative Buddhist mainstream of the time, which was upheld, I conjecture, by the *fudai* daimyo and many vassals of Domain Shinto leaders themselves. In other words, Domain Shinto lords faced largely tacit opposition from the lower echelons of warrior society to their reforms.

In order to describe the wider relationship between Domain Shinto and more conservative forms of religion in the early Edo period, I would like to take up an observation made by Herman Ooms. In his *Tokugawa Ideology*, Ooms draws a distinction between “the ritual mode of ideological expression” in the Tokugawa mainstream—referring in particular to the Tōshōgū cult of Ieyasu—and the “discursive mode” of Shinto-Confucian “schoolmen”—who include, as I conceive them, the ideologues of Domain Shinto.<sup>71</sup> Perhaps this observation could be generalized as a shift from “medieval” to “early modern” modes of ideological expression. According to medieval conceptions, ultimate authority was attributed to ritual systems that developed around “secrets” at their centers. These secrets could be ritual formulas or objects or both, but in any case, they had to be conferred in the form of initiations from a bearer of authority to a qualified successor. “Teachings” played only a secondary role in this process. Authority was tied to the possession of symbolic objects guarded by secrecy.<sup>72</sup> This “ritual mode of ideological expression” found its most refined form in esoteric Buddhism, but it was found in other traditions as well, such as Yoshida Shinto. In contradistinction to such conceptions of sacred authority, neo-Confucian intellectuals insisted on the concept of a “Way” that centered on a “teaching” revealing a “truth” that could and should be communicated to as many people as possible, since it was a public good. Confucian Shinto of the seventeenth century reflected this conceptualization. It defined Shinto as the Way of Japan every Japanese should follow (even if it was hard to determine what kind of truth Shinto contained). Domain Shinto was, as we have seen, the experimental application of Confucian Shinto in certain domains, domains that in retrospect appear to have been laboratories of a new, “discursive mode” of ideological expression. In this sense, Domain Shinto differed from the Tokugawa mainstream, which relied almost entirely on long-established esoteric modes of sacred authority. Thus, Domain Shinto was not at variance with Tokugawa mainstream ideology in terms of content, but in terms of modality.

This “discursive” approach notwithstanding, esoteric modes of transmission retained their significance in Confucian Shinto as well. Although this goes beyond the period discussed above, we can equate the end of Domain Shinto with the rise of nativism in the eighteenth century. The latter directed its criticism much more consistently against the esoteric remnants of medieval Shinto, including ritual innovations by Domain Shinto leaders.

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71 Ooms 1985, p. 193.

72 For details of this medieval “culture of secrecy,” see Scheid and Teeuwen 2006.

Seen from this angle, Domain Shinto ultimately had to give way to the “discursive modes” of ideological expression that it had itself accompanied into the religious-political arena of the early modern period.

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**SPECIAL SECTION**, edited by Bernhard Scheid, Stefan Köck, and Brigitte Pickl-Kolaczia  
Domain Shinto in Tokugawa Japan

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## **Domain Shinto: Religious Policies, Guiding Ideas, and Historical Development**

**INOUE Tomokatsu\***

This article argues that the restoration of ancient shrines initiated by Tokugawa Yoshinao in the 1630s should be regarded as the starting point of Domain Shinto. It demonstrates that Yoshinao's constructive Shinto policies were grounded on the same ideology that we find at work in the more famous and primarily destructive Domain Shinto policies of the Kanbun era. The article presents lesser-known examples before and during the Kanbun years that also fit into this ideological pattern. In this period, Shinto and Confucianism were regarded by many political agents as identical and of equal value, which also explains the daimyos' simultaneous interest in Shinto and Confucian ritualism. In conclusion, this article proposes defining the end of Domain Shinto as the time when Shinto-Confucian ideologies no longer inspired Shinto reforms, that is, the beginning of the eighteenth century.

**Keywords:** *shinju itchi*, Tokugawa Yoshinao, Hayashi Razan, Hayashi Gahō, *shikinaisha*, shrine restoration, *inshi*, Confucian rituals

During the Kanbun 寛文 era (1661–1673), the three domains of Aizu 会津, Mito 水戸, and Okayama 岡山 pursued distinctive religious policies that aimed at the reduction and retrenchment of temples and shrines. In a recent edited volume examining early modern Shinto and this issue, Bernhard Scheid and his team introduced the label “Domain Shinto” for these policies.<sup>1</sup> This new academic term does not refer to a specific Shinto school or school of thought, but to a “cluster of religious policies and ideas that were directly or indirectly related to Shinto,” putting the emphasis not only on intellectual but also on institutional history.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Köck et al. 2021.

2 See the introduction to this Special Section.

This article provisionally adopts Scheid's definition of Domain Shinto while accepting that the concept is still relatively young and undeveloped. This makes it essential to further refine the concept. I will therefore examine the essence of Domain Shinto policies, the ideas from which they originated, and whether they varied from period to period. Moreover, I will analyze the Shinto-Confucian concepts that constitute the intellectual underpinnings of Domain Shinto and their expression in new forms of ritualism. Finally, in my conclusion, I address the question of which period might be considered the end of Domain Shinto. Let me start, however, with a few thoughts on the applicability of the term itself.

### Shinto or Shinto Policy?

Tsuji Zennosuke 辻善之助 (1877–1955) was the first to explain the Kanbun policies in Okayama, Mito, and Aizu as a “retrenchment of Buddhist temples” (*jiin seiri* 寺院整理) based on an anti-Buddhist ideology (*haibutsu ron* 排仏論).<sup>3</sup> This interpretation was taken up by Tamamuro Fumio 圭室文雄, leading to a general understanding that Buddhism was the main target of these policies.<sup>4</sup> As I will try to demonstrate in this article, however, the Kanbun reforms were actually grounded in a particular Shinto ideology and primarily targeted shrines. In this regard, of preeminent importance were the teachings of Hayashi Razan 林羅山 (1583–1657), Yoshikawa Koretaru 吉川惟足 (1616–1695), and Yamazaki Ansai 山崎闇斎 (1619–1682).<sup>5</sup> Although these intellectuals disagreed in many details, their ideas are all based on the axiomatic premise that Shinto and Confucianism were identical (*shinju itchi* 神儒一致).

Within the intellectual identification of Shinto with Confucianism, Razan's idea that “the Way of the Gods is the Way of Rulership” (*shintō soku ōdō* 神道即王道) is of particular importance.<sup>6</sup> This not only influenced several leading daimyo in their development of Domain Shinto, but also justifies the term “Domain Shinto” itself. As Domain Shinto refers to both religious policies and the ideas guiding them, it might seem more correct to speak of “domain Shinto policies.” However, inasmuch as these policies were based on Razan's dictum that Shinto is the Way of Rulership, these policies can be seen themselves as “Shinto” in practice. From Razan's point of view, Shinto policy is in fact Shinto. Since the promoters of this “Shinto *qua* Shinto policy” were feudal lords rather than the shogunate, their practice of Shinto was confined to their domains. Therefore, as far as religious policies by feudal lords accorded to “the Way of the Gods is the Way of Rulership”, they can indeed be labeled Domain Shinto.

Put differently, the applicability of the term Domain Shinto depends on the suppositions that (1) early Tokugawa Confucian intellectuals like Hayashi Razan harbored a genuine interest in Shinto, and that (2) this interest influenced the religious policies of certain domains. This article attempts to verify these suppositions.

3 Tsuji 1953, pp. 331–336; Tsuji 1955, pp. 339–399.

4 Tamamuro 1971; Tamamuro 1987.

5 All of them founded Confucian Shinto schools: Ritō Shinchi Shinto 理当心地神道 (Razan), Yoshikawa Shinto 吉川神道 (Koretaru), and Suika Shinto 垂加神道 (Ansai).

6 This idea is mentioned, for instance, in Razan's *Shintō denju* 神道伝授; see Taira et al. 1972, p. 19; also Ooms 1985, p. 93.



### Domain Shinto during the Kanbun Era

We start with a brief outline of the most typical examples of what we call Domain Shinto, the religious policies in Mito, Aizu, and Okayama, which are covered in more detail in the other articles of this Special Section. A discussion of these cases is necessary in order to compare them with a number of similar examples which show that Domain Shinto also manifested itself in the reforms of individual religious institutions and did not necessarily affect an entire domain.

#### *The Cases of Mito, Aizu, and Okayama*

Under Tokugawa Mitsukuni 徳川光圀 (1628–1700), daimyo of Mito domain in Hitachi Province, religious reforms started with a survey of temples and shrines in 1663.<sup>7</sup> Based on this survey, Mito streamlined its religious institutions from 1666 until the end of the century, a retrenchment involving the destruction and consolidation of both temples and shrines. With regard to Buddhist institutions, 1,433 temples—more than 50 percent of the 2,377 temples in its territory—were eliminated.<sup>8</sup> With regard to Shinto, Mitsukuni strived for a system of a single tutelary shrine per village. The number of tutelary village shrines (*chinjusha* 鎮守社) was increased from 186 in 1663 to 551 around 1700.<sup>9</sup> Yet, Buddhist shrine monks (*shasō* 社僧) were dismissed in the process. Moreover, shrines that were deemed to have no adequate historical pedigree according to the survey were considered “illicit shrines” (*inshi* 淫祠) and extirpated. These measures continued until the last year of Mitsukuni’s reign, 1696, when Buddhist elements were still being thoroughly expunged from village shrines.<sup>10</sup> Mitsukuni also restored Shizu Jinja 静神社 and Yoshida Jinja 吉田神社, the traditional second (*ninomiya* 二宮) and third (*sannomiya* 三宮) shrines of Hitachi Province in 1667, while defrocking their Buddhist clergy. Both shrines were *shikinaisha* 式内社, that is, state-sponsored shrines of the Heian 平安 period (794–1185) included in the *Engishiki jinmyōchō* 延喜式神名帳 (List of shrines in the regulations of the Engi era) compiled in the tenth century. With regard to Shinto ritualism, Mitsukuni sent Mito priests to Kyoto to study under the Yoshida-Urabe 吉田卜部—at that time the foremost authority in shrine matters.

In northern Aizu, Hoshina Masayuki 保科正之 (1611–1673) ordered local temples and shrines to submit their histories (*engi* 縁起) to the domain in 1664.<sup>11</sup> Based on this investigation, Masayuki had new temples and “illicit shrines” torn down. Moreover, Buddhist elements were removed from shrines and smaller shrines were merged. On the other hand, he revived *shikinaisha* that had fallen into disuse. The results of this reorganization, completed by 1672, were documented in two registers of local shrines, *Aizu jinja-shi* 会津神社志 and *Aizu jinja sōroku* 会津神社総録.<sup>12</sup>

In the west of Japan, Okayama’s Ikeda Mitsumasa 池田光政 (1609–1682) initiated religious reforms in 1666 that also led to massive destruction and the consolidation of local

7 The following data on Mito is taken from Tamamuro 1968, pp. 858–870; Tamamuro 2003, pp. 3–6; and Pickl-Kolaczia 2021, pp. 179–185.

8 Pickl-Kolaczia 2021, p. 180.

9 Pickl-Kolaczia 2021, p. 184.

10 For notable exceptions, see Brigitte Pickl-Kolaczia’s contribution to this Special Section.

11 Kasei Jikki 1976, p. 182; other data on Aizu is from Aizu Wakamatsu-shi 1965, pp. 362–363.

12 *Aizu jinja-shi*, completed in 1672, contains a list of the 268 main ancient shrines of Aizu domain; *Aizu jinja sōroku*, completed after Masayuki’s death in 1673, contains the names of 1,418 shrines confirmed by the domain administration.

religious sites.<sup>13</sup> As of 1667, 563 of the 1,044 temples in the territory had been eliminated. By 1675, the number of destroyed temples had risen to 598. With regard to shrines, only tutelary village shrines (*ubusunagami* 産土神) and shrines of long pedigree were retained, while small shrines dedicated to syncretic deities such as Kōjin 荒神 were deemed “illicit.” All in all, 10,572 “illicit shrines” were merged into seventy-one collective shrines called *yosemiya* 寄宮, which were put under the jurisdiction of their respective district offices. This large-scale project was endorsed by the Yoshida in Kyoto. As in Mito and Aizu, *shikinaisha* gained privileged status in Okayama as well.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, Mitsumasa altered the widely practiced *terauke* 寺請 system—the confirmation of non-Christian affiliation by Buddhist temples—and replaced it with *shintō-uke* 神道請 (also called *shinshoku-uke* 神職請), that is, confirmation of non-Christian status by the Shinto priesthood.

### *The Case of Takamatsu Domain*

Matsudaira Yorishige 松平頼重 (1622–1695) is another lord who carried out Domain Shinto policies during the Kanbun era in his domain of Sanuki Takamatsu 讃岐高松, albeit in a less radical fashion than his younger brother, Tokugawa Mitsukuni of Mito.<sup>15</sup> In 1668, Yorishige erected “collective shrines” (*yosemiya*) similar to those in Okayama, and in 1669, he ordered the headmen (*ōjōya* 大庄屋) of each district to investigate the origins of their shrines and temples, and to submit their findings to him. Already some years earlier, in 1664, Yorishige had come to the conclusion that the Tsuruuchi Hachimangū 鶴内八幡宮—a typical syncretic shrine within his domain—was identical to a certain Shirotori Jinja 白鳥神社 (white bird shrine) mentioned in a medieval war tale and dedicated to the mythological hero Yamato Takeru no Mikoto 日本武尊.<sup>16</sup> Subsequently, Yorishige had the shrine’s administrative temple (*bettōji* 別当寺) and other Buddhist elements removed, and asked priests of the Urabe 卜部 family in Kyoto to install a shrine priest (*kannushi* 神主) and to rename the shrine Shirotori Jinja.<sup>17</sup> In the following year, he requested the shogunate to grant the shrine a vermilion seal estate of two hundred *koku* and fortified the non-Buddhist nature of the shrine in a code (*hatto* 法度) of thirty-six rules.

However, Yorishige did not plan to abolish Buddhism altogether. When he retired from his lordship of Takamatsu domain in 1673, he clearly expressed his position regarding Shinto and Buddhism to Shogun Ietsuna 家綱 (1641–1680), a son of his cousin Iemitsu, in the following words of advice:

13 Data on Okayama is taken from Taniguchi 1964, pp. 573–602. For details, see also Köck 2021 and Stefan Köck’s contribution to this Special Section.

14 Inoue 2007, p. 3.

15 My analysis of Yorishige’s shrine policies is based on his biography in Matsudaira Kōekikai 1964, pp. 180–184, 296–308, and upon Kagawa-ken 1989, pp. 569–571.

16 This identification was based on medieval sources like the *Genpei jōsuiki* 源平盛衰記, but while that text mentions a white bird shrine in Sanuki Province, it does not specify its location. The oldest sources on Yamato Takeru no Mikoto, *Kojiki* 古事記 (712) and *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (720), mention the legend that he assumed the form of a white bird when he died. These sources also mention several white bird shrines in his honor but do not describe any of them as situated on Shikoku.

17 In fact, he turned to the Hirano 平野 branch of the Urabe, who were collateral relatives of the famous Yoshida-Urabe mentioned above.

Japan is a divine country, but in recent times it has lost [its relation to the gods]. You should command the lords of provinces (*kokushu* 国主) and domains (*ryōshu* 領主) to abolish useless shrines, and to restore shrines of ancient reputation in a simple way. Shrines of pure ancient origin (*sōgen* 宗源) should be run by shrine priests (*shanin* 社人). In shrines of dual origin (*ryōbu shūgō* 両部習合), however, priests should perform their duties together with the Buddhist administrators (*bettō* 別当) of the shrine's original Buddha hall (*honjidō* 本地堂).<sup>18</sup>

Thus, Yorishige recommended the removal of Buddhist oversight from those shrines originally run without Buddhist supervision. Shrines that had originated within Shinto-Buddhist syncretism, however, should continue their mixed traditions.

This comparatively tolerant attitude towards Shinto-Buddhist syncretism became visible in practice in 1666, when Yorishige ordered the restoration of Iwaseo Hachimangū 石清尾八幡宮, a famous local shrine close to his residence in Takamatsu town. Here, the shrine's administrative Buddhist temple was not torn down, while the hall of its *honji* Buddha was restored. Thus, the Shinto-Buddhist layout of the site was fully maintained.

#### *Izumo, Ise, and Other Examples of Domain Shinto Practice*

The restoration of the Izumo shrine of Kizuki Taisha 杵築大社 (today's Izumo Taisha 出雲大社) was completed in 1667 and funded by the *bakufu* in the name of Shogun Tokugawa Ietsuna.<sup>19</sup> However, his role was limited to approving the construction and paying the costs. The restoration itself was in many respects a typical Domain Shinto project by the new daimyo of Izumo Matsue domain, Matsudaira Naomasa 松平直政 (1601–1666), a grandson of Tokugawa Ieyasu.

Already in 1638, when he took over the domain, Naomasa had laid down new guidelines for Izumo Shrine's management in the Kizuki Taisha Hatto 杵築大社法度.<sup>20</sup> In subsequent years, Naomasa appealed to the shogunate for permission to rebuild the shrine, which was granted in 1646. However, the project had to wait another fifteen years, starting only in the first year of Kanbun, 1661. The reconstruction project included the removal of Buddhist pagodas, temple halls, and sutra repositories, most of which had been installed in the shrine precinct under the Amago 尼子, the daimyo who had controlled the Izumo region from 1486 to 1566. The anti-Buddhist measures of 1661 are generally attributed to Naomasa, but they were also advanced in large part by the Kizuki shrine priests. The priests were in turn influenced by Kurosawa Sekisai 黒澤石斎 (1612–1678), who served as the domain's Confucian scholar from 1653 to 1666. Kizuki priests who became familiar with his work soon shared his deep dissatisfaction with Shinto-Buddhist practices, a criticism that derived ultimately from Sekisai's teacher, Hayashi Razan.

Further support for Izumo's anti-Buddhist policy came from Inoue Masatoshi 井上正利 (1606–1675), who served from 1658 to 1667 as the shogunate's magistrate for temples and shrines (*jisha bugyō* 寺社奉行). Besides his official duties, he was a disciple of Yamazaki Ansai,

18 Saiki 1979, p. 123. Terms for the classification of shrines such as *sōgen* and *ryōbu shūgō* were originally coined by Yoshida Shinto; on this topic, see Scheid 2003 as well as his contribution to this Special Section.

19 Data on the rebuilding of Izumo's Kizuki Shrine are taken from Nishioka 2002. For recent studies in English, see Zhong 2016, pp. 39–46, and Teeuwen 2021, pp. 154–157.

20 Reproduced in Murata 1968, pp. 362–367.

the founder of Suika Shinto. It is said that he was the one who introduced Ansai to Hoshina Masayuki. He was also a fierce critic of syncretic concepts such as *ryōbu shūgō* and *honji suijaku*, and strongly supported the elimination of all Buddhist elements from shrines.<sup>21</sup>

During the Kanbun era, the Ise Shrines also experienced a series of anti-Buddhist measures.<sup>22</sup> The most striking case affected the nuns of Keikōin 慶光院, a Buddhist nunnery in Ise. They had put immense effort into raising funds for the ceremonial rebuilding of the shrines (*shikinen sengū* 式年遷宮). When this rebuilding tradition was finally revived in 1669, however, the nuns were excluded from the ceremonies due to their Buddhist affiliation. Another case resulted from a fire in Ise's pilgrimage town of Yamada 山田 in 1670. Although 189 Buddhist temples were destroyed, only 142 were allowed to be rebuilt in the following year. Yet another anti-Buddhist act occurred in 1671, when the priesthood of Ise's Outer Shrine was urged to remove all Buddhist elements (*ryōbu* 兩部) from their precincts. Since the town of Yamada was under the direct administration of the shogunate, such anti-Buddhist measures were executed by the local magistrate (*Yamada bugyō* 山田奉行) on shogunal orders. Ise is therefore not an example of *Domain Shinto* in the strict sense. Indeed, the exclusion of the Keikōin nuns is often attributed to Shogun Ietsuna. He is said to have believed that "ancient law" demanded the administration of Ise without Buddhism. According to *Chitose no matsu* 千載之松, however, these measures reflected the intentions of Hoshina Masayuki, Ietsuna's erstwhile guardian, whom we encountered above as one of the most typical representatives of *Domain Shinto*.<sup>23</sup> Regardless of who was ultimately responsible, the example of Ise tells us that the separation of Shinto and Buddhism or the retrenchment of Buddhist temples was certainly not at odds with shogunal religious policies during the Kanbun era.

Other shrine-centered projects of this period include the "renovation of old shrines" (*kogū saikō* 古宮再興) project of Tosa Kōchi 土佐高知 domain; the shrine restorations of Iyo Matsuyama 伊予松山 domain; the revival of Ninomiya Ono Jinja 二宮小野神社 in the Shinshū Matsumoto 信州松本 domain; and the restoration of Wakamiya Hachiman-sha 若宮八幡社 in the castle town of Nagoya 名古屋, where Tokugawa Mitsutomo 德川光友 (1625–1700) replaced Buddhist *shasō* with non-Buddhist Shinto clergy (*shinshoku* 神職).<sup>24</sup> In a similar vein, Tokugawa Mitsusada 德川光貞 (1627–1705) of Wakayama removed a Buddhist *bettō* temple from Kuzu Daimyōjin 九頭大明神 in 1678.<sup>25</sup>

As in the *Domain Shinto* cases of Mito, Aizu, and Okayama, these projects did not necessarily aim at eradicating Buddhism. Rather, their common feature is a religious policy that applied the separation of Shinto and Buddhism to social reality. In the next section, I will take a closer look at the ideas and concepts upon which this policy was based.

21 Later, Hoshina Masayuki also eliminated Buddhist *shasō* from shrines in his domain, such as from Tōdera Hachimangū 塔寺八幡宮; see *Chitose no matsu* 千載之松 in Ganban 1916, p. 57. *Chitose no matsu* is a record of Hoshina Masayuki's sayings and deeds. It was compiled in 1828 based on firsthand reports by Masayuki's vassals.

22 The following synopsis of the case of Ise is based on Inoue 2009. See also Teeuwen 2021, pp. 160–161.

23 According to *Chitose no matsu*, it was Masayuki himself who proposed the relocation of Keikōin across the Miyagawa 宮川, the river which marked the borders of Ise, in 1666; see Ganban 1916, pp. 55–56.

24 On the Ninomiya Ono shrine, see Inoue 2007, pp. 5, 13–14, 16. For Nagoya, see Hayashi 1999, p. 685.

25 Tsuji 1955, pp. 339–340. Interestingly, Tsuji Zennosuke considered the case of Wakayama to be "one of the earliest cases of so-called *shinbutsu bunri*," a perception corrected by subsequent research.

### Domain Shinto's Guiding Ideas and Their Origins

With regard to the guiding ideas of the reforms by Tokugawa Mitsukuni in Mito and Hoshina Masayuki in Aizu, we are fortunate to have a few texts that not only document their policies, but also legitimate and explain the goals of their measures. In this section, I will introduce two of these works and compare them to a treatise written a generation earlier, a treatise that, in my opinion, was the inspiration for each of the Kanbun enterprises.

#### *Mito Religious Concepts in the Shintō shūsei*

The ideas upon which the religious policy of Mito was founded during the Kanbun period are expressed in the preface of *Shintō shūsei* 神道集成 (Compilation of writings on Shinto), a twelve-volume compendium of various matters related to Shinto. It was compiled by a group of Mito retainers headed by Imai Ariyori 今井有順 (1646–1683, also Tōken 桐軒) and saw its first edition in 1670.<sup>26</sup> In it we read:

After yin and yang separated from the original chaos, order was established in the world by the heavenly and the earthly deities, the Five Virtues, and the separation of sovereigns and vassals. The people were upright, and the Great Way was clear. . . . This Way was called the divine way (*shintō*), its teachings were called the divine teaching (*shinkyō* 神教), and its laws were called the divine law (*shinpō* 神法). The rulers naturally governed the realm and those who were ruled observed it by never ever departing from this Way.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, the preface describes the creation of an ideal society in accordance with Shinto. It then laments the fact that this ideal society deteriorated in subsequent ages: As the imperial government (*ōkō* 王綱) fell into disarray, manners and customs declined, and dubious discourses appeared like “rising clouds and gushing fountains.” Furthermore, Buddhists such as Prince Shōtoku and Kūkai emerged and, through eloquent phrases, turned wrong into right. They explained *kami* as incarnations of buddhas, thus “muddying the sparkling purity of the original source (*sōgen*, or Shinto) with the filthy defilement of the dual parts (*ryōbu*, or syncretism).”<sup>28</sup> According to the text, the decline continued as records about antiquity were lost or misused by dubious religious figures. Therefore, those who wanted to know more about the ideal society of old and its “divine way” could not find any clues and their endeavors ended in frustration. Into this society came Tokugawa Mitsukuni, a highly virtuous, learned, and intelligent leader. Between his political duties, he read the “classics of foreign countries” (that is, the Confucian classics) and felt increasingly drawn to the “divine law” of Japan. Deploring the decline of the divine way, he searched for the means to restore it. The preface thus insinuates that Mitsukuni’s passion for Shinto was strengthened by his reading of Confucian texts, presenting him as an exponent of Shinto-Confucian unity.

The text goes on to report that Mitsukuni, determined to eliminate “heterodoxy” and clarify the “original source,” ordered his retainer Imai Ariyori and others to compile the *Shintō shūsei*. As explained elsewhere in the text, “heterodoxy” refers both to Buddhism and

<sup>26</sup> After 1670, more content was added and the work was finally completed in 1730. My analysis is based on the edition in ST 1.

<sup>27</sup> ST 1, p. 4.

<sup>28</sup> ST 1, p. 4. On the terms *sōgen* and *ryōbu*, see also Scheid’s contribution to this Special Section.

to the teachings of “shamans” (*fugeki* 巫覡).<sup>29</sup> Mitsukuni therefore believed that Buddhism as well as shamanism were responsible for disturbing the formerly ideal order of Shinto. As we have seen, the centers of activity of these religious currents—Buddhist temples and “illicit shrines”—indeed became the main targets of Mito’s religious retrenchments.

*Aizu Religious Concepts in the Aizu jinja-shi*

Next, let us examine the religious ideas of Aizu domain as they can be gathered from the preface to *Aizu jinja-shi* (1672), written by Hayashi Gahō 林鷲峰 (1618–1680), a son of Hayashi Razan. Gahō writes:

*Kami* exist; therefore we have to build shrines to worship them. This is the reason why at the Zhou 周 court in China . . . the emperor worshiped the deities of Heaven and Earth, the lords worshiped the deities of their realms, while bureaucrats and all kinds of people below them conducted rites specific to their roles and ranks. This is a law (*hō* 法) applying to past and present. [According to this law], in Japan we have revered Shinto since the beginning of time.<sup>30</sup>

It is important to note that the Chinese Zhou dynasty, the ideal society according to Confucian thinking, is contrasted here with Japan. Nevertheless, both societies share the same “law.”

This state of affairs, however, came to an end when Buddhism appeared, and new shrines were created under its influence:

In some places, shrines from the Engi era (*shikinaisha*) still exist, but they are in ruins and hard to identify, while at other places evil illicit shrines (*jain no bokora* 邪淫之祠) are deluding people, causing harm.<sup>31</sup>

Thus, in the eyes of Gahō, “evil illicit shrines” or *inshi* are detrimental to ideal society in the same way as Buddhism is. Moreover, he identifies *inshi* with “new shrines,” that is, shrines that lack ancient origins, contrasting them with the *shikinaisha*. Even if they have become difficult to identify, *shikinaisha* shrines enable us to gain insights into the ideal society of the past.

Gahō continues by pointing out that it was Hoshina Masayuki who challenged this state of affairs through his “deep belief in Shinto.” He had envoys explore the histories (*engi*) of “thousands of shrines” in his domain, and on the basis of this investigation restored shrines of ancient pedigree and moved shrines on “defiled ground” (that is, shrines close to Buddhist structures) to better places. He defined “chief deities” (*shushin* 主神) for each district and merged small village shrines with them.<sup>32</sup> Thus, the text illustrates quite concretely that Masayuki’s religious policies included restoring dilapidated *shikinaisha*, separating Shinto and Buddhism at sites that followed syncretic patterns, and establishing collective shrines,

29 ST 1, p. 4.

30 ZST 27, *Ronsetsu hen 2*, p. 100.

31 ZST 27, *Ronsetsu hen 2*, pp. 100–101.

32 ZST 27, *Ronsetsu hen 2*, p. 101.

like in Domain Shinto as practiced in Okayama. In conclusion, Gahō praises Masayuki's religious policies as the work of an exceptional domain lord as follows:

Building shrines and worshiping the *kami* is a matter of national importance; preserving things of old and restoring things abandoned is a matter of good government; venerating the original source (*sōgen*) accords to the propriety of this country; abolishing illicit shrines is a sign of wise political judgment.<sup>33</sup>

Comparing the ideas on which Kanbun religious policies in Aizu and Mito were founded, we encounter a number of similarities. Both envisioned an ideal society existing in accordance with Shinto, and blamed Buddhism and illicit shrines for its decline. On the other hand, they stress the importance of *shikinaisha* as symbols of the ideal society. This retrospective utopia recalls the example of Matsudaira Yorishige, who had advised Shogun Ietsuna that while Japan was a “divine country,” the real state of this divine country had ceased to exist a long time ago.

#### *The Source of Domain Shinto Concepts*

The concepts discussed in the preceding sections did not suddenly appear during the Kanbun period. They can be traced back to a text written as early as 1646, namely the preface to *Jingi hōten* 神祇宝典 (Treasure books of the deities of heaven and earth), compiled by Tokugawa Yoshinao 徳川義直 (1601–1650), daimyo of Owari Nagoya 尾張名古屋 domain.<sup>34</sup> The *Jingi hōten* itself aims at identifying deities worshiped at *shikinaisha* and other famous old shrines.

The preface to the *Jingi hōten* can be summarized as follows: (1) Japan is a divine country created and inhabited by divine spirits; it follows the Way of the Gods (*shintō*). (2) During the reign of Emperor Daigo 醍醐天皇 (r. 897–930), illicit shrines were eliminated, and a system of shrine rules based on the 3,132 deities listed in the *Engishiki* emerged; it was similar to the system of shrines and offices established by the Zhou dynasty. (3) However, due to the spread of Buddhism, native *kami* were regarded as “traces” of the buddhas, leading to the idea of *honji suijaku* 本地垂迹. (4) When *kami* lose their names, they also lose their divine powers (*shintoku* 神徳), becoming merely spirits without a soul. (5) Having resented this for many years, Tokugawa Yoshinao did research on the deities enshrined in *shikinaisha* and prominent non-*shikinaisha* shrines based on classics such as the *Nihongi* 日本紀 and its explanations by Nakatomi 中臣 and Urabe priests; (6) demonstrating that Shinto is equivalent to Confucianism and the Way of the Sages.<sup>35</sup>

These points are almost identical to the contents of the abovementioned prefaces of *Shintō shūsei* and *Aizu jinja-shi*. All texts agree that *shikinaisha* shrines are the embodiment of an ideal divine country (*shinkoku*) based on Shinto; that this country was comparable to the Zhou dynasty in China; that it was weakened and disturbed by the introduction of Buddhism; and that *shikinaisha* and other old shrines must be restored in order to revive the divine country. All this was based on the identification of Shinto with Confucianism. A point

<sup>33</sup> ZST 27, *Ronsetsu hen* 2, p. 101.

<sup>34</sup> The *Jingi hōten* consists of ten volumes. Volumes one through nine are a compilation of sources on ancient shrines. The tenth volume is devoted to illustrations of ritual tools.

<sup>35</sup> *Jingi hōten*, in ST 38, *Jinja hen* 3, pp. 3–5.

of note is the mention of “illicit shrines,” which were removed, according to the *Jingi hōten*, when Emperor Daigo established the shrine rules of the *Engishiki*. This reveals that “illicit shrines” were also regarded as obstacles to an ideal society. Thus, all of the ideas that guided the Domain Shinto policies of the Kanbun era were already mentioned in the *Jingi hōten* preface.

While written in the name of Yoshinao, this preface was actually drafted by the official Confucian teacher of the *bakufu*, Hayashi Razan, who was also Yoshinao’s personal instructor in Confucian matters.<sup>36</sup> The text is clearly influenced by Razan’s specific Confucian interpretations of Shinto, but this does not mean that the work disregarded Yoshinao’s intentions. Its guiding ideas were in fact the product of both a feudal lord and a Confucian scholar.

Tokugawa Yoshinao was the ninth son of Tokugawa Ieyasu and therefore an uncle of Tokugawa Mitsukuni and Hoshina Masayuki. It is known that he wielded considerable influence over the scholarly interests of Mitsukuni in particular.<sup>37</sup> It is therefore quite plausible that a direct relationship existed between the *Jingi hōten* and *Shintō shūsei*, and that the *Jingi hōten* was indeed the inspiration for the distinctive religious policies developed in various domains during the Kanbun era. As the next section demonstrates, circumstantial evidence for this relationship can be also gained from certain key terms shared by Domain Shinto texts.

“Restore What Was Lost, Rejoin What Was Disconnected”

The first practical consequences of Tokugawa Yoshinao’s interest in shrines can be traced back to 1631, when he restored Masumida Jinja 真清田神社, the traditional first shrine (*ichinomiya* 一宮) of the province of Owari. Among this shrine’s rituals, we find a *norito* 祝詞 prayer praising the fact that Yoshinao “restored the lost [past] and rejoined disconnected [traditions]” (*sutaretaru o ba osame, taetaru o ba okoshite* 癡乎波修賣絶乎波興志亘).<sup>38</sup> In its Sino-Japanese reading, *kōhai keizetsu* 興廢繼絶, this phrase can also be found in other compilations by Yoshinao, for instance in a text called *Seikōki* 成功記 (Record of success).<sup>39</sup> It even appeared a hundred years later, when Masumida priests praised Yoshinao as the one who “rejoined the disconnected rituals and restored the abandoned halls and offices” (*keizetsu saishi, kōhai kyūkan* 繼絶祭祀、興廢宮館).<sup>40</sup> Interestingly, variations of this phrase can also be found in several subsequent cases of Domain Shinto that we introduced above:

- In Izumo’s shrine laws (Kizuki Taisha Hatto) of 1638, we encounter the expression “rejoin what was disconnected, restore what was lost” (*keizetsu kōhai* 繼絶興廢) in article nine, referring to the shrine’s repair.<sup>41</sup>
- In 1644, two years after Matsudaira Yorishige took over rulership in Takamatsu, he ordered repairs to the abovementioned Iwaseo Shrine. A memorial plaque (*munafuda* 棟札) at this shrine reminds us that, thanks to Yorishige’s benevolent administration, “all

36 Kyōto Shisekikai 1918, pp. 114–116.

37 Nishimura 1910, p. 79.

38 *Masumi tantōshū* 真清探桃集, in Masumida Jinja-shi 1995, p. 187.

39 Masumida Jinja-shi 1994, pp. 307–310.

40 *Masumi tantōshū*, in Masumida Jinja-shi 1995, p. 97.

41 Murata 1968, pp. 362–367.



- things lost were revived again” (*hyappai kankō* 百廢咸興).<sup>42</sup> This phrase contains the pair *kō* 興 and *hai* 廢 (“revive” and “lost”) of Yoshinao’s eulogy.
- In 1658, Hayashi Gahō drafted a “Restoration Record of Asakura Shrine in Tosa” documenting events which had occurred the previous year.<sup>43</sup> In this text, Gahō uses the entire phrase *keizetsu kōhai* to praise the daimyo’s shrine repairs.
  - The preface to Mito’s *Shintō shūsei* uses the second pair of characters in Yoshinao’s phrase. Here, Tokugawa Mitsukuni is credited with “fame for rejoining what was disconnected” (*keizetsu no mei* 繼絕之名), alluding to his revival of an ideal society that had fallen into oblivion.<sup>44</sup>
  - In the afterword of *Aizu jinja shi*, Hattori Ankyū 服部安休 (1619–1681), who was in charge of the shrine reorganization project in Aizu, described Hoshina Masayuki as the man who “restored the lost Way of the Gods and rejoined the disconnected shrines” (*shintō no sutaretaru o okoshi, jinja no taetaru o tsugu* 興神道之廢、繼神社之絕).<sup>45</sup>

As these examples indicate, the phrase *kōhai keizetsu*, initially associated with Tokugawa Yoshinao, became a kind of motto for Domain Shinto lords and their Confucian tutors in the Kanbun era.

#### *Yoshinao’s Legacy*

Tokugawa Yoshinao was already interested in *shikinaisha* in the 1620s. This is evidenced by the fact that in 1626 he asked Bonshun 梵舜 (1553–1632), a member of the Yoshida family and expert on Yoshida Shinto, about the deities of the shrines listed in the *Engishiki*.<sup>46</sup> As mentioned above, this interest soon resulted in his restoration of Masumida Jinja in 1631. In many other respects, however, Yoshinao did not develop a particularly distinctive religious policy. Contrary to his aggressive criticism of *shinbutsu shūgō* in the *Jingi hōten*, he left mixed religious institutions untouched. Masumida Jinja, for instance, housed a number of Buddhist halls within its precincts and was in fact typical of the traditional combination of Shinto and Buddhism. Until the medieval period, Buddhist rituals performed by shrine monks (*shasō*) played a major role in the festival calendar. However, Yoshinao did not abolish the Buddhist shrine clergy when he restored the shrine in 1631. In 1649, he even issued some regulations obligating the *shasō* of Masumida Jinja to take part in its festivals.<sup>47</sup>

Thus, Yoshinao’s religious policy did not put his anti-Buddhist stance into practice, nor was his renovation program extended to all shrines in his domain. His ideas, however, anticipated the policies of Mito and Aizu during the Kanbun era. Therefore, we can regard the Domain Shinto policies of that time as a continuation of Yoshinao’s philosophy and as an active attempt to turn it into social reality.

42 *Munafuda*, literally roof ridge slips, are short texts documenting the construction of a building that were traditionally written on wooden boards and placed under the roof of the building in question. See Matsudaira Kōekikai 1964, p. 304.

43 *Tōsa no kuni Asakura no miya saikō no ki* 土佐国朝倉宮再興記, in Hino 1997, pp. 82–84.

44 ST 1, p. 4.

45 ZST 27, *Ronsetsu hen* 2, p. 121.

46 According to Tanabe Hiroshi 田辺裕, the idea to compile this *Jingi hōten* can be traced back to 1622, see Tanabe 1968.

47 *Masumi tantōshū*, in Masumida Jinja-shi 1995, pp. 199–200.

## Shrine Restorations as a Constitutive Element of Domain Shinto

### *Daimyo Prior to the Kanbun Era*

Tokugawa Yoshinao's interest in the restoration of old shrines and the reestablishment of *shikinaisha* was shared by other feudal lords of his time as well. In 1648, two years after the *Jingi hōten* was drafted, Sakakibara Tadatsugu 榊原忠次 (1605–1665), lord of the Ōshū Shirakawa 奥州白河 domain, restored Hokotsuki Jinja 榊衝神社 in the district of Iwase 岩瀬. Tadatsugu was a most trusted lord from the ranks of former vassals (*fudai* 譜代) of the Tokugawa. His shrine restoration was documented by Hayashi Gahō, who stressed the fact that Hokotsuki Jinja was a *shikinaisha* that had fallen into complete disrepair and was restored on the singlehanded initiative of a daimyo who prayed there for the safety of his domain and family.<sup>48</sup> Similar to Yoshinao's case, Tadatsugu's restoration also retained elements of the traditional Shinto-Buddhist amalgamation. This can be inferred from a plaque (*munafuda*) dated to the fifth month of the same year (1648), which states that the repairs were dedicated to both the main Shinto deity, Hokotsuki Daimyōjin 榊衝大明神, and its *honji* buddha, the Eleven-Headed Kannon.<sup>49</sup>

Yoshinao's younger brother Tokugawa Yorinobu 徳川頼宣 (1602–1671) also demonstrated a special interest in *shikinaisha* and other old shrines in his domain of Kii Wakayama 紀伊和歌山 when he conducted a survey of such shrines in 1650. Based on this investigation, the domain erected stone markers for shrines of uncertain whereabouts that had fallen into disuse and obscurity.<sup>50</sup> This example is noteworthy because in this case, Shinto measures were not confined to restoring existing shrines or identifying their deities. Thus, Yorinobu pushed the shrine restoration policies of Yoshinao and Tadatsugu a step further.

Moreover, *tozama daimyō* 外様大名, that is, daimyo who did not belong to the inner circles of the regime, also became interested in *shikinaisha* around this time. In 1657, for instance, Yamauchi Tadayoshi 山内忠義 (1592–1665), the second-generation daimyo of the Tosa Kōchi domain in Shikoku, restored Asakura Jinja 朝倉神社, a local *shikinaisha* mentioned in the *Nihon shoki*. Moreover, Tosa turned to the Yoshida in Kyoto in the hope of gaining more information about the *shikinaisha* deities of his domain.<sup>51</sup> From this example, we can infer that the ancient deities of Tosa, including those of Asakura Jinja, had completely fallen into oblivion, and that it was the domain lord who took on the task of identifying them. This case resembles that of Yoshinao, not only in the special effort to rediscover the names of ancient shrine deities (for which Yoshinao initially also turned to the Yoshida), but also for applying the motto *keizetsu kōhai* familiar from Yoshinao's *Jingi hōten*.

### *Daimyo from the Kanbun Era Onward*

While the above examples of shrine restoration policies may have been inspired by the growing anti-Buddhist ideology of the time, they did not put anti-Buddhism into practice. Domain Shinto before the Kanbun era did not include any destructive measures, but rather aimed at the gradual restoration of an ideal society through a constructive policy of shrine renovation. From the Kanbun era onward, however, Domain Shinto introduced measures

48 "Kinensai harae no batsu" 祈年祭祓禊, in Hino 1997, p. 349.

49 Naganumachō-shi 1997, p. 842.

50 *Kii zoku fudoki* 紀伊続風土記, cited in Wakayama-shi 1965, p. 435; Wakayamashi-shi 1989, p. 219.

51 *Ohiroma zakki* 御広間雑記, entry from Meireki 明暦 3 (1657).7.21 (Yoshida Bunko 吉田文庫, Tenri Central Library).

resulting in the oppression of Buddhism. In addition to Mito, Aizu, and Okayama, there were the above-cited cases of Tokugawa Mitsutomo, successor to Yoshinao in the Nagoya domain, and Tokugawa Mitsusada, son and successor of Yorinobu in Wakayama, who removed Buddhist clergy when they restored the ancient shrines in their domains. Thus, Domain Shinto of the Kanbun era continued the constructive policy of shrine revival but shifted towards realizing the anti-Buddhist ideas that had always been part of its ideology.

While anti-Buddhism waned again after the Kanbun era in the 1680s, the emphasis on *shikinaisha* spread to a number of other domains:

- In 1676, the domain of Hirado 平戸 in Kyushu engaged in a particularly large-scale effort to identify and revive all *shikinaisha* on the island of Iki 壱岐.
- From 1680 to 1682, a few *shikinaisha* shrines in the Ōshū Iwakitaira 奥州磐城平 domain were rebuilt.
- In 1699, Wakayama changed the name of the abovementioned Kuzu Daimyōjin. This was done with the help of the Yoshida, who revealed it as the *shikinaisha* shrine Sasutahiko Jinja 刺田比古神社. As a *shikinaisha*, the shrine was given additional land in 1712 by Tokugawa Yoshimune 徳川吉宗 (1684–1751), who later became shogun.
- In 1705, the Confucian scholar Tani Shigetō 谷重遠 (1663–1718, also Jinzan 秦山) drafted a study on the locations and deities of *shikinaisha* shrines in Tosa (*Tosa no kuni shikisha kō* 土佐国式社考). The study was commissioned by the domain. Subsequently, the domain planned to erect stone markers on the sites of vanished *shikinaisha* shrines following the example of Wakayama one generation earlier.
- In 1714, Dewa Kubota 出羽久保田 domain revived one of its *shikinaisha* and ranked it above all other local shrines.

Thus, Domain Shinto's constitutive concern for reestablishing ancient, long-forgotten shrines continued well into the eighteenth century.<sup>52</sup>

### Shinto-Confucian Theory and Practice

Already in the time of Tokugawa Yoshinao, the politics of Domain Shinto were complemented by the creation and promotion of Confucian rituals. This section attempts to demonstrate that this was done in line with the Shinto-Confucian ideologies forming the basis of Domain Shinto. I will then show that this Shinto-Confucian mix is not to be confused with Yoshida Shinto.

#### *Confucian Ritualism*

The introduction of Confucianism to Japan dates to the fifth century. In the seventh and eighth centuries, the court adopted the legal and administrative code of China, the *ritsuryō* 律令 system, which included the *sekiten* 稷奠, a public ceremony for worshiping Confucius. The rite was introduced at the Academic Bureau (*daigakuryō* 大学寮), which oversaw the education of the courtly administrative elite. However, with the imperial court's decline in the later Heian 平安 period of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the *sekiten* rite also fell into oblivion.

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52 For the details of these cases, see Inoue 2007.

By the medieval period it was virtually unknown, practiced by only a few court nobles and at the Ashikaga Academy 足利学校 in the province of Shimotsuke 下野 (today's Tochigi).

When the Tokugawa came to power, however, *sekiten* was revived, albeit not in the context of court ritualism. The key players in this development were Hayashi Razan and his disciple in Confucian matters, the abovementioned Tokugawa Yoshinao. In 1632, the Hayashi family built a Confucian hall—literally a “sage hall” (*seidō* 聖堂)—dedicated to Confucius and other Confucian saints. This was supported by Tokugawa Yoshinao, who had himself established a Confucian hall in Nagoya sometime before 1629.<sup>53</sup>

Yoshinao also took a keen interest in the rituals of the Confucian hall at the Ashikaga Academy in Shimotsuke, including the *sekiten* rite. When he stopped there on his way to the Tokugawa mausoleum at Nikkō 日光 in 1636, Yoshinao noted that the form of their rituals differed from those described in the *Engishiki* and had them revised.<sup>54</sup> Together with Yoshinao's esteem of *shikinaisha*, this confirms his idealization of the *ritsuryō* system (which the *Engishiki* was part of). Later, in 1668, the Tokugawa funded the renovation of the Confucian hall at the Ashikaga Academy.<sup>55</sup> The *sekiten* and related rituals were also adopted by Ikeda Mitsumasa, becoming part of his distinctive religious policy in Okayama.<sup>56</sup>

Despite his tolerant political stance towards Buddhism, but in line with his religious thinking, Yoshinao strongly opposed the idea of having his own funeral performed in a Buddhist way, and wished to have a Confucian ceremony.<sup>57</sup> When he died in 1650, however, the vassals of Nagoya domain were anxious to avert any negative reaction from a Buddhist-influenced shogunate and had a large number of Buddhist monks involved in the funeral ceremony. Yoshinao was finally buried in a Confucian style, but his grave was placed in a Buddhist temple.

His nephew Tokugawa Mitsukuni, who greatly admired his uncle, was furious at this and blamed his chief vassals for disregarding his uncle's will.<sup>58</sup> Mitsukuni interred his own father Yorifusa 徳川頼房 (1603–1661) according to Confucian rites in 1661 and established a Confucian-style family mausoleum.<sup>59</sup> From 1655, Ikeda Mitsumasa also changed the funeral rites of his forefathers from Buddhism to Confucianism. In 1659, he built up a Confucian-style family mausoleum, and in 1665, he established a Confucian graveyard in the Waidani 和意谷 region of his domain. He had the remains of his grandfather and father transferred to this site from their family temple in Kyoto in 1667.<sup>60</sup> Soon, other daimyo followed suit in instating Confucian funerals. These included the Hitotsuyanagi 一柳 of Iyo Komatsu 伊予小松 and the Nagai 永井 of Tango Miyazu 丹後宮津, who both built Confucian ancestor halls (*shidō* 祠堂) in the mid-1670s.<sup>61</sup>

53 Nishimura 1910, pp. 55–62; McMullen 2020, pp. 173–176.

54 Nishimura 1910, pp. 66–70.

55 According to a memorial roof ridge plaque dating to this time (Kawakami 1880, appendix 2–4), Shogun Ietsuna provided the money, while Doi Toshifusa 土井利房 (1631–1683), whose domain included the Ashikaga district at that time, had the repairs done by his retainers.

56 For details, see McMullen 2021.

57 Tsuji 1955, pp. 338–339.

58 Nishimura 1910, pp. 168–172; Tamamuro 1968, pp. 871–873.

59 Azuma 2008b.

60 Azuma 2008a.

61 Hino 1997, pp. 119–121, 124.

*The Identification of Shinto with Confucianism*

Why would domain lords such as Tokugawa Yoshinao, Tokugawa Mitsukuni, or Ikeda Mitsumasa, who put great efforts into restoring ancient shrines, adopt Confucian funeral rites? The reason is their belief in the unity of Shinto and Confucianism (*shinju itchi*). This conviction was shared not only by those lords who adopted Confucian funerals, but also by many other leaders of Domain Shinto, including Matsudaira Naomasa and Hoshina Masayuki. As we have seen, the texts documenting their policies (the prefaces of *Jingi hōten*, *Shintō shūsei*, and *Aizu jinja-shi*) are imbued with this philosophy. These works were collaborations between daimyo and Confucian scholars in their service. The preface of *Jingi hōten* was drafted by Razan in the name of Yoshinao, while that of *Aizu jinja-shi* was written by Razan's son Gahō, who also documented the restoration of Hokotsuki Shrine by Sakakibara Tadatsugu, and that of Asakura Shrine by Tosa's Yamauchi Tadayoshi. Razan's disciple Kurosawa Sekisai was involved in the separation of Shinto and Buddhism at Izumo's Kizuki Shrine. Most policies that combined shrine revivals with anti-Buddhism in the mid- and late seventeenth century were therefore based on the Shinto-Confucian philosophy of the Hayashi, in other words, on Razan's Ritō Shinchi Shinto.

While scholars such as Maruyama Masao 丸山真男 (1914–1996) considered Razan's neo-Confucianism the leading ideology of the early Tokugawa, in recent decades critics like Herman Ooms have downplayed Razan's historical importance.<sup>62</sup> In fact, Ooms has rightfully pointed out that the Zhu Xi 朱熹 studies by the Hayashi house did not constitute the official ideology of the *bakufu* during the time of Razan.<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, when we focus on the distinctive religious policies of powerful daimyo in the later seventeenth century, the phenomena we call Domain Shinto, we must acknowledge that the political impact of Razan's Shinto-Confucian thinking was indeed enormous.

The reasons why Domain Shinto was founded on the premise of Shinto-Confucian unity have been discussed at length in my recent article "Shinto as a Quasi-Confucian Ideology."<sup>64</sup> Let me just repeat here that these reasons were ultimately related to the specific geopolitical situation of Japan in the seventeenth century: on the one hand, Japan was trying to achieve the status of a "civilized" East Asian nation and thus felt the need to adopt Confucian virtues; on the other hand, these Confucian virtues were diametrically opposed to the essence of the Tokugawa warrior culture, namely, "martiality" (*bu* 武). Confucian Shinto was, in my view, an attempt to resolve this conundrum.

*Domain Shinto and Yoshida Shinto*

Finally, I would like to add a word about the influence of Yoshida Shinto on Domain Shinto. In contrast to Razan's Shinto—which was probably influenced by the ideas of Yoshida Kanetomo 吉田兼俱 (1435–1511)—there was very little direct impact. This may come as a surprise, considering that Tokugawa Yoshinao in Owari and Yamauchi Tadayoshi in Tosa asked the Yoshida for advice regarding the deities of their *shikinaisha* shrines, that Tokugawa Mitsukuni in Mito sent local priests to Kyoto in order to study under the Yoshida, and that Matsudaira Yorishige in Takamatsu had a priest with family relations to the Yoshida

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62 See, for instance, Maruyama 1974.

63 Ooms 1985, pp. 72–75.

64 Inoue 2021.

installed at Shirotori Shrine in his domain. Moreover, the *Jingi hōten* contains a reference to the “explanations of the Urabe” and Ikeda Mitsumasa sought the endorsement of the Yoshida when he established his collective shrines in Okayama. However, the Yoshida only wielded authority in specialist fields such as shrine ritualism, priestly succession, and the correct identification of shrine deities. Yoshida Shinto, or rather the priestly tradition of the Urabe house, was not meant as a theory of Shinto. The Yoshida derived their authority from the fact that they were the only lineage of priests who had transmitted “pure Shinto” since the Age of the Gods—a fiction, of course—and that they served as high officials in the Office of Deities at the court. As such, they decided ceremonial issues related to shrines and the priesthood. With regard to the guiding ideas of Domain Shinto and its religious policies, however, they had no direct influence at all.

### Conclusion

Domain Shinto comprises specific religious policies that came to the fore most prominently in the domains of Mito, Aizu, and Okayama during the Kanbun era. These policies sought the reestablishment of a divine country that had existed in antiquity and was based on Shinto. This idea appears already in the *Jingi hōten* of 1646 and can be traced as far back as the 1620s. In practice, Domain Shinto meant restoring and reviving ancient shrines, such as *shikinaisha*, removing Buddhist elements from shrines, and abolishing temples and shrines without ancient pedigree. The proponents of Domain Shinto were styled as lords who “restore and rejoin what was lost and disconnected” (*kōhai keizetsu*). The ideal of reestablishing a divine country was based on a Shinto-Confucian worldview that regarded the semi-mythic Zhou dynasty of China as the model of an ideal society. It culminated in the creation of Japanese Confucian ceremonies and funerary rites.

Prior to the Kanbun era, many shrine revivals had already been based on anti-Buddhist ideologies, but these remained confined to individual shrines or studies on shrine history. They had no significant impact on the religious *status quo*. Shrines of the common Shinto-Buddhist pattern were allowed to continue their traditions undisturbed. Nevertheless, ideological and personal relations between local shrine policies before and during the Kanbun years suggest a continuity that the term Domain Shinto helps highlight. Moreover, the phenomena called Domain Shinto here have long been regarded as policies related to Buddhism, following Tsuji Zennosuke and Tamamuro Fumio. As demonstrated above, however, their primary target was Shinto.

Yet even if Domain Shinto can be traced back to the 1620s, the Kanbun era marks a clear programmatic shift, with anti-Buddhist policies, the destruction of syncretic shrines, and the introduction of Confucian funeral rites. Further research is needed regarding the reasons for this shift in light of the religious policies of the central government during the same period. In this article, I have limited my discussion to how concepts in pre- and post-Kanbun Domain Shinto were similar, and yet the means employed were different.

Finally, let us consider how Domain Shinto came to an end. It is well known that Ikeda Mitsumasa’s anti-Buddhist policies in Okayama displeased the *bakufu* and had to be abandoned after his reign. This led to a slackening of anti-Buddhist policies in other domains as well. However, if we do not regard Buddhism as the primary target of Domain Shinto, the end of anti-Buddhist policies does not necessarily imply the end of Domain Shinto. Indeed, initiatives to revive *shikinaisha* continued in many domains well into the eighteenth century.

On the other hand, new ideas regarding shrines emerged by the end of the seventeenth century at the latest. For example, Mano Tokitsuna 真野時繩 (1648–1717), a priest of Tsushima Gozu Tennō-sha 津島牛頭天王社 in Owari, strongly criticized the idea that Japanese shrines should imitate Chinese rituals without respecting the differences (*sai* 差異) between Japan and China. This was, in Mano's view, no different from *honji suijaku* theory.<sup>65</sup> Thus, half a century after Tokugawa Yoshinao, the daimyo of Owari, requested a Confucian funeral, priests in the same domain rejected the identification of Shinto not only with Buddhism but also with Confucianism, resulting in a search for the uniqueness of Japanese culture. A new trend to free Japan from the “Chinese mind” (*karagokoro* 漢意) emerged in intellectual circles, and the idea of Shinto-Confucian unity began to fade. In order to determine the end of Domain Shinto, it will be necessary to examine whether the emphasis in various domains on *shikinaisha* in the eighteenth century was still based on a Shinto-Confucian ideology. Moreover, it will be necessary to examine how Domain Shinto emerged, including the fact that it was mainly carried out by Tokugawa leaders, against the backdrop of the social conditions of the first half of the seventeenth century.

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Domain Shinto in Tokugawa Japan

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## Shinto Certification and Religious Differentiation: Domain Shinto in Early Modern Okayama

Stefan KÖCK\*

Ikeda Mitsumasa's Shinto-related reforms in Okayama domain in the later 1660s have hitherto been interpreted as measures of local relevance. By applying the Domain Shinto paradigm to this case, however, it becomes clear that the reforms are local manifestations of a much broader appreciation of Shinto among daimyo of Tokugawa kin. Mitsumasa's reforms are best known for the adoption of religious certification via Shinto shrines (*shintō-uke*) instead of Buddhist temples (*terauke*) as part of the practice of sectarian registration (*shūmon aratame*). In Okayama, this brought about a domain-wide separation of Shinto and Buddhism (*shinbutsu bunri*), a most radical measure that had to be abandoned under the regime of Mitsumasa's successor Ikeda Tsunamasa. Nevertheless, this article demonstrates that Okayama's Domain Shinto reforms brought about a lasting functional differentiation between Shinto and Buddhist clergy leading to a professional Shinto priesthood even at the level of village shrines. Thus, Okayama became a pioneer region in regard to the development of Shinto autonomy.

**Keywords:** *shintō-uke*, *terauke*, *shūmon aratame*, *shinbutsu bunri*, *shinju itchi*, Ikeda Mitsumasa, Ikeda Tsunamasa, Yoshida Shinto, village shrines

The 1660s were a period of administrative consolidation for Tokugawa religious policy. Whereas previously the *bakufu* 幕府 had issued particularized regulations for certain groups, it now turned towards national laws, mandatory for religious institutions in general. Under the aegis of Hoshina Masayuki 保科正之 (1611–1673)—step-uncle, tutor, and advisor (*bosa* 輔佐) of shogun Tokugawa Ietsuna 徳川家綱 (1641–1680), and the *bakufu*'s pivotal political actor until the mid-1660s—groundbreaking laws regulating religious traditions and sectarian inspection (*shūmon aratame* 宗門改) were promulgated. A directive from early 1665 ordered

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all domains to appoint an official for sectarian inspection (*shūmon aratame bugyō* 宗門改奉行) and to submit an annual report on the religious affiliation of the domain's populace. The order was related to the *bakufu*'s ban on Christianity, first introduced in 1614 and gradually intensified thereafter. This directive made *terauke* 寺請 (certification of non-Christian religious belief via Buddhist temples) *de facto* mandatory for the entire population of Japan.

The Law for Shrine Priests (Shosha Negi Kannushi Hatto 諸社禰宜神主法度) from Kanbun 寛文 5 (1665).7.11 regulated Shinto. Its most important stipulation confirmed the authority of the Yoshida 吉田 over local Shinto priests, elevating the family's status and influence in Shinto matters.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the Law for Shrine Priests seems to have served as a trigger for religious reforms by the lords of the three domains of Aizu 会津, Mito 水戸, and Okayama 岡山 from 1666 onward, which we subsume under the label "Domain Shinto" here. As explained in the introduction to this Special Section, these three lords were part of a broader trend among the daimyo of Tokugawa kin who envisioned an ideal society based on a reappraisal of Shinto. Confucianists of the Hayashi 林 family and Yoshikawa Koretaru 吉川惟足 (1616–1694) of Yoshida Shinto formulated the theoretical tenets of this trend, based on the understanding of Shinto and Confucianism as being essentially the same (*shinju itchi* 神儒一致). Daimyo starting with Tokugawa Yoshinao 徳川義直 (1600–1650) of Owari 尾張 began to turn these ideas into a new social reality.

Among the lords of Domain Shinto, Ikeda Mitsumasa 池田光政 (1609–1682) introduced the most drastic measures in his Okayama domain, including in particular *shintō-uke* 神道請, the certification of non-Christian beliefs by Shinto shrines. In this article, I focus on the questions of why and how *shintō-uke* replaced *terauke* for a short time in Okayama. I argue that *shintō-uke* led to a thorough separation of Shinto and Buddhism (*shinbutsu bunri* 神仏分離) in the domain. Even when Mitsumasa's successor Ikeda Tsunamasa 池田綱政 (1638–1714) subsequently reintroduced *terauke*, *shintō-uke* continued to be practiced by shrine families. Okayama priests achieved an unusual degree of autonomy thanks to the Domain Shinto reforms of Mitsumasa. Thus, *shintō-uke* and the Domain Shinto reforms in general made Okayama the first domain in Japanese religious history where the separation of Shinto and Buddhism became thoroughly established, accomplished about two hundred years prior to the Meiji government's religious separation measures.

To examine regional and temporal differences of *shintō-uke* practice within Okayama domain, this article not only looks at local histories and edited documents on the Ikeda, but also at certain villages for which primary manuscripts have survived. Some of these sources are transcribed and analyzed for the first time here. They demonstrate the developmental process that made Okayama a pioneer of Shinto autonomy in Japan.

### Previous Research

Until recently, the religious reforms of Okayama have not received much attention in Western scholarship despite being highly relevant for the history of Shinto as well as for the history of religion in Japan. John Whitney Hall, the first to bring developments in Okayama to the attention of a Western audience, mentions the Shinto-related reforms only in passing as part of the third and last phase of Mitsumasa's reforms.<sup>2</sup> Herman Ooms, in his study on Tokugawa

1 Teeuwen 2021, p. 152; Scheid 2002, pp. 313–314; Inoue 2013, pp. 112–115.

2 Hall 1966, pp. 407–408.

ideology, takes up the topic of *shintō-uke* as a special case of anti-Buddhist politics in the domains Okayama, Mito, and Aizu.<sup>3</sup> Nam-lin Hur, likewise, mentions *shintō-uke* as a variant of the standard form of *terauke* in his study on the *danka* 檀家 (temple parishioner) system.<sup>4</sup> Luke Roberts provides probably the most detailed account of reforms in Okayama, including not only those of Ikeda Mitsumasa but also of his son and successor Ikeda Tsunamasa. Yet, Roberts's analysis is based on conclusions by Tamamuro Fumio 主室文雄 which have been criticized in more recent Japanese scholarship.<sup>5</sup> In short, a systematic study of *shintō-uke* in Okayama in the light of recent Japanese scholarship is still lacking in Western sources.<sup>6</sup>

Among Japanese secondary literature, the best known studies are those of Taniguchi Sumio 谷口澄夫 on Ikeda Mitsumasa and the works of Tamamuro Fumio.<sup>7</sup> Tamamuro briefly introduces the *shintō-uke* system in his work *Edo bakufu no shūkyō tōsei*.<sup>8</sup> His most comprehensive study on this topic deals with temple and shrine restructuring during Mitsumasa's regime. However, Tamamuro does not give due consideration to the continuation of Shinto policies under Mitsumasa's successor Tsunamasa.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to the works of Taniguchi and Tamamuro, there are quite detailed studies on *shintō-uke* by Kurachi Katsunao 倉地克直 and Beppu Shingo 別府信吾. These have, however, received little attention in either Japanese or Western academic discourse. Kurachi has studied the system of sectarian inspection (*shūmon aratame*) in Okayama from the beginning of the religious control of Christian apostates in the 1650s via the introduction of *shintō-uke* up to the return to mandatory *terauke* for the general populace of Okayama in 1687. Beppu Shingo has analyzed the relations between Okayama and the Yoshida house. Like Kurachi, he also considers the development of *shintō-uke* under Tsunamasa's regime, with a focus on shrine families.<sup>10</sup>

This article is greatly indebted to the research of Kurachi and Beppu. Yet my focus falls on the implications of the development of Okayama's *shintō-uke* system for the emergence of Shinto as a distinct and autonomous religious tradition. Contrary to previous studies, I interpret the reforms in Okayama (and in Aizu and Mito as well) not as isolated phenomena, but as examples of a much more comprehensive historical development of fostering Shinto and separating Shinto and Buddhism, a phenomenon we call Domain Shinto.<sup>11</sup>

### Shinto Appreciation among Tokugawa Kin

Ikeda Mitsumasa of Okayama, Hoshina Masayuki of Aizu, and Tokugawa Mitsukuni 徳川光圀 (1628–1701) of Mito are regarded as the three main agents of Domain Shinto, but their shared interest in Shinto as well as Confucianism is rooted in a general appreciation of both teachings among members of the inner circle of the Tokugawa house. This intellectual preference was probably fostered by Tokugawa Yoshinao, daimyo of Owari and uncle of both

3 Ooms 1985, pp. 192–193.

4 Hur 2007, pp. 92–93.

5 Roberts 2012, p. 144.

6 For brief mentions, see also Bodart-Bailey 1993, pp. 310–311; Scheid 2002, p. 301; Scheid 2003, p. 642; Breen and Teeuwen 2010, p. 54; Antoni 2016, pp. 75–76.

7 Taniguchi 1961.

8 Tamamuro 1971, pp. 103–104.

9 Tamamuro 1996.

10 Kurachi 1983, pp. 304–330; Beppu 2013, pp. 141–163.

11 See the introduction to this Special Section.

Hoshina Masayuki and Tokugawa Mitsukuni.<sup>12</sup> His interests in Confucianism and Shinto led to his cooperation with the Confucian teacher Hayashi Razan 林羅山 (1583–1657), whom he met first in 1629. Yoshinao rejected the *honji suijaku* 本地垂迹 theory, which regarded buddhas to be the original form of *kami*, as being a source of disorder, and argued for the removal of all Buddhist elements from shrines. His positions resulted in a rise in appreciation of Shinto in Owari.<sup>13</sup> Thus, Yoshinao can be regarded as the first agent of Domain Shinto in the inner circle of the Tokugawa.

The Ikeda were originally a *tozama* 外様 house that did not belong to the inner circle of the Tokugawa regime. Nevertheless, Mitsumasa was already a companion of Tokugawa Iemitsu 徳川家光 (1604–1651) in the 1620s, with his formative years spent in Edo. In 1623, when Iemitsu went to Kyoto and was assigned the title of shogun, Mitsumasa was part of his entourage. The year 1623 saw also Mitsumasa's coming-of-age ceremony (*genpuku* 元服), in which he received permission to use the character *mitsu* 光 from the name of Iemitsu, a rare honor. In 1628, Mitsumasa married Katsuko 勝子 (also Katsuhime 勝姫, 1618–1678), the daughter of Iemitsu's older sister Senhime 千姫 (1597–1666), at Edo Castle. These close relations with Iemitsu's family resulted in lifelong devotion and loyalty on Mitsumasa's side; in later years, Mitsumasa was a confidant of and advisor to Iemitsu.<sup>14</sup>

A similarly close relation existed between Iemitsu and Hoshina Masayuki of Aizu. Masayuki was the fourth son of Shogun Tokugawa Hidetada 徳川秀忠 (1579–1632) and thus a stepbrother of Iemitsu. In his last will, Iemitsu appointed Masayuki the tutor of his son and successor Ietsuna. Tokugawa Mitsukuni of Mito, on the other hand, was a son of Ieyasu's eleventh son Yorifusa 徳川頼房 (1603–1661). Like Mitsumasa, Mitsukuni had received permission to use the character *mitsu* from Iemitsu's name during his coming-of-age ceremony. Mitsumasa, Mitsukuni, and Masayuki were thus kin. They moreover shared an interest in Confucianism as well as in Shinto.

Although there is no textual evidence for concerted action, most studies on the 1666 religious reforms in Okayama, Mito, and Aizu insinuate that the three lords did not introduce their measures independently of each other. Even as a daimyo, Ikeda Mitsumasa stayed almost every other year in Edo, and Masayuki and Mitsukuni spent most of their lives there, only occasionally visiting their domains. When the *bakufu* promulgated the Law on Temples of All Sects and the Law for Shrine Priests in 1665, all three were in the shogunal capital.<sup>15</sup> It seems most likely that when in 1666 they began their reforms in their respective domains of Okayama, Mito, and Aizu they knew of each other's intentions.

## Ikeda Mitsumasa's Reforms in Okayama

### *Prelude to the Okayama Shinto Reforms*

In Okayama, the first steps to promote Shinto had already occurred some years before 1666. Some time in the early 1660s, Mitsumasa invited Matsuoka Ichinosuke 松岡市之助

12 Owari together with Kii 紀伊 and Mito formed the three cadet houses (*gosanke* 御三家) of the Tokugawa that were eligible to provide a shogunal successor.

13 See Inoue Tomokatsu's contribution to this Special Section.

14 Kurachi 2012, pp. 18–19; Taniguchi 1981, p. 195; Hall 1966, p. 398.

15 Suzuki Eiichi provides a table of the periods that Tokugawa Mitsukuni spent in Mito (*Mitsukuni shūhan ichiran* 光圀就藩一覽) (Suzuki 2006, p. 103). My thanks go to Brigitte Pickl-Kolaczka for having pointed this out to me.

(fl. 1664–1679), a Shinto priest from the famous Atsuta Jinja 熱田神社 in Owari, to the domain.<sup>16</sup> Probably inspired by the abovementioned domain lord of Owari, Tokugawa Yoshinao, Atsuta Shrine priests were already cooperating with the Yoshida adept Yoshikawa Koretaru, resulting in the transmission of the *Jūbachi shintō* 十八神道 rite of Yoshida Shinto 吉田神道 to a priest of Atsuta Shrine.<sup>17</sup> Since Ichinosuke was also from Atsuta Shrine, informal contacts with Yoshida Shinto probably existed before he went to Okayama.

