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# Introduction

KUSUNOKI Ayako and MATSUGI Hiromi

This special issue of *Japanese Studies around the World*, titled “Age of Monarchy/Monarchy for Age: Revisiting Monarchy from a Comparative Perspective,” consists of eight articles and one column. It represents the fruits of an overseas symposium of the same title that the International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken) organized on August 26, 2021. The symposium was held online as part of the 16th International Conference of the European Association for Japanese Studies (EAJS) in collaboration with the Consortium for Global Japanese Studies who sponsored the second session of the symposium, the “EAJS next-generation workshop.”

The symposium and special issue were inspired by events in Japan over the last few years. In 2016, Emperor Akihito announced his intention to abdicate, and the following year a special law was enacted, allowing for succession during his lifetime. In 2019, when Crown Prince Naruhito acceded to the throne, the era changed from Heisei to Reiwa. The interest shown in these events clearly proves that the imperial system still wields the power to shape an age.

Human relationships are not sufficient for human survival. The stability of the social order inevitably necessitates power, but the deployment of power, through political, economic and social institutions and mechanisms, is also insufficient for human society. Within traditional notions of authority, what Fukuzawa Yukichi called the “inner order,” it is an extra-human being, transcendent or divine, that represents the public and enables the integration of the people. This generally takes the form of a monarchy, or the emperor system in Japan.

Recognition of this gives rise to a number of questions. What kind of presence did the emperor have in each period? How was the apparatus for asserting and claiming authority and transcendence established? What place was given to the emperor in the construction of the modern state? How did the state of kingship in Japan influence other nations that also tried to build a nation? And how were these monarchies and their regal power represented in art? The articles in this special issue of *Japanese Studies around the World* represent the contributions of researchers in different countries and academic fields, and collectively seek to tackle these questions from a variety of perspectives.

# Art and Royal Authority: On the Creation of Illustrated Scrolls during the Government of Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa

PAN Lei\*

This article examines the illustrated scroll of events known as the *Nenjū gyōji emaki* and the narrative illustrated scroll *Ban Dainagon emaki*, which were produced during the government of Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa. By analyzing the items and actions that are depicted or mentioned in these scrolls, the article will study the circumstances in which the scrolls were created and examine the relationship between scroll-making and politics. The results will show that the ultimate goal of Go-Shirakawa's government in producing the two abovementioned illustrated scrolls was to document the state of royal authority in each period since the pre-Heian era.

**Keywords:** *Nenjū gyōji emaki*, *Ban Dainagon emaki*, illustrated scroll of events, narrative illustrated scroll

## Introduction

The period of cloistered rule (1086–1192), in which retired emperors (*in* 院) abdicated as lineal ascendants and then guided the court government by guardianship of the current emperor, is seen as a major turning point in Japanese history. This period encompassed various changes, such as the rise of the social status of samurai families in the establishment and governance of the *shōen kōryō* 莊園公領 system of public land and private estates, exhibiting both the waning light of antiquity and the first glimpses of the middle ages. This hundred-year span from the Shirakawa 白河 and Toba 鳥羽 cloistered governments (respectively 1086–1129 and 1129–1156) to the Go-Shirakawa 後白河 cloistered government (1158–1192) involved a broad differentiation of power, with royal power comprised of two complementary domains of “emperor” and “retired emperor.” In the context of this differentiation of power, the national culture of the capital city spread to the provinces, while at the same time, regional cultures flowed into the capital city, producing many

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novelties.<sup>1</sup> To turn our focus to art, the art of the cloistered rule period is appraised as “possessed of depth, extraordinarily prolific, and full of creativity.”<sup>2</sup> “Narrative illustrated scrolls” (*emakimono* 絵巻物) were especially abundant in this period; these works composed stories by adding poetry written in characters to *yamato-e* 大和絵 (classical Japanese paintings), a style of painting that was representative of the national culture.

Although conventional historical studies have often centered their interpretations on written materials, in recent years, more historical studies have been conducted using paintings as the basis for research. This article will shed light on illustrated scrolls thought to have been produced during the Go-Shirakawa cloistered government, starting with a review of previous studies, and then analyzing the items and actions depicted and mentioned in these scrolls, and consequently the concepts and ideologies expressed in the pictures. Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa led a cloistered government that had survived a tumultuous period overseeing the following five generations of emperors since his abdication in Hōgen 保元 3 (1158): Nijō 二条, Rokujō 六条, Takakura 高倉, Antoku 安徳, and Go-Toba 後鳥羽. This article will consider the kinds of messages Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa wanted to convey to contemporary and future generations through the production of illustrated scrolls and reexamine the relationship between politics and illustrated scroll production during his reign.

## 1. Illustrated Scroll Production under Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa

Illustrated scrolls tend to be seen as a popular art form that summarize literary works in a lucid way; however, during the period of cloistered rule, the imperial family is thought to have played a leading role in their production. All four of Japan’s most highly-appraised illustrated scrolls (*Genji monogatari emaki* 源氏物語絵巻, *Shigisan engi emaki* 信貴山縁起絵巻, *Ban Dainagon emaki* 伴大納言絵巻, and *Chōjū jinbutsu giga* 鳥獸人物戯画) were works of the cloistered rule era; scroll production at that time was, in a sense, a matter of national importance.

The seventy-seventh emperor, Go-Shirakawa (1127–1192; r. 1155–1158), fourth son of seventy-fourth Emperor Toba, and half-brother of the seventy-sixth emperor, Konoe 近衛 (who passed away at the young age of seventeen), inherited the throne in the seventh month of Kyūju 久寿 2 (1155) as a placeholder until his first son, imperial prince Morihito-shinnō 守仁親王 (the

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1 Heian 平安-era (794–1185) noble society included many followers of Pure Land Buddhism, who prayed so that they could pass on to the next life in Amitabha’s Pure Land. In the late Heian period, the pessimistic *mappō* 末法 ideology of the “latter days of the law” of Buddhism strengthened the Pure Land faith, and the work of lower-class clergymen called “saints” (*hijiri* 聖) contributed to the nationwide spread of Pure Land teachings. Meanwhile, in the provinces, samurai were constructing castles in each region to strengthen their clan or regional ties. The Northern Fujiwara (Ōshūfujiwara 奥州藤原) of the Ōu 奥羽 region were particularly active during the century-long span covering the three generations of Kiyohira 清衡 (1056–1128), Motohira 基衡 (d.u.), and Hidehira 秀衡 (?–1187), importing Kyoto culture with an abundance of wealth derived from gold mining and horse trading. In addition to building ostentatious temples like Chūsonji 中尊寺 and Mōtsūji 毛越寺, they boasted great wealth from a unique culture that was produced through trade with northern regions. It was through the Fujiwara clan that regional products were brought into the capital.

2 Tsuji Nobuo 辻惟雄, *Nihon bijutsu no rekishi* 日本美術の歴史, University of Tokyo Press, 2005, p. 141.

eventual seventy-eighth Emperor Nijō), would assume the role of emperor. From a young age, Go-Shirakawa was transfixed with the popular *imayō* 今様 poetry of that era. He had a strong awareness of the power of culture and worked to develop a variety of cultural activities. The treasure house built into Rengeō-in 蓮華王院 for him by Taira no Kiyomori 平清盛 (1118–1181) around Chōkan 長寛 2 (1164) shows a small measure of this. The writings, musical instruments, and paintings in the collection at the treasure house are so wide-ranging as to suggest that one of the motives for involving Taira no Kiyomori in Japan's trade relations with the Song 宋 dynasty (960–1279) was to have him seek out treasures to place there.<sup>3</sup> The illustrated scrolls held at Rengeō-in include *Nenjū gyōji emaki* 年中行事絵巻 (Illustrated Scroll of Events), *Hōgen sumaizu emaki* 保元相撲図絵巻, *Jōan gosechi emaki* 承安五節絵巻, *Kokawa-dera engi emaki* 粉河寺縁起絵巻, *Gosannen kassen emaki* 後三年合戦絵巻, *Ban Dainagon emaki*, *Kibi no Otodo Nittō emaki* 吉備大臣入唐絵巻, *Hikohohodemi no Mikoto emaki* 彦火々出見尊絵巻, *Yamai no sōshi* 病草紙, *Gaki zōshi* 餓鬼草紙, and *Jigoku zōshi* 地獄草紙.<sup>4</sup> The production of nearly all of these scrolls is likely to have reflected the intentions of Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa.<sup>5</sup>

As Itō Daisuke 伊藤大輔 points out about the production of artworks by retired emperors, “As power tended to be decentralized in the cloistered rule period, the retired emperor separated from the reigning emperor and participated in political conflicts to reinforce royal authority as a representative of the royal family. Works of art were tools for pressuring others and winning competitions through the superabundant beauty of these works. In this sense, producing works of art is seen to have been a supremely political act.”<sup>6</sup> This is an expression of the growing theories in recent years that view the retired emperor's production of works of art as instrumental in political disputes. Specifically, there are a large number of studies emphasizing the relationship between Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa's production of illustrated scrolls and his involvement in politics, arguing that he adorned royal authority with narrative scrolls,<sup>7</sup> that Go-Shirakawa tried to get recognition for his own authority using scroll-making as an image strategy,<sup>8</sup> that the scrolls were a ploy to get “psychological compensation” that would communicate the strength of royal authority,<sup>9</sup> and that Go-Shirakawa sincerely desired to have his legitimacy guaranteed on both political and

3 Gomi Fumihiko 五味文彦, *Emaki de yomu chūsei* 絵巻で読む中世, Chikuma Shobō, 2005, p. 63.

4 Masuki Ryūsuke 増記隆介, Sarai Mai 皿井舞, and Sasaki Moritoshi 佐々木守俊, *Kodai kokka to bukyō bijutsu: Nara, Heian jidai* 古代国家と仏教美術：奈良・平安時代 (*Tennō no bijutsushi* 天皇の美術史, vol. 1), Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2018, p. 76.

5 Gomi Fumihiko, Sano Midori 佐野みどり, and Matsuoka Shinpi 松岡心平, *Chūsei bunka no bi to chikara* 中世文化の美と力 (*Nihon no chūsei* 日本の中世, vol. 7), Chūōkōronshinsha, 2002, p. 210.

6 Itō Daisuke, *Shōzōga no jidai: Chūsei keiseiki ni okeru kaiga no shisōteki shinsō* 肖像画の時代：中世形成期における絵画の思想的深層, University of Nagoya Press, 2012, p. 1.

7 Sano Midori, “Monogatari chikara: Chūsei bijutsu no ba to kōsōryoku” 物語る力：中世美術の場と構想力, in *Chūsei bunka no bi to chikara*, Gomi et al., pp. 173–233.

8 Inamoto Mariko 稲本万里子, “Goshirakawain no emaki seisaku to sono kinō ni kansuru chōsa kenkyū” 後白河院の絵巻制作とその機能に関する調査研究, *Kenkyū seika hōkokusho* 研究成果報告書, 2003.

9 Satō Yasuhiro 佐藤康広, “Miyako no jiken: *Nenjū gyōji emaki*, *Ban Dainagon emaki*, *Yamai no sōshi*,” 都の事件：『年中行事絵巻』・『伴大納言絵巻』・『病草紙』 in *Bijutsu o sasaeru mono* 美術を支えるもの (*Kōza Nihon bijutsushi* 講座日本美術史, vol. 6), Kinoshita Naoyuki 木下直之, ed., University of Tokyo Press, 2005, pp. 79–108.



religious grounds using scrolls of events and narrative illustrated scrolls.<sup>10</sup>

The contents of the illustrated scrolls produced under the guidance of Go-Shirakawa can be broadly classified into illustrated scrolls of events and narrative illustrated scrolls. In the next section, we will look at the items and actions depicted and mentioned in these scrolls, focusing on *Nenjū gyōji emaki* and *Ban Dainagon emaki*, which are both set in the capital, the mainstay of royal power.

## 2. Items and Actions Depicted in the *Nenjū gyōji emaki*

Komatsu Shigemi 小松茂美 notes that the following illustrated scrolls of events that have appeared in the literature were all produced during the era of Go-Shirakawa.<sup>11</sup>

1. *Hōgen Jōnanji keiba emaki* 保元城南寺競馬絵巻 (*Sanetaka kōki* 実隆公記)
2. *Hōgen sumaizu emaki* 保元相撲図絵巻 (*Gyokuyō* 玉葉)
3. *Nin'an gomisogi gyōkō e*, 7 vols. 仁安御禊行幸絵 七巻 (*Kanmon gyōki* 看聞御記)
4. *Jōan gosechi emaki*, 3 vols. 承安五節絵巻 三巻 (*Kanmon gyōki* 看聞御記)
5. *Nenjū gyōji emaki* (*Kokon chomonjū* 古今著聞集)

Of these, the *Nenjū gyōji emaki* is an extremely important document for understanding the customs of the Heian period. Volume sixteen of the extant early Edo 江戸-period (1603–1867) *Nenjū gyōji emaki* reproduction made by father and son Sumiyoshi Jokei 住吉如慶 (1599–1670) and Gukei 具慶 (1631–1705) depicts annual ceremonies, festivals, Buddhist services, games, and other events involving the late Heian-period imperial court, nobility, and towns.<sup>12</sup> However, not all key imperial annual events from January to December are depicted; the focus is on events from January to June, and much of the scroll space is given over to January events, conveying some dozen events such as Chōkin no Gyōkō 朝覲行幸 (vol. 1), private banquets (vol. 5), large court banquets (vols. 6 and 10), imperial events to pray for the *Golden Light Sutra* (vol. 7), and *tōka* 踏歌 dancing (vol. 10). In this section, we will examine the Chōkin no Gyōkō depicted in volume 1.

Chōkin no Gyōkō is a ceremonial congratulatory rite in which the emperor goes out to greet his imperial father and mother at the beginning of the new year. This rite was established as an

10 Nagai Kumiko 永井久美子, “Monogatari emaki ni miru Goshirakawa inseiki: *Ban Dainagon emaki*, *Hikobohodemi no Mikoto emaki*, *Kibi no Ototo Nittō emaki* o chūshin ni” 物語絵巻に見る後白河院政期：『伴大納言絵巻』『彦火々出見尊絵巻』『吉備大臣入唐絵巻』を中心に, PhD dissertation, University of Tokyo, 2011.

11 Komatsu Shigemi, ed., *Nenjū gyōji emaki* (*Nihon no emaki* 日本の絵巻, vol. 8), Chūōkōronsha, 1987, p. 119.

12 Of the existing reproductions, the most outstanding one is considered to be from the Sumiyoshi family line (in possession of the Tanaka family). Volume 16 of this Sumiyoshi reproduction was temporarily passed on to the head of the Taima governors for safekeeping when the Sumiyoshi family's fortunes declined around the time of the Meiji Restoration. Later, painter Tanaka Yūbi 田中有美 (1840–1933) received it from that head of family, and then Tanaka Shinbi 田中親美 (1875–1975) inherited it; it remains in possession of the family today (Ibid., p. 121). The original *Nenjū gyōji emaki* scrolls were lost to successive fires, but Fukuyama Toshio 福山敏男 has done a detailed study of existing reproductions; see Fukuyama Toshio, “Dai nijūyonkan kai-setsu: *Nenjū gyōji emaki* ni tsuite” 第二十四巻解説：年中行事絵巻について, in *Nenjū gyōji emaki* 年中行事絵巻 (*Nihon emakimono zenshū* 日本絵巻物全集, vol. 24), Fukuyama, ed., Kadokawa Shoten, 1968.

imperial court event in the period of the fifty-fourth emperor, Ninmyō 仁明 (r. 833–850). Its first appearance in historical records was in the document “Tennō Chōkin Daijō Tennō” 天皇朝觀太上天皇, volume 28, eighth section on emperors of the *Ruijū kokushi* 類聚国史, compiled by Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真 (845–903). It reads, “Emperor Saga 嵯峨, day of the Water Rabbit, in the eighth month of Daidō 大同 4 (809). Emperor visited Retired Empress [Retired Emperor?].<sup>13</sup> Minister of the Right Junii Rank Fujiwara Ason Uchimarō 藤原朝臣内膳, consecration. Day-long banquet. Exchange of gifts.”<sup>14</sup> In other words, in the eighth month of the year Daidō 4, Emperor Saga (786–842; r. 809–823) inherited the throne from his older brother, the fifty-first emperor, Heizei 平城 (774–824; r. 806–809), and a day-long banquet was held under the consecration of Minister of the Right Fujiwara Ason Uchimarō. At this point, Chōkin no Gyōkō had not yet been established as a New Year ceremony; according to *Ruijū kokushi*, Emperor Ninmyō decided to greet the retired emperor and imperial mother at the beginning of every new year starting in Jōwa 承和 1 (834).

Chōkin is based on a Chinese ceremony mentioned in the *Works of Mencius*, volume 9: *Wan Zhang I* (“Mengzi” *juanjiu Wanzhangzhangjushang* 『孟子』 卷九·万章章句上): “After the death of Yao, when the three years’ mourning was completed, Shun withdrew from the son of Yao to the south of South river. The princes of the kingdom, however, repairing to court, went not to the son of Yao, but to Shun. Litigants went not to the son of Yao, but to Shun. Singers sang not the son of Yao, but to Shun.” This passage reveals that Chōkin was originally an act in which subjects gave salutations to the emperor; in China, the emperor greeting the retired emperor is not called Chōkin. Furthermore, as Sano Masato 佐野真人 points out, “It would not have been feasible to have a ceremony in which the emperor has an audience with the retired emperor on a customary basis” in China.<sup>15</sup> As such, it is safe to say that Chōkin no Gyōkō is a Japanized imperial court event. The program of the Chōkin no Gyōkō ceremony is recorded clearly in *Saikyūki* 西宮記, a work on the usages and practices of the court compiled by Minister of the Left Minamoto no Takaakira 源高明 (914–982), a son of Emperor Daigo 醍醐 (885–930; r. 897–930) who had descended to the status of civilian and married the daughter of Fujiwara no Morosuke 藤原師輔 (908–960). His work studying the usages and practices of the court is thought to have been influenced by Morosuke, who perfected the Kūjō 九条 school of practices.

Volume 1 of *Nenjū gyōji emaki* is understood to depict the seventy-eighth emperor, Nijō, proceeding from the Imperial Palace to Hōjūji 法住寺 Palace to greet Go-Shirakawa on the second day of the new year in Chōkan 1 (1163).<sup>16</sup> In the scene in which the emperor starts out departing the Hall for State Ceremonies in the main building of the Imperial Palace (see figure 1), the emperor is standing in the frame of the south side of the Hall for State Ceremonies, accompanied by two court ladies, and wearing a round-necked robe colored with wax tree dye. This dyed robe is a type of ceremonial attire that emperors have worn for important ceremonies since the Heian

13 The original text reads 帝朝于太上天皇. Here, “empress” 皇后 is thought to be an error for “emperor” 天皇.

14 *Kokushi taikēi: Ruijū kokushi* 国史大系：類聚国史, Keizai Zasshisha, 1916, p. 230.

15 Sano Masato, *Kodai tennō saishi, girei no shiteki kenkyū* 古代天皇祭祀・儀礼の史的研究, Shibunkaku Shuppan, 2019, p. 246.

16 Gomi, *Emaki de yomu chūsei*, pp. 68–69.





Figure 1. The emperor departing from the Hall for State Ceremonies. *Nenjū gyōji emaki*, vol. 1. Komatsu, *Nenjū gyōji emaki*, pp. 2–3.

period. The slightly reddish-brown “wax tree dye” color was brought over from China, imitating an ochre color symbolizing the color of the sun in attire for the emperor. According to the *Nihon kōki* 日本後紀, kimono colored with wax tree dye was established for use in various ordinary ceremonies and for audiences with foreign envoys through an imperial decree made by Emperor Saga in Kōnin 弘仁 11 (820).

The court lady to the emperor’s left is bearing a sword, and the court lady to his right is bearing the emperor’s jewel. The sword (Kusanagi no Tsurugi 草薙劍) and the jewel (Yasakani no Magatama 八坂瓊曲玉) are two of the Three Sacred Treasures handed down through generations of emperors as representations of the imperial throne, and they were traveling along with the emperor. To the right of the court lady bearing the jewel, there is a person in waiting who appears to be a regent. Below the south steps proceeds an imperial carriage (*hōren* 鳳輦), with a gilt bronze Chinese phoenix decorating the center peak of its cabin. In order to avoid defilement, the emperor would not officially have ridden in a vehicle that touched the ground, and instead would travel in an imperial carriage shouldered by palanquin bearers for formal ceremonies. The Sadaishō 左大將 (general of the inner palace guards, left division) is standing next to the cherry tree to the east of the stairs, and the Udaishō next to the *tachibana* orange tree to the west. Armed imperial guards defend the area around the carriage, and attending senior court nobles form a line at the top of the courtyard. Thus, the emperor leaves the Imperial Palace, and is about to proceed to the retired emperor’s palace, watched over by both military and civilian officials.

The imperial procession passes through the Shōmei gate of the south series of gates, and the front and Kenrei gates of the outer wall of the Imperial Palace, and continues along the main street of the palace in front of the Taiken gate, where a crowd of spectators has gathered. Among these, we see two ox carts dashing in the opposite direction, and commoners fleeing in fear of the raging oxen (see figure 2).

The imperial procession arrives at Hōjūji Palace, built at the end of Shichijō Avenue on the outskirts of Heian-kyō 平安京, and the emperor and retired emperor view court dancing and music together (see figure 3). In a seat in front of the central main residence building, we can see the hem of the emperor’s wax-tree dyed robe as he sits down, and food spread out on nine serving plates in front of him. The retired emperor is seated on a cushion to the right side of the emperor,



Figure 2. Onlookers in town. *Nenjū gyōji emaki*, vol. 1. Komatsu, *Nenjū gyōji emaki*, p. 5.



Figure 3. Dance viewing. *Nenjū gyōji emaki*, vol. 1. Komatsu, *Nenjū gyōji emaki*, pp. 10–11.

and only a minimal hem of his imperial robe is showing. Going west from the main residence building toward the roofed path, there are eleven senior court nobles (including regents) seated on slatted wood, and all have the hems of their ceremonial court attire inner robes hanging over the handrail; this type of etiquette is thought to have begun around the mid-tenth century. Five court officials are seated on wooden flooring to the right and left of the upper courtyard below the stairs, and all have placed their shorn shallow clogs in front of them. To the right and left below the south stairs, seven palace guard officers are sitting cross-legged on tiger pelts, and in the middle of them is a dancer wearing a red robe. To summarize, in the “dance viewing” scene, multiple nobles are depicted in addition to the emperor and retired emperor, whose faces are not shown. The regents seated on slatted wood closest to the emperor, followed by the ministers, reveal that the status of nobles is shown according to their distance from the emperor and retired emperor.

A dragon boat floats on the pond, and four children are rowing with poles. Dragon boats were brought to Japan from China during the Tang 唐 dynasty (618–907). Since dragons were imaginary animals that often crossed water, and waterfowl often flew in resistance of strong winds, these were frequently used together to decorate the prows of boats, with *ryūtō gekishu* 龍頭鷓首 boats (dragon and waterfowl boats) working in pairs, each with one animal on its prow. From the Heian period to the Muromachi 室町 period (1336–1573), *ryūtō gekishu* boats were used at religious



festivals, imperial court events, and in water festivities of nobles. Chapter 24 of the *Tale of Genji*, “Butterfly,” also depicts a scene in which people prepare a Chinese-style *ryūtō gekishu* boat in the palace courtyard in spring, and release it onto the pond, amusing themselves with Japanese and Chinese poetry and music. The Chōkin no Gyōkō scene in volume 1 of the *Nenjū gyōji emaki* does not depict a *ryūtō gekishu* boat, but it is likely floating about somewhere in the south pond.

As we have seen above, the Chōkin no Gyōkō scene realistically depicts items and actions that were not fully conveyed in the usages and practices document, *Saikyūki*, such as the attire of the emperor, retired emperor, and nobles; the items presented by the court ladies; the route of the imperial visit and the scenery along the way; and the arrangement of those in attendance.

### 3. Creation of the *Nenjū gyōji emaki* Event Scroll

During the Toba cloistered government, conflicts intensified within the imperial family and the regent’s family surrounding the issues of succession to the throne and the inheritance of manors. In the imperial family, the opposition was between Cloistered Emperor Toba and Retired Emperor Sutoku 崇徳 (1119–1164; r. 1123–1142), and in the regent family, the opposition was between Chief Imperial Advisor Fujiwara no Tadamichi 藤原忠通 (1097–1164) and Minister of the Left Fujiwara no Yorinaga 藤原頼長 (1120–1156). In the seventh month of Kyūju 2 (1155), Emperor Go-Shirakawa acceded to the throne, and upon Retired Emperor Toba’s death in the seventh month of Hōgen 1 (1156), Retired Emperor Sutoku’s side raised an army which was then defeated after attacks by Minamoto no Yoshitomo 源義朝 (1123–1160) and Taira no Kiyomori 平清盛 (1118–1181) on the emperor’s side. This was the first battle to occur within the city of Heian-kyō since its founding, and it further damaged the greater palace area, which had been falling into decay since the second half of the tenth century. In the second month of the following year, Emperor Go-Shirakawa accepted a proposal by advisor Shinzei 信西 (Fujiwara no Michinori 藤原通憲, 1106–1159) and decided to reconstruct the greater palace area, which was completed in only eight months. Then, on the twenty-second day of the first month, Hōgen 3 (1158), he revived the custom of private banquets, which had been long discontinued.<sup>17</sup> This day is depicted as follows in volume 3, chapter 4, tale 98 of the *Kokon chomonjū* 古今著聞集, a collection of stories compiled in the mid-Kamakura 鎌倉 period (1185–1333).

Private banquets had begun in the Kōnin years, but were discontinued in the Chōgen 長元 years (1028–1037). While they were supposed to be revived on the twenty-first day of the first month, Hōgen 3, due to the rain that day, the banquet was moved to the twenty-second.<sup>18</sup>

17 On the history of the period from the outbreak of the Hōgen Rebellion to the establishment of Go-Shirakawa’s government, see Kōchi Shōsuke 河内祥輔 and Nitta Ichirō 新田一郎, *Tennō to chūsei no buke* 天皇と中世の武家 (*Tennō no rekishi* 天皇の歴史, vol. 4), Kōdansha, 2011, pp. 16–51; and Mikawa Kei 美川圭, *Goshirakawa tennō: Nihon daiichi no daitengu* 後白河天皇：日本第一の大天狗, Minerva Shobō, 2015, pp. 13–106.

18 Nishio Kōichi 西尾光一 and Kobayashi Yasuharu 小林保治, eds., *Kokon chomonjū jō* 古今著聞集 上 (*Shinchō Nihon koten shūsei* 新潮日本古典集成, vol. 59), Shinchōsha, 1983, p. 151.

Private banquets were an annual imperial court event held on the day of the rat, between the twenty-first and twenty-third days of the first month, on the south corridor of the central pavilion of the imperial palace. The emperor, crown prince, and senior court officials would attend and call on persons of letters of lower noble ranks to write literary works and take part in the banquet festivities. According to the *Kokon chomonjū*, these banquets began in the Kōnin era and discontinued in Chōgen 7 (1034), and were then revived 124 years later in Hōgen 3. The banquet that year had in attendance chief advisor Fujiwara no Tadamichi (aged sixty-two), Grand Minister Fujiwara no Munesuke 藤原宗輔 (aged eighty-two), and other nobles and court officials; it was apparently a magnificent event “hearkening back to old times.”<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, on the twenty-second day of the sixth month of Hōgen 3, Emperor Go-Shirakawa revived the sumo wrestling seasonal court banquet, which had been discontinued for thirty-five years. After all the passion he threw into reconstructing the greater palace area and reviving the imperial council, Emperor Go-Shirakawa abdicated to Imperial Crown Prince Morihito on the eleventh day of the eighth month of Hōgen 3 (1158), after ruling for only three years, and began his cloistered rule as retired emperor. Over the thirty-year period of his cloistered government, as mentioned above, Go-Shirakawa is thought to have had many illustrated scrolls of events produced. In this way, Emperor Go-Shirakawa reproduced the spectacles of the greater palace he rebuilt and the imperial council he revived during his reign in a series of event scroll paintings; the *Nenjū gyōji emaki*, in particular, came to be completed as an encyclopedia of imperial court events based on documents recording the usages and practices of the court.<sup>20</sup>

The *Nenjū gyōji emaki* was completed around 1165, and is said to have included over sixty volumes, although most were lost in wartime fires. What remains are sixteen reproductions, made by the father and son Sumiyoshi Jokei and Gukei in the early Edo period based on some of the originals, as well as three other reproductions. On the imperial command of Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa, the originals are thought to have been painted by official imperial artist Tokiwa Genji Mitsunaga 常盤源二光長 (d.u.), with clean copies of the *kotobagaki* 詞書 (captions) being delegated to Chancellor Fujiwara no Norinaga 藤原教長 (1109–1180).<sup>21</sup> Additionally, Fujiwara no Motofusa 藤原基房 (1144–1230), son of chief advisor Fujiwara no Tadamichi and expert in studies of the usages and practices of the court, was appointed in the role of “director of editing.”

*Kokon chomonjū*, volume 11, illustration 16, tale 397, states:

During the reign of Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa, a raised cloth picture illustrating annual events, Matsudono Motofusa.

During the era of Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa, annual events were depicted in paintings,

19 Ibid., pp. 151–153.

20 On the context of the production of the *Nenjū gyōji emaki*, see discussions by Komatsu, *Nenjū gyōji emaki*, pp. 106–123, and Mikawa, *Goshirakawa tennō*, pp. 34–42.

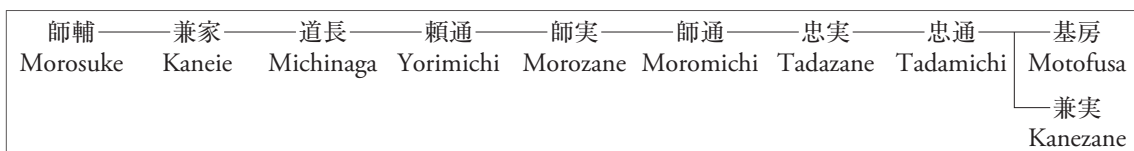
21 The *Nenjū gyōji emaki* (reproduction) includes the addition of a postscript by Sumiyoshi Jokei which notes, “Occasional writer, Minister Masatsune. Painter, Mitsunaga.” According to a study by Komatsu Shigemi, this note’s calligraphy penmanship is that of Fujiwara no Norinaga. See Komatsu, *Nenjū gyōji emaki*, pp. 122–123.

and with much appreciation were presented to Matsudono. He observed them closely, and noted the places with errors on blotting paper, signing and sealing them with his own handwriting and returning the notes to the cloistered emperor for viewing. On the decision that the paintings needed to be redone, the cloistered emperor said: “How could we correct paintings bearing blotting paper marked with the signature of such a person? With this, these paintings are already a priceless treasure.” As such, they were included in the treasure house at Rengeō-in. The blotting paper is still there. It is really an incredible thing.<sup>22</sup>

In other words, when Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa showed a well-made annual event painting to Fujiwara no Motofusa, Motofusa thoroughly looked it over, wrote down some notes about places that had errors, and returned these to Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa. Usually, one would follow the notes and redo the paintings, but Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa regarded the memo of such a person as Motofusa to be a treasure and added the paintings as-is to the treasure house collection at Rengeō-in, which was built for him by Taira no Kiyomori.

Fujiwara no Motofusa became regent in 1166 and served as chief advisor to the emperor from 1172 to 1179. Intimately involved with the imperial council, he was respected by the imperial court as a learned leader. Looking at Motofusa’s origins, the diagram below indicates that one of his ancestors was Morosuke, who was born the second son of chief imperial advisor Tadamichi and completed the Kujō school’s study of court usages and practices. Morosuke’s descendants were blessed with many daughters, and for eight successive generations of emperors, from the reign of the sixty-third emperor, Reizei 冷泉 (950–1011; r. 967–969), to the seventieth emperor, Go-Reizei 後冷泉 (1025–1068; r. 1045–1068), he monopolized the position of regent and chief advisor as a maternal relative of the emperor. Father and son Fujiwara no Michinaga 道長 and Yorimichi 頼通 built the golden age of regency government, and their descendants, called the Midō 御堂 school, inherited the position of regent and chief advisor for generations as Fujiwara family elders. This is why imperial ceremonies were executed based on the *Kujō nenjū gyōji* 九条年中行事, and why the Kūjō school’s studies on imperial usage and practice predominated over other schools. It is safe to say that this is the context in which Motofusa’s studies in court usage and practice were highly esteemed during Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa’s government.

#### Fujiwara no Motofusa’s lineage



22 Nishio and Kobayashi, eds., *Kokon chomonjū ge* 古今著聞集 下 (*Shinchō Nihon koten shūsei*, vol. 76), Shinchōsha, 1986, pp. 40–41.



#### 4. Items and Actions Depicted in the *Ban Dainagon emaki*

As with the event scroll paintings, Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa's government also produced a large volume of narrative illustrated scrolls, one of which, the *Ban Dainagon emaki* (Illustrated Scroll of Chief Councilor Ban), is a Japanese national treasure counted among the four major picture scrolls in the country. This illustrated scroll depicts the conspiracy and downfall of Dainagon (chief councilor of state) Tomo no Yoshio 伴善男 (811–868) in the context of the conflagration of the Ōtenmon 応天門 gate of the Heian Palace by arson, which occurred on the night of the tenth day of the third month of Jōgan 貞観 8 (866), during the reign of the fifty-sixth emperor, Seiwa 清和 (850–881; r. 858–876), in the early Heian period. Estimated to have been produced in the second half of the twelfth century, or about three hundred years after the Ōtenmon Incident, the scroll is currently in possession of the Idemitsu Museum of Arts. Consisting of three volumes, according to Komatsu Shigemi, although it was recorded in the *Kanmon gyōki* as one volume, it was cut and reorganized into a three-volume work at the discretion of Wakasa Governor-General Sakai Tadakatsu 酒井忠勝 (1587–1662) in the seventeenth century.<sup>23</sup> As with the *Nenjū gyōji emaki*, the paintings are thought to have been done by court painter Tokiwa Genji Mitsunaga, who had been very active around Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa, and the poetic *kotobagaki* were under the direction of noted calligraphist Fujiwara no Norinaga.

The *Ban Dainagon emaki* contains two lines of *kotobagaki* for both the second and third volumes, but the opening *kotobagaki* of the first volume have been lost to history. However, since the *kotobagaki* of the second and third volumes closely resemble tale 114, “Ban Dainagon Ōtenmon o yaku koto” (The Incident of Ban Dainagon Burning Ōtenmon) in the story collection *Uji shūi monogatari* 宇治拾遺物語 from the early Kamakura period, the *kotobagaki* of the first volume can generally be inferred. In terms of content, volume 1 depicts the conflagration of Ōtenmon through arson, and Grand Minister Fujiwara no Yoshifusa's visit to the emperor's habitual residence to admonish Emperor Seiwa to thoroughly search for the truth of the event; volume 2 depicts Minister of the Left Minamoto no Makoto 源信 (810–868) and his court ladies appealing to heaven for his innocence, and a fight between children that triggers the discovery of the true culprit; and volume 3 depicts the investigation of a servant who was an eyewitness at the site of the arson, and Dainagon Tomo no Yoshio being sent into exile.

The beginning of the first volume depicts a group of police and judicial chiefs rushing down Suzaku Boulevard toward the scene upon hearing news that Ōtenmon is ablaze (see figure 4). The government position of police and judicial chief under direct control of the emperor was established by the fifty-second emperor, Saga, to keep public order in the ancient capital of Heian. However, their professional duties gradually expanded to encompass duties that had originally belonged to the Ministries of the Left and Right and other security positions, including actions like investigating and apprehending criminals, and restraining and interrogating them. As a royal police force or military force centered on the emperor, by the regent's and advisor's era they wielded

23 Komatsu Shigemi, ed., *Ban Dainagon ekotoba* 伴大納言絵詞 (*Nihon no emaki*, vol. 2), Chūōkōronsha, 1987, p. 100.



Figure 4. Group of police and judicial chiefs mobilizing. *Ban Dainagon emaki*, vol. 1. Komatsu, *Ban Dainagon ekotoba*, pp. 2–3.



Figure 5. Group of police and judicial chiefs heading toward Ban Dainagon's residence. *Ban Dainagon emaki*, vol. 3. Komatsu, *Ban Dainagon ekotoba*, pp. 72–73.

their power to the fullest.<sup>24</sup> The *Ban Dainagon emaki* opens with a portrayal of the police and judicial chiefs and introduces them again in the third volume when they investigate the servant, chase down and capture Ban Dainagon (see figure 5), and escort him after his conviction. In this way, the scroll diligently communicated the scenery of the capital at the time of the Ōtenmon Incident. However, as it has been pointed out that the scene of the police and judicial chiefs charging out to the site of the fire leading soldiers mounted on horseback at the beginning of the first volume would have only occurred in a limited window of about thirty years in the late twelfth

24 Sasaki Keisuke 佐々木恵介, *Tennō to sesshō, kanpaku* 天皇と摂政・関白 (*Tennō no rekishi* 天皇の歴史, vol. 3), Kōdansha, 2011, pp. 186–187.

century;<sup>25</sup> this suggests that the capital depicted by the artist would have overlapped with the twelfth-century capital in which the illustrated scroll was created.

The scene in the *Ban Dainagon emaki* that has the biggest impact on viewers is likely that in which Ōtenmon is going up in flames. Various people are depicted looking at the fire from both sides of Ōtenmon as it is engulfed in flames. While there are many commoners in everyday clothing standing inside Suzakumon 朱雀門 gate downwind of the fire, on the upwind side in front of Kaishōmon 会昌門, government officials and their attendants are gathered. Since the inside of Suzakumon to the south side of Ōtenmon is downwind of the fire, there is a mantle of black smoke overhead and sparks falling, and the fear expressed in the depiction of the figures and facial expressions cannot be concealed (see figure 6). Meanwhile, there is less commotion among the senior court nobles, courtiers, lower nobility, and military officers gathered on the north side of Ōtenmon in front of Kaishōmon, since they are standing upwind; they are tossing awestruck or inquisitive looks toward the conflagration (see figure 7). Thus, unlike the narrative scroll *Genji monogatari emaki*, produced during the governments of retired emperors Shirakawa and Toba and depicting primarily imperial court life, the narrative scroll *Ban Dainagon emaki*, produced under Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa, has a vivid energy that contrasts commoners and nobles. It shares this point with the previously mentioned event scroll *Nenjū gyōji emaki*, perhaps due to ideas unique to Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa, who had close contact with wandering entertainers and commoners through *imayō* poetry.

The scene changes to one in which Fujiwara no Yoshifusa 藤原良房 (804–872), surrounded by mysterious characters in ceremonial court attire, visits the pavilion of the emperor's habitual residence immediately following the fire, and admonishes Emperor Seiwa to do a full investigation of the facts to find the truth (see figure 8). Emperor Seiwa, who receives Fujiwara no Yoshifusa in his bedchamber upon his sudden arrival, is sitting on a red-hemmed mattress, in a long scarlet *hakama*, donning an outer robe over his undergarments, with his hair left exposed. At this meeting with the emperor, Grand Minister Fujiwara no Yoshifusa advocates for the innocence of Minister of the Left Minamoto no Makoto, who had been falsely accused by Dainagon Tomo no Yoshio, wearing an upright *eboshi* 烏帽子 hat and everyday robes worn by the imperial family. The emperor is depicted with an uncovered head, and the Grand Minister in an upright *eboshi* and everyday attire, something that would have been inexcusable for a palace visit in that era. This conveys both the chaos of the situation and the close bonds between maternal grandfather Fujiwara no Yoshifusa and his grandson Emperor Seiwa.

Volume 2 opens with a depiction of an envoy heading to the residence of Minister of the Left Minamoto no Makoto to issue his pardon, as it has come to light through the admonitions of Fujiwara no Yoshifusa that Minamoto has been falsely accused. In this scene, where the facial expressions of the court ladies change from anguished to joyful when they get news of the pardon, the painting also depicts the implements of Minamoto no Makoto's residence. There is nothing but a metallic lacquered inkstone case with an open lid (see figure 9). In contrast, the inside of Tomo no Yoshio's residence depicted in volume 3, immediately after Tomo no Yoshio is taken away by the men who have been sent to capture him, includes many implements such as a metallic lacquered

25 Suzuki Keizō 鈴木敬三, *Shoki emakimono no fūzokuteki kenkyū* 初期絵巻物の風俗史的研究, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1960, pp. 505–507.





Figure 6. Group of people inside Suzakumon. *Ban Dainagon emaki*, vol. 1.  
Komatsu, *Ban Dainagon ekotoba*, pp. 14–15.



Figure 7. Government officials in front of Kaishōmon. *Ban Dainagon emaki*, vol. 1.  
Komatsu, *Ban Dainagon ekotoba*, pp. 22–23.



Figure 8. Emperor Seiwa and Fujiwara no Yoshifusa.  
*Ban Dainagon emaki*, vol. 1.  
Komatsu, *Ban Dainagon ekotoba*, p. 30.

mirror case, a container for hair ointment, a tray, a serving table, and a long-handled saké decanter (see figure 10). These portrayals contrast “simplicity” with “extravagance,” a theme which also appears in the scene of children fighting in volume 2. A security forces servant and an accountant for the Ban Dainagon household live side by side in a partitioned housing unit, but the servant’s home is sided with wicker, while the accountant’s is sided with clapboard, showing that the accountant’s home is economically affluent (see figure 11).

The children’s fight, which is painted using an intertemporal technique, triggers the discovery of the true culprit. It takes place in the fall, six months after the Ōtenmon fire, in a corner of an eastern alley in a neighborhood of the capital. There is a fight between the children of a security forces servant and those of an accountant of the Ban Dainagon household, and their parents come outside. According to the *kotobagaki*, when the accountant defends his own children and tramples the servant’s children “as if to kill them,” the servant’s anger boils over, and he divulges that he witnessed the scene of the arson. This starts rumors that Ban Dainagon was himself the true culprit in the Ōtenmon fire—this section of volume 2 portrays the townspeople one after another, including those who saw the fight and those who spread the rumors. The faces of characters from the lower class are not depicted in the typical *hikime kagibana* 引目鉤鼻 (“slit eyes and hook nose”) nondescript style, but are instead depicted with rich facial expressions (see figure 11).

## 5. Creation of the *Ban Dainagon emaki*

The *Ban Dainagon emaki* is an illustrated scroll on the topic of the Ōtenmon Incident which took place in Jōgan 8 (866); however, it does not convey the history of the Ōtenmon Incident itself. The Ōtenmon Incident is recorded in the national history *Nihon sandai jitsuroku* 日本三代実録, completed by the sixtieth emperor, Daigo, in Engi 延喜 1 (901). Reading this work, we see that there is scant information about the Ōtenmon fire itself, stating only, in the record for the tenth day of the third month of Jōgan 8, under Emperor Seiwa: “Tenth day. Night. Ōtenmon fire. Spread up to the two buildings Seihōrō 棲鳳樓 and Shōranrō 翔鸞樓.”<sup>26</sup> Then, the same text goes on to explain the handling of the incident after the fire in the record for the third day of the eighth month of Jōgan 8.<sup>27</sup> Ōyake no Takatori 大宅鷹取 (d.u.), a government official of Bitchū living in the eastern side of the capital, accused Dainagon Tomo no Yoshio and Uemon no Suke Tomo no Nakatsune 伴中庸 (d.u.) of setting fire to Ōtenmon. Then, the day after his accusation, Ōyake no Takatori was restrained by the police and judicial chiefs of the left (record for the fourth day of the eighth month, Jōgan 8), and on the seventh, at the command of the emperor, state councilors Minabuchi no Toshina 南淵年名 (808–877) and Fujiwara no Yoshitada questioned Tomo no Yoshio at the investigative bureau (record for the seventh day of the eighth month, Jōgan 8). On the twenty-ninth, Tomo no Yoshio’s son, Tomo no Nakatsune, was taken into custody at the Saemon office, and on the same day Ikue no Tsuneyama 生江恒山, who had killed Ōyake no Takatori’s daughter, was tortured (record for the twenty-ninth day of the eighth month, Jōgan 8).

26 Kuroita Katsumi 黑板勝美 and Kokushi Taikei Henshūkai 国史大系編修会, eds., *Nihon sandai jitsuroku* 日本三代実録 (*Shintei zōho kokushi taikei* 新訂増補国史大系, vol. 4), Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1966, p. 180.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 192.





Figure 9. Court ladies of the Minister of the Left residence. *Ban Dainagon emaki*, vol. 2. Komatsu, *Ban Dainagon ekotoba*, pp. 44–45.

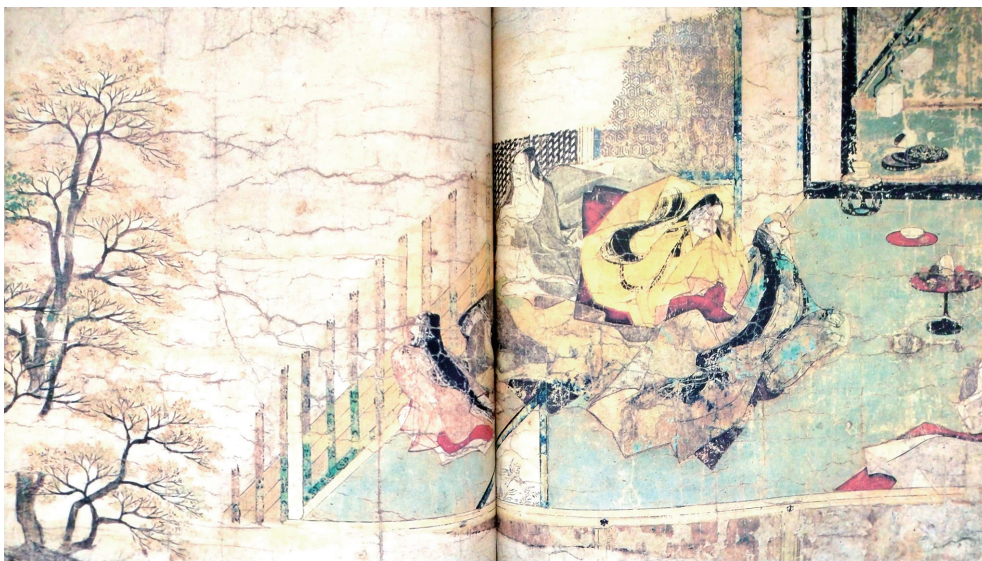


Figure 10. Dainagon residence after losing its master. *Ban Dainagon emaki*, vol. 3. Komatsu, *Ban Dainagon ekotoba*, pp. 80–81.



Figure 11. The servant's children fighting with the accountant's children. *Ban Dainagon emaki*, vol. 2. Komatsu, *Ban Dainagon ekotoba*, pp. 56–57.



The next day, Tomo no Kiyotada 伴清繩, co-conspirator of Ikue no Tsuneyama and another servant of Tomo no Yoshio, was also tortured (record for the thirtieth day of the eighth month, Jōgan 8). Then, six weeks after the accusation, on the twenty-second day of the ninth month, the record states that a total of thirteen people, including Tomo no Yoshio, were convicted for burning down Ōtenmon.<sup>28</sup>

As we have seen above, the *Ban Dainagon emaki* depicts the Ōtenmon conflagration, the discovery of the true culprit, the restriction and questioning of plaintiffs by police and judicial chiefs, the pushiness of Tomo no Yoshio's attendants, and the punishment of the true culprit. While it does not convey history itself, this scroll does incorporate most of the elements of the Ōtenmon Incident recorded in the historical text *Nihon sandai jitsuroku*.

In the context in which the Ōtenmon Incident, which had occurred about three hundred years prior, was chosen as the subject of an illustrated scroll during the era of Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa, Komatsu Shigemi points out that the Tarō fire occurred on the night of the twenty-eighth day of the fourth month of Angen 安元 3 (1177), and the Jirō fire occurred the next year, on the night of the twenty-fourth day of the fourth month of Jishō 治承 2 (1178).<sup>29</sup> The Tarō fire started in an alley in Higuchitomi, and fanned out to the northwest, fed by southeasterly winds. According to chief advisor Kujō Kanezane 九条兼実 (1149–1207)'s diary *Gyokuyō* 玉葉, and the runological history book *Hyakurensō* 百鍊抄, completed in the late Kamakura period, the range of the fire extended about 180 *chō* 町 (roughly equivalent to 1.8 km<sup>2</sup>), from Tominokōji on the east, to Suzaku Boulevard on the west, to Rokujō on the south, and to the greater palace area in the north; the Grand Council of State building, which was at the south side main entrance of Ōtenmon, was lost in the fire. Furthermore, fourteen high-ranking court officials' residences were damaged in the fire, including that of *Nenjū gyōji emaki* editor and chief advisor Fujiwara no Motofusa. Many homes held extensive libraries, including those of Dainagon Tokudaiji Sanesada 徳大寺実定 (1139–1192), Dainagon Fujiwara no Takasue 藤原隆季 (1127–1185), Chūnagon Hino Sukenaga 日野資長 (1119–1195), Chūnagon Nakayama Tadachika 中山忠親 (1132–1195), Chūnagon Minamoto no Masayori 源雅頼 (1127–1190), and Sanmi Fujiwara no Toshitsune 藤原俊経 (1113–1191); however, as Kujō Kanezane lamented, “Today we have suffered disaster, our dynasty is in ruins, this is the end of an era, a tragedy,”<sup>30</sup> indicating the tremendous toll the fire took on their libraries. In *Hōjōki* 方丈記 (An Account of My Hut), poet and essayist Kamo no Chōmei 鴨長明 (1155–1216) writes, “Besides, the losses were incalculable. Perhaps a third of the entire city was destroyed.” As his writing shows, the great fire of Angen 3 left one third of the capital in ashes. Furthermore, the Jirō fire the following year started around Shichijō-dōri and Higashinotōin, and is thought to have spread along Shichijō Boulevard to Suzaku Boulevard.

The series of great fires that occurred in the capital must have been extremely worrying for Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa, as he had just rebuilt the greater palace area twenty years prior. It would only be natural for him and those around him, who watched the Council Hall and the rest

28 Ibid., p. 195.

29 Komatsu, *Ban Dainagon ekotoba*, pp. 98–111.

30 Fujiwara no Kanezane 藤原兼実, *Gyokuyō*, vol. 2, Kokusho Kankōkai, 1906, p. 317. Fujiwara no Kanezane is also known as Kujō Kanezane, as he was the founder of the Kujō family, that is, the head family descending from Fujiwara Hokke.

of the Grand Council of State buildings be consumed in the fire right in front of their eyes, to be reminded of the Ōtenmon Incident three hundred years earlier. Perhaps the realistic depictions of the flames and the gathering crowd at the beginning of the *Ban Dainagon emaki* are largely owed to the firsthand experience the creators would have had of the great fires that occurred under Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa's government. This may also be the origin of the method of painting, by layering contemporary reality on top of historical records, as mentioned above in the depiction of the police and judicial chiefs. In addition to the conflagration of the greater palace area, we can surmise that the burning of written documents would have been a shocking event to Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa, who had produced the *Nenjū gyōji emaki* and committed himself to reproducing imperial court functions based on studies of imperial court usages and practices.

## 6. Depicted Royal Authority

Annual imperial court events in ancient Japan were ceremonies that were conducted at certain times of the year as customs and imparted a rhythm to the process of daily life throughout the year. The calendar was brought to Japan from China via the Korean Peninsula during the Asuka 飛鳥 period (592–710).<sup>31</sup> However, it was first used in the twelfth year of the thirty-third empress, Suiko 推古 (604).<sup>32</sup> The adoption of the calendar was accompanied by the establishment of an emperor-centered state with centralized authoritarian rule, and annual events developed as functions of the imperial court.

In Enryaku 延暦 13 (794), the fiftieth emperor, Kanmu 桓武 (737–806; r. 781–806), moved the capital to Kadonogun, Yamashiro no Kuni, and named it Heian-kyō, marking the beginning of the Heian period. Emperor Kanmu, who had ancestry from Chinese and Korean settlers to ancient Japan, adored Chinese culture.<sup>33</sup> His son, the fifty-second emperor, Saga, was educated by his father and fervently absorbed the products of Chinese civilization. He appointed writing instructor Sugawara no Kiyotomo 菅原清公 (770–842), whose career included visiting Tang China as an official envoy, and implemented a series of Sinification policies. In Kōnin 9 (818), Emperor Saga handed down an imperial decree which stated that along with revising ceremonies in the country and men's and women's attire to match the Tang Chinese style, court rank diplomas for level five and above would also be changed to the Chinese format. Furthermore, all palaces, temple buildings, gates, and so on, were given new framed titles, as stated in the *Nihon kiriyaku*

31 In the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, tenth month of the tenth year of Empress Suiko, it is recorded: "Winter, tenth month. A Baekje priest named Kwal-leuk arrived and presented by way of tribute books of calendar-making, of astronomy, and of geography, and books of the art of invisibility and of magic." Kojima Noriyuki 小島憲之, Naoki Kōjirō 直木孝次郎, Nishimiya Kazutami 西宮一民, Kuranaka Susumu 蔵中進, and Mōri Masamori 毛利正守, eds. and trans., *Nihon shoki (Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū)* 新編日本古典文学全集, vol. 3), Shōgakusan, 1996, p. 538.

32 From *Seiji yōryaku* 政事要略, volume 25, annual event twenty-five, eleventh month. This suggests that, while the calendar may not have been circulating in society, it was used in Japan from the time of Suiko.

33 According to the *Shoku Nihongi* 続日本紀, in the twelfth month of Enryaku 8 under Emperor Kanmu, the next year's New Year of the Water Rat, Emperor Kanmu's mother Takano no Niigasa was the daughter of Yamato no Ototsugu, descendant of Prince Junda, son of King Muryeong of Baekje.

日本紀略 on the twenty-seventh day of the fourth month of Kōnin 9: “On this day, with control, we shall hang frames with new names written.” In Kōnin 12 (821), the *Dairishiki* 内裏式 was completed as a book of the emperor’s ceremonies (compiled by Fujiwara no Fuyutsugu and others). This work describes both established and provisional ceremonies conducted in the imperial court in the early Heian period, detailing the characteristics of each event.<sup>34</sup>

Starting in Jōgan 14 (872), Emperor Saga’s great-grandson and the fifty-sixth emperor, Seiwa, created the *Jōgan gishiki* 貞觀儀式 as a new work on ceremonies; at this point, we could say that Japan’s imperial court events and their ceremonies were more or less complete, while being heavily influenced by Chinese customs.

From the second half of the ninth century into the tenth century, as Japan’s relationship with China went through major changes, a type of national culture (*kokufū bunka* 国風文化) was born, centered on aristocratic society, which conformed to the Japanese climate, customs, and manners, even while having absorbed Chinese culture up to that point. With the development of the *kana* syllabary, it became easier to compose poetry and prose in Japanese, and instead of the earlier collections of Chinese-language poetry and writings, the *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集, thought to have been completed in Engi 5 (905), was created as the first collection of *waka* 和歌 poetry compiled for the emperor. Satō Sekiko focuses on the fact that the *Kokin wakashū* was written based on a cursive *kana* script used to record *waka* poetry of that time, and while it has a preface written in *kana* (*kana-jo* 仮名序), it also has a preface written in Chinese characters, called the *mana-jo* 真名序. She writes, “We can infer the editors’ intentions to give authority to *waka* through Chinese writing and the study of Chinese classics” and points out that “starting with the early ninth century, right after Emperor Saga laid out a thorough policy of Sinification, the tone of time-honored Japanese styles gradually became stronger in the culture, and by the eleventh century, the ‘Japanese’ and ‘Chinese’ influences were equal.”<sup>35</sup> In this way, imperial court events started out on a path from imitating Chinese events to Japanification, and according to *Uda Tennō gyōki* 宇多天皇御記 cited in the *Moromitsu nenjū gyōji* 師光年中行事,<sup>36</sup> folk events such as eating rice gruel containing the seven plants of spring on the fifteenth day of the first month of the year and eating peach blossom rice cakes on the third day of the third month were adopted by the imperial court.

Yamanaka Yū 山中裕 points out that the annual events of the sixtieth emperor, Daigo, and the sixty-second emperor, Murakami 村上 (926–967; r. 946–967), “tended to be made aristocratic,” and that since Fujiwara no Tadahira 藤原忠平 (880–949) endeavored to develop “elegant events,” he established the Tadahira school of ceremonies which “were the guidelines for regents and cabinet ministers at imperial court events.” She continues, “The completion of the Fujiwara family’s method of producing ceremonies meant a shift away from emperor-centered ceremony

34 For a detailed study on the creation of the *Dairishiki*, see Tokoro Isao 所功, *Heianchō gishikisho seiritsushi no kenkyū* 平安朝儀式書成立史の研究, Kokusho Kankōkai, 1985, pp. 13–29.

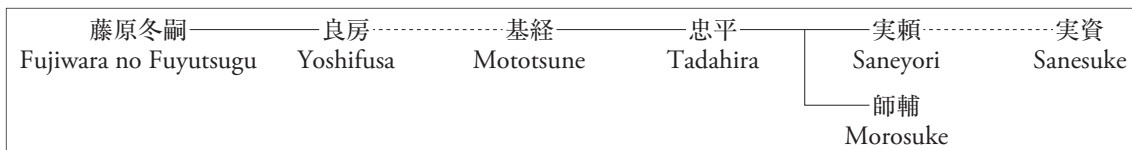
35 Satō Sekiko 佐藤勢紀子, “Kanbun no shisō, wabun no shisō” 漢文の思想・和文の思想, in Satō Hiroo 佐藤弘夫 and Hirayama Yō 平山洋, eds., *Gaisetsu Nihon shisōshi* 概説日本思想史 (rev. ed.), Minerva Shobō, 2020, pp. 59–66.

36 Hanawa Hokiichi 塙保己一, ed., *Zoku Gunsho Ruijū* 続群書類従, vol. 10 (1), Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai 続群書類従完成会, 1926, p. 336.



methods to noble-centered methods.”<sup>37</sup> The imperial court event ceremonial methods compiled by Fujiwara no Tadahira were inherited by his sons Morosuke and Saneyori 実頼 (900–970). Minister of the Right Fujiwara no Morosuke completed the *Kujō nenjū gyōji*, perfecting the Kujō school of studies in court usages and practices, and Saneyori’s adopted son and Minister of the Right Fujiwara no Sanesuke 藤原実資 (957–1046) completed the *Ono no Miya nenjū gyōji* 小野宮年中行事, perfecting the Ono no Miya school of studies in court usage and practice. Thus, high-ranking court nobles carried out the tasks of organizing and recording the imperial court events that had gradually been Japanized starting in the late ninth century, and the family lineages of studies in court usages and practices were highly esteemed in Heian-period noble society.

#### Genealogy of the family studying court usages and practices



The anecdote from the *Kokon chomonjū* mentioning the importance that Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa placed on the blotting paper with comments by Fujiwara no Motofusa could be seen to reflect to some extent his intentions in producing the *Nenjū gyōji emaki*. The comment paper notes the parts of the work that contain errors, but from our perspective, while these really are errors, in a sense this is also a valuable document showing the differences between tradition and the present. Speaking only of the Chōkin no Gyōkō in volume 1 of the *Nenjū gyōji emaki*, the fact that the Chōkin no Gyōkō imperial court event that was Japanized while being based on a Chinese ceremony was chosen as the theme for an illustrated scroll is itself fascinating. The customs that had been strongly influenced by Chinese customs as Emperor Saga was in the process of establishing a series of Tang-style policies are depicted, but more typically Japanese customs developed by Heian nobles are also depicted. For Fujiwara no Motofusa, an expert in ancient practices, who respected conventional practices, anything that did not follow convention would have been an error; however, for “culture king” Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa, the parts that did not follow convention may have shown the changes taking place in the development of annual events.

In this period, *yamato-e* were reaching a level of maturity in their themes and style, and Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa may have wanted to use illustrated scrolls, with their narrative capacity, to convey the spectacle of annual events in a way that writings on ancient practices, like the *Saikyūki*, could not.

Furthermore, looking at the composition of Chōkin no Gyōkō, two spaces have been created for the opening and ending sections. The opening section depicts the emperor departing from the Imperial Palace and heading to the palace of the retired emperor, under the watchful eyes of the regent and other military and civilian officials (see figure 1). The ending section depicts a scene in which the emperor and retired emperor watch a performance of dance and music together (see

37 Yamanaka Yū, “Nenju gyōji sono arubeki Sugata: Kyūtei gyōji teichaku made no dōtei” 年中行事そのあるべき姿：宮廷行事定着までの道程, in *Emakimono no kanshō kiso-chishiki* 絵巻物の鑑賞基礎知識, Wakasugi Junji 若杉準治, ed., Shibundō, 1995, pp. 261–267.

figure 3). In both scenes, the nobles are ranked according to their location. Furthermore, the shift from a space containing the emperor and regent to a space which includes the retired emperor seems to show the shift from the regency government period to the cloistered emperor government period. Additionally, in that process, crowds of common people also appear as spectators. The production of the *Nenjū gyōji emaki* may have included the intention to reconfirm the form of government in which the emperor, regent, and retired emperor jointly governed during the cloistered rule period, in other words, the state of royal authority.

Meanwhile, the *Ban Dainagon emaki* may have played a similar role to the *Nenjū gyōji emaki*, as it was produced after being triggered by the Tarō and Jirō fires that occurred under Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa's government. Nitō Satoko 仁藤智子 points out that when the *Ban Dainagon emaki* was produced, "people's awareness of the incident at the time was expressed with the phrase 'how regrettable,' inferring that they perceived Ban Dainagon to have been falsely accused."<sup>38</sup> However, from our perspective, the point of producing the *Ban Dainagon emaki* as spearheaded by Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa was not to convey that Ban Dainagon was falsely accused, but rather that the focal point may have been the changes that the Ōtenmon Incident brought about in the state of royal authority.

As mentioned above, the *Nihon sandai jitsuroku* lists the course of events following the Ōtenmon fire as follows: 1. Ōyake no Takatori's accusation, 2. restraint of Ōyake no Takatori, 3. Tomo no Yoshio's interrogation, 4. detention of Tomo no Nakatsune and torture of Ikue no Tsuneyama and Tomo no Kiyotada, and 5. Tomo no Yoshio's conviction. Here, half a month after Ōyake no Takatori's accusation, on the nineteenth day of the eighth month of Jōgan 8 (866), it is stated, "Imperial decree, Grand Minister. Assumes control of government,"<sup>39</sup> meaning that Fujiwara no Yoshifusa was appointed the first retainer to become regent. Thus, through this incident, Fujiwara no Yoshifusa led the Hokke 北家 branch of the Fujiwara clan to prosperity, paving the way for the regency government. As stated in the section on the twenty-second day of the ninth month of Jōgan 8, the thirteen people exiled as a result of this incident were all from the Ban (Tomo) family or the Ki family, and both families thus drifted away from central political circles. The Ōtenmon Incident was no more than one among a series of incidents in which the Fujiwara Hokke branch ostracized other families. They increased their authority in the central political world by ousting Tomo no Kowamine 伴健岑 (d.u.) and Tachibana no Hayanari 橘逸勢 (782?-842) through the Jōwa Incident in Jōwa 承和 9 (842) during the reign of the fifty-fourth emperor, Ninmyō; Sugawara no Michizane through the Shōtai Incident in Shōtai 昌泰 4 (901) during the reign of Emperor Daigo; and Minamoto no Takaakira through the Anna Incident in Anna 安和 2 (969) during the reign of Emperor Reizei.

Behind Fujiwara Hokke's rise to power, descendants of Fujiwara Hokke regents came to monopolize the upper ranks of the nobility along with the descendants of emperors. As Sasaki Keisuke mentions, in the early period during the reigns of the sixty-fourth emperor, Ichijō 一条 (980-1011; r. 986-1011), and the sixty-eighth emperor, Go-Ichijō 後一条 (1008-1036; r. 1016-1036), there appears "the archetypal formation in which the people ascending to positions

38 Nitō Satoko, "Ōtenmon no hen to *Ban Dainagon emaki*: Kiroku to kioku no aida" 応天門の変と『伴大納言絵巻』: 記録と記憶の間, *Kokushikan shigaku* 国史館史学, no. 19, 2015, p. 29.

39 Kuroita et al., *Nihon sandai jitsuroku*, p. 193.

in the nucleus of the state, in other words, the people comprising royal authority, have made themselves at home, and their patriarchs have reached the summit of national politics ... in other words, this is a system in which the emperor's maternal grandfather becomes regent, and the emperor and his mother (the regent's daughter) compose a seamless royal authority underneath the regent."<sup>40</sup> This system of royal authority and "clans" overlapping would later be inherited. However, the clan patriarch at the summit of national politics changed from regent to retired emperor with the arrival of the cloistered rule period, in which the form of government was a joint administration run by the retired emperor, emperor, and regent.

The theme of the *Ban Dainagon emaki* is an incident that helped bring about the Fujiwara Hokke's rise to power as the clan that had just laid the foundations for the political system of the cloistered rule period. The scroll also depicts Minister of the Left Minamoto no Makoto and his involvement in the incident, which was not specified in the *Nihon sandai jitsuroku*. Born the son of Emperor Saga, Minamoto no Makoto was granted the surname Minamoto as he stepped down to civilian status in Kōnin 5 (814). However, he held an important government position, along with his younger brothers Minamoto no Tokiwa 源常 (812–854) and Minamoto no Sadamu 源定 (815–863), who had also stepped down to civilian status. In Ten'an 天安 1 (857), when Minister of the Right Fujiwara no Yoshifusa was appointed Grand Minister, Dainagon Minamoto no Makoto ascended to the position of Minister of the Left. The *Nihon sandai jitsuroku* records, upon the death of Minamoto no Makoto in Jōgan 10 (868), on the twenty-eighth day of the twelfth month: "In the winter of Jōgan 6, Dainagon Tomo no Yoshio and Minister Minamoto no Makoto confronted each other, and their relations worsened."<sup>41</sup> Then, again, on the twenty-second day of the ninth month of Jōgan 8, it states about Tomo no Yoshio, "Early in the Jōgan era, Tomo no Yoshio's relations with Minister of the Left Minamoto no Makoto worsened, and several years later, he tried to slander the minister with rumors of treason, but in the end it was he who committed a crime."<sup>42</sup> This suggests that there had always been friction between Minamoto no Makoto and Tomo no Yoshio, but it does not mention that after the Ōtenmon fire, Tomo no Yoshio pinned the blame on Minamoto no Makoto for the arson. However, even though the protagonist Tomo no Yoshio never appears, the *Ban Dainagon emaki* relates that Minamoto no Makoto was slandered by Tomo no Yoshio in two scenes: in volume 1, when "Grand Minister Fujiwara no Yoshifusa admonishes Emperor Seiwa to investigate the truth of the incident," and in volume 2, when "Minister of the Left Minamoto no Makoto appeals to heaven for his innocence." These depictions of Minamoto no Makoto being slandered by Tomo no Yoshio, which were not based on the Japanese historical records, reinforce the legitimacy of Fujiwara no Yoshifusa's actions, and simultaneously go on to justify the later prosperity of the Fujiwara Hokke, the start of the regency government, and the start of the cloistered government.

Thus, compared with event scrolls, narrative scrolls have the advantage of storytelling to not only reproduce the actual state of royal authority, but also the historical vicissitudes involved. Furthermore, by depicting the contrasting figures and facial expressions of officials and commoners watching Ōtenmon in flames, choosing the townscape as the setting for the children's fight that

40 Sasaki, *Tennō to sesshō, kanpaku*, p. 172.

41 Kuroita et al., *Nihon sandai jitsuroku*, p. 238.

42 Ibid., pp. 196–197.



triggers the discovery of the true culprit, and having many commoners appear as spectators, the producers of this illustrated scroll further expanded the target audience that would reaffirm the state of royal authority.

## Conclusion

This article examined the annual event scroll *Nenjū gyōji emaki* and the narrative scroll *Ban Dainagon emaki*, which were produced during Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa's government. The *Nenjū gyōji emaki* depicts annual ceremonies, festivals, Buddhist services, and games at the imperial court, among nobility and in the town, during the late Heian period, while *Ban Dainagon emaki* depicts the conspiracy and downfall of Tomo no Yoshio in the story of the Ōtenmon Incident that occurred in the early Heian period. Various people appear in these scrolls, from retired emperors, emperors, and regents to high-ranking nobles, low-ranking officials, and commoners. They are ranked in these depictions, which reproduce not only the state of real royal authority during the cloistered government period, but also its basis, royal authority of the regency period, and the even earlier state of royal authority in the early Heian period. The scrolls were set in the capital city, perhaps because the real area of control enjoyed by royal authority in the early Heian period and later was limited to Heian-kyō and its outskirts.

With these scrolls, the state of royal authority in the cloistered rule period was reproduced, and furthermore, despite joint administration by the retired emperor, emperor, and regent, the retired emperor became a presence that surpassed the others. This is revealed by the fact that, while it is said that scroll paintings do not portray the faces of nobles, the faces of Emperor Seiwa (in *Ban Dainagon emaki*) and Emperor Nijō (in *Nenjū gyōji emaki*) are shown, but the retired emperor's face is not. Thus, during Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa's government, under the political system following the regency government, in which royal authority overlapped with "clans," Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa recorded the historical vicissitudes of royal authority as a patriarch using illustrated scrolls. Without denying that Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa used the production of artistic works as a tool in political disputes, as far as *Nenjū gyōji emaki* and *Ban Dainagon emaki* are concerned, it appears that his primary objective in illustrated scroll production was to leave a record of royal authority from a sense of responsibility as a patriarch.

美術と王権  
——後白河院政期の絵巻制作をめぐる——

潘 蕾\*

本稿では、後白河院政期に制作された行事絵『年中行事絵巻』と物語絵『伴大納言絵巻』を取り上げ、そこに描かれ、語られているモノ・コトの分析を通して、絵巻の成立事情を考察し、その上で、絵巻制作と政治との関わりを検討する。その結果、後白河院による上記二幅の絵巻制作の最大の目的は、平安前期以来の王権のあり方を記録することであったと明らかにした。

キーワード：年中行事絵巻、伴大納言絵巻、行事絵、物語絵

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## The Emperor as Captive of the Constitution

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On August 8, 2016, Emperor Akihito issued a video message to the people of Japan. Based on this message, Akihito abdicated to current Emperor Naruhito on April 30, 2019, and the name of the era was changed from Heisei to Reiwa. This was the first time since Japan established the Meiji Constitution and became a constitutional state that an emperor abdicated during his own lifetime. In this respect, Akihito's abdication was a challenge to constitutional order. In this paper, we will examine the continuity of Japan's national framework since the Meiji period and the strain that this framework is currently facing, as revealed by this question of abdication.

**Keywords:** the emperor as a symbol of the state, abdication, the Constitution of the Empire of Japan, Itō Hirobumi

On August 8, 2016, Emperor Akihito 明仁 delivered a televised video message to the Japanese people. In it, he expressed his grave concern that he would be unable to fulfill his symbolic role as prescribed by the constitution due to his advanced age, and he appealed to the people to understand his desire to abdicate. In response, the government began to deliberate the possibility of him ceding the throne to the crown prince, and in June 2017, a special law was enacted for this purpose. On April 30, 2019, Emperor Akihito duly abdicated, and Crown Prince Naruhito 徳仁 immediately ascended the throne as the new emperor. The era name changed from Heisei 平成 to Reiwa 令和. This was the first time in about two hundred years that an emperor had abdicated, and had not been foreseen since Japan became a constitutional state in 1898.

I will begin by examining the provisions of the current Constitution of Japan. In Article 2, it is stipulated that “The Imperial Throne shall be dynastic and succeeded to in accordance with the Imperial House Law passed by the Diet.” The Imperial House Law stipulates in Article 4 only that, “In the event of the demise of the emperor, the heir shall immediately ascend the throne.” This implicitly assumes that succession occurs only on the death of an emperor. Although abdication is not explicitly prohibited, it is safe to say that the law did not permit it. This was also the case under the Constitution of the Empire of Japan.

The current Constitution states that succession to the throne shall be governed by laws passed by the Diet, and this was duly the case with the abdication. However, the fact that the reason for

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the abdication was the emperor's wish raised serious constitutional issues. The Constitution of Japan severely restricts the emperor's official activities and the state affairs that he can conduct. The fear was that the amendment to the law and the abdication, based on the emperor's personal wish, were unconstitutional acts.

However, there was no outcry questioning the emperor's message due to the Japanese people's respect for and trust in the emperor. After all, he had made his way to disaster-stricken areas every time Japan was hit by natural disasters and had continued to stand by the people and encourage them. He had, in other words, imparted a new warmth to his role as a symbol of national unity. This paper is not an examination of the constitutional issue of this abdication. Rather, I would like to give an overview of the legal status of the emperor since the Meiji era, before considering the historical significance of the abdication.

The Constitution of the Empire of Japan and the Constitution of Japan are regarded as two completely different constitutions with distinct legal characteristics. The former established the sovereignty of the emperor, and is considered to be the instigator of militarism, creating strong imperial prerogatives, including that of the emperor as commander-in-chief. The latter, meanwhile, is considered to be a democratic and pacifist constitution based on the sovereignty of the people. To be sure, there are certainly various principled differences between the two constitutions, but we can also point out the continuity that runs through them. One aspect of continuity concerns the status and the functions of the emperor.

This statement of mine demands a great deal of exposition. The Imperial Constitution of Japan stipulated in Article 1 that "The Empire of Japan shall be ruled by the Emperor of Japan for all time and in all lineages," while the Constitution of Japan stipulates in Article 1 that "The Emperor shall be the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power." It is clear that the Imperial Constitution advocated the sovereignty of the emperor, and the Japanese Constitution changed it to establish the sovereignty of the people, making the emperor a non-political symbol.

In spite of this, I would like to argue that there is a commonality in the way the emperor is portrayed by these two constitutions. In brief, both of these constitutions effected the institutionalization of the emperor as a public figure.

The Constitution of the Empire of Japan may seem to have established the emperor as a monarch who ruled the country with autocratic power. However, the emperor was a highly institutionalized presence in the political arena. For the emperor to make political decisions of his own volition was considered something best avoided. The emperor is said to have been rendered sacred as a living god in the Imperial Constitution, but the actual historical background of this is complicated. The "Declaration of Humanity" issued by Emperor Hirohito on January 1, 1946, allegedly denied the emperor such divine status. However, this was also what Ōkubo Toshimichi 大久保利通 (1830–1878), a leading figure in the Meiji Restoration, was seeking. In his famous memorandum of November 1873 suggesting how Japan might move towards the creation of a constitution, Ōkubo argued that the emperor should move away from being worshipped like a god in the inner recesses of the palace, as in the past, and become a human sovereign who would be personally in

charge of the government.<sup>1</sup>

While Ōkubo positioned the emperor as the reigning monarch of the nation, he also demanded of the emperor a strong sense of dignity and self-discipline. In his mind, the emperor was to placate the people and promote their unity. To this end, Ōkubo demanded that the emperor actively appear before the people to gain their support and adulation. It was in realization of Ōkubo's ideas that the capital was moved from Kyoto to Tokyo, where the emperor would reside, that the Meiji emperor embarked on tours throughout Japan, and attended such national events as expositions. It was expected that through such activities the emperor would serve as the focus for national unity.

It was Itō Hirobumi 伊藤博文 (1841–1909), Japan's first prime minister, who created the emperor system by focusing on the emperor's power to unify the nation. Itō is known as the drafter of the Japanese Imperial Constitution, but what role did he expect the emperor to play?

On June 18, 1888, at a meeting of the Privy Council, established to deliberate on the draft of the Constitution, Itō stated, "The axis of our nation is the imperial house alone," and "the power of the sovereign should be respected, and not be constrained."<sup>2</sup> He may have been trying to establish an absolutist state centered on the emperor.

However, with the meeting convened, Itō also stated, "The establishment of a constitution and the implementation of politics is a matter of specifying the sovereign's great authority in the constitution and restricting some parts of it," and declared, "The constitutional government is clearly a matter of restricting the sovereign's authority."<sup>3</sup> How should we understand this?