Ichinosuke's first official visit in Kanbun 4 (1664).5.4 to the Yoshida in Kyoto on behalf of Okayama's domain administration is recorded in the *Ohiroma zakki* 御広間雑記, a historiographical account of the Yoshida house. Two days later, on Kanbun 4 (1664).5.6, the record mentions that Matsuoka underwent a *Nakatomi no harae* 中臣禊 purification rite and received a (*Shintō*) *saikyojō* (神道) 裁許状 priestly certificate from the Yoshida. By issuing a *Shintō saikyojō* certificate, the Yoshida basically recognized a priest as part of their network. As in Ichinosuke's case, it was common that issuing this certificate was accompanied by a Nakatomi purification rite, the most common of several purification rites of the Yoshida. Obtaining the *Shintō saikyojō* was also a prerequisite for priests to receive more prestigious transmissions of Yoshida Shinto rites at a later time.<sup>18</sup>

In the following years, Ichinosuke continued to visit the Yoshida in Kyoto on behalf of Okayama. One purpose of these visits can be gathered from a note of Kanbun 5 (1665).6.19 sent from Mitsumasa to his chief vassals, where he mentions that it was necessary to receive an official rank (*kan'i* 官位) for Ichinosuke from the Yoshida.<sup>19</sup> One year later on Kanbun 6 (1666).7.2, around the time when Okayama's shrine reforms started, Ichinosuke received the transmission of the *Jūbachi shintō* rite. Probably on that occasion, the Yoshida also confirmed him as general inspector of Shinto priests of Okayama (*kannushi sōgashira* 神主惣頭).<sup>20</sup> This new office established by Mitsumasa's administration became the central authority for Shinto administration in Okayama domain.<sup>21</sup>

Considering these developments, it is obvious that Mitsumasa's regime used Yoshida Shinto to legitimize their own Shinto-Confucian reforms. However, Yoshida Shinto had no traditional basis in the domain. Rather, the Shinto elite of Okayama maintained relations with the Shirakawa house, the Yoshida's rival at the imperial court. In particular, Okayama's most prestigious shrine, Kibitsunomiya 吉備津宮, was affiliated with the Shirakawa. Other shrines cooperated with the Ise Shrines. It is thus quite probable that Mitsumasa anticipated potential internal resistance to his reforms and enlisted Yoshida-related priests from outside

16 Atsuta Shrine was well known for safeguarding the sword Kusanagi no tsurugi 草薙劍, one of the three imperial regalia.

17 Koretaru, who had received the highest initiations into Yoshida Shinto without being a member of the family, had cultivated relations with the Tokugawa's inner circle since 1657, the year he met Tokugawa Yorinobu 徳川頼宣 (1602–1671), daimyo of Kii. In 1661, Koretaru became Hoshina Masayuki's Shinto teacher. On this, see Bernhard Scheid's contribution to this Special Section. On the transmission of the *Jūbachi shintō* rite, see Hatakama 2008, p. 348b.

18 Hatakama 2008, pp. 341b–342a, 349b.

19 Nagayama 1932, vol. 2, pp. 934–935.

20 Köck 2021, p. 165.

21 Other domain administrations (for example, Hirosaki 弘前, Kanazawa 金沢, Tottori 鳥取, and Saga 佐賀) often employed members from domain-internal Shinto priest networks for administrative purposes, choosing the priest who headed the respective network as their liaison. If someone else had been chosen, this could have resulted in opposition of the domain's priests against measures taken by the administration (Inoue 2008a, pp. 370a, 375b–376a).

Okayama to supervise the changes he envisioned.<sup>22</sup> In this way, Matsuoka Ichinosuke, originally merely a provincial Shinto priest, became *kannushi sōgashira* of Okayama and played a major role during the phase of religious reforms under Mitsumasa.

*The Retrenchment of Shrines in 1666*

Ichinosuke's first administrative task on behalf of Mitsumasa's government was overseeing a survey of shrines in Okayama in the winter of 1665/66.<sup>23</sup> The survey, completed in the spring of 1666, resulted in a comprehensive register of shrines. Similar to religious surveys in Mito and Aizu, it served as a basis for Mitsumasa's retrenchment of Shinto shrines. According to the survey, there were a total number of 11,128 shrines in Okayama. Of these, 601 were *ujigami* 氏神 (village tutelary) shrines. The vast majority, however, were so-called illicit shrines (*inshi* 淫祠), which had been built without official permission. Traveling thaumaturges like *yamabushi* 山伏 or *miko* 神子 met there with clients to perform prayer rites (*kitō* 祈祷) for the sick or for people possessed by foxes or badgers. The fees for such rites were seen as a cause of impoverishment of the populace. Moreover, the domain authorities feared political unrest and thus regarded the fact that people met at these shrines outside the scope of official control with suspicion.<sup>24</sup> Mitsumasa's reforms thus initially targeted the *inshi*.

Measures started in earnest in Kanbun 6 (1666).5.18, when Mitsumasa conferred with Ichinosuke and other heads of his administration about details for measures to reduce the number of shrines.<sup>25</sup> Mitsumasa ordered that only the tutelary shrines and the domain's *taisha* 大社 (grand shrines) mentioned in the tenth-century *Engishiki* 延喜式 should remain. All other shrines were in fact destroyed. The objects of worship (*shintai* 神体) and other devotional objects of the obsolete shrines were stored in so-called *yosemiya* 寄宮, collective shrines, a new category of shrines built at the behest of Mitsumasa's administration specifically for this purpose. Initially, there were seventy-two *yosemiya*, one for each of the administrative areas supervised by a local deputy (*mura daikan* 村代官). Kugunochi Jinja 句々廻馳神社 in the village of Ōdara 大多羅 was designated as the head shrine (*honsha* 本社) of all *yosemiya*.<sup>26</sup>

In total, 10,528 of Okayama's shrines, 94.5 percent, were destroyed in 1666. Roughly one shrine per village remained (0.97 per village).<sup>27</sup> Thus a system was established by Mitsumasa's regime of one shrine per village (*isson issha* 一村一社), as was also envisioned by Tokugawa Mitsukuni in Mito. Already at this stage, the domain administration was urging Buddhist monks to laicize.<sup>28</sup> In particular, monks who had served as *shasō* 社僧 (shrine

22 In the organization of his domain administration and implementation of reform measures, Ikeda Mitsumasa relied heavily on personnel originally from outside Okayama. For example, about half of the officials who implemented religious reforms in Okayama in 1666/67 were Confucian-minded samurai from outside the domain who had joined the domain's rifle brigade organized by Kumazawa Banzan 熊沢蕃山 (1619–1691) in the early 1660s and thus been absorbed into Okayama's rural administration. Mitsumasa's Confucian advisors like Banzan or Ichiura Kisai 市浦穀齋 (1642–1712) also came from outside Okayama (McMullen 2021, pp. 119–121).

23 Beppu 2013, p. 144.

24 Fujii et al. 1967b, pp. 13–14; Inoue 2008b, p. 277.

25 Fujii et al. 1967b, pp. 13–14; Inoue 2008b, p. 277.

26 Kurachi 2012, p. 132. Much later, under Tsunamasa's reign in 1712, the *yosemiya* shrines were all merged into Kugunochi Jinja.

27 Köck 2021, pp. 166–167.

28 Uehara 2012, p. 191.



monks) were defrocked, only to be immediately appointed priests (*shinshoku*) of the respective village shrines.<sup>29</sup>

*Shinto Certification as an Attempt to Realize shinju itchi in Practice*

While the retrenchment of shrines was radical, there is strong evidence that Mitsumasa ultimately wanted to foster Confucianism, or rather, the ideal of a unification of Shinto and Confucianism (*shinju itchi*). In Kanbun 6 (1666).7, after instigating measures to tear down illicit shrines, Mitsumasa toured his domain in order to win over the populace for this teaching. In line with Confucian concepts of benevolent rule, he presented village headmen with garments and granted land to Shinto priests.<sup>30</sup> Persons over ninety years of age received gold and silver.<sup>31</sup> Good moral conduct of members of the populace was also rewarded.

Obviously, Mitsumasa's regime deemed actions like showing benevolence and rewarding good moral conduct important for spreading Confucianism. The populace was advised to adhere to Confucian morality and to conduct funerals and ancestor veneration according to Confucian standards. The rural elite was encouraged to no longer have their sons educated by Buddhist monks at temple schools (*terakoya* 寺子屋), but by Confucian-minded former *rōnin*, who were to be hired as teachers. A total of 123 rural literacy schools (*tenaraisho* 手習所) had been established by 1668.<sup>32</sup>

These measures targeted Buddhism, which until then had had a monopoly on burials and education. To this end, the domain administration planned first to spread Confucianism among the upper strata of the domain's populace, from the *kōri bugyō* 郡奉行 (district officials) and the *mura daikan*, to village officials, laicized shrine monks, and even Buddhist monks.<sup>33</sup> Mitsumasa also tried to enforce his shrine policies in a positive way by granting land to shrine priests to gain their support. Until then most of them had not been serving solely as priests. Granting them land was a way for the domain government to officially recognize their status as professional priests.

However, one year later, in 1667, the headmen of the village of Katakami 片上 in Wake 和気 district told travelling *bakufu* inspectors (*junkenshi* 巡見使) visiting Okayama that many people were disappointed to learn that there was only a one-time award for good moral conduct. He further reported that village leaders had thus lost interest in Confucianism and turned toward Shinto.<sup>34</sup> This shows that Mitsumasa's regime was interested in spreading Confucianism among the populace, and indicates that common people distinguished between Shinto and Confucianism. Theories of Confucian Shinto obviously had not led to the creation of a corresponding syncretic tradition.

Nonetheless, Mitsumasa was elated by his promotional tour through the countryside. Immediately after returning to Okayama, he discussed plans with the heads of his administration to change the mode of anti-Christian certification for those who had expressed an inclination toward Confucianism (Kanbun 6 [1666].8.4). He drafted a certificate of conversion from Buddhism to Confucianism and Shinto to be issued by local

29 Köck 2021, p. 171.

30 Uehara 2012, p. 191.

31 Nagayama 1932, vol. 1, p. 560.

32 However, Tsunamasa closed all the *tenaraisho* in 1674 due to fiscal troubles.

33 Uehara 2012, p. 191.

34 Nagayama 1932, vol. 1, p. 560.

Shinto priests. An example can be found in an entry for the next day (Kanbun 6 [1666].8.5) in Mitsumasa's journal. The relevant passage for certification by a priest reads:

Although the signee \_\_\_ of \_\_\_ district, \_\_\_ village has until now been a parishioner of Shingon Buddhism at \_\_\_ temple in \_\_\_ village, \_\_\_ district and requested certification accordingly, he has turned to Confucianism and studies Shinto and expresses faith in the tutelary deity of \_\_\_ shrine (not required for outsiders). He is not a Christian. If there is anything suspicious, I will seek you out and explain. Accordingly, this is hereafter valid.<sup>35</sup>

In other words, non-Christian certification by Shinto priests was meant for “those who had shown inclinations towards Confucianism.”<sup>36</sup> This referred to not only the small group of Confucian-minded officials in the administration, but also to members of the populace he had met during his previous weeks on the road who had responded positively to his request for conversion.

In this draft, Mitsumasa proposed for the first time that Shinto priests participate in the system of sectarian inspection (*shūmon aratame*) by certifying someone as neither Christian nor Buddhist, but instead as a Confucian convert and believer in Shinto. At that time, however, this kind of certification was meant only for converts from Buddhism, not for the entire population. Clearly, in the eighth month of 1666, *shintō-uke* was not intended to become the only or even the predominant form of mandatory religious certification in Okayama domain.

#### *Domain-wide shintō-uke*

The event that triggered the development of domain-wide *shintō-uke* was the excessive reduction of Buddhist temples and clergy in late 1666 and early the following year. This measure principally targeted a subgroup of the Buddhist Nichiren 日蓮 sect that the *bakufu* had also declared illegal, the Fujufuse 不受不施. Okayama was one of their strongholds. But other Buddhist sects also became part of this retrenchment. As a result, one-fifth of Okayama's villages no longer had a temple in the spring of 1667. About half of monks were laicized or driven out of the domain.<sup>37</sup> In some extreme cases, such as the district of Tsudaka 津高, over 90 percent of temples were destroyed.<sup>38</sup> In this situation, *shintō-uke* was a practical replacement for sectarian inspection by Buddhist temples.

Mitsumasa only returned to Okayama domain in the fifth month of 1668 and thus did not directly supervise the implementation of *shintō-uke* in 1667. Rather, this was the task of the heads of the domain administration, probably guided by his son and later successor Ikeda Tsunamasa 池田綱政 (1638–1714), who stayed in Okayama for most of 1667, returning only in Kanbun 7 (1667).11 to Edo.

To create a functioning system of certification via Shinto shrines, the local infrastructure for certification had to be modified. The few documents remaining from this period give

35 Fujii et al. 1967a, p. 569a, b. See the *Bi'yō kokushi nichiroku* 備陽国史日録 of 1666 (Kanbun 6), OKM Microfilm TAA-003-572–573. The translation of this passage from Mitsumasa's template is from Köck 2021, p. 167.

36 Fujii et al. 1967a, pp. 568b–569a.

37 Köck 2021, pp. 170, 174.

38 Kurachi 1983, p. 318.

a rough outline of events.<sup>39</sup> As a first step, the domain administration had to discover who had dissolved their temple affiliation and converted from Buddhism to Shinto. These people would henceforth have their religious affiliation certified by their village's Shinto priest. Thus, early in 1667 village officials were tasked with compiling registers of members of their respective *ujiko* parishes. An example is the register of the Hachiman parish (*Hachiman ujiko chō* 八幡氏子帳) of Onoue 尾上, completed in Kanbun 7 (1667).4.7.<sup>40</sup> It lists the members of individual households by name, age, and degree of kinship, starting with the head of the household, his wife, and children. Keeping track of this kind of information was important to ensure a continuous record of sectarian inspection over the years.

The procedure for becoming a Shinto adherent remains unclear. According to Mitsumasa's original plan from the eighth month of 1666, each convert was to submit a certificate of conversion from Buddhism to Confucianism and Shinto. However, no actual document of this kind is known. Considering that Mitsumasa intended *shintō-uke* originally only for a rather small proportion of the domain's populace, it seems plausible that this step was then skipped in 1667, when Shinto certification was applied to large parts of the populace. The former practice of certification via *terauke* that persisted in certain cases was now the exception rather than the rule.

An archetypal case for comprehensive conversion is the village of Kitakata 北方. There were originally two temples in this village, one Shingon 真言 and one Nichiren.<sup>41</sup> Both temples were destroyed during the reforms of 1666–1667. The Shingon temple's monk was laicized and became a Shinto priest for the Hachiman Shrine in Kurayoshi. Subsequently, the religious affiliation of his entire former temple parish (*danka*) was transformed into his *ujiko* parish. Thus, in this case, the changes seem to have been merely to satisfy the regulation.<sup>42</sup>

For the years 1667 and 1668, no actual summary of figures of religious affiliation for the entire Okayama domain or even a register (*shūmon aratame chō* 宗門改帳) of a single village remains. However, Onoue's *Hachiman ujiko chō* register shows that, from its outset, the actual practice of *shintō-uke* did not differ from the former certification via Buddhist temples. There was obviously a well-established procedure for the administrative process of certification that remained the same, regardless of whether the village residents had to submit individual certificates of conversion, or whether they were declared *ujiko* members simply by entering their names in the *ujiko* register.

Exact figures of sectarian registration in Okayama are known for 1669 from a document that is quoted in the *History of Biyō* (*Biyō kokushi ruihen* 備陽国史類編).<sup>43</sup> According to this document, 97.5 percent of the population were certified via *shintō-uke* in 1669. This would mean that *shintō-uke* had already become firmly established by that time. However, Uehara

39 These documents are preserved in the archives of three village headmen families: the Hagino family, the Maruyama family, and the Noritake family.

40 This is the only extant register of this kind. The document lacks a colophon and is probably only partially preserved. *Hachiman ujiko chō* 八幡氏子帳, NKM 40.

41 The Shingon temple was a sub-temple of Manganji 万願寺 of the neighboring village of Kurayoshi 倉吉. The Nichiren temple was a sub-temple belonging to Renkyūji 蓮久寺 of the village of Tsuzura 葛籠.

42 Kurachi 1983, p. 313.

43 OKM Microfilm TAA-008-114. The *Biyō kokushi ruihen* is a history of Okayama domain covering the years 1654 to 1673. Its date of compilation and author are not known. The volumes of the *Biyō kokushi ruihen* are organized by topic (Hall 1966, p. 167). There is also a draft version of the figures preserved in the Ikeda family archive, see OKM Microfilms YPC-001-284 to YPC-001-288.

Kenzen considers these numbers suspiciously high, pointing out that they were compiled by *kōri bugyō* 郡奉行 and *mura daikan*, that is, officials in the service of Mitsumasa's regime.<sup>44</sup> Thus, these numbers may have been manipulated to depict the desired result rather than reality. Nevertheless, the numbers given in the *Biyō kokushi* hint at a relationship between *shintō-uke* and the number of temples destroyed in 1666–1667.

According to the *Biyō kokushi*, a minority of 2.5 percent of the population, in total 7,676 people, were not certified via *shintō-uke* in 1669.<sup>45</sup> These people were, however, not distributed equally throughout the domain, but concentrated in the district of Kojima 児島. In 1669, a total of 6,592 inhabitants—over 20 percent of the total of 38,945—were certified by *terauke* as Buddhists.<sup>46</sup> In the register for Nagahama 長浜 in Kojima district, all 176 households are actually classified as Buddhist. Only three women who held positions at Shinto shrines (designated as *miko*) are separately registered as adhering to Shinto.<sup>47</sup> This is the first known example from Okayama to single out certain individuals according to their role in Shinto. The reasons for the strong presence of *terauke* in Nagahama, in particular, and in Kojima district at large may be—at least in part—due to the specificities of temple retrenchment in Okayama. The Shingon sect had a strong presence in Kojima. A relatively small number of its temples, only 39.7 percent, were closed due to Mitsumasa's reforms. The number of surviving temples was therefore 60 percent while the domain average was under half.<sup>48</sup>

A counterexample to the case of Nagahama is again Onoue in Tsudaka, which is documented in a Register of Religious Affiliation dating to Kanbun 12 (1672).1.20.<sup>49</sup> The colophon of this document opens with the village headman's declaration that all registered villagers, in total 552, revere the tutelary shrine of the village (*uji no miya* 氏宮), in other words, adhere to Shinto. None of them was a Christian or follower of the Fujufuse branch of the Nichiren sect.<sup>50</sup> The village headman's declaration is followed by a similar statement by Hachiman Shrine's priest confirming this.

Thus, the entire population of Onoue seems to have converted to Shinto, as no case of *terauke* is mentioned. This is in fact plausible, considering that the district of Tsudaka had been a stronghold of the heterodox Fujufuse in the province of Bizen 備前. In contrast to Kojima district, 91 percent of Tsudaka's temples were destroyed.<sup>51</sup> It was thus virtually impossible to conduct *terauke*, leaving *shintō-uke* as the sole option.

When introducing reform measures in 1666, Mitsumasa repeatedly stressed that the populace should not be pressured to convert. Instead, people should choose their sectarian affiliation based on their own discretion. Nonetheless, Mitsumasa's administration completed measures to weaken Buddhism and strengthen Confucianism and Shinto, including *shintō-uke*, within just two years. This suggests that violence and repression were applied.<sup>52</sup> In

44 Uehara 2012, p. 223.

45 OKM Microfilm TAA-008-114. The draft in the Ikeda family archive differs only slightly, giving 7,672 people.

46 OKM Microfilm TAA-008-113. The draft gives identical figures; see also Kurachi 1983, p. 310.

47 The preserved copy dates to Genroku 元禄 2 (1689).3.26; see the *Kanbun kunen hito aratame shūmon kakiwake chō* 寛文九年入改宗門書分帳, Hagino-ke monjo 萩野家文書 821, Okayama University Libraries.

48 Köck 2021, p. 170.

49 *Shūshi o-aratame chō* 宗旨御改帳, NKM 44.

50 NKM 44, p. 32 (sheet 798).

51 Kurachi 1983, p. 310.

52 Uehara 2012, pp. 201–202.

tandem with repressive measures, Matsuoka Ichinosuke, the newly appointed general inspector of Shinto priests of Okayama (*kannushi sōgashira*), engaged in the education of shrine priests at least until Kanbun 10 (1670).<sup>53</sup> That year, Noda Michinao 野田道直, a disciple of Yoshikawa Koretaru, was enlisted to support Ichinosuke. In Kanbun 11 (1671).11, Michinao started to instruct priests in the Yoshikawa Shintō 吉川神道 tradition, probably along the lines of Koretaru's *shinju itchi* thinking, which assumed the congruency of Shinto and Confucianism.<sup>54</sup>

Despite these efforts, the domain's populace at large did not subscribe wholeheartedly to Mitsumasa's course. Confidential reports from the administration after 1666 state that the orders of the domain government were usually observed only superficially. While *shintō-uke* had become the predominant form of sectarian certification, it was regularly noted that, in private, most people continued to adhere to and practice Buddhism, regardless of whether they were townsfolk or peasants, *bushi* or craftsmen.<sup>55</sup>

#### *Reactions of the bakufu*

The year 1666 seems to be simultaneously the apex and end point of official enthusiasm for Shinto backed by Hoshina Masayuki. The Law for Shrine Priests of 1665 obviously inspired the Shinto-related reforms of 1666 not only in Okayama, but also in Mito, Aizu, and elsewhere. On the other hand, the power structure had started to shift. Shogun Ietsuna involved himself more and more in the politics of the *bakufu*, while shogunal officials appointed under Iemitsu retired. The office of Great Councilor (*tairō* 大老), vacant since 1662, was filled by Sakai Tadakiyo 酒井忠清 (1624–1681) in 1666. Unlike Iemitsu, these new *bakufu* leaders did not hold Masayuki in such high esteem. They set out to restore governance through the hereditary Tokugawa vassals (*fudai* 譜代), who from that point on dominated *bakufu* bureaucracy for the remainder of the Edo period.<sup>56</sup>

It was in this situation that word of the extreme reforms in Okayama reached Edo. In particular, Okayama's retrenchment of Buddhist temples met with opposition in influential Buddhist circles. Monks of the eminent temples Zōjōji 増上寺 and Kan'eiji 寛永寺 spread rumors that Buddhist monks had been driven out of Okayama domain completely.<sup>57</sup> The new *bakufu* regime was clearly worried that unrest might arise if other domains decided to introduce similar measures. Thus, shortly after his arrival in Edo the following year (Kanbun 7 [1667].4.2), Mitsumasa met with *tairō* Tadakiyo on Kanbun 7 (1667).4.16 to explain the situation.<sup>58</sup> Tadakiyo requested a report on events, which Mitsumasa submitted at the end of the same month. In this report, Mitsumasa states that his measures had been designed to weaken Buddhism and strengthen Shinto and Confucianism in Okayama. The domain's population was turning from Buddhism towards Shinto and Confucianism. All in all, eight hundred and forty monks laicized or left the domain. Defrocked monks who chose to remain

53 Hirota and Kurachi 1988, pp. 77–78.

54 Hirota and Kurachi 1988, p. 78; Kurachi 2012, p. 143.

55 Uehara 2012, pp. 223–225; Okayamaken-shi 1984, pp. 720–721.

56 Totman 1967, p. 210; Asao 1975, p. 41.

57 In particular, Kan'eiji's Okayama branch temple Kinzanji 金山寺 as well as the latter's sub-temples in Okayama had suffered gravely through Mitsumasa's measures of reduction. Thus relations between both sides was strained.

58 Fujii et al. 1967a, pp. 576b–577a.

in Okayama became either peasants (*hyakushō* 百姓), merchants (*shōnin* 商人), or Shinto priests. The religious certification for adherents of Shinto and Confucianism was carried out via *shintō-uke* throughout the domain.<sup>59</sup>

Mitsumasa's report was circulated among the council of elders (*rōjū* 老中) and met no criticism. Nor did the chief inspectors (*ō-metsuke* 大目付) of the *bakufu* raise any objections against the measures outlined in the report. In his study of Mitsumasa's way of rule and its consequences for the society of Okayama, Uehara Kenzen has concluded that the report was resoundingly successful and thus that the *bakufu* acknowledged and approved of the *shintō-uke* practice of Okayama domain, as well as the reform measures regarding Buddhism.<sup>60</sup>

Earlier studies assumed that Tadakiyo and the new *bakufu* regime opposed Mitsumasa's measures from the outset.<sup>61</sup> A closer look at the chain of events shows, however, that although *bakufu* leaders initially expressed concern, there was no dispute between them and Mitsumasa at this stage. After receiving detailed information about Mitsumasa's measures and goals, the *bakufu* clearly signaled its toleration for them.

## Developments under Ikeda Tsunamasa's Reign

### *Liberalization of Religious Certification*

In contrast to its initial leniency, the *bakufu* began to voice concerns as conversions from Buddhism to Shinto continued in Okayama. Mitsumasa's resignation as domain lord in Kanbun 12 (1672).6.11 is often related to this criticism. Soon thereafter, in Enpō 延宝 2 (1674).11.9, Mitsumasa's son and successor Tsunamasa ordered a liberalization of sectarian certification. In doing so, he referred to earlier statements by Mitsumasa that people were free to choose their religious affiliation. This meant that after a period of eight years, those who had leaned toward Buddhism could openly practice their faith again and be certified accordingly. Soon, a large share of the populace reverted to *terauke* certification.<sup>62</sup>

The practical results of Tsunamasa's order can be gathered from the Register of Sectarian Inspection of Onoue on Enpō 8 (1680).4.28.<sup>63</sup> Compared to 1672, sectarian affiliation had become much more heterogenous. The residents of Onoue were now scattered between three temples and one shrine parish. The largest group, 466 in total, were parishioners of Myōdenji 妙伝寺, a temple of the Hiden-Fujufuseha 悲田不受不施派, a subgroup of the Fujufuse that was tolerated by the *bakufu* until 1691.<sup>64</sup> Other residents belonged to temples of neighboring villages. Thus, the majority of the village's residents had shifted their allegiance back to Buddhism, although 154 were still certified as the *ujiko* of the village's Hachiman Shrine.<sup>65</sup> An interesting detail is the fact that these Shinto adherents were also called the “*danna* 旦那 of Nakayama Shōbei,” the head priest (*kannushi*) of the Hachiman Shrine.<sup>66</sup> The term *danna*, however, usually signified a member of a Buddhist parish. It is therefore likely that this *ujiko* parish originally belonged to Tokujuin 徳寿院, a

59 Uehara 2012, pp. 205–206.

60 Fujii et al. 1967a, pp. 577b–578a; Uehara 2012, pp. 205–208; Kurachi 2012, pp. 138–140.

61 See for example Taniguchi 1961, p. 65; Taniguchi 1981, pp. 121, 195–196; Bodart-Bailey 1993, pp. 310, 313–314; Roberts 2012, pp. 144.

62 Kurachi 2012, p. 314; Uehara 2012, p. 226.

63 *Shūshi o-aratame chō* 宗旨御改帳, NKM 45.

64 NKM 45, pp. 66–67 (sheets 861–862); Stone 2021, pp. 69–70.

65 NKM 45, p. 89 (sheet 884).

66 NKM 45, p. 90 (sheet 885).

Tendai 天台 temple-shrine complex whose parish had converted completely to the Hachiman Shrine in the 1660s.<sup>67</sup> All in all, the 1680 register of sectarian affiliation in Onoue indicates that *terauke* and *shintō-uke* were equally valid as a means of sectarian certification in the years after 1674.

*Terauke for the Populace, shintō-uke for Shinto Clerics*

Okayama's peculiar dual sectarian certification lasted until 1687, when the *bakufu*—led by Tokugawa Tsunayoshi 徳川綱吉 (1646–1709)—tightened religious control again. From Jōkyō 貞享 5 (1687).6.22, it demanded the nationwide compilation of registers of kinship of (former) Christian families and codified *terauke* as the only acceptable form of sectarian certification.<sup>68</sup>

This order also put an end to *shintō-uke* in Okayama. Whether this was done under pressure is controversial. Tsunamasa, at the time on sojourn in Edo, was informed of the order directly by the *rōjū* Toda Tadazane 戸田忠真 (1651–1729). Although it has been generally assumed that Tsunamasa yielded to pressure from the *bakufu*, recent studies point in a different direction. Regarding religion, Tsunamasa generally agreed with the views of his peers in the *bakufu*. The decision to revert exclusively to *terauke* in Okayama was thus not made under pressure but was mutually agreed upon between him and Tadazane.<sup>69</sup> His father's death five years earlier in 1682 also spared him from discussions at home. The abolition of *shintō-uke* was no longer regarded as an impious act.<sup>70</sup>

Unfortunately, no registers for the years 1687 or 1688 remain that might reveal how this decision was implemented in Okayama. However, the register of 1689 for Onoue has been preserved. It lists the population as belonging to the parishes of six temples situated in Onoue and neighboring villages.<sup>71</sup> The register shows that the members of the *ujiko* parish of the Hachiman Shrine who had been certified via *shintō-uke* only seven years earlier were incorporated into the parishes of four temples in the village. Clearly, *terauke* had become the only form of sectarian certification and Buddhist temples had regained their position as a pivotal part of domain rule in Okayama.<sup>72</sup>

Despite this evidence, the order of 1687 did not lead to a complete abolition of *shintō-uke*. Documents of sectarian inspection in subsequent years reveal that it continued. As for other matters, only isolated evidence has been preserved, but owing to the systematic nature of administrative practices, information regarding sectarian certification can be taken as *pars pro toto*.

A register of sectarian inspection from the village of Yamada 山田 in Kojima district for the year 1691 confirms that all its residents now belonged to temple parishes. However, the following remark reveals a certain lack of homogeneity:

67 Kurachi 1983, p. 314.

68 Kurachi 1983, p. 316; Okayamaken-shi 1984, p. 706.

69 Roberts 2012, p. 144; Hur 2021, p. 30; Kurachi 2019, p. 111; Köck 2020, pp. 233–234.

70 Uehara 2012, p. 226; Taniguchi 1981, p. 597.

71 *Kirishitan shūmon o-aratame getsuji bangata meisai chō* 切支丹宗門御改月次判形名歳帳, NKM 18, pp. 17–18 (sheets 216–217).

72 Kurachi 1983, p. 316.

The households amount in total to 118. One household among these is that of a *kannushi* and has a *shinshoku* register (*shinshoku-chō* 神職帳).<sup>73</sup>

This note points to a separate register of sectarian inspection for the household of a Shinto priest, that is, a form of *shintō-uke*. The Noritake 則武 family archive of Onoue includes a document dated 1702 entitled “Monthly sealed register of residents and horses and of Christian sectarian inspection (Shrine personnel).”<sup>74</sup> It seems likely that the “*shinshoku* register” noted above refers to a document such as this, meaning a separate register of non-Christians solely for the households of Shinto priests.

The Onoue document is a completely preserved register; its preface points out the relevance of sectarian inspection and it contains a colophon. These features allow us to deduce how and to what end *shintō-uke* certification continued in Okayama domain after 1687. The preface mentions mandatory monthly checks of whether Christians, Fujufuse or Hiden-Fujufuse believers, or Christian apostates (*korobi* ころび) lived in shrine households.<sup>75</sup> It also states that individuals holding positions at shrines, such as *kannushi*, *shinkan* 神官, *shajin* 社人, or *miko*, should adhere solely to Shinto and were not to join (*torimōsazu* 取不申) a parish temple (*danna dera* 旦那寺).<sup>76</sup> These provisions echo the 1669 case from Nagahama in Kojima district, which listed three *miko* separately as Shinto adherents in an all-Buddhist community. The preface also proves that in Okayama, shrine families were not allowed to join a Buddhist temple parish. The administrative processes of sectarian inspection distinguished clearly between Buddhism and Shinto.

Onoue’s *shinshoku* register of 1702 lists four households, starting with the Nakayama household of the Hachiman Shrine. From the data, we know that the head of the household, Nakayama Mitsushige 中山光重, aged thirty-six, served at the Hachiman Shrine of Onoue and at Bizen’s first shrine Kibitsunomiya, which had administrative control over the Hachiman Shrine. In addition, the register mentions six persons; Mitsushige’s mother, sister-in-law, nephew, and nieces.<sup>77</sup> The former priest Nakayama Shōbei was probably Mitsushige’s already deceased father, making this an example of priestly succession within the same family. This was clearly in line with Mitsumasa’s intention that shrines in Okayama be controlled by permanent professional priests instead of Buddhist shrine monks.<sup>78</sup> The three additional *shinshoku* households in the register were also designated as families supervised by Kibitsunomiya. In the colophon of the document, the head of Kibitsunomiya, Ōmori Chikugo no kami 大守筑後守, confirmed that the households were adherents of Shinto and had no Christian, Fujufuse, or Hiden-Fujufuse adherents among them.<sup>79</sup>

Onoue’s 1702 register of sectarian registration for shrine families is therefore a prime example of how far the recognition of Shinto as a separate, distinct religious tradition had developed in Okayama despite mandatory *terauke* for Japan’s populace since 1687. Priestly

73 *Kirishitan shūmon o-aratame getsuji hangata chō*, *Genroku yonen shōgatsu jūgonichi*, *Kojima-gun, Yamada-mura* 切支丹宗門御改月次判形帳・元禄四年正月十五日・児島郡・山田村, Okayama Prefectural Archives.

74 *Kirishitan shūmon o-aratame getsuji hangata jinba chō (shakata)* 切支丹宗門御改月次判形人馬帳 (社方), NKM 19.

75 NKM 19, p. 2 (sheet 221).

76 NKM 19, pp. 2–3 (sheets 221–222).

77 NKM 19, pp. 5–6 (sheets 224–225).

78 Beppu 2013, p. 225.

79 NKM 19, p. 9 (sheet 228).



succession inside the same family shows that at local shrines, the office of priest had become professionalized and hereditary in the same family, a development that appeared in other regions of Japan only in the course of the eighteenth century.<sup>80</sup> Members of the Shinto clergy and their households were not only exempt from *terauke*, but were instead obligated by the domain administration to perform religious certification in separate documents, documents certified by a fellow Shinto priest. This is but one example showing that this part of Mitsumasa's reforms took root in practice. The *shinshoku* register of Onoue is evidence that Okayama was a pioneer in developing Shinto autonomy.

### Conclusion

In this article I have analyzed the development of *shintō-uke*, sectarian certification via Shinto shrines, which was a major aspect of the Domain Shinto reforms in Okayama. As a first step toward these reforms, the daimyo Ikeda Mitsumasa invited to Okayama Matsuoka Ichinosuke, a priest from Atsuta Shrine in Owari. Ichinosuke had no previous ties to Okayama domain or its Shinto circles but was nevertheless appointed by Mitsumasa as supervisor of the entire Shinto clergy of his domain. This was due to Atsuta Shrine's relations to the Yoshida house. Ichinosuke was responsible for the implementation of Domain Shinto reforms, including reductions in the number of illicit shrines by merging them into collective shrines (*yosemiya*), introducing a system of one shrine per village, and *shintō-uke* certification.

In contrast to previous studies, I emphasize that when initiated in 1666, *shintō-uke* was only intended for that section of the domain's population that had turned its back on Buddhism and followed Confucian morality, burials, and ancestor cults, as favored by Mitsumasa. The domain administration regarded these residents no longer as Buddhists and therefore did not oblige them to undergo *terauke* certification. In order to prove their non-Christian affiliation, they had to resort to *shintō-uke*.

The *shintō-uke* that was created by Mitsumasa as an alternative means of sectarian certification prevailed only after the purge of the Fujufuse Nichiren sect, which had a stronghold in Okayama. After the purge, which also affected other Buddhist sects, temples and monks became virtually nonexistent in large parts of Mitsumasa's domain. Consequently, there was no longer a reliable basis for religious certification via *terauke*. *Shintō-uke* prevailed between 1667 and 1674, when Mitsumasa's son and successor Ikeda Tsunamasa declared the domain's populace free to choose between *shintō-uke* and *terauke* certification. But even under Mitsumasa's rule, exceptions from *shintō-uke* existed.

Another important finding is that contrary to common scholarly opinion, the *bakufu* did not oppose Mitsumasa's reforms from the outset. In 1667, Mitsumasa was able to remove initial reservations about his reforms in meetings with *bakufu* leaders, who afterwards tolerated his measures. Even under Tsunamasa's administration, when *bakufu* law made a return to *terauke* unavoidable, Okayama's shrine families and personnel were still obligated to practice sectarian certification via *shintō-uke*. In this sense, the status of *shintō-uke* as a key component of Shinto autonomy was confirmed in 1687 and continued in Okayama throughout the Edo period.

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80 Endō 2003, p. 123.

All in all, religious reforms under the two Ikeda daimyo resulted in one of the first major examples in Japan of *shinbutsu bunri*, the separation of Shinto and Buddhism. This implied a separate Shinto clergy, with separate sanctuaries and a separate way of sectarian certification via *shintō-uke*. Domain Shinto in Okayama also had other aspects, such as Confucian ancestor worship being combined with daimyo deification at shrines, and these remain as a topic for research in the future.

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**SPECIAL SECTION**, edited by Bernhard Scheid, Stefan Köck, and Brigitte Pickl-Kolaczia  
Domain Shinto in Tokugawa Japan

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## **Domain Shinto in Early Modern Mito: Impacts on Village Populations and Rural Networks**

**Brigitte PICKL-KOLACZIA\***

Tokugawa Mitsukuni's religious policies in Mito domain during the 1660s are famous for their radical retrenchment of Buddhist institutions but were also designed to promote a system of one shrine per village. As Mitsukuni aimed at a complete separation of Shinto shrines from Buddhism, his reforms can be regarded as a typical case of Domain Shinto. Nevertheless, he could not achieve a comprehensive implementation of his policies. In the village of Noguchi, the subject of this case study, a tutelary shrine had existed since the early ninth century. It was, however, managed by a Buddhist temple. Its festivals were rooted in Buddhist practices mixed with a few Shinto elements. Probably owing to its comparatively high status, Noguchi's tutelary shrine remained under Buddhist influence for at least one hundred and twenty years after Mitsukuni's Domain Shinto measures. Only in the first half of the nineteenth century had all Buddhist elements been removed. Based on firsthand sources, this article reconstructs the relatively slow transformation of Noguchi's religious practice while analyzing the surprisingly large networks of Noguchi's leading families, in which their village shrine played a vital role.

**Keywords:** early modern Japanese religion, religious practice, rural society, shrine administration, tutelary shrine, Noguchi, Mito

This article deals with Domain Shinto at a local level, analyzing how religious policies introduced by Tokugawa Mitsukuni 徳川光圀 (1628–1701) in his domain of Mito 水戸 (today's Ibaraki Prefecture) in the second half of the seventeenth century affected a particular village and its inhabitants. As noted in the introduction to this special section, we use Domain Shinto as an umbrella term to subsume a cluster of religious policies and ideas related to Shinto. The most prominent examples of Domain Shinto reforms occurred in the 1660s, the same time as those of Mitsukuni, and each involved the radical transformation of a certain local religious landscape. These reforms did not focus solely on Shinto as they also

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derived from the fascination of the daimyo in question with Confucianism. Nonetheless, they did result in conditions favorable for the promotion of Shinto institutions and professionals.

The measures implemented were not identical in each of the domains involved, nor did they lead to the same outcomes. In Okayama 岡山, the main focus was on inspection of religious affiliation through Shinto shrines (*shintō-uke* 神道請).<sup>1</sup> Distinctive to Domain Shinto in Aizu 会津 was Hoshina Masayuki's 保科正之 (1611–1673) Shinto funeral and his subsequent deification.<sup>2</sup> And in Mito, the introduction of a system of one tutelary shrine per village and the proposed separation of Shinto and Buddhism were the most noteworthy aspects and had the greatest impact on the domain's religious landscape. In this article, I examine the effects of Mitsukuni's policies on local religious practice. I demonstrate that they are a key example of Domain Shinto, as the transition from syncretic to Shinto-focused practices, a deviation from the general developments in Japanese religion in the early modern period, was not prompted by either shogunal policy nor Shinto ideology alone, but are the result of Mitsukuni's desire to regulate and streamline religious administration based on his own ideas. Shinto shrines that conformed to his vision by either having a long history or by being promoted to tutelary shrines, which he then placed at the center of local communities, played a central role in his plans.

### Zooming in on the Village

There have been a number of publications examining the religious policies Mitsukuni introduced in Mito. In 1968, Tamamuro Fumio 圭室文雄 published a study describing the measures implemented by Mitsukuni and the effect these measures had on Mito's religious landscape.<sup>3</sup> Based on that early study, he also analyzed the impact of these measures on Hachiman and village tutelary shrines.<sup>4</sup> Tamamuro's seminal work *Shinbutsu bunri* 神仏分離, one of the major publications on the separation of Shinto and Buddhism, also includes a section on Mito.<sup>5</sup> In *Le sabre et l'encens*, published in 2005, Natalie Kouamé examines the destruction of temples in Mito based on a collection of orders from 1666 entitled *Hakyakuchō* 破却帳 (Register of Destructions).<sup>6</sup> And in a recent chapter of my own, I have given a detailed description of the measures of Mitsukuni, as well as their impact on the religious environment of Mito.<sup>7</sup> However, all of these studies analyze developments in Mito at the level of the domain. They include very little on the consequences of Mitsukuni's measures for religious life and practice in Mito's villages.

Much research has been done on the social history of early modern Japan. However, works such as Herman Ooms's *Tokugawa Village Practice*, which provides detailed descriptions of the social structure of Tokugawa-era villages, give very little information on religious practices at this time.<sup>8</sup> This gap has to some extent been filled by Nam-lin Hur's *Death and Social Order in Tokugawa Japan*, yet its focus is on funerary customs and

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1 See Stefan Köck's contribution to this Special Section.

2 See Bernhard Scheid's contribution to this Special Section.

3 Tamamuro 1968.

4 Tamamuro 2000; Tamamuro 2003.

5 Tamamuro 1977.

6 Kouamé 2005.

7 Pickl-Kolaczia 2021.

8 Ooms 1996.



the resulting relationship between temples and their parishes.<sup>9</sup> While Hur does mention Mitsukuni's religious policies, it is only in passing. Moreover, his observations on Shinto funerals, also regarding Mito, are limited to the period after the mid-eighteenth century.

The present article builds on this earlier research to describe the effects of Mito's religious policies on religious practice in a single village over a span of roughly two hundred years: from the 1660s, when religious practices were quite syncretic, to the mid-nineteenth century, when Shinto rituals were performed without any Buddhist participation at all. As we will see, Mito's transition away from Buddhist-Shinto syncretism (*shinbutsu shūgō* 神仏習合) had become common practice, at least in the village of Noguchi, long before the Meiji government's Order on the Separation of Kami and Buddhas (*Shinbutsu hanzenrei* 神仏判然令) of 1868. This deviation from general developments in Japanese religion seems to have been a result of Mito's Domain Shinto. My sources also suggest, however, that the reforms of Mitsukuni took much longer to manifest than he likely intended.

For this case study into the local implications of Domain Shinto, I examine the village of Noguchi 野口 because, unlike for other villages in Mito, there are still a relatively large number of documents available from the early modern period. These documents were written and collected by members of Noguchi's most prominent family, the Sekizawa 関沢, and are now held in the Ibaraki Prefectural Archives. The *Sekizawa kenke monjo* 関沢賢家文書 collection consists of over 6,700 documents dating from 1514 to the late Meiji 明治 era (1868–1912). The documents contain information on village administration, land, taxes, religious matters, and, of course, matters related to the family itself.<sup>10</sup> The case study draws on documents selected from this collection, which I use to examine the institutional and individual networks that centered around Noguchi's tutelary shrine of Saeki Jinja 佐伯神社, and how changes in religious practice affected these networks.

Before turning to religious policies and practices, let me give a short description of Noguchi's topography and its economic circumstances. Noguchi was situated on the Naka River 那珂川, which connected the village with the castle town of Mito, approximately twenty-five kilometers to the southeast.<sup>11</sup> With the river serving as a trading route, Noguchi and its people maintained relations with many villages and towns. A market was held in Noguchi's Yadonami 宿並 district six times a month (*rokusaiichi* 六斎市), making the village an economic hub. Goods that were traded included hardware, paper, sundries, dyed cloth, vegetables, tobacco, sweets, fish, spun cotton, *tatami*, woven straw mats, rope, and cotton. In addition to selling their own produce, local farmers could purchase almost all their farming tools and daily necessities at the market. In 1693, a harbor and an official marketplace were erected on the riverbank, where goods and tithes were stored and handled. This thriving harbor market ultimately led to the ruin of Yadonami, since trade moved away from that district.<sup>12</sup>

According to the earliest available reliable data, a census of 1774, Noguchi counted in that year 623 inhabitants in 166 households with 80 horses. The village's annual income was 935 *koku*. At that time, however, Noguchi, like the rest of Mito, was in a state of economic

9 Hur 2007.

10 The documents are well preserved, often originals with later colophons or postscripts.

11 Today Noguchi is part of the city of Hitachi-Ōmiya 常陸大宮.

12 Kidota 1988, pp. 3–5.

decline. In 1782, the number of households had decreased to 135, the number of inhabitants to 531, and the village's income to 759 *koku*. This trend held at least until the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>13</sup>

### Changes in Religious Policies in Japan

When Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康 (1543–1616) came to power in the early seventeenth century, he implemented numerous policies to consolidate his authority and streamline and regulate the administration. Between 1601 and 1615, his government issued forty-six decrees to regulate temples. These policies were, at first, targeted at individual temples rather than Buddhism in general or particular Buddhist sects.<sup>14</sup> From 1612, though, the government issued laws on specific sects, and by the second half of the seventeenth century, rules affecting all sects came into effect.<sup>15</sup> These included the introduction of a system of main and branch temples (*honmatsu seido* 本末制度), the obligation to maintain two main temples for certain sects, and a focus on doctrinal study. The *honmatsu seido* was implemented to strengthen the authority of head temples over branch institutions. In contrast, the obligation to maintain two head temples sought to weaken sects against the secular authorities by splitting their formerly centralized power. Putting emphasis on doctrinal study was meant to divert the clergy's attention from political matters. It also led to a reduction in the number of priests by disqualifying the non-scholarly with no knowledge of Buddhist doctrine. Details varied by sect and by region, but by and large these policies were implemented across the whole of Japan.<sup>16</sup>

After the Shimabara Rebellion (*Shimabara no ran* 島原の乱) of 1637–1638, an insurrection blamed on Christian influence, the government ordered that the population undergo certification of their religious affiliation (*shūmon aratame* 宗門改).<sup>17</sup> Although these orders did not specify a particular authority to execute these inspections, the task was effectively performed by Buddhist temples.<sup>18</sup>

Thirty years after introducing the inspection of religious affiliation, the government under Tokugawa Ietsuna 徳川家綱 (1641–1680) passed the Law on Temples of All Buddhist Sects (Shoshū Jiin Hatto 諸宗寺院法度) in Kanbun 寛文 5 (1665).7.11. It contained provisions on the issuing of certificates of religious affiliation by temples and regulated relations between Buddhist temples and parishioners. On the same day, the Law for Shrine Priests (Shosha Negi Kannushi Hatto 諸社禰宜神主法度) was issued to regulate Shinto affairs. This legislation granted unprecedented authority over shrine priests to the Yoshida 吉田, a powerful family of Shinto priests in Kyoto. By treating the Yoshida as equivalent to a Buddhist sect, it “placed Shinto in the same category as the sects of Buddhism.”<sup>19</sup>

Shortly before these laws, in early 1665 the shogunal government mandated the countrywide inspection of religious affiliation by ordering all daimyo to install *jisha bugyō*

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13 Kidota 1988, pp. 5–7.

14 Harada 2004, pp. 154–156.

15 Hur 2007, p. 50.

16 Kasahara 2001, pp. 336–337.

17 Tamamuro 2001, p. 262.

18 Only in 1687 did the shogunate explicitly forbid religious certification by any agent other than Buddhist temples. See also Stefan Köck's contribution to this Special Section.

19 Teeuwen 2021, p. 152.

寺社奉行 (magistrates of temples and shrines) or *shūmon bugyō* 宗門奉行 (magistrates for religious affairs).<sup>20</sup> Officially, these orders did not instruct Buddhist temples to inspect religious affiliation, but in practice it was mostly temples that took on this task. This semi-official obligation to affiliate with a Buddhist temple to obtain the necessary certification, the so-called *terauke* 寺請 system, put Buddhism in a preeminent position in relation to other religious creeds.

This intervention in religious life in Japan was not met with unconditional obedience. Some daimyo seemed to reject this privileged status of Buddhist temples and instead turned to Confucianism and Shinto.<sup>21</sup> In 1666, several daimyo started a series of religious reforms in their domains, reforms that we subsume under the term Domain Shinto. As mentioned above, Tokugawa Mitsukuni of Mito was one of the most prominent of these reformers.

### Religious Policies in Mito

Mitsukuni was the second daimyo of Mito domain and a grandson of Tokugawa Ieyasu. Mito was one of the Three Houses (*gosanke* 御三家), branch families of the ruling Tokugawa installed in the domains of Kii 紀伊, Owari 尾張, and Mito. While the Mito Tokugawa were of slightly lower status than the other two houses, they were exempt from the obligation of alternating residence between Edo and their home domain (*sankin kōtai* 参勤交代). Nonetheless, Mitsukuni spent most of his time in Edo and thus close to the shogun and the center of political power. This may have given Mitsukuni the freedom to interpret *bakufu* orders in accordance with his own needs.<sup>22</sup>

In 1663, Mitsukuni commissioned a survey of all religious institutions in Mito. Every village collected information on its temples and shrines and forwarded the collected data to the domain administration. Domain officials then compiled an overall register called the *Kaikichō* 開基帳 (Register of Foundations). This register contains fifteen volumes: two for tutelary shrines (*chinju* 鎮守) of Mito's towns and villages (*Chinju kaikichō* 鎮守開基帳), five for Shingon temples, one for Rinzaï 臨濟 and Sōtō 曹洞, and one each for the other sects represented in Mito: Tendai 天台, Jōdo 浄土, Ikkō 一向, Ji 時, and Nichiren 日蓮, as well as the groups of ascetics, *yamabushi* 山伏 (mountain ascetics, practitioners of Shugendō 修験道) and *gyōnin* 行人 (ascetics similar to *yamabushi*, but with looser institutional ties). The register includes information about each institution's name, location, affiliation, income, head temple, additional titles and designations, priestly rank of the chief monk, certificates of tax exemption, founding, founder, and, for the years before 1663, the number of adherents and number and social status of parishioners.

According to this register, there were 2,377 temples in Mito at the time, with most affiliated with the Shingon school. With a population of around 290,000, the average parish size was approximately 122 persons, smaller than the average Japanese parish of that period.<sup>23</sup> The number of temples in Japan had been increasing since the beginning of the Edo period despite repeated attempts by the shogunate to stifle their uncontrolled growth.<sup>24</sup> Since

20 Tamamuro 2008, p. 58.

21 See also the contributions by Inoue, Scheid, and Köck on Okayama and Aizu in this Special Section.

22 Pickl-Kolaczka 2021, p. 178; the following short summary of Mitsukuni's religious policies is based on Pickl-Kolaczka 2021.

23 Tamamuro 1968, pp. 841–843.

24 Hur 2007, p. 4.

temples apparently did not serve individual villages, but family lineages, the increase was thus due—at least in part—to an increase in new family branches resulting in new lineages.<sup>25</sup>

Although the number of temples in Mito in relation to population was above the countrywide average, the *Chinju kaikichō* shows that there were only 186 shrines, all listed as “tutelary” (*chinju*), with 18 *kannushi* 神主 (head priests), 169 *negi* 禰宜 (priests), 18 *shanin* 社人 (shrine personnel), and 6 *ichiko* 市子 (shrine maidens). While the *kannushi* seem to have been licensed by the Yoshida, this was probably not the case for the other shrine personnel, including *negi* and *ichiko*.<sup>26</sup> It is important to note that the register listed only tutelary shrines. Shrines not considered tutelary, such as smaller folk shrines, were not included in the *Chinju kaikichō*, although they were listed in the registers provided by individual villages, as the records of Noguchi village will demonstrate below.

Three years later, the year after the Law on Temples of All Buddhist Sects and the Law for Shrine Priests were issued, Mitsukuni implemented religious policies that aimed to change the religious landscape according to his own ideals and to allow him more control in religious matters.<sup>27</sup> These policies constitute Mito’s specific form of Domain Shinto. They reduced the number of temples to 944, with roughly 60 percent destroyed. This reduction, however, did not oppose shogunal religious policy, as Mitsukuni mainly targeted temples headed by uneducated monks (*muchi muge no gusō* 無智無下之愚僧, literally “ignorant and vile simple-minded monks”).<sup>28</sup> This was in accordance with the Law on Temples of All Buddhist Sects, which ordered priests to be well-versed in their doctrines.<sup>29</sup>

While his most severe measures affected Buddhist institutions, the ideological focus of Mitsukuni’s policies was on Shinto. This manifested itself in several ways. An emphasis was placed on shrines having a certain pedigree. Shrines without a long history and that were mainly rooted in folk belief and thus not included in the register of tutelary shrines were to be eradicated. In their place, Mitsukuni aimed at having one tutelary shrine per village (*isson-isssha* 一村一社). The point was to position shrines at the center of communities to facilitate administration and to strengthen the population’s sense of community.<sup>30</sup> The eventual goal was probably to take the inspection of religious affiliation out of Buddhist hands.<sup>31</sup>

The installation of this system of one tutelary shrine per village can be considered successful. According to a 1696 register called *Chinjuchō* 鎮守帳 (Register of Tutelary Shrines), which lists the tutelary shrines of Mito’s villages, their number had nearly tripled from 186 in 1663 to 511.<sup>32</sup> This means that after Mitsukuni’s reforms, almost every one of the nearly six hundred villages in Mito had its own tutelary shrine.<sup>33</sup> According to his plans,

25 Ooms 1985, p. 166.

26 Tamamuro 2003, pp. 2–3. Unlike today, in the period in question, the term *negi* seems to denote a status below *kannushi*. It may have also been used for village members who held religious authority but were not fully-fledged priests.

27 Pickl-Kolaczia 2021, p. 189.

28 According to *Hakyakuchō*, p. 3. The original manuscript is kept at the National Diet Library, Tokyo, Sugiyama sōsho 杉山叢書 4, call number ㊦ 081–11. It is reproduced in Kouamé 2005, pp. 14–58.

29 Pickl-Kolaczia 2021, p. 180.

30 Tamamuro 1968, p. 869.

31 See also the introduction to this Special Section.

32 *Chinjuchō* in ST 53, *Jinja hen* 18, pp. 169–235.

33 A register of villages in Mito from 1781 lists 578 villages (Tamamuro 1968, p. 869). I am assuming that this number did not change dramatically during the Edo period.

these shrines were to be separated from Buddhist institutions and managed by a Shinto priest. Mitsukuni also sent shrine priests to Kyoto to be instructed in Yoshida Shinto.<sup>34</sup> The separation of Buddhism and Shinto, however, was not implemented comprehensively.<sup>35</sup> Noguchi is an example of the failure of this aspect of Mitsukuni's policies; the village's tutelary shrine remained under Buddhist supervision until the nineteenth century.

Another aspect that Mitsukuni tried to tackle was the obligatory inspection of religious affiliation at Buddhist temples.<sup>36</sup> For a short period, from 1674 to 1687, shrine priests in Mito obtained certificates of religious affiliation from two of the domain's shrines, namely Shizu Jinja 静神社 and Yoshida Jinja 吉田神社, ranked as the second (*ninomiya* 二之宮) and the third (*sannomiya* 三之宮) shrines of Hitachi 常陸 (the province in which Mito was located). However, this measure was short lived, ending when the government decreed that religious affiliation certification was the exclusive purview of Buddhist temples.<sup>37</sup>

Unique to Mito's religious reforms are the so-called "Hachiman reforms" (*Hachiman aratame* 八幡改). In 1695, Mitsukuni's successor Tsunaeda 徳川綱條 (1656–1718) targeted Hachiman shrines and had most of them either re-dedicated or destroyed. This might have been due either to the deity's strong Buddhist connotations impeding Mitsukuni's attempts to disentangle shrines from Buddhist influence, or the fact that the Satake, the lords of Mito prior to the Tokugawa, had worshiped Hachiman. Other hypotheses include Mitsukuni's possible doubts about the identity of Hachiman and Ōjin Tennō 応神天皇 (r. 270–310), or having reservations about the veneration of an imperial ancestor by common people.<sup>38</sup> In any case, the aim of such reforms was probably not to oppress Buddhism nor to promote a particular Shinto sect, but to shape Mito's religious landscape based on Mitsukuni's Shinto-Confucian ideals.<sup>39</sup> At their core, though, stood the separation of Shinto from Buddhism. Mitsukuni's policies did not exactly align with the shogunate's reforms, nor were they a manifestation of major Shinto movements such as Yoshida Shinto. They also differed in many particulars from the reforms taking place in Okayama and Aizu at around the same time. Nonetheless, they were based on a similar ideology and were probably motivated by the same legal preconditions. These shared characteristics make up Domain Shinto, of which Mito constitutes a representative and prominent example.

### Impact on the Village

Documents from Noguchi help us understand the impact of Mitsukuni's Domain Shinto on Mito's villages and their inhabitants. In 1663, Noguchi conducted a survey of its religious institutions and compiled the Register of Temples and Shrines in Noguchi.<sup>40</sup> The order to

34 Tamamuro 1968, p. 858.

35 Pickl-Kolaczia 2021, p. 185.

36 For a discussion of anti-Christian temple certification, see Hur 2021.

37 Itō 1968, pp. 824–825; Kasahara 2001, p. 338; on developments in Okayama, see Köck's contribution to this Special Section.

38 Pickl-Kolaczia 2021, pp. 186–187.

39 Pickl-Kolaczia 2021, p. 189.

40 *Noguchi-mura jisha o-aratame chō* 野口村寺社御改帳 SKM, call no. 60-1-0. This is a copy of the 1663 register, dated 1723 and signed by Sekizawa Genjiemon 関沢源次衛門, hereditary name of the head of the Sekizawa family from the early eighteenth century (Kidota 1988, p. 10).

prepare this register was issued by Mitsukuni and thus came from outside the village, either from Mito or Edo.<sup>41</sup>

*Noguchi's Temples and Shrines*

This Register of Temples and Shrines in Noguchi gives us a glimpse into the situation of religious institutions in 1663. There were thirteen Buddhist temples in Noguchi at that time. Ten belonged to the Shingon school: Renkakuji 蓮覚寺, Myōjōin 妙浄院, Hōjōin 法浄院, Renjōin 蓮浄院, Kashōin 華浄院, Keijōin 経浄院, Ryūzōin 龍蔵院, Keirenji 慶蓮寺, Hōsen'in 宝泉院, and Jōshōin 浄性院. One was a Sōtō temple named Gyokusenji 玉泉寺, one a Jōdo temple named Jōdoji 浄土寺, and one an institution called Daifuku 大福 that was classified as *yamabushi*.<sup>42</sup> Renkakuji was the most prominent temple. Noguchi does not seem to be an outlier when it comes to Buddhist institutions in Mito, even if the distribution of temples between schools was not completely identical to that of the whole domain, and some schools were not represented in Noguchi at all. As in Mito as a whole, though, in Noguchi the majority of temples belonged to the Shingon school.<sup>43</sup> Six of the thirteen temples in Noguchi were destroyed during the period of Mitsukuni's reforms: the Shingon temples Ryūzoin, Keirenji, Hōsen'in, and Jōshōin, and the Jōdo and Sōtō temples.<sup>44</sup>

Noguchi's register also lists thirteen shrines. There were five independent shrines: Saeki Jinja 佐伯神社, Tachiki Myōjin 立木明神, Fuji Gongen 富士権現, Seiryū Gongen 清龍権現, and Inari Myōjin 稻荷明神. Another eight shrines were located on the grounds of Saeki Shrine. Three were Hachiman shrines: Usa Hachiman 宇佐八幡 (also called Yumiya Hachiman 弓矢八幡), Wakamiya Hachiman 若宮八幡, and Shōhachiman 正八幡. The other five shrines were dedicated to Kumano Gongen 熊野権現, Mishima Gongen 三島権現, Inari 稻荷, Sanjūbanjin 三十番神, and Kitano Tenjin 北野天神.

Table 1 lists all of these shrines with their respective *honji* 本地 (original) buddhas, in this case called *hontai* 本体 (primary devotional object). Noguchi's shrine for its protective deity, the village's tutelary shrine, was Saeki Jinja (see figure 1). It not only served Noguchi, but also the neighboring villages of Noguchitaira 野口平 and Ōhata 大畠. It was the only shrine in Noguchi listed in the domain-wide register, and thus the only shrine recognized by the domain.

41 Depending on when exactly Mitsukuni gave the order to have these registers compiled, he was either in Edo or Mito. While he spent most of his time in Edo, between seventh and eleventh months of 1663 he resided in Mito (Suzuki 2006, p. 103).

42 SKM, call no. 60-1-0, pp. 3-5, 9-11; Komatsu 2004, p. 2. Renkakuji is missing from this 1723 copy of the register. This is presumably a mistake by the copyist, as a newer 1817 copy lists the temple's name; see the *Suifu shiryō* 水府志料, vol. 16, comp. Komiyama Fūken 小宮山楓軒, National Diet Library, call no. 826-13, p. 105.

43 For the overall distribution of temples between sects in Mito, see Tamamuro 1968, p. 842.

44 Komatsu 2004, p. 2. As yet, I have not found any evidence describing the exact circumstances of the destruction of the temples.

Table 1: Shrines in Noguchi, 1663<sup>45</sup>

Shrine	<i>bontai</i>
Saeki Myōjin 佐伯明神	Jūichimen Kannon 十一面觀音 Yakushi Nyorai 藥師如來 Jizō Bosatsu 地藏菩薩
Tachiki Myōjin 立木明神	Jūichimen Kannon 十一面觀音
Fuji Gongen 富士權現	Dainichi Nyorai 大日如來
Seiryū Gongen 清龍權現	Nyoirin Kannon 如意輪觀音
Inari Myōjin 稻荷明神	Jūichimen Kannon 十一面觀音
<b>Shrines on Saeki Myōjin's grounds</b>	
Usa Hachiman 宇佐八幡 / Yumiya Hachiman 弓矢八幡	Amida Nyorai 阿彌陀如來
Wakamiya Hachiman 若宮八幡	Jūichimen Kannon 十一面觀音
Shōhachiman 正八幡	Shōkannon 正觀音
Kumano Gongen 熊野權現	Amida Nyorai 阿彌陀如來
Mishima Gongen 三島權現	Shaka Nyorai 釈迦如來
Inari 稻荷	Jūichimen Kannon 十一面觀音
Sanjūbanjin 三十番神	Dainichi Nyorai 大日如來
Kitano Tenjin 北野天神	Jūichimen Kannon 十一面觀音

According to its official history, Saeki Jinja—also referred to as Saeki Myōjin 佐伯明神 or Saeki Sanjinja 佐伯三神社—was founded in 806 by a monk named Genkai 玄海.<sup>46</sup> Genkai belonged to the Hossō-shū 法相宗 and was from the province of Sanuki 讃岐 in Shikoku. Saeki Jinja enshrined Inase Irihiko no mikoto 稻背入彦命, a deity linked to that province.<sup>47</sup> The shrine possessed land in Noguchi and neighboring villages, which it had received in the later part of the sixteenth century from Satake Yoshishige 佐竹義重 (1547–1612), a former lord of Mito domain. The Satake revered Saeki Shrine as *kita no chinju* 北の鎮守 (northern tutelary shrine).<sup>48</sup> Like many Shinto shrines at that time, it was not managed by a Shinto priest, but by a *bettō-ji* 別当寺 (supervisory temple). Saeki Shrine's *bettō-ji* was Renkakujī. The *Saeki Myōjin saiji shikiji* 佐伯明神祭事式事 of 1666 details that the same temple also managed Tachiki Myōjin, Fuji Gongen, and Seiryū Gongen.<sup>49</sup>

45 Created by the author based on 1666's *Saeki Myōjin saiji shikiji* 佐伯明神祭事式事, SKM, call no. 32-3-0, pp. 1–2, 4–5.

46 The origins of the shrine's name are detailed in 1707's *Saeki Daimyōjin Inase Irihiko no mikoto* 佐伯大明神稻背入彦命, SKM, call no. 1907-0-0. This cites *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, and *Kinmochi shiki* 公望私記, a Heian 平安 period (794–1185) commentary on the *Nihon shoki* by Yatabe no Kinmochi 矢田部公望. The Saeki 佐伯 (alternatively 佐倍木) are described as descendants of Emishi forced to settle away from the capital due to their unruly behavior. The Saeki-be 佐伯部 then lived in the five provinces of Harima, Sanuki, Iyo, Aki, and Awa (Sakamoto et al. 1967, p. 313). Local etymology derives Saeki from *sakebu* 叫ぶ, while the *Kinmochi shiki* describes them as a “hairy people . . . who shout (*kyōdō* 叫咷) day and night.”

47 According to the *Nihon shoki*, Inase Irihiko no mikoto was the younger brother of the imperial prince Kamikushi 神櫛皇子, ancestor of the Kuninomiya of Sanuki 讃岐国造. Inase Irihiko was ancestor of the Harima no Wake 播磨別 (Sakamoto et al. 1967, pp. 285–287). The Saeki family also appear in the *Harima fudoki* 播磨風土記 (Palmer 2016, p. 14).

48 Gozenyama-mura Kyōdoshi 1990, p. 352.

49 SKM, call no. 32-3-0, pp. 4–5.



Figure 1. Saeki Jinja, the long lasting tutelary shrine of Noguchi, remains a part of the community today. Photographed by the author in 2020.

The shrine consists of three buildings, thus its moniker Saeki Sanjinja. Each shrine building had its own *hontai*: a Jūichimen Kannon 十一面観音, a Yakushi Nyorai 薬師如来, and a Jizō Bosatsu 地藏菩薩. Despite Mitsukuni's provisions, these typical elements of Buddhist-Shinto syncretism could still be found in the early eighteenth century and may have existed still longer.

Next to the main building of Saeki Shrine today there is a hall housing seven small shrines: Inari Jinja 稲荷神社, Yama Jinja 山神社, Fuji Jinja 富士神社, Tachiki Jinja 立木神社, Yamakura Jinja 山倉神社, Soga Jinja 素鷲神社, and Tenman Jinja 天満神社. It is unclear exactly when the other shrines listed above in table 1 disappeared. It is not unlikely, however, that this happened at the time of Mitsukuni's reforms. In compliance with the later reforms of Tsunaeda, the three Hachiman shrines were abolished at the end of the seventeenth century.

#### *Noguchi's Secular Administration*

Noguchi village's secular administration consisted of a *shōya* 庄屋 (village headman) and several *kumigashira* 組頭 (group leaders).<sup>50</sup> The abovementioned Sekizawa family played a central role in the village's administration. Their history begins in 1601, when Yahachirō Shigesada 弥八郎重定 moved to Noguchi on the recommendation of the local shrine priest, Saeki Bingo 佐伯備後. Shigesada's third son founded his own line, the Sekizawa family. Until the early seventeenth century, the family were of warrior rank. However, two generations after Shigesada's arrival in Noguchi, the head of the family joined the class of peasants for economic reasons. After this change in status, the family's income increased, as did its influence in the village. In 1642, the family head became a group leader, an office he passed on to his son and successor. Nevertheless, from the 1660s onward the family was in dire financial straits, ultimately selling their estate and relinquishing the post of group leader.

50 In the late eighteenth century, Noguchi had six *kumigashira*.



But in the 1740s, Sekizawa Masakiyo 関沢政清 managed to stabilize the family's income and reputation. He regained social recognition for his family and was even selected to serve from 1750 to 1752 in the domain's office for agriculture (*kinnōyaku* 勤農役). He was also the first to carry the family's hereditary name of Genjiemon 源次衛門.<sup>51</sup>

It was Masakiyo's great-grandson Masahide 政英 who would finally bring unprecedented prosperity to the Sekizawa family. Masahide took over the family's business in 1773. At that point in time, the family's assets included saké (worth 150 *ryō*), soy sauce (worth 50 *ryō*), paper (worth 360 *ryō*), fresh *urushi* 漆 (lacquer) and *urushi* trees (worth 105 *ryō*), soy and azuki beans (worth about 12 *ryō*), loans (45 *ryō*), stored wares for trade (worth 137 *ryō*), and cash (70 *ryō*). The family also owned building lots and arable land. Their annual income was 50 *koku*. In 1774, the household consisted of nine people and five horses. The family's total wealth amounted to something between 1,500 and 2,000 *ryō*. Although they were the largest farming family in Noguchi, their economic focus was brewing soy sauce and saké.<sup>52</sup>

Masahide's prosperity was not limited to economic success. He continuously ascended in social rank. In 1775, he became one of Noguchi's group leaders. Ten years later, he was appointed village headman. In 1791, his area of influence widened still further when he was appointed *yamayokome* 山横目 (mountain and forest supervisor), giving him authority over eighteen villages.<sup>53</sup> He was also involved in relief measures for poorer families suffering under the economic decline of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. However, this support was not only altruistic; it was also for his family's benefit by halting the labor drain caused by economic decline.<sup>54</sup>

#### *Changes in the Administration of Religious Institutions*

In some respects, Noguchi was typical of the religious changes in Mito, such as half of its temples being abolished. But it was unusual in other respects, in particular regarding Saeki Shrine and its administration. Saeki Shrine had been Noguchi's tutelary shrine since before the reforms of Mitsukuni. While it was not a *shikinaisha* 式内社 (a shrine listed in the *Engishiki* 延喜式), its long history made it the type of shrine Mitsukuni wanted to strengthen in Mito's religious landscape. And yet after Mitsukuni's reforms Saeki Shrine remained under Buddhist supervision; its separation from Buddhism was not enforced until the first half of the nineteenth century. While this constitutes a deviation from Mitsukuni's overall plan, it nonetheless seems to represent a common problem faced by shrines in Mito. If no temple took care of their maintenance, shrines were not financially viable. They had virtually no sources of income, such as funerals or memorial services for the dead, which were the purview of Buddhist temples.<sup>55</sup>

Information about the development of the administration of Saeki Shrine can be gathered from two different versions of the *Chinjuchō*, the register of Mito's tutelary shrines. The first version, dating probably to 1696, mentions only Renkakuji and a monk named Myōjō 妙浄 as administering Saeki Shrine.<sup>56</sup> But another version of the register, edited later,

51 Kidota 1988, pp. 8–10.

52 Kidota 1988, pp. 14–16.

53 Kidota 1988, p. 26.

54 Kidota 1988, p. 30.

55 Pickl-Kolaczka 2021, p. 185.

56 *Chinjuchō*, p. 22. In the possession of Tamamuro Fumio 圭室文雄.

mentions the office of shrine priest, not the Buddhist monk.<sup>57</sup> This seems to reflect the emphasis on Shinto as part of Mitsukuni's measures. The later version also mentions six *yamabushi* from the Tōzan 当山 faction of Shugendō as administrators.<sup>58</sup> These six came from other villages and from 1698 were employed in a rotating system of shrine administrators, known as *rinban* 輪番.<sup>59</sup>

Having *yamabushi* as administrators at Noguchi's Saeki Shrine is inconsistent with developments across Mito as a whole, where almost 80 percent of the *yamabushi* disappeared in this period. But those affiliated with Noguchi seem to have continued their function unimpeded. In fact, their official mention in the later shrine register seems to indicate that they had risen in importance in Noguchi. The reasons for this are as yet unclear. Possibly they were saved from the fate of the many other *yamabushi* in Mito due to having been associated with Noguchi's religious institutions, such as Renkakuji or even Saeki Shrine itself.<sup>60</sup>

Another difference between the two versions of *Chinjuchō* concerns the mention of shrine administrators and personnel. The earlier version only lists Renkakuji and its monk Myōjō, but the later edited version also mentions a *negi* named Nagayama 長山 and an *ichiko*.<sup>61</sup> Nonetheless, the shrine remained under Buddhist control without a licensed Shinto priest until the Tenpō 天保 era (1830–1844), when such a priest was finally installed by Tokugawa Nariaki 徳川斉昭 (1800–1860).<sup>62</sup> A document dated 1846 names Nagayama Kyūma 長山求馬 as the shrine's Shinto priest (*shinkan* 神官).<sup>63</sup> This Nagayama Kyūma was likely a descendant of the *negi* with the same family name mentioned in the *Chinjuchō*.<sup>64</sup> This means that despite the then daimyo of Mito, Tokugawa Nariaki, installing a Shinto priest as administrator of Saeki Shrine, the post was likely filled by a longstanding member of Noguchi's community and not by an outsider.