First of all, there is no doubt that Itō's ideal in the real world of politics was not a politically active emperor. He abhorred the possibility of the national government being influenced by the arbitrary will of the monarch. This is easy to appreciate when one considers his political leadership before and after the constitution was enacted. Prior to the enactment of the Constitution, Itō blocked movements by the emperor's entourage for direct imperial rule, and worked to institutionalize the imperial court.<sup>4</sup> In the actual implementation of the constitution, Itō usually advised the emperor to refrain from intervening in politics, but when the confrontation between the Diet and the government reached an impasse, he asked the emperor to mediate from a neutral standpoint.<sup>5</sup> Itō thought of the constitutional monarch as someone who would not get deeply involved in politics, but neither would he be completely divorced from it.

1 "Rikken seitai ni kansuru ikensho" 立憲政体に関する意見書, Ōkubo Toshimichi 大久保利通, *Ōkubo Toshimichi monjo* 大久保利通文書, vol. 5, Nihon Shiseki Kyōkai, 1928, p. 182. This point had been in Ōkubo's mind from the beginning when he overthrew the Tokugawa shogunate and established a new government ruled by the emperor. In early 1868, immediately after the restoration of the monarchy, Ōkubo planned to relocate the capital to Osaka in the hope that the emperor would be removed from Kyoto, where he was mired in old customs, and that he would become a monarch who would lead the people. See also Ōkubo, *Ōkubo Toshimichi monjo*, vol. 2, 1927, p. 191.

2 *Sūmitsuin kaigi gijiroku* 枢密院会議事録, vol. 1, University of Tokyo Press, 1984, p. 157.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 173.

4 Sakamoto Kazuto 坂本一登, *Itō Hirobumi to Meiji kokka keisei* 伊藤博文と明治国家形成, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1999.

5 Itō Yukio 伊藤之雄, *Rikken kokka no kakuritsu to Itō Hirobumi* 立憲国家の確立と伊藤博文, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1999.

This point can also be made with regard to the exercise of the so-called imperial prerogatives. The Meiji Constitution set forth a truly wide range of exclusive political powers for the emperor from Article 5 to Article 16, but these were to be executed only on the advice and with the approval of his subjects. For example, the appointment of the prime minister was first recommended by a council of elder statesmen called *genrō* 元老. The emperor never once appointed anyone other than their nominee as prime minister. The same was true for the other ministers, and the emperor automatically appointed to the cabinet the men recommended to him by the prime minister.

At first glance, the omnipotent emperor and the constitutionally constrained emperor are contradictory. How can the two be reconciled? In a speech in 1899, Itō said, “A nation is like a piece of cloth wrapped around its land and people. It is represented by the sovereign,” and the word “represent” (*daihyō* 代表) is typically used. However, I choose not to say that the Japanese sovereign “represents” the nation, rather that he “symbolizes” or “expresses” the Japanese nation.<sup>6</sup>

I interpret Itō’s intention here as follows. First of all, he was trying to emphasize the symbolic function of the emperor vis a vis the exterior. This is evident from the fact that, in the quote above, he says that when one nation faces another, it should be as if one individual were facing another, and he asks the sovereign to play the role of such an “individual.”

At the same time, Itō’s request for the “symbolic” function of the emperor may have had another meaning. It may be possible to grasp it in the sense of a “symbol of national unity.” This also points to the real meaning of Itō’s speech at the opening of the Privy Council meeting. In other words, what Itō wanted to emphasize was that the emperor could create laws and stand above them as an omnipotent legislator, precisely because he was a symbol of national unity. In other words, the emperor could be such a sovereign insofar as he was one part of the national community, the *res publica*, composed of the entire nation.<sup>7</sup>

Itō’s call, in the aforementioned statement before the Privy Council, for the imperial house to play the role of an axis that might unite the hearts of the people, as Christianity did in Europe, would support this view. In this way, Itō seems to have attempted to construct a duality in the imperial body, such that he “symbolizes” the absoluteness of the state to the world, while at the same time acting as an organ of the state in the concrete political process.

As described above, with the Meiji Restoration, the emperor was required to change from being a ritualist who served the gods to becoming a monarch as a human being, and his new status was confirmed by the Imperial Constitution. The emperor reigned over the people as an omnipotent sovereign, but his existence was thoroughly institutionalized and embedded in the structure of the state. The emperor became a national institution. Across the three generations of Meiji, Taishō, and Shōwa, each emperor knew his role and practiced it, sometimes stifling their own true feelings in the process. For example, Mutsuhito 睦仁, the Meiji emperor, rejected the award of the Order of the Garter bestowed upon him by the British royal family in 1906. Why did he do so, when the public and private sectors were thrilled at this proof that Japan had become a “developed” country? The official biography of Emperor Meiji tells us the reason: “The emperor was always averse to receiving guests from abroad. He was always reluctant. However, once the time came, he never

6 Takii Kazuhiro 瀧井一博, ed., *Itō Hirobumi enzetsushū* 伊藤博文演説集, Kōdansha Gakujutsubunko, 2011, p. 169.

7 This point recalls the legal maxim *Rex infra et supra legem* (“the king who is both under and above the law”).



showed any displeasure toward the guests.”<sup>8</sup>

Emperor Mutsuhito must have felt the contradiction between the emperor who served the gods in the inner recesses of the Imperial Palace in Kyoto by purifying himself and removing himself from all pollution, and the emperor as a sovereign who symbolized the nation at home and abroad.

Finally, I would like to return to Emperor Akihito’s video message and question its meaning. After the Meiji Restoration, Japan became a centralized nation-state and promoted Western-style modernization. As a symbol of this, the emperor was taken out of the Imperial Palace in Kyoto to appear before the eyes of the people as a monarch. “Symbol of national unity” is the phrasing of the Japanese Constitution enacted after World War II, but the emperor had been such a symbol since the Meiji era, when the Japanese Imperial Constitution was enacted.

If we look at this from the emperor’s point of view, we might say that ever since the Meiji Restoration, the emperor has been the captive of the state constitution. Emperor Akihito’s expression of his “feelings” to the Japanese people can be seen as an appeal to this idea. At the same time, it may be said to signal the end of the current “shape” of Japan, which Japan has fashioned since the Meiji Restoration.

As Kariya Takehiko explains, in the twenty-first century, Japan has no national goal.<sup>9</sup> This is because the sense of catching up with the West—modernization, the goal of the nation until now—has disappeared. In the simple sense of being economically on a par with the West, Japan has already caught up. However, if we view modernity only as a goal to be caught up with, we will overlook the values it encompasses. The Japanese nation and society are now in a state of great uncertainty as a result of losing the goal of modernization and losing sight of the meaning of modernity. How will the country construct a new constitution (the “shape” of the nation) in accord with the changes within and without? Emperor Akihito’s video message raises the issue of how to locate the emperor in this new context.

## 憲法に囚われた天皇

瀧井一博\*

2016年8月8日、当時の明仁天皇は日本国民向けのビデオメッセージを發し、これがきっかけで、2019年4月30日、明仁は現天皇の徳仁に讓位し、元号も平成から令和に変わった。天皇が生前に退位することは、日本が1889年に大日本帝国憲法を制定して立憲国家となって以降、初めてのことだった。この点、明仁による讓位は、立憲秩序への挑戦でもあった。本稿では、

8 *Meiji tenno ki* 明治天皇紀, vol. 11, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1975, p. 492.

9 Kariya Takehiko 荊谷剛彦, *Oitsuita kindai kieta kindai* 追いついた近代消えた近代, Iwanami Shoten, 2019.

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この退位問題を通じて見えてくる明治以降からの日本の国家体制の連続性と  
目下直面しているひずみを考察する。

キーワード：象徴天皇、退位、大日本帝国憲法、伊藤博文

## Royal and Imperial Connections: Japanese Influence at the Court of Bangkok and on the Siamese/Thai Monarchy

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This article investigates Japanese cultural and political influence in the Kingdom of Siam, renamed Thailand in 1939. Early exchanges in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries saw the consumption of Japanese products in the Southeast Asian kingdom as status symbols. Japanese swords in particular were cherished and have become dynastic heirlooms since then. From the late nineteenth century onward, Imperial Japan was seen as a role model of successful modernization in Bangkok and Japanese advisors and instructors were hired by the court. Critics of the absolute monarchy meanwhile stressed that Imperial Japan had become a great power as a constitutional monarchy.

**Keywords:** Siam, Thailand, King Chulalongkorn, modern monarchy, Meiji Constitution

### Introduction

As ritual institutions, monarchies are mosaics of diverse practices, symbols, and beliefs. As individual elements of the institution are continuously replaced, remade, or added over time, the apparent symbols of continuity in an ever-changing world reveal themselves to be rather dynamic institutions upon closer inspection. The nineteenth century was one especially active phase of reinventing monarchies around the globe. At risk of being swept away by the modern political and economic revolutions, monarchies were recast to serve as beacons of stability for new social orders in a world of nation-states, parliamentary governments, and the primacy of capital. This occurred in a truly transnational setting, in which new national practices and symbols were rapidly diffused across borders, creating internationally recognizable modern monarchies of royal nations.<sup>1</sup> This process was not limited to Europe, as other monarchs borrowed freely from European practices, habits, and ideas to present themselves simultaneously as equals of their royal peers and betters of their

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1 Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Traditions*, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 1–14; Charlotte Backerra, Milinda Banerjee, and Cathleen Sarti, "The Royal Nation in Global Perspective," in *Transnational Histories of the "Royal Nation"*, M. Banerjee, C. Backerra, and C. Sarti, eds., Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, pp. 1–17.



subjects. They meant to become much more similar to European royalty than ever before while remaining distinctively authentic to their respective national audiences, even though the latter involved a considerable degree of invention and reinterpretation. Takashi Fujitani and Maurizio Peleggi have shown this for the modern Japanese and Siamese monarchies respectively in their seminal studies.<sup>2</sup>

It is well known that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries across the colonial and semi-colonial world, Meiji Japan became an inspiration and role model. Anticolonial nationalists and political reformers studied the East Asian Empire through publications as well as by visiting Japan or acquiring an education there. By the end of the Meiji period, Japan had gained full sovereignty through the renegotiation of the unequal treaties signed with the colonial powers. The Anglo-Japanese Alliance signed in 1902 further demonstrated that Japan had become recognized as a great military power. And through the acquisition of Taiwan and Korea after the First Sino-Japanese and the Russo-Japanese War respectively, Japan had become a colonial power in its own right. What made the Japanese exemplar so attractive was that Japan's ascent to a great power had undeniably proven that progress and power were not limited to the "White" and Christian West. But the Japanese exemplar also demonstrated that self-government and constitutionalism were possible outside Europe and North America. What has received much less recognition is that the modern Japanese monarchy created after the Meiji Restoration became a role model in its own right, as will be shown here for the case of Siam. It exemplified the overall success of Imperial Japan to borrow selectively from Europe to become modern without losing its apparent national authenticity. At the same time, the imperial institution of Japan was seen as a crucial force behind Japanese social progress. By successfully tying together state and nation, it allowed for the harvesting and channeling of the people's collective energies for the pursuit of "progress" and military victories. This article traces the Japanese influence at the court of Bangkok and on the modern monarchy of Siam, renamed Thailand in 1939, from the sixteenth century onward, and examines its lasting influence in the Southeast Asian kingdom.

### Early Japanese-Siamese Relations and Court Culture

Modern Japanese-Thai relations can be traced to the Declaration of Amity and Commerce between Japan and Siam of 1887. Direct exchanges between the Kingdom of Siam with its former capital of Ayutthaya and the Japanese islands can however be traced to the sixteenth century, when improvements in shipbuilding and navigation allowed merchants to outfit ships for the journey between East and Southeast Asia.<sup>3</sup> These exchanges would influence Siamese court culture until the nineteenth century.

The Portuguese were the first to document the arrival of a Siamese junk in Japan in 1563,

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2 Takashi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan*, University of California Press, 1998; Maurizio Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image*, University of Hawai'i Press, 2002.

3 Iwao Sei'ichi 岩生成一, *Nanyō Nihon machi no kenkyū* 南洋日本町の研究, Nan'a Bunka Kenkyūjo, 1940, pp. 118–119.

likely not the first one.<sup>4</sup> A Japanese ship traveling to Ayutthaya was first recorded by the Spanish in the Philippines. In the summer of 1589, the vessel was blown off course and arrived in Manila, where the Spanish bought its cargo of swords, guns, and other weapons.<sup>5</sup> Four years later, the Siamese chronicles report five hundred Japanese mercenaries fighting for King Naresuan (1555/6–1605, r. 1590–1605), who was battling Burmese invaders.<sup>6</sup> The Siamese king is said to have used a Japanese sword during his campaigns, which has since become one of the so-called eight weapons of sovereignty of which the king takes possession during coronation ceremonies.<sup>7</sup> The current sword is, however, likely a replica. In the early seventeenth century, letters were exchanged between the courts of Ayutthaya and Edo and several Siamese missions visited Japan.<sup>8</sup> This diplomatic intercourse ceded in the 1630s. But trade relations resumed in 1661 and flourished during the next decades.<sup>9</sup> French missionaries and envoys visiting the kingdom towards the end of the century wrote about a royal warehouse filled with “beautiful Japanese sabers,” which were gifted by the king to officers as signs of royal favor.<sup>10</sup>

The royal capital of Ayutthaya was destroyed by Burmese invaders in 1767. A new kingdom with its capital in Bangkok was established in 1782 by the founder of the reigning Chakri dynasty. One of the most important royal temples in the capital is Wat Phra Chetuphon near the old palace. It was extensively renovated in the early nineteenth century. At that time, murals of various peoples of the world described in poems were added. The description of the Japanese mentions their beautiful swords.<sup>11</sup> It was not much later, in the reign of King Mongkut (1804–1868, r. 1851–1868), that Siam began to sign the unequal treaties reducing its sovereignty.<sup>12</sup> The king himself gifted John Bowring (1792–1872), the British envoy who negotiated the Bowring Treaty (1855), a Japanese-style sword.<sup>13</sup> A high-ranking noble meanwhile asked the envoy to buy a sword for him

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4 Luis Frois, *Die Geschichte Japans (1549–1578): Nach der Handschrift der Ajudabibliothek in Lissabon. Übersetzt und kommentiert von G. Schurhammer und E. A. Voretzsch*, Verlag der Asia Major, 1926, p. 190.

5 Gaspar de Ayala, Letter from Gaspar de Ayala to Felipe II (July 15, 1589), in *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1898, Volume 7: 1588–1591*, E. H. Blair and J. A. A. Robertson, eds., Arthur H. Clark Company, 1903, p. 126.

6 Richard D. Cushman, *The Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya*, Siam Society, 2000, p. 128.

7 Horace Geoffrey Quaritch Wales, *Siamese State Ceremonies: Their History and Function*, Bernard Quaritch Limited, 1931, pp. 106–107.

8 Ernest Mason Satow, “Notes on the Intercourse between Japan and Siam in the Seventeenth Century,” *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, vol. 13, no. 2, 1885, pp. 139–210.

9 Iwao Seiichi, “Reopening of the Diplomatic and Commercial Relations between Japan and Siam during the Tokugawa Period,” in *Acta Asiatica*, vol. 4, 1963, pp. 1–31.

10 Nicholas Gervaise, *Histoire naturelle et politique du Royaume de Siam*, Pierre le Mercier, 1688, p. 295; François-Timoléon de Choisy, *Journal du voyage de Siam fait en M. DC. LXXXV. et M. DC. LXXXV*, Sebastien Mabre-Cramoisy, 1687, p. 276.

11 Prince Dhani Nivat, “The Inscriptions of Wat Phra Jetubon,” *Journal of the Siam Society*, vol. 26, no. 2, 1933, pp. 143–170.

12 For the concept of semi-coloniality, see Jürgen Osterhammel, “Semi-Colonialism and Informal Empire in Twentieth Century-China: Towards a Framework of Analysis,” in *Imperialism and After Continuities and Discontinuities*, W. J. Mommsen, ed., Allen & Unwin, 1986, pp. 290–314.

13 King Mongkut, *The Writings of King Monkut to Sir John Bowring (A.D. 1855–1868)*, W. Pongsripijan and T. Nuchipan, eds., The Historical Commission of the Prime Minister’s Secretariat, 1994, p. 33.

in Japan when he learned that the British were to sail there.<sup>14</sup>

With the modernization of the Siamese military under King Mongkut's son and successor King Chulalongkorn (Rama V, 1853–1910, r. 1868–1910), Japanese swords lost their appeal. In photos and paintings, the king is either shown with the Khmer-style Sword of Victory (Phra saeng khan chaiyasi พระแสงขรรค์ชัยศรี) or a European court sword. But the king also identified a Japanese sword favored by the dynasty's founder that had been passed down to him as a dynastic treasure.<sup>15</sup> Both King Vajiravudh (Rama VI, 1881–1925, r. 1910–1925) and King Prajadhipok (Rama VII, 1893–1941, r. 1925–1935) were photographed with a Japanese sword, possibly this dynastic heirloom.<sup>16</sup> The sword played a role in the coronation ceremonies of King Chulalongkorn's successors Prajadhipok and the present ruler, King Vajiralongkorn (Rama X, b. 1952, r. since 2019).<sup>17</sup>

The Siamese court's appreciation of Japanese craftsmanship was not limited to weapons. Indeed, the abovementioned temple mural refers to the Japanese as excellent craftsmen.<sup>18</sup> Japanese porcelain, furniture, silk, and items made from gold or silver were noted by the French visitors to the court in the late seventeenth century and often gifted to them as presents.<sup>19</sup> European visitors in the nineteenth century still observed that the Siamese aristocracy appreciated Japanese lacquer and China ware.<sup>20</sup> Japanese food was also already appreciated at the court at the time of the French missions to the court of Ayutthaya in the late seventeenth century.<sup>21</sup> As late as the early nineteenth century, a poem attributed to King Phraphutthaloetra Naphalai (Rama II, 1768–1824, r. 1809–1824) praised “Japanese fish sauce,” possibly soy sauce.<sup>22</sup>

From the mid-nineteenth century onward, European goods and consumption practices became the new standard of refinement at the Siamese court. But as a memoir shows, the arrival of a new shipment of Japanese tableware in a Bangkok store still caused excitement among the

14 Sir John Bowring, *The Kingdom of and People of Siam*, John W. Parker and Sons, 1857, p. 332.

15 Naruemon Buntaeng นฤมล บุญแต่ง, “Phrasaeng dap fak thong kliang” พระแสงดาบฝักทองเกลี้ยง, *Daily News*, January 17, 2017, <https://d.dailynews.co.th/crime/16450/> (accessed April 30, 2022).

16 Saimai Chopkonsuek สายไหม จบกมลศึก et al., eds., *Phraratchaphithi Boromratchaphisek พระราชพิธีบรมราชาภิเษก*, Ministry of Culture, 2017, p. 102.

17 Ibid, pp. 93, 94. Saimai Chopkonsuek สายไหม จบกมลศึก et al., eds., *Phraratchaphithi Boromratchaphisek พระราชพิธีบรมราชาภิเษก*, Ministry of Culture, 2017, pp. 92–95; “Maikamnotkan sadetphraratchadamnoen liap phranakhon doi khabuan phayu-yattra thang chonmak nueangnai phraratchaphithi boromratchaphisek P. S. 2562” หมายกำหนดการเสด็จพระราชดำเนินเลียบพระนครโดยขบวนพยุหยาตราทางชลมารคเนื่องในพระราชพิธีบรมราชาภิเษกพุทธศักราช ๒๕๖๒, *Royal Gazette*, vol. 137, no. 3, 3kh, January 16, 2019, 33/2562 ราชกิจจานุเบกษา เล่ม ๑๓๗ ตอนที่ ๓ ข ๑๖ มกราคม ๒๕๖๓, ที่ ๓๓/๒๕๖๒.

18 Prince Dhani Nivat, “The Inscriptions of Wat Phra Jetubon.”

19 François-Timoléon de Choisy, *Journal du voyage de Siam*, pp. 192, 224, 226, 250, 256, 274, 276, 286, 287, 298.

20 Graf Friedrich Albrecht zu Eulenburg, *Ost-Asien 1860–1862 in Briefen des Grafen Fritz zu Eulenburg*, Graf Philipp zu Eulenburg-Hertefeld, ed., Mittler, 1900, p. 349.

21 François-Timoléon de Choisy, *Journal du voyage de Siam*, pp. 221, 227.

22 Chomnard Setisarn ชมนาด ศีตีสาร์ and Voravudhi Chirasombutti วรุฒิ จิราสมบัติ, *Wiwatthanakan aban Yipun nai prathet Thai* วัฒนธรรมอาหารญี่ปุ่นในประเทศไทย, Department of East Asian Languages, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, 2005, p. 27.



women of the palace in the early twentieth century.<sup>23</sup> The highest-ranking queen of King Chulalongkorn, Queen Saovabha Phongsri (1878–1919), was especially fond of Japan and wished to visit in 1910. The travel plans had already advanced when they were aborted after the death of Emperor Meiji.<sup>24</sup> According to her British physician, she had a “small paper-built Japanese house” erected in her Bangkok palace.<sup>25</sup>

## Japanese Lessons for the Absolute Monarchy

When King Chulalongkorn (1853–1910) ascended the throne in 1868, the Kingdom of Siam found itself already between British and French colonial possessions and its sovereignty limited by unequal treaties. The independence of a rump kingdom in the Chao Phraya River basin was only guaranteed in 1896 with the Declaration between Great Britain and France with Regard to the Kingdom of Siam. But to regain jurisdiction over colonial protégées, King Chulalongkorn was forced to make territorial concessions to the colonial powers until 1909. The kingdom would only gain full sovereignty in 1938 after the constitutional revolution of 1932.

Against this background, King Chulalongkorn began to assert his authority over the loosely integrated realm and its entrenched nobility, while simultaneously working to prevent further colonial encroachment. To do so, the king and his collaborators built a modern, centralized bureaucracy, a modern army, and embarked on instilling a sense of nationhood coupled with loyalty to the Buddhist monarchy in his multiethnic subjects. Princes were sent to Europe to acquire the necessary knowledge for these reforms, while the administration of surrounding colonial states were studied as concrete case studies. The kingdom’s reading public meanwhile learned through the circulation of the colonial press as well as the first Siamese newspapers that in Japan similar reforms as in Siam were taking place, alas at a faster pace.<sup>26</sup>

According to the diary of the medical missionary Dan Beach Bradley (1804–1873), Imperial Japan was first referred to as a role model for Siam as early as 1873. In that year, the Siamese minister of foreign affairs mentioned to him that “some thorough system of education in Siam after the example of Japan” had to be established.<sup>27</sup> Three years later, King Chulalongkorn met the first Japanese envoys to Siam and briefly chatted with them about the difficulties of administrative reforms.<sup>28</sup> King Chulalongkorn acted for the first time upon the notion that Siam could learn from Japan shortly after the signing of the Declaration of Amity and Commerce between both countries in 1887, which today marks the beginning of modern, formal diplomatic relations. In the spring

23 Momluang Nueang Ninrat ม.ล. เนื่อง นิลรัตน์, *Chivit nai wang* ชีวิตในวัง, Jamsai, 1994, p. 85.

24 Thai National Archives GT 7.4/5, Somdet Phrarachini phanpi luang cha praphat Yipun (1911–1912) กต.๗.๔/๕ สมเด็จพระราชินีพันปีหลวงจะประพาสญี่ปุ่น (พ.ศ. ๒๔๕๔-๒๔๕๕).

25 Malcolm Smith, *A Physician at the Court of Siam*, Oxford University Press, 1982, p. 106.

26 David M. Malitz, “‘What Is Good about the Japanese System of Governance?’ — The Reception of Imperial Japanese Parliamentarism in Siamese/Thai Political Thought (1880s–1940s),” *The International History Review*, 2022, pp. 2–3, doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2022.2113552.

27 Dan B. Bradley, *Abstract of the Journal of Rev. Dan Beach Bradley, M.D., Medical Missionary in Siam, 1835–1873*, Multigraph Dept. of the Pilgrim Church, 1936, p. 305.

28 Ōtori Keisuke 大鳥圭介, *Shamu kikō* 暹羅紀行, Kōbushō, 1875, pp. 43–46.

of 1888, an official from the Department of Education was dispatched to Japan, where he was to prepare a detailed study of the country's system of education. His report, as well as a second report dated 1903, do not appear to have had a discernable impact, however.<sup>29</sup>

What is clear is that while King Chulalongkorn was interested in learning about specific institutional reform in Imperial Japan, he did not consider the country as offering a general blueprint for reform to take place in Siam. In 1885 he rejected a memorandum written by princes and nobles serving as diplomats or studying in Europe, which proposed the promulgation of a constitution. Japan, where a constitution had been promised in 1881, was explicitly mentioned as a role model in the text. Yet, for King Chulalongkorn, constitutional government was unsuitable for his kingdom, at least for the time being.<sup>30</sup>

A decade later, Japan's victory over Qing China and the renegotiation of the unequal treaties deepened interest in the country at the Bangkok court. In April 1895 the courtly magazine *Wachirayan* published a long article about the Japanese monarchy, which was described as an absolute monarchy. This was factually incorrect given the proclamation of the Meiji Constitution in 1889. The article discussed the emperor, his family, the Imperial Household Ministry, the court's budget, but also the creation of the modern Japanese peerage system.<sup>31</sup> The next year, the magazine published an analysis of the Japanese victory over Qing China, which had not been expected. The author argued that the emperor had personally led the military efforts from his headquarters that had been moved to Hiroshima, closer to the actual fighting. Furthermore, what differentiated the Japanese from the Chinese emperor was that he was of the same nationality as his subjects, resulting in a close relationship.<sup>32</sup> In essence, Emperor Meiji was interpreted in these articles in a way that justified the Siamese royal project to build a national dynasty and an absolute monarchy around King Chulalongkorn.

It was in the context of the Japanese military victory that what is likely the first concrete adaptation of a Japanese practice by the Bangkok court occurred. Army chief Prince Bhanurangsi (1859–1928) had observed the graduation ceremony of the Japanese military academy, in which the emperor personally handed the certificates to the new officers, when visiting Japan in 1890. This was adopted in Siam in 1896 as the academy's "annual festival" to foster a direct bond between the king and his officers. The annual festival with the graduation ceremony still continues. Since the reign of King Prajadhipok, however, the new officers receive a sword from their monarch.<sup>33</sup> Prince Bhanurangsi visited Japan again in 1906. There he observed celebrations of the Japanese victory over Russia and greatly cherished the officers' loyalty towards the emperor. Chinese cadets

29 David K. Wyatt, *The Politics of Reform in Thailand: Education in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn*, Yale University Press, 1969, pp. 137, 160, 331, 342.

30 Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand*, Cambridge University Press, 2014, pp. 75–76.

31 Chaomuen Sisonrak เจ้าหมื่นศรีศรีรักษา, "Lamdap wong khong phrachao phaendin lae ratchatrakun nai prathet krung Yipun lamdap wong khong phrachao phaendin lae ratchatrakun nai prathet krung Yipun" ลำดับวงศ์ของพระเจ้าแผ่นดินแลราชตระกูลในประเทศไทยกรุงยี่ปุ่น, *Wachirayan* วชิรญาณ, April 1895, pp. 680–690.

32 Phraongchao Rachani Chaemcharat พระองค์เจ้ารัชนี้แจ่มจรัส, "Tham mai Chin chueng phae Yipun" ทำไมจีนจึงแพ้ยี่ปุ่น, *Wachirayan*, no. 15, January 1896, pp. 1511–1525.

33 Thep Buntanon เทพ บุญตานนท์, *Thaban khong phraracha kap kan sang sammuek haeng sattha lae phakdi* ทหารของพระราชากับการสร้างสำนักแห่งศรัทธาและภักดี, Matichon, 2022, pp. 49, 142.

in contrast did not exemplify this virtue, which, for him, was a crucial characteristic of military officers.<sup>34</sup> After the war King Chulalongkorn bought torpedo boats and destroyers in Japan and had a small number of cadets trained in the country.<sup>35</sup>

In 1898 both countries concluded the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation, which set the stage for the opening of embassies in the two capitals. It also granted Japan consular jurisdiction in Siam, despite Japan having just overcome this limitation of its sovereignty itself very recently. Also negotiated was that consular jurisdiction would lapse with the conclusion of the codification of Siamese law, and that this process was to be supported by a Japanese legal adviser.<sup>36</sup> The *Penal Code of the Kingdom of Siam* of 1908 would then also explicitly mention the role model of Japan in its introduction.<sup>37</sup>

Towards the end of his reign, King Chulalongkorn revisited the need for a modern and universal system of education. In this context, he ordered the drafting of a royal declaration modeled after the Japanese Imperial Rescript on Education to convince the public of the necessity of public schools, the introduction of fees for them, but likely also to shore up support for the absolute monarchy at a time when criticism of the slow pace of political reforms had become more frequent. The resulting Royal Edict on Siamese Education was promulgated on August 23, 1910.<sup>38</sup>

Since the end of King Chulalongkorn's reign, political reforms on the municipal level were discussed in Siam. Japan was seen as a model in this regard, and so King Prajadhipok ordered a translation of the Japanese law on municipal organization. However, no concrete proposal had been developed at the time of the Siamese revolution of 1932.<sup>39</sup>

34 Thai National Archives, R.5/98 *Raingan Krommuen Nakhon Chaisi sadet truatkan thahan prathet Chin lae Yipun (July 25, 1906 – February 6, 1907)* ร.๕/๙๘ รายงานกรมหมื่นนครไชยศรีเสด็จตรวจการทหารประเทศจีนแลญี่ปุ่น (๒๕ กค – ๖ กพ ๑๒๕).

35 Phraya Hanklangsamut พระยาหาญกลางสมุทร, “Prawat (sangkhap) khong rongrian nairuea P. S. 2441 thueng 2475” ประวัติ (สังเขป) ของโรงเรียนนายเรือ พ.ศ. ๒๔๔๑ ถึง ๒๔๗๕, in *Anuson nai ngan phraratchathan phloeng sop Phonrueatri Phraya Hanklangsamut (Bunmi Phanthumanawin) na chapanasathan khong kong thap ruea Wat Khrueawanworawihan wan chan thi 1 karakadakhom 2517* อนุสรณ์ในงานพระราชทานเพลิงศพ พลเรือตรี พระยาหาญกลางสมุทร (บุญมี พันธมนาวิน) ณ ฌาปนสถานของกองทัพเรือ วัดเครือวัลย์วรวิหาร วันจันทร์ที่ ๑ กรกฎาคม ๒๕๑๗, Naval Press, 1974, pp. 27–29; Kong Prawattisat Thahan Ruea กองประวัติศาสตร์ทหารเรือ, “Prawat rueurop Thai yuk ruea konfai” ประวัติเรือรบไทยยุคเรือกลไฟ, in *Prawat sathanthi rachakan thahan ruea lae prawat rueurop thai yuk ruea konfai phim pen anuson nai ngan prachumphloeng sop nang Chanthara Phonphatphichan 15 phruetsachikayon P. S. 2509* ประวัติสถานที่ราชการทหารเรือ และประวัติเรือรบไทยยุคเรือกลไฟ พิมพ์เป็นอนุสรณ์ในงานประชุมเพลิงศพ นางจันทร์ พลภัทรพิจารณ์ ๑๕ พฤศจิกายน พ.ศ. ๒๕๐๙, Naval Press, 1966, pp. 50–54.

36 Ishii Yoneo 石井米雄 and Yoshikawa Toshiharu 吉川利治, *Nichi-Tai kōryū roppyaku-nen shi* 日・タイ交流 600 年史, Kōdansha, 1987, pp. 129–130.

37 *Kotmai laksana aya Rattanakosin Sok 127 (1908)* กฎหมายลักษณะอาญารัตนโกสินทรศก 127, Khana Nitisat Chulalongkorn Mahawithayalai, 2010, pp. 4–5.

38 King Chulalongkorn พระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว, “Phrarachahatthalekha wa duai phrarachobai kiao kap kansueksa khong chat” พระราชหัตถเลขาว่าด้วยพระราโชบายเกี่ยวกับการศึกษาของชาติ, *Warasan sinlapakon* วารสารศิลปากร, vol. 3, no. 3, 1949, pp. 10–11; David K. Wyatt, *The Politics of Reform in Thailand*, pp. 364–366.

39 Murashima Eiji 村嶋英治, *Pibūn: Dokuritsu Tai ōkoku no rikken kakumei* ปีบูน : 独立タイ王国の立憲革命, Iwanami Shoten, 1996, pp. 65–67, 80–85.



## Japanese Servants of the Siamese Crown

The adviser chosen by the Japanese government to support the codification of the penal code was the Ehime-born Masao Tōkichi 政尾藤吉 (1870–1921). As a lawyer who had graduated from Yale, and former editor of the English-language *Japan Times*, he had the necessary legal and linguistic qualifications. In Bangkok, he worked closely with Minister of Justice Prince Rabi Badhanasakdi (1874–1920), and additionally served as a judge at the highest court of the kingdom. The introduction to the code explicitly referred to Japan as a role model. Masao began to work with French advisers on the Civil Code but resigned in 1913, as he disagreed with their proposal to include polygyny in the code. The year before he had received the second highest noble rank of *phraya*.<sup>40</sup> He briefly served as Japanese ambassador to Siam in 1920, but died after only six months in the post.<sup>41</sup> He received a royal cremation, with King Vajiravudh personally lighting the funeral pyre.<sup>42</sup>

Masao had not been the first Japanese hired by King Chulalongkorn's government. In line with the continuing appreciation for Japanese crafts, one painter and two sculptors had been hired already in 1891. In 1898, a Japanese cartographer joined them.<sup>43</sup> All of them served several years in Siam. Tsuruharu Kenzaburō from the Tokyo School of Fine Arts in contrast stayed only very briefly in Siam, where he arrived in 1910. His hiring is nevertheless noteworthy, as he was specifically appointed to gild a copy of the Buddha image Phra Buddha Chinnarat from the Northern Siamese city of Phitsanulok, one of the most famous and sacred images in the kingdom. King Chulalongkorn specifically requested a Japanese artist for the task.<sup>44</sup>

The 1898 treaty between Japan and Siam also allowed for the establishment of embassies in Bangkok and Tokyo. Japan's first ambassador to Siam was the Hirado-born and Cambridge-educated Inagaki Manjirō 稲垣満次郎 (1861–1908). He proposed that the Siamese government promote sericulture in Eastern Siam to strengthen the country against colonial aggressions.<sup>45</sup> In 1901, after an initial tour by two Japanese sericulture experts, agricultural scientist Toyama Kametarō 外山亀太郎 (1867–1918) was hired. His report resulted in the official foundation of a Sericulture Department within the Ministry of Agriculture, which was headed by a son of King Chulalongkorn, Prince Phenphatthanaphong (1884–1909), who had studied agricultural science in Great Britain. His department hired not only Toyama, who remained for only two more years due to ill health, but also several Japanese instructors, the last of whom stayed until 1912. The

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40 Kagawa Kōzō 香川孝三, "Masao Tōkichi den (1): Hōritsu bunya de no kokusai kyōryoku no senkusha" 政尾藤吉伝 (1): 法律分野での国際協力の先駆者, *Kokusai kyōryoku ronshū* 国際協力論集, vol. 8, no. 3, 2011, pp. 39–66; Kagawa Kōzō, "Masao Tōkichi den (2): Hōritsu bunya de no kokusai kyōryoku no senkusha," *Kokusai kyōryoku ronshū*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2001, pp. 39–68; Tamara Loos, *Subject Siam: Family, Law, and Colonial Modernity in Thailand*, Silkworm Books, 2002, p. 67.

41 Ishii and Yoshikawa, *Nichi-Tai kōryū roppyaku-nen shi*, pp. 157–163.

42 "The Late Dr. Masao," *Siam Observer*, August 22, 1920, p. 4, and August 25, 1921, p. 5.

43 Ishii and Yoshikawa, *Nichi-Tai kōryū roppyaku-nen shi*, p. 151.

44 Maurizio Peleggi, *Lords of Things*, p. 189.

45 Ishii and Yoshikawa, *Nichi-Tai kōryū roppyaku-nen shi*, p. 179.

government ended its support only one year later, likely due to the lack of tangible results.<sup>46</sup>

Among the Japanese hired by the government of King Chulalongkorn to support the reforms taking place in the kingdom, Yasui Tetsu 安井哲 (1870–1945) stands out as the only woman. Today, she is most famous as a pioneer of female education in Imperial Japan. She served as the first dean of Tokyo Women’s Christian University, which was founded in 1918. From 1923, she was the university’s second president following Nitobe Inazō 新渡戸稲造 (1862–1933). Long before that, in 1902, she was hired as the first principal of Rongrian Rachini, the Queen’s School, founded to offer a modern education for the daughters of the royal family and nobility. The idea to hire a Japanese appears to have been first advanced by Crown Prince Vajiravudh. Returning from his studies in Great Britain he had stopped over in Japan, touring the country for six weeks to visit schools and other places. His father reacted positively to this idea, apparently, because he “preferred Eastern teachers” for the ladies of the court.<sup>47</sup> His own Anglo-Indian teacher’s publication of a sensationalist story of her time in Bangkok, which included obvious falsehoods, might have contributed to this decision.<sup>48</sup> Yasui had been trained as a teacher in Japan and had then been selected by the Japanese government to further her studies in Cambridge. That she was selected for the task in Siam, however, was likely due to her conversion to Christianity in Great Britain, which displeased the Ministry of Education. Yasui was a dedicated educator, who left a lasting impression on her students and is still remembered today at the Queen’s School.<sup>49</sup>

In 1902, Queen Savang Vadhana (1862–1955), a consort of King Chulalongkorn, founded a hospital in Sriratcha, on the coast east of Bangkok. Today, the fact that Japanese doctors were hired for the hospital is forgotten.<sup>50</sup> Yet at the time, they were also recognized by the foreign community in Bangkok, as the hospital became the only Siamese equivalent of a colonial “hill-station,” where one could escape the capital’s climate.<sup>51</sup>

46 Ishii and Yoshikawa, *Nichi-Tai kōryū roppyaku-nen shi*, pp. 180–191; Ian Brown, *The Élite and Economy in Siam c. 1890–1920*, Oxford University Press, 1988, pp. 158–164.

47 Aoyama Nao 青山なを, *Yasui Tetsu-den: Denki, Yasui Tetsu 安井てつ伝: 伝記・安井てつ*, Ōzorasha, 1990, p. 104.

48 Anna Harriette Leonowens, *The Romance of the Harem*, University Press of Virginia, 1991, and Anna Harriette Leonowens, *The English Governess at the Siamese Court: Being Recollections of Six Years in the Royal Palace at Bangkok*, Oxford University Press, 1988.

49 Aoyama Nao, *Yasui Tetsu-den*, p. 105; Ishii and Yoshikawa, *Nichi-Tai kōryū roppyaku-nen shi*, pp. 163–176.

50 Yaninie Phaithayawat ญาณินี ไพทยวัฒน์, “Panha nai gan prab dua su rabib ratchakan samai mai kong Khunang kharatcha ‘boriphan’ tam jarit baeb gao kong Sayam: Gorani sueksa Chaopraya Surasakmontri (P.S. 2420–2453)” ปัญหาในการปรับตัวสู่ระบบราชการสมัยใหม่ของขุนนาง ‘ข้าราชการบริพาร’ ตามจารีตแบบเก่าของสยาม: กรณีศึกษาเจ้าพระยาสุรศักดิ์มนตรี (พ.ศ. 2420–2453), *Warasan Prawatisart*, vol. 46 (2021), pp. 29–48, 45; “Shamu-koku to Fujii-shi” 暹羅国と藤井氏, *Ikai jijō 医海事情*, no. 560, March 11, 1905, p. 248; Dōjinkai 同仁会, *Dōjinkai yonjūnen-shi 同仁会四十年史*, Dōjinkai, 1943, p. 15.

51 Arnold Wright and Oliver T. Breakspear, *Twentieth Century Impressions of Siam: Its History, People, Commerce, Industries, and Resources, with Which Is Incorporated an Abridged Edition of Twentieth Century Impressions of British Malaya*, Lloyd’s Greater Britain Publishing, 1908, p. 179.

## Constitutional Lessons

King Chulalongkorn had expressed his “envy” of the faster progress taking place in Japan in a letter to his Belgian general adviser Rolin-Jacquemyns in 1898.<sup>52</sup> At that time, even Western diplomats raised the Japanese exemplar at the court.<sup>53</sup> The Russo-Japanese War had been followed with great interest in Siam. Even far to the north from the capital, a traveling retired German officer was quizzed by the local governor about the war.<sup>54</sup> Just like critics of political stagnation in other semi-colonial monarchies, the first critical publishers in Bangkok linked Japanese victories on the battlefield to the empire’s constitutional government and parliament. (Siamese journalists would continue to pursue this line of argument until the Siamese revolution of June 24, 1932, which would finally usher in a constitutional monarchy in the Southeast Asian kingdom.)<sup>55</sup> Even more disturbingly, conspirators planning to assassinate King Chulalongkorn’s successor, King Vajiravudh, and establish a constitutional monarchy in 1912, explicitly referred to Japan and the Japanese emperor as models for Siam.<sup>56</sup> King Vajiravudh, often writing under a pen name, as well as his brother and successor King Prajadhipok, would now argue that Siam should not follow the Japanese exemplar too closely, as rapid change would cause social unrest and would thus endanger the nation.<sup>57</sup>

However, at this time, the institutions of a modern state had largely been assembled, while funding for new hires and promotions became increasingly scarce. Probably even more important for the Britain-educated kings was that after World War I, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance gave way to an Anglo-Japanese rivalry in East Asia. Economically closely integrated into the British empire, Siam naturally sided with the British rather than the Japanese Empire. There were also concerns about Japan’s imperial ambitions in Southeast Asia, especially after the acquisition of Germany’s colonial possessions in China and the Pacific.

Nevertheless, attempts to selectively borrow from Japan continued. Writing under a pen name, King Vajiravudh had credited the Japanese *genrō*, the political oligarchs of the Meiji period, who he understood as wise and loyal elder statesmen, for having been crucial to Japanese success.<sup>58</sup> His brother and successor King Prajadhipok then founded upon his ascension to the throne the

52 Walter E. J. Tips, *Gustave Rolin-Jacquemyns (Chao Phraya Aphai Raja) and the Belgian Advisers in Siam (1892–1902)*, White Lotus Books, 1992, p. 218.

53 Benjamin A. Batson, “American Diplomats in Southeast Asia in the Nineteenth Century: The Case of Siam,” *Journal of the Siam Society*, vol. 64, no. 2, 1976, pp. 39–111.

54 Rudolf Bode, *Reiseerinnerungen an und Erlebnisse aus Siam 1904*, Wiener Verlag, 1906, p. 13.

55 David M. Malitz, “What Is Good about the Japanese System of Governance?,” pp. 3–6.

56 Rian Sichan เจริญ ศรีจันทร์ and Net Phunwivatthanon เนตร พูนวิวัฒน์, *Patiwat R. S. 130 ปกิวิติ ร. ศ. ๑๓๐*, Matichon, 2013, pp. 246–252.

57 Asvabahu, “Japan for Example,” in *A Siam Miscellany*, Siam Observer Printing Office, 1912, pp. 49–76; Asvabahu, “Clogs on Our Wheels,” *Siam Observer*, April 21, 1915, p. 4; King Prajadhipok, “Kham nam” คำนำ, in *Phraratchadamrat nai Phrabatsomdet Phrachulachomklao Chaoyuhua song thalaeng phraborom rachathibai kaekhai kan pokkhrong phaendin พระราชดำรัสในพระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว ทรงแถลงพระบรมราชาธิบายแก้ไขการปกครองแผ่นดิน*, Rongphim Sophon Phiphatthanakon, 1927, pp. 1–4.

58 Asvabahu, “Japan for Example.”



Supreme Council of State. To this he appointed senior—in both rank and age—princes to advise him. This council is said to have been consciously modeled on the *genrō* of Japan.<sup>59</sup> The Great Depression hit export-oriented Siam hard. When it hit, Siam had already been stagnating and political reforms were not forthcoming. King Prajadhipok initiated a policy of austerity but decided to insulate his relatives from its ramifications. Junior soldiers and bureaucrats studying in Europe had already in 1927 founded the clandestine People's Party to plan for the overthrow of the absolute monarchy. Now they were able to recruit high-ranking officers, who had lost faith in the ancient regime. On June 24, 1932, the People's Party under Phraya Phahon Phonphayusena (1887–1947) took power in a bloodless coup d'état. Phahon had been educated in Imperial Germany, where he met Tōjō Hideki 東條英機 (1884–1948). But he had also been briefly seconded to the Imperial Army in 1920 for study purposes. There he was told that he looked like restoration leader Saigō Takamori 西郷隆盛 (1828–1877) and therefore was prone to likewise become a great revolutionary.<sup>60</sup>

The leader of the civilian wing of the People's Party, French-educated jurist Pridi Banomyong (1900–1983), had drafted a constitution that King Prajadhipok promulgated after adding “provisional” to the document's title. Both the royal family and conservative members of the People's Party were unhappy with this first Siamese Constitution due to its omitting the customary honorific language for the monarch and for reducing him to a mere figurehead. As the revolutionaries were also wary of being attacked as self-serving, of an intervention by the colonial powers on behalf of the royal family, and also because they were well aware that they needed the support of senior bureaucrats to effectively govern the kingdom, the drafting of a new constitution was agreed upon.<sup>61</sup> Siam's or Thailand's first “permanent” constitution promulgated in December 1932 was drafted following the study of several constitutions of constitutional monarchies, including the Meiji Constitution. But the constitution of the Great Japanese Empire was also discussed as an exemplar by the Siamese public. While it had been critics of the absolute monarchy who had referred to Imperial Japan before the revolution, it was now conservatives who embraced the Japanese constitution for its imperial prerogatives. A lasting heritage of the Bangkok monarchy with this engagement with Imperial Japan is the adoption of Article 3 of the Meiji Constitution, which stipulated that the emperor was “sacred and inviolable.” This became Article 3 in the December 1932 constitution stating that “The king shall be enthroned in a position of revered worship and shall not be violated.” This article was maintained in all Thai constitutions and is now Article 6 in the constitution of 2017.<sup>62</sup>

The constitutions most influenced by the exemplar of the Meiji Constitution were however the two short-lived postwar constitutions of 1947 and 1949. These introduced a royally appointed upper house, a feature of the Imperial Japanese political system discussed in Thailand since July

59 Momchao Phunphitmai Disakun หม่อมเจ้าพูนพิศมัย ดิศกุล, *Sing thi khaphachao phop hen (ruam lem) สิ่งที่เขาพบเห็น (รวมเล่ม)*, Matichon, 2016, p. 31.

60 Phaibun Kanphonphibun ไพบุลย์ กาญจนพิบูลย์, *111 Pon Phonek Phraya Phahon Phonphayusena 'chet burut' 29 minakhom 2551 111 ปี ๑พจนฯ พลเอก พระยาพหลพลพยุหเสนา 'เชษฐบุรุษ' 29 มีนาคม 2551*, Sukphap Chai 2009, pp. 40–52, 445.

61 Thawatt Mokarapong, *History of the Thai Revolution: A Study of Political Behavior*, Wattana Panich, 1972, pp. 103–110.

62 David M. Malitz, “What Is Good about the Japanese System of Governance?,” pp. 7–8.

1932, and reintroduced Siamese/Thai *genrō* by reestablishing the Supreme Council of State in 1947, renamed the Privy Council in 1949.<sup>63</sup> In 1951 however the military reintroduced the 1932 constitution as they became wary of the authority the constitution granted the king. King Bhumibol (1927–2016, r. 1946–2016) returned that year from his studies in Switzerland to reside in his kingdom permanently.<sup>64</sup>

Japan ceded to be a role model of a constitutional monarchy for the duration of his reign. Meanwhile, the postwar governments of Phibun Songkhram (1897–1964) and Sarit Thanarat (1908–1963) began to embrace the monarchy as a symbolic institution able to unite the Thai populace while fostering relations with foreign countries in the Western block, including Japan.<sup>65</sup> King Bhumipol's and Queen Sirikit's (b. 1932) state visit in 1963 as well as the visit to Thailand of Crown Prince Akihito (b. 1933) in the following year resulted in a lifelong friendship.<sup>66</sup> This relationship even had an impact on the culinary culture of Thailand. The imperial ichthyologist Akihito gifted King Bhumipol fifty Nile Tilapia fish, as he was aware of the latter's search for a cheap source of protein for his subjects. Nile Tilapia fish has since become a common and cheap food source. Today, there is even a children's book on Crown Prince (and later emperor) Akihito's role in the introduction of the fish to Thailand.<sup>67</sup>

## Rediscovering the Japanese Example

For Thais who were born and grew up during the Cold War, King Bhumipol, who reigned from 1946 to 2016, became more than their head-of-state. He visited and hosted foreign heads-of-state while leading Buddhist and Brahmin ceremonies at home, and was thus a powerful symbol of a national identity that reconciled tradition and modernity. Spending much of his time on development work throughout the country, he was seen as a virtuous role model that elected politicians and military strongmen could never emulate in the public eye. Some likened him to a bodhisattva, just as it had been claimed by monarchs of the premodern past. Having intervened in 1973 and 1992 to end the killing of protestors demanding the end of military dictatorships, King Bhumipol became a patron saint for Thai democracy for many, while his support of the quasi-fascist movement of the 1970s was forgotten. However, for the generation that had been born after the end of

63 Ibid.

64 On political developments in Thailand during and after World War II, see Sorasak Ngamcachonkulkid, *Free Thai: The New History of the Seri Thai Movement*, Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University, 2010; Daniel Fineman, *A Special Relationship: The United States and Military Government in Thailand, 1947–1958*, University of Hawai'i Press, 1997.

65 Thep Buntanon เทพ บุญตานนท์, *Thaban khong phraracha kap kan sang sammuek haeng sattha lae phakdi tharaxongpharaxakap khabkar sanrang sanik haeng sritha and rakdi*, Matichon, 2022, pp. 239–240.

66 Inoue Makoto, "Japan's Imperial Couple Pays Tribute to Late Thai King," *Nikkei Asian Review*, March 6, 2017, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/Japan-s-imperial-couple-pays-tribute-to-late-thai-king2>.

67 Chananthorn Kamjan, "A Tale of Fish and Monarchs," *Bangkok Post*, November 5, 2016, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/special-reports/1127665/a-tale-of-fish-and-monarchs>; Sommai Chenkitchakan สมหมาย เจนกิจการ and Natthaphong Pankhao ณัฐพงษ์ ปานขาว, *Pla Nin ปลาไน*, Nanmee Books, 2016, pp. 8–9.

the Communist insurgency, and who grew up against the backdrop of a booming economy fueled by foreign direct investment and tourism, Cold War nationalism centered on the crown and its development projects were of little consequence. In particular, the generations too young to have any meaningful memory of King Bhumipol began to question the institution after the military coups of 2006 and 2014 that overthrew elected governments under the pretense of protecting the monarchy, resulting in authoritarian yet ineffective governments. The ascension to the throne of King Vajiralongkorn in 2016, who was seen critically even by staunch royalists, furthered this trend of a critical engagement with the monarchy. Engagement with the Japanese monarchy and postwar constitution remained limited, however, until 2019.<sup>68</sup> That year, the formal coronation of King Vajiralongkorn took place less than a week after the enthronement of Emperor Naruhito. Since then, critics of the political status quo in the Kingdom of Thailand have rediscovered the Japanese exemplar as evident from the press and social media postings.<sup>69</sup> Shortly after the coronation in Thailand, the first elections since the coup of 2014 took place. The progressive Future Forward party, critical of the military, surprised conservatives by coming in third due to the strong support of younger and especially first-time voters. Its dissolution in the spring of 2020 triggered a student movement that also gained international attention due to its explicit criticism of the Thai monarchy, its political influence, and its wealth. Student leaders called for far-reaching reforms with the

68 For example, the Thai press reported on the seventieth anniversary of the Japanese postwar constitution and attempts by the government to amend it: “70 ปี รัฐธรรมนูญสมัยใหม่ญี่ปุ่น รัฐบาล ‘อาเบะ’ จะพยายามแก้ไขเพิ่มอำนาจกองทัพหรือไม่, *Prachatai* ประชาไท, May 3, 2017, <https://prachatai.com/journal/2017/05/71310>; “Yonroi rathamnun Yipun chai ma khroprop 70 pi mai khoei kaekhai yonroi rathamnun Yipun chai ma khroprop 70 pi mai khoei kaekhai” ย้อนรอยรัฐธรรมนูญญี่ปุ่น ไขมาครบรอบ 70 ปีไม่เคยแก้ไขย้อนรอยรัฐธรรมนูญญี่ปุ่น ไขมาครบรอบ 70 ปีไม่เคยแก้ไข, *Manager Online* ผู้จัดการออนไลน์, May 3, 2017, <https://mgronline.com/japan/detail/9600000044538>.

69 See for example Supphanyath Aphinyan ศุภณัฐ อภิญาณ, “Chamlae rang rathathammanun kaekhai muat phramahakasat ‘chabap kabot tai kraprong’ khong ‘Piyabutr Saengkanokkul’” ข้าแหวะร่างรัฐธรรมนูญแก้ไขหมวดพระมหากษัตริย์ ‘ฉบับกบฏใต้กระโปรง’ ของ ‘ปิยบุตร แสงกนกกุล,’ *Manager Online*, August 12, 2021, <https://mgronline.com/daily/detail/9640000079362>; “Khaphachao cha patibat tam rathathammanun lok ruam thawaiphraphon phithi ratchaphisek ‘chakkraphat Yipun’” ข้าพเจ้าจะปฏิบัติตามรัฐธรรมนูญ! โลกร่วมถวายพระพร พิธีราชาภิเษก ‘จักรพรรดิญี่ปุ่น,’ *Maticchon Sutsapada* มติชนสุดสัปดาห์, October 22, 2019, [https://www.maticchonweekly.com/hot-news/article\\_240177](https://www.maticchonweekly.com/hot-news/article_240177); “Borom ratchaongkan ‘chakkraphat Yipun’ khong banlang nai krop rathathammanun” บรมราชโองการ ‘จักรพรรดิญี่ปุ่น’ ครองบัลลังก์ในกรอบรัฐธรรมนูญ, *Prachachat Thurakit* ประชาชาติธุรกิจ, May 1, 2019, <https://www.prachachat.net/world-news/news-321652>; “Phonsamruat chi phu mi sithi lueaktang chao Yipun kueap khrueng khan ‘kae rathathammanun’ thi chai ma tangtae sinsut songkhram lok” ผลสำรวจชี้ ผู้มีสิทธิเลือกตั้งชาวญี่ปุ่นเกือบครึ่ง ค้าน ‘แก้รัฐธรรมนูญ’ ที่ใช้มาตั้งแต่สิ้นสุดสงครามโลก, *The Standard*, September 14, 2019, <https://thestandard.co/nearly-half-oppose-amending-constitution-under-abe-govt/>; “Ratchawong Yipun sathit sathaphon mae thaep rai rat sapsombat” ราชวงศ์ญี่ปุ่น สถิตสถาพร แม่แทบไร้ราชทรัพย์สมบัติ, *Voice Online*, last updated November 26, 2019, [https://tlhr2014.com/archives/24215](https://www.voicetv.co.th/read/w5RckzsY9?fbclid=IwAR0mvgeT_JnLwBAvdK9sDbqpOihQG93Lp8T4oMfxnrGWPff2h0nEFSfBpB0; Kuea Charoenrat เกื้อ เจริญราษฎร์, “Kan chamkat amnat chatkan sapsin sathaban kasat nai rathon botrian kan patirup chak Yipun thueng thai” การจำกัดอำนาจ-จัดการทรัพย์สินสถาบันกษัตริย์ใน รธน.: บทเรียนการปฏิรูปจากญี่ปุ่นถึงไทย, <i>Thai Lawyers for Human Rights</i>, December 20, 2020, <a href=).

express aim to make the de facto supra-constitutional institution a truly constitutional monarchy. On November 10, 2021, the Constitutional Court of Thailand then ruled that such calls for reform of the monarchy amounted to an attempt to overthrow it and were therefore unconstitutional.<sup>70</sup> Against this background, Thai publications began to discuss the Japanese postwar constitution and the role of the Japanese monarchy in the political system.<sup>71</sup> Of particular interest in this context is an essay by one of the founders and leaders of the dissolved Future Forward party, the former law professor Piyabutr Saengkanokkul (b. 1979). His essay posted in May 2022 on the website of the Progressive Movement and on his own Facebook page discussed the postwar constitution in detail. Its title made unmistakably clear that the postwar constitution of Japan is seen by progressives as an example: “The Japanese Constitution of 1947: A Constitution solving the Problem of ‘Ultra-Royalism.’ An Interesting Example for Thailand.”<sup>72</sup>

## Conclusion

The history of Thailand, known as Siam until 1939, as well as of its monarchy, is much more entangled with that of Japan than is usually acknowledged. Manufactured goods from Japan were cherished from at least the early seventeenth century to the early twentieth century. Japanese swords have even become dynastic heirlooms of Thailand’s monarchs until the very present. But the high esteem in which Japanese crafts were still held in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is most evident in the hiring of Japanese craftsmen as teachers and for the task of gilding

70 Muramatsu Yohei 村松洋兵, “Tai ōshitsu kaikaku yōkyū wa ‘iken,’ gakuseira ni katsudōkinshi meirei” タイ王室改革要求は「違憲」 学生らに活動禁止命令, *Nihon keizai Shinbun* 日本経済新聞, November 10, 2021, <https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXZQOGS10DR30Q1A111C2000000/>.

71 “Koet arai khuen kap Yipun lang phae songkhram lok khrang thi” เกิดอะไรขึ้นกับญี่ปุ่นหลังแพ้สงครามโลกครั้งที่ 2, *Silpa Wattanatham* ศิลปวัฒนธรรม, October 25, 2021, [https://www.silpa-mag.com/history/article\\_76784](https://www.silpa-mag.com/history/article_76784); Chanya Inchaiya ชัญญา อินทร์ไชยา, “Yipun: Ratchawong suepsai suriya thep su chakkraphat phu pen sanlak prathet nai khwamkhluanwai khong ‘sathaban kasat’” ญี่ปุ่น: ราชวงศ์สืบสายสุริยเทพ สู่จักรพรรดิผู้เป็นสัญลักษณ์ประเทศในความเคลื่อนไหวของ ‘สถาบันกษัตริย์,’ *Way Magazine*, December 7, 2021, <https://waymagazine.org/emperor-of-japan/>; “Nakriannok sanoe loek 112 humkhrong sitthiseriphap pachot pokpong kiatyot sathaban” นักเรียนนอกเสนอลีก 112 คู่มครองสิทธิเสรีภาพปชช.-ปกป้องเกียรติยศสถาบันฯ, *Thai Post* ไทยโพสต์, November 4, 2021, <https://www.thaipost.net/hi-light/18351/>; Anya Tangrattanachotkun อรยา ตั้งรัตน์โชติกุล, “Mong ratthamnun thi mai khoei thuk kae thammai ratthathammanun Yipun thueng mi-ayu yaonan” มองรัฐธรรมนูญที่ไม่เคยถูกแก้: ทำไมรัฐธรรมนูญญี่ปุ่นถึงมีอายุยาวนาน, *The 101 World*, December 2, 2021, <https://www.the101.world/constitution-of-japan/>; Thamrongsak Phetloetan an อารังศักดิ์เพชรเลิศอนันต์, “An prawatisat kanmueang Thai nai kham winitchai sanrathathammanun ‘lomlang kan pokkhrong,’” อ่านประวัติศาสตร์การเมืองไทยในคำวินิจฉัยศาลรัฐธรรมนูญ ‘ล้มล้างการปกครอง,’ *Voice Online*, December 2, 2021, <https://voicetv.co.th/read/8xXBL3XUj>.

72 Piyabutr Saengkanokkul ปิยบุตร แสงกนกกุล, “Ratthamnun 1947 khong Yipun: Ratthamnun thi kaepanha saphawa ‘kasatniyom lonkoen.’ Baep thi nasonchai samrap prathet Thai” รัฐธรรมนูญ 1947 ของญี่ปุ่น: รัฐธรรมนูญที่แก้ปัญหาสถานะ ‘กษัตริย์นิยมล้นเกิน’ ตัวแบบที่น่าสนใจสำหรับประเทศไทย, Facebook post at 8:19am on 4 May 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/PiyabutrOfficial/posts/610994350386627>, and at *Progressive Movement*, May 5, 2022, <https://progressivemovement.in.th/article/7319/> (May 5, 2022). There were approximately 14,000 “likes” and 1,400 “shares” of the Facebook post as of September 30, 2022.



the copy of a famous Buddha image. Imperial Japan was embraced very early on as an exemplar of successful reforms in education and military affairs, key projects for the modernization of the Kingdom of Siam. Today's graduation ceremony of the Thai military academy, which aims to create a bond between the monarch and his officers, was initially introduced based on the Imperial Japanese example. That a royal decree on education was drafted based on the famed Imperial Rescript of Education also demonstrates that Meiji Japan was considered at the court as having mastered the creation of a direct and loyal bond between the emperor and his subjects at large. The absolute kings of Siam were, however, categorically opposed to consider their critics' proposal to promulgate a constitution and rejected the idea that political participation would foster patriotism and loyalty to the throne. Rather, they attempted to copy the role of the *genrō* as perceived by them by appointing senior princes to an advisory council. To this end, the Siamese Revolution of June 24, 1932, abolished the absolute monarchy. The Japanese influence on the kingdom's first "permanent" constitution drafted in its wake is clear. The article declaring the monarch sacrosanct is a translation of Article 3 of the Meiji Constitution and it has been incorporated in all Thai constitutions until the present. With the establishment of constitutionalism in Siam, Imperial Japan lost its attractiveness for progressives in the kingdom. It was now royalists who drew on the Japanese exemplar when drafting their short-lived constitutions with a royally appointed upper house and institutionalized Siamese *genrō*. With that, the Japanese influence on the Thai monarchy appeared to have come to an end, apart from a close personal friendship between King Bhumibol and Emperor Akihito.

This has changed, however, since the double succession of 2019, and against the backdrop of a political crisis in Thailand, where a younger generation is much less supportive of the Thai monarchy than their elders. Demanding reforms of the institution to make it a truly constitutional one, they have rediscovered the Japanese exemplar, that is, they have discovered the Japanese postwar constitution as an example of a truly democratic and constitutional monarchy.

### 王室と皇室のつながり

——バンコク宮廷とシャム・タイ王政に及ぼした日本の影響——

ダーヴィット・マリツ\*

本稿では、シャム王国（1939年にタイと改称）における日本の文化的・政治的影響について検討する。16世紀後半から17世紀初頭にかけての初期の交流では、東南アジアの王国で日本製品がステータスシンボルとして好まれた。特に日本刀は珍重され、現代に続くまで王朝の家宝となった。19世紀後半からは、帝国日本がバンコクの近代化の手本とされ、宮廷では日本人の顧問や教官が雇われた。一方、絶対王政を批判する人々は、日本が立憲君主制

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として大国となったことを訴えた。

キーワード：シャム、タイ王国、チュラロンコン大王、近代王室、大日本帝  
国憲法

## Research Trends in China on the Japanese Emperor System

GUO Lianyou\*

The abdication of Emperor Akihito and the accession of Emperor Naruhito have led to further research in China on the Japanese emperor system. Research within China on the emperor system is wide-ranging, covering the history and current status of abdications, the influence of Chinese culture on the emperor system and accession to the throne, Imperial Household diplomacy, and the emperor and China-Japan relations. This article will introduce research on the emperor system conducted by Chinese researchers in the period preceding and following the abdication and accession of the Heisei and Reiwa emperors respectively, and will then discuss recent research trends on the emperor system in China.

**Keywords:** abdication, emperor diplomacy, memorial visits

### Introduction

On August 8, 2016, Emperor Akihito 明仁 hinted at his intention to abdicate in a video message to the Japanese people, noting that he was no longer able to fulfill his duties as a symbolic figure-head due to age-related decline. In response, the government established and put into effect the “Law for Special Exception of the Imperial House Law concerning Abdication, etc. of the Emperor” in a Cabinet meeting. Following the “Law for Special Exception,” Emperor Akihito abdicated on April 30, 2019 (Heisei 平成 31), and Crown Prince Naruhito 徳仁 acceded to the throne the following day, May 1. The Heisei era ended, and a new era called Reiwa 令和 began.

Emperor Akihito’s abdication and Emperor Naruhito’s accession were covered by the media worldwide. China was no exception, and the mass media was quick to take up the news. Motivated by this news, research in China on the Japanese emperor system increased. For example, in late September 2019, the Beijing Center for Japanese Studies held a symposium titled “The Emperor System and Japan: In Relation to History, Politics, Society, and Culture.” This symposium was hosted jointly by the Beijing Center for Japanese Studies and the International Research Center for Japanese Studies. Some two dozen researchers gathered from countries such as China, Japan, South Korea, and Ukraine. They reported on and discussed the position and role of the emperor in Japanese history and modern society, based on the theme of the “emperor system and Japan,” from

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a variety of angles and perspectives, including mythology, history, cultural history, the history of thought, and sociology. To share the findings from the symposium both inside and outside of China, ten exemplary articles were selected for revision by their authors, after which they were compiled and published in January 2022 in the Beijing Center for Japanese Studies journal (*Ribenxue yanjiu* 日本学研究, vol. 32, January 2022, Guo Lianyou 郭连友, ed.).

Prior to this international symposium, six research articles related to the Emperor system had been published in the Institute of Japanese Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) 中国社会科学院日本研究所 in the journal *Riben xuekan* 日本学刊, in volumes 2, 3, and 5 in 2019 (March, May, and September 2019 respectively). The abovementioned research is wide-ranging and diverse, covering topics such as the history and current status of abdications, the influence of Chinese culture on the emperor system and imperial accession, Imperial Household diplomacy, and the emperor and China-Japan relations. This article will introduce research on the emperor system conducted by Chinese researchers in the period limited to that preceding and following the abdication and accession in 2019, and will then discuss recent trends in research on the emperor system in China.

## 1. Research on Abdication by the Emperor

On the whole, the mass media and research articles in China addressed the abdication with relative objectivity, while analyzing its significance. The words and actions of the emperor desiring to abdicate, even while facing the fact that abdication conflicted with Japan's Imperial Household Law (Kōshitsu Tenpan 皇室典範), were read by some journalists and researchers as the emperor urging reforms to the Imperial Household system.

For example, the 2016 *Jiancha fengyun* 检察风云 (vol. 20) contains an article on the legal and cultural dilemma of the abdication of the emperor of Japan. This work has a positive perception of the emperor steadfastly guarding the meaning and symbolism of abdication, stating,

The emperor declares in the video message that he does not accept the regency system, repeatedly using the phrase “symbol of the State” in regard to “the desirable role of the Emperor, who is designated to be the symbol of the State by the Constitution of Japan.” This degree of emphasis on the emperor's symbolism is meant to keep conservative forces from deifying the emperor once again, rejecting the return to a deified emperor of the kind that existed in prewar imperial Japan.<sup>1</sup>

He points out that deliberate abdication protects the symbolism of the emperor. According to the author's interpretation, the emperor is essentially considered to be a profession. Invariably handling the politics of one's position is also the essence of the modern civil servant system, a major departure from the feudalistic imperial system of rule. In this sense, Emperor Akihito is a politician with

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1 Mo Ban 墨阪, “Riben: Tianhuang ‘shengqian tuwei’ de falu yu wenhua zhilun” 日本：天皇“生前退位”的法律与文化之困 (The Legal and Cultural Difficulties of the Emperor's Abdication before His Death), *Jiancha fengyun* 2016, vol. 20, p. 53.



a very modern legal awareness, who has adapted to democratic trends. However, it is safe to say that the perception of the emperor as a “politician” is unequivocally a misunderstanding on the part of the author.

In connection with this, the article “Tianhuang tuiwei de lishi yu xianshi” 天皇退位的历史与现实 (The History and Current Status of Abdication by the Emperor) by Japanese history researcher Li Zhuo 李卓 (*Riben xuekan* 2019, vol. 2, pp. 1–26) states:

On this occasion, the progressive-minded Emperor Akihito’s statement of abdication is actually a call to reform the Imperial Household system, as a challenge to old customs. While the Law for Special Exception ultimately passed was prepared for Emperor Akihito alone, and does not extend to a fundamental amendment to the Imperial Household Law, it is, in short, the first step taken toward reforming the Imperial Household system. The realization of Emperor Akihito’s abdication will be a breakthrough for revising the Imperial Household Law, and may bring about discussion of such issues as the establishment of matrilineal branches of the imperial family, or even the possibility of female emperors. By incorporating modern norms into the Imperial Household system, the symbolic emperor system may come to have vitality for the first time. Perhaps this itself is the real purpose and meaning of Emperor Akihito’s request for abdication. (p. 24)

In this way, the author takes the emperor’s abdication to be connected to amendments to the Imperial Household system, and praises its innovative quality for leading to a breakthrough.

The emperor’s abdication is the first in the modern era, and above all else the first in the history of Japan’s constitutional government. Regarding the reality of abdications in history, Li has investigated the history of abdication by emperors from ancient to modern times based on this awareness of the issues.

According to Li, in the 1,222-year period from 645 to 1867, there were a total of eighty-seven emperors in Japan, excluding Northern Court emperors, of which fifty-eight abdicated during their lifetimes. In the history of Japan, the Imperial Household was a weak presence that was interfered with by all manner of forces, and abdication by the emperors was at one time normalized. The system of lifelong emperors was established in the Meiji 明治 era (1868–1912), and is thought to have begun after the Imperial Household Law was established with the aim of stabilizing the Imperial Household.

From ancient to modern times, there have been a number of reasons why an emperor would abdicate; according to Li, they can generally be summarized into four types: 1. In the primitive form of abdication, a female emperor would abdicate to her successor according to her own wishes; 2. Inability to continue official business due to health issues; 3. To ward off misfortune and pray for blessings after a natural disaster; and 4. The emperor himself was entering the Buddhist priesthood. Li thoroughly analyzes the situation and finds several factors behind these abdications: in terms of societal factors, there were no institutional restrictions on imperial succession; and in terms of political factors, strong powers interfered with imperial succession, the maternally related Fujiwara clan wielded arbitrary power, there were internal disputes in the imperial court during the period of cloistered rule, and later on the shogunate was significantly involved, among other

factors. Li's article contributes to the understanding of the history and the current status of Japan's emperor system, as well as the characteristics of modern Japanese political culture.

The following articles cover the meaning and influence of abdication by emperors: Tang Yongliang 唐永亮, "Riben tianhuang 'shengqian tuiwei' wenti de shenceng fenxi" 日本天皇“生前退位”问题的深层分析 (A Deeper Analysis of the "Abdication while Living" of the Emperor of Japan) (*Shijie zhishi* 世界知识 2016, vol. 17 [Sep. 1], pp. 65–67); Liu Jiangyong 刘江永 and Lin Xinyi 林心怡, "Cong Mingren dao Deren: Tianhuang yuanhe qiangdiao qi xiangzhengxing" 从明仁到德仁：天皇缘何强调其象征性 (Why Did the Emperors, from Akihito to Naruhito, Emphasize their Symbolic Nature?) (*Taipingyang xuebao* 太平洋学报 2020, vol. 1, pp. 36–49). These authors analyze the significance of Emperor Akihito and Emperor Naruhito's emphasis on the symbolic emperor system from the aspects of history, institutions, and abdication, and attempt to gain an understanding of Japanese politics as they transition through this event from the Heisei era to the Reiwa era. They then point out that the issue of amending Article 9 of the Constitution is related to the emperor system, drawing attention to the gravity of this issue.

While not directly related to abdication by the emperors, the article by Zhang Lin 章林, "Riben zhaiwang zhidu de shanbian yu gudai tianhuang zhi" 日本斋王制度的演变与古代天皇制 (The Transmutation of the Saiō System in Japan and the Ancient Emperor System) (*Journal of Beijing Union University* 北京联合大学学报, Humanities and Social Sciences Edition, 2020, vol. 2, pp. 48–54) is a study focused on the *saiō* 斋王 system (this refers to an unmarried imperial princess serving at an important shrine in place of the emperor) within the ancient emperor system, which was closely related to ensure the position of the crown prince. Zhang examines the formation, development, changes, and dissipation of the *saiō* system as an overriding ritual institution for preserving the ancient emperor system, revealing that the state of the *saiō* system indicates the status of changes in the ancient emperor system. According to Zhang, Emperor Tenmu 天武 (r. 673–686) established and restored the *saiō* system using the religious authority of ancestral gods in order to reinforce the legitimacy of his supreme rule. In the imperial succession disputes of the eighth and ninth centuries, the *saiō* system was an important measure for giving the crown prince an unshakable position, further rendering the management and administration of the system complete. The importance of the *saiō* system started to wane along with the decline of the emperor's power during the regency and cloistered rule periods until it eventually disappeared from the stage of history. Zhang's article is the latest discussion in the research on the ancient emperor system from the perspective of religious rituals.

## 2. Research on the Relationship between the Emperor System and Chinese Culture

In connection with the recent abdication by the emperor, and the subsequent accession, the relationship between Chinese culture and the formation of the ancient Japanese emperor system, royal authority, accession ceremonies, and other topics has garnered attention, leading to further research.

Cai Fenglin 蔡凤林's article "Dongyan lishishi yuxia de Riben tianhuangzhi xingcheng guocheng tanxi" 东亚历史视域下的日本天皇制形成过程探析 (The Process of Forming the Japanese Imperial System in the Context of East Asian History) (*Riben wenlun* 日本文论 2021,

vol. 1 [Aug. 1], pp. 1–20) takes a broad view of the relationship between Japan’s ancient emperor system and East Asia, especially the Korean Peninsula:

The main intrinsic factors through which the emperor system was formed were greater productivity in ancient Japanese society and the demand for domestic politics created thereby. The main external factor was the international environment of East Asia, which developed around issues on the Korean Peninsula. Ancient Japan continuously and consistently maintained a close relationship with the politics, economy, and culture of the East Asian mainland. The series of processes from the establishment of unified royal authority in ancient Japan to the construction of the Japanese nation under the *ritsuryō* 律令 codes, the development from royal to imperial authority, and the establishment of the emperor system reveal major influences from the development of political culture and changes in the political situation in ancient East Asia. The central tie was the path of civilization on the Korean Peninsula, and the Korean Peninsula itself was a principal driving force that hastened the birth of Japan’s emperor system. (p. 1)

Articles that examine the relationship between the ancient emperor system and Chinese culture include those of Liu Xiaofeng 刘晓峰, “Jianzuo dachangji de yishi jiegou yu wenhua de jiedu” 天皇践祚大尝祭的仪式结构与文化解读 (Interpretation of the Ritual Structure and Culture of the Senso Daijōsai Festival) (*Riben xuekan*, 2019, vol. 5); Pan Lei 潘蕾, “Riben gudai tianhuanzhi guojia de goujian yu chenwei sixiang” 日本古代天皇制国家的构建与讖纬思想 (The Construction of the Japanese Imperial State in Ancient Times and the Divination Ideology) (*Ribenxue yanjiu*, vol. 32, pp. 28–48); and Wang Xin 王鑫, “Tiangou yu huangquan” 天狗与皇权 (Tengu and Imperial Rights) (*Ribenxue yanjiu*, vol. 32, pp. 49–64).

Liu focuses on the religious ritual of the “accession Daijōsai 大尝祭” (first ceremonial offering of rice made by a new emperor), one of a series of accession rites considered to mark in particular the succession of the divinity of the emperor. The article uses a solid command of history, mythology, and folklore studies to examine how ancient Japanese emperors handed down divinity as “living gods.” Liu focuses on the most emblematic rites of the Daijōsai: Omi no Oyu 小忌御湯, Shinsen Shingu 神饌親供, and Matoko Oufusuma 真床追衾, arguing that of these three rites, the Omi no Oyu rite, in which the emperor dons a robe of feathers and bathes, is the key point of the ceremony. According to Liu, an ancient Japanese myth was used in the establishment of this rite; the article points out that an ancient Chinese sun god myth mentioned in the *Classic of Mountains and Seas* (*Shan hai jing* 山海經) and other works may also have been used as a reference. As the Omi no Oyu rite paved the way for the emperor to acquire the sacredness of the sun goddess, that rite imitated the myth of the “sun bathing in Tanggu 汤谷.” In other words, the sun returns to its most primeval state in order to regain power. Liu goes on to analyze the rite from the angle of temporal cycles, stating, “It appears as a ceremony that imitates the death and rebirth of the sun, with a backdrop of the sun’s cycle of old and new. ... The crux of all the Daijōsai rites is the death and rebirth of the ancient sun. ... Only after undergoing the ‘Omi no Oyu’ rite is the emperor endowed with sacred attributes” (p. 88).