#### *Transformation of Religious Practices*

Changes in the administration of Saeki Shrine appear to have gone hand in hand with changes in religious practice. Following the lead of Mitsukuni's Domain Shinto, syncretic rituals were gradually dropped in favor of Shinto ceremonies without Buddhist features. It is unclear when Buddhist influence started to wane in Noguchi. Unfortunately, there are no continuous records. Nonetheless, extant documents do enable glimpses of religious practice as they shifted in Noguchi in the years between the 1660s and the 1850s.

A key document here is the aforementioned *Saeki myōjin saiji shikiji* of 1666, which consists of five numbered sheets glued and folded together.<sup>65</sup> The author's name is given as

57 This version cannot be dated earlier than 1707, since it includes events from that year; ST 53, *Jinja hen* 18, pp. 169–235.

58 ST 53, *Jinja hen* 18, p. 179.

59 According to a 1764 document, *Noguchi-mura shojisha aiaratame kakiagechō* 野口村諸寺社相改書上帳, SKM, call no. 1326-0-0, pp. 3–4. The villages were Akutsu 垓, Hosoya 細谷, Tamatsukuri 玉造, Batō 馬頭, Shimonomiya 下野宮, and Kōnosu 鴻巣. All were located quite far away from Noguchi.

60 Both versions of the *Chinjuchō* list many *yamabushi* as shrine administrators. It seems plausible that affiliation with a shrine offered some protection for the *yamabushi* of Mito.

61 ST 53, *Jinja hen* 18, p. 179.

62 Shimonaka 1982.

63 *Kakitsuke o motte negai age tatematsuri sōrō koto* (*Saeki myōjin daiha kaishō hairyō negai*) 書付ヲ以奉願上候事 (佐伯明神大破松松拝願), SKM, call no. 1860-0-0, p. 1.

64 ST 53, *Jinja hen* 18, p. 179.

65 SKM, call no. 32-3-0.

Sekizawa Kizaemon 関沢喜左衛門. A short postscript added in 1869 by Sekizawa Chōjirō 関沢長次郎 gives a brief history of Saeki Shrine and religious measures in Mito during the Edo period. According to this postscript, the document originally consisted of six sheets, but the last sheet was lost during political disturbances in Mito domain in 1864. There is also a comment in red ink, possibly by Chōjirō, stating that the contents written in the 1660s cannot be taken seriously. It seems likely that this reflects a late nineteenth century ideology that promoted the separation of Shinto and Buddhism and took an anti-Buddhist stance. It may also have been an attempt to protect Saeki Shrine from further scrutiny by Meiji ideologues and from potential repercussions and violent acts against any possibly Buddhist remnants at the shrine.

The original text that gave rise to this later anxiety provides an overview of Noguchi's religious festivals throughout the year as they relate to Saeki Shrine, which are listed as follows:

- First day to eighth day of the first month: The *negi*, *ichiko*, and six managing attendants (*bettō rokku* 别当六供) assemble inside Saeki Jinja and Renkakuji, where they recite the *Ninnō Sutra* and pray for peace and safety in the land.
- Tenth day of the third month: The shrine parishioners (*ujiko* 氏子) of the three villages of Noguchi, Noguchitaira, and Ōhata assemble to present offerings for the *kami* (*heisoku* 幣束) and eat *sakakowai* 酒強飯 (rice steamed for saké production).
- First day of the fourth month to last day of the sixth month: Every day, the six *bettō* recite the *Lotus Sutra* in front of Renkakuji.
- Fifteenth day of the sixth month: The *negi* presents offerings to the *kami*. The six *bettō*, the *negi*, and the *ichiko* assemble to hold a ceremony with *sakakowai*.
- Fifteenth day of the eighth month, and the ninth and nineteenth day of the ninth month: The *ichiko* holds a ceremony “in the same way as [described] above.” On the evening of the eighteenth day, a *yugama* 湯釜 (kettle) is presented.
- Nineteenth day at the hour of the ox: *Michi no matsuri* 道の祭 (procession) from Saeki Shrine to Tachiki Myōjin. The distance is 210 *ken*.<sup>66</sup>
- Last day of the eleventh month: The *negi* holds ceremonies, which are not noted in detail.

During each of these seven religious festivals, the *bettō* recite the *Lotus Sutra* and do maintenance work on the shrine building.<sup>67</sup>

From this calendar, it is clear that for Shinto shrines in Noguchi, too, religious life in 1666 was deeply rooted in Buddhist practices, and so did not greatly differ from the blend of Buddhism and Shinto common throughout Japan in the early Edo period. Ceremonies involved the participation of *negi*, *ichiko*, and Buddhist practitioners in their function of *bettō*. They frequently officiated the same rituals together. The ceremonies were held at Renkakuji as well as at two of Noguchi's shrines: the tutelary Saeki Shrine and Tachiki Myōjin. The recitation of sutras features prominently in several rites, especially the *Lotus Sutra*. It is also

<sup>66</sup> Approximately 382 meters.

<sup>67</sup> SKM, call no. 32-3-0, pp. 3–4.

worth noting that the *bettō* were responsible for maintaining the shrine building, and that this too was linked to the festival calendar.

The *bettō* referred to in this document were very likely the six *yamabushi* mentioned above. Connections between *yamabushi* and Buddhist temples were not uncommon; they often formed “collaborative and synergic networks” with Buddhist institutions.<sup>68</sup> It seems that the six *yamabushi* traveled to Noguchi several times a year to take part in ceremonies. From this we can infer that prior to officially taking up rotating responsibility for the shrine as mentioned in the later *Chinjuchō*, they already had a relationship with Saeki Shrine and thus with the community. It is noteworthy that although they seem to have been part of Noguchi’s religious apparatus in 1666, the date of the above calendar, they are only mentioned in the official registers from 1698 onwards.

It may be assumed that this late seventeenth century state of affairs continued unchanged, since the records of Saeki Shrine make no further mention of such matters. The next major event in the shrine’s history is documented about a hundred years later. Around 1790, Saeki Shrine underwent renovation and rebuilding. It was a costly effort. Donations were collected in Noguchi as well as in numerous other villages in Mito and even outside the domain. There are two documents from 1788 recording these donations, one for the main hall (*honsha* 本社), and the other for the three shrine buildings referred to as *sansha* 三社.<sup>69</sup>

Donations for the main hall came from 38 villages or wards. Of these, 23 were within Mito domain and 8 were outside, including 7 in Edo.<sup>70</sup> Donations for the *sansha* shrine complex came from 17 villages, all inside Mito domain. Among the donors for the shrine complex were also 3 temples: Renkakuji in Noguchi, Senpukuji 泉福寺 in Noguchitaira, and Myōshōji 命照寺 in Ōhata. Sekizawa Masahide, who is referred to by the hereditary name Genjiemon, donated large sums for the project and also handled the money given by other donors.<sup>71</sup>

The rebuilding included the addition of decorative wood carvings. They were designed and produced by a master wood carver from the village of Kamiose 上小瀬 named Nagayama Takashige 長山敬重.<sup>72</sup> Work on the shrine was finished in 1791, and a document from that year records that in the fourth month the re-enshrinement of the deities (*sengū* 遷宮) was performed.<sup>73</sup> For that occasion, *goma* 護摩 rituals, in total fourteen performances (*za* 座), were held. The *goma* is a fire ritual in esoteric Buddhism held to pray for good health or profit. The rituals were sponsored by various individuals and groups. There is no reference to a religious professional conducting the ceremonies. Since *goma* are also a typical Shugendō practice, it seems probable that one or several of the *yamabushi* officiated the ceremonies. While there is a *goma* rite in the Yoshida Shinto tradition, there was no licensed Shinto priest residing in Noguchi at that time. It thus seems unlikely that the document is referring to a ceremony based on Yoshida traditions.

68 Castiglioni et al. 2020, p. 1.

69 These are the *Jōyō Naka-gun Suifu Noguchi-mura Saeki Daimyōjin honsha shindachi kangebo* 常陽那珂郡水府野口邨佐伯大明神本社新建勸化簿 (hereafter *Honsha*), SKM, call no. 31-0-0, and the *Jōyō Naga-gun Suifu Noguchi-mura Saeki sansha shindachi kangebo* 常陽那珂郡水府野口邨佐伯三社新建勸化簿 (hereafter *Sansha*), SKM, call no. 32-1-0.

70 I have not been able to identify the locations of the remaining seven villages mentioned in the records.

71 *Honsha*, SKM, call no. 31-0-0, p. 65; *Sansha*, SKM, call no. 32-1-0, p. 26.

72 Kamiose lay about five kilometers north of Noguchi upstream along the Ōsawa River 大沢川.

73 *Saeki Myōjin go-sengū nyūyōchō* 佐伯明神御遷宮入用帳, SKM, call no. 1624-1-0, p. 1.

From these documents we can infer that even after Mitsukuni's reforms of the 1660s, Buddhist practices were still prevalent in Noguchi in 1791. Over the next sixty years, however, Buddhism was slowly expunged from shrine festivals. An 1855 entry from the diary of Sekizawa Genjiemon, probably a descendant of Masahide, reveals that the annual festival (*reisai* 例祭) at that time was of a very different character than the ceremonies and practices described in earlier years. At that time, Renkakuji and the six *yamabushi* certainly no longer administered Saeki Shrine, since, as mentioned above, the shrine had its own *shinkan*, installed by Tokugawa Nariaki.

The diary entry from the fourth month of 1855 describes the annual festival as follows:

- Eighth day: This year, we have asked the tutelary deity to come out of the shrine. For this year's ceremony, the sacred treasures (*shinki* 神器) had not been prepared. Hence in accordance with a decree (*otashi* 御達) [prescribing] the ceremony's procedures, the [devotional objects] were brought from this village [of Noguchi] in a portable shrine to the ceremonial site at the riverbank, where prayers (*kitō* 祈禱) were held.
- Ninth day: [The deity] entered the temporary shelter (*okariya* 御仮屋). Since there was a delay the day before in Noguchitaira, this was done today.
- Tenth day: From approximately the eighth hour, the deity passed through Kamijuku 上宿, Kamigō 上郷, and [Noguchi] Taira.<sup>74</sup>
- Eleventh day: The tutelary deity [was entertained] with a [performance of] puppet theater in the village.<sup>75</sup>

This description is noteworthy for several reasons. First, there is no longer any reference to Buddhist institutions or ceremonies. Renkakuji is not mentioned, nor are the *yamabushi* as *bettō*. The recitation of sutras has also lost its place within the rites. Second, the parishes no longer assembled before Saeki Shrine. Instead, a *mikoshi* 神輿 was now paraded through the parishes, where their members said separate prayers for safety and a good harvest.<sup>76</sup> And third, the procedures of the festival were prescribed in a decree and thus were probably dictated from outside the parishes.

#### *Religious Practice and Community in Noguchi*

The documents listing the donors for the renovations of Saeki Shrine and the *goma* sponsors allow a glimpse into the community of Noguchi. The two 1788 documents detailing donors for the renovation of the shrine both begin with the founding history of Saeki Shrine, followed by the names of the village officials. Sekizawa Genjiemon (Masahide) was the village headman (*shōya*). There were six group leaders (*kumigashira*).

74 The eighth hour (*yatsu goro* ハツ頃) could refer either to two in the morning or two in the afternoon; the latter seems more likely here. For more details on the early modern time system, see Zöllner 2003, p. 124.

75 Shimonaka 1982.

76 Shimonaka 1982.

**Table 2: Village head and group leaders in Noguchi, 1788 and *goma* sponsors, 1791<sup>77</sup>**

Name	<i>Honsha</i>	<i>Sansha</i>	<i>Goma</i>
Sekizawa Genjiemon 関沢源次衛門	village head	village head	o
Nagayama Jirōemon 長山次郎衛門	group leader	group leader	
Horie Gohei 堀江五兵衛	group leader	group leader	
Aoki Kichiemon 青木吉右衛門	group leader	group leader	o
Gunji Ginpei 軍司銀平	group leader	group leader	o
Kobayashi Shin'emon 小林新右衛門	group leader	group leader	o
Gunji Katsushige 軍司勝重	group leader	group leader	o
Ichi Asahi 市朝日	shrine personnel	shrine personnel	
Nagayama Ōsumi no kami 長山大隅守	shrine personnel	shrine personnel	

It comes as no great surprise to learn that influential members of the community were also involved in matters related to religious practices and the upkeep of religious institutions. We have already encountered Sekizawa Genjiemon under the name of Masahide. He was one of the Sekizawa family's most successful members and one of only three people to sponsor a *goma* ceremony individually, as table 3 shows. Four of the group leaders also participated in *goma* rituals, as can be seen in table 2.

Three of the *goma* performances were collective; two were for the villages of Noguchitaira and Ōhata (1 and 14). In the latter cases, the names and numbers of sponsors are not mentioned. In the case of the collective rite in Ōhata, the person who presented the money is named. Another collective performance was paid for by a group of three merchants from three villages (10). Only three rites were sponsored by a single donor: one by Sekizawa Genjiemon from Noguchi (2), one by Minagawa Gohei 皆川五兵衛 from Ōhata (8), and one by Tachi Tsubonaka 館坪中 from Kadoi (13). All other performances were sponsored by groups of two to five donors.

**Table 3: Sponsors of *goma* performances, 1791<sup>78</sup>**

Goma Performance	Donor village	Number of sponsors	Comments
1	Noguchitaira	-	collective performance
2	Noguchi	1	Sekizawa Genjiemon 関沢源次衛門
3	Noguchitaira	2	
4	Ōhata	2	
5	Noguchi	2	
6	Noguchitaira	3	
7	Noguchitaira	4	
8	Ōhata	1	Minagawa Gohei 皆川五兵衛
9	Kadoi	4	

77 Created by the author based on *Honsha*, SKM, call no. 31-0-0; *Sansha*, SKM, call no. 32-1-0, and 1791's *Ōgoma seshu tsukechō* 大護摩施主附帳, SKM, call no. 1624-2-0.

78 Created by the author based on SKM, call no. 1624-2-0.

Goma Performance	Donor village	Number of sponsors	Comments
10	Nagasawa, Fukuoka, Kadoi	3	collective performance for merchants
11	Kadoi	5	
12	Kadoi	3	
13	Kadoi	1	Tachi Tsubonaka 館坪中
14	Ōhata	-	collective performance

This data reveals that Saeki Shrine's religious community was not limited to households in Noguchi. For the *goma* rituals, several sponsors came from other villages. Noguchitaira and Ōhata belonged to the shrine's official parish; the others (Nagasawa 長沢, Fukuoka 福岡, and Kadoi 門井) were obviously also connected to it. On the other hand, not all of Noguchi's group leaders financially supported the *goma* rituals.

### Analyzing Changes in Religious Practice in Noguchi

Saeki Shrine, which served as the tutelary shrine for several villages and thus had regional importance, connected people and institutions beyond the borders of the village of Noguchi. It was connected to the domain as a whole through the festivals and rituals that supported the shrine. People in Noguchi thus formed relations with each other as well as with people outside their village. Changes in ceremonies and rites resulted in changes in these networks.

Before analyzing these changes, I would like to point out that Noguchi was in a privileged position since it already had a tutelary shrine prior to Mitsukuni's measures, one of only 186 tutelary shrines in the domain at the time. It thus already represented a model of Mitsukuni's vision for Mito's religious landscape in this respect and fulfilled one of the characteristics of Mito's Domain Shinto. Since Noguchi could keep its accustomed religious institution at the center of its religious practices, changes in the village's religious landscape were unlikely to have been felt as sharply as they probably were in other villages in Mito. Moreover, since according to Saeki Shrine's founding legend it was established by a Buddhist monk of the Heian period, the presence of a Buddhist monk at Saeki Shrine was a long-standing tradition. This may be another reason why the shrine's Buddhist traditions remained unchallenged until at least the late eighteenth century.<sup>79</sup>

Renkakuji was relieved as managing institution in 1698, when six *rinban* were officially named as managers of Saeki Shrine in a system of rotating responsibility. These six figures probably already had previous connections with Saeki Shrine and Noguchi. Nevertheless, Renkakuji was still mentioned as official *bettō-ji* in documents until the 1830s. The official appointment of the *yamabushi* as *rinban* can be considered atypical for the changes in Mito, since *yamabushi* were generally targeted by Mitsukuni's measures. From the 1830s, however, we can observe more drastic changes in religious practices in Noguchi and its vicinity. These changes are rooted in Domain Shinto measures of the seventeenth century, as the groundwork for the separation of Shinto and Buddhism was laid by Mitsukuni's reforms.

The religious policies of Ieyasu in the early seventeenth century triggered a series of measures that were later implemented by his descendant Ietsuna. In turn, several domain

79 See Inoue's contribution to this Special Section for similar examples from other domains.

lords, including Tokugawa Mitsukuni in Mito, reacted to the *bakufu*'s policies regarding Buddhism. Of course, one must be hesitant in considering Ieyasu's edicts as the starting point in a process leading to the development of Domain Shinto.<sup>80</sup> But they are an important waypoint and certainly influenced Mitsukuni's decision to initiate reforms in Mito. A specific feature of Mitsukuni's policies was to position a Shinto shrine at the center of each community in order to facilitate administration and to strengthen the population's sense of belonging to their villages. By removing temples and smaller shrines rooted in folk beliefs from the villages of his domain, Mitsukuni's policies caused shifts in the relationships between individuals and institutions. The tutelary shrines replaced the institutions that had been closed, thus influencing the religious identity of the domain's villagers. Mitsukuni endeavored to make the shrines the focus of villagers' religious practice.

In Noguchi, Saeki Shrine was already a central institution at this time. It was not the only shrine, however. In 1666, Tachiki Myōjin still played an active role in the religious life of Noguchi, Noguchitaira, and Ōhata. This shrine later disappeared, leaving Saeki Shrine the focus of religious practice in the area. Even prior to Mitsukuni's measures, the influence of Saeki Shrine reached far beyond the village's borders, also serving as the tutelary shrine of the villages of Noguchitaira and Ōhata. Indeed, Mito's lords before the Tokugawa considered it the tutelary shrine of the whole region, calling it *kita no chinju*. The shrine had numerous connections outside Noguchi and even outside Mito, with sponsors and donors also in Edo. Thus, the connections of Saeki Shrine were not limited to the local community. The shrine was affected by actions that happened outside Noguchi. This becomes especially evident in the renovation of Saeki Shrine in the 1790s, and by decisions made by members of the Mito Tokugawa that impacted Noguchi and Saeki Shrine. These actions include, but are not limited to, Mitsukuni's decision to promote Shinto shrines as centers of communities, and the appointment of Nagayama Kyūma as the *shinkan* of Saeki Shrine by Nariaki more than one hundred and sixty years later.

Saeki Shrine also influenced relations between individuals within Noguchi and its immediate vicinity through religious practice, as is evident in the shared sponsoring of *goma* rituals in 1791. Groups of people joined together to pay for and participate in such rituals, and while in most cases, the members of these groups of sponsors were from the same village, in one case merchants from different villages participated in a joint ritual. Through the shared ritual their relationship was maintained and very likely strengthened. The rebuilding of Saeki Shrine and related events such as the 1791 *goma* rituals offered opportunities not only for sustaining existing ties between individuals, but also for reinforcing the village's social structure. Through donations and the sponsoring of *goma* performances, the village headman and group leaders, among others, were able to strengthen their ties with the shrine as well as underline their social status. Here we see certain parallels to various domain lords restoring old and famous but dilapidated shrines in the seventeenth century. These lords not only saw it as their obligation to restore the ancient shrines, but also legitimized their rule by enabling the proper worship of their domains' deities.<sup>81</sup>

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80 I borrow here some of the ideas in Bruno Latour's actor-network-theory, notably his second "source of uncertainty," which states that action is controversial because it is never entirely clear where it comes from (Latour 2005, pp. 44–48).

81 Again, see Inoue's contribution to this Special Section.



Of course, religious policies and practices were not the only factors influencing people's lives and their relations with each other. Economic change also played a major role, as can be seen in the sometimes turbulent history of the Sekizawa family. This leads to the question of how religious practice and economic change interacted. The fact that Saeki Shrine was renovated during a time of economic decline hints at the importance of the shrine within the region. It is not clear who initiated the renovation, but Sekizawa Genjiemon (Masahide) was the main donor for the rebuilding of both the *honsha* and the *sansha*. He was also one of the individual sponsors for the *goma* rituals. Indeed, the shrine's fate seems to have been closely connected to that of the Sekizawa family. The family may well have benefited from the influence held by Saeki Shrine over religious life in Noguchi. Conversely, the thriving Sekizawa fortunes may have boosted the shrine. Most likely, they benefited from each other.

In the forty to fifty years after the renovation of Saeki Shrine, relations with and around Saeki Shrine seem to have undergone a number of transformations. While the position of the Sekizawa family appears to have remained stable from the late eighteenth century, other families seem to have experienced major changes in status. It is clear that the gains of the shrine trickled down to people who had relations with it, even if this is not explicitly mentioned in the documents examined in my research. Saeki Shrine was managed by a *negi*, six *yamabushi*, and monks from Renkakuji, but it remains unclear exactly how these individuals benefited from the shrine's development and how the changes in religious practices affected them personally. We do know that members of the Nagayama family continued to hold positions as Saeki Shrine's priests. Nagayama Kyūma became the shrine's *shinkan* in the 1830s on the order of Tokugawa Nariaki; this probably represented an improvement in Saeki Shrine's status within the Shinto hierarchy. Renkakuji, by contrast, was eventually destroyed,<sup>82</sup> and Renkakuji's monks and the *yamabushi* later no longer acted as administrators for Saeki Shrine. Beyond that, their fate is unknown.

Over time, the connections between the various parishes of Saeki Shrine became looser or were even severed, at least in terms of religious practice. The parishes no longer assembled for an annual festival and no longer celebrated together. This certainly affected relations between the members of these communities. Religious ceremonies serve more than the purpose of worship and prayer. Since preparing festivals is a protracted community effort, they are an occasion for cultivating relationships, not only during festival time but throughout the year. Holding ceremonies for each community separately meant that the groups preparing them were isolated from one another. This does not necessarily mean, of course, that connections between the parishes and their individual members were cut entirely, but the vehicle of religious practice was disrupted.

## Conclusion

I consider the changes that occurred in Mito at the local level to be a key example of Domain Shinto. The transition from syncretic to Shinto-focused practices was not prompted by shogunal policy nor by Shinto ideology alone, but was a consequence of unique measures undertaken in Mito. It was also completed in Noguchi before the Meiji government enacted its Order on the Separation of Kami and Buddhas, and thus it was a development separate

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<sup>82</sup> The available sources do not elaborate on the destruction of Renkakuji. It is likely that the temple was destroyed under Nariaki's pro-Shinto policies.

from the *shinbutsu bunri* policies of the Meiji era. The last step in the process in Mito was very likely ordered by Tokugawa Nariaki, who was certainly influenced by Mitsukuni's policies of the 1660s.

As discussed above, Mitsukuni's aim was to regulate religious administration. Placing Shinto shrines at the center of communities was a means for achieving this goal. It seems that Mitsukuni did not reach everything he had anticipated. Some did not manifest at all. Others did finally appear, but only after a long time, longer even than Mitsukuni's lifetime or that of his successor Tsunaeda. Eventually, though, they did manifest, including a complete shift from Buddhism to Shinto in the ceremonies held in Noguchi.

Establishing more manageable units of religious administration was a major aspect of Domain Shinto in Mito. Installing one tutelary shrine per village also meant establishing smaller units of religious affiliation within the Shinto realm. The separation of Saeki Shrine's parishes seems to be an evolution of this Domain Shinto characteristic. In the later nineteenth century, the modalities of Noguchi's shrine festival in the fourth month were prescribed by outside authorities by decree. It is thus not unlikely that this separation was intended by the domain's administration. Moreover, this seems to accord with Mitsukuni's initial aim of making religious life more controllable. By hindering the maintenance of networks between communities and villages, it was also easier to control the people. Domain Shinto in Mito thus had a slow but profound effect on the domain's commoner population and their relations.

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## Are We Allowed to Find Beauty in the Face of Death and Destruction?

### Ishiuchi Miyako's *Hiroshima* and Postwar Japan

Yoshikuni IGARASHI\*

The photographer Ishiuchi Miyako's *Hiroshima* series features colorful and alluring photos of items of clothing and artifacts that used to belong to *hibakusha* and are now stored at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. In response to criticism that she has aestheticized Hiroshima, Ishiuchi defends her artistic practice by casting it as resistance to a politicized history that has long imprisoned the city in images of death and destruction, which conceals the colors and beauty—the feminine quality—that once existed there.

Despite her qualms with History, her work is framed by postwar representations of Hiroshima that have highlighted the inhumane effects of the atomic bomb. Through referencing these tragic images her Hiroshima photos express deep emotions. However, her aesthetic practice effectively silences the personal histories of the *hibakusha* these objects represent, relegating them to a generic story devoid of individuality.

Situating *Hiroshima* within Ishiuchi's career trajectory, this article examines the ways in which Ishiuchi produced a beautiful personal narrative through photography and writing but has struggled to extend that to a city with which she has no personal connections. More recent works from the *Hiroshima* series, which are less colorful and prominently display the traces of bodily injuries, suggest that she has grown uneasy with the privileged aesthetic of her original position and is now willing to embrace Hiroshima's dark history.

**Keywords:** atomic bomb, aesthetics, Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, memory, photography

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“Photography activates the past.”  
—Ishiuchi Miyako, *Monochrome*, 1993

“Can the beautiful be sad?”  
—Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun*, 1989

When I first flipped through the pages of *Hiroshima*, the photo collection produced by Ishiuchi Miyako 石内都 (b. 1947), I was immediately mesmerized by the liveliness of the colorful still-life photos.<sup>1</sup> As the photographer rightfully insists, monochrome photos have long dominated images of post-atomic attack Hiroshima. In contrast, *Hiroshima* represents the clothing and everyday objects of the *hibakusha* in bright colors, mostly using natural light and a large lightbox (80cm × 160cm).<sup>2</sup> Unlike the intense white light of the bomb that scorched the victims’ skins and clothes, the gentle white light that fills Ishiuchi’s photos animates these lifeless artifacts. Hues—red, blue, green, and many others—jump out at viewers more accustomed to grisly grey tones.

The objects chosen by Ishiuchi emerge from the dark, climate-controlled storage room of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum to remind us of the everyday lives they were once part of. The pinkish cotton dress with small floral patterns conjures up the softness and warmth of the body that it once enveloped.<sup>3</sup> Light shines through the thin fabric of the silk one-piece dress, the blouse, the slip, and the chemise. They appear in dark colors as if captured in X-ray photos or incinerated to skeletal carbon form. By contrast, for other women’s items of clothing, light filtered through their thicker fabric enlivens their colors, while muting the stains of their wearer’s bodily fluid. A boy’s summer school uniform does not let the light pass through it, and instead appears suspended by the intense illumination of the light box.<sup>4</sup>

The last photo in the collection features a dark one-piece dress whose front left section is torn away: it spreads out as if lifted by the breeze, hanging in the air (figure 1). Seeing this piece, I immediately recalled the angel in Paul Klee’s *Angelus Novus*, whose fate Walter Benjamin melancholically describes in “Theses on the Philosophy of History”:

... a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.<sup>5</sup>

Was the angel there to witness the nuclear blast a sign of scientific “progress”? Could he have been wearing this dress as he was blown away in the storm?

Ishiuchi’s camera draws close to objects, focusing on their fabric, with frays, tears, singses, and scorch marks, as well as stains from blood and black rain, which remind the viewer of what their wearers went through on 6 August 1945 in Hiroshima. Of course, the

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1 Ishiuchi 2008b.

2 Ako 2008a.

3 Ishiuchi 2008b, pp. 5, 17, 67.

4 Ishiuchi 2008b, pp. 9, 14, 27, 49, and 64.

5 Benjamin 1969, pp. 257–258.

Figure 1. ひろしま/*hiroshima* #71. Donor: Hatakemura Takeyo. Ishiuchi Miyako, 2007. Chromogenic print.  
© Ishiuchi Miyako.



injured bodies of their original owners are not present. Yet, the clothes that used to cover them re-present their pain and suffering. Ishiuchi's beautiful and haunting photos visualize memories of what is now invisible, the lost bodies of their wearers, and their absent presence.

Discussing the mutually constitutive relations between self and clothes, anthropologist Daniel Miller contends: "The clothes were not superficial, they actually were what made us what we think we are."<sup>6</sup> Media scholar Marshall McLuhan famously observed: "Clothing, as an extension of the skin, can be seen . . . as a means of defining the self socially."<sup>7</sup> Juxtaposing their words with Ishiuchi's photos, one could argue that the clothes her camera captures are the *hibakusha* themselves.

These photos of clothes therefore raise questions about those who wore them on that fateful day. What kind of injuries did the person sustain? Did they manage to return to their family despite their injuries? Even if they were fortunate enough to receive their family's care, how long did they remain alive? If they survived the injuries, what was their postwar life like? Did they suffer from keloid scars or the aftereffects of radiation exposure? In this regard, however, the photos in Ishiuchi's collection remain silent, rejecting all of these questions. The items of clothing and objects appear anonymous in the photos, completely detached from any personal information or the life stories of their wearers. The readers are minimally informed about their association with Hiroshima, which is referenced only through the book's title and the photographer's brief note that explains that the items are relics preserved at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum.

Unlike documentary photography or films that strive to represent the reality of Hiroshima as a form of public history, Ishiuchi's photographs urge each viewer to establish

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6 Miller 2010, p. 13.

7 McLuhan 1994, p. 119.

a personal relationship with each item. She defiantly declares that she “privately possesses” (*shibutsuka shi* 私物化し) Hiroshima and photographs it “as her own thing” (*kojinteki na mono toshite* 個人的なものとして), adding that “I do not make appeals. I don’t offer captions because I want you to see them with your own eyes and feel with your own words.”<sup>8</sup> Hers is an audacious call to imagine a Hiroshima composed of hues and beauty rather than monochronic images overshadowed by death and destruction.<sup>9</sup> It is an apt position for an artist born in the postwar (1947) and with no personal connection to the place. It can also be seen as a position that aspires to elevate Hiroshima to a universal human experience. Her message of “liberating Hiroshima from History [with a capital letter H]” has been well received at overseas exhibitions.<sup>10</sup> Reviewing the 2014 exhibit in New York, *Here and Now: Atomic Bomb Artifacts, Hiroshima 1945/2007*, Holland Cotter commented that, “What [Ishiuchi’s] doing is using photography as a forensic tool and as an instrument of mourning: In both capacities, it stops and holds the eye and does not easily let go.” Loring Knoblauch concludes his review of the same exhibit by affirming the power of Ishiuchi’s photos: “These items are no longer dusty relics buried in a museum cabinet somewhere, but a living, breathing tribute to the lives of those caught in the crossfire of history,” while Makeda Best praises the exhibit’s power to transform the viewer “from distant observer to immediate witness.”<sup>11</sup>

Firmly standing in the present, Ishiuchi claims that her perspective on what occurred in Hiroshima on 6 August 1945 is as valid, if not more so, than that of the *hibakusha* themselves. With her singular focus on beauty, she produces her own Hiroshima, participating in the long history of photographic representation of the atomic bomb experience. Ishiuchi’s beautiful images are a strategic choice through which to disrupt the orthodoxy of atomic bomb art, an orthodoxy that has been deeply anchored in the city’s tragic history and powerfully defined parameters of artistic expression of Hiroshima, including photography, with the slogans of antiwar, antinuke, and peace.

Yet is it really that easy to liberate Hiroshima from History? Critics have expressed their discomfort with Ishiuchi’s unapologetic aestheticization of Hiroshima. Kuraishi Shino 倉石信乃 points out the danger, suggesting that the specific historical experience could be dissolved into generality.<sup>12</sup> Ozawa Setsuko 小沢節子 is confused by the *Hiroshima* exhibit, the beauty of which outshines everything else.<sup>13</sup> Tsuchiya Seiichi 土屋誠一 succinctly diagnoses the challenge that Ishiuchi faces in her *Hiroshima* series; she is left to deal with the “complete otherness” of the Hiroshima experience.<sup>14</sup> Although Tsuchiya tries to see this in a positive light, the absence of suffering bodies remains glaring.<sup>15</sup> These critics’ comments ultimately point to the tension that exists between Ishiuchi’s aesthetic position and Hiroshima’s history.

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8 Ishiuchi 2016a, p. 137–138.

9 Discussing the visual impact of the black and white photos displayed at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, Okuda Hiroko 奥田博子 makes a contrasting point: “The rows of black and white photos of those who were killed by the bomb [at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum] likely produce a powerful impact on visitors used to color photos.” Okuda 2010, p. 130.

10 Including one held at the University of British Columbia from 2011 to 2012.

11 See Cotter 2014; Knoblauch 2014; Best 2015, pp. 179–180.

12 Kuraishi 2008, p. 118.

13 Ozawa 2009, pp. 5–6.

14 Tsuchiya 2008b, p. 12.

15 Tsuchiya 2008a, p. 171.



Artists should be judged by their artistic work rather than their commentaries on it. It is not productive to focus solely on their words, especially given the fact they are not necessarily the best critics of their own work. However, Ishiuchi's case should be treated differently because her words are an integral part of her artistic oeuvre. Since her debut, she has eloquently spoken about her own work and life, weaving them into a narrative about a female photographer's struggles in her early life and eventually with her own mother. Revealing the autobiographical elements concealed within her work, elements that she alone is qualified to discuss authoritatively, Ishiuchi has prescribed the ways in which critics and audiences may interpret her photography. Hence, critical engagement with Ishiuchi's work must take her words seriously as they carry inordinate weight in the constitution and evaluation of her artistic vision. The following is my effort to think through Ishiuchi's *Hiroshima* photography together with her writings about it.

This article first examines the *Mother's* series, from which Ishiuchi seamlessly transitioned to *Hiroshima*, in order to trace the evolution of her artistic vision. It then examines her paradoxical relationship with Hiroshima's dark history. To defend her aesthetic vision, Ishiuchi distances herself from the terrible images of nuclear destruction, claiming that they have overwhelmed past artistic expressions of Hiroshima. Yet her *Hiroshima* photos would make little sense without that historical context. Ishiuchi's rejection of History and recovery of the beauty that existed in pre-bombed Hiroshima erases the city's post-bomb history, including the lives of those who survived the attack and lived difficult postwar lives. The second half of this article shifts focus and explores the emotional work of mourning loss in which Ishiuchi's work seems to engage, as well as her essentialist assertion that, as a woman, she is uniquely positioned to find Hiroshima's beauty. The final postscript ponders on more recent photographs in the *Hiroshima* series; they are not beautiful like earlier works, and what does that mean?

### Ishiuchi Miyako's Postwar

Ishiuchi recalls her attitude toward photography when she began taking photos: "I have never had formal training in photography. When choosing what to shoot, I thought I needed to start with my own discontent. I strongly thought that I might be able to express something uniquely me if I photographed memories of my past, more like negative memories than positive ones."<sup>16</sup> The photographer returned to her hometown of Yokosuka, a place that she associated with "deep terrible images," and photographed it as if to loosen emotional knots. She explains her choice: "The function of photography, which to me is nothing but the undoing (*gyakusayō* 逆作用) of emotions, made me choose this town as the subject [of my photography] through which to open my personal matters to the outside world."<sup>17</sup> To her, photography was a practice through which to retrace a past filled with discontent and to construct her new self.<sup>18</sup>

Though Ishiuchi discusses it only in general terms, a problematic relationship with her mother was at the root of her discontent, and thus her creative career. In a 2006 interview, she confides that she was frustrated with her mother's modest, quiet disposition, while musing

16 Ishiuchi and Yoshioka 2008, p. 26.

17 Ishiuchi 1993, p. 27.

18 Ishiuchi once declared that her photography is her personal history. Ishiuchi 1993, p. 170.

about the rivalry that may have existed between them over her father's affection.<sup>19</sup> Elsewhere she states: "The fact that I was not getting along with my mother served as an impetus for my starting photography."<sup>20</sup> Her identity as a photographer was indeed deeply entangled with her mother, as evidenced by the choice of her professional name. Rather than her own birthname, Fujikura Yōko, or a fictitious name, she opted to use her mother's birthname, Ishiuchi Miyako, signaling the deeply ambivalent feelings that she harbored toward her.<sup>21</sup> Her mother was a person to be overcome and simultaneously identified with. In Ishiuchi's subsequent career, she explored diverse subject matters—from Yokosuka to the bodies of men and women, and then to the scars left on them—and eventually returned to her mother.

Toward the end of her life, her mother agreed to be a photo subject, and, through their photo sessions, they began to establish an intimate relationship. In 2000, Ishiuchi presented a series of photos of her mother's hands and feet and the large burn scars left on her body in the *25 MAR 1916* series; her mother died later that year.<sup>22</sup> In the absence of her mother, she began photographing her mother's mementos in both monochrome and color, exhibiting them under the title *Mother's* for the first time in 2002, and then publishing a photo collection, *Mother's 2000–2005: Traces of the Future*.<sup>23</sup> Ishiuchi recalls her relationship with her mother before her death in the afterword of *Mother's 2000–2005* in the following way:

For a long time, I felt upset because I had a hard time communicating with my mother. Just when the tensions between us began to dissipate after my father's death, she passed away. What an irony. The person who had been there until a moment ago is now gone. Facing the reality that her physical presence is gone, my regrets and feeling of powerlessness surge and swallow me with an intense sorrow that I never anticipated.<sup>24</sup>

After quoting this passage, Kasahara Michiko speculates, "Perhaps Ishiuchi was motivated to photograph her mother not simply to create new work but even more to find a way to communicate intimately with her for the first and last time."<sup>25</sup> Kasahara's words seem to capture well Ishiuchi's relationship with her mother at the end of her life. Their communication must have consisted of the emotional work to loosen the knots that they had formed over the years. Ishiuchi's journey, which first retraced her own emotional scars from Yokosuka, concluded when she arrived at the scars left on her mother's body. Her mother's death, however, deprived her of a final resolution. To fill the absence of her mother, Ishiuchi

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19 Ishiuchi 2006, pp. 32–33.

20 Ishiuchi, Kokatsu, and Nakajima 2011.

21 In discussing her relationship with her mother in a 2006 interview, she explains rather nonchalantly how she chose her professional name: "[My professional name] is my mother's birthname. From the start of my career, I did not want to use my real name. I thought it would be nice, when I debuted, as nobody would know who I was. [My mother's birthname] was one of the many I came up with. There was a possibility that, if my parents divorced, I would share her maiden name. In that sense, it was not out of the ordinary, and I decided on it without consulting her." Ishiuchi 2006, p. 35. In a 2014 interview, Ishiuchi offers a similar explanation: "When I debuted, I intended to use a name different from my birthname. After considering various names, it occurred to me that this [her mother's birthname] is better than a made-up name. It is a beautiful name, too." Ishiuchi and Ōtani 2014, p. 67.

22 Satō 2009, p. 135.

23 Ishiuchi 2005.

24 Ishiuchi 2016b, p. 75. All translations are by the author.

25 Kasahara 2005, p. 124.

began to photograph things that used to touch her mother, including her kimono, old underwear, chemises, half-used cosmetic products, a brush with her mother's hair tangled in it, a hairpiece, dentures, and worn shoes. Ishiuchi's intimate gaze discovered a woman in the person who had existed only as a "mother."<sup>26</sup>

### From Monochrome to Color

The use of color photos in *Mother's 2000–2005* requires some commentary. While shooting parts of her mother's body, scars, and underwear—what she called the second skin—in black and white, Ishiuchi chose color film to photograph brightly colored items such as her shoes, rouge, and kimono. The photographer, who confided that she was conversing with her deceased mother through taking photos of her underwear, seems to have established a different relationship with her mother and photography through her use of color.<sup>27</sup>

Until she began working on the *Mother's* series, Ishiuchi primarily worked in black-and-white photography. Only on three occasions had she experimented with color images: she photographed her former high school classmates with a large format 50.8 cm × 61 cm Polaroid camera in 1984, used a regular color Polaroid camera for a 1999 solo exhibit titled *Body and Air*, and shot locations circling Tokyo Bay using color film from 1982 to 1984.<sup>28</sup> Monochrome photos always entail intense processing work in a darkroom. Ishiuchi at one point declared that fixing images on photographic printing paper was the main activity for her and that she takes photos just to get to that stage.<sup>29</sup> There is nothing mechanical about the darkroom operation that she describes in her 1993 book, *Monokurōmu* (Monochrome); rather, it is more like the process of a weaving fabric. Ishiuchi intimately connected her experiences of weaving and dyeing fabric in college with photo development. The smell of glacial acetic acid used in the developing process was familiar to her since it was also used in the dyeing process. The chemical smell "brought back the sensation of weaving clandestinely late at night in a bleak basement classroom occupied only with looms. The basement classroom was always filled with the smell of glacial acetic acid. Soaked in the smell of the darkroom, knowing nothing about photography, I intuitively understood that photography was the same as dyeing."<sup>30</sup>

To her, developing black-and-white photos was comparable to the process of dyeing and weaving textiles with her own hands: "The loom was replaced by an enlarger, and white thread by white paper. There might not be much difference between them because they are in the same categories. Like dyeing threads and weaving fabric, I produce another photo."<sup>31</sup> Inside the darkroom, the creator herself metamorphosed into warp and weft, entwined with the scenery. Woven together with Yokosuka, old rundown apartments, former brothel buildings, the hands and feet of women who were born in 1947, and the scars left on her models, she becomes an integral part of her photography.<sup>32</sup> The photographer Araki

26 Ishiuchi and Yoshioka 2008, p. 40.

27 Hoaglund 2013.

28 This last group of photos were published as the "TOKYO BAY CITY" series for *Kamera Mainichi* from February 1983 to December 1984. Ishiuchi claims that she did not think much about the implications of using color film for the series and shot as if she had been taking monochrome photos. Ichii 2010.

29 Ishiuchi and Yoshioka 2008, p. 34.

30 Ishiuchi 1993, p. 93.

31 Ishiuchi 1993, p. 352.

32 Ishiuchi once claimed that she felt as if she was having sex with the photos when she worked on them in the

Nobuyoshi, who called young Ishiuchi a “photo weaving maiden” (*shashin shokujo* 写真織女), was keenly aware of the essence of her photography.<sup>33</sup>

However, it is impossible to establish such intimate relations with each print when working with color photos. Insofar as she uses color film, Ishiuchi must entrust the printing process to a lab technician, albeit with detailed directions.<sup>34</sup> Ishiuchi exclusively worked with black and white photos when she photographed her mother and also in the initial phase of shooting her mementos. However, her mother’s rouge gave her—the photographer who was so attached to the hands-on process of printing black-and-white photos—the impetus to use color prints. She felt something was amiss when she saw it in black and white: “When I first start[ed] working on my mother’s mementos, I shot them on monochrome film, and developed and printed them in the darkroom as usual. When I finished some prints of her lipstick, it struck me that something was different, something was off. The lipstick in the monochrome image looks gross. When a lipstick is not red, it exudes a strange ambience and looks heavy. Black-and-white photos of a lipstick are not beautiful.”<sup>35</sup>

This explanation most likely describes the moment when her relationship with her mother and photography decisively changed. The aesthetic standard that insists a lipstick must be red and beautiful had never been part of her work. When taking photos of women’s faces drawn with rouge, or their manicured hands, Ishiuchi had never felt the compulsion to shoot with color film. She describes the difference between monochrome and color photos in corporeal terms: “When I started shooting color photos, I noticed they would leave my hands quickly, leaving a sensation of speed behind. I always feel with monochrome photos that I forever embrace them, and they have become part of my body. But color photos feel totally different.”<sup>36</sup> At the base of her creative action, there was a strong impulse to grasp self and world—reconfigure and weave them—in black-and-white photography. With the use of color photos, the photographer has retreated from this intense existential quest. With the disappearance of her mother’s body, the original, tense relationship between the artist and her artistic subject seems to have completely receded into the background.

Although Ishiuchi makes light of the fact that she adopted her mother’s birthname as her professional name at the beginning of her career, its trajectory suggests an intimate relationship between the two Ishiuchi Miyakos. As her complicated relationship with her mother came to an end with the latter’s death, the photographer seems to have closed the long first chapter of her career. Ishiuchi describes the meaning behind photographing her mother’s mementos: “Now, I am left only with the things that used to belong to my mother. In order to tell my mother ‘good-bye,’ I decided to bring out what had been stored away into the light one by one and engrave [their images on] photography.”<sup>37</sup> The writer Seirai Yūichi aptly called Ishiuchi’s act of photographing her mother’s belongings as a “ritual to part

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darkroom. Ishiuchi and Yoshihara 1991, p. 111.

33 Araki 1979; and Kuraishi 2009b, p. 120. An English version of this essay also included in the volume offers a translation of “photo weaver” for the nickname “*shashin shokujo*” (Kuraishi 2009a, p. 139). I modified the translation here to underscore its gendered nature.

34 In the documentary film, *Things Left Behind*, there is a scene in which she gives specific instructions to a print technician, see Hoaglund 2013.

35 Ishiuchi 2016b, pp. 17–18.

36 Ishiuchi 2016b, p. 19.

37 Ishiuchi 2002, p. 54.

with her mother.”<sup>38</sup> The photographer discusses her mother and photos interchangeably as she describes the process of parting that concluded in a foreign land: “I visited [the exhibit, *Mother's 2000–2005: Traces of the Future*, held as part of] the Venice Biennale 2005 three times and felt my works gradually ceased to be [about] my mother as an individual being (*koteki na mono* 個的なもの) and gained independence (*jiritsu shita* 自立した).”<sup>39</sup> Being displayed at an international art festival, Ishiuchi's mother was liberated from the artist's emotional knots and sublimated into “everybody's mother.”<sup>40</sup> By finding color and beauty in her mother's mementos, the photographer packaged her absence into comforting images.

In working on *Hiroshima*, Ishiuchi intended to “bring the flow of *Mother's* to Hiroshima.”<sup>41</sup> The series of mostly color photos attest to her stance towards Hiroshima. To her, photography was no longer a means through which to grapple with the situations and relationships that surrounded her—we may call them personal history—but had become a method to grasp the objects in front of the camera with “a sensation of speed.” If her darkroom was a space where “the present and the past come in contact” as she once described, the photographer, in leaving it, seems to have lost her point of contact with the past.<sup>42</sup>

### In Hiroshima

At the 2006 *Mother's* exhibit in Tokyo, an editor of a major Japanese publishing house asked if Ishiuchi would be interested in making Hiroshima her next subject.<sup>43</sup> When she first visited the city and saw the ruins of the Hiroshima Prefecture Industrial Promotion Hall (commonly known as Atomic Bomb Dome), she had the impression that “it is small and very cute.”<sup>44</sup> This experience convinced her that she would be able to “take photos of Hiroshima.”<sup>45</sup> Her reaction to the iconic building should be read as an expression of her confidence that she would be able to maintain her creative agency without being overwhelmed by Hiroshima, a global symbol of death and destruction.

Ishiuchi never explains exactly why she chose to photograph personal items stored in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum.<sup>46</sup> Rather, she speaks with pride about her artistic approach; she aspired to capture today's Hiroshima rather than the Hiroshima of the past.

My photos do not have captions. [The only textual data provided for them] is the list of donors' names. In my other exhibitions as well, each individual photo does not have any accompanying explanation. This is because I am not very interested in data. The

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38 Seirai 2008.

39 Ishiuchi 2008a, p. 18.

40 Hoaglund 2013.

41 Ishiuchi and Yoshioka 2008, p. 49.

42 Ishiuchi 1993, p. 95.

43 Ishiuchi 2008b, p. 73; Ishiuchi 2016a, pp. 136–137.

44 Seirai Yūichi 青菜有一 lightheartedly admits that to his knowledge Ishiuchi was the first person to ever describe the Atomic Dome as “cute.” Ishiuchi and Seirai 2015, p. 185. Ishiuchi also used the word *kenagena* to describe the building, which can be translated as admirable or commendable. The word also connotes a degree of condescension for it is always used for those with lesser social standing, especially women and children, in challenging situations. Ishiuchi 2008a, p. 18.

45 Ishiuchi 2016a, pp. 136–137.

46 At the outset of the project, Ishiuchi was not thinking of photographing artifacts stored at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. It occurred to her when she first went to Hiroshima in search of her subject in the city. The meaning of photographing them became clear only afterward. Ishiuchi 2016a, p. 137.

museum holds detailed data on each item. Before or during the shooting, I read none of that. Data belongs to the past, and I cannot photograph the past. I am taking photos of skirts and one-piece dresses that exist now, in front of me. In that sense, these are very contemporary relics. This is my basic attitude in shooting photos. Probably no other person thought about Hiroshima this way.<sup>47</sup>

Certainly, no other photographer to my knowledge has leapt so easily over the past thinking about Hiroshima in this way. Here Ishiuchi declares in strong terms that, while aspiring to be a photo weaving maiden, she would never be a handmaiden of history. She does not wish to reproduce the messages of “peace and antiwar” uncritically but aspires to take a fresh look from a purely artistic perspective at the Hiroshima that exists here and now.<sup>48</sup>

Some viewers have critically responded to the beauty that Ishiuchi presents in her Hiroshima photos. To them, she replies in the following way: “I have been criticized quite a bit [by being asked such a question as:] ‘Is it ok to beautify Hiroshima so much?’ but [to this question] I answer: ‘It’s ok. Of course!’”<sup>49</sup> To the graduate student who asks about the potential for “aestheticizing the disaster” at the Vancouver exhibition site, she replies: “I am not thinking about aesthetics. They are just really beautiful.” Ishiuchi then continues: “All the relics have colors. Therefore, I naturally thought I should shoot them in color.”<sup>50</sup> Her response implies her sense of beauty is intuitive—she knows what beauty is when she sees it—and thereby forecloses the student’s probing question about the uneasy relationship between beauty and disaster. The photographer thus decouples beauty from disaster and uses her subjective sense of beauty as a shield to protect her aesthetic stance as she steps deep into the politically charged Hiroshima art milieu. Rather than engage with it, however, Ishiuchi bypasses it by anchoring her aesthetic vision in the pre-bombed Hiroshima. “They used to be more beautiful before the atomic bomb was dropped,” says the photographer, insisting that these items of clothing represent the everyday lives of their wearers before the fateful day of 6 August 1945.<sup>51</sup> By focusing on the beauty of the relics rather than on the destructive power of the bomb, she highlights the pre-atomic bomb period, the time when Hiroshima residents lived their everyday lives filled with human drama and color. Ishiuchi thereby participates in the recent representational trend in popular culture focusing on ordinary citizens’ lives leading up to the explosion of the atomic bomb, rather than on their post-atomic bomb lives in either Hiroshima or Nagasaki.<sup>52</sup> By invoking pre-disaster life in Hiroshima, Ishiuchi

47 Ishiuchi 2016a, p. 137. Ishiuchi may not have read the data but listened to it. *Things Left Behind* shows curator Shimomura Mari sharing detailed background information about each object as she carefully handles them for the photo shoot, see Hoaglund 2013. Ishiuchi has acknowledged that the *Hiroshima* series was a collaborative effort with Shimamura in a television program; see Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai 2012.

48 Ishiuchi and Sugihara 2022.

49 Ishiuchi 2016a, p. 138. Shiga Kenji 志賀賢治, former director of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, refused to attend the exhibit held at the Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art in 2008 because the photos were “too beautiful.” He felt “Hiroshima could not be that beautiful.” Shiga 2020, p. 7.

50 Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai 2012.

51 Ishiuchi and Kodama 2020, p. 96.

52 An early example is the 1982 novella by Inoue Mitsuharu 井上光晴, *Ashita: 1945 nen 8 gatsu 8 ka, Nagasaki*, which portrays the quotidian lives of several families in Nagasaki in the twenty-four hours leading up to the atomic bomb attack (Inoue 1982). The film version, *Tomorrow Ashita* (directed by Kuroki Kazuo) was released in 1988. In 2005, Tokyo Broadcasting System portrayed twenty days of a fictional family’s life in Hiroshima just prior to the explosion of the atomic bomb (TBS Terebi 2005). Ishiuchi could therefore hardly claim

exorcises the disaster and subsequent history from her aesthetic project. A corollary is that the *Hiroshima* series is a recovery work of what is left of beauty after the atomic bomb attack. She also turns the table and accuses those who criticize her aesthetic vision for possibly harboring “discriminatory assumptions that atomic bomb relics are dark and miserable.”<sup>53</sup> Ishiuchi's *Hiroshima* photos strive to liberate *hibakusha* and the city from the drab images in which they have been unjustly imprisoned for so long. Her criticism toward her detractors mirrors her aesthetic stance, rendering the post-atomic bomb history of Hiroshima invisible.

Her claims are problematic on two levels. First, despite her insistence that she merely conveys the inherent beauty of the relics, the beauty, and colors that she captures are, by and large, products of her artistic imagination. For some items of clothing, there is a striking contrast between Ishiuchi's photos and the original artifacts (and the images one finds on the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum's website). For example, the dark-colored dress, the first article that she photographed at the very beginning of the project, adorns the last color page of *Hiroshima* (figure 1). The photographer confides her special affection for this dress, which she named for its color and tattered look *COMME des GARÇONS*, after the Japanese fashion brand.<sup>54</sup> The dress serves as a material through which she explains her creative method and vision: “By placing it on the lightbox, I photograph it as if the body is showing through it. Then the reality emerges that, if I had lived in this time, I might have worn this dress.”<sup>55</sup> By posing as an imaginary wearer of the dress, Ishiuchi turns the history associated with the artifact into her story. Her conjecture illustrates the act of privately possessing Hiroshima, the act that she has declared central to her *Hiroshima* photos. In the dramatic backlight, the one-piece dress appears in a dark greenish hue, perhaps mirroring the dark destructive power of the atomic bomb.

When compared to the actual dress stored at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, however, the “reality” in her explanation seems closer to fiction. It appears that the original dress was navy blue with small white polka dots, visible on some inner material. The outer layer has faded into a light brown color, which together with the residual blue pigment gives a hint of green to the remaining front panel and skirt. The sleeves show more of the original blue than the other parts.<sup>56</sup> While the photo listed on the museum's database shows the dress in lighter colors overall (figure 2), it renders the dress's present condition more visible. Tattered for sure, but there is no hint of the black for which early *COMME des GARÇONS* fashion was known for.<sup>57</sup>

The purported anonymity of this dress is central to Ishiuchi's romanticization of nameless victims and her claim of privately possessing Hiroshima.<sup>58</sup> When she completed the shooting for *Hiroshima* in 2007, the museum had no personal data associated with the dress.

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originality in rediscovering the fact that “ordinary girls were leading their lives as usual” before the atomic bombing. Ishiuchi and Wakamatsu 2015.

53 Ishiuchi and Kodama 2020, p. 96. Ishiuchi admits that she has had not been free of such assumptions.

54 Ishiuchi, Kokatsu, and Nakajima 2011.

55 Ishiuchi and Wakamatsu 2015.

56 I had the privilege of examining several dresses stored at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum in person, including the ones I discuss here, on 25 October 2022. I would like to thank Shimomura Mari and Ochiba Hironobu for kindly granting me access to the collection.

57 Dress, Hatamura Takeyo (Donor) “A-bomb Artifacts,” ID Code 3103–0006, Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum Peace Database, [https://hpmm-db.jp/list/detail/?cate=artifact&search\\_type=detail&data\\_id=22852](https://hpmm-db.jp/list/detail/?cate=artifact&search_type=detail&data_id=22852).

58 Ishiuchi, Kokatsu, and Nakajima 2011.



Figure 2. One-piece dress. Donor: Hatakemura Takeyo, Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum Peace Database, “A-bomb Artifacts,” ID Code 3103-0006.

However, she envisions the unknown wearer as a “beautiful maiden” (*utsukushiki otome* 美しき乙女).<sup>59</sup> The museum’s 2020 survey of its collections revealed Hatakemura Takeyo as the donor.<sup>60</sup> One can now find her name, the date she donated it (23 April 1956), and a brief description of where she experienced the bombing (1,900 meters from the hypocenter) on the museum’s database. One can also learn that, when she experienced the bombing, Takeyo was forty-one years old, too mature to be labelled *otome* 乙女.

The photos of another dress also demonstrate the distance that the photographer went to scrape off the remnants of history. The one-piece dress that twenty-one-year-old Ogawa Setsuko wore on 6 August 1945 appears in two photos of *Hiroshima*. One captures the image of nearly the entire dress (figure 3). Spread on the lightbox, it appears translucent in brown, almost dissolving into the white light. The dress appears as a shadow, with light scraping off most of its materiality as if it is an X-ray. The top part appears as if it was cut out of a colored cellophane sheet. The second photo zooms in on the bottom part, transforming the fabric’s gentle wrinkles into mineral, vein-like patterns. The two shades of brown—the top half of the dress is lighter than the bottom half—reveal that the back side of the dress is completely lost, hinting at the wearer’s fate. Yet the sense of lightness dominates the two photos, and the thin, meshy fabric appears untethered from the weight of Hiroshima’s tragic history.<sup>61</sup>

Without Ishiuchi’s aesthetic lens, the original dress has a completely different appearance. The silk dress appears in dingy gray colors, and the large brown stains of bodily

59 Ishiuchi claims she “felt goosebumps” when she learned there was no donor on record for this item. Ishiuchi, Kokatsu, and Nakajima 2011; Ishiuchi 2008b, p. 73.

60 Her name was wrongly attributed to another dress until a recent survey found otherwise. Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, Curatorial Division, email message to author, 20 September 2022.

61 Ishiuchi 2008b, pp. 9 and 63.



Figure 3. ひろしま/*hiroshima* #9. Donor: Ogawa Ritsu (Ogawa Setsuko's mother). Ishiuchi Miyako, 2007. Chromogenic print. © Ishiuchi Miyako.



fluid and gray soot marks are distinctively visible in the mid-section. There is nothing glamorous about this dress in its present condition. Unlike the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum database image (figure 4), which appears in brighter shades than the actual dress, Ishiuchi captures its thin, delicate fabric, while reducing to a merest hint the damage that the atomic bomb exacted on Ogawa Setsuko.

Most of the objects in Ishiuchi's photos are blown up and larger than the frame—and often are blown up to images larger than life when they are exhibited—connoting the exuberant life force that once filled them. Commenting on Ishiuchi's *Hiroshima* photos, Jani Scandura emphatically states that they “are not still-life portraits, . . . nor portraits of life that was stilled in an instant. Rather, they are photos that insist: *there is still life here, now* [emphasis in original].”<sup>62</sup> They were part of an everyday life that once existed in the city of Hiroshima. They refuse to appear as museum specimens silently and modestly framed in the photos. However, when I saw the items of clothing in the storage and exhibit spaces of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, what struck me first and foremost was their smallness. To eyes that are used to the contemporary physique of Japanese people, these dresses are petite in comparison. The small sizes of the dresses, school uniforms, and children's clothes emphasize the smallness of the individuals in contrast to the inhuman scale of the nuclear destruction.

Comparing Ishiuchi's photos with the original artifacts attests to the photographer's ability to produce beautiful photos out of tattered clothes, in order to fulfill her aesthetic vision. As she readily admits, the beautiful Hiroshima that results is her creation, and may not always present itself as such. The beauty that the photographer has found seems also

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62 Scandura 2015, p. 151.



Figure 4. One-piece dress. Donor: Ogawa Ritsu (Ogawa Setsuko's mother), Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum Peace Database, "A-bomb Artifacts," ID Code 3103-0005.

ephemeral. When she saw the skirt Yamane Tomie wore on 6 August, one year or so after the shooting session, it appeared lifeless as if it was "fossilized."<sup>63</sup> To explain the drastically changed state of the skirt, she invokes an almost mythical power of photography to bring artifacts to life. But it would be more appropriate to point to the ease at which she realized her aesthetic vision with the help of the lightbox and latest print technology.

Numerous male photographers have captured bleak images of Hiroshima but only her photos show the beauty that, Ishiuchi claims, has long been concealed beneath them. She then hedges possible criticisms of her work by qualifying her hyperbolic claim: "These photos are not actually beautiful even when somebody says they are. A cursory look may not reveal this, but when carefully examined, the clothes are torn, and many of them are full of scars and carry traces of the atomic bomb."<sup>64</sup> Contrary to her assertion, it would not require a careful examination to realize these items of clothing are torn, burned, and stained. Even for the clothes which are most intact, and with Ishiuchi's best efforts to make them appear beautiful, their damaged state is the first feature viewers of her photographs notice. Framed by Hiroshima's history, Ishiuchi's work instantly recalls gruesome images, albeit not too overtly, of Hiroshima and other nuclear disasters.<sup>65</sup> If it had not been for the rich history of Hiroshima photos that serve as a frame of reference, Ishiuchi's would probably have far less impact on

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<sup>63</sup> Ishiuchi, Masaki, and Yonahara 2008, p. 257.

<sup>64</sup> Ishiuchi 2016a, p. 138.

<sup>65</sup> Nuclear disaster sites such as Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Fukushima, the Marshall Islands, and Chernobyl have attracted the attention of photographers. Tokuyama Yoshio introduces his readers to fifteen Japanese photographers whose work has been associated with these sites in his book *Genbaku to shashin*. It should be noted that they are all men. Tokuyama 2005.

each viewer.<sup>66</sup> The ghastly beauty that viewers find in her work is in many ways a product of their emotional responses to the shadows of death and destruction that linger on the clothes.

The intertextuality of Hiroshima photographs, of which Ishiuchi's work is a part, illuminates the second issue with Ishiuchi's aesthetic maneuver. That is, she misrepresents the nature of the criticisms hurled at her work, overlooking their real point. Critics feel hesitant and even guilty in finding beauty in the artifacts and are thus less concerned about beauty itself than the question of where it comes from. What Ishiuchi's photos convey is far too complex to be contained by the abstract unitary concept of beauty. The viewers of her photos are awed by their ghastly beauty, beauty outlined by the dark shadow of nuclear carnage, while being forced to recognize their own fascination with them. They find beauty in her Hiroshima photos not despite the tragedy that struck the city on 6 August 1945, as Ishiuchi intimates, but because of it.

The director of Hiroshima Television, Kawakami Yōko, for example, grappled with her own fascination when she first saw Ishiuchi's *Hiroshima* photos. Beauty struck her unexpecting eyes: "I have worked [in Hiroshima] thinking that we must convey the misery of the atomic bomb attack. But, when I saw the photos, I could not help but think how beautiful they are."<sup>67</sup> Ishiuchi's work on Hiroshima releases dark emotions in its viewers, emotions beyond "reason and conscience."<sup>68</sup> Kawakami tries to assuage her guilt by convincing herself that beauty would help highlight the cruelty of the bomb. In Susan Sontag's words, "The photograph gives mixed signals. Stop this [the cruelty], it urges. But it also exclaims, What a spectacle!"<sup>69</sup> Ishiuchi tries to forcefully mold these mixed signals into a soothing message, claiming that she had produced her work not as documentary photography but purely as art. In other words, her single-minded focus on beauty makes it extremely difficult to talk about the long dark shadows cast on her photos.

Ishiuchi insists she is not at all naïve about the tragic history of Hiroshima: "The relics, under normal circumstances, should disappear with their original owners. But then, why must these 'things' remain behind? Everybody knows. That is because of the atomic bomb. I really don't want to talk about such fundamental stuff (*kōiu kihonteki na koto* こういう基本的なこと)."<sup>70</sup> If their owners had not been victims of the atomic bombing then these personal items would not have been preserved at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, let alone be the beneficiaries of the renowned photographer's attention. Ironically, by declaring that she does not wish to talk about the "fundamental stuff," the artist underscores the centrality of the atomic bomb experience to her *Hiroshima* photos. She similarly deems the political messages of antiwar and peace fundamental, so fundamental that she does not want to mention them.<sup>71</sup> Ishiuchi pushes back at the notion that her artistic vision is reduceable to familiar political catchphrases which have emerged from the city's atomic past. Yet her photographs are deeply anchored in Hiroshima's dark memories and history, despite

66 In an interview with John O'Brian, Ishiuchi acknowledges that "my *Hiroshima* photographs follow in the wake of the other photographer's work. My photographs are connected with Matsushige Yoshito's photos" (Ishiuchi and O'Brian 2012, p. 9). However, Ishiuchi also emphasizes a total break from the long "tradition and history" of male photographers struggling with Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Ishiuchi and Seirai 2015, p. 185.

67 Kakehashi 2010, p. 63.

68 Sontag 2002, p. 85.

69 Sontag 2002, p. 68.

70 Ishiuchi 2016a, p. 138.

71 Ishiuchi and Asahi Kamera 2008, p. 242; Ishiuchi 2016a, p. 138.

her reluctance to make that more explicit in her artistic vision. For her hesitant nods to Hiroshima's past—perfunctorily discussing it against her expressed aversion to doing so—to make sense, the title of the exhibit should perhaps be changed to *Hiroshima*, in accordance with Jacques Derrida's concept of “under erasure.”<sup>72</sup> Hiroshima is always there but could not be named in her photography.

### **Nameless *Hibakusha***

Since her debut, Ishiuchi has discussed the subjects of her photographic work only in general terms, while maintaining that she has established or maintained personal and intimate relations with her subjects, whether human or inanimate object, when shot in black and white. Ishiuchi assumes a completely different stance for *Hiroshima*, casually stating: “Artifacts left behind by nameless ordinary citizens (*namo naki shisei no hitobito* 名もなき市井の人々) are preserved in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum.”<sup>73</sup> Even if the expression “nameless ordinary citizens” might be a figure of speech, it still demonstrates the extremely lopsided relationship between the world-renowned artist and ordinary citizens, with the *hibakusha* turned into nameless ordinary citizens in her collection. Whether dead or alive, they are all cast into a one-size-fits-all story, while denied any kind of personal relationship with the photographer.

Perhaps the biggest issue with *Hiroshima* is not that the photos in the collection are beautiful, but that the personal memories the objects represent are displaced by the photographer's aestheticism. While the images of artifacts may evoke their original owners, they are reduced to an abstract, generic code of “*hibakusha*.” Facing the camera, the individuals associated with the objects are unable to either return their gaze or speak for themselves; they are not given sufficient agency to shake the photographer and the viewers out of their comforting and complaisant visions. A poignant example of this disempowerment is found in the two photos of the dress that the aforementioned Ogawa Setsuko wore on the day the atomic bomb exploded in the city of Hiroshima.<sup>74</sup> Standing outside, 790 meters away from the hypocenter, she suffered major burns on her face and back and died five days later.<sup>75</sup> Her name is nowhere to be found in the series, however. In its brief, one-page list of the photographed objects and their donors included in the back matter, one would instead find the name of her mother, Ogawa Ritsu, who survived her daughter's death and donated the dress to the museum in 1974. In both *Hiroshima* and another collection that Ishiuchi published in 2014, *From Hiroshima*, only the names of the donors are included.<sup>76</sup> The names of those who suffered the atomic bombing do not appear unless they were

72 Derrida deploys this concept to underscore the problematic nature of language, which Gayatri Spivak succinctly describes as “inaccurate yet necessary” (Spivak 1997, p. xiv). By spelling out Hiroshima under erasure, one could call into question the efficacy of the name Hiroshima. What it represents is always inaccurate and inadequate, though it is impossible to call what it designates any other way. The title of Ishiuchi's photo collection could then signify the photographer's struggle to represent the city.

73 Ishiuchi 2014c, p. 158; Ishiuchi 2016b, p. 60.

74 Ishiuchi 2008c, p. 9; Hoaglund 2013.

75 Dress, Ogawa Ritsu (Donor), “A-bomb Artifacts,” ID Code 3103–0005, Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum Peace Database, [https://hpmm-db.jp/list/detail/?cate=artifact\\_en&search\\_type=detail&data\\_id=22851](https://hpmm-db.jp/list/detail/?cate=artifact_en&search_type=detail&data_id=22851).

76 This she does rather reluctantly because it is required by the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum (Ishiuchi 2008b, pp. 75, 78; Ishiuchi 2014b). The donors' names are transcribed in the Roman alphabet and appear in the “List of Works.”

donors.<sup>77</sup> Being relegated to the generic category of *hibakusha*, Ogawa Setsuko lost her unique identity as well as the life that she led in wartime Hiroshima. The name of her surviving mother stands in for her.

In cases where survivors donated their own items, or their family did so on their behalf long after the bombing, there is no mention of the fact that they were *hibakusha*. A number of critics who have discussed Ishiuchi's *Hiroshima* seem oblivious to this erasure. Lena Fritsch declares rather nonchalantly: "Needless to say, the great majority of the people who once owned these dresses, shoes, and watches were killed either directly during the bombing or gradually over the following months and years."<sup>78</sup> Hayashi-Hibino Yōko explains: "Western-style clothing was not the most common type of apparel in Hiroshima toward the end of the Pacific War. Loose-fitting shirts and pants known as *monpe* were the official everyday costume during the war, but many girls wore clothing that they liked better underneath. Many examples of these sorts of clothes found their way into the museum because the people who wore them were killed in the attack."<sup>79</sup> While sharing this fascinating information about young women's fashion-conscious behavior during the war, she wrongly assumes the finality of the bombing. Yomota Inuhiko 四方田犬彦 summons up still more violent, graphic images: "Many of the artifacts [in the photos] are Western-style clothes and most of them are women's. They were gathered, torn off from the wearers who were already dead or died shortly thereafter."<sup>80</sup> In *Hiroshima*, it is the women who are forcibly torn from their clothes. Ishiuchi herself emphatically states: "What does it mean that the bodies of the original owners [of relics] disappeared. Especially when they died suddenly because of the atomic bomb. I was able to feel that."<sup>81</sup> Ishiuchi highlights the dark shadow of death that clings to the term "relics (*ihin* 遺品)." She carried the term over from *Mother's*, noting when discussing her photographs of relics stored at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum that "The first relics that I shot belonged to my mother, who died at age eighty-four."<sup>82</sup> In Ishiuchi's mind, both the museum's artifacts and her mother's mementos signify death, and life thereafter is impossible to conceive. She and her critics seem to have completely forgotten about the people who lived their post-atomic bomb lives with varying degrees of difficulty and anxiety.<sup>83</sup>

77 The only exception is Sasaki Sadako, who died from leukemia at age twelve in 1955. Her red Japanese sandals are identified by her name in *Hiroshima*. Ishiuchi 2008b, pp. 75, 78.

78 Fritsch 2015, p. 62. Makeda Best also categorically erases those who survived the bombing: "The subjects of Ishiuchi's *Hiroshima* series are personal artefacts collected by volunteers and family members of bombing victims." Best 2015, p. 177.

79 Hayashi-Hibino 2009, p. 150.

80 Yomota 2008, p. 56. Yomota's imagination echoes the post-bombing scene that Washida Kiyokazu envisages, where clothes were fused with burned skin and forcefully torn off bodies in extreme pain. Washida intimates that the personhood of the victims was transferred to the objects through this agonizing interaction (Washida 2008). There is at least one blouse housed in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, which was cut up and peeled off the victim's body, but this is not among Ishiuchi's photos. See "Blouse that had been cut off to undress," Fujita Kiyoko (Donor: Mother), "A-bomb Artifacts," ID Code 3102-0102, Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum Peace Database, [https://hpmm-db.jp/list/detail/?cate=artifact\\_en&search\\_type=detail&data\\_id=22602](https://hpmm-db.jp/list/detail/?cate=artifact_en&search_type=detail&data_id=22602).

81 Ishiuchi and Asahi Kamera 2008, p. 242.

82 Ishiuchi and Kodama 2020, p. 97.

83 In a brief note included in *Hiroshima*, Ishiuchi squeezes the survivors out of the postwar by assuming all the objects were separated from their original owners on the day of or shortly after the atomic bombing: "I realize that the time from the day these objects became historical sources and today is about the length of time I have lived" (Ishiuchi 2008b, p. 73). Sandra S. Phillips is the only critic I have found who, in discussing Ishiuchi's *Hiroshima* series, mentions the survivors: "Of those that did not die, the rest bore their scars for the remainder of their lives" (Phillips 2014, p. 118).

If one checks the database that the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum maintains on its website, one easily realizes it is wrong to assume that the original owners of the artifacts all died immediately upon or shortly after their exposure to the nuclear blast.<sup>84</sup> *Hiroshima* carries photos of forty-five objects, ten of which have no information about the original owners or their donors. Twenty-four were given to the museum by bereaved families, nine by the survivors themselves, and two by survivors' families. What *Hiroshima* erases is those who survived the bombing and their memories of their postwar years, memories inseparably tied to their personal artifacts. In 1999, Abe Hatsuko donated the white blouse with small black polka dots that she wore at the time she experienced the atomic explosion 1,900 meters from the hypocenter in the Hakushima area. What was subsequently lost was not her life but that of her daughter, Hiroko, who had been born on 28 June 1945. Around 17 September, Hiroko began to show symptoms of radiation sickness and died a week later.<sup>85</sup>

Takase Futaba was eighteen and wearing a one-piece dress with a fine red and navy-blue plaid pattern when she experienced the atomic explosion 1,100 meters from the hypocenter in Ōtemachi. Although suffering from severe atomic-bomb sickness—at one point her doctor gave up on her—she miraculously recovered. Her mother Setsuko, who had sewn her dress and helped Futaba to safety after the bombing, died of sepsis on 1 September.<sup>86</sup> Futaba then carefully stored the dress as her mother's memento until she decided to donate it to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum in 2005.<sup>87</sup>

Most of the visitors to the *Hiroshima* exhibit probably believed, like many critics had, that Hatsuko and Futaba expired immediately or shortly after the bombing. In Ishiuchi's photographs, it is impossible to detect the postwar years that the two women lived through as a young mother agonizing over the death of her infant daughter (Hatsuko's husband died in 1989) while fearing the aftereffects of massive irradiation, and a teenager who included the dress that her mother made in her trousseau when she married, lived beyond the age at which her mother died, and finally decided to part with the memento in her old age.<sup>88</sup> While lovingly portraying her relationship with her own mother, Ishiuchi chooses to turn a blind eye to the mother-daughter relations that these two dresses represent.

She forces the survivors, who suffered in the space between life and death, out of the postwar, displacing the unique experiences of individual *hibakusha* with such vague, banal concepts as death, pain, and sadness. Ishiuchi's discussions of her *Hiroshima* photos reduce this complex history to an uncomplicated narrative that culminates in the explosion of an

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84 "A-bomb Artifacts," Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum Peace Database, [https://hpmm-db.jp/artifact\\_en/](https://hpmm-db.jp/artifact_en/). Ishiuchi claims that she read the pertinent data after completing the shoot for *Hiroshima*. Ishiuchi, Kokatsu, and Nakajima 2011.

85 Ishiuchi 2008b, pp. 53 and 69; and Blouse, Abe Hatsuko (Donor), "A-bomb Artifacts," ID Code 3101-0132, Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum Peace Database, [https://hpmm-db.jp/list/detail/?cate=artifact\\_en&search\\_type=detail&data\\_id=22632](https://hpmm-db.jp/list/detail/?cate=artifact_en&search_type=detail&data_id=22632). A quick search of the online database also reveals the following: Hatsuko donated four other artifacts, including her late husband's, to the museum along with her blouse in 1999. Three years later, she contributed her drawing of herself, her husband, and their daughter in her arms in miserable conditions hours after the bombing to the museum's collection of atomic bomb survivors' drawings. Furthermore, her tale of survival and loss was published in a church pamphlet in 2006, which is also among the items in the museum's collection.

86 Takase 1995.

87 Dress, Takase Futaba (Donor), "A-bomb Artifacts," ID Code 3103-0013, Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, [https://hpmm-db.jp/list/detail/?cate=artifact\\_en&search\\_type=detail&data\\_id=22859](https://hpmm-db.jp/list/detail/?cate=artifact_en&search_type=detail&data_id=22859).

88 Takase Futaba's mother died at the age thirty-eight. Futaba donated the dress to Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum in 2005, sixty years after the bombing. She was eighteen when she experienced the bombing.

atomic bomb and attendant doom, which many viewers and critics have unquestioningly embraced. Ishiuchi's aesthetic vision ultimately hinges on the sublime image of the bomb. Beauty of pre-bombing life in the city, which she has purportedly found, deepens if the bomb's destruction had been total.

By presenting *Hiroshima* as a work of art, not documentary photography, Ishiuchi tries to protect the integrity of her artistic vision from Hiroshima's dark past that threatens to overwhelm any artistic intent. Her discursive maneuver, however, fails to produce its intended effects because the city's memory is already an integral part of the beauty that her work exudes. Her photos silently invoke the death and destruction that reigned over the city, despite her reluctance to acknowledge many survivors' long arduous postwar struggles.

### ***Hiroshima* as a Form of Commemoration**

Even after demonstrating *Hiroshima's* deep connections with the city's history, we are still left with the task of understanding the complex emotions that her *Hiroshima* photography evokes in a viewer's mind. Historical analysis would have little to say about the power of Ishiuchi's aesthetic vision besides that it has been historically informed despite her claim that it is not. It is therefore necessary to move beyond the bounds of historical criticism in order to grasp its contemporary significance and to highlight the emotional work in which Ishiuchi's *Hiroshima* photographs engage. The prism of religion that Seirai Yüichi uses in discussing Ishiuchi's work on Hiroshima offers a perspective that triangulates the binaries of aesthetic and history. Another artist's encounter with sublime beauty at a disaster site—Wim Wenders' telling of his experience at the 9/11 site in New York City—further helps us understand what Ishiuchi does with the beauty that she has found in Hiroshima.

Just as he aptly characterizes *Mother's*, Seirai sees Ishiuchi's *Hiroshima* as a form of ritual through which to facilitate a permanent separation of the living and the deceased. "I think the Japanese may have not finished mourning those who died in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Ms. Ishiuchi's work—visiting Hiroshima repeatedly to photograph artifacts associated with *hibakusha*—may be part of a mourning ritual."<sup>89</sup> When juxtaposed with her *Mother's* series, it becomes clear that *Hiroshima* aspires to do to memories of Hiroshima what the *Mother's* series has done to Ishiuchi's memories of her mother. Both bodies of work are acts of grieving, in which loss is gently recalled and denuded of context to be transformed into beautiful images. Ishiuchi's photography engages in a healing—more religious than historical—process, which, in Julia Kristeva's words, is "closer to catharsis than to elaboration."<sup>90</sup>

New York gallery owner and publisher Andrew Roth has rendered more explicit the religious undertone of Ishiuchi's *Hiroshima* photographs through the design choices he made in creating his 2014 photo collection, *Here and Now: Atomic Bomb Artifacts, Hiroshima 1945/2007*.<sup>91</sup> The volume carries 214 of Ishiuchi's photographs, which are organized roughly by categories such as women's dresses, socks, protective head gear, objects, girl's school uniforms, and so on.<sup>92</sup> No page numbers or names of donors are on its pages while the colophon, minimum acknowledgments, and Ishiuchi's autograph are inscribed on a separate

89 Ishiuchi and Seirai 2015, p. 183.

90 Kristeva 1989, p. 24.

91 Ishiuchi 2014a.

92 Although Yonahara Kei describes the photos as organized by colors, I do not recognize such a color scheme in the book. Yonahara 2015, p. 111.

folded insert.<sup>93</sup> A photograph of a white shirt is printed in white and gray on the front cover while the image of the shirt's back side on the back cover is similarly in white and gray. The same set of images appear in full color on the first and last of the printed pages of the volume respectively. The materiality of the book, sandwiched by these photo images, symbolically invokes the body that the shirt once enwrapped (and by extension other absent bodies in the collection).<sup>94</sup> What is perhaps most unusual is the book's somber appearance. Encased in a solid paper sleeve sized 21.9 cm × 21.4 cm × 5.9 cm, with the entire exterior appearing beige-gray, it looks more like a drab square pavestone. Its design compels the reader to emulate, in each reading of the book, the move that Ishiuchi made at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum—pulling artifacts out of the dark cuboid space—and brings these beautiful images out into the light. By daring to find beauty in the face of death and destruction, Ishiuchi creates a safe and peaceful space to grieve for the city's dark history, and *Here and Now* stands as an unassuming marker that shows the way into this space.

Roth's book intimates, by finding beauty in the city of Hiroshima, that Ishiuchi recognizes the mourning process that the city has been engaging in. Yet Ishiuchi never makes that connection explicit in the way Wim Wenders does when he speaks about the voice that he claims to have heard at the still-smoldering 9/11 disaster site in November 2001, the site he does not hesitate to address as "Ground Zero." Stepping into the restricted areas where workers sifted through the rubble searching for human remains, Wenders encountered an incredible sight, about which he recounts as if it is a scene in an ode:

Ground Zero was surrounded by skyscrapers,  
so the early sun could not shine directly into the hole,  
into that huge wound on the ground.  
But the sun was reflected  
from the glass surfaces of the adjoining buildings,  
its rays piercing through the smoke and the mist.<sup>95</sup>

Awed by the scene, Wenders took this photo "[o]f sheer beauty" with the panoramic camera he was carrying.<sup>96</sup> Wenders' vertical panoramic shot severely bifurcates the image, echoing the Judeo-Christian imagery of heaven and hell. The sublime beauty that he found is shrouded in an aura of divinity.

Right then the place spoke to him, though Wenders fears it may sound "blasphemous" to claim so. Its message to him was clear:

Something horrible took place here.  
It took me.

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93 The publisher made this artistic choice in contravention of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum's rules that stipulate when publishing or exhibiting photos of artifacts, donor names must accompany them.

94 A twelve-year-old boy, Yatagai Ushio, was wearing the shirt on 6 August 1945. He was nine hundred meters away from the hypocenter when the bomb exploded over the city. The sleeves of the shirt were cut off because, soaked in his blood, they stuck to his skin. Ushio miraculously survived the injuries and irradiation. Shirt, Yatagai Yoshie (Donor), "A-bomb Artifacts," Identification Number 3101-0192, Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum Peace Database, [https://hpmdb.jp/list/detail/?cate=artifact\\_en&search\\_type=detail&data\\_id=22692](https://hpmdb.jp/list/detail/?cate=artifact_en&search_type=detail&data_id=22692).

95 Wenders and Zournazi 2013, p. 142.

96 Wenders and Zournazi 2013, p. 143.



I am that place to which it happened,  
 I do know better than anyone else!  
 The blood of all these people who died here  
 has soaked into my skin,  
 and their cries are forever echoing in the air  
 above me.  
 But I, the place,  
 with the sun as my witness right now,  
 want to tell you:  
 let this not be in vain!  
 Let death not create more death!  
 Revenge will not make sense of the sacrifice  
 that happened here.  
 Only forgiveness.  
 Let this be a place of peace,  
 of rest,  
 of healing.<sup>97</sup>

Wenders' dramatic telling of his experience among the ruins of 9/11 points to the essential role that beauty plays in mourning and forgiving. The sublime beauty shrouded in a divine aura that he witnessed that morning was a powerful antithesis to the death and destruction laid bare on the ground. In deep grief, the voice of the place urged Wenders and other humans to seek not vengeance but forgiveness—the ultimate goal of the mourning process and a higher resolution that will break the chain of violence.<sup>98</sup>

Contrary to the way she invokes memories of places (Yokosuka, old apartment buildings, and former brothels) in her debut trilogy, Ishiuchi remains silent about her memories of the place called Hiroshima.<sup>99</sup>



Figure 5. Ground Zero, New York, 8 November 2001. Wim Wenders. © Wim Wenders.

97 Wenders and Zournazi 2013, pp. 143–144.

98 Kristeva asserts that forgiveness precedes aesthetics: “There is no beauty outside the forgiveness that remembers abjection and filters it through the destabilized, musicalized, resensualized signs of loving discourse. *Forgiveness is aesthetic* and the discourse (religions, philosophies, ideologies) that adhere to the dynamics of forgiving precondition the birth of aesthetics withing their orbit” (Kristeva 1989, p. 206). If we are to accept her stance, we need to invert Wenders’s narrative. Sublime beauty did not cause the place to speak. Wenders was ready to forgive and therefore witness the beauty and hear the voice.

99 The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, where Ishiuchi took her *Hiroshima* photographs, has served as a semi-religious institution, though it was never intended for such a purpose. With *hibakusha* and their family members dying out, relatives left with their atomic bomb-related mementos chose the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum as their final resting place, in an act reminiscent of placing ashes of the deceased in the charnel house maintained by a temple (Ako 2008b, p. 178). The display of carnage in the museum exhibition halls resembles, but is more graphic and real than, pictorial representations of hell displayed at temples. The halls have also become a space for prayer and deep contemplation; see for instance Shiga 2020, p. 234. For this man and many other visitors, the museum is a liminal space that stands between life and death, a space for mourning loss, whether personal or social.

But could she have heard the voice of Ground Zero at one of the three original sites that experienced a nuclear blast (Trinity Site, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki)? The Peace Memorial Park, inside which the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum is located, was built on the 12.2-hectare piece of land near the hypocenter. The place knows “better than anyone else” what happened on that day in Hiroshima and is still burdened with pieces of the past. The ruins of the Hiroshima Prefectural Industrial Promotion Hall, now commonly referred to as the Atomic Bomb Dome, are an integral part of Tange Kenzō’s park design. (The north-south axis extends from the ruins at the north end of the park to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum at the south end.) Tanabe Masaaki 田邊雅章, whose childhood house used to stand right next to the Industrial Promotion Hall, reveals that during the park’s construction, the area north of the Hiroshima Victims Memorial Cenotaph was covered with layers of soil because there were too many human remains to excavate.<sup>100</sup> Sixty-two years after the dropping of the bomb, beneath the beautiful façade, the place’s voice, if it had indeed been present, would have been muted into barely audible murmurs.

Instead of tuning into the imaginary voice of the place, however, Ishiuchi focuses on finding beauty there, seeing no need to translate it into an explicit message by anthropomorphizing the place. Perhaps it is indeed blasphemous to claim that one hears such a voice, let alone understands the message it conveys, since the voice would already be imbued with earthly political intent. If the beauty that Wenders found is sublime and divine, framed in a vertical panoramic shot, Ishiuchi’s is human and sad, found in ordinary items of clothing. Contrary to Wenders’ cinematic imagination that seeks a dramatic resolution, Ishiuchi’s photographic vision silently witnesses the catalytic property of beauty in the process of mourning, just as Kristeva describes: “Beauty emerges as the admirable face of loss, transforming it in order to make it live.”<sup>101</sup>

### **Feminizing Hiroshima**

While refusing to relegate her aesthetic vision to banal political messages, Ishiuchi does not hesitate to cast it in a rather reductive gender narrative. Her essentialist claim is that she sees this beauty because she is a woman, whereas male photographers, because they are men, replicated the political messages anchored in history and were thereby blinded to the everydayness and the beauty that existed in pre-atomic bomb Hiroshima. Women’s purported outsider status to history is crucial to her claim: “History is made really by a handful of people, and most of them are men. In Hiroshima, I viscerally understood how history is made. Women are definitely not [the producers of] history.”<sup>102</sup> A corollary is that, as a female photographer, she was able to find the Hiroshima that her male counterparts failed to see, and this Hiroshima brought her feminine vision to the fore: “Since I started working on *Hiroshima*, I grew conscious of the fact that I shot objects from [a] woman’s perspective.”<sup>103</sup> Gender is a way to confirm Ishiuchi’s supposedly natural affinity with beauty while rejecting documentary photography or history.<sup>104</sup> By rearticulating the binary terms of art and history

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100 Tanabe 2010, pp. 161–162.

101 Kristeva 1989, p. 99.

102 Ishiuchi, Tsuchiya, and Masaki 2008, p. 245.

103 Ishiuchi and Wakamatsu 2015.

104 In a 2020 interview, for example, Ishiuchi suggested: “Perhaps because I am a woman, I can take beautiful photos of relics.” Ishiuchi and Kodama 2020, p. 97.

in gendered terms, she, by the virtue of being a woman, automatically secures an unassailable aesthetic position against history that threatens to intrude upon her photographic vision.

In choosing materials for her photographs, Ishiuchi looked for feminine beauty in them. Although a fair number of military uniforms and semi-official, pseudo-military style wartime male clothing (*kokuminfuku*) are stored in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, they do not interest her.<sup>105</sup> These khaki-colored clothes do not meet the photographer's aesthetic standards. As the museum's own database demonstrates, the museum houses a wide variety of objects.<sup>106</sup> Among them, Ishiuchi prioritized what women had worn: "Reflecting my preference for things that women wore I photographed all the one-piece dresses, skirts, blouses, and girl's school uniforms stored at the museum. Therefore, the relics that women left behind dominate [the *Hiroshima* series]."<sup>107</sup>

She also sees feminine beauty in the title *Hiroshima* spelled out in *hiragana* script (ひろしま): "Written in the cursive syllabary, it is beautiful. Also, it is important that it is written in a female hand. To me, it is unthinkable to write it in *katakana* script. Everyone has handed down Hiroshima in *katakana* script [from generation to generation], but that is the Hiroshima that men have talked about."<sup>108</sup> The *Hiroshima* written in *katakana* script (ヒロシマ) has been shrouded with antiwar and peace messages that men have loudly pronounced, while the *Hiroshima* in *hiragana* script connotes an effort to represent the city from a female perspective, solely relying on aesthetic values.

If Higashi Takuma 東琢磨 is right in claiming that the city of Hiroshima "has loved the women who inhabited [private] narratives and silence, which would always remain invisible in the official discourse [about the city]," efforts to feminize this city should start with the act of excavating what has been concealed by men's Hiroshima, the stories of women who have lived with atomic bomb memories.<sup>109</sup> However, when we view the 1953 film, *Hiroshima*, produced by the Japan Teachers Union, it is obvious that the title, also written in *hiragana*, was already deeply mired in the politics of antiwar and peace. The suffering of Hiroshima has often been expressed through the bodies of noncombatants, especially those of young women and children. The tragic story of Sasaki Sadako, a Hiroshima girl who died from leukemia at age twelve in 1955, gained prominence in no small part because it fits both categories.<sup>110</sup> One could also easily compile a long list of heroines in popular culture who die young while embodying the suffering of Hiroshima.<sup>111</sup>

105 Ishiuchi offers another reason for shooting mostly women's items of clothing: that they are an overwhelming majority among the garments and small items of clothing kept at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. The information provided on the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum website, however, shows the opposite to be the case. Of the 607 items listed on the site, 438 (77.2 percent) are identifiable as men's clothing (six were unidentifiable).

106 Tsuchida Hiromi takes a different approach in representing artifacts stored in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum: he photographed a wider variety of objects, including those that strongly remind one of Japan's militaristic past in black and white, and provides a brief textual explanation to each when it is available. Tsuchida 1995.

107 Ishiuchi 2016b, p. 65.

108 Ishiuchi 2016a, p. 138.

109 Higashi 2016, p. 144.

110 *Sadako: "Genbaku no ko no zō" no monogatari* examines Sadako's story in the larger global context, see NHK Hiroshima Kaku/Heiwa Purojekuto 2000. A biography of her short life is found in chapter 2, pp. 21–75.

111 Such a list would include: Yukiko in a 1959 manga, *Kieyuku shōjo* (Shirato 2009); Hayashima Akiko in the film *Sono yo wa wasurenai* (Daiei, 1962); Yumechiyo in *Yumechiyo nikki* (a three-part television drama by NHK, 1981, 1982, and 1984, and a film by the same title: Tōei, 1985); Shizuma Yasuko in *Kuroi ame* (a novel

Explaining the thinking behind her *Hiroshima* photographs, Ishiuchi contends: “Until now, the atomic deaths have been discussed only as the mass death of hundreds of thousands. But I want to think about only one girl’s death.”<sup>112</sup> In her photography, the individuality of the hundreds of thousands of *hibakusha* is replaced by a single nameless and voiceless girl, who stands as a symbol of the generic category. To an audience member at the University of Indiana, who asked how she photographed the relics, she answered a bit theatrically: “The relics are stored in small boxes inside the underground vault. I open them, say hello to them, and shape them to make them look best in natural light.” She then continued after briefly pausing, “So that she who used to wear this cloth [in the image projected on the screen] can come back anytime.”<sup>113</sup> A heavy dose of sentimentality in this final line effectively reduces the figures of *hibakusha* into a beautiful, yet anonymous and silent Japanese existence.<sup>114</sup> The photographer expresses the desire to see the girl who was wearing the skirt return in bodily form, but would she be ready for the disfigured body to return, full of severe burns and open wounds?

### Postscript

Ishiuchi has weaved her photos and words into a beautiful story about herself. The success of the *Mother’s* series hermetically sealed the circular trajectory of her creative endeavor. Gone is her militant yet vulnerable self, present at the beginning of her career, that hurled her unresolved emotions onto photographic paper with all her might. By contrast, the gaze she casts on objects in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum is soft and empathetic, and Ishiuchi uses beauty as a medium through which to engage in the emotional work of mourning. Yet, in shooting artifacts stored at the museum, the photographer steadfastly defends the sovereignty of her aesthetic vision against the dark history that has long defined photographic representations of Hiroshima.

There are signs of change in her photographic vision, however. The photos of Hiroshima artifacts that Ishiuchi shot almost a decade after she started and included in the 2017 exhibition catalog, *Kime to Shashin* 肌理と写真 (Grain and image), may attest that Hiroshima’s history had corroded her optimistic aesthetics. Simply put, they are not at all beautiful. The ephemeral beauty that Ishiuchi’s camera captured in early shootings is no longer there. The artifacts are placed on a light-blue sheet with what appears to be more subdued lighting. Unlike any of the items of clothing included in *Hiroshima*, Terao Nobue’s one-piece dress permanently shows blood stains.<sup>115</sup> The only colors found on Ōshita Nobuko’s chemise are black and brown in Ishiuchi’s photo.<sup>116</sup> There is a spot on the left shoulder that

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by Ibuse Masuji, 1966, and a film; Imamura 1989); and Hirano Minami in *Yūnagi no machi sakura no kuni* (a manga by Kōno Fumiyo, 2004, a film by Tōhoku Shinsha, 2007, and a television drama produced by NHK Hiroshima Station, 2018). Maya Morioka Todeschini sees through the feminine figures of *hibakusha* and “the commodification’ of female A-bomb victims, who are made into a kind of cultural product which both men and women can consume in the security of their homes.” Ishiuchi’s work and narrative in many ways replicate these cultural practices; see Todeschini 1996, pp. 230–231.

112 Ishiuchi and Wakamatsu 2015.

113 Yonahara 2015, pp. 116–117.

114 It is known that Koreans, Chinese, Southeast Asian students, White Russians, Japanese Americans, and American POWs were among those who suffered in the atomic bombing in Hiroshima; see Kuwashima 2023.

115 Ishiuchi 2017, pp. 188–189.

116 Ishiuchi 2017, p. 197.

appears to have been rubbed against a charred object and large drab brown stains all over the backside. There are also grey spots that appear to have stains from black rain (the photograph also appears slightly out of focus). The dress that twenty-month-old Egi Chizuko wore on 6 August appears in dingy pink, with two fist-size torn holes visible.<sup>117</sup> There is a spot that shows shades of pink, which is probably closer to the dress's original colors. A torn flap has protected the spot from the elements, and Ishiuchi lifts it to reveal what seems to be the original colors underneath. The lower right corner of the front panel and a large part of the gathered hem appear in dusty brownish colors. Surprisingly, the photo accessible on the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum's database appears in brighter colors with its dark spots being less pronounced.<sup>118</sup> I detect little sense of "exhilaration" in those photos, a sense that she claims she experienced during the initial *Hiroshima* shooting sessions.<sup>119</sup> In a 2016 lecture, Ishiuchi shared a backstory to the pink silk blouse that Shimokubo Kiyo wore. Unbeknownst to the photographer at the time of shooting, the blouse was originally white, and her blood stained it pink. No matter how many times her family washed it, the color never faded.<sup>120</sup> Ishiuchi claimed that she "has no interest in the story like that" (*sōitta hanashi niwa mattaku kanshin ga naindesune* そう言った話には全く関心がないんですね) and appears unsure about what to do with the information.<sup>121</sup> History literally bled into Ishiuchi's aesthetic vision and seems to refuse to be transformed into beautiful images.<sup>122</sup> The changes in her *Hiroshima* photos suggest that the photographer began to feel the weight of the city's history. Even if that is not the case, her photography continues to evolve as she struggles to produce her own Hiroshima.

Ishiuchi has periodically returned to the city to photograph new objects donated to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, claiming that shooting Hiroshima is now her lifework. Photography has given her stronger ties with the place: "Until I shot for *Hiroshima*, I knew Hiroshima only as [abstract] information. As I shot [artifacts stored at the museum], I learned about Hiroshima residents' lives during the war. It was also a discovery of my own ignorance. There are many things that I don't know even at my age but still can learn about them. Photography gave me that wonderful experience."<sup>123</sup> If her more recent photos of Hiroshima are an indication, Ishiuchi is ready to extend her artistic journey into Hiroshima's history, bound less by the beautiful story that she had produced through her illustrious career. I am eager to witness how far and where her lifework will take her.

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117 Ishiuchi 2017, p. 196.

118 Child's dress, Egi Matsuko (Donor), "A-bomb Artifacts" ID Code 3103-0001, Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum Peace Database, [https://hpmm-db.jp/list/detail/?cate=artifact\\_en&search\\_type=detail&data\\_id=22847](https://hpmm-db.jp/list/detail/?cate=artifact_en&search_type=detail&data_id=22847).

119 Ishiuchi 2016c.

120 Ishiuchi 2016c; and Blouse, Hagimoto Tomiko, "A-bomb Artifacts," Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum Peace Database, ID Code 3101-0205, [https://hpmm-db.jp/list/detail/?cate=artifact\\_en&search\\_type=detail&data\\_id=22705](https://hpmm-db.jp/list/detail/?cate=artifact_en&search_type=detail&data_id=22705).

121 In a 2015 lecture, Ishiuchi described that the blouse was originally white but changed its color to pink after surviving the bomb, but she remained mum about how it turned pink. Ishiuchi and Wakamatsu 2015.

122 I borrow the visceral image of history bleeding from Art Spiegelman's seminal text, *Maus*, specifically the subtitle of its first volume: *My Father Bleeds History*. Spiegelman 1992.

123 Quoted in Yonahara 2013, p. 124.

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## Salt, Seaweed, and Grief: The Power of Suma-Themed Private Poetry in *The Tale of Genji*

Beth M. CARTER\*

In the Heian period, poems in the *zōtōka* (exchange poem) style strengthened social bonds and supported the court-centered polity, while Buddhist poetry (*shakkyōka*) was extolled for its religious expression and ability to assist the composer achieve a positive rebirth. Contrary to what is often argued, therefore, private poetry (*hare no uta*) wielded as much power as public poems (*ke no uta*). This article will show that these points also apply to fiction of the time.

In *The Tale of Genji*, the “Suma” chapter contains the highest number of poems. All are private and are lauded for the ways they reveal a character’s true nature and depth of feeling. The Suma love poems extol Genji’s virtues to those still in the capital and lay the groundwork for his eventual pardon. However, the bonds maintained through these Suma-themed poetic exchanges become an obstacle when Genji is about to leave the tale, since clinging to earthly attachments hinders a good Buddhist rebirth. I argue that through the “proxy reply” to a “Suma” poem given in the “Maboroshi” chapter, the tale’s author points to the release of this impediment and facilitates Genji’s positive rebirth, a sign of the religious power of private poems. With a nod to the lyrical beauty of the “Suma” *zōtōka*, this article reveals the ways in which these poems simultaneously participate in the sociopolitical and religious worlds of the tale.

**Keywords:** exile, *zōtōka*, Buddhism, proxy reply, rebirth

In studies of *monogatari* 物語 (tales) produced during the Heian 平安 period (794–1185), scholars have extolled exchange poetry (*zōtōka* 贈答歌) between lovers for its beauty, ability to succinctly express a character’s innermost thoughts, and advancement of plot lines. Within fictional texts, these *zōtōka* often assist in revealing a character’s true nature and depth of feeling. While praising the lyrical qualities of *zōtōka*, though, studies do not usually consider the poems fundamental to the sociopolitical and religious underpinnings of the tales. In

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addition to the fictional nature of the tales, one reason for this is the general understanding that private poetry (*ke no uta* 藝の歌) was used for purely personal, or “utilitarian,” reasons.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, it is public poetry (*hare no uta* 晴の歌) that is analyzed for its sociopolitical functions.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Buddhist poetry (*shakkyōka* 釈教歌), which began to be independently categorized in the Heian period, is investigated for its religious expression and outcomes.<sup>3</sup> Exchanged love poems differ from public and religious poetry in numerous ways, including that their private nature allows composers to, at times, deviate from social expectations in order to calibrate their expressions and stretch the limits of acceptable demonstrations of emotion. Privileging the lyrical content of private poetry in *monogatari*, however, overlooks the sociopolitical and religious power of these poems.

*Zōtōka* provide glimpses into not only the emotions and concerns of their authors, but the social and religious worlds in which they were composed, rendering the private inherently intertwined with the public. An excellent case study is the exchanged love poems in the travel section of the “Suma” 須磨 chapter in *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 (*The Tale of Genji*, ca. 1008). “Suma” contains the highest number of poems within the tale and centers around the social bonds, love affairs, and political fate of the protagonist, Genji. As the chapter opens, we find a hero who has fallen from grace. The text is unclear about his exact offense, but Genji’s amorous adventures with Oborozukiyo, the daughter of the Minister of the Right and the new attendant (*naishi no kami* 尚侍) to the emperor, are suggested as the cause for the penalty. As Genji prepares to depart for his exile in Suma, and during his time away from the capital, he corresponds with those close to him through exchanges of poetry. On the surface, the poems between separated lovers reflect an intimacy and longing unique to each relationship. But, when viewed in the context of *Genji*’s “Suma” narrative arc, the private love poetry exchanged during his exile works to soften the positions of not only his romantic partners, but also of others at court. In addition to this sociopolitical effect, expanding the “Suma” arc to include a poem composed more than twenty years later clarifies that private love poetry has religious efficacy as well, through its power to bind one to, or release one from, earthly attachments that hinder a good rebirth within the Buddhist realms. In this way, *zōtōka* embedded in fiction may also constitute sociopolitical and transformative religious power, reflecting actual practices in Heian-era Japan.

### The Power of Poetry

The argument of this article builds on the work of scholars who have shown private poetry to have important religious and sociopolitical influences. William R. LaFleur cautions readers not to erect “a false wall between ideas and art” and argues for the reading of private poetry as Buddhist poetry.<sup>4</sup> LaFleur demonstrates the Buddhist episteme in which period poetry operated meant “even if the laity did not participate in the dialectic and debate carried on in the monasteries, they were very much involved in the pursuit of poetry, and the sutras of Buddhism were a natural, available, and rich repository of concrete symbols and metaphors.”<sup>5</sup> Edward Kamens shows how this operated at the time in the case of the eleventh-century

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1 Kubota 1965, pp. 12–13; Katagiri 2000, p. 216.

2 Persiani 2020, p. 8.

3 Yamada 1989, p. 95.

4 LaFleur 1983, p. 18.

5 LaFleur 1983, pp. 15–16.

sequence of fifty-five *waka* 和歌 (poems) based on select topics from Buddhist scripture composed by Princess Senshi (Senshi naishinnō 選子内親王 964–1035). Kamens argues that the blend of the religious and the literary in Senshi’s private poems set this collection apart, as it is both poetic exercise and formal devotion.<sup>6</sup> Scholars such as Gary Ebersole and R. Keller Kimbrough, to name a few, reveal that this concept extended into later periods.<sup>7</sup> In other words, it is clear that private poetry had, in addition to lyrical beauty, religious power.

Recently, Gian Piero Persiani has argued that the idea that private poetry has no public or political value is inaccurate, as it is “as rich in political significance and as intertwined with questions of authority and political necessity as its ‘formal’ counterpart.”<sup>8</sup> To illustrate his point, he highlights the way historical court aristocrats used *zōtōka* “to establish, monitor, and keep healthy ties between members of the court, thus providing vital soft support to the cooperative and consensus-based order.”<sup>9</sup> In other words, private poetry operated in both the lyrical and sociopolitical modes, as it strengthened and maintained bonds crucial to sustaining court politics important to the public order. Building on the insights of these scholars, this article asserts that *zōtōka* in *The Tale of Genji* can also deploy sociopolitical and religious power and are essential to the “Suma” narrative arc.

### “Suma” *Zōtōka* in Scholarship

*Genji* scholarship views *zōtōka* as pivotal to efforts to advance the plot of the tale and reveal a character’s true feelings.<sup>10</sup> This can also be true of other types of poetry, but *zōtōka* dominate *Genji* and are an important facilitator for its many narrative arcs.<sup>11</sup> Part of this usefulness is due to the structure of *zōtōka*, which consists of prompt (*zōka* 贈歌) and reply (*henka* 返歌). The prompt conveys a character’s depth of feeling using complex, layered allusions, often to earlier poems or famous places. The reply responds rhetorically and thematically, acknowledging the message of the sender while describing the receiver’s emotional state.<sup>12</sup> Steeped in the accepted *utakotoba* 歌言葉 (poetic vocabulary) of the period, *zōtōka* reveal a character’s private emotions to both the recipient and the reader, which helps progress relationships in the tale and its narration.

Scholarship specifically on the “Suma” *zōtōka* also focuses on their lyrical and structural functions. Traditional categorizations of the forty-eight poems in “Suma” (shown in table 1) relate them to either the “parting” (*ribetsu* 離別) or “travel” (*kiryo* 羈旅) genres.<sup>13</sup> Haruo Shirane, Komachiya Teruhiko 小町谷照彦, and Hirota Osamu 廣田收 conclude that the seventeen parting poems (composed prior to *Genji* leaving the capital) focus on the sorrow of separation due to exile and reflect the composer’s emotive stance.<sup>14</sup> Shirane also stresses

6 Kamens 1990, p. 75.

7 Ebersole 1983; Kimbrough 2005, p. 3.

8 Persiani 2020, p. 8.

9 Persiani 2020, p. 12.

10 Maeda 2001, p. 74.

11 Suzuki 1969, pp. 117–120; Komachiya 1972, p. 113. The division of the 795 poems in *Genji* differs by scholars, but there are roughly 107–110 solitary poems (*dokueika* 独詠歌), 590–620 *zōtōka*, 64–65 poems composed at events (*shōwaka* 唱和歌), and miscellaneous others.

12 Carter 2019, p. 215.

13 This structure mimics books eight and nine of the tenth-century poetic anthology, the *Kokinwakashū* 古今和歌集 (*Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern*, hereafter *Kokinshū*). See Shirane 1987, p. 19.

14 Shirane 1987, p. 19; Komachiya 1997, p. 299; Hirota 2011, pp. 131–135.

**Table 1: Categorization of poems in “Suma”**

	parting ( <i>ribetsu</i> 離別)	travel ( <i>kiryo</i> 羈旅)
<i>zōtōka</i>	16	16
<i>dokueika</i> (solitary poems)	1	15
<b>total</b>	17	31

Based on Komachiya 1997, p. 289; Komachiya 2023, p. 250.

the lyrical content of the thirty-one travel poems composed after Genji’s journey into exile, concluding that they center “on the loneliness of a man far from the capital.”<sup>15</sup> The emotive functions of the “Suma” *zōtōka* corpus have thus been extensively analyzed.

Scholars have also explored the social power of these poems through considerations of gender in the corpus of “Suma” travel *zōtōka*. Paul Schalow and Reginald Jackson analyze the poems exchanged between men and conclude that they enable homosocial relationships to come to the fore.<sup>16</sup> For these two scholars, the physical absence of women during Genji’s exile opens a space for him to tend to his male relationships, which are strengthened through exchanges of poetry reliant upon Chinese allusions men were expected to know. In addition to strengthening social relationships, Jackson argues that, for Genji in exile, these poems are “homosocial textual mediation as a way to mourn his loss of home and status.”<sup>17</sup> Indeed, the poems Genji exchanges with the men who accompany him in exile share a longing for the capital. The revealing of this desire deepens their homosocial bonds and enable the men to come to terms with their present predicament (exile) through the creation of a new community (exiled). The poems not only assist them in conveying their feelings for each other, but also allow Genji to come to terms with his loss of rank and separation from home.

Despite being a destination where it was taboo to bring a wife or lover, H. Richard Okada points out that exile affected women as well, stating that the tale’s author, Murasaki Shikibu 紫式部 (978–1014), “traces the myriad ramifications of political displacement for the lives of both women and men.”<sup>18</sup> Scholarly analyses of the twelve *zōtōka* exchanged between the exiled Genji and women (listed in table 2) focus on the ways they affect, or maintain, relationships. While the specifics of these studies are included in the readings below, the general conclusion coincides with Jackson’s assertion in his investigation of male homosocial relationships: “Exile compels practices of textual citation, production, and mediation that generate intimacies unachievable elsewhere.”<sup>19</sup> In sum, love poems exchanged during exile permit lovers to express the emotional toll of forced separation while commenting on the specifics of each relationship, advancing the plot in novel ways.

Although *zōtōka* are meant to be coupled, Takagi Kazuko 高木和子 and Ogita Midori 萩田みどり note that not all of these poetic exchanges are complete within *Genji*.<sup>20</sup> Some are missing either the prompt or the reply; they are “fractured.” For example, within the travel portion of “Suma,” the prompt poem from Genji to his wife, Murasaki, is missing, as is his

15 Shirane 1987, p. 19.

16 Schalow 2007, pp. 116–125; Jackson 2021, pp. 120–148.

17 Jackson 2021, p. 121.

18 Okada 2009, p. 76.

19 Jackson 2021, p. 121.

20 Takagi 2008, p. 14; Ogita 2013, p. 5.



**Table 2: “Suma” travel *zōtōka* exchanged between men and women**

Poem Numbers	Prompt author	Reply author	Suma Imagery
1–2	Genji	Fujitsubo	<i>Ama</i> ; brine
3–4	Genji	Oborozukiyo	Salt fire; smoke
5	(not included)	Murasaki	Brine; watery road
6–9	Rokujō	Genji	Ise; Suma
10	Hanachirusato	(not included)	not used
11–12	Gosechi Dancer	Genji	Boat; Suma

reply to a lover, Hanachirusato. The reason for this could be the same as for other fractured *zōtōka*, which Takagi argues is out of necessity due to the length of the tale.<sup>21</sup> In another reading, Ogita explains the absence of Genji’s response to Hanachirusato by noting that he instead sends a symbolic reply through repairing her home.<sup>22</sup> In both cases, these conclusions do not consider their sociopolitical and religious roles, as omissions can preserve social standing and completions can resolve imbalance and loss.

Traditional readings of the “Suma” arc, therefore, do not take full account of these omitted poems. I argue that this neglects important elements of the “Suma” narrative. Gustav Freytag’s classical narrative arc has five elements: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.<sup>23</sup> A common overarching theme within an arc is that of rebirth, where the protagonist experiences an event that transforms them for the better.<sup>24</sup> “Suma” can fall into this category, as after angering the court, being stripped of his rank, and sent into exile, Genji subsequently rises to greater heights after his pardon. For generations of scholars, this feat of rehabilitation is attributed to the presentation of his “Suma” aesthetic productions, namely his paintings to the imperial court in the chapter “Eawase” 絵合 (The Picture Contest).<sup>25</sup> In this reading, Genji is transformed over the course of a three-point arc: exposition (the fall from grace), rising action (the production of paintings in Suma), and the climax (reascension) that doubles as resolution. Genji’s paintings exert the sociopolitical power that allows him to rise to an even greater rank than he had attained prior to his banishment.

In the general understanding of the “Suma” arc, the narrative points of falling action and resolution are missing. However, this can be resolved if Genji’s “Suma” travel *zōtōka*, which are a means of forgiveness, are included. I propose that among Genji’s “Suma” artistic creations presented to the court are the poetic compositions he sent to his capital-dwelling lovers, and that these, like his paintings, carried sociopolitical power. In contrast to the poems exchanged with men in Suma, Genji’s poetic exchanges with women during his exile are all conducted through places and with people of sociopolitical influence. As argued below, the “Suma” travel *zōtōka* exchanged between Genji and women keep the memory of his exceptional qualities alive among courtiers during his physical absence, mollifying their anger and leading to his eventual forgiveness and pardon.

21 Takagi 2008, p. 149.

22 Ogita 2013, p. 15, note 16.

23 Freytag 1894, p. 115.

24 Booker 2004, pp. 193–211.

25 Bowring 1988, p. 34; Mostow 1999, p. 7; Stockdale 2015, pp. 57–62.

Including Genji's exchanged love poems in this arc also encourages the integration of a composition he pens more than twenty years after his exile. The "Suma" travel *zōtōka* reappear in "Maboroshi" 幻 (The Seer) when Genji finds Murasaki's correspondence from his time in exile. Here, the reader is given the opportunity to, perhaps, learn the content of his prompt poem not divulged in "Suma." But, again, the message is not revealed. Despite the tale never disclosing Genji's sentiments in this poem, through an analysis of Murasaki's reply imagery, Takagi argues that it must have been quite different from those to other women.<sup>26</sup> Such a conclusion makes sense, given Genji's particularly strong bond with Murasaki. As will be demonstrated below, in the tale, one reason for omitting poems is that it might express an unusual depth of emotion and fall outside of acceptable parameters. Therefore, in the case of the concealed "Suma" poem to Murasaki, its omission serves a sociopolitical goal: hiding sentiments that do not convey a mastery of social convention. It is not until after Murasaki's death, when Genji is seriously considering taking the Buddhist tonsure, that he finally repairs the fractured *zōtōka* when he writes a poem on the margins of Murasaki's letters from Suma, matching her earlier allusions.

I term this act a "proxy reply": a poem composed after the death of a lover that substitutes for one previously concealed. This differs from a "proxy poem" (*daisaku uta* 代作歌), which was composed on behalf of another "to affirm the status of aristocrats as the titular owners of others' bodies of work."<sup>27</sup> In the case of a proxy reply, the author is the same character who had previously left the coupled exchange unresolved. In "Maboroshi," Genji's proxy reply not only returns the tale to balance by completing the exchanged love poems in "Suma," but also facilitates his release of attachments to objects and memories. In this way, the reappearance, completion, and destruction of the "Suma" travel *zōtōka* in "Maboroshi" extends the narrative through Genji's sociopolitical decline to resolution, which includes his preparations for death and rebirth, incorporating the religious power of private poetry. This lengthens and completes the "Suma" arc, by adding the falling action, Genji's decline in the world, and the resolution (his eventual death and rebirth).

### Exposition: Exile in Suma and the Poetics of Place

In *Genji's* exploration of themes of exile, the "Suma" chapter details the departure of the main hero, Genji, from the capital of Kyoto to the shores of Suma. The text hints that Genji's offense was his intimate involvement with Oborozukiyo, an imperial attendant. Many, including the emperor, were not truly offended by the relationship, but the text explains that it was sufficient for the Kokiden empress mother to thwart Genji's rise at court and "gave her a fine reason to set in train the measures to accomplish his downfall."<sup>28</sup> Readers, and Genji himself, know that he has actually committed a far greater offense: his illicit affair with his stepmother Fujitsubo that resulted in the birth of a son, Reizei, who would come to be emperor. Shirane marks this as the true reason for banishment, since "though Genji claims to be innocent of the public charges brought against him, he privately associates his loss of office and present difficulties with [the affair with Fujitsubo]."<sup>29</sup> In any event, before the imperial

26 Takagi 2008, p. 140.

27 Heldt 2005, p. 30. For a discussion of literary and historical uses of *daisaku uta*, see Watanabe 2022.

28 SNKBZ 21, p. 149; Tyler 2006, p. 219. All English translations are Tyler's unless otherwise noted.

29 Shirane 1987, p. 13.

Kokiden faction could take official action against him (although the text mentions a “decision to send [him] into distant exile”) Genji voluntarily leaves the capital, not daring to “ignore such censure merely because [his] heart is pure,” and relocates to Suma before facing “still greater dishonor.”<sup>30</sup>

During the Heian period, to be stripped of rank and post was a severe penalty and readers of *Genji* would be aware of the gravity of his transgression(s). According to the Yōrō Ritsuryō 養老律令 (Yōrō Code 718, promulgated 757), the most severe crimes (*hachigyaku* 八虐, the eight abominations) could be punishable by execution.<sup>31</sup> However, we know from the work of Rikō Mitsuo 利光三津夫 and Jonathan Stockdale that execution was rarely carried out (due to fear of vengeful spirits, or *onryō* 怨靈) and that the preferred punishment was exile.<sup>32</sup> These legal codes and traditions were fodder for authors and contributed to the creation of a genre of exile tales, with “Suma” reflecting the actual politics of the time.

Readers and characters are left unsure how long Genji will remain outside of the capital. The uncertainty of this timeframe is underscored within the text, as Genji and Murasaki “despaired that he would be gone for years and years” and, when arriving in Suma, Genji “wondered how he would get through the years ahead.”<sup>33</sup> Despite this, the author notes that Genji does not expect the banishment to be permanent, as he remarks that “I will certainly be back, if only I live long enough” and worries about being humiliated if he returns “before I have my pardon.”<sup>34</sup> Not knowing when a pardon might come, Genji prepares to be separated from his loved ones for years on end.

Komachiya, Ōtsuka Sōkō 大塚宗香, and Ogita note that the author’s choice to send Genji into “distant exile” at Suma was based on literary rather than legal precedent.<sup>35</sup> Banishment was based on a codified scale of near, medium, and distant.<sup>36</sup> The exact distances for each category were not spelled out and “the state chose locations that had customarily been used for exile prior to the completion of the *ritsuryō* codes” with examples being “near exile: Echizen, Aki; medium exile: Suō, Iyo; [and] distant exile: Izu, Awa, Hitachi, Sado, Oki, Tosa.”<sup>37</sup> Suma is not on this list. Only one-hundred kilometers from the capital, Suma is far closer than the most lenient exile Chinese precedent allowed.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, Murasaki consoles herself with the thought “that Suma was not far away.”<sup>39</sup>

Instead, Suma associates Genji’s experience with another exile banished to the same location: Counselor Ariwara no Yukihira 在原行平 (818–893).<sup>40</sup> Murasaki Shikibu had knowledge of numerous historical exiles, but as Ishikawa Tōru 石川徹 argues, Suma and Yukihira are important to foreshadowing not only Genji’s eventual return to the center, but also his rise in political fortune.<sup>41</sup> This is important, as in traditional exile tales of wandering

30 SNKBZ 21, p. 165, notes 29 and 20; Tyler 2006, p. 230.

31 Stockdale 2015, p. 89.

32 Rikō 1986, pp. 106–107; Stockdale 2015, pp. 85, 105–107.

33 SNKBZ 21, pp. 162, 188; Tyler 2006, pp. 229, 240.

34 SNKBZ 21, pp. 177, 172, 223; Tyler 2006, pp. 235, 233, 257.

35 Komachiya 1997, p. 293; Ōtsuka 2006; Ogita 2013, p. 1.

36 SNKBZ 21, p. 165, note 29.

37 Stockdale 2015, p. 91; SNKBZ 21, p. 165, note 29.

38 Tang-period codes prescribed exact measurements for the amount of distance considered near, medium, and far (2,000, 2,500, and 3,000 *li*, equivalent to 1,000, 1,250, and 1,500 kilometers); see Stockdale 2015, p. 91.

39 SNKBZ 21, p. 191; Tyler 2006, p. 241.

40 Komachiya 1997, p. 293; Ishikawa 1986, p. 86; Ōtsuka 2006; Ogita 2013, p. 4.

41 Ishikawa 1986, p. 87.

nobles (*kishuryūritan* 貴種流離譚) the person banished is never able to regain his former status and glory.<sup>42</sup> These tales span the genres of fictional *monogatari* and mytho-historical prose. For example, in the tenth-century *Taketori monogatari* 竹取物語 (*The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter*), the fate of the exiled princess is left unresolved after she returns to the moon. The eighth-century *Kojiki* 古事記 (*Records of Ancient Matters*) recounts how the twice-exiled god Susano-o 須佐之男 was expelled from the plain of heaven to earth, where he longed for his spiritual homeland.<sup>43</sup> Historical records demonstrate that this fate also held true for many famous mortals, such as Minamoto no Takaakira 源高明 (914–982) and Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真 (845–903), who were both sent to Kyushu.<sup>44</sup> Genji is also linked with these two historical courtiers within “Suma.” For example, while in Suma, Genji references lines from Michizane’s poems, written while he too was in exile.<sup>45</sup> Yet, Michizane died while in exile in Dazaifu 大宰府 and was only posthumously given a raise in rank. Like Genji, Takaakira was also a first generation “Genji,” excluded from imperial succession despite being the son of an emperor.<sup>46</sup> Both men leave the capital for their exile at the same time: around the twentieth of the Third Month.<sup>47</sup> But, following his pardon, Takaakira never returned to political life. Of these historical exiles, it is only Yukihiro, like Genji, who eventually returned to court and rose higher than his previous position.<sup>48</sup> In “Suma,” the foundation for this remarkable achievement is laid through Genji’s *zōtōka* that draw upon Yukihiro’s well-known Suma poem.

From as early as the eighth-century, Suma was known for its sea folk, their livelihood, and their garments.<sup>49</sup> We see this imagery in Yukihiro’s *Kokinwakashū* 古今和歌集 (*Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern*, ca. 920) poem:

Should one perchance ask after me, say that, on Suma Shore,  
salt, sea-tangle drops are falling as I grieve.

*Wakuraba ni tou hito araba Suma no ura ni moshio taretsutsu wabu to kotae yo*  
わくらばに問ふ人あらば須磨の浦に 藻塩たれつつわぶとこたえよ<sup>50</sup>

Here, the “salt, sea-tangle drops” represent both Yukihiro’s tears at being parted from his loved ones and the brine that drips from those who gather seaweed to make salt along the Suma coast. Shirane notes that Yukihiro’s poem made Suma “a famous *utamakura*, or poetic place-name, associated with exile and a cluster of motifs—fisherfolk (*ama*), saltburning (*shioyaki*), seaweed (*mirume*), brine, firewood (*tsumagi*), smoke (*keburi*), boats, a lonely coast, autumn winds, the sound of waves.”<sup>51</sup> Therefore, this imagery and Yukihiro’s poem would have been well known among people of Genji’s station, both fictional characters within the tale and contemporary readers.

42 Okada 2009, p. 67.

43 Stockdale 2015, p. 18.

44 Shirane 1987, p. 21.

45 Tyler 2006, pp. 246–248, notes 56, 62, 68.

46 Okada 2009, p. 69.

47 Shirane 1987, p. 21.

48 Ishikawa 1986, p. 87.

49 Brazell 1997, p. 36.

50 *Kokinshū* 962, SNKBZ 11, p. 363. For the English translation see Tyler 2006, p. 239, note 28.

51 Shirane 1987, p. 19.

It is this poetic tradition that provides the themes for Genji's laments to his female lovers, as Suma-related words became metaphors of love. According to Edwin Cranston, brine imagery refers to:

the custom of burning brine-drenched seaweed to extract salt, an occupation of the shore-dwelling *ama* or "sea folk." The rising smoke serves as a metaphor for signs which may betray the secret "love-fires" of the poet.<sup>52</sup>

Therefore, the location of his exile at Suma determines that Genji's poems of longing for his lovers will link back to the imagery found in Yukihiro's *Kokinshū* poem, that of salt, seaweed, and grief. Ogita stresses that within the salt-themed poems of the chapter, the use of the homonyms (or close sounding words) *shio* 塩 (salt), *shio* 潮 (tide), and *shiotaru* 潮垂る (copious crying) allows for careful calibrations of allusions to match specific relationships.<sup>53</sup> This underscores Genji's devotion, and aesthetic ability, permitting his poems to stand in for him among those influential at court during his absence, and foreshadowing his return and rise.

Important not just for its Suma/salt imagery, Yukihiro's poem also introduces the concept of a proxy reply.<sup>54</sup> In his poem, Yukihiro commands his readers to answer inquiries about him in a certain fashion. By concluding his composition with "*kotae yo* 答えよ" ("say that"), he asks the interlocutor to respond *for him*. His poem is not a reply to others, for it begs for a subsequent composition to fill in what he does not express in this moment. As we will see, later in *The Tale of Genji*, Murasaki Shikibu will make use of this concept when Genji composes a delayed reply for a poem previously concealed from the reader. While Yukihiro calls for someone else to compose a proxy reply in his poem, Genji will do so himself, responding to what could not be revealed earlier. In this sense, the Yukihiro poem is used allusively not only for its imagery but also for its structure and function.

### **Rising Action: Coupled Love Poems as the Foundation for Restitution**

Just as historical aristocrats employed private poetry for political means, the poems Genji exchanges with his lovers within the travel section of "Suma" are the means to his eventual return to the capital. Since Suma imagery is love imagery, utilizing it within *zōtōka* allows Genji to communicate his emotions to his women at court. Others witness the forgiving nature of these women, spurring them to also recall Genji's virtues. This is in contrast to the *zōtōka* that remain in Suma—the poems between men employing Chinese imagery. Although both exchanges repair the loss of separation, only the heterosocial repairs Genji's ties with members of the court, reminding them of his exceptional company and talents, and creates the conditions for his pardon.

Despite not being with Genji during his exile in Suma, the tale stresses that women—their thoughts and emotions expressed through received *zōtōka*—are central to his experience. Even prior to his departure, the chapter details how various women will miss Genji. Of course, we learn that Murasaki is bereft with grief; but even women Genji has less

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<sup>52</sup> Cranston 1975, p. 95.

<sup>53</sup> Ogita 2013, p. 6.

<sup>54</sup> I thank one of the referees for this insight.

contact with are sorrowful.<sup>55</sup> Women of both high and low station grieved at his imminent departure: Fujitsubo sent him “constant private messages,” serving women “abandoned all dignity and wept,” and “maids and latrine cleaners he would never know but who had been touched by his kindness, particularly lamented every moment of his absence.”<sup>56</sup> The mother of his deceased wife, Aoi, also sends him a message lamenting his banishment. To this letter, Genji hints at the importance Suma imagery will have for him when separated from specific women by murmuring:

Now I go to see whether yonder on that shore where seafolk burn salt  
 Their fires send such smoke aloft as rose at Toribeno  
*Toribeyama moeshi keburu mo magau ya to ama no shio yaku ura mi ni zo yuku*  
 鳥辺山もえし煙もまがふやと 海人の塩やく浦見にぞ行く<sup>57</sup>

Here, he parallels the smoke from fires for saltmaking in Suma with the plumes that rise from the cremation grounds at Toribeno.<sup>58</sup> Recalling the longing of this woman, the only one to which he writes who was also present at Aoi’s cremation, Genji blends together two modes of separation: death and exile. This poem demonstrates Ogita’s idea that Genji employs salt imagery to match the specific bond he shares with individual women.<sup>59</sup>

Once Genji is settled in Suma, his “thoughts turned to the City: to the many there whom he loved, to his dear lady in her sorrow,” indicating the continued importance of women—specifically those in the capital—within the narrative arc of his exile.<sup>60</sup> “Blinded” by tears and “unable to complete the letters,” he sends them poems.<sup>61</sup> The first is to Fujitsubo, with whom he shares the crime of disrupting the imperial lineage. This weighed heavily on Fujitsubo, who, in part to atone for this act, takes the tonsure. This drastic move puts distance between her and Genji, though the attraction never truly wanes. We can see this in “Suma,” when Genji writes to her during the rainy season of the fifth month:

How, then, fares the nun in her seafolk’s hut of rushes at Matsushima,  
 these days when brine is dripping from the man of Suma Shore?  
*Matsushima no ama no tomaya mo ika naramu Suma no urabito shio taruru koro*  
 松島のあまの苫屋もいかならむ 須磨の浦人しほたるころ<sup>62</sup>

55 Despite its location within the exchanged love poems of the travel section, the poem from Hanachirusato does not fit the pattern of using Suma imagery to indicate forgiveness. Her prompt poem does not incorporate Suma imagery or link her current predicament with Genji’s. This signals that Suma allusions are appropriate only when corresponding with, and exploring the feelings and experiences of, an especially close intimate. For more on this exchange, see Takagi 2008, pp. 146–147.

56 SNKBZ 21, pp. 163, 170, 184; Tyler 2006, pp. 229, 232, 238.

57 SNKBZ 21, p. 168; Tyler 2006, p. 231. For a discussion of the importance of Suma imagery to this chapter, see Ogita 2013, p. 13.

58 Ogita 2013, p. 13.

59 Ogita 2013, p. 6.

60 SNKBZ 21, p. 188; Tyler 2006, p. 240.

61 SNKBZ 21, p. 188; Tyler 2006, p. 240.

62 SNKBZ 21, p. 189; Tyler 2006, p. 240.

As Royall Tyler notes, *ama* (nun in the translated poem) also means someone who gathers from the sea; and Matsushima, like Suma, is poetically famous for its salt makers.<sup>63</sup> Komachiya stresses that Matsushima is not a typical allusion, occurring only four times in the tale, and reflects on Fujitsubo's position in the capital, where she waits for his return.<sup>64</sup> This reference also arcs back to the time when Fujitsubo took the tonsure, a type of exile, when Genji composes a poem for her, referencing her as a nun who "gathers sea-tangle sorrows" at Matsushima.<sup>65</sup> This wordplay therefore associates Fujitsubo's condition (as an *ama* removed from court, yet still within the inner circle) to Genji's own as a "man of Suma Shore," exiled at Suma where he cries copiously (*shio taruru*) like dripping brine.<sup>66</sup>

The poem instills empathy and fosters forgiveness. Upon receiving Genji's poem, Fujitsubo thinks of him fondly and responds in a manner that "was unusually warm":

Her every labor goes to firing dripping brine: at Matsushima,  
while her years go by, the nun heaps up the sad fuel of sighs.  
*Shio taruru koto o yaku nite Matsushima ni toshi furu ama mo nageki o zo tsumu*  
しまたるることをやくにて松島に 年ふるあまも嘆きをぞつむ<sup>67</sup>

In her reply, Fujitsubo responds directly to the allusions in Genji's poem. In the first line, there is the repetition of *shio taruru*. This reiterates the separated lovers' tears and compares their continued devotion to each other with salt makers laboring over their fires. Takagi notes that the duplication of the *ama* trope in the second line conveys just enough warmth while concealing their forbidden relationship.<sup>68</sup> Although Fujitsubo is not able to pardon Genji, her poem demonstrates that he is forgiven (in her eyes, at this time) for his real transgression—fathering Reizei. Fujitsubo considers her newfound realization of Genji's virtues, praising him for having:

so managed things in the end that nothing was said, he had resisted his unreasoning passion and kept the affair decorously concealed. Could she then fail to remember him with love?<sup>69</sup>

This forgiveness is noteworthy as Genji is exiled for his *potential* disturbance of the imperial line rather than his *actual* sin of fathering an emperor. Here, through Suma-themed *zōtōka*, the reader is alerted to his possible, potential, rise in favor.

The theme of forgiveness laced with Suma imagery continues in Genji's other poems to his lovers. To Oborozukiyo, the woman partly responsible for his exile, Genji sends:

While, all unchastened, I on Suma Shore still miss sea-tangle pleasures,  
What of you, O seafolk maid, whose salt fire never burns low?

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63 Tyler 2006, p. 240, note 31.

64 Komachiya 1997, p. 294.

65 SNKBZ 21, p. 136; Tyler 2006, p. 214.

66 SNKBZ 21, p. 189; Tyler 2006, p. 240, note 31.

67 SNKBZ 21, p. 191–192; Tyler 2006, p. 241.

68 Takagi 2008, pp. 136–139.

69 SNKBZ 21, p. 191; Tyler 2006, p. 241.

*Korizuma no ura no mirume no yukashiki o shio yaku ama ya ikaga omowan*  
 こりずまの浦のみるめのゆかしきを 塩焼くあまやいかか思はん<sup>70</sup>

Here, Genji conjures the sight of entangled seaweed to bring to mind embraced bodies in his address to a woman who continues in her devotion with “salt fire” that “never burns low.” Ogita argues that Genji employs the term *shio yaku* 塩焼く (salt fire) to demonstrate his desire to meet with her, his inability to forget their love.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, rather than shunning the woman who shared in his dishonor, Genji continues to profess his love for her. Oborozukiyo responds appropriately:

She whose love this is, the saltmaker with her fire, dares not have it seen,  
 And for all her smoldering the smoke has nowhere to go.  
*Ura ni taku ama dani tsutsumu koi nareba kuyuru keburu yo yuku kata zo naki*  
 浦にたくあまだにつつむ恋なれば くゆる煙よ行く方ぞなき<sup>72</sup>

In the first line of her reply, she draws upon the imagery of the saltmaker’s fires. Although she does not repeat Genji’s *shio yaku*, she responds with the smoke (*keburu* 煙) produced by the process. This implies her devotion to Genji, as “for all her smoldering the smoke has nowhere to go.” Oborozukiyo privately yearns for him, understanding she cannot travel to him or outwardly express her love.<sup>73</sup> However, although she tries to keep her feelings concealed, the reader learns that the emperor sees her longing for Genji, and shares it. He remarks “his absence leaves a void. I expect many others feel it even more than I do. It is as though all things had lost their light.”<sup>74</sup> Using traditional Suma imagery, Genji and Oborozukiyo demonstrate continued devotion and longing. Simultaneously, these poems remind those within the capital of Genji’s virtues, point to a softening of positions, and open the possibility for return.

Although the reader is not privy to Genji’s prompt poem to Murasaki, her reply fits within the larger pattern of the “Suma” travel love *zōtōka*: forgiveness. She writes:

Hold up to your sleeves ever wet from dipping brine, O man of the shore,  
 the clothes I wear every night that watery road parts us.  
*Urabito no shio kumu sode ni kurabemiyo namiji bedatsuru yoru no koromo o*  
 浦人のしほくむ袖にくらべみよ 波路へだつる夜の衣を<sup>75</sup>

Since sleeves are not traditional Suma imagery, Takagi suggests that their inclusion in this poem is not a response to an allusion in Genji’s (missing) prompt but Murasaki’s personal choice, a nod to the gift she includes with the poem: clothing.<sup>76</sup> The sleeves of this clothing will be soaked by Genji’s tears. In the second line, Murasaki contrasts her clothes with his

70 SNKBZ 21, p. 189; Tyler 2006, p. 240.

71 Ogita 2013, pp. 5–6.

72 SNKBZ 21, p. 192; Tyler 2006, p. 241.

73 Ogita 2013, p. 6.

74 SNKBZ 21, p. 197; Tyler 2006, p. 243.

75 SNKBZ 21, p. 192; Tyler 2006, p. 241.

76 Takagi 2008, p. 140.



and notes that they cannot sleep on the same sleeves at night due to the watery road of exile.<sup>77</sup> As Rajyashree Pandey explains, in Heian-period poetry, sleeves (*sode* 袖) “are most closely associated with sexual desire and longing.”<sup>78</sup> The erotic image of sleeping on the same sleeves first appears in *Genji* in the chapter “Utsusemi” 空蟬 (The Cicada Shell), when Genji places the robe he stole from his lover underneath his own as he lays down to sleep.<sup>79</sup> The *bedatsuru*, or parting, refers to both the divide caused by the watery road (as Genji had taken a boat to Suma) and the separation of lovers. This poem expresses Murasaki’s longing despite their unconventional meeting and marriage. In an earlier chapter, “Wakamurasaki” 若紫 (Young Murasaki), the eighteen-year-old Genji abruptly whisks away the ten-year-old Murasaki.<sup>80</sup> The narrator does not definitively guide the reader on how to feel about Genji’s action. At times the tale stresses that the abduction was improper but elsewhere reveals that Murasaki “seemed very pleased” with the situation, coming to care “only for this second father.”<sup>81</sup> The text does not provide a conclusive verdict at the time of the incident, but Murasaki’s “Suma” poem delivers her final judgment: forgiveness.

This process of absolution continues in the Rokujō Haven’s poems, written to Genji despite having earlier suffered a crushing humiliation at his hands. Rokujō is a high-ranking widow who excels at poetry and, despite being older than Genji, becomes his lover. However, Genji, married to Aoi, the daughter of the powerful Minister of the Left, does not openly acknowledge their intimate relationship (plural marriage was possible in the Heian period). Shamed by rejection and ridicule, Rokujō becomes unhinged. Her spirit detaches from her body while she is still alive and relentlessly attacks Aoi, ultimately killing her. During the possession, Genji identifies Rokujō’s spirit. Thoroughly rejected as a result of “Genji’s subsequent silence and his shabby treatment of her,” Rokujō joins her daughter, the high priestess of the Ise Shrine, in Ise 伊勢 (approximately one hundred and fifty kilometers from the capital in Kyoto).<sup>82</sup> Despite this sordid history, Rokujō writes Genji a long letter while he is in exile, including two poems:

Give thought when you can to the Ise saltmaker gathering sorrows,  
 you who are of Suma Shore, where I hear the brine drips down.  
*Ukime karu Ise o no ama o omoiyare moshio taru chō Suma no ura nite*  
 うきめ刈る伊勢をの海人を思ひやれ もしほたるてふ須磨の浦にて<sup>83</sup>

And

Though I scour the strand at low tide on Ise Bay, there is not a shell  
 nor anything such as I can do in my affliction.  
*Ishima ya shiohi no kata ni asarite mo iu kai naki wa wa ga mi narikeri*  
 伊勢島や潮干の潟にあさりても いふかひなきはわが身なりけり<sup>84</sup>

77 Ogita also associates the wet sleeves with tears; see Ogita 2013, p. 5.

78 Pandey 2016, p. 38.

79 SNKBZ 20, p. 117.

80 SNKBZ 20, p. 207; Tyler 2006, p. 86.

81 SNKBZ 20, pp. 224, 261; Tyler 2006, pp. 94, 109.

82 SNKBZ 21, p. 83; Tyler 2006, p. 193.

83 SNKBZ 21, p. 194; Tyler 2006, p. 242.

84 SNKBZ 21, p. 194; Tyler 2006, p. 242.

Rokujō's first poem is similar to Fujitsubo's reply to Genji.<sup>85</sup> The two women begin their poems with mentions that their own situations, one as a nun and the other in Ise, mirroring Genji's exile. Rokujō expresses this sentiment through the term "*ukime*," which means both the "sorrow" and "seaweed," gathered where they are.<sup>86</sup> This makes the first poem not solely about her own predicament, but also Genji's current reality: in self-inflicted exile crying salty tears like dripping brine. It is her second poem that is wholly devoted to her own plight.<sup>87</sup> This poem plays on the word "*kai*," which can mean both "shellfish" and "reward."<sup>88</sup> Rokujō insinuates that both she and Genji find themselves in distant locations, where shellfish are gathered, not as a reward, but as punishment. But the two locales differ, as Ise is closely associated with Japan's center of power, being the location of the shrine to the sun goddess Amaterasu Ōmikami 天照大御神 (from whom all emperors are said to descend). Rokujō's "exile" is not political, but personal. She is still connected to the imperial court but sees her present situation as punishment by Genji for not acknowledging her. Despite conceding that her pain endures, the mere existence of the poems is evidence of a thawing between the two, a reopening of lines of communication and the start of a process of forgiveness.