Liu then examines the Daijōsai’s Shinsen Shingu and Matoko Oufusuma rites’ relationship to

Chinese culture. According to Liu, the most important condition of the Daijōsai rites is the use of specially-grown new rice plants, which is closely related to ancient Japanese beliefs in grain spirits. The new rice plants used in the Daijōsai are directly related to the cycle of temporal seasons, as rice is planted in spring and harvested in autumn. If the accession occurs before July, the Daijōsai rites are held in November of the same year, and if later, in November of the following year. The reason for this change is due to the boundary that exists between June and July. According to yin and yang ideology, the first half of the year from January to June is “yang,” while the second half from July to December is “yin.” If the new emperor accedes before July, the rice plant will have had plenty of exposure to yang-spirited sunlight, and the rice harvested can be well used in religious rites. If the accession occurs in July or later, that year’s yang-spirited sun will be in decline, and the rice harvested cannot be used in religious rites. Rice is cultivated, harvested, and made into a ritual product because it is sufficiently sacred. This property is closely related to the solar cycle. The rite of “communal dining” with the gods, using rice with sufficient yang energy, shows the relationship of the Daijōsai with the earth and with seasonal cycles. As we see here, Liu points out that the fundamental principles of the Daijōsai rites were prescribed by ancient Chinese yin and yang ideology.

Regarding the Matoko Oufusuma rite, Liu argues that it is influenced by the ancient royal accession rite known as Shouling Jiti 授灵继体, as mentioned in the “Guming 顾命” chapter, “Zhoushu 周书” volume, in *Shujing* 書經 (*Book of Documents*). This states, “Now that I have been appointed, I will return to the court with the royal drape hanging on the throne.” In other words, the king has died, but since his spirit is clinging to the garment, putting it on display is a way to inherit the king’s spirit. The quilted bedding of the Daijōsai Matoko Oufusuma is a memento of the deceased emperor, so the emperor’s spirit remains in it. It is conceivable that the Daijōsai rites are a superimposition of the “Niiname 新嘗” rite of new grains and the “Shouling Jiti” rite. Liu states that “the Daijōsai’s transfer of the spirit of the past emperor follows the thread of royal successions in China during the Western Zhou 西周 dynasty” (p. 93).

Through this analysis of the central rites of the *Daijōsai*, Liu concludes that the formation of all three rites was greatly influenced by ancient Chinese myths, traditions, and worldviews. Going beyond the confines of the theories of previous studies, this article deserves attention for deftly navigating varied historical materials and convincingly clarifying the influences of ancient Chinese myths, yin and yang ideology, religious rituals, and traditions on Daijōsai rites.

In addition to Liu Xiaofeng, the relationship between the ancient Japanese emperor system and Chinese culture is discussed in Pan Lei’s “Ribei gudai tianhuanzhi guojia de goujian yu chenwei sixiang.” This article reveals that well-preserved books on the *chenwei* 讖纬 (the prediction of good and bad fortune) ideology, which had been used by rulers for a time in order to foretell the rise and fall of royal authority in the Han 汉 dynasty (BC202–AD220) before being set aside by their successors, show that the ideology had also been exported to Japan and was in fact used by administrators there. The article then indicates that consequently, Chinese *chenwei* ideology influenced the construction of the ancient Japanese emperor system. Pan argues that there were four reasons for era changes in Japanese history: 1. Emperor abdication; 2. good omens; 3. natural disasters; and 4. revolutionary years, the first years of the sexagenary cycle, in other words the Year of the Wood Rat. Of these, Pan posits that three of them are related to Chinese *chenwei* ideology. Furthermore, Pan examines *Nihonkoku genzaisho mokuroku* 日本国見在書目録 (Japan National



Catalogue) and the *jingjizhi* 经籍誌 (bibliographical section) of *Suishu* 隋书, and finds that the former work contains fifteen types and ninety-five volumes of books of omens, surpassing the latter's eleven types and sixty-nine volumes. In addition, allusions to *chenwei* ideology can be found in the many citations of books of omens in the Chinese *Yiwen leiju* 艺文类聚 encyclopedia and in the *Nihonkoku genzaisho mokuroku*. Based on the fact that many of these sources were referenced when the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (720) was compiled, the article argues that *chenwei* ideology was transmitted to Japan at an early stage. Pan then uses the *Nihon shoki* and the *Shoku Nihongi* 続日本紀 (797) to show that *chenwei* ideology was incorporated into the building of the ancient Japanese emperor system, based on records of good omens, the establishment of the *ritsuryō* system, the investiture of the crown prince, reforms to the office and rank system, revisions of era names, and the establishment of official positions during the reign of Emperor Tenmu, as well as on the two major political achievements of Emperor Kanmu 桓武 (r. 781–806): the conquest of the Emishi 蝦夷 people, and the relocation of the capital.

In “Tiangou yu huangquan,” Wang Xin notes that the meteoric *tengu* 天狗, originally of China, was tied to rumors of natural disaster and the mandate of Heaven ideology and often provoked a revolutionary change of dynasty. Meanwhile, from its first transmission to Japan, the *tengu* in the “revolutionary” sense was severed from its relationship to royal authority. Later, the *tengu* developed uniquely within Japanese history: pranking farmers in the Heian period, and understood as a kind of phantom or monster that hindered Buddhist teachings and ascetic practices. In the Middle Ages and later, the *tengu* was endowed with divinity and transformed into a guardian deity due to the influence of various ideologies absorbed by Shugendō 修験道 (mountain asceticism), including the belief in vengeful ghosts, the belief in the spirits of deceased persons, Shinto-Buddhist syncretism, manifestation theory (the belief that Shinto gods are manifestations of buddhas), native Japanese mountain worship, and animism. Wang thus clarifies the differences in the relationship between *tengu* and royal authority in China and Japan.

### 3. Studies on the Prewar Emperor System

Various studies have addressed the emperor system in the prewar period. One representative article focusing on the concept of the emperor system and the origins and changes in its name is Chen Yue'e 陈月娥's “Ribei gongchandang guanyu ‘tianhuangzhi’ gainian xingcheng, shanbian yu renshi bianqian” 日本共产党关于“天皇制”的概念形成、嬗变与认识变迁 (The Formation, Transition, and Change of Understanding of the Japanese Communist Party's Concept of “Imperial System”) (*Riben xuekan*, 2019, vol. 5, pp. 96–115). Chen considers the concept of the emperor system to have been a result of the Japanese Communist Party originally invoking Marxist theory to deepen their understanding of the prewar Japanese national polity and political structure, stating that the concept is the result of the intense political conflict between the dissolution faction (a faction that asserted that the party should be disbanded) and the farmer-labor wing of the JCP. According to Chen's study, the JCP's calls to “overthrow the emperor system” after the Asia-Pacific War incited a fierce debate and introspection on the emperor system within Japanese society, with the phrase “emperor system” becoming a common political term in various circles of Japanese

society. However, the original concept of the “emperor system” was intentionally fragmented, and ultimately became the broad concept of “the Japanese state system that considers the emperor to be the person of paramount authority.” At the same time, the political situation inside and outside Japan changed, and while the JCP’s stance made an about-face from opposition to and denial of the emperor system to respect for the system, the abolition of the emperor system was not removed from its strategic goals. As a work by a Chinese researcher, Chen’s study may contribute to the ascertainment of the function and role of the emperor system and its future destination.

Other studies focus on the view of the emperor as an individual. Ge Rui 葛睿’s “Xicun Maoshu tianhuangguan de yanbian” 西村茂樹天皇观的演变 (The Evolution of Nishimura Shigeki’s View on the Emperor) (*Ribenxue yanjiu*, vol. 32, pp. 100–114) examines Nishimura Shigeki 西村茂樹’s views of the emperor. In his book *Nihon dōtoku-ron* 日本道德論 (Theory of Japanese Morals), in the section on “The Construction of the National Character,” Nishimura claims that one of the duties of citizens is to venerate the Imperial Household and to live under its reign. Considering Nishimura’s high praise for the Imperial Rescript on Education (*kyōiku chokugo* 教育勅語), his image is one of unconditional reverence for the emperor. The author has doubts about this, and examines Nishimura’s *bakumatsu*-period petitions and public speeches as well as his statements on the emperor and the Imperial Household in *Hakuō shigen* 泊翁卮言, which was not published during his lifetime. Ge then revises the image of Nishimura’s conservative “Imperial Household respect” view of the emperor, and puts forth the bold theory that Nishimura considered the Imperial Household only play the role of consolidating popular sentiment along the lines of Western religions, recognizing that the system would ultimately disappear. This article is noteworthy as a study that raises questions about research on Nishimura’s conventional view of the emperor.

In “Bei Yihui de tianhuangguan: Cong ‘shendaoshi guoti’ dao ‘xiandai guoti’” 北一輝的天皇观：从“神道式国体”到“现代国体” (Kita Ikki’s View of the Emperor: From a “Shinto-Style National System” to a “Modern National System”) (*Ribenxue yanjiu*, vol. 32, pp. 115–130), Huang Shijun 黄世军 analyzes the substance and characteristics of Kita Ikki 北一輝’s views on the emperor. According to Huang, Kita primarily absorbed the tenets of the national polity theory and the theory of the emperor as an organ of government, while keeping a basis in constitutional commentary; he argued that national sovereignty was established by the Meiji Constitution. Kita’s view of the emperor criticized the “Shintoist national polity” while indicating the direction of the development of a “modern national polity.” Kita’s national sovereignty theory also included active demands of the state as subject, signifying that the agency of the “privileged” emperor and the people who composed the state would be eliminated and stripped away, reducing individuals to the status of mere tools for the state. Huang points out that as a representative of “the duality of imperialism,” Kita’s democratic socialist theories ultimately became an ideology for foreign expansion. As of now in China, Huang’s study features the latest findings on Kita’s views on the emperor.

#### 4. Assessment of Emperor Akihito (Imperial Household Diplomacy, China-Japan Relations, etc.)

Following Emperor Akihito’s abdication, a lot of research was conducted on the role he fulfilled while on the throne, particularly his accomplishments in Imperial Household diplomacy,

memorial visits, and the development of China-Japan relations. Qiu Huasheng 邱华盛 and Feng Shaokui 冯昭奎’s “Lun Mingren tianhuang zai zhongri waijiaozhong de dute zuoyong jian ji yu Zhongguo kexuejia de Jiaowang” 论明仁天皇在中日外交中的独特作用兼及与中国科学家的交往 (The Unique Role of Emperor Akihito in Chinese-Japanese Diplomacy and His Engagement with Chinese Scientists) (*Riben xuekan* 2019, vol. 5, pp. 59–79) and Tian Qingli 田庆立’s “Pingcheng shidai xiangzheng tianhuangzhi de gengxu ji gexin” 平成时代象征天皇制的赓续及革新 (The Internationalization and Innovation of the Emperor System in the Heisei Period) (*Riben xuekan* 2019, vol. 3, pp. 18–43) are some representative articles.

The writers above highly praise the Imperial Household diplomacy that Emperor Akihito had engaged in since his days as crown prince. Qiu and Feng hold that the emperor played the role of postwar mediator: through his visits to a total of sixty-six countries, the Imperial Household diplomacy implemented by Emperor Akihito was an important and unique component of postwar Japanese diplomacy. Although his political power was severely restricted, the emperor held an extremely important role in Japanese diplomacy, and worked to restore relations with formerly inimical countries. Qiu and Feng argue that as a symbol of the nation, Emperor Akihito actively developed this diplomacy and expanded the influence of the Imperial Household, while simultaneously contributing to the improvement of postwar Japan’s international image and its soft power.

Qiu and Feng address the emperor’s 1992 visit to China and point out that the significance of this visit was in its promotion of friendly relations between the peoples of both China and Japan, as well as in its direct perspective on history, in that it served as a model for future members of the imperial family. They highly praise the role that the emperor played in the development of China-Japan relations.

Tian Qingli also considers Emperor Akihito as characterized by his reconciliation of the psychological ill feelings that remained among enemy nations after the Second World War through his international goodwill diplomacy, and by the improvement of the overall image of the emperor, the Imperial Household, and Japan in the eyes of the international community. In relation to this, Tian also touches on the emperor’s memorial visits, addressing the emperor’s stance of reflecting on history and setting a high value on peace.

The article by Lu Yaodong 吕耀东 and Xie Ruochu 谢若初, “Riben tianhuang de weiling waijiao fanshi tanxi” 日本天皇慰灵外交范式探析 (A Paradigm Exploration of the Japanese Emperor’s Consolation Diplomacy) (*Riben wenti yanjiu* 日本问题研究 2017, vol. 5), focuses on “memorial diplomacy” (*ireigaikō* 慰灵外交) as a part of Imperial Household diplomacy, with a detailed analysis of the timing, selection of destination countries, and style of the memorials. The writers summarize the characteristics of memorial diplomacy as follows: 1. The emperor’s memorial diplomacy is a striking feature of Japanese political culture as a new model for Japan’s foreign relations, and has become a unique political phenomenon of Japan’s diplomatic performance in the modern international community; 2. every tenth anniversary of the end of the war, visits are held at roughly the same period as the commemoration of the worldwide victory of the war against fascism—along with its cyclical nature, this kind of diplomacy involves historical corrections toward the position of the aggressor countries of the war; 3. The destination countries for memorial visits comprise only a small fraction of the countries Japan invaded during the war, and are strategically limited to those that pragmatically ally or quasi-ally with Japan, and thus by nature are

selective and one-sided; 4. The memorial ceremonies are exceptional in that they take place at special locations such as monuments to the war dead, or places where the remains of soldiers have been recovered; 5. Memorial diplomacy, which is carried out by the emperor as a symbolic figure as decided by the current constitution and based on related resolutions of the Japanese government, has a representative and symbolic nature at the national level, whether viewed through a legal lens or an emotional one; 6. The objects of memorialization are selected not only for their relationship to the memorial location, but with subjective acknowledgment of the different perspectives involved, and in this way they are ambiguous; 7. In terms of positioning, this model of diplomacy expands Japan's overall foreign strategy, namely bilateral relations with target countries, while at the same time it is synchronistic to and moreover improve the international image of Japan as a "pacifist country;" 8. From the perspective of historical tradition, memorial diplomacy is founded on the religious functions that the emperor once had, and as the overseas development of domestic memorials, it has a succession-like and denotative nature; 9. This diplomacy is effective as to some extent it satisfies Japan's political appeal in regions where it conducts foreign relations, and at the same time it has a homogenous nature that responds to the activities of right-wing organizations.

The writers address the above characteristics while simultaneously pointing out the harmful effects of memorial diplomacy as follows: 1. It runs the risk of being used by right-wing political forces; 2. Since the objects and targets involved in memorial diplomacy are complex and sensitive, the nature of this diplomacy could be fundamentally reversed, as without strict limitations, it risks developing into a realistic problem that promotes the expansion of right-wing political forces and fosters the revival of an emperor-centered historiography of Japan, causing a deluge of historical revisionist trends of thought; 3. With the influence of Japan's foreign strategy and political trends such as domestic conservatism, memorial diplomacy is inevitably one-sided, directional, and politically-purposed; as such, it inevitably becomes a tool for reinforcing the country's pragmatic alliance with the U.S.

In addition to the above, Zhang Min 张敏's work presents an unsparing opinion of "emperor diplomacy." "Ribei zhanghou waijiao xinmoshi de mosuo yu goujian: ribei tianhuang waijiao 'fangmeifanshi'" 日本战后外交新模式的摸索与构建：日本天皇外交“访美范式” (Exploration and Construction of New Diplomacy Model of Post-war Japan: "Normal Forms of Visiting USA" of Japanese Tennō's Diplomacy) (*Riben wenti yanjiu* 2016, vol. 4, pp. 19–26) claims that this diplomacy and contrition about the war is no more than a highly secretive political technique that should be considered alarming.

## Conclusion

As shown above, Emperor Akihito's abdication and Emperor Naruhito's accession sparked a period of active research in China on the Japanese emperor system. This article has summarized and introduced these research trends and findings in China, particularly from Emperor Akihito's announcement of his intention to abdicate in August 2016, up to the present day.

Viewing the trends in this research over the past six years, a few characteristics stand out. First,



today's researchers have a solid command of primary sources, and their studies are relatively deep, objective, and convincing. Second, there are more studies being produced from the perspective of China-Japan comparative cultural theory than before. Third, it is now possible to conduct postwar emperor system studies in relative freedom, including with a critical point of view. Fourth, cooperation on research on the emperor system within academia internationally is increasing, and some of the results can now be shared due to publications in translation.<sup>2</sup>

The issue of Japan's emperor system is a key to understanding Japanese politics, society, culture, and history; this issue cannot be avoided in Japan studies. This is why the topic is gaining attention and studies are being conducted by researchers on Japan worldwide, including China. However, perhaps due to differences in understanding the issue, there has not yet been collaborative research on the emperor system, and current findings by researchers in each country cannot be shared promptly. In that sense, the International Symposium on the emperor system and Japan held at the Beijing Center for Japanese Studies in September 2019 and 2021 summer's "Age of Monarchy/Monarchy for Age" symposium held by the International Research Center for Japanese Studies at the 16<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the European Association for Japanese Studies were extremely significant. As a Chinese researcher, I hope for further cooperation and joint research on the emperor system by international scholars.

## 中国における天皇制研究の動向

郭 連友\*

明仁天皇の退位、新天皇の即位をきっかけにして、中国の天皇制研究が活発化してきている。中国の天皇制研究の内容をみると、天皇の生前退位の歴史と現状、天皇制や即位に見られる中国文化の影響、皇室外交、天皇と中日関係など多岐多様にわたっている。本稿では、天皇の生前退位と新天皇の即位前後という時期に限定して、中国の研究者による天皇制研究の代表的論文を紹介することで、中国における天皇制研究の最近の動向を明らかにする。

キーワード：天皇退位、天皇外交、慰霊訪問

2 *Ribenxue yanjiu*, volume 32, includes four articles by Japanese researchers: Isomae Jun'ichi 磯前順一, "Matsurarezaru kami no yukue: Shinwaka suru gendai Nihon" 祀られざる神の行方：神話化する現代日本 (The Whereabouts of Unworshipped Gods: Mythologizing Modern Japan); Satō Hiro'o 佐藤弘夫, "Arahitogami' e no michi: Kindai Tennō no shūkyōteki ken'i" 『現人神』への道：近代天皇の宗教的権威 (The Path to the Living God: The Modern Emperor's Religious Authority); Ogura Shigeji 小倉慈司, "Kodai no Tennō to jingi saishi" 古代の天皇と神祇祭祀 (Ancient Emperors and the Rituals of Gods of Heaven and Earth); and Sonehara Satoshi 曾根原理, "Hideyoshi, Ieyasu no shinkakuka to 'Tokugawa ōken-ron'" 秀吉・家康の神格化と『徳川王権論』 (The Deification of Hideyoshi and Ieyasu, and "Tokugawa Royal Authority Theory").

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## Diplomacy and Kingship: Trilateral Relationships among Japan, the Chosŏn, and the Ming during the Reopening of the Pusan Trade in 1604

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For the Tsushima Fuchū domain, restoring severed relations with Chosŏn Korea after the Imjin War was a diplomatic priority. This article sheds light on the important role played by Ming China, which actively participated in the post-Imjin rapprochement between Japan and Korea. In particular, the reopening of the Pusan trade in 1604 was realized not only through bilateral Chosŏn-Tsushima negotiations but involved a more complicated multilateral relationship internal to Japan itself—the Tsushima domain and the Tokugawa shogunate as two parties of interest in Japan, as well as Chosŏn and Ming.

**Keywords:** Tsushima Fuchū domain, Tokugawa shogunate, Imjin War, Japanese invasions of Korea (1592–1598), Japanese disturbance of Imjin

### Introduction

With the death of Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 (1537–1598) in Keichō 慶長 3 (1598), the Japanese forces withdrew from the Korean Peninsula, thus ending the Imjin 壬辰 War.<sup>1</sup> Immediately after the war, in 1599, Sō Yoshitoshi 宗義智 (1568–1615), lord of the Tsushima Fuchū 対馬府中 domain, and his retainer Yanagawa Shigenobu 柳川調信 (1539–1605), started peace negotiations with Chosŏn Korea. Due to the high level of discretion in Chosŏn relations, Tsushima dispatched envoys to Chosŏn, repatriated Chosŏn captives, sent letters requesting peace,

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1 In Japan, the war is called “Bunroku, Keichō no eki 文禄・慶長の役” or “Hideyoshi’s invasion of Korea.” In South Korea, it is called the “Japanese disturbance of Imjin” and the “Second war of Jeong-yu,” and in China, it is referred to as the “Wanli Korean Campaign” or “Wanli Japanese War.” Recently, the Imjin War is used to refer to a war that involved all three countries, and so in this article, “Imjin War” will be used.

and continued seeking amity.<sup>2</sup> Finally, diplomatic relations between Japan and Chosŏn were officially restored with the arrival of the first Chosŏn envoy to Japan in Keichō 12 (1607). Chosŏn-Tsushima trade was then re-institutionalized with the conclusion of the Kiyū Agreement (Kiyū Yakujō 己酉約條), a trade agreement signed between the Tsushima domain and Chosŏn Korea in the fifth lunar month of Keichō 14 (1609). The Kiyū Agreement set several stipulations for trade relations: (1) the Japanese envoys were limited to three kinds: the king's (=shogun's) envoy, the Tsushima lord's special envoy, and the appointee of Tsushima island; (2) the number of vessels sent by the Tsushima lord was reduced to twenty; and (3) the vessels were required to carry a sealed document with the Tsushima lord's signature or stamp on it. It is commonly believed that the signing of the Kiyū Agreement officially marked the restoration of the Chosŏn-Tsushima trade, but in fact trade was only actually resumed with the dispatch of the first vessel to the Korean Peninsula in the ninth lunar month of Keichō 16 (1611).<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, an edict dated from Wanli 萬曆 32 (1604) was transmitted from the Chosŏn Department of Rites (Yejo 禮曹) to Tsushima by Yujōng 惟政 (1544–1610), a Chosŏn monk, and Son Munuk 孫文彥 (16th–17th c.), a diplomat. Issued before the conclusion of the Kiyū Agreement, this edict suggested that the reopening of the Pusan trade had already been approved by the Chosŏn government. Tashiro Kazui stated that the resumption of private trade between Japan and Chosŏn was already mentioned in an edict from the councilor of the Department of Rites (Yejo Ch'amüi 禮曹參議) to Tsushima brought by the monk Yujōng in 1604, but Chosŏn's intention to resume private trade was not fixed until the third lunar month of Keichō 15 (1610) because of strong concerns of illicit trade and the leakage of confidential intelligence.<sup>4</sup> Araki Kazunori 荒木和憲 analyzed the negotiation process between Japan and Chosŏn after the Imjin War, as well as the negotiation process regarding the conclusion and implementation of the Kiyū Agreement, and pointed out that the reopening of trade in Pusan in 1604 was only a temporary permission for public and private trade accompanying irregular envoys.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, Korean scholar Min Tök-ki 閔德基 evaluated a rescript sent to Chosŏn in the

2 *Tsūkō ichiran* 通航一覽, vol. 1, no. 25, Seibundō Shuppan, 1912, pp. 299–302; Matsuura Masatada 松浦允任, *Chōsen tsūkō daiki* 朝鮮通交大紀, vol. 4, Tanaka Takeo 田中健夫 and Tashiro Kazui 田代和生, eds., Meicho Shuppan, 1978, pp. 147–153.

3 Tashiro Kazui, *Kinsei Nitchō tsūkō bōekishi no kenkyū* 近世日朝通交貿易史の研究, Sōbunsha, 1981, p. 58; Chōng Sōng-il 鄭成一, *Chōsen hugi taeil muyōk* 朝鮮後期對日貿易, Sinsōwōn, 2000, p. 24. Son Sūng-ch'ōl 孫承喆 has also pointed out that trade between Tokugawa and Chosŏn was not immediately resumed according to the Kiyū Agreement; see *Kinsei no Chōsen to Nihon: Kōrin kankei no kyo to jitsu* 近世の朝鮮と日本：交隣關係の虚と実, Akashi Shoten, 1998, p. 164.

4 Tashiro Kazui, *Kinsei Nitchō tsūkō bōekishi no kenkyū*, pp. 67–68.

5 Araki Kazunori, “‘Jinshin sensō’ no kōwa kōshō” 「壬辰戦争」の講和交渉, *SGRA Report* 86, 2019, pp. 54–74; Araki Kazunori, “Kiyū yakujō no teiketsu, shikō katei to Tsushima no ‘hanei’ bōeki” 己酉約條の締結・施行過程と対馬の「藩營」貿易, in Han-Il Munhwa Kyoryu Kigūm 韓日 문화 교류 기금, *Imjin Waeran esō Chōsen T'ongsinsa ūi Kil ro: Chōnjaeng ūi Sangch'ō wa Ch'iyu, kūrigo Hwahae* 壬辰倭亂에서 朝鮮通信使의 길로 : 戰爭의 傷處와 治癒, 그리고 和解, Kyōngin Munhwasa, 2019, pp. 107–142; Araki Kazunori, “Nitchō kōwa katei ni okeru teitanshi no ichizuke” 日朝講和過程における偵探使の位置づけ, in Han-Il Munhwa Kyoryu Kigūm 韓日 문화 교류 기금, *Kūnse Han-Il Kwan'gye ūi Silsang kwa Hōsang: Yakt'al kwa Kongjon, Chōnjaeng kwa P'yōnghwa* 근세 韓日 관계 의 실상 과 허상 : 약탈 과 공존, 전쟁 과 평화, Kyōngin Munhwasa, 2020, pp. 171–200.

fifth lunar month of Seonjo 宣祖 37 (1604) by Ming envoy Zhao Ji 趙澱 (16th–17th c.) as an “autonomy rescript” that announced a shift in the form of the Chosŏn’s negotiations with Japan and the way of reporting to the Ming, from advance report to after-the-fact notification.<sup>6</sup> Based on Min’s evaluation, Araki Kazunori characterized the period from the ceasefire to the restoration of diplomatic relations between Japan and Chosŏn (the fifth lunar month of 1604 to the fifth lunar month of 1607) as a withdrawal of “Ming interference.” If we follow Min’s assessment and Araki’s periodization, the reopening of the Chosŏn-Tsushima trade in Pusan, which was permitted two months after the issuance of the rescript, should be included in the period of peace negotiations after the dissolution of “Ming interference” and Chosŏn’s report should be considered an after-the-fact notification. However, on the fifth day of the seventh lunar month of the following year, after the issuance of the rescript, which Min evaluated as an indication of the Ming’s non-interference in Chosŏn’s negotiations with Japan, a Ming commander named Shan Jinzhong 單進忠 (16th–17th c.) admonished Tsushima’s envoy Tachibana Tomomasa 橘智正 (16th–17th c.)<sup>7</sup> regarding Ming authority and suzerainty in Chosŏn’s negotiations with Japan,<sup>8</sup> which signified that the Ming interfered in Tokugawa-Chosŏn relations. This fact seems to contradict Min’s view. Moreover, regarding the relationship between the resumption of the Tokugawa-Chosŏn trade and the Chosŏn-Ming relationship, Tsuji Yamato 辻大和 focuses mainly on the Ming official’s patrol of Dongnae after the conclusion of the Kiyū Agreement and argues that the background of the Ming’s interference is the invasion of Ryūkyū 琉球.<sup>9</sup> Tsuji’s viewpoint also contradicts Min’s assessment and defies Araki’s periodization.

Given the political situation around 1604, the political powers of the Tsushima domain, the Japanese central authority (the Tokugawa shogunate), Chosŏn Korea, and Ming China were all involved in the multilateral wrestling behind the reopening of the Chosŏn-Tsushima Pusan trade. It is essential to verify the relationships among the four parties, especially examining when and how Chosŏn gave permission to reopen the Pusan trade to Ming China and whether Chosŏn’s decision was interfered with by the Ming.

In this article, I will attempt to delineate a concrete picture of the intertwining of Ming China, Chosŏn Korea, and Japan (Tsushima and the shogunate) over the reopening of the Pusan trade in 1604 by investigating Tsushima’s manipulations and how Chosŏn reported the reopening of Chosŏn-Tsushima trade to Ming China. It should become clear that the issue is part of the postwar process of the Imjin War and that the role Ming China played in Chosŏn’s foreign policy carried greater weight than has been recognized in previous scholarship. In this sense, the article illustrates that the reopening of trade between Japan and Chosŏn was not a result of bilateral negotiations, but a reflection of the trilateral relationship between Japan (including the Tokugawa shogunate and Tsushima domain), Chosŏn Korea, and Ming China. I will argue that Ming China is an essential element in analyzing the restoration of Japan-Chosŏn relations after the Imjin War.

6 Min Tök-ki, *Zenkindai Higashi Ajia no naka no Kan-Nichi kankei* 前近代東アジアのなかの韓日関係, Waseda University Press, 1994, p. 143.

7 Tachibana appears in Japanese sources as Ide Yarokuzaemon 井出弥六左衛門.

8 *Seonjo sillok*, Seonjo 38 (1605).7.5.

9 Tsuji Yamato, *Chōsen ōchō no taichū bōeki seisaku to minshin kōtai* 朝鮮王朝の対中貿易政策と明清交替, Kyūko Shoin, 2018, ch. 2.



## Chosŏn's Permission to Reopen the Pusan Market in 1604

Tokugawa-Chosŏn trade during the Edo period took three different forms: (1) tributary trade with which the Tsushima domain presented gifts to the Chosŏn court, then received presents in return; (2) official trade, whereby the Chosŏn government bought designated items, including copper, tin, and buffalo horns, from Tsushima and paid in cotton, based on a fixed quantity and fixed-price system; and (3) private trade or market trade, conducted between Chosŏn merchants designated by the Chosŏn government and the people of Tsushima domain at the Kaeshi Daech'ŏng 開市大廳<sup>10</sup> in the Japan House in Pusan (Jp. *wakan*, Kr. *Waegwan* 倭館). Trading took place six times a month, with the Tsushima domain mainly exporting silver and importing ginseng, raw silk, etc. from China via Chosŏn. With few exceptions, the Pusan trade was not based on a fixed quantity or fixed-price system but rather on the pursuit of profit. Initially, the market was open three times a month, but from 1610, it opened six times a month.<sup>11</sup>

As for the reopening of the Pusan trade in 1604, Tashiro Kazui interpreted it as permission to resume private trade between Tsushima and Chosŏn.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, Araki Kazunori interpreted it as permission for both official trade and private trade, based on the fact that official trade with the Tsushima envoy was tentatively permitted in 1602.<sup>13</sup> Considering these divergent views, it is necessary to return to the fundamental sources and reexamine them.

Two primary sources are used by historians in determining the nature of the Pusan trade in 1604. One is a letter from a councilor of the Department of Rites (Yejo Ch'amüi Sŏng Imun 成以文 (1546–1618) to Sō Yoshitoshi, the lord of Tsushima domain, dated from the seventh lunar month of Wanli 32 [1604]; hereafter Sŏng Imun letter). The other source is an edict issued by Yejo, Chosŏn's Department of Rites (hereafter Yejo Edict) in the same year. Both were delivered to Tsushima by the monk Yujŏng and Son Munuk.

In the Sŏng Imun letter, the Chosŏn court reported Japan's request for rapprochement to Ming officials and asked for instructions from the Jiliao 薊遼 governor. This was a declaration that Chosŏn could not decide such matters on its own since all issues related to the restoration of Tokugawa-Chosŏn relations were to be decided by Ming China. And the instruction of the Jiliao governor was that Japan's request could not be approved immediately but that Chosŏn could allow the temporary restoration of trade with Tsushima. What Chosŏn allowed here was “the coming and going of Tsushima merchants and the trading of the goods and cargos they carried” (齎來物貨, 往來交易).<sup>14</sup> In other words, the Sŏng Imun letter describes the process that led to the reopening of trade in Pusan.

10 This is the name of a building in Japan House in Pusan.

11 Tashiro Kazui, *Kinsei Nitchō tsūkō bōekishi no kenkyū*, pp. 67–68; Tashiro Kazui, “Tsushima han's Korean Trade, 1684–1710,” *ACTA ASIATICA* 30, 1976, pp. 85–105; Kim Chi-nam 金指南, *T'ongmun'gwan chi* 通文館志, vol. 5, Chosŏn Ch'ongdokpu 朝鮮總督府, 1944.

12 Araki Kazunori, *Kiyū yakujō no teiketsu*, pp. 124, 128; Tashiro Kazui, *Kinsei Nitchō tsūkō bōekishi no kenkyū*, pp. 67–68.

13 Araki Kazunori, “Jinshin sensō' no kōwa kōshō,” p. 73.

14 Letters kept in the Tsushima Sō family documents, such as *Zenrin tsūsho* 善隣通書 and *Chōsen tsūkō daiki*, are frequently used by scholars.

The Sōng Imun letter exists in several altered versions. One version of the letter is found in the shogunate's collections such as *Gaikoku kankei shokan* 外国関係書簡,<sup>15</sup> *Ikoku nikki* 異国日記,<sup>16</sup> and *Ikoku raikan mitome* 異国来翰認.<sup>17</sup> The other is those held in the Tsushima Sō family documents (Tsushima Sōke Monjo 対馬宗家文書), such as *Zenrin tsūsho*<sup>18</sup> and *Chōsen tsūkō daiki*.<sup>19</sup> Araki Kazunori noted that the Sōng Imun letter kept in the shogunate's documents had additional words such as “It is my pleasure to present this idea in detail to the shogunate (幸將此意細陳于内府公),”<sup>20</sup> which did not appear in the version found in the Tsushima Sō family documents, and he therefore argued that the Tsushima domain had falsified this letter. However, when comparing the Tsushima version with the *bakufu* version, deletions are very noticeable, rather than the additions pointed out by Kazunori Araki. Five sections were deleted by the Tsushima domain when Tsushima submitted the Sōng Imun letter to the shogunate. In addition to the deletion of trade permission, other details, including the repatriation of Chosōn captives by the Tsushima domain, Tsushima's threat of using the shogunate's force against Chosōn, and the related parts of Chosōn-Tsushima negotiations were redacted. In other words, permission for the reopening of trade in Pusan and Tsushima's negotiations regarding this was kept secret from the shogunate.

In comparison, the Yejo Edict is significant as it contains the permission for the market trade. The first half of the instruction explains the background of this permission. After the Imjin War, the relationship between Japan and Chosōn was severed, and trade was no longer possible, so the Tsushima domain petitioned Chosōn to “trade as before (照旧交市).”<sup>21</sup> Here, “trade” refers to market trade or private trade. We could say that according to the Yejo Edict, the reopening of the Pusan trade in 1604 only permitted limited restoration of private trade. In addition, the edict also outlines that “market trades could be allowed only when the Tsushima merchants solicited for trade (遇有本島倭子乞要交易物貨者，許令開市).”<sup>22</sup> It is clear that the Yejo Edict only permitted private trade between Tsushima and Chosōn on an irregular basis and did not resume full trading relations.

Regarding the Yejo Edict, there is a reference to the negotiation records on the

15 The Historiographical Institute of the University of Tokyo, Kondō Jūzō Kankei Shiryō S 近藤重藏 関係資料-4-403, <https://clioimg.hi.u-tokyo.ac.jp/viewer/report/view/ldata/T34/4/403/00000009>, accessed March 1, 2022).

16 *Ikoku Nikki Kankōkai* 異国日記刊行会, ed., *Eibun ikoku nikki: Konchiin Sūden gaikō monjo shūsei* 影印本異国日記：金地院崇伝外交文書集成, Tōkyōbijutsu, 1989, p. 124.

17 The Historiographical Institute of the University of Tokyo (2051.9–120); Library of Graduate School of Letters, Kyoto University (国史：こ 2/5).

18 *Zenrin tsūsho*, vol. 3 (National Institute of Korean History, no. 4750, MF782, <http://library.history.go.kr/dhrs/dhrsXIFViewer.jsp?system=dlidb&id=DK0000004750>, pp.16–17, accessed November 28, 2022).

19 Matsuura Masatada, “*Chōsen tsūkō daiki*,” pp. 154–155; Araki Kazunori, “Jinshin sensō,” p. 68.

20 This sentence appears in *Gaikoku kankei shokan*, *Ikoku nikki*, and *Ikoku raikan mitome*.

21 *Zenrin tsūsho*, vol. 11 (National Institute of Korean History, no. 4786, MF785), *Chōsen tsūkō daiki*, pp. 156–157, Jiun isho 自雲遺書 (National Institute of Korean History, no. 6519, MF954).

22 Ibid.

Tsushima-Chosŏn trade in the eighteenth century named *Kaishi no kakitsuke* 開市の書付<sup>23</sup> in the Tsushima Sō family documents, a note on the market trade which relates to the history of the restoration of the Tsushima-Chosŏn trade. The note first states that in 1604, Yujōng and Son Munuk came to Japan as peace envoys and had an audience with Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康 (1543–1616) and Tokugawa Hidetada 徳川秀忠 (1579–1632) at Fushimi 伏見 Castle. Before Yujōng came to Japan, they received an edict from the Chosŏn court, which clearly stated that Chosŏn had permitted them to reopen the trade with Tsushima because Tsushima had requested it. After that, the conclusion of the Kiyū Agreement is mentioned, but in fact it stated that permission for reopening trade had already been granted in 1604, six years before the conclusion of the Kiyū Agreement. However, since formal diplomatic relations between Japan and Chosŏn had not yet been restored, the decision was made after informal negotiations between Tsushima and Chosŏn and was not reported to the shogunate. Later, in Kan'ei 寛永 12 (1635), an edict brought by Yujōng and a note explaining the instruction were submitted to Tokugawa Iemitsu 徳川家光 (1604–1651). It was only then that the shogunate came to know about its existence for the first time.<sup>24</sup> Until 1635, the shogunate did not even know of the Chosŏn's permission to reopen the Pusan market in 1604.

When the Tsushima domain submitted the Sōng Imun letter to the shogunate, it deleted Chosŏn's permission to open trade in Pusan and the details of its manipulation. Moreover, the Yejo Edict, which was evidence of trade permission, had not been submitted to the shogunate until 1635. Instead of reporting to the shogunate immediately, the Tsushima domain chose to deliberately conceal the resuming Tsushima-Chosŏn trade. Since Japan-Chosŏn diplomatic relations had not yet been reestablished at the time when the Pusan trade reopened in 1604, Tsushima not only falsified the Sōng Imun letter but also concealed Chosŏn's permission for the reopening of the Pusan trade to keep the shogunate from knowing what Tsushima had done.