Genji's replies bolster this conclusion, as they signal his continuing affection for Rokujō despite the severance of their romance. He answers both of her poems, writing:

If only I, too, had boarded the little boat she of Ise rows  
 Lightly out over the waves, and gathered in no sorrows!  
*Isebito no nami no ue kogu obune ni mo ukime wa karade noramashi mono o*  
 伊勢人の波の上こく小舟にも うきめは刈らで乗らましものを

How long, languishing here at Suma on the shore, must I dream and mourn  
 While the briny drops rain down on the seafolk's fuel of care?  
*Ama ga tsumu nageki no naka ni shio tarete itsu made Suma no ura ni nagamemu*  
 海人がつむ嘆きの中にしほたれて いつまで須磨の浦にながめむ<sup>89</sup>

Hijikata Yōichi 土方洋一 highlights the unusual paralleling of these *zōtōka*.<sup>90</sup> Specifically, in the first lines, Rokujō alludes to her own distance from the capital while Genji instead replies about wishing to be where she is in Ise (and not his exile).<sup>91</sup> The only shared imagery in the first reply is that of "gathering sorrows." Genji does not pick up on the allusions in Rokujō's second poem and instead uses imagery from the first—Suma and brine—in his second reply.<sup>92</sup> Despite these disparities, Hijikata concludes that these *zōtōka* indicate a reciprocal acknowledgement of their history, sorrow, and present suffering, and although, as Takagi and Ogita stress, there is no expectation their romance will resume, the two enter a

85 Komachiya 1997, p. 296.

86 Tyler 2006, p. 242, note 39.

87 Komachiya 1997, p. 296; Hijikata 2013, pp. 86–90.

88 Tyler 2006, p. 242, note 40.

89 SNKBZ 21, p. 195; Tyler 2006, p. 242.

90 Hijikata 2013.

91 Hijikata 2013, p. 87.

92 This choice mirrors Genji's decision not to respond (in verse) to Hanachirusato's poem, which similarly was solely about her own plight.

new coexistence that will culminate with Genji agreeing to look after her daughter.<sup>93</sup> “Suma” nods to this new beginning, as the excellent quality of Rokujō’s poems cause Genji to bemoan “not knowing when I shall speak to [her] again.”<sup>94</sup> Not only is this a signal of forgiveness, but it also reiterates one of Genji’s greatest virtues: never forgetting a woman. This endearing quality is stressed in the text, which underscores that “in this way he kept consolingly in touch with all his ladies.”<sup>95</sup>

Throughout the tale there is a Gosechi Dancer—the daughter of a Kyushu official who performed at the Gosechi festival—of whom Genji is fond, and their exchange further demonstrates his aesthetic mastery among courtiers. In “Suma,” this dancer “managed somehow to send him”:

Have you eyes to see in the towrope’s tug and slack my own swaying heart  
Helplessly drawn toward you by the music of your *kin*?  
*Koto no ne ni hikitomeraruru tsunadenawa tayutau kokoro kimi shirurame ya*  
琴の音にひきとめらるる綱手縄 たゆたふ心君しるらめや<sup>96</sup>

At first glance this poem appears to lack Suma imagery, but, from the setting of the scene, we know that it was composed as the Gosechi Dancer passed by Suma in the company of the Dazaifu Deputy. Because of the taboo against visiting those in exile, they do not stop. In this way, the “towrope’s tug and slack” in the Gosechi Dancer’s poem refers to both the boat and the tide in which she waited along the Suma shore. The allusion also indicates the tug and slack of her emotions: wanting to visit him but not doing so. Genji understands this message and responds:

If such were your wish that your heart goes taut and slack as the towrope does,  
Would you then pass straight on by, O wave along Suma Shore?  
*Kokoro arite hikite no tsuna no tayutawaba uchisugimashi ya Suma no uranami*  
心ありてひきての綱のたゆたはば うち過ぎましや須磨の浦波<sup>97</sup>

Here, Genji acknowledges the prohibition on receiving visitors, although it is a biting reproach to her shallow feelings.<sup>98</sup> He indicates that her love for him is not as strong as her desire to abide by social convention. In the end, the slack wins and she passes “straight on by.” Nevertheless, Genji’s poem to the Gosechi Dancer reminds the official retinue of his graces, as the “account of Genji’s circumstances drew from the Deputy and all those who had come to meet him an undignified flood of tears.”<sup>99</sup> This emphasizes the broader implications of Genji’s love poems, as they are not only parts of a unique romantic relationship but also soften the attitudes of the powerful men who surround his lovers.

93 Hijikata 2013; Takagi 2008, p. 145; Ogita 2013, p. 7.

94 SNKBZ 21, pp. 195–196; Tyler 2006, p. 243.

95 SNKBZ 21, p. 196; Tyler 2006, p. 243.

96 SNKBZ 21, p. 205; Tyler 2006, p. 247.

97 SNKBZ 21, p. 205; Tyler 2006, p. 247.

98 Komachiya 1997, p. 299; Kitahara 2017, p. 24.

99 SNKBZ 21, pp. 204–205; Tyler 2006, p. 247.

In sum, within “Suma,” the only poems with complete exchanges between the banished Genji and those still physically in the capital, or with influence among members of the court, are *zōtōka* between lovers. This differs from the *zōtōka* exchanged between men. As Schalow demonstrates, those *zōtōka* stay in Suma—all the men are in Suma when they are composed and there is no indication that they are transported to the capital.<sup>100</sup> This contrasts with the poems he exchanges with women (except Murasaki), which are physically transported to the capital (or places of power) and have a wider audience: powerful personages able to influence his pardon. Through Genji’s continued devotion to his women, expressed through Suma imagery, he begins to be forgiven for his crime(s). These are not only his past transgressions during his intimate relationships, but also those that led to his banishment. Upon close examination, we find that the very first hints of Genji’s eventual pardon occur during and directly after his poetic exchanges with his lovers, as his poems “aroused strong feelings in most of those who read them.”<sup>101</sup> After these poems are exchanged, the emperor pardons Oborozukiyo and feels Genji’s absence “leaves a void” and “had frequent occasion to regret [his] absence.”<sup>102</sup> Genji’s private poems transform his memory from a man who smeared the imperial court to one who enhances it. True, not all in powerful positions felt this way, as the softening of attitudes “drew strong words from the Empress Mother when she heard of it,” with the result that “for fear of the consequences Genji’s correspondents lapsed into silence.”<sup>103</sup> However, this proves that even the Kokiden faction acknowledges the sociopolitical power of *zōtōka*.

### **Falling Action and Resolution: A Proxy Reply to Aid Release and Rebirth**

So far, we have seen how exchanged love poems assist in Genji’s eventual restitution at court. To recap, the first point within this narrative arc, the exposition, is his physical exile. Once in Suma, the poetry he composes using the allusions of the place of his exile contribute to the softening of positions among members of the court, which constitutes the arc’s rising action. The climax is Genji’s return to good graces and eventual rise in rank.<sup>104</sup> Here, I argue the Suma arc can be extended to include a poem—a proxy reply—he writes twenty-five years later, as he withdraws from court. Doing so expands the narrative to include the falling action represented by Genji’s sociopolitical decline, and the resolution of the arc with his eventual death and rebirth. In this reading, by completing the fractured *zōtōka* of “Suma” in “Maboroshi,” Genji releases an important earthly attachment, making way for the “right mindfulness” required for a good Buddhist rebirth. This emphasizes that private poetry in *monogatari* wields a religious power similar to its historical counterpart.

The term “proxy reply” is comprised of words that signify substitution and response. While a proxy reply could encompass any delayed composition linked to a fractured *zōtōka*, here I am specifically interested in poems composed after the death of a lover that link back to an earlier, incomplete, poetic exchange. A proxy reply therefore is similar in theme and allusion to the revealed *zōtōka*, created by the same person, but is not an exact duplicate of the concealed original. It also does not need to be composed in the same period. For Jackson,

100 Schalow 2007, p. 119.

101 SNKBZ 21, p. 189; Tyler 2006, p. 240.

102 SNKBZ 21, p. 206; Tyler 2006, p. 247.

103 SNKBZ 21, pp. 206–207; Tyler 2006, pp. 247–248.

104 Bowring 1988, p. 34; Mostow 1999, p. 7; Stockdale 2015, pp. 57–62.

the spatiotemporal disruption of proximate removes gives *Genji* readers the opportunity to find new readings, and intimacies, that “try to tame the disorganization wrought by death and other losses.”<sup>105</sup> In this vein, I argue that the spatiotemporal disruption of *zōtōka* within scenes of separation alerts the reader to emotions, intimacies, and attachments too improper or personal to be revealed at the time. It is the proxy reply, composed later by the same person, that ultimately resolves the loss of separation.<sup>106</sup>

The link between concealed poetry and deep romantic feelings is deployed early within *Genji*. As many scholars have noted, the prominent themes of friendship, hidden correspondence, and romantic encounters in the poems of the “Suma” chapter are seeded in the second chapter of the tale, “Hahakigi” 帚木 (The Broom Tree).<sup>107</sup> For example, the close bond between Genji and his brother-in-law, Tō no Chūjō, is revealed when the latter spies some love letters the former left out in the open. The most important are concealed from view. This allows the two men to embark on a guessing game, probing and exploring each other’s romantic interests while protecting the identities of lovers too dangerous to disclose. It is during this exchange that Tō no Chūjō recalls his love affair with a nearly perfect woman whom he wishes to find again. Genji asks what her letters said, and, without giving away her identity, Tō no Chūjō obliges by quoting their *zōtōka*, but omitting his final response. During this game, Genji has successfully kept the identities of his lovers secret, but Tō no Chūjō has revealed just enough to pique Genji’s interest in locating the woman readers will come to know as Yūgao. In this case, secrecy not only hides, but, as Norma Field argues, reveals a “private self that can become the matter of fiction.”<sup>108</sup> Namely, it exposes Genji’s competitive and manipulative nature among his male friends.<sup>109</sup> As Schalow notes, this scene sets the tone of homosocial friendship based on sexual rivalry that will again be highlighted in the “Suma” chapter when the two men secretly meet and exchange gifts and poetry.<sup>110</sup>

Yet, within this same scene in “Hahakigi,” concealed poetry also signals a deep loss in need of resolution. Instead of divulging his poetic reply, Tō no Chūjō launches into a speech revealing his despair over their separation and lamenting his ignorance of the location of his lover and their child, Tamakazura. He creates a fractured *zōtōka*. Fushimi Shinko 伏見親子 argues that a poem Genji later composes to Tamakazura, which cites the poems in “Hahakigi,” is meant to resolve this imbalance and the trauma Tō no Chūjō and Tamakazura experience from losing Yūgao.<sup>111</sup> Yet, the poem fails.<sup>112</sup> In part the failure is due to the author, as the poem is written by Genji and not Tō no Chūjō, ultimately leaving the latter’s sorrow at losing Yūgao unresolved. The poem also proves insufficient because it is directed to the wrong recipient, Tamakazura, and not her mother. Because Tamakazura is not privy to the original prompt, she is unable to decipher the allusions and the poem fails to resolve her loss

105 Jackson 2021, pp. 20–21.

106 Fushimi Shinko investigates these fractured exchanges as they relate to possible lovers—Genji and Tamakazura—outside of a scene of loss. She terms these as poem letters citing other poems from previous chapters. See Fushimi 2015, pp. 5–7.

107 Takeda 1963; Gatten 1981; Shirane 1987, pp. 70–72, 234; Schalow 2007, p. 117.

108 Field 1987, p. 17.

109 Field 1987, p. 17.

110 Schalow 2007, p. 117.

111 Fushimi 2015, p. 3.

112 For more on this exchange, see Shibamura 2014.

of a mother.<sup>113</sup> In cases such as these, secrecy, in the form of a concealed poem, also signals a deep love and the trauma of devastating loss.

An earlier example of concealed poetry in “Kiritsubo” 桐壺 (The Paulownia Pavilion) similarly underscores Murasaki Shikibu’s use of secrecy to reveal a character’s private self and distress at losing a loved one. In the very first poem of the tale, Genji’s mother, Kiritsubo no Kōi, in the process of traveling back to her native home to convalesce, composes to the distraught emperor:

Now the end has come, and I am filled with sorrow that our ways must part:  
The path I would rather take is the one that leads to life.  
*Kagiri tote wakaruru michi no kanashiki ni ikamahoshiki wa inochi narikeri*  
かぎりとして別る道の悲しきに いかまほしきは命なりけり<sup>114</sup>

Here, Kiritsubo no Kōi acknowledges their deep love bond and predicts her forthcoming demise. Despite addressing this poem to the emperor, he does not reply with one of his own.<sup>115</sup> This allows the Kiritsubo emperor to keep the true depth of his love for his favorite consort private at this particular moment. (Just lines before he exclaims, “You cannot abandon me now! I will not let you!”<sup>116</sup> This indicates that any poetic response would be quite emotional.) As stated in the introduction, expressing strong personal emotion within the confines of acceptable displays was widely practiced among the premodern Japanese elite.<sup>117</sup> Omitting a response to a love poem signals a character’s inability to publicly conform to social standards and saves them from social *faux pas*. Within the tale’s scenes of separation and loss, there appears to be a continuum of acceptable emotion displayed in poetry. When there is an omission in these exchanges of poetry, just as in the case of Genji’s missing Suma poem, it occurs during a period of severe emotional distress. Omission signifies it would be socially unacceptable to compose/disclose a poem demonstrating this level of emotion.

It is only after Kiritsubo no Kōi’s death that the emperor is able to express his devotion in poetic form, creating a proxy reply to the fractured *zōtōka*.<sup>118</sup> After learning that Kiritsubo no Kōi has died, the emperor composes a poem that arcs back to hers, employing similar imagery:

O that I might find a wizard to seek her out, that I might then know  
at least from distant report where her dear spirit has gone.  
*Tazuneyuku maboroshi mogana tsute nite mo tama no arika o soko to shirubeku*  
たづねゆくまほろしもがなつてにても 魂のありかをそこと知るべく<sup>119</sup>

Here, the emperor’s poem, like Kiritsubo no Kōi’s, focuses on the pain of parting and a desire to reunite. Unlike when Kiritsubo no Kōi was alive and a poetic reply would reveal excess

113 Fushimi 2015, p. 3.

114 SNKBZ 20, p. 23; Tyler 2006, p. 5.

115 Hijikata 2013, p. 91.

116 SNKBZ 20, p. 23; Tyler 2006, p. 5.

117 Ebersole 1989, pp. 47, 129, 181–182.

118 Hijikata contends that Kiritsubo no Kōi’s poem should be categorized as *dokueika* and this explains the lack of a reply from the emperor; see Hijikata 2013, p. 91.

119 SNKBZ 20, p. 35; Tyler 2006, p. 11.

emotion, the ritual mourning period protects the emperor, as extreme displays were thought to placate the spirit of the deceased.<sup>120</sup> This proxy reply, his last poem directed to Kiritsubo no Kōi, works to repair the loss.<sup>121</sup> In this way, within mourning scenes, proxy replies that respond to earlier poems left unanswered, or concealed, close the anticipated pair, end the lingering attachment to a loved one's memory, and allow the composer to move forward.

Among the scenes of separation in *Genji*, “Maboroshi” stands out, marked by Genji's seasonal poetic laments following the death of Murasaki, some of his last acts before leaving the world of the tale. The chapter highlights his decline, noting that he fears he will appear eccentric due to being “too distraught to see anyone,” and culminates in his preparations for the afterlife.<sup>122</sup> Readers are only alerted to Genji's passing by the first line of “Niou Miya” 匂宮 (The Perfumed Prince), which picks up the tale eight years after “Maboroshi.” The lack of description of Genji's death and/or post-death rituals have led generations of scholars to deliberate Genji's fate. Kawazoe Fusae 河添房江 characterizes this debate as reading Genji's exit from the tale as having either a “plus” or “minus image.”<sup>123</sup> The plus image asserts that by incorporating the presence of light (*gokō* 御光) at the time Genji prepares to leave the world, Murasaki Shikibu lays the groundwork for readers to assume his good rebirth. Tamagami Takuya 玉上琢弥 stresses that Genji's story confirms his enlightenment as this light is like that omitted by the historical Buddha on his deathbed.<sup>124</sup> Jinno Hidenori 陣野英則 expounds on this point, noting that Genji's light disappears from descriptions of his adult character, only to return at the end of his life as a marker of his “emperor-like” temperament, likened to a bodhisattva and assumed to grant a good rebirth.<sup>125</sup> In a third analysis, Kannotō Akio 神野藤昭夫 contends that this light signifies that Genji has recovered from the all-encompassing grief that surrounded him after the death of Murasaki, preparing him for a positive rebirth.<sup>126</sup> In the “minus image” reading, scholars such as Abe Akio 阿部秋生, Hinata Kazumasa 日向一雅, and Fujii Sadakazu 藤井貞和 take a more pessimistic view, arguing that, due to Genji's continued attachments to the earthly realm—most notably his memories of Murasaki—and the fact he did not take the tonsure, a positive rebirth is not certain.<sup>127</sup> Suzuki Hideo 鈴木日出男 concludes that “Maboroshi” ends with a message of despair.<sup>128</sup> Shirane addresses these analyses and argues that Genji's light imagery is meant to link him with the historical Buddha, but that by the end of his life, his inability to sever his attachments to the world may hinder his rebirth.<sup>129</sup>

These suppositions over Genji's fate are grounded in Buddhist teachings regarding pathways to a good rebirth. The debate hinges upon whether or not Genji has released his earthly attachments, most notably his memories of Murasaki, to facilitate a positive outcome. In the Heian period, it was believed that during the process of dying, the “three attachments”

120 Collins 2000, p. 45.

121 The emperor will briefly linger on her memory through one additional composition that questions his ability to live without his loved one, a delayed reply to a poem sent by Kiritsubo no Kōi's mother.

122 SNKBZ 23, p. 521; Tyler 2006, pp. 767, 769.

123 Kawazoe 1999, pp. 160–166.

124 Tamagami 1967, pp. 181–183.

125 Jinno 2001, pp. 238–239.

126 Kannotō 1980, p. 354.

127 Abe 1966; Fujii 1971; Kannotō 1980, p. 357; Hinata 2009, pp. 90–93.

128 Suzuki 1973, p. 8; Kannotō 1980, p. 358.

129 Shirane 1987, pp. 173, 182.

(to objects, self, and place of rebirth) manifest.<sup>130</sup> Jacqueline I. Stone translates the description of these attachments by Senkan (Senkan Naigu 千観内供, 918–984) as, “with respect to one’s beloved wife and children, relations and dependents, dwelling, and so on a profound and redoubled possessive love.”<sup>131</sup> To alleviate this attachment one must cultivate, prior to death, “a profound awareness of impermanence and disgust for the world, and better yet, to make a vow to achieve birth in the Pure Land.”<sup>132</sup>

In “Maboroshi,” Genji’s attachment to the memory of Murasaki is presented as a hindrance to a good rebirth. Upon rediscovering Murasaki’s Suma correspondence, Genji composes:

Swept on by longing to follow her now she has crossed the Mountain of Death,  
I looked on the signs she left, and still I strayed from the path.  
*Shide no yama koenishi hito o shitau tote ato o mitsutsu mo nao madou kana*  
死出の山越えにし人をしたふとて 跡を見つものなほまどふかな<sup>133</sup>

Here, Genji reveals that even though he desires to reunite with Murasaki in the afterlife he still cannot bring himself to completely abandon this world or his attachment to objects. He does not categorize the Suma letters, “the signs she left,” as a “spiritual helper” assisting him to focus on being reborn with Murasaki. Rather, as Ii Haruki 伊井春樹 argues, this poem blocks his ability to proceed on the Buddhist path, representing his attachment to the world.<sup>134</sup> Dwelling on earthly attachments, such as his love for Murasaki, can erase an entire lifetime of devout action and hinder his rebirth.<sup>135</sup>

Scholars such as Komachiya, Ii, and Matsuki Noriko 松木典子 have noted the dramatic shift in Genji’s mental state between his “Mountain of death” poem and his subsequent composition.<sup>136</sup> For these scholars, it is only after Genji pens a poem in the margins of Murasaki’s Suma correspondence and has it burned that he is able to truly focus on taking the Buddhist tonsure. Having just stated that Murasaki’s Suma letters would allow him to keep her memory alive, he then writes “in the margin of a long one”:

I shall have no joy from gathering sea-tangle traces of her brush:  
let them rise above the clouds as she also rose, in smoke.  
*Kakitsumete miru mo kai nashi moshioyusa onaji kumoi no keburu to o nare*  
かきつめて見るもかひなし藻塩草 おなじ雲居の煙とをなれ<sup>137</sup>

This poem picks up on the Suma imagery of Murasaki’s letters, including the earlier fractured *zōtōka*. In the first line, Genji compares Murasaki’s writing to “sea-tangle” traces. Seaweed, ever-present on the Suma shores, is used in the salt-making process, as is the “brine”

130 Stone 2016, pp. 221–230.

131 Stone 2016, p. 230. For the original, see *Jūgan hōshinki* 十願發心記, in Satō 1979, pp. 198b–199a.

132 Stone 2016, p. 230.

133 SNKBZ 23, p. 547; Tyler 2006, p. 777.

134 Ii 1996, p. 321.

135 Stone 2009, pp. 61–62.

136 Komachiya 1984, p. 63; Ii 1996, pp. 320–322; Matsuki 2000, p. 16.

137 SNKBZ 23, p. 548; Tyler 2006, p. 778.



referenced in Murasaki's poem. Additionally, Murasaki's handwriting mimics the shape of seaweed, reminiscent of tangled hair after an intimate encounter (recall the "sea-tangle pleasures" of Genji's Suma poem to Oborozukiyo and the "seaweed tresses" he references in "Aoi" 葵, or "Heart-to-Heart," when cutting Murasaki's hair).<sup>138</sup> In the second line, Genji, like Murasaki, references their separation. Earlier Murasaki invoked the "watery road" between her in the capital and Genji in Suma, while here Genji notes Murasaki's ascension "above the clouds" through cremation smoke. They have been forcibly separated once again. When comparing this poem in "Maboroshi," written on the margins of Murasaki's "Suma" correspondence, we find that it is a line-by-line proxy reply to her previous poem.

This proxy reply keeps Genji's original poem concealed while being part of his release of earthly attachments, or passions. In "Suma," Genji's poems to his lovers exert sociopolitical power, assisting in his forgiveness, eventual pardon, and rise to great political heights. A poem to Murasaki would not function in such a manner, as she was not influential within the aristocracy, and any such poem would likely be too deeply personal and emotional to fit within accepted standards. Concealing the original prompt poem keeps Genji's abnormally strong emotions private. It is only when he is ready to release these sentiments, protected by the ritual mourning period, that he is able to respond in poetic form, repairing the loss of her death. As stated earlier, Ii contends that Genji's Suma-themed poem in "Maboroshi," and the destruction of the letters, allows him to release his passions.<sup>139</sup> The tale supports this conclusion, as immediately after Genji states that he had been "lost in my sorrows [and] never knew months and days were still passing by."<sup>140</sup> This statement shows that, through the religious power of his proxy reply, the successful release of an earthly attachment, Genji is now free of the all-consuming grief that had previously engulfed him—returning him to the present with a newfound clarity. The creation (and ultimate destruction) of this proxy reply resolves his earthly attachment to Murasaki's memory, closes their fractured poetic exchange, and repairs the loss of their separation, both in "Suma" and "Maboroshi."

## Conclusion

Genji's Suma aesthetic products reflect his political positions, from exile to exalted, coming together at the end of his life, allowing him to shed his earthly attachments and prepare for a good rebirth. In this article, I include Genji's exchanges of love poems while in exile as part of the rising action of the Suma arc, as they influence members of the court and seed his ultimate forgiveness. As other scholars have illustrated, the arc reaches its zenith when Genji triumphs over his rivals and rises at court through the public presentation of his Suma paintings, an act that seemingly erases his experience of exile.<sup>141</sup> I contend here, though, that the "Suma" arc only ends with Genji's completion and destruction of his Suma-themed correspondence in "Maboroshi." The "Suma" poetic exchanges that once maintained his romantic passions and paved the way for his pardon and political success become a hindrance to his rebirth. By completing the fractured Suma *zōtōka* with a proxy reply, Murasaki Shikibu paves the way for Genji's departure from the world and the unburdening of his soul as he leaves the

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138 SNKBZ 23, p. 550; Tyler 2006, p. 779.

139 Ii 1996, p. 321.

140 SNKBZ 23, p. 28, note 6; Tyler 2006, p. 169.

141 Bowring 1988, p. 34; Mostow 1999, p. 7; Stockdale 2015, pp. 57–62.

tale. The omission of some poems and the fracturing of *zōtōka* in scenes of loss preserves the dignity of characters who could be seen as overly emotional. Repairing these poetic exchanges also resolves the loss suffered in such scenes, allowing for, in some cases, a release of earthly attachments. Foregrounding fractured *zōtōka* and their proxy replies reveals their vital functions within the plot of *monogatari*, as well as within the sociopolitical and religious discourse of the period.

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## Japanese Nostalgia for Empire in China: The Forgotten Story of Kangde Academy, 1935–1944

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This article examines Kangde Academy, a private school that operated from 1935 to 1944 in Hyogo Prefecture, Japan. The school was founded by the first director of Manchukuo's General Affairs Board, Komai Tokuzō. Existing studies in Japanese and English on Manchukuo have paid inadequate attention to Komai, an important contemporary Japanese bureaucrat who contributed to Manchukuo's creation in 1932, and research on Komai's interest in education as a means of fostering cooperative relations between the Japanese and Chinese is notably lacking. The article draws on the sparse and scattered sources in order to elucidate the reasons behind Kangde's foundation, accounts of school life at Kangde, and the postwar experiences of Kangde's graduates. In doing so, it argues for the importance of looking beyond the history of domination and violence when attempting to develop a more nuanced understanding of the operation of Japan's empire in China. The story of the Kangde Academy casts fresh light on fourteen years of interactions between Japan and China from 1931 to 1945 and problematizes the concept of apology for the Japanese Empire in postwar Japan.

**Keywords:** education, Japanese Empire, Komai Tokuzō, apology, politics

Exit Sakasegawa station, on the Hankyū Imazu Line in Takarazuka City, head on foot along the banks of the Sakase River in the direction of Mt. Rokkō for approximately fifteen minutes, and you will find a remarkable [school] building in the forest on your right. . . . The name of that school was Kangde Academy, a training institution for potential Manchukuo officials in the early Shōwa years . . . It is hard to trace the school's faculties and graduates, although the building is occasionally visited by those who claim to have studied there [in the late 1930s and the early 1940s]. [Some observers today] consider the school a by-product of the war of invasion; we can only imagine the school's bitterness for suffering [such infamy].<sup>1</sup>

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1 Asahi Shinbun 1975, p. 41.

Kangde Academy 康德学院 (Jp: Kōtoku Gakuin; Ch: Kangde Xueyuan; hereafter Kangde) is a name few Japanese have heard today. It was a private school that existed between 1935 and 1944 on the outskirts of the famous theatrical city of Takarazuka 宝塚, in Hyogo Prefecture. Cultivating and training seventy-seven graduates in the course of those nine years, the school was closed in spring 1944 due to the exacerbation of the Pacific War of 1941–1945.<sup>2</sup> After the school’s closure, its campus became a dormitory and clubhouse for the employees of the East Asian Bearing Corporation (Tōyō Bearingu Kabushiki Gaisha 東洋ベアリング株式会社; currently NTN Corporation); published sources do not mention when the company demolished the building.<sup>3</sup> This short-lived school with few students did not attract major public attention during its existence, and the postwar Japanese media, notably the Osaka-Kobe branch of the *Asahi Shinbun* (Asahi Shinbun Hanshin Shikyoku 朝日新聞阪神支局), felt able to pass over detailed reflections on the realities of Kangde. In 1975, the newspaper described Kangde as a “by-product of the war of invasion” (*shinryaku sensō no otoshigo* 侵略戦争の落とし子). “Kangde” was the reign name of Manchukuo, and the mention of Manchukuo in turn recalled Japan’s invasion of China from 1931 and 1945. In this interpretation, Kangde provides yet another example of the well-known story of Japan’s military aggression in East Asia in the early twentieth century.

In contrast to the epigraph from the *Asahi Shinbun*, this article maintains that Kangde was not a mere by-product of Japan’s invasion of the continent. The school’s existence helps reveal the fragmented nature of the Japanese Empire’s decision-making process for its overseas policies in the 1930s and the early 1940s. The ambiguous power relations that characterized these decision-making circles in turn generated spaces for different—sometimes contradictory—interpretations of the Japanese Empire’s overseas expansion among the empire’s former officials in postwar Japan. It also largely helped former imperial officials rationalize nostalgic feelings regarding their activities in China and the rest of East Asia before 1945.

Established in 1935 by Komai Tokuzō 駒井徳三 (1885–1961), a former director of Manchukuo’s General Affairs Board (Sōmu-chō 総務庁), the school was meant to help Japan solve its “continental problem” of Sino-Japanese confrontation—an objective that the Japanese military was also desperately looking to achieve.<sup>4</sup> Opposed to the military’s solution of subjugation by force, Komai instead advocated communication with China. This was to be facilitated through education in China’s language, culture, and customs for Japanese youth resident on the home islands, to cultivate future officials with the requisite linguistic and cultural expertise to overcome the opposition of Chinese speakers to Japan’s empire. Instead of a training institution for invaders, Kangde offered what in the mid-1930s and early 1940s—when Japanese military arrogance was at its peak—a rare opportunity for Japan’s youth to engage with China’s language, affairs, and customs.

Historians Katō Kiyofumi and Nobuko Toyosawa have argued for the importance of analyzing the individuals and institutions that “do not [often] appear in grand narratives of Japanese history” if historians want to “understand the nature and identity of the Japanese

2 Toki 1964, pp. 336–337.

3 A 2003 article by a Takarazuka civil organization suggests that Kangde’s building “no longer existed.” Takarazuka-shi Nishiyama Komyuniti Kyōgi-kai 2003.

4 Komai 1944, pp. 218, 225–226.



Empire.”<sup>5</sup> The Kangde case suggests that the Japanese military were not the empire’s sole decision-makers, even during the war years of 1937 to 1945. Instead of hastily dismissing counterpoints to the domination, violence, and atrocities that characterize Japan’s expansion in China as representing a velvet glove draped over the iron fist of military rule, historians could view them as evidence for the existence of those who genuinely sought to foster Sino-Japanese affinity in the 1930s and the early 1940s. These people—not all of whom belonged to the upper echelons of officials—were not so marginal that historians of modern East Asia can afford to ignore them. Otherwise, it is difficult to explain the nostalgia for Japan’s wartime projects in Manchukuo and elsewhere that prevailed among the empire’s former officials after 1945.

In recent years, English-language studies on early twentieth-century Manchuria and Japanese imperialism have tended to problematize stereotyped images of Japan’s colonial empire in East Asia as having been uniformly oppressive, excavating more nuanced accounts of Sino-Japanese interactions. Yuka Kishida, for instance, describes the Manchukuo National Foundation University (Kenkoku Daigaku 建国大学) as “a rare space for the transnational exchange of ideas” in Manchukuo.<sup>6</sup> Johnathan Henshaw, Craig Smith, and Norman Smith consider the dichotomy between collaboration and resistance that runs through studies in both Chinese and English examining Japan’s empire in mainland China in the 1930s and the early 1940s “a long-standing problem” that prevents historians from grasping the multifaceted experiences of local Chinese under Japanese occupation.<sup>7</sup> Shifting attention to the Japanese home islands, an examination of Kangde allows historians to approach a lesser studied—yet equally important—facet of early twentieth-century Japanese imperial ideals, that of cooperation. Recovering this aspect of empire from the devastation wrought by espionage, censorship, atrocities, violence, and domination helps one grasp the complicated currents of Japanese imperialism, and thus to better understand those in postwar Japan who continued to justify Japan’s colonial activities in East Asia after the empire itself was dust.

### **Forgetting Kangde: Historiography, Structure, and Sources**

Kangde was a post-secondary private school under the supervision of the Japanese Ministry of Education (Monbushō 文部省); only male Japanese-speaking high school graduates in good physical health could apply to the school. Chinese-language education, including training in reading and writing Chinese script and speaking in Beijing-accented Mandarin, was Kangde’s primary focus.<sup>8</sup> In addition to offering instruction, Kangde covered all the costs of its students, such as tuition, clothing, food, residence, and annual two-month research trips to the Korean Peninsula, Manchukuo, or China proper.<sup>9</sup> After graduation, most students settled in mainland China and worked in local municipal or county governments, although some joined the Japanese military, and others became Kangde lecturers.<sup>10</sup>

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5 Katō and Toyosawa 2023, pp. 85, 89.

6 Kishida 2019, p. 2.

7 Henshaw et al. 2021, p. 10.

8 Kōtoku Gakuin 1935, pp. 18–19.

9 Komai 1934, pp. 140, 142.

10 For instance, five of the six 1939 graduates of Kangde joined the army, while one taught courses for new students at Kangde. Yamatani 1964, p. 390.

The school's founder and principal, Komai Tokuzō, was an influential Japanese bureaucrat who served as the Japanese Kanto Army's political, economic, and legal consultant after the 1931 Manchurian Incident and who became head of Manchukuo's General Affairs Board between March and October 1932—theoretically the most powerful Japanese individual in Manchukuo in those months.<sup>11</sup> When he established the school in April 1935, however, Komai no longer held official positions in either administration. He founded Kangde with his savings after returning from Manchukuo to Japan and funded the school for the nine years of its existence without seeking financial or political support from domestic financial cliques.<sup>12</sup>

Despite Kangde's distinctiveness, the school has received virtually no attention from researchers of modern East Asia in Japan, China, or the West. There is also a dearth of research on Komai Tokuzō himself; while there are a few studies examining his career before the creation of Manchukuo in 1932, they skip over any in-depth analysis of his activities in Manchukuo and later life.<sup>13</sup> Politics is likely an important reason for such academic oversight. The postwar Japanese government's attempts to separate Japan's "imperial past from its peace-loving present" has made individuals like Komai, whose political career was in Manchuria and China proper, into "symbolic reminders" of Japanese imperialism for many Japanese, Chinese, and English-language researchers.<sup>14</sup> Hasegawa Yūichi is arguably the only scholar who has conducted research on Kangde. Based on 1979 interviews with Ueno Takashi 上野巍 (b. 1904), Kangde's cofounder and professor, and Toki Hachirō 土岐八郎 (b. 1917), a Kangde lecturer who had graduated from the school in 1938, Hasegawa focuses on introducing readers to the school, rather than analyzing it.<sup>15</sup>

Writing about postwar memories of the Japanese occupation circulating among mainland Chinese, historian Marjorie Dryburgh believes that "personal histories" often underline "a more fragmented social history of occupation than the orthodox [People's Republic of China] narratives [of Japanese violence] admit."<sup>16</sup> Dryburgh's observation regarding Chinese personal histories also applies to Japan, for as Katō Kiyofumi and Nobuko Toyosawa note, there are many gaps between personal memories of the Japanese Empire and the "national historical narrative" of Japan's empire in postwar Japan.<sup>17</sup> The case of Kangde confirms that a gap exists between personal memories and national narratives regarding Japanese people's interactions with mainland China in the 1930s and the early 1940s. Founded by a renowned imperial bureaucrat in the early Shōwa years, how did Komai envisage Kangde could help Japan resolve the critical issue of Sino-Japanese hostility? Why did Kangde strive to cultivate individual students' Chinese-language proficiency, and why did Kangde graduates in the postwar years refuse to regard themselves as perpetrators of Japan's invasion of China? The article tries to answer these questions to foster closer academic attention to the issue of imperial nostalgia in postwar Japan.

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11 In practice, the Kanto Army's commander in chief was the top decision-maker on the Japanese side.

12 Komai 1934, p. 141; Yokoyama 1964, p. 348.

13 For example, see Katō 2022.

14 Katō and Toyosawa 2023, p. 89.

15 Hasegawa 2016, pp. 237–239.

16 Dryburgh 2019, p. 230.

17 Katō and Toyosawa 2023, pp. 85, 92.

This article contains three sections. The first analyzes the factors contributing to Kangde's foundation, exploring Komai Tokuzō's political ideals, officialdom in Manchukuo, and early twentieth-century Sino-Japanese educational initiatives that sought to develop relations between Japan and China. The second details Kangde's curriculum, operations, and management, to show the kind of people Kangde sought to cultivate in order to facilitate Japan-China cooperation and peace in East Asia. The third part of the article recounts the story of Kangde's closure and the experiences of its surviving graduates in the postwar era, contrasting Komai's expectations for the school and its students with the harsh reality of Japan's invasion of China proper in 1937, defeat in 1945, and diplomatic isolation from the People's Republic of China (PRC) between 1949 and 1972. The article references multiple sources, including contemporary news coverage, Kangde-published brochures, monographs by and on Komai, and documents in the Japanese government-operated website of the Center for Asian Historical Records (Ajia Rekishi Shiryo Sentā アジア歴史資料センター).

Compared to the schools in Japan that publish voluminous records on their own history, such as Aichi University and Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (Tōkyō Gaikoku-go Daigaku 東京外国語大学), Kangde's professors and students remained relatively silent after 1945; if Kangde-related sources still exist, those in possession of them seem to have kept quiet about their existence. For example, Kangde routinely published an introductory brochure on the school each year titled *Kōtoku gakuin gairan* 康徳学院概覽 (Overview of Kangde Academy), yet libraries in Japan hold only the 1935 and 1938 editions.<sup>18</sup> According to Hasegawa Yūichi, Kangde's students annually drafted detailed reports, primarily on local rural economies, after finishing their research travels in mainland China and Korea. These were necessary for them to graduate, but it appears that none of the resultant reports have entered Japan's library collections.<sup>19</sup> The scarcity of sources prevents one from comprehensively evaluating Kangde's position in prewar Japan's education system, but the school's existence reveals a lesser-known aspect of wartime Sino-Japanese relations, one that stressed the importance of cooperation instead of confrontation between Japan and China for making Japan the dominant power in East Asia.

### Manifesting Knowledge, Virtue, and Passion: Kangde's Historical Background

Kangde was a three-year private academy that sought to cultivate Japanese officials with expertise in Chinese. These officials would foster Sino-Japanese cooperation and work with Chinese-speaking ethnicities in mainland China to end the two countries' hostile relations.<sup>20</sup> The academy's name is borrowed from Manchukuo's reign name between March 1934 and August 1945, and meant "peace and contentment for the general population requires moral and ethical guidance" (*kangji xiamin bixu dao zhi yi de* 康濟下民必須道之以德).<sup>21</sup> Realizing Japanese guidance for the national development of Chinese-speaking ethnicities was Kangde's central objective.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, the first article of the school's charter stated that Kangde aimed to "lay the foundation of peace in East Asia by cultivating individual students' noble and promising characters, including expertise in the Chinese language and

18 This is in the possession of Toyohashi Library, Aichi University.

19 Hasegawa 2016, p. 239.

20 Komai 1944, pp. 218, 225–226.

21 In other words, *kang* means peace and contentment, and *de* means morality and ethics. Peng 2017, p. 282.

22 Komai 1944, p. 218.

the affairs of Japan and Manchukuo.”<sup>23</sup> Komai Tokuzō believed that Japanese “respect for the dignity and interest” of Han Chinese would slowly convince the latter to become Japan’s followers, whereas contempt and vigilance would only intensify Sino-Japanese hostility.<sup>24</sup> Hence, if Japan wanted to “solve the continental problem,” it must “hold hands” with China and Manchukuo “forever with heartfelt passion”—cooperation between people served as an indispensable means for Komai to expand Japan’s influence in Asia.<sup>25</sup> Given the scarcity of Japanese linguistic and political experts on China, especially among those who served in Manchukuo and for the Japanese home government and military, Kangde as a college-equivalent private academy aimed to fill this obvious gap in human resources.<sup>26</sup> It imitated the Datong Institute (Datong Xueyuan 大同學院), Manchukuo’s training institution for its government officials, where Komai had served as principal between July 1932 and July 1933, by accommodating its students and full-time professors in the school’s dormitory for centralized management.<sup>27</sup> Although school life in Kangde lacked freedom compared to Japan’s public universities, students had no financial burdens not only because the school covered their tuition and travel costs but also because food, clothing, accommodation, stationery, and daily necessities were free.<sup>28</sup> Such a generous system attracted many Japanese-speaking high school graduates to take Kangde’s competitive annual entry examination.<sup>29</sup> The chief source of the school’s funds was the savings of, and loans taken by, Komai Tokuzō.<sup>30</sup>

Born in Shiga Prefecture in June 1885 into a family of Shinto priests and physicians who specialized in acupuncture for children, Komai, whose self-styled name was Bakushū 麦秋, literally the season of ripe wheat, was one of the many Japanese individuals in the Meiji (1868–1912) and the Taishō (1912–1926) eras who traveled to Manchuria to engage in political activities. His lifelong interest in the affairs of China began at the age of seventeen when he read the 1902 autobiography of Miyazaki Tōten 宮崎滔天 (1871–1922), a close friend and supporter of the founder of the Republic of China (ROC), Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925).<sup>31</sup> Observing Sun’s and Miyazaki’s failure to resist monarchical authoritarianism in China, Komai claimed in 1944 that as a high school student he dreamed of following in their footsteps and promoting republican revolution in China.<sup>32</sup> This belief motivated him to learn Chinese and to approach China’s revolutionaries in Japan, to which end he attended night courses at the Tokyo Foreign Language School (predecessor of the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies) during college in Tokyo in 1904.<sup>33</sup> In June 1910, he sailed to the Leased Territory of Dalian (Dairen) in Manchuria as an undergraduate student of the College of Agriculture, Tohoku Imperial University (Tōhoku Teikoku Daigaku Nōka Daigaku 東北帝国大学農科大学; precursor of Hokkaido University), and made use of his own savings to

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23 Kōtoku Gakuin 1935, p. 17.

24 Komai 1944, p. 219.

25 Komai 1944, p. 218.

26 Komai 1934, p. 134.

27 Komai 1934, p. 140; Hasegawa 2016, p. 238.

28 Kōtoku Gakuin 1938, p. 2.

29 For an example, see Hashimoto 1964, p. 339.

30 Komai 1934, p. 141.

31 Komai 1933, p. 5.

32 Komai 1944, p. 9.

33 Komai 1952, p. 43.

complete his bachelor's thesis in August 1911, *Manshū daizu ron* 滿洲大豆論 (On Manchuria's soy beans).<sup>34</sup> This thesis earned Komai a position at the South Manchuria Railway Company (SMRC) in August 1912 because “no one else had studied yet” the importance of Manchuria's soy beans to the SMRC's and Japan's economy.<sup>35</sup> Determined to relate his study of China to Japan's continental policies of the time, over the following two decades Komai, supported by the SMRC and the Japanese Foreign Ministry, toured virtually all of China's provinces except for Tibet, Qinghai, and Xinjiang, publishing analytical monographs on China's finance and agriculture.<sup>36</sup>

Komai became head of Manchukuo's General Affairs Board in March 1932 and principal of the newly established Datong Institute in July 1932 not only due to his understanding of China-related affairs but also his personal network within the Japanese military. Friends there included Itagaki Seishirō 板垣征四郎 (1885–1948), one of the planners of the 1931 Manchurian Incident who subsequently became Army Minister (Rikugun Daijin 陸軍大臣) in 1938, and Koiso Kuniaki 小磯国昭 (1880–1950), the Japanese Kanto Army's chief of staff from August 1932 and March 1934, who would become prime minister in 1944.<sup>37</sup> With these powerful backers in the Kanto Army, Komai often rejected proposals from army officials when he served as the country's General Affairs Board Director. “Go and ask your commander and chief of staff about how much power I have,” was Komai's favorite response to those from the Kanto Army who came to question Komai's restraint of the army's power in Manchuria.<sup>38</sup> As historian Katō Michiya observes, Komai's access to decision-making circles in Manchukuo and Japan despite the fact he had never studied in the West or taken the Qualifying Examination for Senior Officials of Japan (*Kōtō bunkan shiken* 高等文官試験) made him a “special individual among the so-called colonial officials” of prewar Japan.<sup>39</sup>

Serving as the nominal leader of Manchukuo's Japanese government officials, Komai wanted to contribute to the “peaceful unification of China” south of the Great Wall by having Japanese “participate and assist” in the Chinese people's governance of China proper, and to turn the country and Manchukuo into Japan's allies for the forthcoming confrontation with the Anglo-Saxon and Slavic nations.<sup>40</sup> Two decades of engagement with mainland China between the 1910s and the 1930s led Komai to conclude in 1933 that if the Japanese wanted to understand China and win the Chinese people's trust, they must “master their Chinese, study China's history, customs, and affairs, and grasp [the thoughts of] those who direct China's present-day development.”<sup>41</sup> These points were established as Kangde's core principles in 1935.

Enhancing Japanese influence in mainland China by promoting Sino-Japanese cooperation was not a concept Komai invented. Komai's view of China emerged within a tradition of intellectual interaction between the two countries that had developed since the beginning of the twentieth century. The Qing dynasty abolished the civil service

34 Komai 1952, pp. 60–61.

35 Komai 1952, pp. 61, 73.

36 For an introduction to Komai's early life, see Hasegawa 2016, pp. 221–237; Katō 2022, pp. 88–95.

37 Komai 1933, p. 21; Komai 1952, p. 26.

38 Yamaguchi 1967, p. 153.

39 Katō 2022, p. 87.

40 Komai 1933, pp. vii, xi.

41 Komai 1933, p. 7.

examinations and made modern academic qualifications the sole criteria of admission to government posts in 1905; by 1911, more than twenty-five thousand Chinese students were going to study in Japan each year for “some form of modern schooling” and a cheap and fast college diploma.<sup>42</sup> The Japanese government also sought to foster Japanese understanding of the Qing dynasty by establishing schools in Qing territory. The East Asian Common Culture Academy (Tōa Dōbun Shoin 東亜同文書院; hereafter Academy) is one such example. Initially established in Nanjing in 1900 as a college-equivalent school with the support of the local Qing government, the Academy was moved to Shanghai in 1901, where it became prewar Japan’s largest overseas cultural institution.<sup>43</sup> Its purpose was to “preserve China’s independence and stability in East Asia by cultivating exceptional students from China and Japan,” whom it was intended would “lay the foundations for China’s future wealth and strength.”<sup>44</sup> Hence, political science and business were the Academy’s major departments. Accepting subsidies from the Japanese government, the Academy placed Chinese-language education and Chinese affairs at the core of its curriculum for Japanese students, while focusing on teaching Chinese students the Japanese language and “Japanese-localized learnings of Western Europe.”<sup>45</sup> By August 1945, when the Academy was closed following Japan’s defeat in the Second World War, it had trained more than five thousand graduates from Japan and China, including Hayashide Kenjirō 林出賢次郎 (1882–1970), who from September 1932 to March 1938 was the interpreter for China’s last emperor and Manchukuo’s monarch, Aisin-Gioro Puyi 愛新覺羅溥儀 (1906–1967).<sup>46</sup> Konoe Fumimaro 近衛文麿 (1891–1945), who later gained renown as one of Japan’s wartime prime ministers, served as the Academy’s principal between May 1926 and December 1931.<sup>47</sup>

The Academy’s support for research travel to interior China was perhaps its most notable feature. In the summer leading up to their graduation, students would be divided into groups and, with the approval of local Chinese authorities, travel to different Chinese provinces to conduct research.<sup>48</sup> While collecting sources and data for their forthcoming research reports, students were also requested to record their daily experiences during the trip; the Academy would then edit and compile these diaries and publish them as an annual journal titled *Tōa dōbun shoin dai ryokō-shi* 東亜同文書院大旅行誌 (Travel records of East Asian Common Culture Academy).<sup>49</sup>

Frequently interacting with Academy graduates like Hayashide Kenjirō in the 1910s and the 1920s, Komai Tokuzō may well have drawn inspiration from it, although he never admitted as such in his writings.<sup>50</sup> Insisting that “Japan could not survive if China perished,”

42 Reynolds 1993, p. 42; Kawashima 2022, pp. 104–105.

43 Tōa Dōbun Shoin 1982, p. 69.

44 Tōa Dōbun Shoin 1982, pp. 91, 88.

45 Tōa Dōbun Shoin 1982, pp. 70–71, 73.

46 Tōa Dōbun Shoin 1982, p. 69; Hatano 2000, p. i.

47 Tōa Dōbun Shoin 1982, p. 84.

48 Tōa Dōbun Shoin 1982, p. 73.

49 Japanese graduates of the Academy founded Aichi University in Japan in 1946 and stored the reports and diaries in its library. In 2006, the university republished the Academy’s travel diaries as a thirty-three volume source collection with the same title, while the Academy’s research reports were published in 132 microfilm volumes as *Chūgoku chōsa ryokō hōkokusho: Tōa Dōbun Shoin* 中国調査旅行報告書: 東亜同文書院 by the publisher Yūshōdō in 1996.

50 Hayashide served as Komai’s interpreter during the latter’s research travel to Inner Mongolia in 1914. Komai 1944, p. 33.

and that “the solution of the continental problem would remain a critical national policy of Japan for the following century,” Komai highly valued Sino-Japanese reconciliation.<sup>51</sup> It was this belief that justified Kangde’s foundation in 1935.

**Striving for the Fortune of Japan and China: Kangde’s Principles and School Life**

On April 18, 1935, Kangde held an opening ceremony for over one hundred and fifty guests, including representatives from Manchukuo. Classes had begun at its campus in Takarazuka near the eastern end of Mt. Rokkō 六甲 six days earlier, on 12 April.<sup>52</sup> Sakasegawa 逆瀬川, the closest train station to Kangde, was about 1.1 kilometers away, with downtown Takarazuka the same distance again.<sup>53</sup> Even today, one cannot reach Sakasegawa station from the nearby big cities like Kyoto, Osaka, and Kobe without a transfer; in the early 1930s, the area surrounding Kangde was undeveloped land that Komai purchased from the Hanshin Express Railway Corporation (Hanshin Kyūkō Dentetsu 阪神急行電鉄; present-day Hankyū Corporation).<sup>54</sup> By entrusting the Obayashi Corporation 大林組—the construction firm responsible for Manchukuo’s State Council, Central Bank, and the Kanto Army’s headquarters in the capital city of Xijing (Changchun)—to build Kangde’s campus in October 1934, in five months Komai had built a 620 square meter two-floor Western-style school building with an affiliated 16 meter high Asian-style watchtower and a 440 square meter two-floor dormitory (see figure 1).<sup>55</sup> Besides classrooms, offices, bedrooms, bathrooms,



Figure 1. Kangde’s campus in 1938. The building behind the watchtower had classrooms, offices, guestrooms, and a library, while the two small buildings to the right of the watchtower from left to right are, respectively, the auditorium and warehouse. The school’s front gate is beside the warehouse. Kangde’s dormitory, tennis court, and gymnasium are not visible in this photo. Behind the campus is Mt. Rokkō. *Kōtoku Gakuin* 1938, n.p.

51 Komai 1933, p. 2; Komai 1944, p. 2.

52 *Osaka Asabi Shinbun Kōbe ban* 大阪朝日新聞神戸版. “Tōyō heiwa kakuritsu ni tsuchikau nekketsu ji” 東洋平和確立に培ふ熱血児. 18 April 1935, p. 5. April is the beginning of the school year in Japan.

53 Matoba 1964, p. 391.

54 *Kōtoku Gakuin* 1935, p. 26.

55 *Kōtoku Gakuin* 1935, p. 28; *Kōtoku Gakuin* 1938, p. 47; Bakushū Komai Tokuzō ryakufu 1964, p. 567.

guestrooms, recreation rooms, a library, kitchen, and cafeteria, the campus also had a gymnasium, a tennis court, and a warehouse.<sup>56</sup> Including the land purchase, the total cost of construction was 64,000 Japanese yen (approximately 130 million yen today), which Komai covered personally.<sup>57</sup>

The sources of Komai's funds are unclear, although a portion of it came from the pension that Manchukuo's chief executive Puyi (who was enthroned as the emperor of Manchukuo in March 1934) awarded him in July 1933.<sup>58</sup> Komai clearly accumulated wealth during his service in the SMRC, the Japanese Foreign Ministry, and the Manchukuo General Affairs Board from the 1910s to the early 1930s. A Kangde student noted in 1964 that while "prewar politicians with no prominent titles" often suffered financial plights, Komai was an exception.<sup>59</sup> As well as the salaries he accrued in Manchuria and Japan and the savings of his Shinto priest family, Komai's personal network in the Manchukuo government must have provided another source of funds for Kangde's operation.

Although Komai owned a villa near Kangde's campus and often resided there from 1935 to 1944, he gave no details why he chose to establish the school in such a secluded place rather than a major city like Tokyo or Osaka.<sup>60</sup> In his 1952 recollections, though, Komai did briefly mention that he chose Takarazuka because he "wanted to sidestep politics" (*seiji-teki no shigeiki o saketai* 政治的の刺戟をさけたい).<sup>61</sup> "Politics" here might refer to military oversight, as Komai in the same text described Japan in the mid-1930s as a "country governed by the police" and Japan's education industry as "extremely moribund" thanks to its monitoring by the police and military.<sup>62</sup> The widespread militarist sentiment that characterized Japanese society in the early 1930s was not conducive to promoting China-centered education. Historian Louise Young notes that ordinary Japanese citizens at the time were "by and large enthusiastic consumers of imperial ideology," given the voluntary cooperation of the domestic publishing and entertainment industries with "army propagandists" who supported Japanese territorial expansion following the 1931 Manchurian Incident.<sup>63</sup> Locating Kangde away from the cities would help Komai ensure that the school avoid unnecessary interference from the military and "enthusiastic consumers of imperial ideology."

Komai's caution was well founded as he had generated many political rivals among both the Chinese-speaking and Japanese sides during his service in Manchukuo. His insistence on having Japanese direct Manchukuo's affairs, apparently due to his dissatisfaction with the bureaucratic abilities of Manchukuo's other ethnicities, angered individuals like Zheng Xiaoxu 鄭孝胥 (1860–1938), Manchukuo's first prime minister, who had earlier taught Komai calligraphy and Han Chinese poetry in the 1920s. Zheng would resign in protest against Komai in September 1932.<sup>64</sup> On the Japanese side, Komai utilized the Kanto Army to remove Japanese bureaucrats inside the Manchukuo government who opposed his aim of centralizing power in Manchukuo's State Council. By exploiting his personal networks

56 Kōtoku Gakuin 1935, p. 29; Kōtoku Gakuin 1938, p. 47.

57 Kōtoku Gakuin 1935, p. 14.

58 Hitotsu no shigoto 1935, p. 100.

59 Yokoyama 1964, p. 347.

60 Yokoyama 1964, p. 344.

61 Komai 1952, p. 284.

62 Komai 1952, p. 287.

63 Young 1996, p. 95; Young 1998, p. 56.

64 Komai 1933, p. vii; Zheng 1993, vol. 5, p. 2405.



in the Kanto Army, Komai also sought to constrain the interference of lower-level Kanto Army officials in Manchukuo's national policies.<sup>65</sup> Tense personal relationships with both Manchukuo's Chinese-speaking government leaders and Japanese officials were key to the Kanto Army's decision to "invite" Komai to return to Japan in July 1933, for the ostensible purpose of analyzing countermeasures against the Soviet Union.<sup>66</sup> Komai's loss of power in Manchukuo did not extinguish his enthusiasm for aiding mainland China. Rather, it emphasized to him the importance of cultivating "experts in Manchurian and Chinese affairs" to develop Japan's primacy in a putative Asian alliance encompassing Japan, the ROC, and Manchukuo.<sup>67</sup>

For Komai, experts in China-related affairs meant those who possessed a native-level proficiency in Chinese able to interact with Chinese-speaking ethnicities, and a grasp of the "big picture regarding Manchukuo's and China's economy" and politics.<sup>68</sup> According to Komai, Japanese interpreters in Mandarin who graduated from Japan's other language schools relied excessively on the logic of Japanese grammar to form their sentences in Mandarin, and thus lacked the requisite linguistic skills to move their audience using emotion or humor.<sup>69</sup> Having frequently hired those graduates to serve as his interpreters over the past two decades, Komai concluded that few could communicate freely with Chinese-speaking ethnicities in Mandarin, let alone write Han Chinese articles like a native speaker.<sup>70</sup> Komai described the work of those in Japan who analyzed China's economy and politics as "empty theoretical discussions" that were of little use in grasping the changing political situation in China. He reserved particular contempt, however, for Japanese continental activists in mainland China who tried to penetrate local governments and turn Manchukuo and China proper into Japan's protectorates, as their activities damaged Japan's reputation among the Chinese-speaking population.<sup>71</sup> Kangde aimed to cultivate a group of experts on China who could "foster peace in East Asia based on their pure passion" for China and the Chinese people by properly training its students to speak and write in Han Chinese and by giving them a solid background in the current affairs of mainland China.<sup>72</sup> Komai only admitted around ten students to Kangde each year, despite having sufficient financial resources to have supported more.<sup>73</sup> Including lecturers and staff, the number of people involved with Kangde never exceeded fifty people at any one time.

Other than funding, the most important concern for Komai was to secure competent lecturers for Kangde. In 1935, Komai hired three full-time professors for the school. They were Ueno Takashi, a former Osaka University of Commerce (Ōsaka Shōka Daigaku 大阪商科大学) professor of Chinese who had served as Prime Minister Zheng Xiaoxu's secretary in Manchukuo from 1932 to 1934; Yai Shizuo 屋井鎮雄 (d. 1964), who served as a teacher at Niigata Normal School (Niigata Shihan Gakkō 新潟師範学校) before joining Kangde

65 Komai 1944, p. 215; Fujikawa 1981, pp. 52–53.

66 Komai 1944, pp. 216–217.

67 Komai 1934, p. 134.

68 Komai 1934, p. 135.

69 Hitotsu no shigoto 1935, p. 101.

70 Komai 1934, p. 135.

71 Komai 1934, pp. 135–136.

72 Komai 1934, pp. 136, 138–139.

73 That number did fluctuate. For example, the school admitted six students in 1936 and thirteen students in 1937. Rankō kai 1964, p. 493.

and in Komai's words was an "undiscovered talent in the study of China"; and Susaki Jihei 須崎治兵衛, a member of Manchukuo's Privy Council who had simultaneously served as Komai's secretary in Manchukuo.<sup>74</sup> Komai did not engage in teaching activities because he believed that he did not possess the knowledge and morality of a teacher, although he visited Kangde once or twice a month to give talks to the students on contemporary international affairs.<sup>75</sup> Yai Shizuo was manager of the school's affairs, with the title "school supervisor" (*gakkan* 学監), and his duties ranging from handling and auditing the school's expenditures to cultivating the upright personalities of individual students.<sup>76</sup> To preserve the quality of Kangde's Chinese-language education, Komai hired its graduates to teach courses for new students after 1938, and he invited more scholars, journalists, lawyers, and military officials in Japan to serve as sessional lecturers on subjects like finance, law, politics, and the militaries of both Japan and China.<sup>77</sup>

Komai trusted in the abilities of Kangde's graduates to teach newcomers because they had passed through both the school's rigorous entry examinations and three-year study and training program, and thus met Komai's expectations with regards to becoming experts in Chinese affairs. Other than a written test on Japanese, Han Chinese texts, English translations, and algebra, Kangde's entry examinations, which were held at Kangde in early February each year, also included a physical examination and an interview.<sup>78</sup> Those who passed the physical examination on the first day could proceed to the written examinations on the second day. The remaining candidates would then have interviews with Komai and Ueno on day three. Komai and Ueno would select the new students and inform individuals of the result via mail by the end of February.<sup>79</sup> Because of Komai's fame in Japan and the school's generous scholarships, several hundred Japanese high school graduates would take Kangde's examination every year; some dreamed of becoming Komai's disciple because they frequently learned about Komai's activities in Manchukuo from domestic news coverage.<sup>80</sup> Those who met Komai in person during the interviews remembered his sharp gaze, one that "seemed to see through everything," as one Kangde student recalled in 1964.<sup>81</sup>

Admission to Kangde following this competitive entry examination marked the start of a rigorous three-year academic training program in an isolated environment. Residing in Kangde's dormitory, students were only free to leave the campus on Saturday afternoons, Sunday during the daytime, and holidays, with the stipulation that they must return before 6 pm between April and October and 5 pm between November and March. Any other outings required the school's permission.<sup>82</sup> At school, students took courses in law, finance, accounting, Manchukuo- and China-related affairs, commercial English, and practical Mongolian and Russian; each course occupied two to three hours of a thirty-one hour

74 Komai 1934, pp. 137–138; Kōtoku Gakuin 1935, p. 44. The author assumes Yai Shizuo, the characters may also be read Yai Shigekatsu.

75 Komai 1934, p. 137; Suzuka 1964, p. 320.

76 Suzuka 1964, p. 320; Komai 1934, p. 137; Kōtoku Gakuin 1935, p. 17.

77 Kōtoku Gakuin 1935, pp. 44–45; Kōtoku Gakuin 1938, pp. 34–35.

78 *Juken junpō* 1939. Except for in 1935, when the examinations were held in Osaka because the campus was under construction; see Akama 1964, p. 325.

79 *Juken junpō* 1939.

80 Matoba 1964, p. 392.

81 Akama 1964, p. 325.

82 Kōtoku Gakuin 1938, pp. 16–17.

weekly teaching schedule.<sup>83</sup> Courses in Mandarin (*Shinago* 支那語) and written Chinese (*Shinagobun* 支那語文) occupied more than half of the weekly schedule: eighteen hours for first year students; nineteen hours for second year students; and seventeen hours for third-year students.<sup>84</sup>

Encompassing grammar, composition, pronunciation, conversation, written translation, and oral interpretation, Kangde's Chinese-language education began by cultivating individual students' familiarity with Chinese grammar and the Beijing accent in the first and second years, and culminated in advanced translation in the third year.<sup>85</sup> Under the guidance of Ueno Takashi, who "could fluently speak the language spoken at the Beijing imperial court," and Susaki Jihei, who "mixed his Beijing accent with standard terms and slang," students practiced their Chinese in a variety of ways: learning casual and formal conversations, reading China's ancient classics in Mandarin, analyzing grammar and composition, and examining and translating Chinese articles, news reports, government documents, and monographs.<sup>86</sup> A Kangde graduate suggested that as those who managed to enter Kangde were all talented in Chinese, and because no one wanted to be expelled from the school for laziness and potentially forced to repay their scholarships, after three years of study all Kangde graduates could flexibly translate between Mandarin and Japanese, even if the speaker had a "heavy regional accent" or often "referenced abstruse phrases from ancient Chinese classics."<sup>87</sup> The same person believed that the average Chinese-language ability of Kangde's graduates greatly exceeded those who graduated from the Shanghai East Asian Common Culture Academy or those college students in Tokyo and Osaka who majored in Chinese.<sup>88</sup>

Besides a full academic curriculum, physical training was another feature of the Kangde experience. Individual students would travel annually to Manchuria or China proper for research, and on to postgraduate employment in mainland China. In the 1930s and the early 1940s the assassination of Japanese officials in both Manchukuo and China proper by local Chinese revolutionaries and bandits was a frequent occurrence. Consequently, Komai Tokuzō expected Kangde students to be sound of health and body, and "prepared to sacrifice themselves for emperor and nation in case of emergency."<sup>89</sup> Kangde's strict daily schedule involved getting up at 5:50 am between April and October and 6:20 am from November to March and going to bed at 9:30 pm every day. On weekdays, students had physical training from 2 or 3 pm in the afternoon until their dinner at 5:30 pm.<sup>90</sup> Kangde's physical training consisted of two or three hours of military education a week, live fire drills and camping under the supervision of officers from the Japanese Army, together with an hour or two

83 Second- and third-year students had twenty-nine hours of classes every week. Mongolian and Russian were courses for third-year students; each of them occupied three hours a week. Kōtoku Gakuin 1935, p. 19; Kōtoku Gakuin 1938, p. 8.

84 Kōtoku Gakuin 1935, p. 19.

85 Kōtoku Gakuin 1935, p. 49.

86 Suzuka 1964, p. 320; Kōtoku Gakuin 1935, p. 49; Kōtoku Gakuin 1938, p. 39.

87 Suzuka 1964, p. 321. Articles 11 and 12 of Kangde's charter empowered the school to expel those who "harm the school's image" and let those whose "academic ability or physical strength do not meet [the school's] standard" quit school. Article 12 suggested that Kangde might ask those whom the school expelled to repay the scholarships that the school provided them. Kōtoku Gakuin 1935, pp. 19–20.

88 Suzuka 1964, p. 321.

89 Komai 1934, p. 139.

90 Kōtoku Gakuin 1938, p. 15.

of daily manual labor, and sports in the late afternoon.<sup>91</sup> Reclamation of the mountains surrounding Kangde was a common activity for the students. A 1938 graduate of Kangde, for example, recalled that students, with their supervisor Yai Shizuo, manhandled huge stones from the nearby riverbank, and used them to construct Kangde's wall, tennis court, and path to the front gate. As an eighteen-year-old high school graduate who "had never conducted physical labor before," that individual confessed that he and many of his classmates at the time thought of the Kangde training as "forced labor" and themselves as coolies, although when recalling that experience thirty years later he thanked Kangde for providing him with an opportunity to exercise.<sup>92</sup> Kangde's harsh education and training sought to harden and discipline its students so that during their research travel in mainland China they could live with local Chinese peasant families and eat the same food without discomfort.<sup>93</sup> In this regard, at least, Komai Tokuzō was satisfied, as he later claimed that not a single Kangde graduate failed to win the "respect and love" of local Chinese-speaking residents during their ephemeral employment and service in mainland China prior to Japan's surrender in 1945.<sup>94</sup>

In contrast to Kangde's "military regulations" and "spartan education," in the words of two of its graduates, was the school's pleasant learning environment and cordial student-principal relationship.<sup>95</sup> To compensate for its students' physical exertions, Kangde's cafeteria offered unlimited food at mealtimes, all prepared by an old couple from a nearby village.<sup>96</sup> If Komai visited the campus after hunting, he often brought any pheasants and mallards he bagged that day, enabling students to have enough meat to eat for the following two or three days.<sup>97</sup> Besides dining at the cafeteria, students could take food with them on weekends and holidays, when they left the campus on trips to places like Osaka, Kobe, and Mt. Rokkō.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, the cafeteria offered students dessert every week, which students often took while composing poems and songs together.<sup>99</sup>

Like the East Asian Common Culture Academy, Komai asked students to record their daily experiences at school and in mainland China. He also purchased cameras for Kangde's students and sought to categorize the photos that the students took as part of Kangde's heritage.<sup>100</sup> Thanks to his personal networks in mainland China, Komai managed to assign many Kangde graduates to positions in Manchukuo's or northern China's government and civil organizations.<sup>101</sup> At each year's graduation ceremony, Komai always gave a sincere farewell speech and held a banquet for them.<sup>102</sup> On both occasions, he would remind graduates of their mission to foster Sino-Japanese understanding and cooperation, saying, "We are not merely striving for the benefit of Japan; we are also struggling for the cause of China."<sup>103</sup>

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91 Kōtoku Gakuin 1935, p. 19; Kōtoku Gakuin 1938, pp. 15, 45.

92 Akama 1964, pp. 325–326.

93 Ishizaki 1964, p. 328.

94 Komai 1952, p. 284.

95 Suzuka 1964, p. 320; Yokoyama 1964, p. 344.

96 Suzuka 1964, p. 323.

97 Suzuka 1964, p. 323.

98 Imaizumi 1964, p. 394.

99 Suzuka 1964, p. 323.

100 Hirasaka 1964, p. 351.

101 Sakata 1964, p. 105; Yamatani 1964, p. 388.

102 Tazaki 1964, pp. 141–142.

103 Kajikawa 1964, p. 330.

Despite Komai's attentive concern for Kangde as the means to slowly nudge Sino-Japanese relations back onto the track of coexistence, Japan intensified its military invasion of China proper after July 1937. Subsequently, the Pacific War broke out in December 1941, and in 1944, Komai eventually decided to close Kangde, nine years after its foundation.

### **Left Forgotten in the History of Invasion: Kangde's Closure and the Postwar Experiences of Its Graduates**

In February 1944, after becoming aware of Komai Tokuzō's decision to close the school at the end of that academic year, the Japanese Navy ordered the East Asian Bearing Corporation to purchase Kangde from Komai as the company's staff dormitory.<sup>104</sup> Domestic newspapers, including the Hyogo prefectural edition of *Asahi Shinbun*, ignored Kangde's closure in March 1944 amid reports on the war and the heroic sacrifice of Japanese soldiers in China proper and the Pacific. In his 1952 memoirs, Komai criticized both the wartime Japanese Ministry of Education and those in charge of school affairs in the Hyogo prefectural government for their indifference to Kangde. No one from those institutions visited Kangde during the nine years of its existence, and Komai argued that none of them understood the significance of Sino-Japanese cooperation for the rise of Japan as the preeminent power in Asia, writing, "they all lived in their dreams."<sup>105</sup>

The exact reasons for Kangde's closure in March 1944 are unclear; Komai remained silent about this in his writings. Historians thus need to find clues in the scattered postwar narratives of the school's graduates. Personnel shortages after the war between Japan and the ROC broke out in 1937 may well have been an important reason for Komai's decision. Due to military mobilization, more Japanese high school and university graduates joined the army and the navy, and by the end of 1943, as the Pacific War was reaching its climax, "almost all the [able-bodied] youths of Japan were enlisted in the military."<sup>106</sup> Such a situation made the "admission of new students to Kangde a difficult task," recalled Toki Hachirō, a Kangde graduate and lecturer, in 1964.<sup>107</sup> Indeed, the school's personnel shortages were already conspicuous in 1940 due to the war with the ROC. School Supervisor Yai Shizuo was transferred to the navy as a civil official in September 1940, while Umezawa Yasuo 梅沢康夫 (b. 1917), a Kangde lecturer in Mandarin and written Chinese who had graduated from the school in 1938, was mobilized and sent to the frontlines in mainland China, where he soon died in battle.<sup>108</sup> Kangde's annual research trips to mainland China were also forcibly halted in July 1943 thanks to the exacerbation of military clashes between Japan and the ROC across northern and southern China.<sup>109</sup> Another important reason for Kangde's closure was the Japanese military's growing interference in education from the late 1930s onwards. While initially English, Mongolian, and Russian had been the school's secondary languages of instruction, due to their relevance for Japan's interactions on the Asian continent, Komai reluctantly followed orders from the military-directed Ministry of Education and replaced

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104 Toki 1964, pp. 336–337.

105 Komai 1952, p. 287.

106 Toki 1964, p. 336.

107 Toki 1964, p. 337.

108 Toki 1964, p. 335; Ueno 1964, p. 303.

109 Bakushū Komai Tokuzō ryakufu 1964, p. 569.

them with German after April 1941.<sup>110</sup> By the end of 1943, internal pressures and external dilemmas had clearly become insurmountable obstacles to Kangde's operation; although Komai could still have funded the school, closure seemed to be the only option that lay open to him. After closing Kangde, Komai followed the Japanese government's evacuation policy responding to the American bombardment of Japanese cities and settled in the small village of Nawa 名和在 Gunma Prefecture in November 1944.

Following Japan's defeat, Komai was in 1946 indicted as a suspected war criminal by the International Military Tribunal for the Far East for his erstwhile service in Manchukuo. In July and August of that year, Komai was repeatedly interrogated about his activities in mainland China from the 1910s onwards, as well as his relations with the Japanese military, but the Tribunal eventually did not prosecute him.<sup>111</sup> Existing documentation does not provide exact reasons on why the Tribunal decided to exonerate Komai, but this article considers Komai's exit from Manchukuo's inner circle in 1933 a probable cause. Moreover, his firm opposition to Japan's confrontation with the ROC and distance from the military likely convinced the Americans of his innocence, as the Tribunal primarily targeted those "responsible for decision-making at the highest operational level" of Japan's home government and "Japanese military personnel for ordinary war crimes against civilians in occupied territories and prisoners of war."<sup>112</sup>

According to the 1964 recollections of former Kangde professor Ueno Takashi, Komai visited Itagaki Seishirō, the Japanese army minister, in the Japanese-occupied ROC capital of Nanjing in 1938 and remonstrated with Itagaki to use his authority to withdraw Japanese soldiers from China proper. For Komai, military confrontation had "hundreds of harms and zero benefits" for Japan.<sup>113</sup> Ueno recalled that from 1938 to 1944, Komai visited Japanese government institutions in charge of affairs in China, like the Ministry of Greater East Asia (Daitōashō 大東亜省) and the Asia Development Board (Kōain 興亜院), and made several unsuccessful efforts to persuade them of the benefits of negotiating an end to Japan's war with the ROC.<sup>114</sup> Other graduates emphasized that Komai passed up opportunities to exert his influence on Japan's overseas politics before the country's August 1945 defeat because of his dissatisfaction with the military's China policies. After the Marco Polo Bridge Incident of July 1937 broke out, for example, Komai declined an invitation from the former Kanto Army commander Honjō Shigeru 本庄繁 (1876–1945) to join the Japanese home government.<sup>115</sup> Before Komai left Takarazuka for Nawa in November 1944, Prime Minister Koiso Kuniaki's cabinet secretary visited Komai, and invited him to become a member of the Koiso cabinet. Komai declined, arguably due to his disappointment with Japan's reckless policies of military expansion.<sup>116</sup> Several months later, in April 1945, Komai declined an offer from Minami Jirō 南次郎 (1874–1955), the former Kanto Army commander and governor general of Korea, to become director of the SMRC.<sup>117</sup> As his son-in-law noted, his "concerns regarding the

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110 Ichikawa 1964, p. 406.

111 Bakushū Komai Tokuzō ryakufu 1964, p. 570.

112 Wilson 2015, pp. 747, 760.

113 Ueno 1964, p. 309.

114 Ueno 1968, p. 52.

115 Shimizu 1964, p. 223.

116 Bakushū Komai Tokuzō ryakufu 1964, p. 570.

117 Bakushū Komai Tokuzō ryakufu 1964, p. 570.

imprudent adventure of the Japanese military for misleading Japan” (*gun no mufunbetsuna bōkenshugi ga Nihon o ayamaru koto o osoreteita* 軍の無分別な冒険主義が日本を誤ることを恐れていた) made Komai keep his distance from the government after 1937.<sup>118</sup> In the postwar period, too, Komai maintained his distance from politics, involving himself in the logging industry in Nagano Prefecture and natural resource development on Mt. Fuji until he died from cystitis, and kidney and heart failure, at his private residence in Tokyo on 13 May 1961.<sup>119</sup>

In contrast to Komai’s relatively stable later life, depression appeared to dog the footsteps of most of the Kangde’s surviving graduates after 1945. Among those who returned to Japan, a few did manage to enter the government, although many became merchants and office workers.<sup>120</sup> Even among those who became civil servants, however, the Cold War meant there were few opportunities to use their proficiency in Chinese and knowledge of Chinese society, and none of the school’s graduates had any involvement with Japan’s postwar relations with mainland China and Taiwan. Frustration was the primary emotion afflicting Kangde graduates for the rest of their lives. This was not only because, as one Kangde graduate stated in 1964, “what [they] learned and suffered for had all become meaningless” after Japan’s defeat but also because they had “lost [their] life goal” of helping Japan shape a peaceful order through Sino-Japanese cooperation.<sup>121</sup> Kangde’s graduates, along with some former graduates of Kyoto, Waseda, and Hokkaido universities who knew Komai, founded the Rankō kai 蘭交会 in June 1947. This alumni group served as an outlet for their frustrations, and allowed them to memorialize their youth, their school life in Kangde, and their interactions with Komai Tokuzō.<sup>122</sup> Frequently visiting Komai in Tokyo and discussing Asia’s affairs with him, the group’s members, especially the Kangde graduates, often sang Chinese songs at their parties.<sup>123</sup> Attending Komai’s funeral on 18 May 1961, they described themselves as “Komai’s legacy in this world.”<sup>124</sup>

The disappearance of the Japanese Empire from Japanese memory in the postwar years generated frustration among the Kangde graduates. Historian Katō Kiyofumi argues that the remarkable economic growth that followed the end of the American Occupation in 1952 helped those who had remained in Japan throughout the war dichotomize their experiences in the Shōwa era into the “prolonged and tough years of war” from 1931 to 1945 and the “advent of a new era” after 1945 in the postwar era; neither side of this dichotomy possessed a concrete image of the Japanese Empire, a country of vast overseas territories, concessions, and spheres of influence.<sup>125</sup> The forgetting of this empire in Japanese popular memory, Katō argues, precludes the possibility of empathy by those who remained in Japan and had no overseas experiences during the war for those who were involved in the construction of the empire.<sup>126</sup> The former group instead blamed the latter as the cause of their wartime sufferings

118 Utsunomiya 1964, p. 283.

119 Bakushū Komai Tokuzō ryakufu 1964, pp. 573–575.

120 For example, see Suzuka 1964, p. 324; Akama 1964, p. 327; Ishizaki 1964, p. 328.

121 Suzuka 1964, p. 324.

122 *Ran* means orchid; *kō* means communication or interaction; and *kai* means society. The group had about one hundred members. Rankō kai 1964, p. 542.

123 Rankō kai 1964, p. 542; Matoba 1964, p. 393.

124 Rankō kai 1964, p. 544.

125 Katō 2020, p. 1.

126 Katō 2020, p. 2.

at home because postwar Japanese society considered the years of 1931–1945 a “history of invasion.”<sup>127</sup> Yet for the empire’s participants, those who were trapped in the Japanese-occupied overseas territories when Japan surrendered, and those who “considered themselves victims in the postwar liquidations of the Japanese Empire,” the former Greater Empire of Japan forever remained a vivid and relevant image.<sup>128</sup>

Indeed, a lack of interest in learning the stories of their compatriots in mainland China, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific among Japanese civilians in the postwar era made returnees from those places a group of “abandoned people” in Japanese society after 1945, unable to amplify their voices beyond their own circles.<sup>129</sup> Moreover, growing Cold War tensions in Asia after 1948 made more detailed investigations of the roles that different individuals and institutions in the Japanese Empire played in fostering Japan’s oligarchy, militarism, and wartime atrocities an untimely task for the United States.<sup>130</sup> The termination of investigation for Japanese war responsibility further blurred the existing vaguely-defined boundary between innocence and guilt over the Japanese people’s five-decade history of empire-building between 1895 and 1945. It might also convince some observers that many of the perpetrators of invasion in Japan were left unpunished. Yet at least for the graduates of Kangde, their academic and physical training, or their activities on the mainland, were unrelated to the invasion; they would therefore never consider themselves invaders, no matter how the Japanese who had remained at home and the people of Japan’s neighboring countries adjudged the former Japanese Empire. Their occasional visits to Kangde after 1945 reveal their identification with the school’s ideals and determination to celebrate memories of their lost youth and ambitions in an almost forgotten story of Sino-Japanese cooperation.

### **Conclusion: The Legacy of Kangde**

This article has explored Kangde’s bitter struggle to realize Sino-Japanese cooperation from 1935 to 1944, yet what is Kangde’s legacy? This is the most difficult question for historians to answer, given the scarcity of extant sources on the school and on its surviving graduates’ postwar activities in Japan. If one considers Kangde’s legacy for Japanese society, it perhaps cultivated a group of upright, disciplined, and multilingual individuals who worked in multiple fields, like business, industry, education, press, and public service. To give some examples, Toki Hachirō, the 1938 Kangde graduate and lecturer, became director of the Hiroshima Fire Department in the postwar era and gained his colleagues’ respect for his “impartial judgment, thoughtful planning, and prompt action.”<sup>131</sup> Kajikawa Tatsuhiko 梶川辰彦, Toki’s classmate, worked for the Nitchū Bōeki Sokushinkai 日中貿易促進会 (Japan-China Trade Promotion Council) as an interpreter for Japanese and mainland Chinese fishermen.<sup>132</sup> Inagaki Masao 稲垣正夫, a 1941 Kangde graduate, served in the Japanese Foreign Ministry as a foreign affairs official in the postwar era and, thanks to his fluency in Mandarin, taught Japanese to ROC delegates who had fled from mainland China to Japan

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127 Yamatani 1964, p. 387.

128 Katō 2020, pp. 2, 231.

129 Katō 2020, p. 51.

130 Wilson 2017, p. 102.

131 Sakata 1964, p. 106.

132 Kajikawa 1964, p. 328.



after 1949 on behalf of the Ministry.<sup>133</sup> Nevertheless, despite Kangde graduates possessing native-level proficiency in the Chinese language, and confidence in their deep understanding of the Han Chinese, they were not directly involved in postwar relations between Japan and China. While the historian Casper Wits observes that virtually all of those in charge of Japan's indirect communications with the PRC between 1949 and 1972 had developed their personal ties with mainland China during the Japanese Empire rather than in the postwar era, the Kangde case suggests that former lower-level imperial bureaucrats did not have the same opportunities to participate in this political backchannel between Japan and the PRC.<sup>134</sup>

Other than emphasizing Kangde's legacy for postwar Japanese society, it is also important for historians to acknowledge the significance of nostalgic accounts like Kangde for demonstrating the diversity of views in 1930s and 1940s Japan. This could help historians better understand Japan's fragmented empire and bureaucracy in Manchuria, Inner Mongolia, and China proper. Writing in 1968, the former Kangde professor Ueno Takashi praised the school's graduates and other Japanese officials for their "determination and passion to construct a peaceful utopia in East Asia."<sup>135</sup> For Ueno, it is not fair to collapse the struggles of those people into the "simple notion of invasion," writing, "we have no option beyond hoping that future historians will make an impartial judgement" on Japan's interactions in Manchuria and China proper.<sup>136</sup> While Kangde's lecturers and graduates could celebrate and justify their efforts to promote Sino-Japanese cooperation amid Japanese military aggression, researchers must remember that the school ultimately shared the military's objective of making Japan's empire the supervisory force in China and the rest of East Asia, even if the school advocated soft power over subjugation. Hence, Ueno's account of Kangde generates two questions for researchers: how do cases like Kangde challenge or expand one's understanding of Japan's imperial relations with China in the early twentieth century, and how should one historicize and evaluate those Japanese like Kangde's graduates who passionately tried to shape Japan's order in mainland China? One way to answer such questions is to conduct more studies on the activities of those who, Ueno Takashi believed, tried to construct "a peaceful utopia in East Asia." Another possible way is to examine the responses of local Chinese to the activities when related sources become accessible in mainland China.<sup>137</sup> Without such efforts, perhaps the studies of Japan's empire will continue to keep a distance from what Ueno viewed as "impartial."

Regardless of nationality and emphasis, perhaps historians of modern East Asia bear some responsibility for the increasing prominence of those who try to whitewash the Japanese Empire in Japanese society today. Historians' relative neglect of aspects of empire other than Japanese privilege and local victimization continues to provide this group with opportunities to relativize culpability, frequently inverting perpetrators and victims with cases that historians rarely study and points that historians disdain to challenge. To close the gap between Japanese and Chinese when reflecting on their complex half-century of interactions

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133 Inagaki 1964, p. 366.

134 Wits 2015, pp. 6, 158.

135 Ueno 1968, p. 50.

136 Ueno 1968, p. 50.

137 The PRC restricts access to many of the surviving Republican- and Manchukuo-era documents stored at different archives and libraries across mainland China.

from 1894 to 1945, it may be important to further excavate and analyze actual participants in Sino-Japanese interactions and the efforts made on both the Japanese and the Chinese sides to comprehend each other's positions and perspectives in the early twentieth century. Until researchers and ordinary Japanese and Chinese citizens start to accomplish these tasks, the specter of Japan's empire will continue to haunt relations between Japan and China for the foreseeable future.

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## The Imperial Portrait and Palace Conservatism in Occupied Japan

Hirokazu YOSHIE\*

Prior to Japan's surrender in 1945, Emperor Hirohito enjoyed sovereign authority over his people. This relationship was inverted during the Allied Occupation with the introduction of popular sovereignty, granting the Japanese people power to decide whether or not to retain the throne. To understand how the imperial institution adapted to this postwar framework, many scholars focus on the use of mass media by the palace leadership, which transformed Hirohito into a likable celebrity figure eliciting popular approval. This article supplements the media-centered narrative through an examination of the Imperial Household Ministry's adaptation of the imperial portrait (*goshin'ei*)—a prewar/wartime symbol of emperor-centered ideology—in the immediate postwar years. The analysis offered here contextualizes these efforts by considering the ministry leadership's conservative agenda of protecting Hirohito, his prewar/wartime form of emperorship, and their own administrative independence. The success of their efforts is shown by the fact that today the imperial portrait has a place in Japanese society, offering particular groups a means to endorse the imperial institution without inviting public criticism.

**Keywords:** *goshin'ei*, symbolic emperor, Allied Occupation, Imperial Household Ministry

“With regard to Imperial Portrait [*sic*], policy is clear,” wrote Second Lieutenant Scott George, a member of CIE—the Civil Information and Education Division, responsible for the demilitarization and democratization of Japanese religion and education after the war—in a memorandum to his supervisor, Lieutenant Colonel Mark Orr, on 10 July 1946. In this memorandum, George was analyzing the Imperial Household Ministry's recent policy towards the imperial portrait (*goshin'ei* 御真影), official photographs of the emperor and empress. Prior to the end of the war, the imperial portrait had been a symbol of the state's emperor-centered ideology and was placed by the Japanese government in public schools

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for nationalistic purposes (see figure 1). As the Allied Occupation (September 1945 to April 1952) began, CIE made it clear that the position of the imperial portrait in public education needed to change drastically. Before the end of 1945, the Imperial Household Ministry had recalled the imperial portraits from public schools and government offices, retaken photographs of both the emperor and the empress, and created new, separate, imperial portraits of the two (see figure 2). In April 1946, the ministry published new guidelines on how these revamped imperial portraits should be distributed and handled.

It was these guidelines that George referred to as “policy” in July 1946. The second lieutenant judged the ministry’s new policy satisfactory, concluding, “New Portraits are presumably being prepared and will be forwarded to all schools [...and] be placed on walls of schools.”<sup>1</sup> Over the following two decades, the ministry and its successor organizations granted more than two thousand five hundred new portraits of the emperor and empress to individuals and institutions in Japan and abroad. The distribution was conducted peacefully, arousing no public criticism regarding a former ideological apparatus of imperial Japan. However, contrary to George’s expectations, none of the portraits were given to public schools. Instead, the Imperial Household Ministry and its successors gave hundreds of portraits to other individuals and groups in areas such as social welfare and diplomacy. This gap between the CIE’s expectations and the actual pattern of distribution suggests that the ministry did not deploy the new imperial portraits merely to satisfy the victors’ demands, but in accordance with its own interests, which cannot be grasped if one limits the analysis to materials produced by the occupation. By incorporating the views of ministry leaders, this article will examine the Imperial Household Ministry’s rehabilitation of the imperial portrait in the immediate postwar years.

The ministry’s efforts to repurpose the portrait arguably aided postwar Japan to look favorably on the *goshin’ei*, and on the imperial institution it represented. The official website of the Embassy of Japan in Israel, for example, shares a story about the birthday reception for Akihito 明仁 (the Heisei emperor; 1933–) held at the ambassador’s residence on 4 December 2014. Alongside pictures of the banquet and a cultural performance, one finds an image of the pair of imperial portraits, captioned “*Goshin’ei* of Their Majesties the Emperor and the Empress displayed during the reception.”<sup>2</sup> The use of that term would typically evoke in scholars of Japanese history memories of imperial Japan’s practices of emperor worship. But for these Japanese diplomats, *goshin’ei* is not simply a symbol of prewar/wartime ideology; the picture of the emperor and empress grants them a socially acceptable way to express affirmation of the imperial institution. It requires a detailed analysis of the object’s trajectory during more than seventy years of postwar Japan to understand the celebratory tone with which certain groups of people today refer to the portrait. This article paves the way for

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1 George 1946.

2 Embassy of Japan in Israel, “Heisei 26 nendo tennō tanjōbi shukuga resepushon no kaisai” 平成26年度天皇誕生日祝賀レセプションの開催, 2014: <https://www.israel.emb-japan.go.jp/html/tentan2014jp.html>. For other examples, the Embassy of Japan in Hungary, “Tennō tanjōbi resepushon no kaisai” 天皇誕生日レセプションの開催, 2007: <https://www.hu.emb-japan.go.jp/jpn/071210.htm>; Miyamoto Shūji 宮本秀治, “Goshin’ei no tōchaku” 御真影の到着, 19 November 2020: <https://blousonite.com/blog/2020-11-19.html>; Denden mushi no kai でんでん虫の会, “Rijichō no hitorigoto” 理事長のひとりごと, 30 October 2019: <https://dendenmushinokai.com/2019-10-30>; Shūkan Nyūyōku Seikatsu 週刊NY生活, “Tennōheika tanjōbi o iwau” 天皇陛下誕生日を祝う, 24 February 2021: <https://www.nyseikatsu.com/ny-news/02/2021/32004/>.



such an understanding by illuminating the *goshin'ei*'s successful reincarnation, which was facilitated by the Imperial Household Ministry leadership soon after Japan's surrender.



Figure 1. The prewar imperial portrait of Hirohito and Kōjun taken in 1928. Reproduced from KGKC, vol. 1, n.p.



Figure 2. *Mainichi shinbun* front page on the day of the promulgation of the new constitution, 3 November 1946. The new postwar imperial portraits (now separate for Hirohito and Kōjun) appear with the headline “The Symbol of a Pacifist Japan: Their Majesties in Democratic Mode.” *Mainichi shinbun*, “Heiwa Nihon no shōchō” 平和日本の象徴, 3 November 1946.

### Thinking Seriously about the Imperial Portrait in Postwar Japan

In much of the world during the twentieth century, monarchical institutions were on the defensive. From Korea (1910), to China (1912), to Russia (1917), to Germany (1918), monarchies crumbled under the impact of war, foreign domination, or political turmoil. The Japanese imperial institution, however, endured despite the nation's defeat in World War II and the ensuing political turbulence.

The endurance of the Japanese monarchy in the face of these disruptions is largely attributed to the momentous decision of the Allied countries in the spring of 1946 not to prosecute Hirohito 裕仁 (the Shōwa emperor; 1901–1989) for war crimes, instead keeping him on the throne to facilitate the occupation's reforms. Later that year, the new constitution written at the behest of the occupation authorities removed sovereignty from the person of the emperor and granted it to the Japanese people. The constitution significantly reduced the emperor's power, but also guaranteed a potentially lasting role for him as a “symbol.”<sup>3</sup> The emperor was now “the symbol of the State and of the unity of the People, deriving his position from the will of the people.”<sup>4</sup> It was therefore imperative for Hirohito and leaders at the Imperial Household Ministry—the administrative organ serving him and members of the imperial family—to find ways to elicit popular support for the throne.

In analyzing how officials undertook this task, many historians have paid attention to these officials' use of the newly emerging mass media. Historians have shown how Imperial Household Ministry administrators collaborated with journalists from commercial media outlets, which became increasingly popular in the postwar decades, in order to improve Hirohito's image with the public. As a result, the mass media—weeklies, radio, and television—turned the formerly sacred and aloof monarch into a likable celebrity figure, who joyfully mingled with crowds everywhere he went.<sup>5</sup> In explaining the postwar reintegration of the imperial institution, historians have emphasized discontinuities, both in the image of Hirohito projected to the public and the means by which such an image was constructed.

This article instead focuses on certain continuities by examining the fate of the imperial portrait in the immediate postwar years of 1945 and 1946. Though scholars have studied the imperial portrait, they have primarily focused on its role in public schools in imperial Japan. These scholars consider the portrait's history to have effectively ended in November 1945, when the Imperial Household Ministry recalled the portraits from public schools as well as government offices.<sup>6</sup> However, the Imperial Household Ministry did not abandon the use of this ideologically loaded symbol in the postwar era. Instead, the ministry leadership retooled

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3 For an example of this view, including the significance of the constitutional differences, see Bix 1995, chapter 14.

4 *Constitution of Japan* 1946, article 1.

5 Tsurumi 1958; Matsushita 1959; Titus 1980; Yoshimi 1999; Yoshimi 2002; Kitahara 2014. In addition, he was also portrayed as an enthusiastic practitioner of marine biology. For an analysis of this image, see Bix 2000, chapters 16 and 17; Low 2006, chapters 7 and 8.

6 Bix 2000, p. 555; Ruoff 2001, p. 131; Kagotani 2005. The most recent example of this scholarly trend is the historian of education Ono Masaaki's 2023 monograph, *Kyōiku chokugo to goshin'ei: Kindai tennōsei to kyōiku* (The Rescript on Education and the imperial portrait: The modern emperor system and education). The book dedicates the last two of its seven chapters to the postwar period from the defeat in World War II in 1945 through to the mid-2010s, but makes no mention of the portrait after its recall at the end of 1945 (Ono 2023, chapters 6 and 7).

the portrait to save Hirohito and fight against the democratization that threatened their powerbase.

The Imperial Household Ministry at the time was run by men who had been serving the organization before the occupation started, notably Ishiwata Sōtarō 石渡莊太郎 (1891–1950), Kinoshita Michio 木下道雄 (1887–1974), Ōgane Masujirō 大金益次郎 (1894–1979), and Katō Susumu 加藤進 (1902–1993). These four men were the most powerful figures in the ministry, and occupied its leadership positions, including the posts of minister, vice-minister, chamberlain, and vice-chamberlain, which allowed them regular access to Hirohito. As long-term servants from before Japan's defeat, these ministry leaders were attached to Emperor Hirohito and the prewar/wartime status of the imperial institution.<sup>7</sup> They wanted to protect Hirohito and his authority from allegations of possible war crimes and maintain their administrative independence. When their conservative agenda was threatened, they resisted the demands of democratization made by the Allied Occupation known as SCAP (the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers) and its subjugated junior partner, the Japanese government (the prime minister and his cabinet, in particular). The imperial portrait figured prominently in this context, as ministry leaders repurposed the object to advance their preservationist agenda.

As the Japanese cabinet renamed the ministry the Imperial Household Office (Kunaifu 宮内府, 1947–1949) and then the Imperial Household Agency (Kunaichō 宮内庁, 1949–), placing it under the prime minister's control, a group of more democratically inclined leaders replaced the ministry's old-timers. The new palace administration did not promote the conservative agenda their predecessors' had attached to the imperial portrait, but they took its distribution seriously. Examining the new leadership's policy in detail is outside the scope of this article. Yet given the fact that *goshin'ei* plays a positive role when many Japanese reflect on the imperial institution today, this article's analysis of the immediate postwar adaptation of the portrait helps us think of it as not merely a legacy of prewar/wartime imperial ideology, but as a possible contribution to the imperial institution's successful adaptation to postwar Japan.

### **“Repugnant to a Person of Democratic Sympathies”: Occupation and the Imperial Portrait**

The Japanese government introduced the imperial portrait into public schools in the early 1890s, along with the Imperial Rescript on Education (*Kyōiku Chokugo* 教育勅語). The introduction of the portrait involved collaboration between the Imperial Household Ministry, which was responsible for the production of the object, and the Ministry of Education, in charge of public education. The Ministry of Education issued a directive for school ceremonies to be held on notable occasions such as the reigning emperor's birthday (29 April for Hirohito) and imperial foundation day (11 February). The directive made it mandatory for headteachers to read out the rescript in front of assembled pupils on such days. The same instruction also enjoined schools with the imperial portrait—possession of which was expected but not mandatory—to have pupils bow deeply toward it at the start of the ceremony.<sup>8</sup>

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7 Chadani 2011, pp. 183–194.

8 Monbushō 1891, p. 67.

As more and more schools requested the portrait from the Ministry of Education, the object was incorporated into the daily activities of those in public education. By the early 1900s, it was expected in many prefectures that at least one male teacher stayed overnight in a schoolhouse to guard the portrait from danger. The social and bureaucratic pressure on teachers to keep the sacred object safe was such that, in the first three decades of the century, a handful died during their attempts to save the portrait from fires.<sup>9</sup> In the 1930s, a jingoistic Ministry of Education increased its pressure on schools to request the imperial portrait.<sup>10</sup> As a result, by the late 1930s, approximately 70 percent of elementary schools possessed the portrait. It became common practice for pupils to stop and bow in front of their school's imperial portrait at least twice a day—as they walked into school in the morning and out in the afternoon. Teachers encouraged these routines as an ideal way to train children as imperial subjects ready to fight in a total war.<sup>11</sup> Possession of the portrait never became mandatory for public schools in imperial Japan, but the object was widespread in schools and demanded attention from teachers and students on a daily basis. By the time Japan opened hostilities with the United States and the United Kingdom in 1941, the imperial portrait was integral to the educational experience of most Japanese people.

Towards the end of 1943, as eventual Allied victory became foreseeable, U.S. leaders began discussing Japanese demilitarization and democratization. However, no consensus was reached in Washington over the fate of Emperor Hirohito. Some U.S. leaders proposed that he be punished as the commander-in-chief in whose name imperial Japan had launched its war of aggression. Others believed that it would be better to keep Hirohito on the throne and use him to facilitate occupation reforms.<sup>12</sup> Irrespective of whether Hirohito was to be punished or collaborated with, however, U.S. leaders broadly agreed that achieving the demilitarization and democratization of Japan would require a transformation in Japan's emperor-centered militarist ideology. It was understood that such a transformation would entail ending practices of emperor worship in schools, which included the use of the imperial portrait.<sup>13</sup>

As the war ended, U.S. leaders hardened their views on the imperial portrait. In September 1945, the U.S. government solicited advice for the occupation from D. C. Holtom (1884–1962), a scholar of Japanese religion and history at the University of Chicago. Holtom proposed that the emperor be stripped of his spiritual authority:

The ceremony of obeisance before the imperial portrait in the schools should be abolished. . . . The portrait should be hung in an easily accessible place where it will be brought into contact with the normal life of the school—in the office of the principal, for example.<sup>14</sup>

Holtom did not suggest that the portrait should be completely removed, but recommended rather that it be moved to a location of greater visibility. His proposal struck a chord with Ken

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9 Iwamoto 1989.

10 Ono 2014, pp. 240–249.

11 Yoshie 2017, chapter 4; for the distribution data, see p. 3.

12 Pyle 2020, pp. 124–129.

13 Kubo 1984, pp. 31–66; Suzuki 1983, pp. 8–26; Kaizuka 2001, pp. 30–35.

14 Holtom 1945, p. 120.

Dyke (1897–1980), the director of CIE, who wrote that public education in prewar/wartime Japan was a hotbed of militarist ideology. Designating the imperial portrait as an important contributor to this ideology, he cited Holtom's recommendation with approval. "[T]he whole system of obeisance [to the portrait]," he added, "appears repugnant to a person of democratic sympathies who has not long been accustomed to it."<sup>15</sup>

The imperial portrait consisted of pictures of Hirohito and Empress Kōjun. But for Allied leaders, Hirohito was the problem, so the empress's part of the portrait was rarely discussed. Officials at the Imperial Household Ministry took the occupation's focus on the emperor into consideration as they deliberated what to do about the imperial portrait. The following sections detail their response.

### Rebranding Hirohito, Recalling His Portrait

As Hirohito announced the decision to surrender on 15 August 1945, Japanese leaders in Japan and abroad expressed fears that his portraits were in danger. On that same day, Japanese ministers and ambassadors cremated sixty-one imperial portraits collected in neutral Switzerland from across Europe. "There was no guarantee," explained Kase Shun'ichi 加瀬俊一 (1897–1956), the Japanese minister to Switzerland, in his report to Tokyo, "that our enemy would not do something disrespectful."<sup>16</sup> Within weeks of Hirohito's public announcement of surrender, administrative leaders in Karafuto (South Sakhalin) and Taiwan sent the ministry similar reports of officials burning the portraits to avoid sacrilege by the enemy.<sup>17</sup> In September 1945, fourteen public schools in Manchuria returned their imperial portraits to the Imperial Household Ministry "due to the recent breakdown in law and order."<sup>18</sup> In mainland Japan, too, the portrait was a source of anxiety. On 9 September, Imperial Household Ministry leaders were informed, and alarmed, about a group of U.S. soldiers who showed up in a remote village in Kagoshima and vandalized the imperial portrait in the village office.<sup>19</sup> Later that same month, Minister of the Navy Yonai Mitsumasa 米内光政 (1880–1948) notified Imperial Household Minister Ishiwata Sōtarō that officers had burned the 202 imperial portraits in navy bases and arsenals, "lest [they] fall into the hands of the enemy."<sup>20</sup>

The ministry leadership reasoned that the imperial portrait went against their goal of protecting Hirohito. When the occupation began, ministry officials sounded out SCAP about their views on Hirohito, and learned that the occupiers were still divided over his fate.<sup>21</sup> In order to convince SCAP of Hirohito's usefulness as a facilitator of occupation, the ministry judged it best to dissociate him from Japan's wartime aggression.<sup>22</sup> The imperial portrait was considered problematic in this regard, as Hirohito appeared as commander-in-chief in

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15 Dyke 1945, p. 145.

16 NKKZ, file 63.

17 NKKZ, files 62 and 67. I was unable to find records on the portrait from other parts of the world, such as the Americas or parts of Asia which had not been under Japanese rule.

18 NKKZ, file 65.

19 Takahashi and Suzuki 1981, pp. 69–72; *Yomiuri shinbun* 読売新聞, "Junan no tennōke" 受難の天皇家, 31 May 1976.

20 NKKZ, file 66.

21 Takahashi and Suzuki 1981, pp. 32–53.

22 Tanaka 1992, pp. 166–168.



Figure 3. *Asabi shinbun* article announcing the emperor's new official garb. *Asabi shinbun*, “Aratani tennōfuku o goseitei” 新たに天皇服を御制定, 8 November 1945.

his official military uniform.<sup>23</sup> To make matters worse, ministry leaders also discovered that SCAP was critical of the way in which the imperial portrait was used in public schools.<sup>24</sup>

The ministry leadership had these concerns in mind when they decided to abolish the emperor’s military uniform and recall his imperial portraits. On 19 September, ministry officials approved designs for a new imperial apparel and presented it to Hirohito for his blessing, which he granted. On 7 November, the ministry officially announced that it had abolished the old military uniform, and replaced it with new non-martial dress (see figure 3).<sup>25</sup> On 24 November, the *Asabi Shinbun* reported that the ministry had decided to recall the imperial portraits of the emperor and empress from public schools and government offices in order to replace Hirohito’s picture. The paper quoted Imperial Household Minister Ishiwata Sōtarō as saying that he and other ministry leaders believed Hirohito’s military uniform was “inappropriate in a time of building a country of peace.” The article added that the ministry had not made any official decision on whether or not to retake the photograph of the empress.<sup>26</sup> Four days later, Imperial Household Vice-Minister Ōgane Masujirō instructed government agencies and public schools to return the portraits.<sup>27</sup> The recall was largely

23 Ono 2023, pp. 203–204.  
 24 Woodard 1972, p. 168.  
 25 Takamatsunomiya 1997, p. 154; Kunaichō 2016a, p. 874.  
 26 *Asabi shinbun* 朝日新聞, “Shin'onbuku no goshin'ei gakkō kanga e aratamete kashi” 新御服の御真影学校官衙へ改めて下賜, 24 November 1945.  
 27 Kunaichō 2016a, p. 913.

Figure 4. Hirohito in his new official garb, captured in Tokyo Station as he embarked for Ise Shrine and the imperial mausoleums in November 1945. *Asahi shinbun*, “Tennōheika Ise ni gyōkō” 天皇陛下伊勢に行幸, 13 November 1945.



complete by January 1946.<sup>28</sup> Within five months of Japan’s surrender, the portrait of Hirohito and his consort Kōjun had disappeared from the archipelago.

As the ministry’s primary motivation for these decisions was conservative, there are signs of hesitancy and contradictory behavior in their implementation. The supposedly nonmilitary uniform was a case in point. As the art historian Kitahara Megumi 北原恵 points out, the new uniform was hardly civilian dress; it closely resembled the old military uniform, except for minor modifications of color and shape and the absence of a sword. Kitahara convincingly argues that the incompletely demilitarized sartorial change reflected palace leaders’ reservations about the rapid demilitarization of Hirohito’s emperorship.<sup>29</sup>

Another example includes Hirohito’s visit to Ise Shrine and the imperial mausoleums. On 12 November, just five days after the announcement of the new costume, the ministry arranged for Hirohito, clad in his new garb, to travel to these sites. Vice-Chamberlain Kinoshita Michio was the principal architect of the trip, and had proposed that Hirohito wear the new dress.<sup>30</sup> The reason for the trips publicized by newspapers was Hirohito’s intention to pray to his ancestors for the successful reconstruction of Japan (see figure 4).<sup>31</sup> At this time SCAP was contemplating banning the state’s control over Shinto shrines, and of Ise Shrine in particular, as part of the campaign to dismantle the throne-based militarist ideology.<sup>32</sup> While

28 Ono 2014, p. 321.

29 Kitahara 2014, pp. 28–38.

30 Kinoshita 1990, p. 20.

31 Kunaichō 2016a, p. 874.

32 See, for instance, Dyke 1945, pp. 142–144.

Hirohito's continued connection with Ise Shrine was potentially dangerous for the monarchy, the fact that such visits were made indicates that even as the ministry was trying to garner SCAP's goodwill, it was also determined to preserve the throne's traditional sources of spiritual authority. Similarly, it was a delicate combination of SCAP's expectations and the ministry's conservatism that influenced the distribution of the new postwar imperial portrait.

### **Democratization and Conservatism in the New Portrait**

The new imperial portraits (figure 2) were organized by the Imperial Household Ministry, with photographs of the empress and the emperor taken on 26 October and 3 December 1945, respectively.<sup>33</sup> Other than these dates, there is no official information regarding the particulars of the portraits, such as their sizes.

What we do know is that leaders of the ministry were devising plans for the new portrait while the old portraits were being recalled in January 1946. On 17 January, Vice-Chamberlain Kinoshita Michio had an audience with Hirohito and briefed him on the ministry's plans for the new portrait. They proposed stipulating that anyone or any organization—no longer just schools, government agencies, or state dignitaries—was entitled to receive a new portrait upon request. However, the proposals made it clear that people should view the portrait with “sincere feelings of love and respect,” representing an emperor who was the “head (*genshu* 元首) of Japan,” “spiritual leader of the people,” “model of the nation's culture,” “affectionate father of people in this nation as one great family,” and “embodiment (*hyōgensha* 表現者) of the imperial ancestors.” Nothing about the empress was stipulated at this point.<sup>34</sup> It is not recorded how Hirohito reacted to these new plans. But Prince Nobuhito 宣仁 (1905–1987), one of Hirohito's brothers, did respond. When Kinoshita had discussions with the prince about the new portrait on 22 and 23 January, the prince asked Kinoshita, “What about postponing nationwide distribution of the imperial portrait for a while, until the situation gets back to normal (*jikyoku no ochitsuku made* 時局の落ち着く迄)?”<sup>35</sup>

Kinoshita's diary includes no further details of their conversation, so it is unclear what the prince meant by “the situation” and “normal.” The political situation surrounding Hirohito and the ministry was certainly fluid at the turn of 1946. As yet, the Allied countries had not made any official decision on whether or not to try Hirohito as a war criminal. However, SCAP purged Ishiwata from the position of imperial household minister on 16 January 1946 due to his tenure as minister of finance in the wartime Tōjō cabinet. Ishiwata was replaced by Matsudaira Yoshitami 松平慶民 (1882–1948), a career palace administrator who had served two emperors. Furthermore, SCAP made clear it would push ahead with plans to force the Japanese government to democratize the relationship between the emperor and the people, and to reform the Imperial Household Ministry accordingly. Under imperial Japan's legal framework, the emperor was “head (*genshu*) of the Empire” and possessed “sovereignty (*tōchiken* 統治権).”<sup>36</sup> As such, the Imperial Household Ministry was a unique organization directly serving the throne, independent of the cabinet, and with full discretion

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33 Kunaichō 2016a, pp. 862, 913.

34 Kunaichō 2016a, pp. 18–19.

35 Kinoshita 1990, pp. 123–124.

36 *Constitution of the Empire of Japan* 1889, chapter I, article 4.



over its personnel and budget. The organization had no accountability to outsiders other than the emperor. The rules regarding the management of the imperial house and the ministry were not amenable to amendment by the Diet, as they were legislated by the Imperial House Law, an autonomous legal code that only the emperor and adult (that is, over twenty years old) males in the imperial family were allowed to modify. SCAP adjudged that the privileged positions of the throne and ministry were undemocratic and ordered reforms to the situation.<sup>37</sup>

Prime Minister Shidehara Kijūrō 幣原喜重郎 (1872–1951) and his cabinet were reluctant at first but ultimately had no choice but to oblige. Over the first three months of 1946, the cabinet forced the ministry to eliminate 25 percent of its staff positions. On 6 March, the cabinet then announced the “Outline of a Draft for a Revised Constitution” (hereafter, the “Outline”) at SCAP’s behest. The Outline demoted the throne to a subordinate position in relation to the Japanese people, who now held supreme power in the nation: “The Emperor shall be the symbol of the state and of the unity of the people, deriving his position from the sovereign will of the people.” The imperial house’s assets were transferred to the state and its budget required the authorization of a democratically convened Diet. The Imperial House Law, too, was now subject to the Diet, whose assent was necessary for the law to be introduced or modified.<sup>38</sup>

The cabinet’s plans for restructuring the palace administration disconcerted the ministry’s leadership.<sup>39</sup> The Outline’s relegation of the emperor also shocked Hirohito himself, who resisted it until the Outline became public on 6 March, and then expressed his displeasure to Vice-Chamberlain Kinoshita.<sup>40</sup>

In the midst of this uncertainty about Hirohito’s fate and the perceived erosion of his position, the Imperial Household Ministry officially announced guidelines for the new imperial portrait. The “Guidelines for the Imperial Portrait” (hereafter, “Guidelines”) were a more systematic, coherent version of the plans that Kinoshita had presented to Hirohito on 17 January 1946. Vice-Minister Katō Susumu authorized the Guidelines and sent them to the other ministries and government agencies on 5 April 1946. As the ministry leadership was still concerned about protecting Hirohito from prosecution by the Allies, they were careful to ensure that the Guidelines embodied SCAP’s democratic agenda. For example, they enjoined that recipients of the portrait of Hirohito should “never force anyone to pay obeisance (*reihai wa kore o shiizaru koto* 礼拝ハ之ヲ強ヒザルコト)” to it. They also said:

The portrait [of Hirohito] should be displayed in a location where people have easy access to it on a daily basis. No facility of concealment, such as a curtain, is necessary; you should also avoid storing the portrait in a special place such as a shrine-style treasure repository or a locker.<sup>41</sup>

In the Guidelines, the Imperial Household Ministry sought to emphasize the absence of the mystical authority that the portrait had possessed in imperial Japan. Now, bowing to the

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37 Sebata 2013, pp. 1–6.

38 *Draft Constitution of Japan 1946*, chapter I, article 1 & chapter VII, article 84.

39 Funabashi 2010, pp. 41–43.

40 Bix 1995, p. 340.

41 Kunaishō 1946.

portrait was a matter of personal choice. The Guidelines followed D. C. Holtom's suggestions that "The ceremony of obeisance before the imperial portrait in the schools should be abolished" and "The portrait should be hung in an easily accessible place where it will be brought into contact with the normal life of the school."<sup>42</sup> As for eligibility, the Guidelines maintained the principle of nondiscrimination that Kinoshita had earlier discussed with Hirohito: all organizations and individuals were entitled to receive the new portrait.<sup>43</sup>

On the other hand, the ministry's intention of preserving the pre-1945 integrity of the imperial institution can also be found. The Guidelines stipulated that Hirohito should command the people's respect as a fatherly leader:

The portrait of His Majesty the Emperor is that which people should look up to with deep love and respect for him as head (*genshu*) of the state and the affectionate father of people in this nation as one great family (*kokumin daikazoku no jifu* 国民大家族の慈父).<sup>44</sup>

The Guidelines' use of the term *genshu* and the paternalistic language was out of sync with the Outline of the draft constitution publicized a month earlier, which had clearly defined the emperor as a "symbol" subordinate to the Japanese people. The discrepancy demonstrates the efforts of ministry leaders to retain the emperor's prewar and wartime symbolic authority, if not his legal status. This explains why the Guidelines discussed his new portrait extensively, but said little about the empress's, and one only finds a brief note at the end of the Guidelines that states "the [stipulations] above apply" to her new portrait as well.

Despite the Guidelines' conservative interpretation of the emperor's role, SCAP raised no objection. This was because they clearly embodied Holtom's recommendation to make the portrait more visible and accessible in public education. Scott George, whose evaluation of the Guidelines opened this article, was one such SCAP member. Moreover, in a July 1946 report on the status of the imperial portrait that circulated among CIE officers, its author, initialed "W. K. B." (most likely William Kenneth Bunce, chief of CIE's Religious and Cultural Resources Division), noted that "The treatment of Imperial Portraits in public schools as announced by the Imperial Household Ministry would seem to be satisfactory."<sup>45</sup> William Woodard, a scholar of Japanese religion and leading member of the CIE, looked favorably upon the Guidelines' promise that, in his words, "the portraits would be sent gratis to any government office, school, organization, or individual that applied."<sup>46</sup> The mass media, too, found this nondiscriminatory policy notable, and did not fail to mention it in their articles introducing the Guidelines.<sup>47</sup>

The politics surrounding the imperial institution, however, remained fluid even after the announcement of the Guidelines on 5 April. On 18 June, the Allied countries publicized their decision not to prosecute Emperor Hirohito.<sup>48</sup> This was certainly a boon

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42 Holtom 1945, p. 120.

43 Kunaishō 1946.

44 Kunaishō 1946.

45 W. K. B 1946. An anonymous referee brought his name to my attention. I would like to thank them for the suggestion. Other examples of the occupation's positive reaction include George 1946; Wigglesworth 1946.

46 Woodard 1972, p. 168.

47 For example, see *Asahi shinbun*, "Puromaido ten ni heika no osugata" プロマイド店に陛下の御姿, 7 April 1946.

48 Nakadate 2013, p. 58.

for the ministry's leadership, which had spent the past ten months democratizing Hirohito's image. On the other hand, the ministry was losing more and more of its administrative independence. The Japanese cabinet were preparing to pass the Outline and relevant bills in the Diet. The proposed laws would downgrade the Imperial Household Ministry to the Imperial Household "Office," and place it under the supervision of the Diet, with its head, the Grand Steward (*Chōkan* 長官), taking orders from the prime minister.<sup>49</sup> This would remove the administrative discretion that the ministry had exercised in imperial Japan, such as giving orders and awards in the name of the emperor, which could now be exercised only with the permission of a democratically-elected prime minister.<sup>50</sup>

Ministry leaders such as Katō, Ōgane, and Kinoshita resisted this every step of the way. They officially submitted alternative proposals for the cabinet and Diet to discuss, and informally pressured government leaders to reconsider. Hirohito himself endorsed the resistance of ministry leaders to change, and the ministry's officials in turn used the monarch's wishes to gain leverage in their negotiations with the cabinet and Diet. Nevertheless, none of the proposals of the ministry leadership were accepted.<sup>51</sup> On 3 November 1946, the Outline, with only minor modifications, was officially promulgated as the Constitution of Japan. The other bills that curtailed the ministry's power were also put into effect. The Japanese government, after all, was acting on SCAP's behalf and even Hirohito was unable to withstand the victors' call for democratization.

Meanwhile, the Guidelines posed an unexpected administrative problem for the Imperial Household Ministry. Within six months of their publication, the ministry had received 148 letters from individuals requesting the new portraits. Approximately half of these requests asked only for Hirohito's portrait, and the other half petitioned for his and Kōjun's. The reasons these petitions advanced varied, from wishing to apologize to the monarch for miserable defeat in the war to wanting to revere the leader of a new pacifist Japan. Some requested more than one copy. For example, Okuhira Tsunehisa 奥平恒久, an employee at the Nagoya-based Suzuki Manufacturing (Suzuki Seisakujo 鈴木製作所), asked for forty-two imperial portraits of Hirohito—these were for himself, his factory, his dormitory, and fellow factory workers who expressed a similar interest in the portrait.<sup>52</sup> Under the policy of nondiscriminatory access to the new portrait, the ministry had no legitimate reason to refuse a request for forty-two copies, or a request for any number of copies, for that matter.

The policy of nondiscrimination came to be seen as not only unsustainable but also potentially harmful to the dignity of Hirohito. Emboldened by the Outline's assertion of popular sovereignty, some Japanese became more critical of Hirohito and the imperial institution. On 19 May 1946, more than two hundred thousand people congregated outside the imperial palace. They clamored for more generous food rationing, with some forcing their way into the palace to demonstrate their anger at its privileged status. One communist demonstrator carried a placard that decried Hirohito for pampering himself while the rest of the country was hungry. Displeased, Hirohito and ministry leaders interpreted the mass demonstration as a result of "selfish individual desires" running rampant in the country.<sup>53</sup>

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49 Sebatu 2013, pp. 1–6.

50 *Draft Constitution of Japan 1946*, chapter VII, article 7.

51 Chadani 2011, pp. 194–199.

52 OSR, vol. 8928 (1946), file 76.

53 Matsushima 2003, pp. 60–62.

Prior to 1945, the Japanese government could have prosecuted the communist demonstrators for lese majesty, but SCAP disallowed its application in this case. It was expected that the crime would be abolished once the Outline became an official constitution in November, which did indeed come to pass.<sup>54</sup> In this context of declining authority around the throne, it is conceivable that the Imperial Household Ministry reconsidered the policy of nondiscrimination: theoretically, the ministry would be unable to deny even a communist demonstrator the portrait if they requested it. Nor would the ministry have any practical way to prevent the portrait from being vandalized.

Whatever happened in the ministry's meeting room, ministry leaders abolished the policy of nondiscrimination. On 1 November 1946, Vice-Minister Katō Susumu announced to his counterparts in other ministries and agencies that the ministry would now limit eligibility for new portraits of the emperor and the empress. Katō listed eight categories of organizations and twelve kinds of individuals deemed to constitute eligible applicants. There are no SCAP records about the abolishment of this policy, which suggests that Vice-Minister Katō and other leaders did not consult with SCAP leaders. Hirohito was already exonerated, so the ministry likely opted not to go through the trouble of notifying them about this rather awkward change which moved policy in a less democratic direction.

The inclusion of listed groups and individuals can be understood in the context of the ministry leadership's concern about the integrity of the portrait. To ensure that the portrait would be safe once it left the palace, the ministry now allowed it to be sent only to groups and individuals that it trusted. Such trusted organizations included government agencies and regional assemblies, while individuals included high-ranking civil servants and elected officials. Eligibility for those not affiliated with the state was limited, but some exceptions were made. Social welfare organizations and individuals working for them, for example, were permitted to apply for the portrait on the condition that they were "recommended" (*senshō* 選奨) by the Imperial Household Minister or other ministers. Individuals with some form of official recognition by the government, such as "orders (*kunshō* 勳章)" and "medals (*hōshō* 褒章)," qualified, too. There was room for other individuals and corporations to receive the portrait, but the ministry set the bar high for them. They now had to be judged by the ministry to be those "above the common level" (*ittei suijun ijō* 一定水準以上), or "worthy of special consideration" (*toku ni sengi sareta mono* 特に詮議された者).<sup>55</sup>

While there was no evidence to show the emperor was involved in the revision of eligibility, Hirohito, too, considered his portrait a reward that should be available only to a select few. For example, Ashida Hitoshi 芦田均 (1887–1959), parliamentarian and future prime minister, recorded in his diary that he was conferred a signed copy of Hirohito's portrait on 3 November 1946, the day the new constitution was promulgated. According to the unidentified messenger who handed the portrait to Ashida, Hirohito had remarked:

I should award orders (*honrai nara jokun* 本来なら叙勳) to those who contributed to the drafting of the constitution. But because the time is not right (*jisetsugara tote* 時節柄とて), upon deliberation I have decided to confer a portrait.<sup>56</sup>

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54 Dower 1999, pp. 259–267.

55 Kunaichō 2016b, pp. 115–116.

56 Ashida 1986, pp. 132–133.

On the same day, the new pair of imperial portraits made their first appearance in the media. The *Mainichi Shinbun*, placed the pictures on the front page with an accompanying title, “Symbol of a Pacifist Japan: Their Majesties in Democratic Mode” (see figure 2). The piece also reproduced the complete list of eligible applicants.<sup>57</sup> Shortly thereafter, the Imperial Household Ministry elected to deny the 148 requests for the new portrait that it had received under the previous nondiscriminatory policy.<sup>58</sup>

### Epilogue

On 3 May 1947, the Constitution of Japan came into effect. With the new legal framework in place, the Imperial Household Ministry was renamed the Imperial Household Office. The office had a staff of one thousand five hundred, a fourth the size of the ministry at the time of the surrender, and was now under the control of the prime minister.

Despite this decline in its size, power, and autonomy, SCAP became increasingly distrustful of the leadership of the Imperial Household, and particularly of their purported willingness to democratize their own organization. In 1947 and 1948, for example, SCAP repeatedly reproached the Imperial Household Office leadership for their haughty behavior when they accompanied Hirohito on tours across the nation. SCAP believed that men such as Ōgane and Katō were making local governments prepare and pay for excessively grandiose welcome receptions for Hirohito, and were encouraging specific acts of reverence (such as waving national flags) from local people. SCAP deplored that the office leadership were using Hirohito’s authority to encourage undemocratic practices associated with prewar and wartime Japan. In one meeting between SCAP and the Imperial Household Office, a SCAP member critically noted that, “Katō is [acting as if he is] the Emperor.” In response to SCAP’s requests, Prime Minister Ashida removed Ōgane and Grand Steward Matsudaira from the Imperial Household Office in June 1948, and then Katō two months later. Vice-Chamberlain Kinoshita had already voluntarily left the ministry in May 1946. By the end of the summer of 1948, then, the wartime leadership of the palace administration were gone.<sup>59</sup>

Their departure signaled the end of efforts to deploy the imperial portrait as a means of protecting the throne and the autonomy of the palace administration. In place of Matsudaira, Ashida appointed Tajima Michiji 田島道治 (1885–1968) as Grand Steward. A former banker with no prior experience in the field of palace administration, Tajima was more receptive than his predecessors to the desires of SCAP and the Japanese cabinet that the palace adapt to the postwar legal framework of symbolic monarchy.<sup>60</sup> During Tajima’s tenure as Grand Steward of the Imperial Household Office (1948–1949), and then the Imperial Household Agency (1949–1953), he and his administration did not issue any new policies about the portrait. Nor did the grand steward have many discussions about the issue with Hirohito.

Yet office/agency leaderships did not shrug off the portrait as a legacy of imperial Japan. The administration’s official records of the imperial portrait, *Oshashinroku* (Records of the imperial portrait), show that between 1946 and 1970 the organization granted more than 2,500 imperial portraits in the names of Emperor Hirohito and Empress Kōjun. While their

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57 *Mainichi shinbun*, “Heiwa Nihon no shōchō” 平和日本の象徴, 3 November 1946.

58 OSR, vol. 8928 (1946), file 76.

59 Sebata 2013, pp. 10–19.

60 Manabe 2019.

recipients were diverse, hundreds of copies were given to government officials, lawmakers, medal recipients, and, after Japan's independence in 1952, Japanese diplomats, Japanese diplomatic missions, and non-Japanese dignitaries. Approximately two hundred and fifty pairs were conferred on social welfare organizations (such as reformatories and hospices) and their directors. No portraits were given to public schools.<sup>61</sup>

It is not documented how successive palace administrations made decisions about the portrait. Yet fragmentary evidence suggests that palace administrators took this repurposed object seriously, in order to adapt the imperial institution to postwar Japan. On 11 November 1949, for instance, Tajima told Hirohito that General Douglas MacArthur (1880–1964), the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, had requested a portrait with Hirohito's signature. Tajima hesitated due to "current diplomatic conditions." Because in prewar/wartime Japan Hirohito had typically given the portrait to foreigners as a diplomatic gesture of goodwill, Tajima was perhaps worried that giving the portrait to MacArthur now would make Japan act as if it was an independent country in the eyes of other Allied leaders. But the grand steward was equally concerned that denying the commander his request might cause trouble to the imperial household, even to the point of forcing Tajima to "resign." Hirohito decided it was better to accede to the American general's request.<sup>62</sup>

As this example shows, Hirohito and the palace leadership were sensitive to the diplomatic significance of the portrait. They did not merely follow the rule to grant it upon request or the protocol to give it to certain groups of people. The Imperial Household Agency, for instance, consistently withheld the portrait from Soviet ambassadors, although it was customary to give the portrait to foreign ambassadors at the end of their tenure in Japan. This unexplained anomaly was possibly due to Hirohito's well-documented wariness of communism, potentially sharpened by the Soviet Union's continued requests (made at least until 1950) to try him as a war criminal even after the Allied countries had officially decided against it in 1946. On the other hand, the Imperial Household Agency gave the portrait to Edwin Reischauer, the U.S. ambassador to Japan from 1961 to 1966, as he left office, even though the ambassador said he did not request it (he happily accepted it).<sup>63</sup>

Palace administrators used similar discretion to give or deny portraits to people and groups within Japan. The palace administration, for example, granted the portrait to hundreds of those who were not on the list of eligible applicants, such as corporate scientists or local volunteers in the judicial system (*chôtei iin* 調停委員, volunteers brokering settlements in civil disputes). On the other hand, the agency refused a 1953 request by a sixty-three-year-old man from Akita who proudly detailed his wartime commendation by the Ministry of Health and Welfare for his dedication to mobilizing his village for the war.<sup>64</sup> Like the decisions to give the portrait to scientists and volunteers, palace administrators did not document the reasons for this refusal. But given their desire to accommodate the imperial institution to postwar Japan, they likely wanted to keep the throne away from any association

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61 OSR, vol. 8928–12438 (1946–1970).

62 Tajima 2021, pp. 55–56; another example is Tajima 2022, pp. 218–220.

63 OSR, vol. 8928–12438 (1946–1970). For an example of the Soviet's request, see *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, "Soviet Wants Trial of Hirohito," 3 February 1950. For the agency's case on Reischauer, see OSR, vol. 12437 (1966–1967), file 23. See also Reischauer 2003, pp. 297–298.

64 OSR, vol. 8928–12438 (1946–1970). For the request from the man in Akita, see OSR, 12430 (1950–1953), file 39.



Figure 5. In this picture, taken in November 2016, pupils at Kagoike's kindergarten are reciting the Imperial Rescript on Education in front of a picture of the then Emperor Akihito, Empress Michiko 美智子, and the national flag. Reprinted with permission of Reuters News & Media Inc.

with wartime mobilization. Likewise, the Imperial Household Office/Agency had no good reason to promote the distribution of the portrait to public schools, because doing so would have provoked the ire of teachers and the media who would see it as a revival of the imperial Japanese practice of emperor worship. Since no public schools requested the portrait, palace administrators did not contact them—a strategic caution that CIE members like Scott George had not anticipated.

The cautious attitude of successive palace administrators toward the portrait appears to have contributed to the amelioration of its negative prewar/wartime associations in the eyes of Japanese people today. To highlight the portrait's smooth postwar rehabilitation, it helps to contrast its fate with the Imperial Rescript on Education. When Kagoike Yasunori 籠池泰典 (1953–), director of the Moritomo Gakuen school in Osaka, became the subject of heated controversy in the media and the Diet in 2017, it was because of both his dubious connections to powerful leaders of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and his school's ethnocentric pedagogy. The most salient of his teaching methods, as the media reported, was having students recite the Imperial Rescript on Education daily. This revelation triggered familiar debates about the politics of memory, with conservative politicians, journalists, and scholars publicly endorsing Kagoike's teaching methods, while their liberal counterparts denounced the conservatives' positive reaction as a throwback to imperial Japan's militarism.<sup>65</sup>

An interesting part of this debate is what it overlooked: Kagoike's curriculum included students viewing and bowing to images of former emperors and empresses (see figures 5 and 6).<sup>66</sup> It is difficult to imagine that the pictures were officially granted to Kagoike by the

65 For examples of positive reactions to Kagoike, see *Sankei shinbun* 産経新聞, "Kyōiku chokugo no dokoga warui to iunoka: *Mainichi shinbun* yo, muchi to henken no tasha kōgeki wa mittomonai" 教育勅語のどこが悪いというのか: 毎日新聞よ、無知と偏見の他者攻撃はみっともない, 13 March 2017; for negative reactions, see *Asahi shinbun*, "Inada shi, 'Kyōiku chokugo no seishin, torimodosu beki dato ima mo omou'" 稲田氏「教育勅語の精神、取り戻すべきだと今も思う」, 8 March 2017.

66 Nakano Wataru 中野渉, "Suga kanbō chōkan, 'minshin tō ni oite setsumeie sarerunodewa'" 菅官房長官「民進党において説明されるのでは」, *The Huffington Post*, 27 March 2017: [http://www.huffingtonpost.jp/2017/03/27/suga-conference\\_n\\_15633202.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.jp/2017/03/27/suga-conference_n_15633202.html).

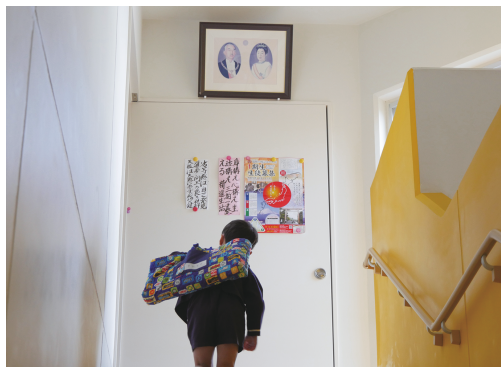


Figure 6. A student bowing to a picture of Emperor Shōwa and his consort in the hallway of Kagoike's kindergarten, captured in November 2016. Reprinted with permission of Reuters News & Media Inc.

Imperial Household Agency, but Kagoike likely based this practice on prewar and wartime emperor worship that used the rescript and the portrait in public schools. However, though his use of imperial images was known and reported, this did not elicit the impassioned support or biting criticism his use of the rescript did. It is difficult to understand public silence over use of the portrait if one focuses solely on the object's history in prewar and wartime Japan. Public acceptance of the imperial portrait today is a product of postwar developments attributable to the palace administration's conscious efforts to repurpose the object in the immediate postwar period. Their policy prepared the way for the imperial portrait to be accepted in contemporary Japan—both as *goshin'ei* and as a politically correct medium of imagining the imperial institution.

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RESEARCH NOTE

## ***Demon Slayer Kimetsu no yaiba: Oni, Vampires, and Sexuality***

Noriko T. REIDER\*

An *oni* (demon/ogre) is a fascinating supernatural creature. Depicted in Japanese literature, religion, art, and folklore, the *oni*'s longevity can be ascribed to their symbiotic evolution alongside Japanese society. The recent Japanese societal phenomenon created by *Kimetsu no yaiba*, a manga which was then made into anime and a film, reveals how *oni* still occupy an important position in Japanese culture. *Kimetsu no yaiba* depicts a war between humans and evil *oni*. The *oni* characters in *Kimetsu no yaiba* across all its iterations possess the fundamental attributes of traditional *oni* such as anthropophagy, but distinct attributes are added. These draw on cultural elements from the West, including superheroes and, most notably, vampires. This research note will focus on the characteristics of *oni* and their portrayal in *Kimetsu no yaiba* to demonstrate the ongoing evolution of *oni* and emphasize their continued relevance today.

**Keywords:** manga, anime, social phenomenon, Dracula, swords, *imo no chikara*

*Kimetsu no yaiba* 鬼滅の刃 (literally, blade/sword of demon destruction) by Gotōge Koyoharu 吾峠呼世晴 (b. 1989), known in English as *Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba*, is a tremendously popular manga and anime series that has become a societal phenomenon in Japan, spawning a feature-length film, games, and merchandise. It is a story of the battles between humans and *oni* 鬼 (demons/ogres). *Oni* are supernatural creatures referenced throughout Japanese history. The *oni* portrayed in this series possess various traditional features such as anthropophagy (or eating human flesh) and shapeshifting abilities, but they also acquire new traits, some more akin to those of vampires. While *oni* populate the world of virtual reality and often morph into benign creatures, the *oni* in *Kimetsu no yaiba* are grotesquely eerie and cruel creatures. This research note will first review traditional characteristics of *oni*, explore their appearance in *Kimetsu no yaiba*, and explain the fusion of *oni* with vampires. Analyzing the adaptation of traditional ideas of *oni* and their new characteristics in *Kimetsu no yaiba* will demonstrate the

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continuous evolution of *oni* and their relevance in contemporary society. It will also use the analysis to consider why *Kimetsu no yaiba* became so popular.<sup>1</sup>

*Kimetsu no yaiba* belongs to the Dark Fantasy genre. The manga was serialized in *Weekly Shōnen Jump* (Shūkan shōnen janpu 週刊少年ジャンプ) from 2016 to 2020, and the first editions of its *tankōbon* 単行本 (paperback manga volumes) were printed as twenty-three volumes in 2017–2020. While the manga was popular, the anime produced by Ufotable further boosted the franchise. The first season covered volumes one through six of the *tankōbon* and aired in 2019; the second season, *Yūkaku hen* 遊郭編 (*Entertainment District Arc*), deals with volumes nine through eleven and was broadcast in 2022. The third season in 2023, *Katanakaji no sato hen* 刀鍛冶の里編 (*Swordsmith Village Arc*) covers volumes twelve through fifteen, while the fourth season, *Hashira-geiko hen* 柱稽古編 (*Hashira Training Arc*) was released in 2024. A film titled *Gekijōban: Kimetsu no yaiba Mugen ressha hen* 劇場版: 鬼滅の刃無限列車編 (*Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no yaiba—The Movie: Mugen Train*), covering volumes seven and eight of the *tankōbon*, was released in 2020 (2021 worldwide) and became the highest-grossing film of all time in Japan, surpassing Studio Ghibli's *Spirited Away*.<sup>2</sup> The commercial success of the series exemplifies a kind of media franchise known in Japanese as the *media mikkusu* (media mix), a marketing strategy to disperse content across multiple mediums such as broadcast media, gaming, and toys.<sup>3</sup>

The societal boom of *Kimetsu no yaiba* could not have occurred without the media mix. Even Noh, the earliest fully developed theatrical genre in Japan, took up *Kimetsu no yaiba* in 2022. Nomura Mansai 野村萬齋 (b. 1966), a *kyōgen* 狂言 (“mad words,” or comic theater) performer, showcases *Kimetsu no yaiba* for a new audience while introducing Noh and *kyōgen* to people unfamiliar with traditional performing arts.<sup>4</sup> Dedicated fans of different media, whether traditional performing arts or contemporary anime and manga, collectively constitute the franchise's community, interacting with and keeping up with other consumers. The Noh *Kimetsu no yaiba* website advertises merchandise only sold at the theater to those who have tickets, and acknowledges that the Noh performances are made possible by cooperation with the publisher, revealing the symbiotic nature of this media franchise. *Oni*, influential in premodern Japan but relegated to the periphery in modern times, are once again indispensable creatures primarily due to the success of this media mix. *Kimetsu no yaiba*, a core media mix product, and the characteristics of its *Oni*, are thus worth examining.

### Summary of *Kimetsu no yaiba*

The storyline of *Kimetsu no yaiba* is set in Taishō-era (1912–1926) Japan. An unofficial organization known as the Demon Slayer Corps (*kisatsutai* 鬼殺隊) has been waging a war against demons for centuries. The demons are former humans turned into demons by Kibutsuji Muzan, the antagonist and progenitor of all demons, by injecting them with his own blood. These *Oni* feed on humans and possess special abilities such as superior strength

1 To avoid confusion, this research note will use *Oni* with a capital O when referring to the *oni* in *Kimetsu no yaiba* and a lowercase *oni* in italics for the traditional, folkloric ones.

2 The video game *Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba: The Hinokami Chronicles* was released in 2021.

3 Marc Steinberg argues that the emergence of Japanese television animation in the 1960s, with the appearance of the anime *Tetsuwan Atomu* (*Astro Boy*, 1963–1966) as a system of interconnected media and commodity, forms a major turning point and inspiration for the development of the media mix. Steinberg 2012, p. viii–iv.

4 MAiDiGiTV 2022.

and the power to regenerate injured or lost body parts. Demons can only be killed if they are exposed to the sunlight, decapitated with a demon slayer's sword called *Nichirin-tō* 日輪刀 (literally, sun sword), or injected with poison extracted from wisteria flowers. On the other hand, the members of the Demon Slayer Corps are mortal humans. The main character, Kamado Tanjirō, is a kind boy who lives with his family in the mountains. After his father's death, he becomes the breadwinner, making trips to the nearby village to sell charcoal. One day he returns to discover his family slaughtered by an Oni; all except Nezuko, his younger sister, who has turned into an Oni. Nezuko surprisingly shows signs of human emotion to Tanjirō. Tanjirō then encounters a demon slayer who recruits him as a demon slayer. Tanjirō's quest to change Nezuko back into a human and avenge the death of his family begins.

After a long, strenuous training, Tanjirō becomes a member of the Demon Slayer Corps. He begins slaying demons with Nezuko, who has been hypnotized by the trainer to bring no harm to humans, and who helps Tanjirō in battle. As an Oni, Nezuko cannot be exposed to sunlight, so Tanjirō carries her in a wooden box during the daytime. Through one of Tanjirō's assignments, he encounters Kibutsuji Muzan. Tanjirō also meets Tamayo, a demon and a doctor whose medical skills enable her to be free of Muzan's control. Tamayo hates Muzan and allies with Tanjirō. On Tanjirō's request, Tamayo begins to develop a cure for Nezuko. This cure requires Tanjirō to supply Tamayo with the blood from the Twelve Demon Moons (*jūni kizuki* 十二鬼月), the most powerful demons under Muzan's command. Later, Tanjirō and Nezuko are summoned to the Demon Slayer Corps' headquarters, where the Pillars (*hashira* 柱), the Corps' nine strongest and most elite members, are discussing the fate of Nezuko, for an Oni should not be allowed to live. However, Ubuyashiki Kagaya, the leader of the Corps, persuades the Pillars to accept Nezuko. Tanjirō and Nezuko begin to work together alongside the Pillars, and their powers significantly strengthen as they experience more fights. The story culminates in the Corps' final battle against Muzan and the elite Demon Moons.