## The Chosŏn and Ming's Position on the Reopening of the Pusan Trade

### 1. The Ming's Narrative on the Reopening of the Pusan Trade

To analyze the Ming interference in the reopening of the Pusan trade, we need to first examine the

23 National Institute of Korean History (No. 4517, MF753), *Pullyu kisa taegang* 분류 기사 대강 II, Kuksa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe 국사편찬위원회, 2006, pp. 89–91. This mainly includes the background of the Palpo Incident and correspondence between the translators of the Tsushima domain, Japan House in Pusan, and the Chosŏn court from the fifth lunar month of Kyōhō 享保 2 (1717) to the third lunar month of Kyōhō 3 (1718). In 1715, to control the circulation of silver, the Chosŏn court further tightened the Palpo trade quota policy in the Qing-Chosŏn trade. In response to this, Chosŏn merchants, Japanese translators in Chosŏn, and Tsushima agents of the Japan House in Pusan joined forces to lobby against the tightening of controls in the Qing-Chosŏn silver trade. In addition, there is also a source titled *Happō no kiroku* 八包之記録 (No. 5439, MF872) kept in the Tsushima Sō family documents, National Institute of Korean History. For details on the Palpo Incident, see Cheng, *Kai hentai no Higashi Ajia*, ch. 7.

24 This affair is called the *Yanagawa ikken* 柳川一件; see Kim Sang-jun 김상준 and Yun Yu-suk, 윤유숙, *Kūnse Han-Il kwan'gye saryojip: Yanagawa Sigeok'i Kuji kirok = Yuchŏn Chohūng Kongsā kirok* 근세 한일 관계 사료집 : 야나가와 시게오키 구지 기록 = 柳川調興公事記録, Tongbuga Yōksa Chaedan, 2015, p. 79.

Ming sources that recorded the reestablishment of Tokugawa-Chosŏn relations. According to the *Ming shilu* 明實錄 (Ming Veritable Record), Japan and Chosŏn first planned to “open the market trade” in Wanli 37 (1609),<sup>25</sup> the year that the Kiyū Agreement was concluded. It is also noted in *Ming shilu* that in Wanli 35 (1607), when the king of Chosŏn reported to the Ming court about Japan’s request for reconciliation by exchanging envoys, the Board of War decided to let Chosŏn make its own decision and showed no intention of interference. From these descriptions, can we conclude that the Ming had nothing to do with the restoration of the Japan-Chosŏn trade?

On the other hand, the king of Chosŏn reported the Japanese situation to the Ming. He permitted the reopening of the Pusan trade in 1609 after receiving Ming approval to handle the negotiation on its own terms. This also means that the Ming side understood that Chosŏn had not yet permitted trade with Japan when the king of Chosŏn reported to the Ming about the Japanese situation in the fourth lunar month of Wanli 35 (1607). It is also stated in *Ming shilu* that the Ming was fully aware of a constant and ongoing private friendship between Pusan and Tsushima even before the reopening of the trade in 1609. In other words, the Ming were also cognizant of the existence of Japan-Chosŏn transactions that had not been reported to it.

The post-Imjin peace negotiations between Japan and Chosŏn are also documented in *Wanli sandazheng kao* 萬曆三大征考 (The Three Campaigns of the Wanli Era) by Mao Ruizheng 茅瑞徵 (16th–17th c.). An unofficial history book, Mao’s work is a primary source with a high historical value. Mao writes, “Later in the third year (1609), the Ming court discussed and approved the opening of trade in the Pusan port. The number of merchant’s vessels from Tsushima was set at twenty each year, and they must return to Tsushima immediately after the transactions (後三年己酉，朝議允于釜山港開市，本島商船歲以二十為率，事竣即回).”<sup>26</sup> The Ming court had exerted a powerful influence on the reopening of the Pusan trade and was aware of the number of vessels dispatched from Tsushima to Chosŏn every year, which was of most interest to Tsushima in the Kiyū Agreement.

In both of the abovementioned official accounts and the unofficial history from the Ming side, there is no mention of Chosŏn’s permission to open trade in Pusan in 1604, and it is recorded that “market trade” was permitted in 1609, the year of the signing of the Kiyū Agreement. Furthermore, the *Ming shilu* suggests that the Ming left the restoration of the Japan-Chosŏn trade to the discretion of Chosŏn, but in Mao’s *Wanli sandazheng kao*, it is recorded that the “market trade” was realized with the permission of the Ming in 1609. There is a discrepancy between the timing of the approval by the Ming and the fact that the Chosŏn court had already approved the private trade between Japan and Chosŏn in 1604. Therefore, Chosŏn did not report to the Ming that it had already granted permission for the opening of Pusan trade in 1604 but only reported the conclusion of the Kiyū Agreement to the Ming in 1609.

## 2. The Report from Chosŏn Korea to Ming China

Since Seonjo 36 (1603), the Chosŏn court had discussed the topic of the reopening of the trade in

25 *Ming shengzong shilu*, Wanli 35 (1607).4.18. *Shengzong* refers to the Wanli Emperor and the *Ming shengzong shilu* is a part of *Ming shilu*.

26 *Beijing tushuguan guji zhenben congkan* 北京圖書館古籍珍本叢刊, vol. 13, Shumu Wenxian Chubanshe, 1988, p. 269.



Pusan and the necessity of reporting it to the Ming many times. In the memorial sent by the Border Defense Command to the king of Chosŏn in the eighth lunar month of Seonjo 36, it was stated that “since cargo trade with Tsushima had been recently allowed (近日已許交易其商物),” “it is appropriate to temporarily allow the opening of the market trade (姑許關市, 似爲便當).”<sup>27</sup> Here, “recently” probably refers to the three transactions between Tsushima and the Chosŏn government that took place in Pusan in the winter of Seonjo 34 (1601), the seventh lunar month of Seonjo 35 (1602), and the third lunar month of Seonjo 36 (1603).<sup>28</sup> One month later, the king of Chosŏn gathered chief ministers and high officials and solicited their opinion on the reopening of the Pusan trade. In the *Seonjo sillok* (Veritable Record of Seonjo), the statements of twenty-nine officials are recorded, among which the most noteworthy is that of Yun Kŭnsu 尹根壽 (1537–1616).<sup>29</sup> Yun’s statement reveals that the Chosŏn had already allowed Tsushima’s goods to be bought and sold, and that the Chosŏn had already inquired with the Ming about the possibility of Chosŏn-Japan relations but had not yet received a reply. It also made clear that the Chosŏn internally recognized that they had to wait for Ming approval before permission could be granted. We can see from Yun Kŭnsu’s statement that the Ming’s opinion was decisive for the Chosŏn regarding the opening of the Pusan trade.

The Chosŏn court was leaning toward resuming trade with Tsushima in Pusan, although no definitive conclusion was reached at the time. In the following month, King Seonjo decided to report it to the Ming. On the twenty-sixth day of the eleventh lunar month (December 28, 1603), Jeong Hok 鄭穀 (1559–1617), a councilor of the Department of Rites, was dispatched to Beijing to present a long rescript, in which Chosŏn first reported the latest developments with Japan and then proposed a compromise measure to allow for the reopening of the Pusan trade, which had long been requested by Tsushima. The rescript also shows that negotiations for the restoration of diplomatic relations between Japan and Chosŏn were not progressing, that Japan would threaten another invasion of Chosŏn, and that with a prevailing drought the weather was not favorable this year. Chosŏn added that the permission for the opening of trade in Pusan was only a temporary solution while the negotiations were in stalemate, and also a measure to mitigate the potential threat of another Japanese invasion. Besides, the Chosŏn also requested that the Ming dispatch a commissioner to Chosŏn to train the Chosŏn army and pretend that the Chosŏn army was the Ming army, thereby fortifying the frontier defense and confusing the Japanese.

With the above rescript, the envoy arrived in Beijing in the second lunar month of Wanli 32 (1604) and had a meeting with officials from the Board of Rites. When Ming officials asked about the purpose of the mission, Jeong Hok replied that it was to express gratitude for the repatriation of the Chosŏn people by Ming China and made a statement regarding the dispatch of a commissioner to Chosŏn.<sup>30</sup> Here, it should be noted that Jeong Hok omitted the request for permission to reopen the Pusan trade. In his comments, he repeatedly stressed the urgency of the Japanese situation and skillfully incorporated the details of the approval for the reopening of trade into his

27 *Seonjo sillok*, Seonjo 36 (1603).8.8.

28 *Seonjo sillok*, Seonjo 35 (1602).7.10; *Seonjo sillok*, Seonjo 36 (1603).3.24.

29 *Seonjo sillok*, Seonjo 36 (1603).9.3; *Wŏlchŏng chip* 月汀集 (Hakchawŏn, 2015, pp. 207–208).

30 Jeong Hok, *Songpogong jocheon ilgi* 松浦公朝天日記, Yŏnhaengnok Ch’onggan Chŭngbop’an 燕行錄叢刊增補版, pp. 16–17.

request for the dispatch of a commissioner to Chosŏn. During his stay in Beijing, Jeong Hok repeatedly requested the dispatch of a commissioner to the Board of War, but the Ming refused, pointing Chosŏn to “strengthen itself.” The Ming did not dispatch a commissioner until Yi Sinwŏn 李信元 (16th–17th c.), who left Hansŏng later, brought a rescript reporting the arrival of the Japanese in Pusan again. Due to Jeong’s replies and actions, the Ming did not pay much attention to the approval of the reopening of trade in Pusan. Jeong Hok left Beijing on May 22, returned to Hansŏng on July 25, and then debriefed to the king of Chosŏn.

At the same time, Zhao Yong 趙灝 (16th–17th c.), a Ming imperial commissioner, arrived in Chosŏn bringing instructions on how to handle Tsushima after the Imjin War.

Chosŏn should know the pros and cons [of Japan]. That is to say, Chosŏn should consider countermeasures to deal with the situation as it arises, which is not for the Ming to direct in any way. Whether to conclude friendly relations [with Japan] or not, is a matter to be decided by the countries involved and the dissolving of the alliance has not led to war, so it is not a matter for the Ming to direct [these negotiations].

其是非利害，計惟該國自知之，則觀勢策應，相機區處，亦惟該國自任之，固非天朝所能一一指揮，而講信修睦，事屬與國，消盟弭變，事屬未然，尤非天朝之所可指揮者也。<sup>31</sup>

In this rescript, it is explicit that Chosŏn’s diplomatic relations with Japan (“negotiation and friendship”) should be decided between the two countries and that the Ming had no particular intention to micromanage or mediate. Thus, Chosŏn began to deal with Tsushima on its own. In the following month, Chosŏn decided to dispatch Yujŏng and Son Munuk to Tsushima and sent them with Sŏng Imun’s letter and the Yejo Edict, as described above.

Min Tŏk-ki evaluated the significance of the rescript as an “autonomy rescript” that changed Chosŏn’s negotiations with Japan and shifted the way of reporting to the Ming, from an advance report to after-the-fact notification. Given Jeong Hok’s trip, it is true that the Chosŏn reported to the Ming in advance before permitting the reopening of the Pusan trade. However, since it had already been reported to the Ming before the “autonomy rescript” was issued, it was an advance report rather than an after-the-fact notification. In explaining the necessity of allowing the reopening of the Pusan trade, Chosŏn positioned it as both a temporary compromise in Japan-Chosŏn diplomatic negotiations and as a mitigation measure to prevent another Japanese military invasion. Furthermore, the Chosŏn emphasized the urgency of the situation in Japan and cleverly built the issue of permission to open trade into the issue of requesting a military commissioner. Therefore, while the Ming focused their attention on the issue of dispatching military commissioners, they were not particularly opposed to the issue of reopening the Pusan trade, which was positioned as a temporary compromise measure in Japan-Chosŏn diplomatic negotiations for peace. In other words, while the Chosŏn was bound by the tributary obligation to make advance reports and obtain Ming approval, it nonetheless maneuvered and diverted the Ming’s attention from the Chosŏn’s true intention by mixing two different matters in one rescript.

Moreover, in reviewing the “autonomy rescript,” the purpose was to make sure that the Ming

31 *Seonjo sillok*, Seonjo 37 (1604).5.21.

wanted the Chosŏn to “look at the situation, consider countermeasures, and take action according to the situation, and not just impose responsibility on the Ming and lose the opportunity to make a decision (觀變策應, 相機區處, 毋得專諉天朝, 因循延緩, 致滋兩誤).”<sup>32</sup>

In addition, the Chosŏn reported Yujŏng and Son-Munuk’s visit to Tsushima to Ming China,<sup>33</sup> which gave permission for the opening of the Pusan trade but did not report the permission granted for the opening of trade in Pusan in 1604 during this trip. The Chosŏn formally reported to the Ming but granted permission to trade without Ming approval. Perhaps, for this reason, Ming China did not consider the 1604 reopening of the Pusan trade as an issue and considered the conclusion of the Kiyū Agreement as permission to trade. This is the reason why Ming sources did not mention the permission of the Pusan trade in 1604 but only recorded that Chosŏn-Tsushima trade was permitted in Wanli 37 (1609) when the Kiyū Agreement was signed.

Due to the scarcity of extant sources,<sup>34</sup> it is not possible to confirm when the Chosŏn reported the conclusion of the Kiyū Agreement to the Ming. Still, it can be indirectly inferred from the following case. In 1609, the Satsuma 薩摩 domain invaded Ryūkyū. In the following year, Mō Hougi 毛鳳儀<sup>35</sup> (1558–1623) was dispatched to the Ming to report this invasion to the Fujian 福建 Governor, Chen Zizhen 陳子貞 (16th–17th c.). Upon learning of the incident, the Ming court decided to discuss Chosŏn relations with Japan in connection to the Satsuma invasion of Ryūkyū. The Ming court dispatched Cai Zhongyu 蔡仲宇 (16th–17th c.) from Liaodong 遼東 to Chosŏn to investigate Chosŏn-Japan relations. Hō Chōngsik 許廷式 (16th–17th c.), the Chosŏn receptionist in charge of entertaining Ming officials, sent a report to the Chosŏn court.<sup>36</sup> He reported that Cai’s purpose was to investigate communications between Chosŏn and Japan, especially the Japanese in Pusan, since he deliberately set up a camp near Japan House in Pusan after his arrival. Cai then invited eleven Japanese for questioning. After confirming the Tsushima people’s trading activities, which included selling pepper and *tanboku* (*dan mu* 丹木, a sacred tree) to Chosŏn and purchasing rice and salt from Chosŏn, Cai stated that there was no problem because the Ming had already authorized such trading activities between Japan and Chosŏn. As early as the third month of Gwanhaegun 2 (1610), the Ming was aware of the trading activities between the two countries and had authorized them. If this is the case, the “sales activities between Japan and the Chosŏn” that were “permitted” by Ming China here refer to the Kiyū Agreement.

On the other hand, prior to this, in Wanli 34 (1606), a Ming envoy named Zhu Zhifan 朱之蕃 (1558–1626) delivered an edict of the Ming emperor to Chosŏn. The edict recalls the Liaodong military commissioner, who had been stationed in Chosŏn to investigate Japanese affairs for the past three years. The edict decreed that since Japan had not taken any particularly worrisome actions the military commissioner should return to China and that Chosŏn should report the Japanese situation from now on. Chosŏn was required to send a report on the Japanese situation

32 Ibid.

33 On the fourth day of the sixth month of Wanli 33 (1605), the Chosŏn reported to the Ming on Yujŏng’s return. Still, there is no report of the permission for reopening the Chosŏn-Tsushima trade during this mission. *Sadae mungwe* 事大文軌, vol. 45, Chosŏn Ch’ongdokpu 朝鮮總督府, 1944; *Imun dŭngnok* 吏文謄錄, vol. 11 (Jangseogak, Academy of Korean Studies, K2-3497).

34 *Sadae mungwe* ends at the eleventh lunar month of 1608, and *Imun dŭngnok* has gaps from 1605 to 1616.

35 He appears in Japanese sources as Ikegusuku Anrai 池城親方安頼.

36 *Gwanhaegun ilgi* (*T’aebaeksan sago chung’obon*), Gwanhaegun 光海君 2 (1609).3.12.

every two months to military commanders in Zhejiang 浙江 and southern Zhili 直隸 provinces and to make urgent reports on critical incidents.<sup>37</sup> The every-two-month report continued to at least Tian'qi 天啓 (1621).<sup>38</sup> Considering this, it is possible that the Chosŏn side reported the conclusion of the Kiyū Agreement as a part of the report on Japanese affairs to Ming China, which was implemented in 1606.

### Chosŏn's Negotiations with Tsushima

In Wanli 40 (1612), after the Satsuma invasion of Ryūkyū, Zhejiang Military Commander Yang Zongye 楊宗業 (16th–17th c.) and General Shen Youyong 沈有容 (1557–1628) strongly insisted that no Japanese should be allowed into Jeolla 全羅 and Gyeongsang 慶尙 provinces in the southern Korean Peninsula. The Wanli emperor approved their proposal and ordered the king of Chosŏn to do so. Since Japan House in Pusan was under the jurisdiction of South Gyeongsang Province, it was naturally understood that this order would lead to the prohibition of the Chosŏn-Tsushima trade in Pusan. Therefore, on June 28, Wanli 41 (1613), when Joseon envoys Song Yōngku 宋英耆 (1556–1620) and Yi Sangkūp 李尚伋 (1571–1637) departed Hansōng for Beijing to celebrate the birthday of the emperor and crown prince as Ch'ōnch'usa 千秋使—a Chosŏn envoy sent to celebrate the birth of the empress or crown prince of China—they carried a rescript by the king of Chosŏn to appeal to the Ming decision.

In the rescript, the king of Chosŏn explained that he had already reported to the Ming both the restoration of diplomatic and trade relations between Japan and Chosŏn and that all negotiations with Japan were conducted under Ming instructions. He also stated that the permission for the reopening of trade in Pusan had been done before the conclusion of the Kiyū Agreement in Wanli 37 (1609). The Song and Yi mission appeared to dispel the suspicions of the Ming court.<sup>39</sup>

Thus, Chosŏn continued to reject new requests from Tsushima, repeatedly stating to Japan that the Ming authorities permitted opening the trade in Pusan when defending against the Ming's false accusations. For example, when the Tsushima monk Keitetsu Genso 景轍玄蘇 (1537–1611) and the Tsushima domain's retainer Yanagawa Kagenao 柳川景直 (?–1613) were in Pusan to negotiate the Kiyū Agreement, Yanagawa asked the Chosŏn to provide a way for Japan to pay tribute to the Ming, but the official Yi Chiwan 李志完 (1575–1617) refused their request. When Yu Kan 柳澗 (1554–1621), the councilor of the Department of Rites, communicated with the lord of Tsushima domain, Yu referred to the report of Zhejiang Military Commander Yang Zongye and the dispatch of commander Huang Yingyang 黃應暘 (16th–17th c.) to Chosŏn, and stated that “it was very fortunate to continue the Chosŏn-Tsushima trade despite such a situation (此際得保開市往來，亦彼此之幸也)”<sup>40</sup> and then turned down the request for Japan to travel to and

37 *Ming shengzong shilu*, Wanli 33 (1605).12.14; *Seonjo suchōng sillok*, Seonjo 39 (1606).4.1.

38 The last verifiable report on the Japanese situation from Chosŏn to Ming is dated Tian'qi 1 (1621).2.30 (*Imun dūngnok*, vol. 15).

39 *Gwanghaegun ilgi (T'aebaeksan sago chungch'obon)*, Gwanghaegun 5 (1613).5.8.

40 Letter dated Wanli 38 (1610).7.20, *Zenrin tsūsho*, vol. 4 (National Institute of Korean History, no. 4751, MF782).



pay tribute to Ming China through the Korean Peninsula.

The following year, in 1613, Tsushima Lord Sō Yoshitoshi again requested to travel to Ming China via the Korean Peninsula, but Kim Chi 金緻 (1577–1625), the councilor of the Department of Rites, rejected the request. In his reply Kim wrote:

The court considered that Tsushima implored with sincerity for the reopening of the Pusan trade, and we appealed to and urged the heavenly court. Only through effort was the reopening of the Pusan trade finally permitted. The agreement and the number of vessels to be sent to Tsushima were all reported to the heavenly court, and the regulations were set, and even the slightest decision cannot be made without the approval of the Ming.

釜市之設，朝廷以貴島之乞款甚懇，申請於天朝，多費心力，始蒙准許，而開市之約條，歲船之額數，悉報天朝，已定規限，此外絲毫之事，本國不得有所擅便。<sup>41</sup>

In addition, in the tenth lunar month of the same year, in a letter to the lord of Tsushima, the councilor of the department of rites, Kim Kae 金闖 (1582–1618), also wrote:

Chosŏn has already reported to the Ming to permit the Pusan trade because Tsushima had respectfully shown its sincerity and earnestly beseeched them. Why are you not satisfied and always complain?

我國以貴島恪修誠款，懇乞不已，具報天朝，許開釜市，德甚盛也，恩至渥也，足下何不知足而忌兮。<sup>42</sup>

Kim strictly refused Tsushima's further demands, including entering the capital of Chosŏn, traveling to Ming via the Chosŏn, the request to dispatch Chosŏn missions to Japan, increasing the number of ships from Tsushima to Chosŏn, and the demand for a grant stamp (*tosho* 圖書)<sup>43</sup> to Tsushima.

In 1615, the Tsushima domain requested that the Chosŏn send a mission to Japan for the celebration of Tokugawa Kazuko's 德川和子 (1607–1678) bridal entry into the Japanese court. Yu Kan explained again that Chosŏn submitted a request to Ming China to restore the Chosŏn-Tsushima trade since Tsushima had shown its sincerity. Then Ming China granted permission and ruled on all maritime agreements, so Chosŏn could only respectfully comply with the Ming's inspection.

From then on, when Chosŏn officials were negotiating with Tsushima, they continued to emphasize that the reopening of trade in Pusan was under the permission of the Ming and turned down requests from Tsushima.

41 Letter dated Wanli 42 (1614).4, *ibid.*

42 Letter dated Wanli 42 (1614).10, *ibid.*

43 A *tosho* was a bronze seal issued by the Chosŏn government to travelers from Japan as proof of permission for diplomatic relations to control Japanese correspondents. It was a private seal; the official seal was called *inshō* 印章.

## Conclusion

After the Imjin War, the Tsushima domain continued to negotiate with Chosŏn to reestablish Japan-Chosŏn relations, using measures such as repatriating Chosŏn captives and threatening Chosŏn with another invasion. The reopening of trade in Pusan in 1604 was the first result of Tsushima's efforts. Tsushima falsified its correspondence with Korea so that the shogunate would not be exposed to these various maneuvers to restore Japan-Chosŏn relations and even kept secret from the shogunate that the permission to reopen trade in Pusan had been granted.

While Ming China expressed its position that it would not interfere in Chosŏn's negotiations with Japan, it began to doubt Chosŏn's relations with Japan as the circumstances in East Asia changed due to the Satsuma domain's invasion of Ryūkyū. Under these circumstances, Chosŏn skillfully took measures and temporarily succeeded in making a proactive decision in granting permission to Tsushima for the reopening of trade in Pusan. Later, when the Chosŏn's diplomatic relations with Japan were questioned by the Ming, they were forced to explain the situation of Japan-Chosŏn relations and succeeded in avoiding any problems. From these points of view, Ming China did not particularly object to Chosŏn's policy-making when granting permission to reopen trade in Pusan. Still, when the circumstances in East Asia shifted, the Ming grew suspicious over Chosŏn's actions. This was not necessarily a complete non-interference, and the power to constrain Chosŏn's negotiations with Japan was still in the hands of Ming China. While the "autonomy rescript" indicated the Ming's intention to ease its grip on Chosŏn's affairs with Japan, it was far from a complete withdrawal of Ming influence in the sense of Chosŏn-Japan diplomacy.

Therefore, the reopening of the Chosŏn-Tsushima trade in the early seventeenth century in Pusan resulted not only from Chosŏn-Tsushima bilateral negotiations, but also involved a more complicated multilateral relationship internal to Japan itself—the Tsushima domain and the Tokugawa shogunate as two parties of interest in Japan, as well as the Chosŏn and the Ming.

### 外交と王権

——1604年釜山開市許可をめぐる日本・朝鮮・明の三国関係——

程 永超\*

対馬府中藩にとって、壬辰戦争によって断絶された朝鮮王朝との関係の回復は外交的緊急課題だった。本稿では、その過程において明朝中国が果たした重要な役割について明らかにする。貿易回復の具体的な表れは1604年の釜山開市であるが、その許可は、対馬と朝鮮王朝との間の交渉だけによって実現したのではなく、日本国内の二つの権力（対馬藩と徳川幕府）、朝鮮王朝、

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明朝の四者の複雑な関わりのなかで実現したものであった。

キーワード：対馬府中藩、徳川幕府、壬辰戦争、文禄・慶長の役、壬辰倭乱

## Chōshū, Shin Buddhism and the Restoration of the Emperor

Mick DENECKERE\*

In the 1860s, an alliance of the Satsuma and Chōshū domains succeeded in overthrowing the Tokugawa regime, leading to the Meiji Restoration in 1868. Next to the economic, political, social, and ideological factors that enabled Chōshū to perform this historical role, there was yet another, lesser-known aspect of Chōshū that was instrumental in preparing the domain for this historical task, namely its religious landscape, in which Shin (True Pure Land) Buddhism occupied a crucial place. This article discusses how the intertwinement of strong pro-emperor sentiment in Chōshū—a domain with an important Shin Buddhist presence—and the historical link between the Shin sect and the imperial institution propelled Shin Buddhism into playing an important, yet underacknowledged role in the Meiji Restoration.

**Keywords:** Modern Japanese Buddhism, Nishi Honganji, Meiji Restoration, *sonnō jōi*, *gohō gokoku*

### Shin Buddhism in Chōshū and Pro-Emperor Sentiment

In the 1860s, the domains of Satsuma 薩摩 and Chōshū 長州 formed an alliance and succeeded in overthrowing the Tokugawa 徳川 (1603–1868) regime, leading to the Meiji Restoration (*Meiji ishin* 明治維新) in 1868. In his monograph *Chōshū in the Meiji Restoration*, Albert Craig discusses the economic, political, social, and ideological factors that enabled Chōshū to play this historical role.<sup>1</sup> However, there was yet another, lesser-known aspect of Chōshū that was instrumental in preparing the domain for this task, namely its religious landscape, in which Shin Buddhism (Jōdo Shinshū 浄土真宗 or Shinshū 真宗, True Pure Land Buddhism) occupied a crucial place.

From the early sixteenth century onwards the daimyo family that ruled Chōshū was the House of Mōri 毛利. While the Mōri in Chōshū were themselves Zen 禅 Buddhists, they were

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1 Albert M. Craig, *Chōshū in the Meiji Restoration*, Harvard University Press, 1961.



careful in their dealings with Shin Buddhist temples, priests, and believers.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, given Shin Buddhists' involvement in the 1475 uprisings by peasants who refused to submit to any form of authority and pay taxes, the Mōri were aware of the sect's potential to cause uproar among its followers.<sup>3</sup> Since Shin Buddhism had spread to the Chōshū area relatively late compared to other regions of Japan, the Mōri managed to avoid the mistake made by other domains of adopting oppressive measures against Shin believers. Instead, they espoused a policy of turning Shin Buddhists into allies and co-opting them into their own forces, because protecting Shin temples, which were supported by an overwhelming majority of the population, was the most effective way of avoiding friction. As part of this policy the Mōri actively encouraged intermarriage between their family and Shin priests.

In the transition to Tokugawa rule in the early seventeenth century, commoners and priests were disarmed and only samurai were allowed to continue carrying swords. As a result, Shin Buddhism no longer constituted the military threat that it had before, but its large number of followers among all layers of society, particularly at the grassroots level, functioned independently from any form of centralized control and continued to represent a considerable force. To further diminish the power of the sect, the first Tokugawa shogun, Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康 (1542–1616), therefore split the Shin sect's main temple (*honzan* 本山) Honganji 本願寺 into a Nishi 西 (West) and a Higashi 東 (East) branch in 1602. As a result of this division, all Shin temples in Chōshū became affiliated with Nishi Honganji 西本願寺.

During the Edo 江戸 (1603–1867) period, the Tokugawa *bakufu* 幕府 (military government) exercised a strict control on Buddhist temples and imposed restrictions on the content of Buddhist priests' sermons, leading many Buddhist sects to increasingly alienate themselves from society. By contrast, Shin priests succeeded in maintaining their proximity to their followers, regularly violating the ban on preaching in laypeople's houses. In regions with a strong Shin Buddhist presence such as Chōshū, practices other than *nenbutsu* 念仏 (the simple intoning of Amida 阿彌陀 Buddha's name) were rejected, thus enabling Shin Buddhism to preserve its characteristic religious style and customs. Although the Edo period may have been one of relative peace—it is sometimes referred to as Pax Tokugawa—Shin believers remained militant and alert, always ready to fight in defense of their faith. That the Shin sect was able to retain its vigor in Western Japan under the Tokugawa is exemplified by the emergence of remarkable Shin scholar-priests in the late

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2 For the history of Shin Buddhism in Chōshū, I have drawn extensively on Kodama Shiki 児玉識, *Kinsei Shinshū no tenkai katei: Nishi Nihon o chūshin toshite* 近世真宗の展開過程：西日本を中心として, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1976.

3 These uprisings are known as *ikkō ikki* 一向一揆 (“leagues of the single-minded”). On the origins of the *ikkō ikki*, and the reasons why Shin followers became involved, see for example Richard Bowring, *The Religious Traditions of Japan, 500–1600*, Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 424.

Edo period in that region.<sup>4</sup> Political circumstances in mid-nineteenth century Chōshū and the involvement of Shin priests therein offer another indication that Shin Buddhism was a vibrant religious community in the area.

### ***Bakumatsu Chōshū and the Movement to “Revere the Emperor and Expel the Barbarians”***

In reality, men of a variety of backgrounds were instrumental in enabling Shin Buddhists in Chōshū to play a vital role in the historical events surrounding the fall of the Tokugawa, the restoration of the emperor, and the formation of the Meiji government, in which the domain played a seminal role. One such central figure was Murata Seifū 村田清風 (1783–1855), a high domain official, who initiated important economic reforms, such as the Tenpō Reforms (*Tenpō no kaikaku* 天保の改革) in the domain in 1838, after being appointed Minister for Reform.<sup>5</sup> With his focus on actual problems of government, Murata had risen rapidly in the domain administration. Perhaps fearing a repetition of late sixteenth-century violence, initially Seifū was on his guard against Shin Buddhism and its potentially destructive influence, given the single-mindedness of its followers.<sup>6</sup> His suspicion exemplifies the power the Shin sect retained in Chōshū in the mid-nineteenth century. Realizing that Shin Buddhist power could be transformed into an asset, instead of suppressing the group, Seifū followed the Mōri tactics of skillfully channeling its energy: a strong Shin Buddhism could help protect Chōshū against an invasion by Western powers and the Christian teachings they brought with them.

Seifū was a strong advocate of *sonnō jōi* 尊王攘夷, the movement to “revere the emperor and expel the barbarians (the foreigners),” which was gaining momentum in Chōshū at the time. That

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4 While Chōshū’s neighboring provinces saw the emergence of outstanding Shin scholar-priests during the Edo period, such as Daiei 大瀛 (1759–1804) in Aki 安芸 and Rizen 履善 (1754–1819) in Iwami 石見, Chōshū would have to wait for such figures to appear until the *bakumatsu* 幕末. Chōshū Shin priests Gesshō 月性 (1817–1858), Shimaji Mokurai 島地黙雷 (1838–1911), Ōzu Tetsunen 大洲鉄然 (1834–1902), Akamatsu Renjō 赤松連城 (1841–1919), and many others would play a seminal role in the modernization of the Shin Buddhist institution, both in their domain and at the level of their head temple Nishi Honganji. After the Meiji Restoration, some of them would travel to Europe as members of the first Japanese Buddhist Mission abroad and were subsequently involved in the Shin Buddhist effort to restore Buddhism to what they considered to be its rightful place in Japanese society. As part of that endeavor, they were instrumental in shaping the modern notion of religion in Japan. See Mick Deneckere, “Shin Buddhist Contributions to the Japanese Enlightenment Movement of the Early 1870s,” in *Modern Buddhism in Japan*, Hayashi Makoto, Ōtani Eiichi, and Paul L. Swanson, eds., Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, 2014, pp. 17–51; Mick Deneckere, “Shin Buddhism in Chōshū and Early Meiji Notions of Religion-State Relations,” in *Buddhism in the Global Eye: Beyond East and West*, John S. Harding, Victor S. Hori, and Alex Soucy, eds., Bloomsbury, 2020, pp. 123–136. On Daiei and Rizen’s legacy, see Esho Shimazu, “The Sangowakuran Incident and its Significance for Engaged Buddhism,” paper presented at the 10th Conference of the International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies, August 2–4, 2001, Otani University, *Muryōkō* 無量光 (Journal of Shin Buddhism), <http://www.nembutsu.info/sangowakuran.htm> (accessed March 31, 2022).

5 Craig, *Chōshū in the Meiji Restoration*, p. 54.

6 Kodama, *Kinsei Shinshū no tenkai katei*, pp. 275–279. Craig mentions the fact that Seifū spent some years studying Zen Buddhism as a youth. Craig, *Chōshū in the Meiji Restoration*, p. 59.

the *sonnō jōi* vision caught on in Chōshū should come as no surprise. As for *sonnō* (“revere the emperor”), throughout the Edo period, the house of Mōri, originally of the Kyoto official class, had managed to maintain its long-standing, unique relationship with the imperial court.<sup>7</sup> And so, under Tokugawa rule, only the daimyo of Chōshū was allowed to visit the houses of court nobles on his way to and from Edo, whereas such direct relations between other military houses and court nobles were forbidden.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, having been defeated by the Tokugawa in the Battle of Sekigahara 関ヶ原 (1600), and having seen the territory of Chōshū reduced to a third of its original size, the domain traditionally harbored a hostility to the *bakufu* and waited for an opportunity to take revenge, as the following passage reflects.

One ceremony embodying this [anti-Tokugawa] animus was held annually on the first day of the new year. Early in the morning when the first cock crowed, the Elders and Direct Inspectors would go to the daimyo and ask, “Has the time come to begin the subjugation of the Bakufu?” The daimyo would then reply, “It is still too early; the time is not yet come.” While obviously secret, this ceremony was considered one of the most important rituals of the han.<sup>9</sup>

The Mōri’s wish to restore the emperor to power was thus amplified by a strong anti-Tokugawa sentiment that had persisted throughout the Edo period.

With regard to *jōi* (the “expulsion of barbarians”), as a coastal domain, Chōshū was acutely aware of possible invasions by foreigners and it was determined to keep them out. Meanwhile, it acknowledged that Japan needed to learn from Western powers if the country was to resist foreign threats. As such, the enemy that Chōshū feared was not so much Western practical knowledge and technology, but rather the ideas, often influenced by Christianity, which were simultaneously imported. Indeed, when contemplating the history of the arrival of Christianity in Japan in the sixteenth century, one should admit that this fear was not unfounded. In short, both the literal meaning of the two parts of the *sonnō jōi* slogan, and its later use as a tool of criticism against the *bakufu*—which proved unable to keep the “barbarians” out as several Western nations forced Japan to conclude unequal treaties with them in the 1850s—found resonance in Chōshū.

How, then, did Shin Buddhism fit with Murata’s hopes of bringing to fruition the *sonnō jōi* ideal? Like the House of Mōri, Shin Buddhism had a close relationship to the imperial court, dating back to the sixteenth century, when Honganji had enabled the accession of emperors through financial support. In the Edo period, this special tie had been further supported by marriage, as well as by the fact that the highest Honganji leadership had remained aristocratic.<sup>10</sup> In this

7 According to Chōshū tradition, the Mōri were an offshoot of the imperial line, for in the ninth century, an ancestor to the Mōri had married a lady-in-waiting of the Nakatomi 中臣 family who was already pregnant by the eldest son of Emperor Heizei 平城 (806–809). Craig, *Chōshū in the Meiji Restoration*, p. 25, n. 31.

8 Ibid., pp. 24–25.

9 Ibid., pp. 21–22. Craig points out that, while almost everyone who has dealt with Chōshū seems to know of this custom, there is a lack of sources that document it. This lack, however, does not necessarily disprove it. Ibid., p. 22, n. 20.

10 Galen D. Amstutz, *Interpreting Amida: History and Orientalism in the Study of Pure Land Buddhism*, SUNY Press, 1997, pp. 19, 36.

respect, Murata could not dream of a better ally. As for his desire to keep out foreign thought, and in particular Christianity, Murata was convinced that Shin Buddhism, with its strong base among the common people and its doctrine that preached endurance and endeavor, was the only religious tradition capable of resisting this type of enemy. In 1854, one year after the American Commodore Matthew C. Perry (1794–1858) had appeared in the bay of Edo with his black ships to force the opening of Japan to Western trade, Seifū sent a letter to the Shin priest Gesshō, in which he expressed his wish for a rapprochement between Shin Buddhism and the Chōshū administration.

Gesshō himself was a charismatic and well-known figure in Chōshū. In his sermons, which usually attracted large crowds, he was highly critical of Christianity and he spurred all Buddhist priests—not only Shin priests but all priests of the eight Buddhist sects—“to protect the state” (*gokoku* 護国) from Christianity by means of the Dharma (*buppō* 仏法), the teachings of the Buddha. In Gesshō’s view, Christianity needed to be completely eradicated. Gesshō emphasized that Shin Buddhist priests and laymen should solely rely on Amida Buddha’s power as a means to protect themselves from the delusions caused by Christianity. But he also encouraged his listeners to fight without sparing their lives if Japan’s coasts needed to be defended, as a way of repaying their debt to the country as a whole.