### **General Characteristics of Traditional *Oni***

Before considering *Kimetsu no yaiba's* Oni, let me describe some general characteristics of folkloric *oni*.<sup>5</sup> The characteristics include appearance, strength, anthropophagy, transformative powers, disenfranchisement, different customs, and wealth.

#### *Appearance and Strength*

The appearance of *oni* reflects their terrifying demeanor. Generally, *oni* are depicted scantily clad with muscular bodies, wearing tiger skin loincloths and carrying iron clubs. Their bodies are hairy and customarily portrayed with one or more horns. They sometimes have a third eye in the center of their forehead, and vary in skin color, being most commonly red, black, or blue. They often have large mouths with conspicuous canine teeth.<sup>6</sup> As their muscular bodies suggest, *oni* are strong—there is a proverb, “Give an *oni* an iron club” (*oni ni kanabō* 鬼に金棒) that means to make someone strong even stronger.

<sup>5</sup> See Reider 2010, pp. 1–29; Komatsu 2016, pp. 97–114; Foster 2015, pp. 117–127.

<sup>6</sup> See Reider 2010, p. 7; Komatsu 2016, pp. 97–98; Foster 2015, pp. 117–118. According to Kosugi Kazuo 小杉一雄, a scholar of Japanese art history, Japanese *oni* developed from Chinese *guishen* 鬼神 (ghosts and spirits) around the twelfth century at the latest. Kosugi 1986, p. 205.

In ancient times, however, *oni* were invisible. In early *Onmyōdō* 陰陽道 (the way of yin-yang), the word *oni* referred specifically to invisible evil spirits that caused human infirmity.<sup>7</sup> Takahashi Masaaki 高橋昌明 identifies *oni* as deities that cause epidemics, while Kumasegawa Kyōko 熊瀬川恭子 interprets *oni* as individuals and/or society's shadow.<sup>8</sup> Peter Knecht notes that the expression *kokoro no oni* 心の鬼 (*oni* in one's heart) used in Heian-period (794–1185) court literature shows one aspect of the multifaceted *oni*:

In this case the *oni* serves to give concrete form to an otherwise hard to express and invisible disposition in one's mind, namely the dark and evil side of one's heart, such as evil or mischievous thoughts and feelings toward fellow humans. This kind of *oni* is said to hide in a dark corner of the heart and to be difficult to control. However, in consequence of an impetus from outside it may be thrown into consciousness and its noxious nature may show itself.<sup>9</sup>

At this point, *oni* were not gendered, and the negative qualities attributed to *oni*—rage, murderous thoughts and actions, cold-bloodedness, and the like—were not gender-specific until manifested in a character.

Today, however, *oni* are popularly portrayed as masculine. This assumption regarding gender comes primarily from the pictorial representation of an *oni*'s appearance. According to Hayashi Shizuyo 林鎮代, who has studied the sex of *oni* in the tales collated as *Yomigatari* 読みがたり (Reading [Old Tales] Aloud, 2004–2005), the majority of *oni* are male, and when female *oni* appear in these stories they do so with an age signifier such as *oni-baba* 鬼婆 (*oni-hag*).<sup>10</sup> No such signifiers are attached to male *oni*; there, the word *oni* stands by itself, without any suffix. However, whether male or female, an *oni*'s gender is generally fluid and situational, and alterable to achieve their objectives, which include eating their victims.

### *Anthropophagy*

The fierce and evil nature of *Oni* is most apparent in their propensity for human flesh. *Oni* can eat humans in one gulp, as in the expression *oni hitokuchi* 鬼一口. The sixth episode of *Ise monogatari* 伊勢物語 (Tales of Ise) tells of a man who falls hopelessly in love with a woman well above his social status. The man decides to kidnap her. As they flee along the Akuta River, a severe thunderstorm forces the woman to shelter in a ruined storehouse. Even though the man stands gallantly on guard at the entrance of the shelter, the lady is eaten by an *oni* in one gulp. Although she screams, the pounding thunder muffles her cries and the man does not realize what is happening until she is gone.<sup>11</sup> “*Oni* in one gulp” suggests an instantaneous action, representing an *oni*'s barbarity and enormous appetite. But these creatures do not

7 On *oni* as invisible evil spirits, see Komatsu 1999, p. 3. *Onmyōdō* as “the Way of yin-yang” follows Hayashi and Hayek 2013, p. 3. *Onmyōdō* is an eclectic practice whose roots are found in the theory of the cosmic duality of yin and yang and the five elements. These developed in ancient China, but *Onmyōdō* adapted elements from *Xiuyaojing* 宿曜經 (Jp. *Sukuyōgyō*) astrology and indigenous Japanese *kami* worship. The appellation emerged in Japan between the tenth and eleventh centuries.

8 Takahashi 1992, p. 4; Kumasegawa 1989, p. 204.

9 Knecht 2010, p. xv.

10 Hayashi 2012, p. 78.

11 For the Japanese text, see Sakakura et al. 1957, p. 114. For an English translation, see McCullough 1968, pp. 72–73.



always consume their victims so quickly. Shuten dōji 酒呑童子 (Drunken demon) is an *oni* that deliberately savors the delicacies of human flesh during special banquets. Shuten dōji is moreover an epicure. He once kidnapped an old woman but did not eat her because, in the crone's words, "my bones are hard, my body sinewy, and my face ugly, I was abandoned and made to wash these clothes."<sup>12</sup> As the Shuten dōji story is often considered as a representative work of *oni*, I will give a summary.

According to the oldest extant text, the *Ōeyama ekotoba* 大江山絵詞 (Picture Scrolls of Mount Ōe, early fourteenth century), during the reign of Emperor Ichijō 一条天皇 (r. 986–1011), people began to disappear mysteriously in and around Kyoto, the Heian-period capital of Japan. Abe no Seimei 安倍晴明 (ca. 921–1005), a yin-yang master of the Heian Court, divines that it is the work of Shuten dōji, formidable leader of the *oni*, who with his cohorts abducts and devours people. The imperial court charges the two generals Minamoto no Yorimitsu 源頼光 (Raikō, 944–1021) and Fujiwara no Yasumasa 藤原保昌 (Hōshō, 958–1036) with the task of destroying Shuten dōji and his evil minions. Before Raikō and Hōshō set out on their quest with their loyal retainers, the troupe prays for success at four separate shrines. Their faith is rewarded, for while on their way to the *oni*'s lair on Mount Ōe 大江, the group encounters four deities disguised as priests. The priests advise Raikō's party to disguise themselves as *yamabushi* 山伏 (mountain ascetics), providing the men with the necessary clothing.

The warriors, now joined by the deities, meet an old woman washing bloody clothes at a river on Mount Ōe. She tells the heroes about the activities of Shuten dōji and his band of *oni*. Arriving at the demon's mountaintop palace, the members of the royal troupe tell the *oni* guard that they are a band of lost *yamabushi* in need of lodging for the night. Shuten dōji, who appears in human form, allows them into his palace and jovially regales the men with bloody saké, human flesh, and stories from his past. After Shuten dōji retires, several *oni* disguised as beautiful women visit Raikō and Hōshō in their quarters. Raikō gives them an intense glare, and the demons scurry off. Raikō and Hōshō's troupe then moves to Shuten dōji's grand bedchamber. Inside, they find Shuten dōji in his true monstrous form: a giant well over fifty feet tall, with a red head and body, a yellow right arm, a blue left arm, a black left leg and a white right leg; his head has five horns and fifteen eyes. While the four deity-priests hold each of Shuten dōji's limbs, the warriors behold him. Raikō's band then kill the rest of the *oni*, free the surviving captives, and bring Shuten dōji's head to the capital.<sup>13</sup>

### *Shapeshifting*

In the way Shuten dōji transformed from a monstrous *oni* to human form, *oni* can transmute into any form. An exemplary tale attesting to their ability to switch genders appears in *Konjaku monogatari shū* 今昔物語集 (Tales of times now past, ca. 1120). A man who brags about his prowess goes to Agi Bridge in Ōmi Province in an attempt to exterminate an *oni* haunting the area. The *oni*, disguised as a beautiful young woman, is waiting at the bridge. As soon as the *oni* attracts the man's attention, it reveals its true form: nine-foot-tall with greenish skin, three fingers on each hand, and disheveled hair. The man narrowly escapes.

<sup>12</sup> Reider 2016, p. 43.

<sup>13</sup> For the Japanese text, see Yokoyama and Matsumoto 1975, pp. 122–140 and S. Komatsu 1983, pp. 75–103, 158–160, 171–178. For an English translation, see Reider 2016, pp. 36–56.

Later, the same *oni*, disguised as the man's younger brother, visits his house, and finally murders him.

Stories of transformation (as well as anthropophagy) are also recorded in Japan's official histories. According to *Nihon sandai jitsuroku* 日本三代実録 (True record of three generations in Japan, 901), on the seventeenth day of the eighth month of Ninna 仁和 3 (887), three beautiful women walking near the Butokuden, one of the buildings in the Imperial Palace compound, see a good-looking man under a pine tree. The man approaches one of the women and begins talking with her. When the remaining two women look back in the direction of the pine tree, they are horrified to see the woman dismembered, her limbs strewn on the ground, and her head missing. At the time, people believed that an *oni* transformed into the handsome man and then ate the woman.<sup>14</sup> The *oni* freely adopts a female or male shape when approaching its target.

#### *Disenfranchised and Different*

*Oni* also represent a marginalized other.<sup>15</sup> Komatsu Kazuhiko 小松和彦 writes, "People who had different customs or lived beyond the reach of the emperor's control" were considered some form of *oni*.<sup>16</sup> This concept is not unique to Japan. Targets of subjugation and ethnic groups that did not assimilate were described as 鬼 by the Han even prior to the Six Dynasties (220–589) period in China.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, the editors of *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (*Chronicles of Japan*, 720) employed the character 鬼 for those who were against the emperors, though it is not certain whether it was pronounced as *oni* or *mono*.<sup>18</sup> Anyone living on the periphery of mainstream society was marginalized and thus considered *oni*.

Shuten dōji is a good example here. When entertaining Raikō, Hōshō, and their group, Shuten dōji tells them of his past, and that he had originally resided on Mount Hiei 比叡 long before Saichō 最澄 (or Dengyō Daishi 伝教大師, d. 822) claimed the area.<sup>19</sup> Saichō was the founder of the Tendai sect of Buddhism and built Enryakuji 延暦寺 on Mount Hiei to protect the imperial court and Japan. Shuten dōji was forced to relocate from Mount Hiei to another place, from which he was again expelled by the order of Emperor Kanmu 桓武 (737–806). Shuten dōji settled on Mount Ōe, beyond the reach of the emperor, but perishes when the imperial court commands warriors to eliminate him. He is thus representative of a defeated party, and of people relegated to the peripheries of Japanese society.

#### *Bringing Fortune*

By and large, *oni* are coded as evil. Yet *oni* are not exclusively negative, and may bring luck. The famous folktale "Issun-bōshi" 一寸法師 (Little One-Inch) tells how an *oni*, through a wish-granting mallet, brought fortune to the main character, the aptly named Little

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14 Saeki 1941, p. 465.

15 Komatsu and Naitō 1991, p. 11.

16 Komatsu 1999, p. 3.

17 Li 1987, p. 427. Li Huoxiong finds Chinese influence in the use of 鬼 in *Nihon shoki* and *Fudoki* 風土記 (*Records of Wind and Earth*, circa eighth century).

18 While Baba Akiko surmises that the rendition of 鬼 as *oni* probably started around 600 CE, other scholars such as Ōno Susumu consider the appellation *oni* started to appear in literature in the Heian period, and that until then 鬼 was rendered as *mono*. See Baba 1988, p. 31, and Ōno et al. 1974, p. 228.

19 In some other versions Saichō is replaced by Kūkai 空海 (or Kōbō Daishi 弘法大師, 774–835), the founder of the Shingon sect of Buddhism.

One-Inch. With the help of the *oni*'s supernatural mallet, Little One-Inch is transformed into a normal-sized human. He further uses the mallet to produce food and treasures. In the Shuten dōji story, too, the imperial court maintains its power and vitality by bringing Shuten dōji's head to the capital. Indeed, Komatsu Kazuhiko interprets Shuten dōji from the perspective of a medieval *Ōken setsuwa* 王権説話 (narrative prose concerning sovereign authority), in which the central sovereign authority appropriates "external" power through a symbolic jewel. In the case of the Shuten dōji story, this symbolic jewel is represented by the demon leader's head. When Shuten dōji's head is brought to the capital, the "external" power is appropriated by the capital, and thus the sovereign. Komatsu explains that the swallowing of the head of Shuten dōji by the body of the state grants renewed life to Heian central authority.<sup>20</sup>

### **Oni in *Demon Slayer Kimetsu no yaiba***

Now let us consider how these traditional features find reflection in *Kimetsu no yaiba* while exploring some changes which have occurred.

#### *Appearance and Strength*

Ordinary Oni appear as typical *oni*, with horns and fangs, and this is accentuated for the elite Oni known as Demon Moons. Upper Moon Four (named Half-Tengu) has huge horns on his head, while Upper Moon One has six eyes. While most Demon Moons generally assume ordinary human form—some attractive, others less so—they all transform during their battles, displaying incredibly muscular bodies with noticeable fangs and horns, concordant with traditional *oni* appearances. Demon Moons have their ranking inscribed on their eyes, indicting their special status and strength. This is unique to the Oni of *Kimetsu no yaiba* and suggests human minds that are class-conscious. Kibutsuji Muzan has seven hearts and five brains but appears in cold and graceful human form. Shuten dōji was human by day before reverting to a monstrous form at night, but Muzan retains his human appearance, though his acts of cruelty and atrocity cause Tanjirō say that, "he is . . . the real demon," as Muzan mercilessly destroys the Oni who worship him.<sup>21</sup>

Unlike traditional *oni*, the elite Demon Moons are equipped with Blood Demon Arts (*kekkiijutsu* 血鬼術), individually customized offensive techniques. These specialized offensive techniques are more in line with action characters in contemporary popular media such as anime, films, and games. The action-packed battle scenes between Oni and Demon Slayer Corps keep readers/viewers on their toes and contribute to the popularity of *Kimetsu no yaiba*.

#### *Anthropophagy*

Like traditional *oni*, Oni in *Kimetsu no yaiba* are anthropophagous, and "the number of humans a demon consumes determines how powerful a demon is."<sup>22</sup> As Oni advance, they become more selective in their consumption. Daki, half of Upper Moon Six and

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20 Komatsu 1997, pp. 9–55.

21 KNY 3, p. 55. The translation is mine.

22 KNY 1, p. 176.

the only female among the Twelve Demon Moons, says, “I don’t eat dirty old people and abominations.”<sup>23</sup> Like Shuten dōji, she is an epicurean.

As per traditional *oni*, Oni do not eat each other. Unlike ordinary *oni*, however, some good Oni (that is, on the side of humans) such as Tamayo can survive without partaking of human flesh. After her encounter with Tsugukuni Yoriichi, a legendary demon slayer, Tamayo resists eating human flesh, and subsists on animal flesh, though she still needs to drink a small amount of human blood.<sup>24</sup> As a good Oni, she buys blood from poor people under the pretext of using it for transfusions.

### *Shapeshifting*

Many Oni in *Kimetsu no yaiba* shapeshift. Lower Demon Moon One almost becomes a train. But the best example of shapeshifting is Kibutsuji Muzan. He was a male human one thousand years ago and is believed to still be male. Like traditional *oni*, Muzan can transform himself into a man or woman; he appears as a beautiful woman or a boy. When he transforms into a beautiful woman, however, it is whimsically rather than to lure victims. In episode fifty-one, Muzan, in beautiful female form, summons all the Lower Demon Moons to eliminate them as he is so disgusted with their weakness. As she-Muzan commands, “Prostrate yourselves,” the Lower Moons realize that she is Muzan, and Lower Moon Six says to himself, “It’s Venerable Muzan... It’s his voice. I didn’t know. His figure and presence are different from before. It’s terrifyingly accurate camouflage.”<sup>25</sup> Muzan choosing to appear as a woman seems primarily to amuse himself rather than for a specific purpose, in contrast to traditional *oni* transforming themselves situationally to achieve a certain objective. Whatever he transforms into, Muzan is always good-looking, like Shuten dōji’s daytime appearance.

### *Disenfranchised and Different*

The Oni in *Kimetsu no yaiba* are humans turned into demons. Shuten dōji, in some versions of the story, is also described as a former human or half-human (his mother was human). The most popular version of the text, an eighteenth-century printed version by a bookseller called Shibukawa Seiemon 渋川清右衛門, introduces Shuten dōji’s birthplace as Echigo Province (present-day Niigata Prefecture). According to a local legend, Shuten dōji was in his human mother’s womb for sixteen months and grew up to be a violent but very good-looking lad.<sup>26</sup> Michelle Osterfeld Li notes that:

The shift toward *oni* who evoke sympathy occurs mainly in the medieval period (circa 1185–1600), when their potential for spiritual growth is considered. Even as they remain dangerous monsters, the reasons why they became *oni* and their potential for change start to matter.<sup>27</sup>

Li describes the female *oni* that appear in “Deeply Jealous Woman Becomes an Oni While Still Living,” a tale in a Buddhist *setsuwa* 説話 collection called *Kankyo no tomo* 閑居の

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23 KNY 9, p. 114.

24 KNY 2, p. 153.

25 KNY 6, p. 173.

26 Tokuda 2001, p. 86.

27 Li 2012, p. 173.

友 (A companion in solitude, compiled 1222), as a lonely and pitiful being. After being abandoned by her lover, the titular woman makes herself look like an *oni*, using starch syrup to fashion her hair into five horns. She then kills her former lover and eventually eats other innocent people.<sup>28</sup> The *kyōgen* performer Nomura Mansai focuses on the sadness of *oni* on the Noh stage—exploring what makes a human turn into an *oni*. Not all *oni* are formerly human, but as Komatsu Kazuhiko comments, “this is a tradition of Japanese *oni* culture. *Oni* have their own personal histories and there is some room for sympathy for that history.”<sup>29</sup> These stories—of tough lives, mentally and physically marginalized—allow audiences to sympathize with demons.

A good example in *Kimetsu no yaiba* is Upper Demon Six Gyūtarō and his younger sister Daki. The name Gyūtarō means pimp, and Daki’s real name is Ume 梅. Ume was named after her mother’s disease, syphilis, which in Japanese is *baidoku* 梅毒; *bai* is the Chinese reading of *ume* (plum) and *doku* means poison. They were born into the lowest caste of the red-light district. Gyūtarō pours his heart out before he expires: “We were real burdens because it cost money to feed us and keep us alive. Our mother tried to kill me many times . . . because I was nothing but a nuisance. Maggot. Dimwit. Coward among dunces. Useless. They laughed at me for my ugly voice and appearance. They called me dirty and threw rocks at me.”<sup>30</sup> He chose to become an Oni to resurrect his sister, who was burned alive as punishment for blinding a samurai by poking his eye out with a hairpin.<sup>31</sup>

In contrast, it is burning jealousy and hatred that motivate Tsugukuni Michikatsu to become the Oni known as Kokushibō, Upper Demon One. Michikatsu wants to train himself to be strong enough to beat his younger twin brother, Yoriichi the legendary demon slayer. In a flashback, Upper Demon One recalls that when he realized Yoriichi’s unparalleled talent, “my body was consumed by the flames of jealousy, from inside out. From the very bottom of my soul, I blazed with hatred for the genius known as Yoriichi.”<sup>32</sup> While other Twelve Demon Moons retain a relatively human-like appearance in ordinary circumstances, Upper Demon One acquires four additional eyes when he becomes an Oni.

The pathetic background stories of the Oni evoke sympathy in readers and viewers. Yet while audiences sympathize with “evil” characters, they are not granted an easy exit. Bruno Bettelheim notes how, “In the traditional fairy tale, the hero is rewarded, and the evil person meets his well-deserved fate, thus satisfying the child’s deep-seated need for justice. How else can a child hope that justice will be done to him, who so often feels unfairly treated? And how else can he convince himself that he must act correctly, when he is so sorely tempted to give in to the asocial prodding of his desires?”<sup>33</sup> Like fairy tales, *Kimetsu no yaiba* provides accountability and a sense of satisfaction to its audience.

In *Kimetsu no yaiba*, the Demon Slayer Corps are not recognized by the government. This makes the Oni, hunted by marginalized demon hunters, into doubly disenfranchised beings. The status of the Demon Slayer Corps is markedly different from Raikō and his companions, the Demon Slayer Corps of their day, because Raikō’s group were publicly

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28 Kojima 1993, p. 422.

29 Komatsu 2022, p. 224.

30 KNY 11, p. 158.

31 KNY 11, p. 161.

32 KNY 20, p. 169.

33 Bettelheim 1977, p. 144.

acknowledged—commissioned by imperial command. Raikō's stories were heavily supported and disseminated to claim legitimacy for Tokugawa rule (1600–1868).<sup>34</sup> In other words, admiration for Raikō as a brave warrior and conqueror of supernatural creatures meant admiration for the Tokugawa shogunate—the theme of courageous good conquering evil reinforced the shogunate's desired image. Conversely, *Kimetsu no yaiba*'s Demon Slayers are marginalized heroes. Contemporary Demon Slayers do good without being recognized—like superheroes before donning their costumes. The audience—absent the need to legitimize lordship or a rigid social class system like the Tokugawa—can relate to the ordinariness of the characters, another factor in the popularity of *Kimetsu no yaiba*.

### *Bringing Fortune*

The Oni in *Kimetsu no yaiba* bring disaster to humans, but Muzan can offer health, physical strength, and longevity to those who become Oni. The Lower Moon Five, Rui, is weak until Muzan takes pity on him. As Daki proudly announces, “Demons don't age. We don't need money to eat. We don't get sick or die. We don't lose anything. And strong, beautiful demons can do anything!”<sup>35</sup> The strength of these Oni is dependent on Muzan, however, which means that all Muzan's Oni crumble once Muzan dies.<sup>36</sup> This resembles the power of Shuten dōji, whose world disappears when he expires; the old washing woman kidnapped more than two hundred years previously perishes when the demon king's supernatural power that prolonged her life vanished.<sup>37</sup> While Shuten dōji's severed head enhances the power of the central government, though, Muzan's corporeal body disintegrates on being exposed to sunlight. Yet Muzan's demise also signifies peace for Japan, as well as love and friendship—good fortune indeed.

### **From *hitokuchi* to Bloodsuckers**

While the Oni in *Kimetsu no yaiba* retain many traditional elements, some new attributes are added. The most noticeable ones are those related to vampires. Vampires, or *kyūketsuki* 吸血鬼, are the blood-sucking undead. They subsist by feeding on human blood, and in the process, their prey die and turn into vampires. While Oni in *Kimetsu no yaiba* eat humans, the emphasis on blood is more vampiric. At the outset it is explained that Nezuko has turned into an Oni because, “Demon blood got in her wound, so she became an Oni. That is how man-eating Oni multiply.”<sup>38</sup> As the story progresses, it emerges that humans are turned into demons by Kibutsuji Muzan injecting them with his own blood. Muzan's blood is the power source. Tamayo lives on a small amount of blood (and her creation, Yushirō, on an even smaller amount). Nezuko's Oni blood helps Tamayo create the drug which turns Oni into humans. The emphasis on blood is also shown in the Blood Demon Arts of higher-level demons, performed by consuming their own blood and energy. If one adds the character *kyū*

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34 Minobe Shigekatsu 美濃部重克 notes that the Shuten dōji story legitimated the Seiwa Genji clan's claim to rule Japan and thus exalted the Tokugawa shogunate, which claimed descent from the Seiwa Genji. The Edo period saw a thriving production of Shuten dōji folding screens and picture scrolls (Minobe and Minobe 2009, p. 148).

35 KNY 10, pp. 38–39.

36 Ubuyashiki Kagaya tells Muzan, “Because you . . . and your kind will cease to exist once you die, right? A change in the air . . . Am I right?” KNY 16, p. 82.

37 Reider 2016, p. 52.

38 KNY 1, p. 35.

吸 in front of *kekkiijutsu*, the Blood Demon Arts becomes *kyūketsukijutsu* 吸血鬼術, Vampire Arts.

### *Exposure to Sunlight*

While blood is the essence of an Oni's power, the weakness of the Oni to the sun's rays foregrounds their vampiric nature. The most influential work of vampire fiction is Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, and the vampiric traits described in Stoker's work merged with folkloric tradition, evolving into the modern fictional vampire. However, the demise of vampires from exposure to sunlight was "an invention of the cinema introduced in 1922 by F. W. Murnau in his landmark film, *Nosferatu*," itself based on Bram Stoker's *Dracula*.<sup>39</sup> Count Orlok, the main character of *Nosferatu*, vanishes into thin air with the sunrise. The backdrop to *Kimetsu no yaiba* is the intense urbanization of the Taishō period. The first decades of the twentieth century in Japan saw writers, anthropologists, and travelers visiting exotic and mysterious rural regions untainted by Western/urban influences, and a belief in the supernatural was widely discussed by scholars.<sup>40</sup> The blending with Japanese *oni* with vampires therefore works as an effective technique to capture the zeitgeist of the Taishō era.

Traditional *oni* are killed by samurais with special swords, or chased away by Buddhist prayers or Onmyōji, but in *Kimetsu no yaiba*, sunlight causes Oni to literally crumble and disappear.<sup>41</sup> From the time Muzan became an Oni, "he couldn't walk in the sun. He realized that he would die if he got hit by sunlight."<sup>42</sup> The final battle between Muzan and the Demon Slayers Corps highlights the destructive power of sunlight for the Oni. As Muzan realizes the dawn is approaching, he transmogrifies into an enormous fleshy baby—the shape he was in his mother's womb. The monstrous baby-shaped Muzan then further enlarges his body so that if the sun's rays burn part of his body to dust, other parts will still remain; and in the process of swelling, he engulfs Tanjirō.<sup>43</sup> As dawn breaks, Muzan tries to avoid the sun, but the demon hunters are commanded, "Don't let him enter the shade!"<sup>44</sup> As sunbeams strike Muzan, his body crumbles and vanishes.

### *Decapitation*

Another method of killing Oni is decapitation with a demon slayer's special sword called a *Nichirinō*. Using an ordinary sword does not work. Death through decapitation is familiar in traditional *oni* legends, exemplified by Shuten dōji, whose demise was brought about by Raikō cutting off their head (see figure 1). Raikō is an extraordinary general, and his sword—a three-foot-five-inch sword decorated with gold—is equally exceptional. Decapitation can

39 Skal 1996, p. 104.

40 For example, Izumi Kyōka 泉鏡花 (1873–1939) wrote "Kōya Hijiri" 高野聖 (The holy man of Mount Kōya) in 1900 and Yanagita Kunio 柳田國男 (1875–1962), the founder of Japanese ethnography, published *Tōno monogatari* 遠野物語 (*Tales of Tōno*) in 1910. In the 1880s, Inoue Enryō 井上円了 (1858–1919) had begun *yōkaigaku* 妖怪学 (Studies of *yōkai*) to explain the supernatural scientifically; Ema Tsutomu 江馬務 (1884–1979) wrote *Nihon yōkai henge-shi* 日本妖怪変化史 (History of Japanese *yōkai* shape-shifters) in 1923. See Foster 2015, pp. 52–61.

41 "Direct contact with the rays of the sun is customarily believed to cause a vampire to ignite, or simply crumble to dust." Jøn 2001, p. 100.

42 KNY 15, p. 59.

43 The depiction of the fighting giant baby reminds me of the scene where Tetsuo starts to mutate, as he cannot control his power, in the animation film *Akira* (1988).

44 KNY 23, p. 54.



Figure 1. Shuten dōji's severed head lunges at Raikō. From the *Ibukiyama Shuten dōji emaki* 伊吹山酒吞童子絵巻. Courtesy of the International Research Center for Japanese Studies.

also bring about the demise of vampires, but the most well-known method of killing them is a stake through their heart. This does not figure in *Demon Slayer*, though, presumably because the stake is so strongly associated with Western vampires that it would spoil the Japanese ambiance of the Oni.

#### *Apotropaics*

Garlic is known to repel vampires. The apotropaic equivalent of garlic in *Kimetsu no yaiba* is wisteria. Oni hate wisteria flowers, and in one episode, a boy who attracts Oni is given an incense bag that smells of wisteria to repel demons.<sup>45</sup> While garlic does not kill vampires, injection with poison extracted from wisteria flowers can terminate Oni—usually Oni of the rank and file. Kochō Shinobu, one of the Pillars and a medical specialist, says of herself, “I may be the only swordswoman among the Pillars who can’t cut a demon’s head off. But anyone who creates poison that can kill demons is a bit amazing.”<sup>46</sup> Kochō’s end comes when she allows herself to be intentionally devoured by Upper Moon Two; she has saturated her own body with the poison so that other demon slayers will have the opportunity to sever his head. Kochō tells Kanao, her successor, “Do not let your guard down. Beheading him is the only way to be sure. I will not fail to weaken the demon . . . so you must cut off his head and finish him.”<sup>47</sup> The order of effectiveness in *Kimetsu no yaiba* is sunlight, decapitation, and wisteria extract.

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45 KNY 1, p. 166; KNY 4, p. 34.

46 KNY 5, p. 145.

47 KNY 23, pp. 32–33.



*Sexuality*

Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock writes, “The vampire in both literature and film embodies transgressive, tabooed sexuality—hypnotic, overwhelming, selfish and destructive. The vampiric body, itself frequently represented as fluid and transformative, courses with polymorphously perverse sexual energy that refuses to be channeled into respectable heterosexual monogamy.”<sup>48</sup> *Kimetsu no yaiba* has many erotic scenes. The ecstasy expressed by Lower Demon Moon One when witnessing Muzan eliminate the Lower Demons reveals a masochistic gratification. Female characters—both Oni and humans—exude ample physical charm with scantily-clad, voluptuous bodies, and the cold-blooded vampiric Muzan has a chilling sexuality about him.

The demon doctor Tamayo is a dangerous woman, referred to by Ue Akiko as a *femme fatale*.<sup>49</sup> Tamayo has been around for several hundred years. Turned into an Oni by Muzan, she temporarily loses her senses and devours her husband, child, and other people. She then vows to avenge her family and destroy Muzan. Virginia Allen claims that “the *femme fatale* . . . was constructed as the woman who controlled her own sexuality, who seduced men and drained them of their ‘vital powers.’”<sup>50</sup> Tamayo’s Blood Demon Art is Blood Bewitchment (*wakuchi* 惑血), released by scratching her arm with her sharp finger nails, with the blood making her invisible. Using her art, Tamayo approaches Muzan with the Humanization drug in her fist. Realizing Tamayo’s presence, Muzan, half naked, firmly grabs her head; the scene perhaps reminds readers of the *mise-en-scène* where Count Dracula holds Mina Harker tight and forces her to suck blood from his chest. Mina Harker recounts that Count Dracula “pulled open his shirt, and with his long sharp nails opened a vein in his breast. When the blood began to spurt out, he took my hands in one of his, holding them tight, and with the other seized my neck and pressed my mouth to the wound.”<sup>51</sup>

***Imo no Chikara (Female Power)***

Like in Disney films, *Kimetsu no yaiba*’s main characters are orphaned when young, empowering them and their young readers/viewers. Absent parents, sibling relations are strong. Komatsu Kazuhiko writes that what Yanagita Kunio called *imo no chikara* 妹の力 (women’s power) is on display in *Kimetsu no yaiba*.<sup>52</sup> *Imo no chikara* is the special spiritual power of a female member of the family or clan used to protect a man close to her. Yanagita describes this special power in relation to the close relationship between a younger sister and elder brother.<sup>53</sup>

The *imo no chikara* is depicted through Nezuko (the younger sister) and her relation to Tanjirō (her elder brother). In the first episode, Nezuko is the only survivor of the Oni’s attack. For Tanjirō, Nezuko is the driving force for Tanjirō’s physical and spiritual journey,

48 Weinstock 2012, p. 21.

49 Ue 2021, pp. 315–322.

50 Allen 1983, pp. 4, 194.

51 Stoker 2011, p. 289.

52 Komatsu 2022, p. 224.

53 Yanagita 1942, pp. 1–30. Miyata Noboru 宮田登 writes that women, particularly young women, possess spiritual power; women are said to be more attuned to the spiritual realm than men. Miyata 2002, pp. 117, 249. Likewise, Carmen Blacker notes, “Sacral power was believed to reside more easily and properly with women . . . in consequence women were recognized to be the natural intermediaries between the two worlds.” Blacker 1975, p. 28.

but while Tanjirō aims to shield Nezuko, Nezuko actually protects and saves Tanjirō's life many times. As a powerful Oni, she has her own Blood Demon Art called Blood Burst (*bakketsu* 爆血), which makes her blood ignite. When Tanjirō is about to be killed by the steel-hard strings cast by Rui, Nezuko burns the strings with her Blood Burst; Tanjirō shouts, "Nobody can ever sever my bonds with Nezuko!!"<sup>54</sup> Tanjirō severs Rui's extremely hard neck with his sword, which has become harder than Rui's body because it has been splattered with Nezuko's Oni blood. The notion of "sever" in this scene plays on words at multiple levels: the severing of the thread (Rui's thread that binds Nezuko and Tanjirō) and of Rui's head; and the bond between Nezuko and Tanjirō, which cannot be severed.

Crucially, Nezuko also returns Tanjirō to his humanity during the final battle with Muzan. This special power between a younger sister and elder brother, Nezuko supporting Tanjirō at that critical moment, is *imo no chikara*. Furthermore, at the height of his struggle with simultaneous Onification and Humanization, Tanjirō spurns Muzan's plea that he become an almighty Oni. Nezuko calls him back to their old mountain house; his friends, dead or alive, all offer their hands to bring him back to the human world. This friendship may reflect contemporary readers/viewers' desire for social interaction to compensate for their loneliness in the real world. Indeed, the fandom of anime and/or manga provides just such a sense of belonging. The media mix provides opportunities for expanding the possibilities for social interaction among readers, viewers, and consumers through the links that cross genres and industries.

The media mix is the driving force for the societal phenomenon of *Kimetsu no yaiba* and its revitalization of *oni*. Traditional *oni* are susceptible to Buddhist prayers or charms such as *Sonshō darani* 尊勝陀羅尼 (Skt. *dhāraṇī*) amulets, just like vampires are weakened by holy objects. Measures taken against evil are similar regardless of time and space. Yet appearing in contemporary media, *oni* as Oni thrive in people's imagination. Oni possess the fundamental elements of *oni*—horns and fangs, with a proclivity for human flesh. They are tremendously strong, while the elite Oni possess offensive techniques that reflect other popular contemporary action figures. *Oni* are notorious shapeshifters, but elite Oni transform just to amuse themselves. And as some *oni* have their own personal histories of marginalization, a few elite Oni are disenfranchised by society. These heart-wrenching background stories often evoke pathos, but Oni must also be defeated. The twist on tradition, features more associated with vampires, make the Oni more exciting and sexier, but with a tint of the exotic Western ambiance that suffuses cultural imaginations of the Taishō period. This is simultaneously nostalgic and fresh for readers and viewers. In tune with *Weekly Shōnen Jump*'s motto of "Friendship, Endeavor and Effort, and Victory" and driven by the appeal of *imo no chikara*, *Kimetsu no yaiba* is tremendously popular in Japan. Through its popularity, *oni* continue to be reimagined into the present.

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54 KNY 5, p. 124.

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REVIEW ESSAY

**Empire on My Mind:  
Celebrating Three Generations of Anglophone Scholarship  
on Imperial Japan**

Frederick R. DICKINSON\*

Seiji Shirane. *Imperial Gateway: Colonial Taiwan and Japan's Expansion in South China and Southeast Asia, 1895–1945*. Cornell University Press, 2022, 288 pages.

Jun Uchida. *Provincializing Empire: Ōmi Merchants in the Japanese Transpacific Diaspora*. University of California Press, 2023, 378 pages.

Paul Kreitman. *Japan's Ocean Borderlands: Nature and Sovereignty*. Cambridge University Press, 2023, 300 pages.

Takahiro Yamamoto. *Demarcating Japan: Imperialism, Islanders, and Mobility, 1855–1884*. Harvard University Press, 2023, 284 pages.

It has been forty years since Ramon Myers and Mark Peattie launched the systematic study in English of Japanese empire building, and Anglophone scholars of Japan remain smitten with empire. Myers and Peattie were established scholars when their seminal volume appeared in 1984.<sup>1</sup> And while the book's thirteen essays forcefully challenged long-term “progressive” Japanese orthodoxy on the origins, nature, and timing of Japanese imperialism, they offered conventional geopolitical, political, economic, and social analyses that garnered little fanfare and no awards. The contrast with more recent studies of the Japanese empire in English could not be starker. Far from conventional, analyses of empire are today the most celebrated new titles in the modern Japanese history canon.

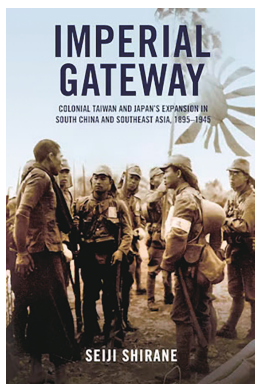
The leap from conventional to cutting edge owes to a dramatic evolution of empire watching over the last forty years. Like their peers examining modern Western empires, scholars of Japan have gradually shifted their attention from detailed analyses of policy-making to investigating public and private actors in the metropole and beyond.<sup>2</sup> And they

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1 Myers and Peattie 1984.

2 The former include Myers and Peattie 1984; Duus 1995; Dudden 2005; the latter include Young 1998; Uchida 2011; Lu 2019.



have vastly expanded the geographic boundaries of what we consider Japanese empire building.<sup>3</sup> Examinations of Imperial Japan mirror powerful trends in Anglophone studies of modern history generally, which include the growing interest in race and ethnicity, science and technology, and the environment.<sup>4</sup> Above all, the continuing vogue for all things imperial can be attributed to the spirited quest by historians overall to transcend the nation with as many border crossings as possible.<sup>5</sup>

The four books under review—three debut monographs, one second-book project—all reflect one or more of these conceptual innovations. The first to appear, Seiji Shirane’s *Imperial Gateway*, is the most conventional in its chronology and discussion of the origins of Japanese empire building. In their vigorous challenge to the progressive censure of a structural Japanese proclivity toward empire, Myers and Peattie in 1984 fashioned an abbreviated timeline for Imperial Japan of just fifty years, 1895 to 1945, and stressed the reactive nature of Japanese empire building, which Peter Duus in 1995 characterized as an act of “mimesis.”<sup>6</sup> Subsequent scholars have moved the timeline back to well before the Meiji Restoration.<sup>7</sup> And historians of the twentieth have accentuated the profound legacies of Japanese empire building well after its supposed implosion in August 1945.<sup>8</sup>

In their emphasis on early, proactive Japanese expansion, most students of Japanese empire today are more likely to echo progressive Japanese historians of the immediate postwar years than the first generation of Anglophone scholars of Imperial Japan represented by Duus, Myers, and Peattie. In this context, Shirane’s adherence to an 1895 to 1945 timeline is charming in its simplicity, and his fidelity to the idea of Japanese nineteenth-century expansion as an act of “preemptive defense” (p. 5) seems oddly antiquarian.

*Imperial Gateway* does, however, deliver a significant conceptual payoff in its geographic scope. Since the 1990s, historians of Japan have shifted their scrutiny of the empire eastward and southward away from an initial fascination with Manchuria.<sup>9</sup> While Taiwan specialists have long examined the intricacies of colonial rule on the island, Shirane joins a small but growing number of Japan historians now drawn to Taiwan’s key place in the history of modern Japan.<sup>10</sup>

In engineering a “Taiwan turn,” the new generation of Japan historians of Taiwan have effectively dispelled the myth of Imperial Japan as principally a continental empire.

3 See Walker 2001; Eskildsen 2002; Azuma 2019.

4 On race and ethnicity, see Caprio 2009; Fujitani 2011; Barclay 2017; Chatani 2018. On science and technology, see Yang 2010; Moore 2013; Kingsberg Kadia 2019. On the environment, see Arch 2018; Fedman 2020; Seow 2021.

5 See Matsuda 2018; Ambaras 2018; Ziomek 2019.

6 See the “Conclusion: Mimesis and Dependence,” in Duus 1995, pp. 424–437.

7 See Walker 2001; Eskildsen 2002; Rüegg 2017.

8 See Watt 2009; Mimura 2011; Kingsberg Kadia 2019.

9 For Manchuria, see Young 1998; Matsusaka 2001; Mimura 2011; O’Dwyer 2015. For Korea, see Caprio 2009; Uchida 2011; Henry 2014. For Taiwan, see Eskildsen 2002; Barclay 2017; Matsuda 2018.

10 Studies of colonial Taiwan by specialists of Taiwan include Ka 1995; Liao and Wang 2006; Dawley 2019.



According to Robert Eskildsen, Japan had plans to colonize Taiwan as early as 1874.<sup>11</sup> Paul Barclay describes the management of indigenous Taiwanese as essential not solely for imperial Japan but, more broadly, for defining new parameters of indigeneity and colonial responsibility in twentieth-century empire building.<sup>12</sup> Hiroko Matsuda shows the degree to which the intricate personal networks of Okinawans in Taiwan belied the artificial distinction between *naichi* 内地 (inner territory) and *gaichi* 外地 (outer territory) in Imperial Japan.<sup>13</sup>

Like these previous works, *Imperial Gateway* accentuates the centrality of Taiwan for modern Japan. But Shirane's geographic scope far exceeds that of his predecessors. As suggested by the title of his volume, Taiwan is less a terminus than a departure point ("gateway") for thinking about a much broader scope of Japanese imperialism. Even Mark Peattie, who as early as 1988 published a monograph on Japan in the Pacific, considered Taiwan no more than an "imperial accessory."<sup>14</sup> By contrast, Shirane situates Japan firmly in Taipei in 1895 and spotlights the Governor General's office not as an outpost of empire but as an active agent in the projection of Japanese political and economic power far beyond Taiwan. Through the strategic use of ethnic Han Taiwanese ties throughout South China and Southeast Asia, the Taiwan Government General, according to Shirane, established key networks in the early twentieth century that would facilitate Japan's military occupation of the region in the 1930s and 1940s.

In other words, despite the conventional 1895–1945 chronology and the discussion of "preemptive defense" in 1895, Shirane offers a powerful corrective to the first generation emphasis on reactive Japanese empire building. In 1989, Peter Duus misappropriated the idea of "informal empire" from British historians Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher to make a clear distinction between what he described as primarily Japanese *economic* interests in China through the 1930s and *military* interests after 1937.<sup>15</sup> But *Imperial Gateway* restores the original significance of Robinson and Gallagher's "informal empire" idea to highlight proactive Japanese intrusions in South China and Southeast Asia well before the advent of formal empire in the 1930s and 1940s.

Shirane's powerful decentering of the analysis of Japanese empire building from Tokyo to Taipei owes, in part, to the impressive accomplishments of earlier generations of Anglophone Japan scholars. In their debut monographs on the Japanese empire, both Peter Duus and Louise Young devoted ample attention to developments beyond the metropole, Duus to Japanese merchants in Korea, Young to Japanese farmers in Manchuria.<sup>16</sup> For her own first book, Jun Uchida, the second historian under review here, took a cue from both Duus and Young to produce in 2011 the first monograph by a Japan historian in English to focus exclusively on Japan's imperial periphery, in her case on colonial Korea.<sup>17</sup> Given Uchida's expertise in social history, *Brokers of Empire* also helped nudge the study of Japanese

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11 Eskildsen 2002.

12 Barclay 2017.

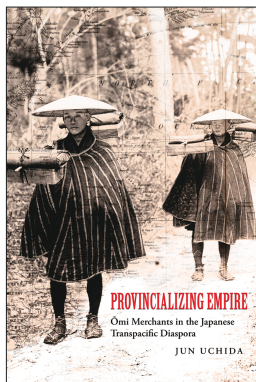
13 Matsuda 2018.

14 Peattie 1988, p. 16.

15 Duus 1989.

16 Duus 1995; Young 1998.

17 Uchida 2011.



empire building away from analyses of high policy and more toward investigations of empire as lived experience.

As the first book by a member of the second generation of Anglophone scholars of the Japanese empire, *Brokers of Empire* was, understandably, closer conceptually to first-generation scholarship than most of the volumes by Uchida's third generation successors. Just as Peter Duus uncovered a "paranoid style" of Japanese decision making from the official sources his policy makers produced, *Brokers of Empire* located a "colonial neurosis" in the writings and oral histories of Japanese settlers in Korea, who were fearful of Chinese nationalism, Korean nationalism, Koreanization, Korean "empowerment," and a prospective loss of status within the Japanese empire.<sup>18</sup>

The effect of this first examination of Japanese empire as lived experience was, in other words, to accentuate the reactive nature of Japanese empire building.

Surprisingly, the contrast with Uchida's second monograph could not be more complete. Like *Brokers*, *Provincializing Empire* offers a view of Imperial Japan from the margins. And as in *Brokers*, the protagonists of *Provincializing* are Japanese merchants who strongly identify with a specific place. But in *Brokers* that place is an area of confinement—colonial Korea—where Japan's settler colonists struggled to eke out a living. By contrast, *Provincializing* spotlights Ōmi Province (present-day Shiga Prefecture), an arena of proud heritage and a launchpad for fortuitous adventure. The volume highlights four hundred years of expansive Ōmi merchant activity, from facilitating Japan's early modern trade with Hokkaido, to promoting the development of Hokkaido in the nineteenth century, to selling cotton to early twentieth-century China and the U.S., to subcontracting with the Japanese military in wartime Japan, to managing a department store chain in China and postwar Canada.

The dramatic contrast between the positionality of Uchida's Ōmi merchants in *Provincializing* and her settler colonists in *Brokers* hints at a striking conceptual departure between her first and second monographs. Whereas *Brokers* tells the insular tale of a late-comer Japanese empire struggling to survive in a Western world, *Provincializing* spotlights a Japan at the vanguard of colonial exploitation from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, with Ōmi merchants as active agents of "racial capitalism" (p. 130), subduing indigenous Ainu in early modern Hokkaido and various subjects of the formal Japanese empire in the early twentieth century. They are also champions of "cotton imperialism" in twentieth-century China and the Pacific (p. 228), "linking the empire and its multiethnic inhabitants to a global culture of consumption" (pp. 331–332).

Interestingly, Uchida, who succeeded Peter Duus as professor of Japanese history at Stanford University, does more than anyone else with *Provincializing Empire* to challenge the most prized tenets of the first generation of Anglophone scholars of the Japanese empire. Duus's *Abacus and the Sword* aimed principally to challenge the well-worn progressive Japanese vision of a *longue durée* of Japanese colonial subjugation. In stressing the "economic weakness" and "political meekness" of Japanese settlers in Korea, Uchida's first book endorsed this vision of a reactive, latecomer Japanese empire. By contrast, *Provincializing Empire* not

<sup>18</sup> Duus 1995, p. 16; Uchida 2011, pp. 135, 153.

only brings economic power back to the center, it offers the most sweeping chronology of Japanese exploitation to date. Whereas Duus located the start of modern Japanese empire building no earlier than the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), *Provincializing Empire* dates Japanese “racial capitalism” as far back as the arrival of the first Ōmi merchants in Hokkaido in 1610. Not even Japan’s progressive scholars hazarded a timeline of Japanese empire building starting *before* the consolidation of Tokugawa institutions in the 1640s.

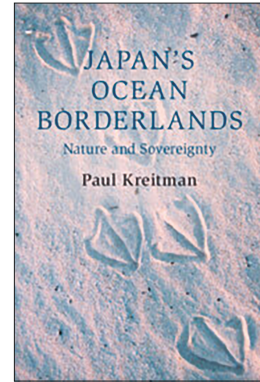
In directing our attention from the Asian continent toward Taiwan and across the Pacific, Shirane and Uchida’s second monograph reflect one of the most popular trends among Japan specialists today, the turn toward maritime space. Since Bill Tsutsui spotlighted a “pelagic empire” in 2013, Japan specialists have clamored for more coverage of movement across oceans.<sup>19</sup> The final two volumes under review here focus explicitly on the modern Pacific and, in so doing, further challenge the earlier fixation on continental expansion and on an 1895–1945 imperial timeline.

Inspired by Hiraoka Akitoshi’s work on the exploration of uninhabited Pacific Islands (what Hiraoka describes as a “Bird Rush”), Paul Kreitman examines Imperial Japan through what he terms Japan’s “ocean borderlands.”<sup>20</sup> The novel prism inspires yet another expansive vision of the geographic and chronological scope of Japanese empire building, one that focuses not simply on either extractive capitalism or formal territorial control, but on constantly evolving schemes to exert sovereignty.

If we focus on Japanese efforts to acquire sovereignty, the earliest parameters of Japanese expansion lie *not* on the Asian continent but in the vast expanse of ocean territory bounded by the Kuril Islands in the north, Hawai‘i in the central Pacific, and Taiwan to the southeast. Japanese interests made, with varying degrees of success, early bids for sovereignty in the Bonin Islands (1862), Micronesia (1876), the Ryukyus (1879), Daito Island (1885), Torishima (1887), the Volcano Islands (1891), Iwo Jima (1891), Hawai‘i (1892), the Senkaku Islands (1895), Taiwan (1895), Marcus Island (1898), Rasa Island (1900), Wake Atoll (1902), Midway (1903), Lisianski (1903), Laysan Island (1904), the Pratas Islands (1907), the Spratly Islands (1918), and the Paracel Islands (1920).

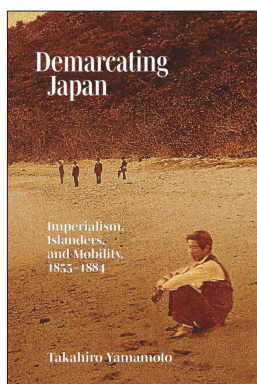
Most early Japanese bids for sovereignty sought control over the feathers of nesting birds on these islands. But feather extraction yielded to guano mining after World War I, followed by a quest for refueling bases for planes and submarines in the 1930s. Early interest in “ocean borderlands” would, in other words, lay the foundations for a vast Pacific empire in the 1940s. But military defeat and the implosion of Imperial Japan did *not* end Japan’s quest for sovereignty in the Pacific. Rather, in an era of peace, that quest assumed a creative new form.

According to Kreitman, while nineteenth-century Japanese quests for sovereignty slaughtered birds en masse across the Pacific, postwar Japanese quests for control took the form of bird conservation. Actual Japanese possession of ocean territories through the Pacific War had fluctuated wildly due to difficult access and unsuitability for human habitation.



19 Tsutsui 2013. For recent studies of Japanese oceanic expansion, see Dusinger 2016; Rüegg 2017; Arch 2018.

20 Hiraoka 2018.



After August 1945, no Japanese settlements remained on Torishima or the Senkaku Islands, and the U.S. controlled the islands of Okinawa. But anti-U.S. base activists checked the expansion of U.S. Marine Corps activity in Okinawa in the name of protecting the Okinawan woodpecker. And in postwar campaigns to protect the Steller's albatross, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and Okinawan conservationists moved decisively to reestablish Japan's claim to Torishima (1960s) and the Senkaku Islands (1970s), respectively.

If Kreitman thus significantly expands our understanding of both the geographic and chronological scope of Japanese expansion, he avoids the excesses of more ambitious recent analyses of Japanese empire building. As we have seen, Uchida's

*Provincializing Empire* makes sweeping claims of Japanese "racial capitalism" from the early seventeenth century to the present. But Kreitman offers a much more sober tale of highly contingent Japanese expansion. While a nineteenth-century quest for bird feathers ultimately laid the foundation for a Pacific empire, there was no direct line from bird-hunting to Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity.

On the contrary, in one of his most important interventions as an environmental historian, Kreitman accentuates the power of the environment to disrupt the best-laid plans of Japan's empire builders. The remoteness, scarcity of potable water, negligible arable land, and vulnerability to volcanoes and typhoons made these islands difficult to access and often impractical to secure. So they remained unreliable beachheads for a burgeoning empire. In contrast to the more familiar tale of the inexorable rise of Japanese power and concomitant environmental destruction, *Japan's Ocean Borderlands* offers a striking vision of imperial fits and starts, one well in keeping with the preference for contingency of first-generation Anglophone scholarship on imperial Japan.<sup>21</sup>

Like Kreitman, our final scholar under review, Takahiro Yamamoto focuses on maritime space and, in so doing, offers yet another challenge to the restrictive geographic and chronological parameters of first-generation Anglophone work on Imperial Japan. But whereas Kreitman follows Japanese bird hunters in an expansive perimeter from Hawai'i to the Paracel Islands, Yamamoto limits his attention to islands close to the Japanese archipelago, those first to be absorbed into an early modern and modern Japanese polity: Sakhalin (1855), Tsushima Island (1871), the Kuril Islands (1875), the Bonin Islands (1876), and the Ryukyus (1879).

*Demarcating Japan* is at first glance a conventional analysis of Japanese "territorialization," but in fact focuses less on territorialization than upon the remarkable fluidity of trade and migration around the Japanese archipelago long before formal Japanese administrative control. In the early to mid-nineteenth century, the peoples of Sakhalin navigated between Qing China, Japanese fisheries employing Ainu, and Russian exiles working Sakhalin coal mines. The Tsushima Strait facilitated Japanese coastal trade, Korea-Tokugawa diplomacy, and Russian trade with China and Japan. Ainu, Russians, Aleuts, and vessels from California

21 For a more declinist vision of imperial Japan and the environment, see Christmas 2019; Fedman 2020; Seow 2021.

hunted furs in the Kuril Islands. The Bonin Islands facilitated a burgeoning Pacific trade, occupied by laborers, ship crews, trafficked persons, whalers, fur animal hunters, and settlers. And the Ryukyus dispatched multiple missions of tribute and trade to China and Japan.

The ultimate consequence of later nineteenth-century territorialization was not the advent of hard borders and the end of trade and migration. Rather, new administrative controls simply produced new patterns of border crossing. Following the full cession of Sakhalin to Russia in 1875, Japanese settlers continued to fish, Ainu communities were consolidated, and more convicts from the Black Sea inhabited the island than ever before. Tsushima transitioned from a Korean-Japanese border region to a geopolitical link between the Sea of Japan and the East China Sea, one that sustained a burgeoning community of Japanese settlers in Korea and of Russian sailors near Nagasaki. Decimation of the fur animal population pushed Russian and Aleut communities out of the Kurils and inspired the forced relocation of all Kuril Ainu to just one island, Shikotan. The Bonin Islands remained a hotbed of human trafficking, piracy, and other activities well after its formal incorporation into the Japanese body politic. And while Ryukyuans no longer paid tribute to Japan and China after 1879, they participated in new patterns of migration to Hawai'i and the U.S. and became the largest source of settlers to Japan's colonies in the South Seas.

Of the four historians under review, Yamamoto shares the strongest affinity with first generation Anglophone scholars of Imperial Japan. His meticulous examination of complex, multilateral nodes of interaction and colorful individuals accentuates the contingency of every attempt at sovereign control. And his emphasis on geopolitics and, in particular, the “fear” among Japan's political leadership of “a sequence of territorial dominos” (p. 230) behind every attempt at border-making directly echoes Peter Duus' notion of a “paranoid style” in Imperial Japan. Duus, Myers, and Peattie described Japanese empire building as a *reaction* to great power politics, to contest the progressive Japanese vision of inexorable expansion rooted in internal political and economic distress. Likewise, Yamamoto insists on a bumpy road to sovereignty, and in doing so counters the enduring popularity of tales of inevitable Japanese expansion based on structural forces.

While Anglophone scholars have decisively broadened the scope of agency, geography, and chronology associated with Imperial Japan, the third generation historians featured here demonstrate that such expanded coverage need not perpetuate well-worn images of the inexorable rise of Japanese power. In fact, they hint at a possible new synthesis in the Anglophone study of Imperial Japan. Recognizing the extraordinary scope of violence in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Japan, they are also worthy successors to first generation scholars in their close attention to specific individuals and to the precise circumstances of Japanese expansion—albeit on a significantly larger scale and in a variety of forms.

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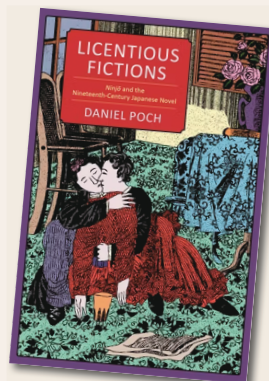


## BOOK REVIEW

### *Licentious Fictions: Ninjō and the Nineteenth-Century Japanese Novel*

By Daniel Poch

Columbia University Press, 2019  
304 pages.



Reviewed by Stephen DODD\*

In the need to sketch out a neat historical sketch of modern Japan, many (myself included at times) have been tempted to resort to an easy, shorthand assumption that the advent of the Meiji period (1868–1912) led to the emergence of an entirely new set of Japanese cultural, political, and social realities almost overnight; as if, on the first day of Meiji, the legacy of centuries of Japanese culture had suddenly disappeared and all eyes were now fixed firmly and exclusively on the future promises of modern Japan. Daniel Poch’s book, *Licentious Fictions: Ninjō and the Nineteenth-Century Japanese Novel*, is an invaluable reminder that the cultural shifts taking place when the Edo period (1603–1868) ended and the Meiji period began were far more complex, intertextual, and interesting. This was particularly the case in the literary field. Rather than emphasize an epistemological divide between Edo and Meiji, Poch sees the nineteenth century as a coherent literary and discursive space “held together by an intensified critical and narrative awareness of emotion” (p. 4).

As suggested in the book’s title, Poch traces the shifting cultural sensibilities and new forms of literary expression that became available during Meiji through the medium of the novel during the nineteenth century, specifically through the highly contested and thus productive literary trope of *ninjō* (human emotion), a term that was frequently associated with amorous sentiment and sexual desire. The term was also viewed as being prone to dangerous excess. For example, the Meiji literary critic and novelist Tsubouchi Shōyō is shown to have associated *ninjō* with the “vulgar passion” (*retsujō*) and immorality that had pervaded late-Edo fiction. Poch argues that Shōyō asserted the role of the Meiji novel should still be to depict emotions, but only to demonstrate how a good Meiji protagonist is able to overcome those passions through reason and conscience. However, Poch is far from simplistic in his outline of Shōyō’s ideas. He pinpoints what he calls the “blind spot” in Shōyō’s didactical interpretation of the role of Meiji fiction by drawing upon Shōyō’s comments about the English novelist, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, whose novel, *Ernest Maltravers* (1837), was translated in abridged form into Japanese as *Karyū shunwa* in 1878–1879. While both English and Japanese versions portrayed animal passions, Shōyō’s opinion was that the novel

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should be read through a Meiji moral lens, that is, as a struggle between passion and reason, with reason the mark of Meiji civilization and enlightenment. However, the blind spot Poch identifies in Shōyō's reasoning centers around a weakness in Shōyō's emphasis on a moralistic reading. After all, there is nothing to stop a reader (mis)reading the novel as an invitation to succumb to the carnal passions set out in the text. In short, Poch highlights *ninjō* as a contested concept in which meaning and counter-meaning work against each other. In the process, the author helps to bring to light the contradictory currents of thought within the Meiji period.

What gives Poch's book its depth and insight is the way his broad overview of nineteenth century Japanese novels breaks down any easy or clear distinction between Edo and Meiji fiction. The author provides an extremely informative contextualization by tracing out the rise of the Chinese early modern vernacular novel, the *xiaoshuo*, during the Ming and Qing dynasties as a literary form with literary, intellectual, and moral ambitions. It is against this broader background of East Asian literary currents that Poch fleshes out the concept of *ninjō* during the late Edo period through a study of two major Japanese writers. He notes how, in the 1830s, Tamenaga Shunsui's *ninjōbon* writings employed heterosexual passion as a means to create empathy with his readership, even though the novelist was also accused of stirring up base, licentious feelings. In contrast, Kyokutei Bakin used the *yomihon* form to assert a more highbrow potential, capable of displaying both moral exemplarity and social value, as exemplified by the phrase, *kanzen chōaku* (promote virtue, chastise vice).

Despite their differences, both writers share an awareness of the problematic and subversive potential found in human passions. The question that taxed these Japanese authors was how to portray these passions realistically in a way that could not be construed as merely prurient, or even as pornographic interest. Anxiety about the correct means of representing human emotions remains an abiding concern for authors even toward the end of the Meiji period, when Natsume Sōseki advocated sketch prose (*shaseibon*) as the literary form most suitable for the age. Through this genre, initially promoted by Sōseki's dear friend, the haiku poet Masaoka Shiki, Sōseki showed that, like Shōyō, he remained distrustful of the subversive and uncontrolled nature of unbridled passion. For Sōseki, the sketch prose form promised to establish a necessary distance from the dangerous heat of human emotions. But what stands out through all the different writers examined by Poch is the fact that *ninjō* remained a source of troubling yet creative anxiety throughout the nineteenth century. In short, the Meiji period did not lead to the elimination of Edo discourses on *ninjō*; rather, it complicated them in highly productive ways. It was not until the late Meiji period, Poch asserts, when the literary discourse of naturalism emerged, that the literary depiction of erotic love and desire was finally naturalized.

What I find very refreshing about this book is that the development of Japanese literary forms is not attributed simply to the influence of foreign literary movements. Most certainly, Poch properly acknowledges the flow of ideas between different cultures. The Chinese *xiaoshuo* is shown to be highly influential in stimulating later Japanese interest in human passion as a legitimate driving force within the *ninjōbon*, the *yomihon*, or the *shōsetsu*. And undoubtedly, the incorporation of Western texts and ideas through translation during the Meiji period, along with cultural and literary concepts like reason and passionate love, had a role in complicating older interpretations of human passion. Yet *Licentious Fictions* effectively

traces a rich, contradictory, and never-ending dialogue within the Japanese literary tradition about what drives the generation of literary forms.

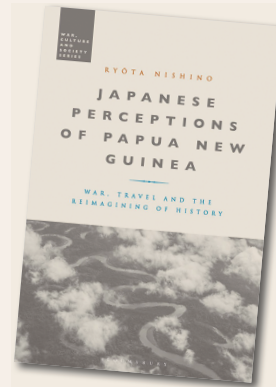
BOOK REVIEW

*Japanese Perceptions of Papua New Guinea: War, Travel and the Reimagining of History*

By Ryōta Nishino

Bloomsbury, 2022  
264 pages.

Reviewed by Andrew ELLIOTT\*



In the struggles over the real and symbolic legacies of Japanese imperialism and the Asia-Pacific War that have taken place in Japan and across the wider region over recent decades, events and issues connected with continental expansionism in Korea and China predominate—understandably perhaps, considering the time frames of colonial rule, geographical proximities, and the increasing significance of economic and political relations in the post-postwar.<sup>1</sup> In comparison, in Japan at least, public discussions about campaigns in the South Pacific, and academic analyses focusing on their memorization, are much less prevalent. For this reason, Ryōta Nishino’s stimulating exploration of Japanese representations of the New Guinea campaign (1942–1945) and Papua New Guinea (PNG) from the postwar to the present day is a welcome addition to the scholarship on war memory, useful not only to students and researchers of Japan and the Asia Pacific, but anyone interested in the intersections of history with tourism, travel and life writing, and the mass media.

The book analyzes a diverse range of texts and genres in three main parts: war memoirs by soldiers and army doctors, documentaries and films, and travelogues. Some of these texts are relatively well known, as with Hara Kazuo’s nonfiction film *Yukiyukite Shingun* (1987) and Mizuki Shigeru’s war-related manga, but many of the other, more obscure works have rarely been picked up for academic analysis before. As Nishino explains, all the chosen texts had public release at some point and, to that degree, they both reflect shifting and conflicting perceptions of the New Guinea campaign and wartime when produced and published *and* have played their own role in how this history has been told, retold, imagined, reimagined, constructed, and reconstructed (p. 2). For this analysis, Nishino draws on Astrid Erll’s idea of “travelling memory” (p. 11)—as much as movement through physical space or travel as narrative, it is this concept that explains the inclusion of “travel” in the book’s subtitle—to describe how memories of the war traverse time, space, media, and genres.

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1 For an academic study of these debates and movements, see Kim 2016.

Excellent illustrations of this process can be found throughout the book but a couple of standout examples come in the final section on travelogues. One is about how Mizuki rewrote, in different publications, and adjusting the meaning each time, a particular episode from a postwar trip to Namale (the gifting of a truck to villagers): in *Sensō to Nihon* (1991), a manga explicitly about wartime experiences that was published just two years after the death of the Shōwa Emperor Hirohito, the gift is described in national terms as an apology for Japan's past atrocities; in *Topetoro tonō gojū-nen* (1995), a prose essay that focuses on Mizuki's half-century friendship with villager Topetoro, the gift is glossed as payment for a house that his friend had built. Whether the revision came about as a result of a new understanding of the event on Mizuki's part, the break in Japan's imperial era, or new narrative demands (of a story centered on friendship rather than war) is impossible to know for sure, but this rewriting nicely reveals the complex intersection of the individual and extrapersonal as memories get reworked in different contexts.

The second example, from travel writer Miyakawa Masayo's *Nyūginia rekuitemu* (1985), shows the complex, multidirectional traffic of memories between generations. Memories do not only move from the old—those who personally experienced the war—to the post-memory young, although this is a common trope of recent Japanese war movies like *Eien no zero* (2013). As Miyakawa writes it, travels in PNG in the early 1980s inspired her to take on a critical, custodian-like role, collecting memories from residents of Timbunke, where a massacre was carried out by Japanese soldiers in July 1944, as well as Japanese veterans. Finally, Miyakawa explains her resolve to confront her father's silence about the war and “tell [him] everything, not just Timbunke, but also the retreat by Japanese soldiers, starvation, cannibalism, prisoners of war, returned soldiers and bereaved families” (p. 178). That is, reversing the conventionally-assumed direction for the passage of war memory, it is Miyakawa (without personal experience) who works as a conduit to transmit memories of the war to her father (who did experience it, albeit as a non-combatant in the Inspector General of Military Training).

Considering the book's main title, a striking absence in many of the readings are the people and places of New Guinea. Whether in Yasujima Takayoshi's photographs of Japanese veterans in prayer (in which local residents are visually sidelined, p. 174), or Makino Hiromichi's twenty-first century travelogues (where he complains about the removal of a makeshift Shinto altar his group had erected without permission near East Rabaul airfield, p. 183), or even *Yukiyukite Shingun* (about Okuzaki Kenzō's rage-driven indictment of wartime leaders), it is Japan (not PNG) that is the center of attention in many of these texts. Conspicuous exceptions include the two documentaries directed by Sekiguchi Noriko, about the operation of comfort stations in Rabaul, which puts filmed testimonies by women (often with local female translators) at the center of the film. Generally, however, the analyses suggest that texts tend to locate the meaning of the war in relation to Japan, whether as victim, perpetrator, or hero (p. 15). This is neatly symbolized in a climactic scene from Katō Daisuke's memoir *Minami no shima ni yuki ga furu* (1961), and its various TV, film, and theater adaptations, when Katō's wartime theater company performs a play for troops from the Tohoku region in which snow (made of cut paper) falls on stage: “Seeing snow before their eyes even in the most hopeless times of war in the South Sea Islands [is shown to] remind them that life is worth living” (p. 92). Perhaps—given the intended audiences of these works and the focus on Japanese war memories—this tendency is to be expected and, to an extent,

unavoidable. Still, it would have been useful if questions about coverage could have been taken up more explicitly, to at least confirm whether this absence is an analytical effect or a characteristic of the chosen texts.

More thorough editing would have helped clean up some awkward expressions and minor grammatical mistakes in places. Overall, however, the book is clearly written and structured; and moreover, it powerfully conveys—especially in enlightening personal anecdotes in the preface and conclusion—the author’s strong feelings of responsibility about how we remember the past, not only as a scholar working on war memory but also as a member of the “postmemory generation . . . implicated in history” (p. 196).

## REFERENCE

Kim 2016

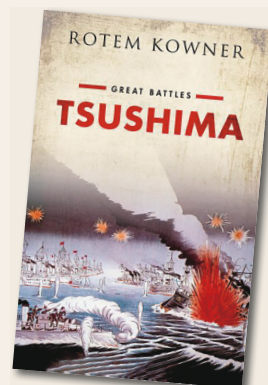
Mikyong Kim, ed. *Routledge Handbook of Memory and Reconciliation in East Asia*.  
Routledge, 2016.

## BOOK REVIEW

### *Tsushima*

By Rotem Kowner

Oxford University Press, 2022  
336 pages.



Reviewed by Clinton GODART\*

In an engagement that began on 27 May 1905 in the Tsushima Strait running between Kyushu and the Korean Peninsula, the Imperial Japanese Navy destroyed the Russian Second Pacific Squadron, which had sailed from the Baltic Sea in a bid to turn the tide of the Russo-Japanese War. In the course of a spectacular victory, Japan sank almost every Russian ship, including eight battleships, while Japanese losses were negligible. About a century ago, the famous British naval strategist Julian Corbett adjudged the Battle of Tsushima to be the “most decisive and complete naval victory in history” (p. 193), as Rotem Kowner reminds us in this excellent new book on the battle. A former naval officer himself, and probably the most influential historian of the broader Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905, Rotem Kowner is the ideal person to write the book under review, which emerges as part of Oxford’s series on “Great Battles.”

As there are so few books in English on the Japanese navy, despite its importance for modern Japanese and East Asian history, this would in any case be a welcome publication. Nevertheless, *Tsushima* does not focus solely on naval affairs, the background and buildup to the battle, and the naval battle itself. It also seeks to explore legacies and memories associated with the battle in different countries. Kowner draws extensively on sources in several languages, including Russian, and therefore provides readers with a uniquely balanced perspective on this naval war.

For readers familiar with naval history, or indeed with this specific battle, there are an abundance of new perspectives to engage with, and fresh facets revealed. Kowner writes engagingly about the impact and importance of new technologies, such as the wireless radio employed on Japanese ships, the torpedo, and sea mines, as well as detailing the more intangible factors on both sides, such as tactics, leadership, and morale, and in the process showing how complicated naval warfare—and history—is.