Gesshō also expressed his ideas in his writings. In 1856, at the demand of Kōnyo 広如 (1798–1871), the twentieth abbot of Nishi Honganji, he produced a *Memorandum on Protecting the Dharma* (*Gohō iken fūji* 護法意見封事). After Gesshō’s death in 1858, Kōnyo had the text shortened, edited, and renamed *Protecting the State by Means of the Dharma* (*Buppō gokokuron* 仏法護国論), and distributed ten thousand copies to temples affiliated with Nishi Honganji across the country.<sup>11</sup> The text discusses the need to preserve the people’s minds from the invasion of evil teachings (Christianity) and to raise their morale by means of the Dharma.<sup>12</sup> In his *Naikai kiyū* 内海杞憂 (Fear for the Inner Sea), Gesshō advocated concrete measures for coastal defense, which earned him the name “coastal-defense priest” (*kaibōsō* 海防僧). Here he speaks of the importance of mobilizing peasants (*nōheiron* 農兵論), an idea also advocated by Murata Seifū.<sup>13</sup> Before the arrival of Perry, Murata had been opposed to the idea of a peasant army out of fear that this might lead to an alteration in the established social order that made a clear distinction between upper and lower classes. By 1854, however, his views had changed:

Even peasants and merchants ... should be ordered to engage in rifle practice, and it would

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11 Peter Kleinen, *Im Tode ein Buddha: Buddhistisch-nationale Identitätsbildung in Japan am Beispiel der Traktate Gesshōs*, Lit Verlag, 2002, p. 151. The main difference between the original and the edited text is that the original contains straightforward criticism, inspired by Mito-school thought, about the decadence and the political inaptitude of Buddhism, including that of Nishi Honganji. In terms of the relationship between the state and Buddhism it follows, although not verbatim, Gesshō’s original argumentation based on *shinzoku nitai* 真俗二諦 (“the supra-mundane and the mundane”). Kōnyo elevated the *shinzoku nitai* doctrine to the status of sect dogma on his deathbed in 1871, and it remained binding until 1945. *Ibid.*, pp. 151–152.

12 Next to a full translation of *Memorandum on Protecting the Dharma*, Kleinen offers translations of Gesshō’s *Fear for the Inner Sea* (*Naikai kiyū*), and *Memorandum Draft* (*Fūji sōkō* 封事草稿), about the call to overthrow the shogunate and restore the emperor. *Ibid.*, pp. 151–205.

13 Kodama, *Kinsei Shinshū no tenkai katei*, p. 284.

also do no harm to priests and bonzes.<sup>14</sup>

Making mention not only of peasants but also of bonzes, the passage reflects Murata's growing concern with the role that (Shin) Buddhism could play in the interest of Chōshū. It remains unclear whether Murata and Gesshō's visions mutually influenced each other, but their goals of keeping Christianity at bay and restoring the emperor to power were similar, if not identical, even though based on different convictions. Murata seems to have realized that the people's belief in salvation by faith, as taught in Shin Buddhism, was a vital factor in mobilizing the majority of the population for the *sonnō jōi* cause. Gesshō on his side sought to protect Shin Buddhism against the anti-Buddhist sentiment that was already emerging in Chōshū at the time.<sup>15</sup>

In essence, in Gesshō's discourse, "protecting the Dharma" and "protecting the state" were inseparable notions. This connection between Buddhism and the state was no novel idea, since the Dharma (*buppō*) had entered Japan in the sixth century as a teaching that would protect the state or the Kingly Law (*ōbō* 王法). The doctrine of mutual dependence of the two laws emerged in Japan in the eleventh century, when Buddhist temples started to form a political force as powerful landholders, who sometimes criticized the authority of those in power—be it the emperor, the court, or leading warrior houses—then again cooperated with them in a system of shared rule. In the Edo period, this "mutual dependence" came to an end as Buddhism found itself dominated by the *bakufu*.<sup>16</sup> Gesshō's call for "a mutual protection of the Dharma and the state" was no doubt an attempt to reverse the fortunes of Buddhism and return it to a position where it would be, once again, on a par with secular power.

The reforms that Murata had introduced in the 1840s in his capacity as Minister for Reform had not merely been economic in nature. His underlying vision of restoring Chōshū to an earlier and purer condition affected all aspects of domain life. In the field of education, the reforms included the opening of the domain school Meirinkan 明倫館 in the domain capital Hagi 萩 to samurai of lower rank, who had previously been excluded. Experts in swordmanship were invited from other domains to teach in Chōshū, while some Chōshū students were sent away to other regions, mostly to study swordmanship, but in some cases for other subjects. One of these students was Yoshida Shōin 吉田松陰 (1830–1859), who was sent to Edo to study military science under various teachers, amongst whom was Sakuma Shōzan 佐久間象山 (1811–1864), the scholar famous for coining the phrase "Eastern ethics, Western science" (*tōyō dōtoku, seiyō gakugetei* 東洋道德・西洋学芸). Realizing the importance of Western learning for the defense of Japan, Yoshida attempted to clandestinely board a ship in 1854 to travel abroad to study, but he was arrested, put in jail in Edo and later given into the custody of Chōshū, where he remained imprisoned until 1855. When his sentence was changed into domiciliary confinement, Yoshida was allowed to open a school and assume the title of teacher of military studies.<sup>17</sup>

Several of Yoshida's students were instrumental in bringing about the Meiji Restoration and

14 Craig, *Chōshū in the Meiji Restoration*, p. 201.

15 Kodama, *Kinsei Shinshū no tenkai katei*, pp. 279–281.

16 Toshio Kuroda (trans. Jacqueline I. Stone), "The Imperial Law and the Buddhist Law," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, vol. 23, no. 3–4, 1996, pp. 271, 284.

17 Craig, *Chōshū in the Meiji Restoration*, pp. 59–60, 131, 156–157.



consequently took up key positions in the new government. For example, Itō Hirobumi 伊藤博文 (1841–1909), Japan’s first prime minister and Yamagata Aritomo 山縣有朋 (1838–1922), the father of the Japanese military, were both students at Shōka Sonjuku 松下村塾, Yoshida’s “village school under the pine trees.” Yoshida considered Murata Seifū as “a most excellent man of Chōshū”<sup>18</sup> and seems to have had similar expectations of the Shin priest Gesshō as Murata had done. Whether or not Shōin himself was a Shin Buddhist believer remains open to question, but members of his family certainly were. The Sugi 杉 family into which Shōin was born was traditionally a family of devout Shin believers, and Shōin’s stepmother and younger sister of the Yoshida family were fervent Shin adherents too. Shōin’s friendship with several Shin priests also points in the direction of a close affinity with Shin Buddhism.<sup>19</sup> His correspondence with Gesshō and with another Shin priest named Utsunomiya Mokurin 宇都宮黙霖 (1824–1897) from Aki 安芸 Province would even have inspired him in his plans to overthrow the shogunate.<sup>20</sup> What is certain is that Yoshida admired Gesshō for the power and impact of his sermons, so much so that when Gesshō was in the neighborhood, Yoshida would cancel classes and send his students off to go and listen to the charismatic priest instead.

It was in the domain’s military campaigns that the connection between Seifū, Gesshō, and Shōin, that is to say, the link between Chōshū, Shin Buddhism, and pro-emperor sentiment, became apparent. Shin temples and their priests participated in coastal defense from 1863, when Chōshū attacked foreign ships in Shimonoseki. Soon after, an official priest regiment, the Kongōtai 金剛隊 (“the unshakeable regiment”), was organized in Hagi to give priests proper military training.<sup>21</sup> It consisted of approximately three hundred priests from all over Chōshū and was based at the Shin Buddhist Seikōji 清光寺 Temple in the domain capital. Furthermore, notes by the Shin priest Akutagawa Giten 芥川義天 (1847–1915) clarify the active role that Shin priests played in the power struggle between the loyalists (*seigiha* 正義派) and the conservatives (*zokuronha* 俗論派) in Chōshū in 1864–1865: Shin priests were instrumental in winning over popular sentiment for the loyalist faction of Takasugi Shinsaku 高杉晋作 (1839–1867), which eventually succeeded in overthrowing the Tokugawa regime.<sup>22</sup>

The Shin Buddhist participation in the military activities of the domain can partly be understood in the context of growing anti-Buddhist sentiment. While the term *haibutsu kishaku* 廃仏毀釈 (“abolish Buddhism and destroy Śākyamuni”) is used mostly to refer to anti-Buddhist movements of the early Meiji period, in several domains, including Chōshū, similar campaigns had already emerged before the Restoration. In such a climate Shin priests saw their participation in military matters as an opportunity to receive the military training that might prove necessary to fend for themselves: as members of the militia they were allowed to arm themselves again. At the same time, young Shin priests in Chōshū became convinced that internal sectarian reform was needed if their sect was to survive the turbulent times in which they found themselves. Their petitions for reform included the demand that the education of the future clergy be improved and

18 Kodama, *Kinsei Shinshū no tenkai katei*, p. 281.

19 Ibid., pp. 281–282.

20 Ibid., pp. 281, 299.

21 *Kongō* is the Japanese rendering of the Sanskrit term *vajra*.

22 Kodama, *Kinsei Shinshū no tenkai katei*, pp. 275–301.

resulted in the opening of a school in Seikōji, where instruction in the literary arts as well as French-style military training was provided.<sup>23</sup>

Shin priests' agency and their connections with the domain authorities indicate that Shin Buddhism was a vibrant institution in the historically important domain of Chōshū in the mid-nineteenth century. This continued to be the case at the time of the Meiji Restoration and beyond.

## Shin Buddhism and the Restoration of the Emperor

One of the major challenges that Meiji officials faced in the construction of a modern state was the unification of the people. To achieve this goal, the young Meiji government, which counted many nativists (*kokugakusha* 国学者, scholars of National Learning) and Shinto supporters in its ranks, constructed “the Great Teaching,” a Shinto-based ideology around the figure of the emperor that later came to be known as State Shinto. That Confucian and nativist scholars had increasingly depicted Buddhist priests as profiteers and Buddhism as a useless social institution throughout the Edo period, had among other reasons to do with the perception that Buddhist temples and their priests sought to enrich themselves through the lucrative temple registration and parishioner systems, as well as memorial services, the most important being funerals.<sup>24</sup> By the mid-nineteenth century, the decline of the Tokugawa, whose power was strongly linked to the Buddhist institution, was accompanied by an intensification of anti-Buddhist views. The Meiji government's decision to make use of a newly constructed form of Shinto rather than Buddhism to unify the country can thus be understood as an expression of its wish to break with the past.

Soon after the Restoration, the government issued the first of a series of orders to clarify the relationship between Buddhism and Shinto (*Shinbutsu Hanzenrei* 神仏判然令) and to end the centuries-long practice of amalgamating Buddhist and Shinto deities. Although it was not the government's intention for these orders to be carried out with violence, those in power passively watched as anti-Buddhist groups interpreted them as imperial consent to attack and persecute Buddhism.<sup>25</sup> This led to a short but violent anti-Buddhist (*haibutsu kishaku*) movement in the early years of Meiji, this time aimed at the whole of Japan. Shin Buddhism survived the tribulations of these anti-Buddhist policies fairly well and recovered relatively quickly in comparison with some other Japanese Buddhist sects. There were several reasons for this quick recovery, but here the focus will be on the role that Nishi Honganji played in bringing about the Meiji Restoration, as I believe this explains, at least partially, why the *haibutsu kishaku* movement of early Meiji was as short-lived as it was.

After Tokugawa Ieyasu had split Honganji into two branches as a way of controlling and

23 Honpa Honganji Hōyō Sōmubu 本派本願寺法要總務部, ed., *Myōnyo shōnin* 明如上人, Honpa Honganji, 1927, p. 93.

24 Thomas D. DuBois, *Religion and the Making of Modern East Asia*, Cambridge University Press, 2011, p. 109.

25 James E. Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and its Persecution*, Princeton University Press, 1990, p. 65.

making use of the power of this major temple for his own agenda, both temples continued to expand their influence in Japan, albeit in different parts of the country. Whereas Nishi Honganji was most influential in western Japan, Higashi Honganji 東本願寺 counted most of its followers in the east. Given that both branches together covered most of the country and could reach an important part of the population through their networks of temples and local communities (*kō* 講), it is hardly surprising that both the court and *bakufu* sought to maintain their relations with the two branches throughout the Edo period.<sup>26</sup>

Nishi and Higashi Honganji's respective histories under the Tokugawa, both that of their regional expansion and of their relationships with the court and the shogunate, resulted in their adopting different political allegiances. The question of the extent to which the two temples sought active involvement in politics, versus the pressure they experienced from court and *bakufu* that haphazardly drove them into these positions, is beyond the scope of this article, but during the last years of the Tokugawa, the respective positions of Nishi and Higashi Honganji can be generally summarized as “serving the emperor” (*kinnō* 勤王) for the former and “supporting *bakufu*” (*sabaku* 佐幕) for the latter. While such a statement may give the impression that the two temples sought to play an active role in national politics, their links with court and *bakufu* are better understood in the context of their main concern to protect the Dharma,<sup>27</sup> a concept that the Shin Buddhist intelligentsia linked to that of “protecting the state” (*gohō gokokuron* 護法護国論), thereby reflecting Gesshō's ideas. In short: what was good for (Shin) Buddhism was good for the country.<sup>28</sup>

In the early 1860s, Higashi Honganji continued to further deepen its ties with the *bakufu*, whereas Nishi Honganji strengthened its adherence to the imperial court. Nishi Honganji's position should come as no surprise given that all Shin Buddhist temples in Chōshū, a domain with a strong pro-emperor sentiment, were linked to Nishi Honganji. Very much like a domain, Nishi Honganji employed its own retainers.<sup>29</sup> Their number amounted to around four hundred men with whom the temple's actual power resided, given that they monopolized the entire temple administration with the exception of *gonshiki* 勤式 (liturgy and ritual) and doctrinal matters. In 1863, five years after he had distributed ten thousand copies of Gesshō's *Buppō gokokuron* to temples across the country, abbot Kōnyo distributed a letter, which explained how priests should behave in this time of national crisis:

When thinking about our debt to the country, this is not a time when we should simply be

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26 Despite the involvement of both temples in the events leading to the overthrow of the *bakufu*, only a limited number of studies have been published on this topic. Naramoto Tatsuya 奈良本辰也 focuses on the circumstances and role of Higashi Honganji in the Meiji Restoration (*Meiji Ishin no Higashi Honganji: Nihon saidai no minshū shūkyō wa ikani gekidō no jidai o ikinitaka. Arashi no naka no hōjō monogatari* 明治維新の東本願寺：日本最大の民衆宗教はいかに激動の時代を生きぬいたか。嵐のなかの法城物語, Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1987). Although similar work has not yet been done on Nishi Honganji, Naramoto's work explains certain aspects of Nishi Honganji around the time of the Meiji Restoration in comparison, thus serving as a useful source.

27 Naramoto, *Meiji Ishin no Higashi Honganji*, pp. 96–97.

28 Kodama, *Kinsei Shinshū no tenkai katei*, pp. 211–212.

29 Shirasu Jōshin 白須浄真, *Ōtani tankentai to sono jidai* 大谷探検隊とその時代, Bensei Shuppan, 2002, p. 50.

watching from the sidelines. Our temples have the duty to exert themselves in serving the emperor and the country.

In order to resist the threat of foreigners who were confusing people's hearts by means of Christianity, it would be insufficient for priests to merely rely on the Dharma:

As I have pointed out on several occasions, [our] priests should reflect on the current situation, be careful of their behavior, live frugally, and avoid luxury. Above, they should fear the unfathomable thought of the buddhas and patriarchs and below, compensate for the gifts of faith from temple supporters and be on their guard not to become idle.<sup>30</sup>

These passages illustrate Nishi Honganji's loyalty to the imperial cause, as well as the abbot's recognition of problems within his sect that went well beyond the management of the *honzan* (head temple): one of the core issues that needed to be addressed was the very behavior of priests. On a more practical level, Kōnyo opened a *dōjō* inside Nishi Honganji to give retainers and priests military training. Moreover, he dispatched people to explain to priests in the branch temples the meaning and purpose of *sonnō jōi*. As confirmation of his *sonnō* position, Kōnyo presented the imperial court with ten thousand gold *ryō* 兩<sup>31</sup> that same year, despite Nishi Honganji's dire financial situation.<sup>32</sup> The court showed its appreciation for such support by bestowing honorary titles upon its abbots.

By 1863, the *sonnō jōi* movement had gained momentum, and supporters from different parts of the country gathered in Kyoto, the imperial capital. In these circumstances, Chōshū samurai often clashed with samurai from other domains. In 1864, a confrontation with the *kōbu gattai* 公武合体 faction (composed of members of both the imperial court and the shogunate) resulted in the Hamaguri Gate Rebellion (Hamaguri Gomon no Hen 蛤御門の変), which forced Chōshū samurai to flee Kyoto. It was Nishi Honganji and its branch temple Kōshōji 興正寺 in Kyoto that sheltered the fugitives. After the rebellion, peace did not return, since Chōshū's extremists made way for the violent actions of militias that supported the Tokugawa shogun. When the involvement of Nishi Honganji and Kōshōji in the Hamaguri Gate Rebellion came to light, the military post of the Shinsengumi 新撰組 ("new corps"), a pro-Tokugawa militia, was moved inside Nishi Honganji's temple grounds to keep the temple under control. Despite these measures, Nishi Honganji's support for the emperor remained unchanged. After parts of the city had completely burnt down during the Rebellion, the temple had the Miyuki Bridge (Miyuki-bashi 御幸橋) built over the Kamo River (Kamo-gawa 鴨川) to provide an escape route for the emperor in case of an emergency, the construction costs of which amounted to fifty thousand *ryō*.

If Chōshū was held responsible for the Rebellion, it was not least because of its share in

30 Naramoto, *Meiji Ishin no Higashi Honganji*, p. 98.

31 The *ryō* was a gold currency unit in the Tokugawa period. On its history and fluctuating value, see for example the website of the Currency Museum of the Bank of Japan: <https://www.imes.boj.or.jp/cm/english/history/>.

32 Ōtani Daigaku 大谷大学, ed., *Shinshū nenpyō* 真宗年表, Hōzōkan, 1973, p. 165; Honpa Honganji Hōyō Sōmubu, ed., *Myōnyo shōnin*, p. 30.

causing the inferno that ravaged important parts of the capital after Chōshū samurai had deliberately set the Chōshū residence in Kyoto on fire during the uprising. Despite the *bakufu's* ensuing punitive expedition against Chōshū, the domain did not respond to any of the *bakufu's* demands. In the second punitive campaign that was organized as a result, Chōshū managed to defeat the *bakufu* forces, owing to the secret alliance it had meanwhile concluded with Satsuma. Following this, Tokugawa Yoshinobu 徳川慶喜 (1837–1913), the last Tokugawa shogun, proposed to return political power to the emperor in the tenth month of 1867. However, the Satsuma-Chōshū alliance, which sought to overthrow the *bakufu* by military force, issued an order to restore imperial rule and pushed ahead with the establishment of a new emperor-centered government two months later.<sup>33</sup> As a result, Yoshinobu was forced not only to return power but also to abdicate as shogun. It was the end of the Tokugawa *bakufu*.

In order to not only strip it of its political authority, but also undermine its economic base, the newly installed Meiji government—which included several Chōshū men—pressed the *bakufu* to return its lands to the emperor. Rejecting this arrangement, the *bakufu* brought together an army to fight the new government's army at Toba 鳥羽 and Fushimi 伏見. On the day of the battle (third day of the first month of 1868), an important meeting took place at the Hiunkaku 飛雲閣 (“Flying Clouds”) pavilion of Nishi Honganji during which soon-to-become Meiji statesmen Saionji Kinmochi 西園寺公望 (1849–1940) and Iwakura Tomomi 岩倉具視 (1825–1883) discussed the government's order to dispatch an army. When the roar of artillery could be heard in Nishi Honganji, the temple sent the abbot's successor Tokunyo 徳如 (1827–1868) with one hundred men to the palace, where he was ordered to protect the Sarugatsuji 猿が辻 Gate.<sup>34</sup> When Emperor Meiji went to Osaka later that year, Kōnyo was put in charge of guarding the Nishi Honganji branch temple Tsumura Betsuin 津村別院 in Osaka that served as the emperor's temporary palace.

These facts indicate that in the critical events surrounding the Meiji Restoration, that is to say, the circumstances leading to the restoration of the emperor, Nishi Honganji was never far away from the center of action, thereby bringing to fruition the vision to protect the state by means of the Dharma. The entire Nishi Honganji organizational structure served to promote support for the new emperor-centered government among the people, and the temple mobilized more than thirty-seven thousand men to serve in the new Imperial Army until the surrender of Edo Castle (and of the *bakufu*) in the fourth month of 1868. Moreover, the young Meiji government's finances extensively relied on contributions from Nishi Honganji: the temple's total expenditures—which included the construction of the Miyuki Bridge, the purchase of paper money issued by the new government, and donations for the government's military expenditures—amounted to one hundred thousand *ryō*.<sup>35</sup> What is more, Nishi Honganji lost over ten thousand *ryō* in the transaction

33 Craig, *Chōshū in the Meiji Restoration*, p. 377.

34 Tokunyo was supposed to succeed as abbot of Nishi Honganji after Kōnyo's death, but Tokunyo passed away before succession. As a result, when Kōnyo died in 1871, he was succeeded by the new successor, Myōnyo 明如 (1850–1903).

35 Shirasu, *Ōtani tankentai to sono jidai*, pp. 47–49.



when setting its gold as collateral for the paper currency issued by the government.<sup>36</sup> Given this allegiance to the emperor and the new Meiji government on the part of one of Japan's major Buddhist temples, the "clarification edicts" that the government started to issue from the third month of 1868 onwards with the purpose of promoting Shinto elements and discarding Buddhism, must have come as an unpleasant surprise. In sum, governmental policies attacked the very institution that played a vital role in the success and acceptance of the new state structure centered around the emperor. It goes without saying that such a situation was untenable in the long run and eventually doomed to fail.

In conclusion, since Shin Buddhists and Chōshū officials shared a similar pro-emperor sentiment, Chōshū proved to be the perfect breeding ground for the notion that the restoration of the emperor was a vital condition for the continued flourishing of the Dharma. It is difficult to prove whether the active participation of Shin Buddhism in Chōshū's cause to overthrow the *bakufu* came about in reaction to the crisis it faced in the light of growing anti-Buddhist sentiment, or whether it was a natural course of events considering Shin Buddhists' and Chōshū officials' common desire of restoring the emperor to power. Given Nishi Honganji's active participation in establishing the new regime, there is a strong argument to make in favor of the agency of the religious sect, which in turn illustrates the need to revisit the narrative that Japanese Buddhism as a whole was weakened by the end of the Tokugawa. What is beyond doubt, however, is that the intertwining of the three elements of Chōshū, Shin Buddhism (Nishi Honganji), and the imperial institution propelled not only the Chōshū domain but also the Shin sect into playing an important, yet underacknowledged, role in restoring the emperor to the throne.

## 長州、浄土真宗と王政復古

ミック・ドネケル\*

1860年代、薩長連合は徳川幕府を倒すことに成功し、1868年の明治維新への道を切り開いた。この歴史的な役割を長州藩が担えたのには、経済的、政治的、社会的、イデオロギー的要素のほかに、もう一つあまり知られていない点がある。それは宗教的背景であり、その中でも特に浄土真宗が重要な位置を占める。本論文では、浄土真宗門徒の多い長州における尊王思想の高まりと、この宗派と皇室の歴史的な関係をめぐり、明治維新において浄土真宗がいかに重要な役割を果たすようになったのか、その経緯を考察する。

キーワード：近代仏教、西本願寺、明治維新、尊王攘夷、護法護国

36 Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan*, p. 73.

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## Modernity for the True Dharma: The Sangha, King, and Buddhist Precepts

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A defining feature of so-called Japanese Buddhism has been the persistent influence of the ideas surrounding the “Final Age of Dharma” (*mappō*), emphasizing the continuous decline of Buddha dharma and the capacities of Buddhist practitioners after the demise of Shakyamuni, which led to inaccessibility to enlightenment and lax discipline epitomized by the “non-precept” in this age. In this article, I will explore the pivotal roles played by the utopian and primordial vision of the “True Dharma” (*shōbō*) in Meiji Japan, with a focus on the Shingon monk Shaku Unshō (1827–1909), and will unveil how his fervent ideals resonated with rapidly shifting global and nation-building settings, restructuring a new temporal-spatial order in the archipelago and beyond.

**Keywords:** Final Age of Dharma (*mappō*), modern Japanese Buddhism, Theravada Buddhism, Shaku Unshō, Oda Tokunō

### Introduction

The persistence of ideas surrounding the Final Dharma Age (*mappō shisō* 末法思想) has often represented one of the defining characteristics of Japanese Buddhism. The three ages of Buddhism (*sanji* 三時) consisted of the period of the True Dharma (*shōbō* 正法), lasting either five hundred or one thousand years, the Semblance Dharma (*zōbō* 像法), lasting one thousand years, and the Final Dharma, lasting ten thousand years. The conventional understandings of the three ages hold that traditional training and disciplinary practices are all but impossible because of the declining capacities of Buddhists. Historically, Japanese people have assumed that *mappō* 末法 began in 1052, and the recurring natural disasters and destructive upheavals around that time drove this home for them. Japanese scholarship on the history of Buddhism has argued that novel and various movements, epitomized by Kamakura New Buddhism (*Kamakura shin bukkyō* 鎌倉新仏教), arose

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in medieval Japanese Buddhism in reaction to this fatalistic perspective.<sup>1</sup> This scholarship did not adequately examine other periods in Japanese Buddhist history, especially the early modern and modern periods.

In line with this, the idea that precepts are invalid in the age of *mappō* (*mappō mukai* 末法無戒) became prevalent. This primarily comes from *Mappō tōmyōki* 末法燈明記 (hereafter abbreviated as *Tōmyōki*), which is said to have been written by Saichō 最澄 (766–822), the founder of the Tendai 天台 denomination.<sup>2</sup> However, many scholars of Buddhism consider this text apocryphal.<sup>3</sup>

Against this backdrop, Shimazono Susumu has recently pointed out that the longing for the True Dharma (Skt. *saddharma*, Jp. *shōbō* 正法) which is the opposite of *mappō*, is a motif throughout Japanese religious traditions; it can be found in *Shōbōgenzō* 正法眼藏 (Treasury of the True Dharma Eye) written by Zen master Dōgen 道元 (1200–1253) and fervent *Lotus Sutra* advocate Nichiren 日蓮 (1222–1283). Some vinaya monks, such as Eison 叡尊 (1201–1290), the founder of Shingon-*risshū* 真言律宗 (Shingon-Vinaya school), devoted themselves to realizing the ideal sangha of Shakyamuni Buddha's age under the banner of the True Dharma.<sup>4</sup> However, the modern genealogy of the True Dharma concept is remarkably understudied.

This article focuses on the Meiji 明治 period (1868–1912) Buddhist efforts to retrieve the utopian time of the True Dharma by reversing the predestined Buddhist decadence of *mappō* through upholding the precepts and the mobilization of imperial power. I examine the movement to revive the Buddhist precepts (*kairitsu fukkō* 戒律復興) through the lens of a well-known, precept-upholding Shingon monk, Shaku Unshō 釈雲照 (1827–1909).<sup>5</sup> Unlike many of the monastics in Japan at the time, the cornerstone of his lineage was precepts maintenance. His movement, putting forth a utopian vision of the True Dharma in Meiji Japan, was also influenced by his predecessor, a late Edo 江戸 period (1603–1868) Shingon monk named Jiun Onkō 慈雲飲光 (1718–1804).<sup>6</sup>

1 On the formation of Kamakura Buddhism-centric ideas within the modern academia of Japanese Buddhism, see Fukushima Eiju 福島榮寿, “Kindai bukkyō saikō: Nihon kindai bukkyōshi kenkyū to ‘kamakura shinbukkyō’ ron” 〈近代仏教〉再考：日本近代仏教史研究と「鎌倉新仏教」論, *Nihon Bukkyō sōgō kenkyū* 日本仏教総合研究, vol. 10, 2012, pp. 117–145.

2 *Mappō tōmyōki* was translated in English by Robert Rhodes as *The Candle of the Latter Dharma* in *BDK English Tripitaka*, 107-III, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1994.

3 On the outline of the scholarly controversy surrounding the authorship of *Tōmyōki* in the postwar period, see Ishida Mizumaro 石田瑞磨, “*Mappō tōmyōki* ni tsuite” 『末法燈明記』について, *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 印度学佛教学研究, vol. 10, no. 2, 1962, pp. 552–555.

4 Shimazono Susumu 島藺進, *Nihon bukkyō no shakai rinri: “Shōbō” rinen kara kangaeru* 日本仏教の社会倫理：「正法」理念から考える, Iwanami Shoten, 2013.

5 For general information on Shaku Unshō, see Nathaniel Gallant and Kameyama Mitsuhiro, “On the National Doctrine of Greater Japan (1882),” In *Buddhism and Modernity: Sources from Nineteenth-Century Japan*, Orion Klautau and Hans Martin Krämer, eds., University of Hawai‘i Press, 2021, pp. 131–142.

6 According to Sim In-ja, the core of Jiun's *shōbō* ideas is fourfold: (1) Sanskrit studies and trans-denominational thought to put the Buddha's insight into practice; (2) a *shōbō* precept revival movement (*shōbō ritsu fukkō undo* 正法律復興運動) to reactualize the vinaya practiced by the Buddha; (3) the making of clothes for monks per the Buddha's instructions; and (4) the practice of meditation as carried out by the Buddha. See Sim In-ja 沈仁慈, *Jiun no Shōbō shisō* 慈雲の正法思想, Sankibō Busshorin, 2003, p. 47.

Previous scholarship has depicted the modern period of Japanese Buddhism as one of a rising lay-centric Buddhism (*zaike shugi* 在家主義) that superseded the power previously wielded by monks and has seen Jōdo Shinshū 浄土真宗 as the vanguard of Buddhist intellectualism. This sect possesses a tradition of its clergy being “neither monk nor layman” and has drawn much scholarly attention, leading to Shin Buddhism-centric scholarship.<sup>7</sup> Notably, as I will show, Unshō proposed an alternative reformation of Japanese Buddhism whereby clergy and monasteries lead under the guiding spirit of the True Dharma.

In this article, I begin by introducing Unshō and his movement to revive the precepts and its commitment to the True Dharma. I then focus on the increasing attention paid to the *Tōmyōki* by Meiji Buddhists. Opposing its arguments surrounding *mappō*, Unshō attempted to demonstrate the viability of the True Dharma by asserting that this tract was a forgery. He was the first modern Japanese intellectual to do so. Despite his strident opposition to clerical decadence and his reactionary approach to modern agendas, his intellectual attempts were shaped by new Japanese Buddhist encounters with Buddhist traditions in South and Southeast Asia and cross-border interactions between Japanese and other Asian Buddhists, as well as by the need for nation-building in Meiji Japan.

## Meiji Buddhist Efforts against Persecution and the Role of Shaku Unshō

In the late nineteenth century, Buddhism in Japan experienced several crises. These were triggered by the religious policies of the new Meiji government—which wanted to separate Buddhism and Shinto—and Buddhism’s persecution, known as the movement to “abolish Buddhism and destroy its symbols” (*haibutsu kishaku* 廃仏毀釈). This movement had a devastating impact on the entire Japanese Buddhist world and has been described as the starting point of “modern Japanese Buddhism.”<sup>8</sup>

7 See Ōmi Toshihiro 碧海寿広, “Shinshū chūshin shikan (Jōdo Shinshū)” 真宗中心史観 (浄土真宗), in *Nihon shūkyōshi no kiwādo: Kindai shugi o koete* 日本宗教史のキーワード：近代主義を超えて, Ōtani Ei’ichi 大谷栄一, ed., Keio University Press, p. 365. On trends in research regarding modern Japanese Buddhism, see Ōtani Ei’ichi, *Kindai bukkyō to iu shiza: Sensō, Ajia, shakaishugi* 近代仏教という視座：戦争・アジア・社会主義, Perikansha, 2012, pp. 13–41; and Ōmi Toshihiro, *Kindai bukkyō no naka no shinshū: Chikazumi Jōkan to kyūdōsha tachi* 近代仏教のなかの真宗：近角常観と求道者たち, Hōzōkan, 2014, pp. 5–14. Shimazono Susumu has paid considerable attention to another modern trend called Nichirenism (*Nichirensugui* 日蓮主義). Colored by Buddhist nationalist commitments, Nichirenists such as Tanaka Chigaku 田中智学 (1861–1939) and Honda Nisshō 本多日生 (1867–1931) initiated religious movements based on fervent belief in the *Lotus Sutra*, and had a wide-ranging influence. According to Shimazono, one of the defining characteristics of Nichirenism is lay-centrism, which put lay believers instead of Buddhist monks at the center of the movement; see Shimazono, *Nihon bukkyō no shakai rinri*, 2013. See also Shimazono, “Kokumin kokka Nihon no bukkyō: ‘Shōbō’ fukkō undō to hokke=Nichirensugui zaikai shugi undō” 国民国家日本の仏教：「正法」復興運動と法華＝日蓮主義在家主義運動, in *Kindai kokka to bukkyō: Shin Ajia bukkyō shi* 近代国家と仏教：新アジア仏教史, vol. 14, Sueki Fumihiko 末本文美士, ed., Kōsei Shuppansha, 2011, pp. 159–211.

8 On the extensive influence of *haibutsu kishaku* on the Japanese Buddhist world, see James E. Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and Its Persecution*, Princeton University Press, 1990.

Shaku Unshō was born in the Izumo 出雲 domain in 1827.<sup>9</sup> At age ten, he was ordained as a Shingon sect priest and spent the first half of his life training. He had a Confucian grounding and also educated himself in various Buddhist doctrines, including Yogachara (*yuishiki* 唯識). In terms of his precepts practice and thought, Unshō trained under Bessho Eigon 別所栄嚴 (1814–1900), a leading proponent of the Mūla-Sarvāstivāda-Vinaya in the Shingon denomination. At the ages of twenty-nine and thirty, Unshō also received the precepts several times from the master Tandō 端堂 (1805–1866), Jiun’s dharma descendant (*hōson* 法孫). In 1868, at the time of the Meiji Restoration, Unshō witnessed the anti-Buddhist movement’s spate of devastation and fought to protect the dharma (*gohō* 護法). This placed him at the forefront of modern Japanese religious history.

The traumatic experience of *haibutsu kishaku* led Buddhists to be increasingly concerned with regaining their previously-wielded power and positions, and they united under this shared interest. In 1868, some of the leading clerics of each denomination founded the Organization of United Buddhist Sects (Shoshū Dōtoku Kaimei 諸宗同徳会盟).<sup>10</sup> In this association, members acknowledged the faults highlighted in the persecution movement and proposed improving the quality of monks and eliminating their evil ways (*heihū* 弊風). This was a strategic narrative to defend Buddhism. Some precept-upholding monks, such as Unshō and the influential Fukuda Gyōkai 福田行誠 (1809–1888) from the Jōdo denomination, took a hardline stance against clerical corruption by accusing monastics of violating the Buddhist precepts.

In the following year, Unshō submitted his “Petition to the Council of State on Sweeping Away the Evils of the Buddhist Clergy” (*Sōhei issen no kanpu kenpakusho* 僧弊一洗ノ官符建白書) to the new Meiji government, which proposed his basic idea of reviving ideal Buddhism.<sup>11</sup> This petition called on political authorities to crack down on corrupt monks’ precept violations. In addition, Unshō saw the Japanese emperor’s regained power (*ōsei fukko* 王政復古) as an opportunity to realize the ancient Japanese Buddhism that he saw as ideal. In the ancient period, the central government strictly regulated Buddhism through the Office of Priestly Affairs (*Sōgō* 僧綱) based on the legal code (*ritsuryō* 律令). This standpoint was linked to his position as a monk of the Shingon denomination, which was founded by Kūkai 空海 (774–835) under imperial aegis and assumed a religious role in protecting the nation (*chingo kokka* 鎮護国家) in the late Heian 平安 period (794–1185). Orion Klautau has pointed out that “for Unshō, the religious policy of early Meiji was not evil at all; on the contrary, the ‘Restoration’ of Imperial power gave Buddhism the chance it needed to return to its ideal form.”<sup>12</sup>

Nonetheless, Unshō’s desperate efforts led to disappointment. In 1872, the Meiji government

9 Biographical materials on Shaku Unshō include *Shaku Unshō* (Bungeisha, 1902), which was written by Yoshida Toshio 吉田敏雄 when Unshō was alive, as well as the three-volume work of the same title by Kusanagi Zengi 草繫全宜 (Tokukyōkai, 1913–1914), who had been Unshō’s disciple and later became the chief abbot (*kanchō* 管長) of the Daikakuji 大覚寺 school.

10 On the discourse of self-reflection and self-criticism among Shoshū Dōtoku Kaimei members, see Orion Klautau オリオン・クラウタウ, *Kindai Nihon shisō toshite no bukkūshigaku* 近代日本思想としての仏教史学, Hōzōkan, 2012, pp. 189–218.

11 Kusanagi 1914b, *Kenpakushū*, pp. 6–8.

12 Orion Klautau, “Against the Ghosts of Recent Past: Meiji Scholarship and the Discourse on Edo-Period Buddhist Decadence,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, vol. 35, no. 2, 2008, p. 278.



issued a decree to decriminalize precept violations, generally called the Nikujiki Saitai law (Nikujiki Saitai Rei 肉食妻帯令), which ended legal provisions specifically for Buddhist monks. It read, “Monks may do as they wish regarding the eating of meat, marriage, and the growing of their hair. Moreover, they need not be concerned about the propriety of wearing commoner’s clothing while not performing Buddhist ceremonies.” Jaffe states that the Meiji authorities’ main aim with this law was to dismantle premodern status distinctions and establish the modern family registration system, along with building a new “emperor-centered community cult of State Shintō.”<sup>13</sup> Ketelaar notes that this policy meant “a radical change in the conception of the relation between public, imperial law (*ōhō*) and the Buddha’s law (*buppō*) as contained within the priest’s religious vows” in that it was “a complete reversal of the identification of these two systems of law that had been worked out during the Tokugawa period.”<sup>14</sup> Indeed, this law shocked Unshō. He strongly resisted it and negotiated with government officials, such as Takasaki Goroku 高崎五六 (1836–1896); however, this was in vain. In these negotiations, drawing on the West’s “public law” (*kōhō* 公法) principle of the separation of politics and religion, Takasaki turned the precept transgression into an individual issue.<sup>15</sup> Despite this, Unshō’s reactionary interest in the revival of ancient Japanese Buddhism through political power lasted his entire life and went through various reformulations as a strategic narrative to meet the demands of the new age.<sup>16</sup>

After the setback of his trans-denominational attempt, Unshō then focused on reforming the Shingon sect he belonged to. In 1879, he led the all-Shingon sect meeting (*Shingonshū taisei kaigi* 真言宗大成会議) to address sectarian schisms and religious regulations. Unshō pushed for various reactionary reformations together with his ally, the monk Ōzaki Gyōchi 大崎行智 (1839–1884), mainly based on the threefold training (*sangaku* 三学), a set of traditional disciplines consisting of the precepts (*kai* 戒), meditation (*jō* 定), wisdom (*e* 慧), and also based on the dying instructions (*yuikai* 遺誡) of Kūkai. Despite his intense efforts, Unshō’s precept-centric reforms faltered in the face of strong opposition from a teaching-oriented group.