The central thesis of the book is that the Battle of Tsushima had wide and long-lasting repercussions beyond the war itself. *Tsushima* describes the ripple effects of the battle that radiated out from the engagement. Most immediately, Japan’s decisive victory at Tsushima

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signaled Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese War. However, in an interesting case where battlefield victory does not automatically yield political gain, it was initially the Japanese side that sought negotiations to cement their victory, and in vain. It was only after the successful Japanese occupation of Sakhalin that the Russians acceded to negotiating an end to the conflict.

The book convincingly elucidates the complex links between the material events of the battle—the destruction of the Russian fleet—on the one hand, and, on the other, how this was subsequently narrated for political ends, interpreted differently by various nations and navies, and remembered and misremembered over the course of the following century. Domestically, the Imperial Japanese Navy made good use of the battle, and the iconic status attained by Admiral Tōgō, to raise its profile within Japan, and to request more funds. However, Kowner argues that the Battle of Tsushima left a complex legacy for the Japanese navy, which proved pernicious in some respects. Tsushima was the only truly decisive engagement between fleets of battleships in modern history. For Japan, and other navies, the battle was proof that big battleships seeking decisive victories was the proper task of a navy, expectations largely disappointed over the subsequent century. While most of the Russo-Japanese War at sea had consisted of blockades and inconclusive engagements, the doctrine of the Imperial Japanese Navy in the decades that followed focused on a single decisive battle, which ultimately never materialized, but distorted resource allocation and military strategy in the decades that followed.

Beyond this, Kowner convincingly argues for a “Tsushima moment” in world history, meaning the wide-ranging impact of this naval battle across the globe that historians have frequently overlooked. For instance, the battle immediately ended Russia's dreams of a large naval presence in the Pacific, and stymied desires for an Asian empire. Seeking to make gains elsewhere, Russia ended its rivalry with Britain. The Russo-Japanese War at sea was thus an important factor in the balance of power in Europe and the complicated history of alliances prior to the First World War. In the United States, Roosevelt was alarmed at the rise of a naval power in the Pacific, which was one reason for his offer to mediate the negotiations between Japan and Russia that ended the war. He soon sent the Great White Fleet around the world as a message to Japan. Germany was alarmed at Japan's victory, but people in colonized countries were inspired by the victory of the “non-white” Japanese over white imperialists. *Tsushima* also recounts how Imperial Russia, the Soviet Union, and modern Russia have each dealt with the memory of Tsushima in different ways, according to the broader political circumstances within which memorialization took place.

The book ends with a short reflection on what makes battles “great”—often the enduring publicity they receive, or the lack thereof. Not long after 1905, the battle of Tsushima was overshadowed by the First World War, and then the second. Memories faded, but Tsushima, Kowner argues, should be more prominent in history writing. This reviewer agrees. But *Tsushima* also calls for more reflection on the role of “great battles” in history. For example, the military historian Cathal J. Nolan argues that the “cult of the decisive battle”—leading to sharp, quick victories—has enthralled not just the prewar Imperial Navy, but most modern military thinkers and leaders. Yet decisive battles are rare, and most wars tend to be



grinding wars of attrition (as shown by Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine).<sup>1</sup> In other words, Nolan argues that the whole idea of great battles is problematic.

Kowner's *Tsushima* manages to pack many aspects of naval war, history, and memory into a short and enjoyable book, and deserves to be widely read.

#### REFERENCE

Nolan 2017

Cathal J. Nolan. *The Allure of Battle: A History of How Wars Have Been Won and Lost*. Oxford University Press, 2017.

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<sup>1</sup> Nolan 2017.

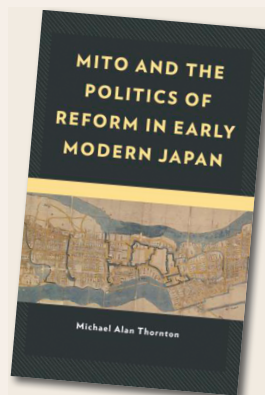
## BOOK REVIEW

### *Mito and the Politics of Reform in Early Modern Japan*

By Michael Alan Thornton

Lexington Books, 2022  
264 pages.

Reviewed by GU Jiachen\*



The 2021 NHK historical drama *Reach Beyond the Blue Sky* was based upon the life of Shibusawa Eiichi, the pioneer of modern Japanese industry. The drama put the spotlight on Mito, one of the three senior branches of the Tokugawa family, due to its strong connection with Shibusawa. As if on cue, *Mito and the Politics of Reform in Early Modern Japan* appears to elucidate the full historical significance of Mito domain as a key player in the Meiji Restoration.

Michael Thornton uses this volume as an effective means of bridging the gap between Western perspectives and Japanese history. The book is markedly friendly to those dipping their toes into Japanese waters yet does not stint on the inclusion of primary sources, including historical documents, photos, and maps, in offering a detailed and accurate account of the period. With its easy-to-understand and engaging style, the book serves as a comprehensive, well-written introduction for anyone interested in Japanese history, especially to the crucial Edo and Meiji periods.

The volume delves into the lives of the Mito Tokugawa rulers, including Mitsukuni, Nariaki, and Yoshinobu (the last shogun), and offers a detailed examination of the ideas of Confucian scholars such as Tachihara Suiken, Aizawa Seishisai, and Fujita Tōko. The early part of the work makes clear how the leaders and scholars of Mito laid the foundations for modern Japan, and explores the ideology advocated by the Mito school. Originating in China during the Spring and Autumn period, and developing over the Song, late Ming, and early Qing dynasties, this ideology forms a crucial part of the narrative. The emphasis on individuals like Zhu Shunshui, who sought exile in Japan, underscores the relationship between Ming loyalists and Mito scholars. Thornton's book clarifies that Mito scholars were interested in Confucianism, Chinese classics, and advocated for Japan's adherence to neo-Confucianism. Zhu Shunshui, and particularly his commitment to revering the emperor of the Ming dynasty and expelling the Manchu Qing dynasty, played a pivotal role in shaping the central ideology of Mito studies, that of "Revere the emperor, expel the barbarian." The

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author contends that Shunshui's ideas contributed significantly to the Restoration Movement in the nineteenth century.

The book serves as a valuable resource for scholars and students of Japanese history. The focus on the town of Mito offers a unique perspective on the development of Japan's modern state, highlighting the role that regional power centers played in shaping national politics. The use of urban history as a lens for understanding Mito and its impact on modern Japan is particularly refreshing and the book enhances our understanding of Mito's ideas by delving into its history as a locale, narrating the experiences of politicians, reformers, and common citizens from the domain's inception to its conclusion.

Another key strength of the book is its exploration of the significance of the Ezochi (today's Hokkaido) for Mito scholars, and how colonization plans were intertwined with anti-foreign rhetoric, leading to an ethnocentric conception of Japanese identity. Nariaki, a vocal advocate for strengthening Japan's military and defending against foreign threats, believed that annexing Ezochi was essential for Japan's security due to its strategic location near Russia. Nariaki's foresight was evident after the Meiji Restoration, when Japan did indeed take control of the Ezochi. This annexation symbolized Japan's growing power and ability to defend itself from foreign threats, with Mito leaders and scholars playing a significant role in shaping Japan's modern nation-state through the process.

It is well-known today that the domains of Chōshū (present-day Yamaguchi) and Satsuma (present-day Kagoshima) played crucial roles in the Meiji Restoration. However, the enduring influence of politicians from these domains since the Meiji era has led to the neglect of the contributions of Mito. This book showcases the acceptance of the Mito school by thinkers from Chōshū and Satsuma. Reading this book alongside Kojima Tsuyoshi's work on figures like Yoshida Shōin and Saigō Takamori allows for a greater understanding of the influence of neo-Confucianism on the Mito school and offers a more complete picture of the roles played by particular domains and individuals in the Meiji Restoration.<sup>1</sup>

Thornton skillfully weaves together the historical background, political climate, and social context that gave rise to the Mito school, offering a comprehensive explanation of its role in shaping Japan's history. The book delves deeply into its intellectual and ideological influence and highlights its impact on Japan's political and cultural development. Reconsideration of the Meiji Restoration through the lens of Mito studies challenges the conventional understanding that the Meiji state merely imitated the West based on a "global standard" shaped by Western powers. This offers valuable insights for future research in modern Japanese history and the history of intellectual exchange between Japan and China. Overall, this insightful and well-researched book is essential for those interested in Japanese history and the profound impact of intellectual and political movements on shaping a nation.

Finally, the Yayoi campus of the University of Tokyo (to which this reviewer belongs) in Bunkyo-ku was once the Mito domain residence. In the late seventeenth century, Zhu Shunshui was invited by Mitsukuni to stay at the residence, where he began teaching Confucianism. Today, there is a stone memorial to Zhu Shunshui on campus. Also located in Bunkyo-ku is the Yushima Seidō, a Confucian temple that is a predecessor of the University of Tokyo. The statue of Confucius enshrined at Yushima Seidō had been brought by Zhu Shunshui from China. When the temple was renovated in 1797, it was carried out on the

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1 Kojima 2018.

basis of plans for a Confucian temple Zhu Shunshui had designed for Mitsukuni. In a sense, therefore, the Mito school remains very much present in modern Japanese academia.

## REFERENCE

Kojima 2018

Kojima Tsuyoshi 小島毅. *Shishi kara eirei e: Sonnō jōi to chūkashisō* 志士から英霊へ: 尊王攘夷と中華思想. Shobunsha, 2018.

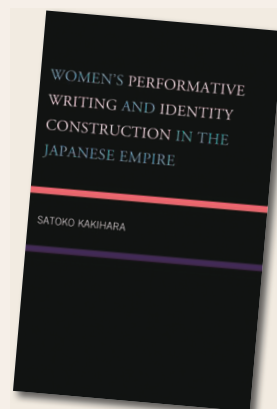
## BOOK REVIEW

### *Women's Performative Writing and Identity Construction in the Japanese Empire*

By Satoko Kakihara

Lexington Books, 2022  
162 pages.

Reviewed by Michaela KELLY\*



*Women's Performative Writing and Identity Construction in the Japanese Empire* promises unique insights into authorship in imperial Japan by analyzing a diverse group of female and male authors spanning its northeast Asian territories. Satoko Kakihara introduces us to students in Manchuria writing about their everyday experiences in a multiethnic society, and to Korean, Japanese, and Taiwanese female authors who construct models for both individual life courses and female collectivity, writing against the backdrop of social upheavals precipitated by colonial modernity. Ambitiously, the book promises to illuminate how the modernization of marriage, education, family, and work influenced women's ideas of identity and happiness (p. 11), and, through its depictions of women's lives, to delve into how individuals negotiate subjectivity under conditions of imperialism (p. 17). Writing becomes a site to explore the self, constituted through intersections of gender, class, ethnicity, and subjugation in colonial Japan, about which Kakihara writes with ease and without pulling punches. From its opening pages, the book creates a self- and author-conscious reader, writing, "who we are and what we write is formed through the constant negotiations among ourselves and the people and forces around us" (p. 1). Kakihara offers a premise that, coupled with historical analysis, begs for self-interrogation; the kind of query one wants to present students, saying "What to do about writing women's selfhood and its complications, and what about *you*?"

Ultimately, the contradictions between what we expect women to do and what they do, or in Kakihara's cases, between what they write and do, becomes the focus. The text is split into four short main chapters, each of which traces one aspect of the life course for many women in imperial Japan: education, marriage, parenting, and labor. The assertion that the writing of female authors can be mined to understand women's subjecthood in the empire is organized around these four social institutions. The authors featured are geographically spread but are all well-educated, largely married, and well-off. Chapter 1 relies on young, presumed Japanese student writers living in Manchuria. Chapter 2 features the well-known

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Hani Motoko, Japanese journalist and author from the metropole. Chapter 3 highlights two Korean chroniclers (one female, one male) of the family, and with the subjects of chapter 4, the female writers Yang Ch'ien-Ho and Kang Kyöng-ae, constitute a provocative collection.

In chapter 1, Kakihara presents winning *tsuzurikata* essays (a daily life essay writing subject taught in school) to demonstrate Japanese settler authors' attempts to integrate nascent ethnic identity and privilege despite their naivete toward the power dynamics each describes in Manchuria. Kakihara calls on Althusser's ideological state apparatus (ISAs) and the non-repressive controls a state exercises over its subjects through education, but misses an opportunity to critically analyze the function of his "cultural ISAs" including literature, which would have furthered understanding of the ideological role of both writing contests and essay writing.<sup>1</sup> Articulating the *way* to read these texts, in context but critically, is a difficult one when the writers themselves seem unaware of their privileged positions and the multiple critical backdrops against which we read them today.

Marriage is the focus of chapter 2, centered on the Japanese author Hani Motoko, who advocates women's self-improvement through the husband-wife relationship (p. 66). While Kakihara describes subjugation of the self through marriage, Hani depicts an end to subjugation through the symbiosis and achievements made possible via the heterosexual married dyad. Here, readers are presented with a conundrum found in other parts of the text—the difference between the lived reality of these female authors and the idealized worlds they present in their writing.

Chapter 3 discusses family as presented by Korean author Chang Tök-cho in 1944 and 1946.<sup>2</sup> Here, Kakihara offers an important claim: day-to-day performances (including writing) of gender and ideology muddle the easy categorization of authors into nationalist or pro-imperial camps.<sup>3</sup> One of Chang's works seems to argue for the importance of marriage and affinal family ties, while the second sets itself directly against them, which would function to subvert the state. In the end, regardless of categories, how should a reader understand Chang's complicity with pro-imperial, anti-feminist ideology? The chapter does not deliver an answer to this question.

With these complexities in mind, chapter 4 on labor highlights women's double subjugation by gender and citizenship status in the empire, seen through the writings of the Taiwanese Yang Ch'ien-Ho and Korean Kang Kyöng-ae. Readers are told that for these writers, living the lives they may imagine is not always possible, as evidenced through Yang's documentation of disappearing customs in Taiwan, followed by her giving up work as a reporter to marry and advocate political reforms that supported the empire over women's liberation (p. 121). What does this "betrayal" of a feminist life course mean? An exploration of whether the disadvantages each shared meant they could not be expected to live truer to a feminist ideal, or a discussion of whether they believed they were accountable to female liberation, would be useful for readers.

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1 Althusser 1971, p. 143.

2 Given that Chang's works span the 1930s and 1940s, much of it dealing with womanhood and women's issues, the decision to analyze two works written so close to the end of the colonial period requires justification.

3 Kakihara also introduces male author Yi Kwang-su as a representative writer of *shinnichi* (pro-Japanese) literature.

Kakihara's text has two closely related weaknesses. The first is the lack of explanation for the selection of writers and texts. Without understanding how each author is representative of the era, the reader has only Kakihara's structure from which to base conclusions. The second limitation is the dearth of direct quotes from the texts, unfortunate given the difficulty accessing translations. One additional foible is that the index lacked details helpful to analog book readers, omitting indices for each author central to the chapters.

Thankfully, Kakihara's writing is accessible, with short chapters that both raise and answer questions about women's selfhood across the territories of imperial Japan. The text ties postcolonial theory and the language of mainstream gender studies theory into Japanese feminist studies, and Kakihara pens humorous turns of phrase that clarify her take on the issues at hand. For instance, summing up the limitations of the family model in the empire, Kakihara argues that "many families are dysfunctional—and the Japanese empire was no exception" (p. 99). Kakihara also beautifully articulates the parallels between the advancement of each colony and women, with both tied to the fortunes of the Japanese metropole. This observation helps explain why her authors acquiesce to normative life paths—confronted as they were by a situation in which marrying supported the patriarchy and working supported the empire. These inescapable routes to subjugation are at the heart of the book, as writers struggle with the gap between their actual lives and the alternative worlds they create.

The text offers snapshots of authors in the colonial period; those seeming to embody the struggle women had observing, analyzing, and ultimately writing about their real or imagined selves. Kakihara offers a geographically diverse array of both settler and colonized authors from the period and is adept at giving voice to the struggles they faced at the intersections of ethnicity, gender, class, and colonial positionality. Questions remain for Kakihara's future work: Why these authors, with whom were they in conversation, and what did each say directly about selfhood, the empire, and subjugation?

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Althusser 1971

Louis Althusser. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes Towards an Investigation." In *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. Translated by Ben Brewster. Monthly Review Press, 1971, pp. 127–186.

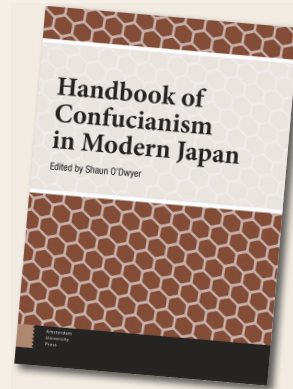
## BOOK REVIEW

### *Handbook of Confucianism in Modern Japan*

Edited by Shaun O'Dwyer

Amsterdam University Press, 2022  
270 pages.

Reviewed by Ernils LARSSON\*



The role of Confucianism is often overlooked in works on modern Japan's ideological development, with many focusing on the vague concept of "State Shinto" rather than the intellectual traditions that undergird this "invented tradition" of the Meiji era.<sup>1</sup> While a number of scholars have emphasized the role played by Confucian thinkers in shaping modern understandings of Shinto, it remains commonplace to discuss fundamental texts of imperial Japan such as the Imperial Rescript on Education (*Kyōiku Chokugo* 教育勅語) primarily within a framework of state-sponsored Shinto.<sup>2</sup> The *Handbook of Confucianism in Modern Japan* is therefore a welcome contribution to the study of ideology under the modern Japanese state.

The volume largely focuses on the period between Japan's opening in the mid-nineteenth century and the end of World War II, and it demonstrates how various strands of Confucian thought impacted Japanese modernization, imperialism, and authoritarianism. Song Qi's chapter on the three teachings—Shinto, Buddhism, and Confucianism—in the writings of mid-Edo period thinker Matsumiya Kanzan 松宮觀山 (1686–1780) is a notable exception, showing how Confucian ideas were integrated into unified cosmological frameworks even prior to the dramatic developments of the nineteenth century. Song argues that Kanzan's hierarchical model of the three teachings, with Shinto at the center, served as a precursor of later state programs "for transforming people into proper citizens" (p. 15).

National morality and the development of the "Imperial Way" (*kōdō* 皇道) are two interrelated themes explored throughout the book. In their respective chapters, Chang Kun-chiang and Park Junhyun outline how the ideal of an Imperial Way was gradually created from the older Confucian ideal of the Kingly Way (*ōdō* 王道), offering a synthesis between classical Confucianism and Shinto as it came to be understood first within a framework of

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1 Isomae 2012, pp. 185–186.

2 Examples of studies engaging with the role of Confucian thinkers in shaping modern Shinto include Breen and Teeuwen 2000; Hardacre 2017.



National Learning (*kokugaku* 国学) and later as an aspect of Japanese nationalism. Chang uses the concept of “contextual turn” in his analysis, demonstrating how the Imperial Way gradually came to privilege a supposedly “Japanese” tradition over Confucianism, the useful but subservient foreign teaching. “Shintō would lead; the Kingly Way would follow” (p. 107), as he succinctly summarizes his argument.

The role of Confucian thought as a source of ethics and morals for the modern Japanese state is further explored at length in several other chapters. Through a close reading of the house journal of the influential intellectual society Meiroku-sha 明六社, Lee Yu’Ting shows how Confucian thinking continued to play a significant role in the early to mid-Meiji period zeitgeist. Masako N. Racel’s case study of the educator Shimoda Utako 下田歌子 (1854–1936) illustrates how Confucian ideals pertaining to the role of women in society and family were adapted and utilized throughout the Meiji and Taishō periods, both in the construction of “good wives and wise mothers,” and in the larger ideological project of creating a unified “national morality.”

Although many of the chapters focus on individual thinkers, a few take a broader thematic approach. Mizuno Hirota investigates how the “Chinese Classics” (*kangaku* 漢学) developed as a field of research and as an academic subject at Tokyo Imperial University during the prewar period, highlighting how Confucianism came to be situated within the discipline of “philosophy” (*tetsugaku* 哲学). Jiang Dongxian and Shaun O’Dwyer focus on how Confucianism intersects with “exemplary nationalism” in both imperial Japan and contemporary China. These thematic chapters offer bird’s-eye views of the topic under study, situating Confucianism within larger political and intellectual debates.

Most of the chapters, however, focus on particular individuals. While these are all valuable for readers new to the study of Japanese Confucianism, with Yamamura Shō’s chapter on Inoue Tetsujirō 井上哲次郎 (1856–1944) in particular providing an excellent overview of the influence of Yangming Learning (*yōmeigaku* 陽明学) on the development of national morality, it sometimes becomes difficult to ascertain the actual social and political impact of the individuals discussed. Here, Eddy Dufourmont’s chapter on Yasuoka Masahiro 安岡正篤 (1898–1983) stands out by offering some truly fascinating insights into one individual’s influence on the preservation of Confucian thought among members of Japan’s postwar business and political elite.

This reviewer would have preferred more thematic chapters to ensure that certain gaps were covered. For instance, there is no chapter exploring the legal status of Confucianism under either of Japan’s two modern constitutions. Given the recent legal controversies over the Naha Confucius Temple, a chapter on the topic of how Confucian institutions have been incorporated under modern law would have been valuable.<sup>3</sup> There is also a lack of any critical discussion concerning the meaning of “Japanese” in “Japanese Confucianism.” Kang Haesoo examines Confucianism in colonial Korea, but a discussion on the particularities of Ryukyuan Confucianism and on the role of Confucianism within migrant communities in places such as Nagasaki and Kobe would also have been appreciated.

From a religious studies perspective, it is striking that little attention is paid to the question of whether or not Confucianism should be considered a religion—an issue at the heart of the recent controversies surrounding the temple in Naha. In his introduction,

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3 On these controversies, see Larsson 2024.

O'Dwyer notes that Japanese academics tend to define Confucianism as “thought” (*shisō* 思想) rather than “philosophy,” but he ignores scholars such as Asano Yūichi and Kaji Nobuyuki, who define it as a “religion” (*shūkyō* 宗教).<sup>4</sup> Understanding this debate is vital in order to engage with the question of where institutions such as the Confucian Yushima Sage Hall in Tokyo are headed, now that Japan’s Supreme Court has decided that *sekiten* 釋奠 (or *Kōshi-matsuri* 孔子祭り, as it is known at Yushima) constitutes “religious activity” under the constitution.

The *Handbook of Confucianism in Modern Japan* is an engaging and highly informative read. Much effort has been made to bring together a diverse group of researchers, many of whom have not previously published in English. They collectively provide a multifaceted and nuanced introduction to the significant role Confucianism has played in the development of national policy, ideology, and morality in Japan. The handbook serves as a useful resource for students of modern Japan, but will also benefit those who, coming from other disciplines, set out to negotiate the complex terrain of Japanese philosophy and thought.

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<sup>4</sup> See for instance Asano 2017; Kaji 2021.

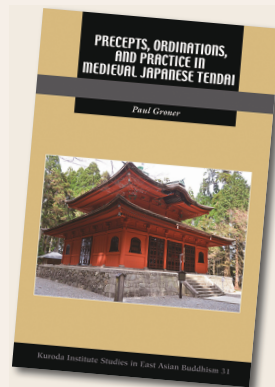
## BOOK REVIEW

### *Precepts, Ordinations, and Practice in Medieval Japanese Tendai*

By Paul Groner

University of Hawai'i Press, 2022  
400 pages.

Reviewed by Stephan LICHA\*



The importance of the Tendai tradition in the development of Japanese Buddhism can hardly be overstated. Yet despite the publication of a number of groundbreaking studies over the last four decades, many of its fundamental aspects remain underexplored in English-language scholarship.<sup>1</sup> This is especially true of the Tendai approach to the Buddhist precepts. The volume under review begins to address this lacuna. It collects twelve of Paul Groner's previously published essays, together with an original introduction and conclusion. A foreword by Jacqueline Stone and an afterword by Charles B. Jones reflect on Paul Groner's contributions as a scholar and teacher.

Saichō 最澄 (767–822), the Tendai tradition's founder, rejected the monastic codes (Skt. *vinaya*) and used the bodhisattva precepts of the *Brahma's Net Sutra* (*Bonmōkyō* 梵網經) to ordain new members of the Tendai order. Groner's work revolves around the problems that arose from this break: How should we understand the bodhisattva precepts in relation to the *vinaya*, the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra*, and esoteric Buddhism? Do we find the essence of the precepts in their observance or rather in some quality of the practitioner's mind? How and who bestows the precepts, and what function does precept ordination have in terms of Buddhist practice and attainments? What does it mean to break the precepts, and how are transgressions redressed? Are the precepts available to all regardless of social or religious status, and if so, how do lay practitioners differ from monastics? Each of the essays addresses these conundrums from a specific vantage point, starting from a consideration of Saichō's own vision before examining the contributions of the Tendai scholiast Annen 安然 (b. 841) and culminating in an analysis of medieval developments, prominently the precept consecration practiced in the Kurodani 黒谷 lineage and the views of the Kurodani critic

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1 Outstanding previous scholarship on the Tendai tradition includes Chen 2009; Chen 2010; Groner 1984; Groner 2002; Stone 1999.

Jitsudō Ninkū 実導仁空 (1309–1388). For the most part, Groner’s work is the only available scholarship in English on any of these topics.

Groner elegantly situates narrow technical points in their broader contexts. This allows the reader to appreciate the intricate patterns of Buddhist doctrinal speculations against the sociohistorical background from which they arose. In this sense, Groner himself turns into something of a Tendai exegete who “opens the shallow to reveal the profound.”<sup>2</sup> A particularly impressive example of this comes in chapter 6, which investigates the role of confession in precept ordinations. Groner shows how the presence or absence of a confession in the ritual program reflects fundamental debates on the nature of Buddhist practice and realization, and ultimately on the soteriological interplay between mind, emptiness, and karma. Groner’s discussion analyzes these issues by taking into account the tension between an individual’s aspiration to Buddhist practice, which could find expression in an ascetic vision quest culminating in self-ordination, and the need to maintain institutional integrity, which insists on proper ritual observance.

While masterful in their command of technical detail, the essays do not always reference the most up-to-date scholarship in the field. For example, Eric Greene’s scholarship on meditation, repentance, and vision might have fruitfully complemented the discussion of these same topics Groner pursues.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, references to Zhiyi’s *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀 should have referenced Paul Swanson’s translation.<sup>4</sup>

Groner himself acknowledges that, as a collection of essays produced over a considerable span of time, the volume lacks an overall argument or narrative (pp. 301–302). This absence can be both a point of criticism and a virtue. Readers not already at least passingly familiar with the topics Groner discusses may find themselves lost in the mass of texts, thinkers, and thoughts examined in a series of overlapping, crisscrossing, and sometimes repetitive chapters. On the other hand, resisting the urge to tie the volume together with a single argument means that its structure accurately reflects the great variety of views and practices that hide behind labels such as “Tendai” or “bodhisattva precepts”—and the often uneasy relationships between them. As Groner rightly points out (pp. 147, 300), earlier research has reinforced monolithic heuristic models such as “original enlightenment” (*hongaku* 本覺) or “exoteric-esoteric establishment” (*kenmitsu taisei* 顯密体制). Groner’s explorations are overlapping, crisscrossing, and repetitive because they are faithful to Tendai treatments of the precepts themselves. To excavate and emphasize this messy history is an invaluable contribution of the volume, if difficult to appreciate for the novice.

Beyond the plethora of doctrinal and historical detail it makes available to a wider audience interested in premodern Japanese Buddhism, Groner’s work demonstrates that the Japanese Tendai tradition has a vital contribution to make to conversations in Buddhist studies and beyond. Recently, the field of Buddhist ethics has garnered attention, and any approach to Buddhist ethics will have to reflect on the significance of the precepts. For instance, the relation between the nature of mind and intentionality, on the one hand, and concrete conduct in the form of following moral prescriptions, on the other, represents a knotty problem for any ambitious account of Buddhist ethics. The Tendai tradition has

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2 See, for instance, the *Fahuaqing yiji* 法華義記 by Fayun 法雲 (467–529).

3 Greene 2021.

4 Swanson 2017.

debated these problems for over a millennium and offers precious resources to draw upon in reflecting on them. Paul Groner has cleared the path toward these riches and continues to probe the way ahead.

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## BOOK REVIEW

# *Japan's Empire of Birds: Aristocrats, Anglo-Americans, and Transwar Ornithology*

By Annika A. Culver

Bloomsbury Academic, 2022  
328 pages.

Reviewed by Morris LOW\*



I had just watched Miyazaki Hayao's latest animated film *The Boy and the Heron* (2023) when I started reading this book.<sup>1</sup> In the movie, after losing his mother during the Pacific War, twelve-year-old Maki Mahito moves with his father to the family estate in the countryside where they live with his new stepmother (his mother's sister Natsuko) in a Meiji-era, Western-style home. Mahito's father is busy as the owner of a nearby new munitions factory. On the estate is an old tower that had been built by his great-granduncle. The tower has a huge scholarly library, Western-style furnishings, and is home to an array of birds from parakeets to pelicans and a mysterious grey heron. It is as if Miyazaki was providing a window into the world of elite Japanese ornithologists that Annika Culver examines in her new book.

Culver sheds light on how a group of members of Japan's elite sought to contribute to Western science and embrace an Anglo-American inspired modernity, especially from the 1920s through to the end of the Pacific War and beyond. She explores what science meant for these men who were members of the House of Peers and of aristocratic background. She examines how they lived and interacted with fellow scholars and collectors, and more broadly details how they articulated their sense of identity in relation to ornithology, a highly gendered field of scientific endeavour. She convincingly demonstrates how the study, collection, and exchange of bird specimens was an integral part of their masculine, class, and national identity.

Culver is one of the few historians of science to examine imperial masculinities in a Japanese context. She shows how the Japanese elite participated in a type of collecting imperialism from the 1920s, what she terms "avian imperialism," positioning themselves as quasi-equals to white scholars in ornithology by taking advantage of the resources and access made available through the growth of the Japanese Empire. The ornithologists fashioned themselves as Western gentlemen of science, wearing clothing and using foreign firearms to mimic Englishmen and Americans out on a hunt. In the 1930s, they embarked on collecting expeditions and established laboratories on lavish estates.

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<sup>1</sup> Miyazaki 2023.

The cast of characters include Cambridge-trained and cosmopolitan scientist Marquis Hachisuka Masauji, Duke Takatsukasa Nobusuke, former Prince Yamashina Yoshimaro (Emperor Hirohito's cousin), and Kuroda Nagahisa. Social class infused their interpersonal relationships with what Culver calls "ornithological homosociality" (p. 43). Their wealth and status facilitated their friendships with each other but also enhanced their ability to access resources, bird specimens, and experts. Takatsukasa was Yamashina's first mentor. Sometimes mistakenly referred to as a Prince, Duke Takatsukasa graduated from Tokyo Imperial University in Zoology in 1914 and went on to become President of the Ornithological Society of Japan. Like Takatsukasa, Yamashina, Kuroda, and Hachisuka would build private museums, laboratories, and aviaries on large estates and at seaside homes. This is reminiscent of the tower in *The Boy and the Heron* and nineteenth-century English country house laboratories that the historian of science Simon Schaffer has written about.<sup>2</sup>

The Hachisuka family had an impressive pedigree that can be traced back to the last shogun, Prince Tokugawa Yoshinobu. In 1927, Hachisuka and his father built a British-inspired mansion on their estate in the Mita district of Tokyo, which was later sold to the Australian Embassy. The hybrid lifestyle that elites at the time led can be seen in images of the interiors that show how Western elements were combined with Japanese characteristics.

What is surprising is the extent to which Culver reveals the personal histories of the men she focuses on. She tentatively explores aspects of their private lives that scholars have hitherto not been privy to, throwing light on their sexuality and interpersonal relations in ways that few Western historians of Japanese science have understood or come to terms with.

How did the Japanese ornithologists and their extensive collections fare during the war? Takatsukasa, Yamashina, and Hachisuka served in the Research Institute for Natural Resources. Yamashina incorporated Hachisuka's libraries and specimen collections into his museum in Shibuya before the war and these collections were subsequently evacuated to Yamashina's Karuizawa summer villa to avoid the bombing of Tokyo. Sadly, Takatsukasa's and Kuroda's collections were destroyed during air raids in 1945.

With defeat, the ornithologists temporarily ceded power to American authorities during the Allied Occupation, negotiating with figures such as the scientist Oliver L. Austin, Jr., who helped to establish and worked in the Natural Resource Section's Wildlife Branch from 1946 to 1950. Culver shows how the Japanese ornithologists sought to rebuild ties with their former enemy and how they adjusted to the demands of a newly democratic Japan and the Cold War. The idea of scientists as a social elite was no longer appropriate. These men were refashioned as scientific workers in a Japan that had little time for class privilege. With the loss of empire, scientists embraced another form of globalism, championing the cause of wildlife conservation.

While Culver's book might initially appear to have a narrow focus, ornithology was part of a wider interest in zoology that was shared by members of the imperial family. Her book helps us to better understand the interest of Emperor Hirohito in marine biology that continued into the postwar period.<sup>3</sup> All in all, this is a truly fascinating account, arguably more suitable for fellow academics and advanced students. It rewards readers with new insights especially in terms of how class, gender and sexuality, and empire and nation

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2 Schaffer 1998.

3 Mohri 2019.

impacted on the lives of Japanese scientists, especially those who were active between the wars. Culver does the history of science a service by reminding us that scientific research was not a level playing field and that connections and private wealth did make a difference. Her book provides a template for understanding the transformation of scientific identities in prewar, wartime, and postwar Japan.

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## BOOK REVIEW

### *Designing Modern Japan*

By Sarah Teasley

Reaktion Books, 2022  
424 pages.



Reviewed by Ruselle MEADE\*

*Designing Modern Japan* is an ambitious work that aims at no less than telling “the history of the design industries, profession and practice in Japan from the mid-nineteenth to late twentieth century” (p. 12). A topic as expansive as this needs a steady guide, and one feels in safe hands with Sarah Teasley. She opens the volume by describing the encounter that prompted her fascination with Japanese design. In an Osaka bookshop in 1991 Teasley found herself “transfixed” by rows of “achingly beautiful” design magazines, an experience many others will no doubt recognize. The fascination endured, such that Teasley has since lectured and published extensively on Japanese design. This feels like a culmination of expertise honed over several decades.

Teasley adopts a chronological approach, charting the major transitions in Japanese design over a century and a half. These include, as one might expect, changes in the professional identity of designers and the materials with which they worked. However, despite considerable changes, some enduring threads run through the history of Japanese design. Teasley demonstrates that what is considered “Japanese” design has consistently been the product of global flows of ideas and people. This of course predates the mid-nineteenth century. Japan’s inclusion in an Asian “network of knowledge” enlivened its early modern craft scene.<sup>1</sup> By “global,” though, Teasley is referring primarily to North America and Western Europe.

While modern Japan’s designs were occasionally the result of serendipitous inspiration, more often than not they were the outcome of deliberate strategizing. Teasley points out, for example, how the national expositions of the early Meiji period held in Ueno Park in Tokyo functioned as “preparatory events” for international expositions, particularly those in Paris (1878, 1889) and Chicago (1893). The role of Japanese design in exports meant that civil servants continued to research international design trends throughout the twentieth century, often commissioning reports with recommendations about what trends to pursue. Top-down interventions were a factor in the popularity of Art Nouveau aesthetics at the turn of

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1 Guth 2021.

the twentieth century, as well as in the influence of pared-back Nordic design in the 1960s. By keeping an eye on international trends, leaders were able to promote designs that were distinct—meaning legibly “Japanese”—but not alienating.

By using design as a lens through which to view modern Japanese history, Teasley also shows how design, as a concept, and designers, as actors, advanced the colonial project. She argues that design professionals were complicit, through their collection, classification, and curating practices, in reinforcing ideas about hierarchies of civilizational levels, which coded colonized regions such as Korea, Taiwan, Okinawa, and Hokkaido as backward. She also points to the use by Japanese colonial authorities of modernist aesthetics in infrastructure design as a means of presenting Japan as a “world power and modern nation” (p. 151) and “visibly asserting Japanese authority over colonized lands and people” (p. 143). Though compelling, the discussion of the role of design in the imperial project reveals some of the pitfalls of Teasley’s capacious approach to design. Here, the design areas touched upon encompass household craft, architecture, graphic design, and much more. A similarly disparate cast of actors are discussed. Teasley explains her broad-ranging approach by noting that design meant “different things to different people at different times and in different places.” Thus, she explains, the work is driven by “definitions of design that shaped its practice in the period explored” (p. 12). Dealing with a broad array of design enables the author to demonstrate how coloniality was enmeshed in the fabric of everyday life of colonial subjects, but it comes at the expense of the effectiveness of “design” as an analytical category. It can be difficult at times to gain a sense of which forms of design were most effective and why. Ultimately, the discussion does little to disturb the narrative of the colonial period to which we are accustomed, despite the claim that “historical narratives and conditions can be understood afresh if viewed from the perspective of design” (p. 17).

The volume is at its best when discussing industrial design in the postwar period, where we see a clearer and more circumscribed profile of the designer. Design played an important role in Japan’s economic recovery, wherein consumption was increasingly prioritized. However, in an era of high growth, designers started to reflect on their values. Many pushed back against a sense that design was simply about generating profit. Concerns about improving product efficiency and enhancing user experience took on greater importance. However, some designers went further, questioning the wider social ramifications of their practice. Prompted by civil unrest in the 1960s, some left-leaning designers resisted the image of design as a mere cog in the national development machine, publishing manifestos that called for designers to engage more with the pressing geopolitical and ecological crises of the time.

Teasley acknowledges that because much of women’s design work “occurred outside of the waged economy” (p. 340), her focus on professional design and designers means that, inevitably, it is male practice that is spotlighted. Women appear in this work primarily as consumers, albeit powerful ones. Women were of course major drivers of design trends in the prewar period, particularly in home furnishings, but increasing numbers of young unmarried women in the workforce from the 1960s onward made them an even more powerful demographic in the eyes of designers.<sup>2</sup> Dubbed “single nobility” because of their purchasing

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2 On the prewar influence of women on design, see Sand 2005.

power, young women exercised outsized power in shaping design, particularly in the areas of fashion and cosmetics, from the 1980s onward.

Overall, this is a highly valuable contribution to our understanding of modern Japan, a work of encyclopedic heft, yet engagingly written. Teasley marshals a wide range of archival sources into a flowing narrative that brims with fascinating insight. The illustrations, too, are a delight, and provide a snapshot of the “achingly beautiful” designs that captivated the author, and which are likely to do the same to her readers.

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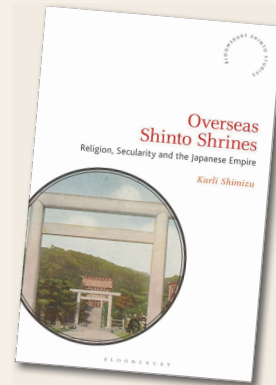
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## BOOK REVIEW

# *Overseas Shinto Shrines: Religion, Secularity and the Japanese Empire*

By Karli Shimizu

Bloomsbury Academic, 2022  
296 pages.



Reviewed by Kate Wildman NAKAI\*

In the close to eighty years between the Meiji Restoration in 1868 and the end of the Second World War in 1945, Japanese active overseas—in both governmental and private capacities—erected some 1,640 shrines in Taiwan, Korea, Manchuria, China, and other parts of Asia and the South Pacific. Of these, 611 were on a scale to be regarded officially as “shrines” (*jinja* 神社). These included eighteen ranked at the top of the shrine hierarchy as “receiving government offerings” (*kankokuheisha* 官国幣社), close to 8 percent of that elite category. The remaining 1,029 shrines were more humble sites of veneration identified as *sha* 社, *shi* 祠, or *shinshi* 神祠 (the book at hand refers to these lesser sites collectively as “pre-shrines”).<sup>1</sup> With the end of the war, the collapse of the Japanese empire, and the repatriation of Japanese government officials, military forces, and settlers, this distinctive element of Japanese religious, cultural, social, and political practice outside the home islands largely disintegrated. Karli Shimizu provides a useful overview of how this network of overseas shrines took shape and functioned during the relatively short span of its existence. Inevitably, given the documentation available, Shimizu focuses primarily on the small number of high-ranking shrines, but her book also offers glimpses of the much more numerous lesser ones.

The book is organized around an expanding geographic framework. Following an initial chapter devoted to theoretical considerations and background issues, Shimizu first examines developments within the Japanese archipelago that she sees as significant to the history of shrines overseas. Chapter 2 takes up the creation in 1890 of a new type of shrine intended to celebrate “the birthplace of Japan.” This was Kashihara Jingū 橿原神宮, which enshrined Emperor Jinmu, the putative first “human” emperor, at the site in Nara Prefecture where he was said to have founded the Japanese state and empire. Various aspects of the construction of this new shrine in the Japanese heartland proved relevant to the subsequent establishment of overseas shrines. Promotion through various media forms emphasized its links to modern

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<sup>1</sup> Nakajima 2010, p. 26. The book by Karli Shimizu under review does not include overall statistics or maps, and its readers might want to consult Nakajima’s article for such information, particularly the map on p. 27. Nakajima uses the term “semi-shrine” rather than “pre-shrine.”

life as well as Japan's origins. Volunteer participation in constructing an outer garden that could be used for public activities broadened its appeal. The practice of offering "reverence from afar" (*yōbai* 遙拜) reinforced its centrality and encouraged devotion to the nation and the imperial house.

Shimizu next turns to "the near periphery," focusing in chapter 3 on the erection of shrines in Hokkaido, beginning in 1869, and Karafuto (Sakhalin), following its transfer to Japan in 1905 after the Russo-Japanese War. Hokkaido was in some regards Japan's first colony, with settlers from the three main islands developing a region that up to then had been home to the indigenous Ainu population. The shrines created there thus provided a direct precedent for shrines constructed at both government and individual initiative outside the archipelago. These are the topics of the following three chapters, which cover developments in Taiwan, Korea, and Manchuria from 1895 to the end of the Pacific War. The final chapter examines the different circumstances shaping the establishment of shrines in the "distant land" of Hawai'i.

In surveying this geographic expanse, Shimizu brings out multiple features common to the shrines created overseas as well as elements particular to differing contexts. Throughout, though, she emphasizes the "secular" rather than "religious" nature of the shrines she examines, a characterization that she links to shrine policies adopted by the government from the 1880s. It is not easy to find a term to sum up the complicated and often contradictory government stance regarding shrines. Having initially promoted shrine veneration as something akin to a state religion, government leaders then stepped back and sought to detach shrines from potentially divisive entanglements in doctrinal disputes. They encouraged shrine veneration as natural to being Japanese while simultaneously affirming freedom of religious belief (which for some, principally Christians but also Buddhists, meant not offering reverence at shrines). Encapsulating this set of circumstances as adding up to a policy of secularity is one possible approach, and Shimizu is to be commended for avoiding the pitfalls of turning to the alternative of "State Shinto."<sup>2</sup> But overly heavy reliance on "secularity" also carries the danger of distorting the phenomena being described. Too often Shimizu seems to present the government as using shrines to promote secularity as an innate value. The other side of this coin is that she plays down the reality that veneration remained the core of shrine ritual. Inculcation of intense devotion to nation and emperor likewise continued to be a key purpose for encouraging shrine visits and "offering reverence from afar."

To single out one example, Shimizu concludes that Kashihara Jingū "demonstrates how modern Shinto shrines were conceived and treated as secular institutions. . . . The government and public saw Kashihara Jingū as a historical site of factual History and treated it as a public institution much like a public park or museum" (p. 53). Her point about the shrine commemorating a person and site held to be historical is a valuable insight. But although shrines might incorporate parks and museums in their grounds, at neither of those was one expected to offer reverence. The shrine that lay at the heart of the installation was of a fundamentally different character. Greater attention to this dimension would have enriched Shimizu's analysis. As regards Kashihara Jingū, for instance, it would have made possible a fuller exploration of the implications of its establishment close in time to the promulgation

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2 For my own take on these tendentious issues, see Nakai 2013; Nakai 2017a; Nakai 2017b.

and implementation of the Meiji Constitution and the issuing of the Imperial Rescript on Education. What did the enshrinement and veneration of Jinmu contribute to the mixture of strategies for defining the nation's scope and shaping popular attitudes toward it? Some of those strategies may have been of a secular character, but "secularity" is not necessarily the most apt summation of the total combination.

Less insistence on the "secularity" of overseas shrines and further consideration of dimensions bound up with veneration and the inculcation of reverence would similarly have enhanced the treatment of their history. Shimizu has given us a helpful overview of an important aspect of Japanese colonial policy. We may hope that she and others will continue to deepen our understanding of the place of overseas shrines in modern Japanese history.

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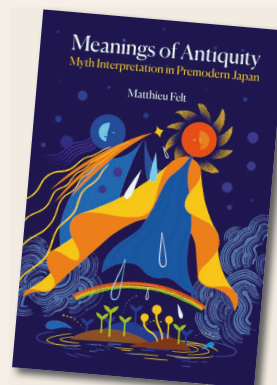
## BOOK REVIEW

### *Meanings of Antiquity: Myth Interpretation in Premodern Japan*

By Matthieu Felt

Harvard University Asia Center, 2023  
376 pages.

Reviewed by Louise NEUBRONNER\*



Since they were compiled in the eighth century, the *Kojiki* 古事記 (712) and *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (720) have undergone constant changes in meaning. Even today, their myths are in flux, never static. It is this malleability of myth that lies at the heart of Matthieu Felt's *Meanings of Antiquity*. Beginning with the original meaning of the texts, Felt covers shifts in their exegesis down to the Edo period across a wide range of material, before concluding with an intriguing analysis of their fate down to the present.

In the introduction, Felt convincingly argues that such a broad scope is essential for an in-depth understanding of *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* commentary because exegetes often worked with previous interpretations when formulating their own. These textual connections are foregrounded for the reader and validate the approach. Felt also provides a concise overview of research on the two texts and discusses their original role legitimating the contemporary imperial state, although he rejects the idea of a unified *kiki* 記紀 mythology due to significant differences between the texts, such as their contrasting visions of empire. Felt also touches on important issues in the exegetical tradition, such as *Nihon shoki* variants and vernacular Japanese readings of both works.

Chapter 1 focuses on the six *Nihon shoki* court readings that took place between 812 and 965 and details a significant shift in the position of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. At the first reading, which was used to bolster imperial authority, Ō no Hitonaga 多人長 proposed that the *Kojiki* was an incomplete progenitor of the *Nihon shoki* and that the two texts were the only correct sources on antiquity, thus creating the closed *Nihongi* canon. This canon was later expanded by figures like Yatabe no Kinmochi 矢田部公望 to incorporate other historical texts, including Chinese materials. Felt details that there was, however, not only an expansion in the textual canon but also in the meaning of the *Nihon shoki*. Poetry written at the conclusion banquets of several *Nihon shoki* readings reveals that the text had become a source to express the daily life of the attendees as well as the origins of the state. The *Nihon*

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*shoki* thus gained primacy over the *Kojiki* and turned from a dynastic history into an origin story for the Japanese state.

In the second chapter, Felt examines the function of the *Nihongi* canon after these court readings. While formal textual exegesis of the *Nihon shoki* decreased, there were increasing references to the constantly oscillating *Nihongi*. Focusing on twelfth-century poetic treatises, Felt shows that *Nihongi* could now refer to almost any matter or text from the past. The *Nihongi* became a source of episodic origin anecdotes, spreading from poetic treatises to other genres and media. This resulted in the “denarrativization of the mythical story” (p. 86) of the *Kojiki* and especially the *Nihon shoki*, which had been previously affirmed through the court readings.

This denarrativization enabled later scholars to freely combine the *Nihon shoki* myths with concepts from other traditions, a form of exegesis discussed in detail in chapter 3. Here, Felt focuses on the way the medieval Chronicles (*chūsei Nihongi* 中世日本紀) wove Buddhist and later Song Confucian ideas into the myths of the *Nihon shoki*. Establishing parallels between traditions, such as those connecting Amaterasu and Dainichi, was key to this form of exegesis. This reflected a changing worldview—a world now comprised of Japan, China, and India—and the importance of asserting the *Nihon shoki* as equal in status to Confucian and Buddhist works. In *Nihon shoki* commentary, Felt highlights the work of Ichijō Kaneyoshi 一条兼良 (1402–1481) as a point of departure, detailing how Kaneyoshi derived a *kami* principle from the *Nihon shoki*. This universal principle functioned as “a comprehensive explanation for the ontology of the universe” (p. 173), adding a metaphysical dimension to the *Nihon shoki*.

Confucian and Suika readings of the *Nihon shoki* during the Edo period are the subject of chapter 4. Felt points out an intriguing difference in the exegesis of this mythical material. The Confucian thinker Hayashi Razan 林羅山 (1583–1657) applied euhemeristic reading methods to the divine age and understood that period as distinct from that beginning with the legendary Emperor Jinmu. However, Yamazaki Ansai 山崎闇齋 (1619–1682), founder of the Suika tradition, read the divine age episodes literally and argued for a continuous narrative that spans the entire work. Notably, Suika scholars were the first to produce commentaries on the entire *Nihon shoki*.

In chapter 5, Felt sheds light on significant exegetical innovations in early modern *kokugaku*, with a focus on Yoshimi Yukikazu 吉見幸和 (1673–1761), Kawamura Hidene 河村秀根 (1723–1792) and his relatives, and Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730–1801). These exegetes rejected Suika readings and combined empirical and hermeneutical methods in their understanding of what was now assumed to be a global mythological narrative. Importantly, Felt demonstrates that early modern *kokugaku* not only dealt with texts written in the Japanese vernacular, as is often emphasized, but also *kanbun* texts like the *Nihon shoki*. He demonstrates this through the extensive *Nihon shoki* scholarship of the Kawamura family and establishes the text as vital for the exegetical work of Motoori Norinaga. Previous research has assumed that Norinaga did not value the *Nihon shoki*, but Felt shows that for Norinaga, the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* were of equal worth for understanding the ancient period. This relates to a paradox the reviewer has been wrestling with in her dissertation project on scholarly disputes surrounding Norinaga’s reading of the *Kojiki*, namely: Why would Norinaga use the *Nihon shoki* to bolster his reading of the *Kojiki* if he thought the work flawed? Felt resolves this



issue by showing that in Norinaga's mind, the two works differed in style but ultimately told the same story.

The conclusion reflects on the status of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* in modern Japan and beyond. Felt also returns to two major issues for exegetes: *Nihon shoki* variants and vernacular readings of both works. He shows how modern commentators still face the problem of choosing a vernacular reading and connects this to a pressing question: Can we speak of an original *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, and if not, what exactly are these texts? Felt concludes by advocating for a reconceptualization of Japanese literature based on the *Nihon shoki*. Situating Japan within Asia, this work might point away from the idea of an isolated Japan, and towards a more global Japanese literature.

Felt successfully demonstrates that myths are not carriers of universal truths about humankind, a trope in earlier studies of myths, but that they are molded according to the position of the exegete. *Meanings of Antiquity* weaves an astounding breadth of textual material into clear and concise descriptions of the changes in meaning these two works have undergone since the eighth century. Throughout, the author translates key passages and extensively discusses the Japanese terms used by exegetes. The discussion of earlier research into the *Kojiki*, *Nihon shoki*, and the history of their reception serves as a tremendous primer for future studies. Finally, Felt's conclusion provides avenues for examining the status of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* in Japan, and for reflecting on what the future may bring.

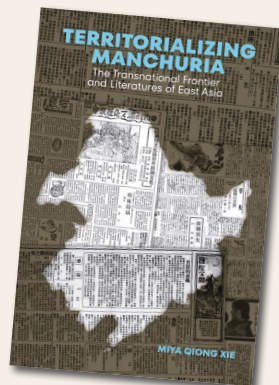
## BOOK REVIEW

### *Territorializing Manchuria: The Transnational Frontier and Literatures of East Asia*

By Miya Qiong Xie

Harvard University Press, 2023  
400 pages.

Reviewed by Joshua Lee SOLOMON\*



*Territorializing Manchuria: The Transnational Frontier and Literatures of East Asia* offers an ambitious but polemical argument—specifically about the “literature of Manchuria” between the 1920s and early 1950s, and more broadly about postcolonial and “frontier literature”—that is more often persuasive than not. Miya Qiong Xie’s methodologies range from the conventional—she cites names familiar to scholars of literature and area studies, such as Deleuze on territorialization (p. 12) and Benjamin’s theory of translation (p. 188)—to the more experimental, as she incorporates autobiographical elements and engages in an autoethnography of her academic field. In addition, she describes the Manchurian literary field viewed through the lens of national literature as a puzzle “with some pieces missing and other pieces out of place” (p. 5), implying the necessity of a multilingual approach to the subject. Indeed, she brings this stance into praxis as her expansive bibliography contains works in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, in addition to English.

*Territorializing Manchuria’s* primary contribution is to introduce “literary territorialization” as a theoretical tool for approaching frontier literature. Literary territorialization is a “dynamic process in which the ebbs and flows of power drive the ebbs and flows of the literary imagination of territories” among the various parameters of the modern nation-state—ethnic groups, cultures, territories, languages, and so forth. This is contrasted with the “territorialization of literature,” which “halts the flow and fixes the dynamics into oppositional binaries: the oppressor versus the oppressed and, among the oppressed, resistance versus collaboration” (p. 17). These processes are examined throughout the subsequent chapters from a variety of perspectives. Chapter 2 sees literary territorialization in the deployment of “native-soil” literature in and of Manchuria, but written in conversation with contemporary writers of the same genre in the Chinese mainland. Chapter 3 shifts perspective to focus on Gu Ding, often criticized for collaborating with the Japanese authorities of Manchukuo, who Xie argues experimented with hybridizing language as a way of territorializing Manchuria as Chinese. The next chapter follows the struggles of ethnic Korean writers in Manchuria who sought—and failed to gain—recognition of their

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nationality and the legitimation of their literature through Japanese translation. The final chapter brings literary territorialization into conversation with the Japanese author Abe Kōbō and his radical theorization of bordering (discussed in the text using Abe's Japanese term, *kokkyō* 国境) as it progresses from reflections on life in a cultural contact zone (Manchuria) to a potentially emancipatory redrawing of frontier borders within individual national polities (generic urban spaces). Literary territorialization is mobilized throughout the book as a critique of postcolonial literary theory's tendency, in Xie's view, to oversimplify and glorify acts of border crossing and hybridity as inherently critical of nationalism (such as pp. 24–25, 130, 250).

The book's second significant contribution will be of most value to readers interested in the specific case of Manchuria and Manchukuo, as it concerns the construction of the field of Manchurian literary studies. Chapter 1 provides a detailed and cross-“national” overview of the literature of Manchuria (the author provokingly often translates 民族, Ch. *minzu* / Jp. *minzoku* / Kr. *minjok*, as “nation” instead of “ethnicity”). This overview is structured as an elaboration of and response to a survey of respected scholars in the field. Through her interviews, Xie effectively demonstrates how the scholars define their subject differently according to their frame of national literature or the primary language of their scholarship. Her contention is that scholars have been limited by the framework of national literature, which is insufficient for approaching the “interconnected” “Manchuria-themed texts” which were in “dialogical relationship[s], with writers constantly addressing their cultural others sharing the same geographic space as antagonistic competitors, points of reference, or implied interlocutors” (pp. 4–5; see also p. 40). Furthermore, the disparate definitions of “Manchurian literature” from scholars with a history of academic collaboration suggests a fundamental misprision or miscommunication occurring between scholars grounded in different national literatures. The book's introduction and conclusion make compelling arguments for both a multilingual scholarship of Manchuria as a transnational place, and more importantly, for “Manchurian literature” as a meaningful epistemological category and object of academic inquiry.

While the main arguments are compelling, some elements of the book may leave readers dissatisfied. The claim in the blurb on the book jacket that it will “compar[e] East Asian literatures in three different languages” may give a slightly wrong impression: while this statement is not a misrepresentation, Xie does lean very heavily on Chinese-language literature, perspectives, and secondary sources throughout. On the other hand, Japan, which controlled vast portions of the literary field during the period under study, often feels like a monolithic boogeyman lurking behind the scenes. Manchuria is consistently referred to simply as a “colony,” and the Japanese as “colonizers,” without elaboration. In addition, general allusions to Japanese-Manchukuo censorship regimes are made throughout the text; however, the reader is not given a concrete description of the scope or severity of these systems with which to better evaluate the writer's claims. Japan's status through much of the book is thus more that of a specter than the very tangible, present, multifaceted, and self-contradictory combination of systems and people that it was. Indeed, the lone chapter focusing on a Japanese writer—Abe Kōbō—begins in postwar, post-evacuation Manchuria, and follows his intellectual trajectory away from Manchuria as a concrete place and into the realm of pure theory. Xie is forthright in her intentions to decenter “Japanese imperial time and space” (p. 301) in this work, but the reader may find that she has been a little too

aggressive in her efforts. (The smaller presence of Korean perspectives in the text is more understandable, and is additionally accounted for in chapters 1 and 4.) One final criticism is that, while the creativity of the autoethnographic approach of chapter 1 is laudable, the number of interviewees can be counted on one hand and the interview data is not bolstered with examples from secondary literature: the result is less that of an effective metanalysis and more of a gimmick used to introduce the literary overview—an unfortunate missed opportunity.

Despite these criticisms, *Territorializing Manchuria* is overall engaging, accessibly written, provocative, and prods the reader to consider frontier literature and Manchurian literature in new ways. It is a welcome addition to the growing field of Manchurian literary studies.

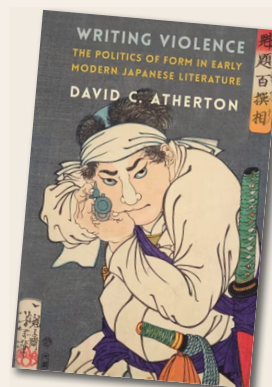
## BOOK REVIEW

### *Writing Violence: The Politics of Form in Early Modern Japanese Literature*

By David C. Atherton

Columbia University Press, 2023  
312 pages.

Reviewed by Mario TALAMO\*



*Writing Violence: The Politics of Form in Early Modern Japanese Literature* deals with literary representations of violence during the Edo period (1603–1868). It is comprehensive in its coverage, engaging with representations of violence in all its forms, from fire to vengeance, from adultery to honor killings. The book is written in an elegant and scholarly style which is, however, possibly difficult for readers without English as a native language. *Writing Violence* is composed of an introduction, five chapters, and a conclusion, with each section of the book approaching the topic from a multidisciplinary perspective covering literature, history, art and legal history, and the broader history of thought. The invocation of different fields in this study is a valuable contribution for readers, particularly those less familiar with Japanese literature in the Edo period.

Chapter 1 deals with the macro genre of *kana* booklets, which were particularly popular during the first part of the Edo period, and specifically focuses on *Musashi abumi* (1661) by Asai Ryōi (d. 1691). Chapter 2 turns its attention to blood revenge, drawing on the author's PhD dissertation. The key text here is *Budō denraiki* (1687) by Ihara Saikaku (1642–1693). *Jōruri* (puppet theater) and Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653–1724) take center stage in the third chapter, while the fourth deals once again with fiction, particularly the *Masurao monogatari* (1807 here, also 1806) by Ueda Akinari (1734–1809). The final chapter in the book is about the tradition of *yomihon* (reading books) from the city of Edo and analyzes the *Fukushū kidan Asaka no numa* (1803) by Santō Kyōden (1761–1816).

Each text is placed in its historical and literary context. For instance, through Asai Ryōi's work, Atherton both describes the genre of seventeenth-century disaster literature and offers a new way of reading the world through this literature. Whereas Ihara Saikaku's work offers a chance to discuss vendettas, one of the legal forms of violence in early modern Japan, the attention to *jōruri* and Chikamatsu allow Atherton to dwell on adultery and the punishment of transgression. Ueda Akinari's tale constitutes the perfect foil against which to discuss issues related to honor killing. Santō Kyōden's *yomihon* finally offers the means to expound upon the

\* Mario Talamo is a Visiting Research Scholar at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies. His academic interests concern the literature and intellectual history of the late Edo period.

notion of frontiers, violent clashes between individuals living in different places, and attempts to establish relations with other countries.

This is a work of meticulous scholarship that provides a series of fascinating windows into the literary productions that the author describes and contextualizes through deep dives into the individual texts that are the centerpieces of each chapter. To give a couple of examples, chapter 4 begins with the social and ideological context that serves as background to Ueda Akinari's tale, which is sketched in great detail. Atherton moves from history to literature to societal analysis, as the text itself (plot, authorial biography, and production of the text) is placed in relation to the historical facts of Masurao's life in order to engage with the *kokugaku* tradition of national philologists. This clearly shows Akinari was involved in a broader debate concerning the ideological role of fiction and allows for Atherton to relate the sorrow of the main character in the text with the author's own sufferings. The same comprehensive approach is evident in the final chapter on the *yomihon* of Santō Kyōden, which narrates events taking place in the north of the country. These offer Atherton the opportunity to analyze the concept of periphery, focusing on the island of Ezo during the last part of the Edo period, when a series of political and social transformations shifted the Bakufu's attention north. This depiction of early nineteenth-century society gives way to the production of *yomihon*, the problem of cultural geography, and the opportunity that visiting new spaces offered to scholars, as they turned new forms of literary production into a means of channeling studies on traditions, history, and local folklore.

In the conclusion of the book, which introduces the *Kaidai hyakusensō* (One hundred selected portraits of those who dashed ahead, 1868–1869) as a new literary production inspired by violence, Atherton returns to formalism, the approach that seemingly constitutes the basis of his methodology. The author states here that “Formalism has become a dirty word in some domains of scholarship. . . . But a capacious formalism . . . has the happy outcome of renewing texts capacity to astonish [and] enables us to hear anew the cacophonous diversity of the addresses they make to the world” (p. 219). A traditional formalist approach would have been greatly appreciated given the paucity of such contributions on Edo literature. Formalism analyses only formal aspects of a work, and omits content interpretation to exclusively focus on the literary product. The author of *Writing Violence* is not bound by this dogmatic interpretation of formalism, however, as the text features extensive sections describing society and the influence it had on literary production. Moreover, he defines the term “form” as follows: “Elements that might more traditionally be classified as ‘content’: character types, *utamakura*, plot structures, the practice of *seppuku*” (pp. 6–7). Despite its concern with form, what is discussed in the book may be understood as manifestations of violence in literature, but not as Forms (Latin: *forma*; old Greek: *morphé* μορφή, hence morphology). The presence of the word “form” in the title would appear to be slightly misleading here.

*Writing Violence* is therefore something of a hybrid text. The choice to focus on the theme of violence rather than on genres is understandable, as this provides the opportunity to examine different genres and develop a more personal and less conventional methodology. The resultant approach enables Atherton to deal with different dimensions of literary works (social, intellectual, and political), rather than solely with their formal aspects. Nevertheless, I believe that a conventional formalistic approach with a structural and actantial analysis of each genre would have corroborated the meticulous survey conducted by the author and enabled him to document the effect that the various expressions of social and political

violence had on deep literary structures. In this sense, *Writing Violence* could have constituted a valuable contribution toward an interesting and underdeveloped field of study.

Leaving the question of formalism aside, however, *Writing Violence* is well-documented and a pleasure to read. It is an important contribution to the field, in particular due to its lively and detailed descriptions of social and ideological changes, and the influence they exerted on literary production. It should feature in courses on early modern Japanese literature.

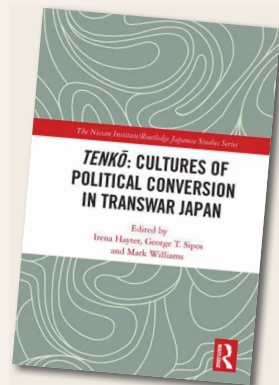
## BOOK REVIEW

### *Tenkō: Cultures of Political Conversion in Transwar Japan*

Edited by Irena Hayter, George T. Sipos and Mark Williams

Routledge, 2021  
290 pages.

Reviewed by Nadine WILLEMS\*



What is *tenkō* 転向? Broadly defined, it refers to the change of thought embraced by leftist activists and intellectuals, often under state coercion, during Japan’s authoritarian period of the 1930s until the end of the war. The thirteen contributions to the present volume examine *tenkō* from an interdisciplinary perspective. They demonstrate that it remains an intriguing phenomenon, subject to a variety of interpretations, and rich in political and cultural significance. Upon concluding the book, readers may hesitate to assign clear boundaries to the concept, but will be persuaded of its potential as an investigative lens for this crucial period in Japan’s modern history.

As noted in the book’s introduction, *tenkō* was intensely debated in the postwar years because of its association with the question of war responsibility, but its treatment in English-language scholarship is curiously sparse (pp. xxiv–xxv). Max Ward’s recent study on thought crime marked renewed interest in the topic, to which this volume presents a welcome extension.<sup>1</sup> The ambition is to build on existing narratives of *tenkō* and expand the methodological and conceptual framework of analysis. The editors also note the need to firmly situate it as “a response to a global crisis of modernity” (p. xxii) rather than as the product of uniquely Japanese settings.

Historically, the shift from a left-wing to a right-wing ideology is not exclusive to Japan. What intrigues in the Japanese context, however, is the sudden mass appeal of *tenkō* in the early 1930s, the formality of the renouncement of Marxism and the institutionalization of the process. The first part of the book, “Conceptual Excursions,” describes and questions this specificity against the background of capitalism and imperialism. Especially relevant is Hong Jong-Wook’s analysis of the renunciation of socialist ideology in colonial Korea. There, *tenkō* was complicated by the issue of nationalism, since to “convert” also meant to become pro-Japanese (p. 49). Viren Murthy probes the subjectivity of the *tenkōsha* (converts) via a detour into the writings of Sinologist Takeuchi Yoshimi. This is also an engaging chapter that probes

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<sup>1</sup> Ward 2019.



the depth of Japanese consciousness from a comparative standpoint, but also singularizes Japan's experience of modernity.

The second part of the book, the nine chapters of "Literary Possibilities," expands the discussion. While a distinct category of "*tenkō* literature" existed, expertly examined here by George Tipos, the other contributions focus on the various ways in which the wider category of proletarian literature addressed the *tenkō* phenomenon. That genre was at the forefront of cultural production in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and provided a platform for introspection to writers, in some instances showcasing their refusal to be silenced. The various chapters collectively draw a picture of a literary scene that paradoxically thrived in the face of censorship and repression.

The inclusion of women authors in chapters by Nakagawa Shigemi and Lee Juhee draws attention to the long-neglected subject of gender. There is also a welcome emphasis on the categories of affect and emotion, as opposed to abstract rationality and alienated (Western) knowledge, which Nakagawa and Irena Hayter develop in their respective explorations of *tenkō* literature. In Hayter's view, the decentered narrative and the "radical distortions in linear temporality" (p. 158) that characterize Takami Jun's novel *Auld Acquaintance* (*Kokyū wasureubeki*) marked a crisis of subjectivity, and Hayter points here to a blurring of the distinction between modernist and proletarian literature. The *tenkō* experience can also be read in terms of a "release from the theoretical" and a process toward the regeneration of the self (p. 164). In other words, the sterile debates on Marxism influenced by global political trends and embraced by a generation of leftist students and intellectuals in the interwar era morphed into a renewed attachment to Japaneseness. In that understanding, ideological conversion did not necessarily require coercion.

The anarchist poets featured in Murata Hirokazu's chapter should have been less reliant on abstractions and theory, yet they too succumbed to the power of affect. Murata shows for example how the poet Hagiwara Kyōjirō defected to the popular agrarian movement of Gondō Seikyō, a proponent of a direct union between the emperor and the people. Although Murata differentiates between Marxist and anarchist *tenkō*, he does not explain why the same "pull" toward spiritual essentialism motivated conversion. Postwar intellectual Tsurumi Shunsuke remains more persuasive when he suggests that only those anarchist thinkers and activists—such as Ishikawa Sanshirō—who had a concrete, i.e., physical, instead of symbolic, connection to rural work were able to maintain their convictions throughout.<sup>2</sup>

This is a dense volume, which undoubtedly succeeds in broadening the analytical framework for the study of political conversion in Japan between the wars and will interest graduate students and scholars of Japanese intellectual history. It is most successful at highlighting the specifically Japanese inflections of the "global crisis of modernity" foregrounded by the editors. The next step in the study of *tenkō* will hopefully consist of an even wider engagement with the issues and features of the "global crisis of modernity," leading towards a fuller understanding of the essence of ideological conversion.

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2 Tsurumi 1991.

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Ward 2019

Max Ward. *Thought Crime: Ideology and State Power in Interwar Japan*. Duke University Press, 2019.

## *Japan Review* Style Guide

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# CONTENTS

## SPECIAL SECTION

### Domain Shinto in Tokugawa Japan

INTRODUCTION

Bernhard SCHEID

Domain Shinto in Tokugawa Japan

Bernhard SCHEID

Domain Shinto as a Testing Ground of Early Modern Shinto

INOUE Tomokatsu

Domain Shinto: Religious Policies, Guiding Ideas, and Historical Development

Stefan KÖCK

Shinto Certification and Religious Differentiation:

Domain Shinto in Early Modern Okayama

Brigitte PICKL-KOLACZIA

Domain Shinto in Early Modern Mito: Impacts on Village Populations and Rural Networks

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Yoshikuni IGARASHI

Are We Allowed to Find Beauty in the Face of Death and Destruction?

Ishiuchi Miyako's *Hiroshima* and Postwar Japan

Beth M. CARTER

Salt, Seaweed, and Grief: The Power of Suma-Themed Private Poetry in *The Tale of Genji*

Jianda YUAN

Japanese Nostalgia for Empire in China: The Forgotten Story of Kangde Academy, 1935–1944

Hirokazu YOSHIE

The Imperial Portrait and Palace Conservatism in Occupied Japan

RESEARCH NOTE

Noriko T. REIDER

*Demon Slayer Kimetsu no yaiba*: Oni, Vampires, and Sexuality

REVIEW ESSAY

Frederick R. DICKINSON

Empire on My Mind:

Celebrating Three Generations of Anglophone Scholarship on Imperial Japan

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39

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