This setback marked a turning point in his movement. At the suggestion of his supporters, bureaucrat-turned-entrepreneur Aoki Teizō 青木貞三 (1858–1889) and Yamaoka Tesshū 山岡鉄舟 (1836–1888), a well-known politician and sword master, Unshō moved to Tokyo in 1885 and began to adopt a stance independent from the Shingon denomination. Furthermore, distancing himself from its center of power, Unshō and his lay followers (also called *gegōsha* 外護者, lit. “outside protectors of Buddhism”), launched a monastic precept school (Kairitsu Gakkō 戒律学校) in Mejirodai 目白台, Tokyo, which in 1887 was renamed the Mejiro Monastic Academy (Mejiro Sōen 目白僧園). This academy educated vinaya-upholding priests using a strict curriculum based on the threefold training.<sup>17</sup> Also in 1889, Unshō relaunched the Ten Virtuous Precepts Society (Jūzenkai 十善会)—originally founded in 1883 but discontinued shortly thereafter—in

13 Richard M. Jaffe, *Neither Monk nor Layman: Clerical Marriage in Modern Japanese Buddhism*, Princeton University Press, 2001, p. 94.

14 Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan*, p. 6.

15 Kusanagi 1914b, *Nikkishū*, pp. 30–31.

16 See Kameyama Mitsuhiro 亀山光明, “Kairitsu no kindai: Shaku Unshō ni okeru shōki jūzenkairon no tenkai” 戒律の近代：釈雲照における初期十善戒論の展開, *Bungei kenkyū* 文芸研究, no. 185, 2018, pp. 1–15.

17 Unshō 1891, pp. 73–74.

cooperation mainly with Sawayanagi Masatarō 沢柳政太郎 (1865–1927), an educator who would subsequently become the first president of Tohoku Imperial University. At that time, Prince Kuni Asahiko (Kuni-no-miya Asahiko 久邇宮朝彦, 1824–1891) was formally inaugurated as the president, and Miura Gorō 三浦梧楼 (1847–1927), an influential military figure, became the chairman of the board of trustees.

### The Vital Root of the True Dharma: Shaku Unshō's Precept-Centered Ideas

As outlined above, in Meiji Japan, Unshō actively worked for the resurgence of the True Dharma based upon the Buddhist precepts. Indeed, the modern Buddhist world witnessed the rise of lay-centric Buddhism, in line with the prevalence of *nikujiki saitai*, which has continued to the present. Against this background, Unshō and his colleagues sought to accommodate rapidly shifting Meiji-period Japanese society. Now let us turn our attention to his ideas regarding the precepts and the True Dharma.

At the core of Unshō's ideal of the True Dharma was the observance of the Buddhist precepts. While Unshō frequently used the somewhat ambiguous term "True Dharma" to encompass his multifaceted activities, it was directly connected with his precept-centric ideas. In the "Prospectus Relating to the Foundation of Mejiro Sōen" (*Mejiro sōen setsuritsu shuisho* 目白僧園設立趣意書), he presented this connection as the last words of Shakyamuni Buddha:

The precepts constitute the vital root of the Tathāgata's True Dharma (*nyorai shōbō no myōkon* 如来正法の命根). In this world, if the precepts are observed, the True Dharma endures. How does this differ from how we exist in the world? Should the Buddha's disciples abolish the precepts, it means the immediate ruin of the True Dharma. This is just like when human beings have the vital root, they can move and activate their five sense organs and the whole body (*gokan gotai shitai* 五官五体支体), but when the lifeforce is annihilated, it immediately demolishes the whole body.<sup>18</sup>

As can be seen from the above quotation, Unshō positioned the revival of the Buddhist precepts as a cornerstone of his efforts to revive the True Dharma. As part of this revival, he founded the monastic academies (*sōen* 僧園; literally "monks' garden"), for the training of young precept-upholding monks. Unshō called the students "virtuous seeds in the fields of merit" (*fukuden zenshu* 福田善種) and denounced depraved monks as "impure weeds" (*esō* 穢草) to be pulled up.<sup>19</sup>

In antiquity when imperial rule (*ōsei* 王政) flourished, the monks of each denomination strictly observed the Buddha's precepts. Accordingly, princes and ministers deeply revered and believed in them. Yet since the great power (*taiken* 大権) shifted to military families (*bumon* 武門) in the medieval period, the monks began to despise the precepts and commit various wrongful acts. In line with this, belief [in Buddhism] among people weakened, and social

18 Kusanagi 1913, p. 120.

19 Unshō 1890a.

morality collapsed. There was no reason for this except the precepts being disregarded [by the Buddhist monks]. As time passed and it became the era of the Tokugawa, Buddhist monks only prohibited clerical marriage and meat consumption, and none of them maintained even the five precepts. The same was true for the people of the country.... Thus, at the time of the Meiji Restoration, mixed up in the disturbance of people's minds, monks abandoned and paid no regard to the precepts, and all of them violated precepts without remorse (*hakai muzan* 破戒無慚).... As a result, civil morality has corrupted and reached rock bottom, and a sense of shame in people's minds has almost completely disappeared. It really is most deplorable.<sup>20</sup>

In a way similar to his early Meiji petition, Unshō aimed to provide a unique perspective on history that linked the loss of imperial power and the rise of *bushi* to the clerical decadence that followed the Genpei War, a clash between the Taira and the Minamoto clans in the twelfth century. In this narrative, the observance and violation of the Buddhist precepts among monks took place in conjunction with the rise and fall of the imperial court's power. Unshō also devoted much energy to exploring the official archival documents issued by the imperial court.

It was common for Japanese Buddhism to present its historical connections with Japanese emperors, highlighting its antiquity, as an apologetic strategy to counter anti-Buddhism sentiments. Another example is the influential lay Buddhist Ōuchi Seiran 大内青巒 (1845–1918) and others founding the nationalistic “Great Society for Revering the Emperor and Worshipping the Buddha” (Sonnō Hōbutsu Daidōdan 尊皇奉仏大道団) in 1889. In his work *On Revering the Emperor and Worshipping the Buddha* (*Sonnō hōbutsu ron* 尊皇奉仏論) published that year, Seiran expounded on the relationship between “our imperial household” and “our Buddhism” (*waga kōshitsu to waga bukkuyō tonō kankei* 我皇室と我仏教との関係) while drawing on various anecdotal accounts.<sup>21</sup>

Also noteworthy is Unshō's interest in social morality. He adamantly argued that “pure” precept-upholding monks can greatly contribute to solving the problems of public morality and monastic corruption. Following the above passage, he formulated the role of vinaya monks as follows: “If one wants to reverse a loss of social morality, uphold national prosperity, and make people principled and moral imperial subjects (*yūdō utoku no minshin* 有道有徳の民臣), this must be based on the monks who keep the precepts in accordance with the dharma (*nyohō jikai no sōryo* 如法持戒の僧侶).”<sup>22</sup>

As I have shown in this section, Unshō attempted to recover the True Dharma through a movement to revive the precepts. The primary impetus was his utopian view of two primordial

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20 Kusanagi 1913, p. 120.

21 Ōuchi 1889, pp. 3–4.

22 Kusanagi 1913, p. 120.

periods of Buddhism, the age of Shakyamuni and the dawn of Japanese Buddhism.<sup>23</sup> Although it technically belonged to the semblance Dharma period, ancient Japanese Buddhism was the crux of his idea. In his quest to recover the True Dharma, Unshō attempted to identify the relationship between imperial rule and precept-observance among monks.

### A New Encounter: Japanese Buddhists' Entanglement with an Alternative Tradition and the Reformulation of Their Self-Awareness

In this section, I will focus on the confrontation between Unshō's attempt to revive the True Dharma and Final Dharma-age-related ideas using his 1897 work *Mappō kaimōki* 末法開蒙記 (Chronicle on Dispelling Darkness during Mappō). As can be surmised from its title, the purpose of this work was to refute the arguments of *Tōmyōki*, especially the idea that the precepts are not valid during the age of *mappō*. As Mori Shinnosuke 森新之介 reminds us, despite its wide-ranging influence on Japanese Buddhist tradition, it was only in the Meiji period that *Tōmyōki* gained increasing attention among Japanese Buddhist intellectuals. For instance, Kanno Senmon 間野 闡門 (d.u.), a cleric of the Ōtani 大谷 branch of Shin Buddhism, published *Mappō tōmyōki ronsan* 末法灯明記論讚 (In Praise of the *Mappō tōmyōki*) in 1895 to disseminate the *Tōmyōki*.<sup>24</sup>

Indeed, Unshō became unable to overlook the looming influence of *Tōmyōki*. In the preface of *Mappō kaimōki*, Unshō looked back on his activities, saying, "It has been several years that an imperfect Buddhist training monk [Unshō] lamented in his mind that the True Dharma is just declining, and struggled to spread the precepts, the vital root of the Tathāgata's True Dharma, through the construction of a monastery and education of pure monks." One person, he says, questioned his activities and asserted that the Buddhist precepts were no longer helpful in the age of *mappō* while drawing on Saichō's *Tōmyōki*.<sup>25</sup>

One of the main points of *Mappō kaimōki* is demonstrating that *Tōmyōki* is a forgery. In this respect, previous scholarship on *Tōmyōki* has framed Unshō as a pioneering modern Buddhist who came from outside the academic sphere. Unshō asserted the inconsistency of *Tōmyōki* with Saichō's other writings, such as *Kenkai ron* 顕戒論 (A Clarification of the Precepts, 820) and *Sange gakushō shiki* 山家学生式 (Regulations for Students of the Mountain School, 818–819). From this viewpoint, Unshō made the case that Saichō was a promoter of the Buddhist precepts (especially Mahayana precepts) and could not have formulated ideas such as the nominal bhikkhu without precepts (*mukai myōji no biku* 無戒名字の比丘) and that the precepts were not valid during *mappō*.

Unshō's movement was also spurred on by information about foreign countries, especially

23 Micah Auerback has shown in his analysis of the *Light of the Three Worlds* (*Sanze no hikari* 三世の光), authored by the early modern nun Kōgetsu Bhikkuni 皓月比丘尼 (d.u.), a disciple of Jiun, that images of Shakyamuni were widely disseminated through the circulation of printed media, such as storybooks written mainly in *kana* (*kanazōshi* 仮名草子), and puppet shows (*ningyō jōruri* 人形浄瑠璃). Auerback also demonstrates that views of Shakyamuni as an exemplar of a monk's practice greatly influenced the Buddhist precept revival movement. See Micah L. Auerback, *A Storied Sage: Canon and Creation in the Making of a Japanese Buddha*, University of Chicago Press, 2015, pp. 96–118.

24 Mori Shinnosuke, *Sekkan inseiki shisōshi kenkyū* 撰関院政期思想史研究, Shibunkaku Shuppan, 2013, pp. 43–45.

25 Unshō 1897a, *Mappō kaimōki-engi*, p. 1 verso–1 recto.

Buddhist countries in South Asia. Unshō associated the ideal of the True Dharma with the Buddhist tradition of South Asia. That is, modern encounters with this tradition created the opportunity to reconsider whether the precepts could truly be ignored during the *mappō* era.

Although previous scholarship, adopting an east/west binary, has paid much attention to the impact of Western scholarship on modern Japanese Buddhists, recent research by Erik Schickelanz and Richard Jaffe has underlined the pivotal role of other Asian Buddhist countries in the modern formation of Japanese Buddhism. Japanese Buddhists' regard for the South Asian tradition was complicated. They were confronted with colonized Asian countries occupied by Western powers and also saw this tradition as an inferior form of Buddhism (shown by the derogatory term "Hinayana"). At any rate, India, the land of Buddhism's birth, sparked Unshō's interest, leading him to reconstruct his view of the True Dharma.

Remarkably, Unshō utilized the Buddhist tradition in South Asia, called "Southern Buddhism" (*Nanpō bukkyō* 南方仏教), to refute the idea of the *Tōmyōki* that precepts were invalid during the age of *mappō*.<sup>26</sup> Unshō also argued against the apologetic discourse of *Tōmyōki*, which states that in the age of *mappō*, "donors don't have the true intention of donors (*dan'otsu no kokorozashi* 檀越の志). Who can censure the monks for not practicing as monks?"<sup>27</sup> In response to this challenge, Unshō strategically used Southern Buddhism as a Buddhist tradition in harmony with his ideal of the True Dharma. This also allowed him to reconsider the monastic tradition of Japanese Buddhism within a broader and comparative context. He noted as follows:

They say that recently, in the Buddhist countries surrounding India, when laypeople enter temples, they devote themselves to receiving the threefold refuge and five precepts and listening to [talks on] the True Dharma, never drinking even a cup of cold tea. This occurs because [monks] rigidly observe the Buddhist precepts, which make monks be monks, and reveal the reason why the three jewels are the three jewels, and also preach and admonish that wasting the three jewels can lead to the evil path. Japan has already entered the *mappō* era, and more than two thousand and several hundred years have passed, and India has also entered the *mappō* era. If, as argued by the writer of *Tōmyōki*, there is a sort of tide of the times, and in the age of *mappō*, things occur naturally and there is no way monks can do anything, how come the Buddhist precepts, such as the four grave precepts, can be observed and the strict regulations (*katsuma* 羯磨), such as monks' repentance, can be faithfully practiced in the other land (India), and how would it be only in this land (Japan) that the True Dharma cannot be practiced?<sup>28</sup>

Embracing a sort of idealized view of Southern Buddhism, Unshō sought to demonstrate the viability of the True Dharma within the Japanese context. Unshō was among the first Japanese Buddhists to encounter the Southern Buddhism tradition in the Meiji period. The adoration

26 On the classification of Buddhism from a global perspective in the Meiji period, see Okuyama Naoji 奥山直司, "Nihon bukkyō to Seiron bukkyō tonō deai: Shaku Kōzen no ryūgaku o chūshin ni" 日本仏教とセイロン仏教との出会い：釈興然の留学を中心に, *Contact Zone*, vol. 2, 2008, pp. 23–25.

27 *The Candle of the Latter Dharma*, p. 19.

28 Unshō 1897b, p. 47 verso–47 recto.



toward India, also called Tenjiku 天竺, was a motif throughout Japanese Buddhist traditions. For instance, Myōe 明恵, a well-known vinaya-upholding monk in the Kamakura 鎌倉 period (1185–1333), lamented that he was born in Japan, a peripheral land of Tenjiku, during *mappō*, and attempted to journey to India.<sup>29</sup> In his younger days, Jiun, the most influential predecessor of Unshō's movement, also tried to go to India, seeking his ideal Buddhism. Nonetheless, virtually no Japanese Buddhist could succeed in traveling there due to limited navigation technology and the foreign policy of Japanese authorities. Yet, the drastic changes of the Meiji period allowed Japanese Buddhists to travel to the Indian subcontinent. They did so for various purposes, such as pilgrimage, learning canonical languages, and searching for the orthodox lineage of the Buddha dharma (*gubō* 求法). Unshō also had a strong desire to travel to India on his own, but gave up because of old age. In 1886, to conduct research on South Asian Buddhism, Unshō dispatched his nephew Shaku Kōzen 釈興然 (1849–1924) to Ceylon, through which Unshō “discovered” the True Dharma. From the correspondence with Kōzen, we can see that Unshō's main concern was pursuing the precepts transmission lineage that directly goes back to Shakyamuni, and the degree to which the True Dharma was actually practiced among Ceylonese Buddhists.<sup>30</sup> Unshō's monastic educational endeavors reflected this gaze at Southern Buddhism. In his *Sōen seiki* 僧園制規 (Regulations of the Monks' Garden), this tradition served as a model for his movement: “Don't you hear that nowadays Southern Buddhists strictly observe the True Dharma precepts of Tathagata and stick to them? Hence, kings and ministers revere and worship [Buddhism] and all people high and low alike admire and take refuge in the sangha treasure.”<sup>31</sup>

Equating the True Dharma tradition with Southern Buddhism was not unique to Unshō. Another major example is Oda Tokunō 織田得能 (1860–1911), a well-known scholar-monk of Shin Buddhism's Ōtani branch. Tokunō was the first Japanese Buddhist to go to Thailand (in 1888). In his 1891 account, *Shamu bukkyō jijō* 暹羅仏教事情 (The State of Siamese Buddhism), he also understands Siamese Buddhism within the framework of the True Dharma. Remarkably, before his sojourn in Thailand, Tokunō had studied Jiun's accounts and the Four-Part Vinaya at Kōkiji 高貴寺, a temple in Osaka where Jiun had served as an abbot and that became the center of the Shingon Vinaya school.<sup>32</sup> His *State of Siamese Buddhism* was written during his stay at Kōkiji. In its preface, Tokunō states his intention to share with a broad audience how the True Dharma exists today.

In this work, Tokunō praises Siamese Buddhism as still having “the True Dharma of Shakyamuni's time” (*Shakuson zaise no shōbō* 釈尊在世の正法) with regard to three aspects of “the law of temples,” “monk's practice,” and “way of teaching.”<sup>33</sup> This also led him to reconsider the neither-monk-nor-layman tradition of Shin Buddhism. Tokunō recalled his astonishment at

29 As Ichikawa Hirofumi reminds us, together with the temporal factor of the three periods, the spatial factor also played a large role in medieval Japanese Buddhists' self-perception within the traditional Buddhist framework of the “three country worldview” (*sangoku sekai kan* 三国世界観). See Ichikawa Hirofumi 市川浩史, *Nihon chūsei no rekishi ishiki: Sangoku, Mappō, Nihon* 日本中世の歴史意識：三国・末法・日本, Hōzōkan, 2005, p. 82.

30 Kusanagi 1914a, *Shokanshū*, pp. 31–32.

31 Unshō 1890b, p. 18.

32 Tsunemitsu Kōnen 常光浩然, *Meiji no bukkyōsha* (1) 明治仏教者・上, Shunjūsha, 1968, p. 333.

33 Oda 1891, p. 1.

witnessing Siamese monks embracing “the two sacred precepts on the suppression of vice and the promotion of virtue.” Here, Tokunō, seeing himself as a Buddhist monk in the age of *mappō*, confesses that he only had knowledge of the True Dharma indirectly through reading and chanting old sutras. On the other hand, his encounters with the monks in “remote areas in the South Seas” (*nanyō no henchi* 南洋の辺地) helped him realize that the *Great Collection Sutra*’s (Skt. *Mahāsaṃnipāta sūtra*) idea that the age of the True Dharma continued for five hundred years is only a “conditioned teaching for one type of practitioner capacity” (*ikki zuien no setsu* 一機隨縁の説), not a general teaching.<sup>34</sup>

As we have seen in this section, Unshō relativized ideas surrounding the Final age of Dharma. This reflected the transnational dimension faced by modern Japanese Buddhism. In particular, encounters with Southern Buddhism allowed him to reconsider the ideas surrounding the Dharma’s Final Age, something also found in the case of the Shin Buddhist Oda Tokunō. Despite his comparative perspective that considered Southern Buddhism, Unshō recognized that Buddhist practitioners’ capabilities declined in the age of *mappō*. Indeed, other Buddhists recognized the declining Buddhism he faced as a reflection of *mappō*. To respond to this, Unshō also asserted the validity of his conception of the True Dharma by appealing to its connection with the power of the Japanese emperor, who he calls the “king of the True Dharma” (*shōbō ō* 正法王), as I show below.

### The Shōbō Ruler: Toward Restoring the True Dharma and Reversing *Mappō* Decline

As already seen, Unshō worked to return to the ideal past of the True Dharma against the growing influence of *Tōmyōki*. In this attempt, his encounter with Southern Buddhism played a central role in relativizing the Japanese Buddhist tradition’s precepts. It was also obvious to him that monastic discipline and power in Meiji Buddhism were on the decline. The Buddhist movements to revive the precepts by his predecessors had ended up in the minority throughout Japanese Buddhist history. He was also aware that the influx of Muslims resulted in the extinction of Buddhism on the Indian mainland. In his view, all of these devastating situations were none other than the realization of “Buddha’s predictions about the future” (*kenki* 懸記) found in various sutras.<sup>35</sup>

Nonetheless, Unshō claimed that through his movement an increasing number of people had recently begun to observe the dharma and more lay followers had received the precepts, such as the ten virtuous precepts and eight precepts. He highlights that this is the fruit of reverence for the True Dharma and that “high-priests and the saint kings in successive dynasties” pray for it to celestials and earthbound deities in Japan.<sup>36</sup> Thus, besides the relativizing approach to the border-crossing aspects of the True Dharma, the particularity of Japanese tradition took a central role in Unshō’s movement to revive the True Dharma.

In this section, I will demonstrate how Unshō set forth an ideal for the relationship between the nation and religion as part of his effort to revive the True Dharma. He considered the True Dharma and its imperial connection as a way to protect the monastic community, proposed

34 Oda 1891, p. 5.

35 Unshō 1897b, pp. 15 recto–16 verso.

36 Unshō 1897b, p. 17 verso.

regulations against precept transgressions, and equated the ideal Buddhist ruler, called the “king of the True Dharma,” with the Japanese emperor. The religious rulers that are patrons of Buddhism are frequently referred to in many sutras, such as the *Nirvana Sutra* and the *Humane Kings Sutra* (*Ninnō kyō* 仁王經). His apologetic arguments also drew upon these sutras. Meiji Buddhists often saw Japanese emperors as the ideal kings found in sutras and emphasized the four debts of gratitude (*shion* 四恩), which refers to obligations towards parents, sentient beings, rulers, and the three treasures.<sup>37</sup> Unshō tried to prove that the king of the True Dharma and the Japanese emperor are closely linked, connecting this with “our dynasty” (*honchō*) and “the Empire of Japan” (*Dai Nihon teikoku* 大日本帝国). He states that in the declining age of *mappō*, it is all but impossible for “the four groups of Buddhist disciples” (*shibu no deshi* 四部の弟子; kings, ministers, monks and nuns, and lay followers) to keep the True Dharma. Nonetheless, Shakyamuni Buddha had already foreseen this and entrusted the True Dharma to the “four heavenly kings, the four dragon kings and the earth deities.” Through this direct transmission, he noted, “their supernormal power” (*jinzū iriki* 神通威力) would enable the True Dharma to be revived in the age of *mappō*. He argues as follows:

Even though after one thousand five hundred years, the True Dharma utterly disappeared without a trace in the country of Kōsambi, in our Empire of Japan, after 1,501 years, the kings of the True Dharma emerged and Buddhism was transmitted from foreign countries, and they spread it. This is not a coincidence. It occurred because the Buddha entrusted the True Dharma to kings, the four dragon kings, as is stated in the *Great Collection Sutra*. [This was also because] the Buddha created a record written about the future in *Sutra for Humane Kings*, ordering kings and the four groups of Buddhist disciples to recover the True Dharma in the time of no Buddha, dharma, and monks. In this way, the Buddha’s word is never false. How can anybody not believe in this?<sup>38</sup>

Kōsambi, mentioned here, is a legendary country also referred to in *Tōmyōki*. In a mythic anecdote, it is said that in the fifteen hundred years after the Buddha’s nirvana, the True Dharma would be stored away in a dragon’s palace (*ryūgū* 竜宮) due to a quarrel and murder taking place between two monks in the country.<sup>39</sup> In the text, this is a major event representative of the demise of the True Dharma in the age of *mappō*. However, Unshō argued that the *shōbō* was transmitted to ancient Japan and that the Japanese emperor inherited it, thereby highlighting the special characteristics of Japanese Buddhism. In this passage, Unshō also presented a unique exegesis concerning the historical incipency of Japanese Buddhism and its relationship with the True Dharma. According to the account of *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀 (compiled in 720), Paekche’s King Sōng (聖) sent the envoys responsible for the introduction of Buddhism to the Japanese court, and they

37 In particular, in many accounts of modern Japanese Buddhists, the compound *shion* was frequently combined with the ten virtuous acts (*jūzen*). See Ikeda Eishun 池田英俊, “Meijiki no bukyō ni okeru shujō no on ni tsuite” 明治期の佛教における衆生の恩について, *Indogaku bukyōgaku kenkyū* 印度學佛教學研究, vol. 14, no. 2, 1966, pp. 755–759.

38 Unshō 1897b, p. 41 verso–41 recto.

39 *The Candle of the Latter Dharma*, p. 7.

arrived in 552, broadly known as the Official Transmission of Buddhism (*bukkyō kōden* 仏教公伝).<sup>40</sup> Although the chronology of *bukkyō kōden* has been a matter of scholarly contention, the date of 552 is designated as the beginning year of *Mappō* in line with another hermeneutical theory which claims the 500 years of the True Dharma and the 1000 years of the Semblance Dharma.<sup>41</sup> Thereby, Unshō sought to reinterpret this putative introduction of Buddhism in Japan as the story of the transmission of the True Dharma to accentuate the exceptional and privileged position of Japanese Buddhism and the Empire.

Unshō depicts the king of the True Dharma as an ideal ruler who “cultivates the multitude and makes the three jewels flourish (*okuchō o tōya shi sanbō o kōryū* 億兆を陶冶し、三宝を興隆) through the application of the “saintly ten virtuous precepts” to his governance.<sup>42</sup> In addition to this, Unshō holds that the ruler’s function includes the protection of the sangha and preventing precept transgressions by establishing the “office of superintendent of monks” (*sōtō* 僧統) in the evil world of *mappō*. In this respect, Unshō regarded the Set of Laws for Monks and Nuns (*Sōniryō* 僧尼令), part of the *ritsuryō*, as an ideal model for the emerging nation of Japan. Nonetheless, he recognized a contradiction inherent in the True Dharma: between the intervention of the king of the True Dharma and the “sangha” in its original sense. More specifically, Unshō had in mind an account in *Tōmyōki* that states, “Judging from the words of the *Humane Kings Sutra*, and so on, to venerate the superintendent of monks is a profanity destroying the community of monks.”<sup>43</sup> Concerning this problem, Unshō conceded that having a superintendent of monks is against “the regulations of the True Dharma” (*shōbō no kisoku* 正法の規則), but he also justified it by pointing to the declining capacity of Buddhist practitioners in the *mappō*. He noted as follows:

Yet since in the age of *mappō* the world is stained by defilements, if there is no law supervising the clergy [the monks’ superintendent], various sorts of traitors will enter into the Buddhist community, seeking clothing and food, and be beyond control. In the time of imperial rule in the southern capital (*nanto ōsei* 南都王政), this law of clerical registration was installed to protect the Buddha dharma from the outside, but because there were still many pseudo-monks, having become monks for the avoidance of taxes and corvée, and without the necessary qualifications, soon after the transfer of capital to the northern city in Enryaku 延暦 7 (798), the great imperial edict for dharma protection and denominational support, mentioned above, was issued. If the imperial court does not implement a clerical register system (*sōseki* 僧籍) and gives up its responsibility regarding their practice, how can we prevent clerics from violating the Buddhist precepts and transgressing?<sup>44</sup>

40 Concerning the cultural and political background behind the transmission of Buddhism in the ancient East Asia, see Jonathan W. Best, “Paekche and the Incipiency of Buddhism in Japan,” in *Currents and Countercurrents: Korean Influences on the East Asian Buddhist Traditions*, Robert E. Buswell, ed., University of Hawai‘i Press, 2005, pp.15–42.

41 About the scholarly debate on the Buddhist transmission to Japan, see Yoshida Kazuhiko 吉田一彦, “The Credibility of the *Gangōji engi*,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, vol. 42, no. 1, 2015, pp. 105–106.

42 Unshō 1897b, p. 40 recto.

43 *The Candle of the Latter Dharma*, p. 20.

44 Unshō 1897b, p. 55 verso–55 recto.

In this way, Unshō justified sangha regulations by mentioning the *shōbō* ruler (*tennō* 天皇), thereby emphasizing the correspondence between the True Dharma and the power of the Japanese emperor. He presents the emperor as an individual entrusted with the True Dharma through a direct transmission from Shakyamuni. Thus, the antiquity of Japanese Buddhism was depicted as a utopian age when the order of the True Dharma was maintained by imperial power, and interpreted as the future direction that Japanese Buddhism and the Empire of Japan should take.

## Conclusion

Through the lens of Shaku Unshō, this article has examined how the concept of the “True Dharma” unfolded in Japan’s modern period as a response to the rapidly changing religious environment from the late nineteenth century onwards. We can see that Unshō’s movement to revive the precepts was unsuccessful. This is apparent from the lay centrality of contemporary Japanese Buddhism. As Maekawa Ken’ichi 前川健一 states, “The Buddhist precepts lost almost all of their meaning as religious practice after the Meiji period.”<sup>45</sup> Nonetheless, as sketched above, this was far from a linear process. Indeed, against headwinds, Unshō’s movement progressed to a degree, strategically taking advantage of modern settings. It did so by utilizing the concept of the True Dharma. In this attempt, an orientation toward Shakyamuni Buddha occupied an integral position that superseded other denominational founders and buddhas.

Fundamentally, at the core of Unshō’s True Dharma movement was the revival of the precepts as “the vital root of the Tathāgata’s True Dharma.” To embody this ideal, Unshō vigorously engaged in a wide range of endeavors primarily through his Monastic Academy and the Ten Virtuous Precepts Society. With regard to the former, Unshō took a hard-line attitude against the rampant transgression of the precepts and celibacy among Buddhist monks, including the Shingon denomination. By doing so, Unshō sought to reform temples by rebuilding the monastic order (*sangha*) through a revival of the Buddhist precepts.

In order for Buddhism to regain its previous power, Unshō tried to mobilize support from lay followers by promoting the ten virtuous precepts. In the crucible of the public debate over civil morality, Unshō envisioned the observance of the precepts among the people at large as upholding social morality and contributing to nation-building. In this process, he faced a great predicament when confronting Buddhism’s tradition surrounding the Final Age of the Dharma. It was inconsistent with his ideas regarding the True Dharma.

In his ideological and pragmatic efforts, the greatest ideological challenge he faced was from the rediscovery of *Tōmyōki*, a historically influential tract that claimed that the precepts were not valid in the context of *mappō* as Buddhists’ capacities declined. Here Unshō regarded the True Dharma as a transcendent concept that went beyond temporal and geographical conditions. He also sought to demonstrate the viability of the True Dharma from his encounter with the tradition of Southern Buddhism. Such encounters opened new opportunities for Meiji Buddhists to

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45 Maekawa Ken’ichi, “Ishida Mizumaro: Nihon bukkyō kenkyū ni okeru kairitsu e no shikaku” 石田瑞磨：日本仏教研究における戒律への視角, in *Sengo rekishigaku to Nihon bukkyō* 戦後歴史学と日本仏教, Orion Klautau, ed., Hōzōkan, 2016, p. 278.



reconsider their monastic tradition within a comparative framework. The True Dharma functioned as the important lens for this, as can be seen from the case of Oda Tokunō.

To reclaim the True Dharma, Unshō also emphasized the role of the king of the True Dharma, that is, the Japanese emperor. He suggested that in light of the declining capacities of the monks in the age of *mappō*, crackdowns on precept violations should rely upon the authority of the emperor, and he justified this by stating that throughout history the emperor has aimed to prevent precept transgressions.

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## 正法の近代

——僧伽、王、戒律——

亀山光明\*

いわゆる日本仏教を総合的に叙述するに際して、釈迦滅後の仏教徒の法や機根の衰えを強調する末法思想が強調されてきたことは概ね認められるだろう——それは解脱の不可能性や末法無戒に象徴される戒行の衰退にあらわされる。本稿では、真言僧・釈雲照（1827-1909）を題材とし、末法と対蹠を成すユートピア的な原初理念である「正法」という思想が明治期の仏教界に果たした役割を検討する。この作業により、いかに彼の正法への理想が当時のグローバルな情勢や国民形成の課題と共鳴し、また日本列島とそれを超え

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た時間的・空間的秩序の再編成を反映したものであったのかを明らかにする。

キーワード：末法、近代日本仏教、上座部仏教、釈雲照、織田得能

## The Origins of the Red Sun Motif: National Idols in Chinese and Japanese Paintings

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This article seeks the origin of the red sun (*hong taiyang* in Chinese), a motif that Chinese painter Fu Baoshi used in his works during the 1950s and 1960s. A similar motif can be found in some works made by Japanese painters during the 1920s and 1930s, though there is no definitive evidence that Fu learned directly from them. Rather, I argue that Fu and his Japanese counterparts drew from an East Asian tradition for depicting national idols that was exemplified in *Tianbao jiuru*, a theme which had been shared between China and Japan for a long time.

**Keywords:** Fu Baoshi, Yokoyama Taikan, Chinese painting, new Japanese painting, Mao Zedong

### Introduction

Fu Baoshi 傅抱石 (1904–1965) was a painter representative of the early period of the founding of the People's Republic of China. As he studied in Japan between 1932 and 1935, there have been debates among researchers concerning Japanese influences on Fu. His connection with Yokoyama Taikan 横山大観 (1868–1958), who is considered one of the leading exponents of modern Japanese painting, is often singled out. From Zhang Guoying's *Fu Baoshi yanjiu* in the 1990s<sup>1</sup> to Aida Yuen Wong's recent book,<sup>2</sup> several studies have highlighted these influences, relying on vague compositional similarities or the fact that certain themes and titles are the same. On the other hand, there are studies such as Chen Lüsheng's *Xin Zhongguo meishu tu shi* that disregard the shared heritage of Japanese and traditional East Asian painting and focus entirely on the circumstances of Chinese society to interpret the works of Fu Baoshi from the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Zhang Guoying 張國英, *Fu Baoshi yanjiu* 傅抱石研究, Taipei Shili Meishuguan, 1991.

2 There is an English version of Aida Yuen Wong's book published in 2006, but the 2019 Chinese version contains many new discussions about Fu Baoshi and Japanese paintings. Aida Yuen Wong, *Parting the Mists: Discovering Japan and the Rise of National-Style Painting in Modern China*, University of Hawai'i Press, 2006; and Ruan Yuan 阮圓, *Bomi kaiwu: Riben yu Zhongguo "guohua" de dansheng* 撥迷開霧：日本與中國「國畫」的誕生, Shitou Chubanshe, 2019.

3 Chen Lüsheng 陳履生, *Xin Zhongguo meishu tu shi* 新中国美术图史 (1949–1966), Beijing Zhongguo Qingnian Chubanshe, 2000, pp. 165–167.

To overcome the imbalance of previous research, this article considers the origins of Fu Baoshi's red sun (*hong taiyang* 红太阳) motif from the perspective of both its contemporary circumstances and its artistic precedents. It aims to elucidate the reasons that led to similarities between works with the red sun motif and 1930s Japanese paintings, starting with Yokoyama Taikan.

## 1. An Early Example of the Red Sun Motif: The Creation of *Jiangshan ruci duo jiao*

In Japanese paintings of the Shōwa 昭和 era (1926–1989), combining images of Mount Fuji and the sun became a standardized symbol of the imperial family.<sup>4</sup> One notable example is Yokoyama Taikan's work from 1927 titled *Chōyō reihō* 朝陽靈峯 (Sacred peak in the morning sun) (figure 1).

Fu Baoshi's *Jiangshan ruci duo jiao* 江山如此多娇 (Such are the bountiful charms of our rivers and mountains)—made in 1959 and housed in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing (figure 2)—is representative of his early political phase and bears a certain similitude to the composition of *Chōyō reihō*. There are the dark colors of mountain ranges and pine trees at the bottom-right corner, light colors of snow-peaked mountains on the top-left corner, and at the center, slightly tilted to the right, a red, round sun is depicted.

Is there a direct link between these two paintings? Or do they merely share well-established motifs? In order to answer these questions, I would like to provide an overview of the creation process of *Jiangshan ruci duo jiao* and explore how its compositional style emerged.

### 1.1. The Origins of its Composition: Collaboration and Examination

*Jiangshan ruci duo jiao* was produced in 1959 for the newly built Great Hall of the People in anticipation of the tenth anniversary of the proclamation of the People's Republic of China. It was a highly political piece, conceived to celebrate the tenth year since the country's foundation. Measuring five and a half meters in height and nine meters in length, it was said to be the largest painting ever made. The political success of this painting also ensured that Fu Baoshi was brought to the forefront of the artistic scene in the new China.

However, *Jiangshan ruci duo jiao* was not solely the product of Fu Baoshi's individual efforts but rather a collaboration with fellow painter Guan Shanyue 关山月 (1912–2000), who described it as “a political duty of incomparable glory.”<sup>5</sup> From the choice of the subject matter and composition to the depiction of the smallest details, it was all the result of constant reworkings that relied on the views of many individuals.

The subject of the painting is derived from a poem (*ci* 词) known as *Qinyuan chun xue* 沁园春·雪 (Spring and snow at Qinyuan)<sup>6</sup> that Mao Zedong 毛泽东 (1893–1976) wrote in

4 Museum of the Imperial Collections, Sannomaru Shozokan 宫内庁三の丸尚蔵館, ed., *Yokoyama Taikan no jidai (1920s–40s)* 横山大観の時代 (1920s–40s), Kikuyō Bunka Kyōkai, 1997.

5 Guan Shanyue, “Huainian Fu Baoshi” 怀念傅抱石, *Shijie zhishi huabao* 世界知识画报, vol. 11, 2012, pp. 24–29.

6 The original poem is as follows:

*The scenery of the northern lands is enclosed in ice for a thousand leagues, with snow fluttering for ten thousand*



Figure 1. Yokoyama Taikan, *Chōyō reihō*, ink on paper, pair of six-panel folding screens, 209×452.4 cm (each screen), 1927, Museum of the Imperial Collections, Sannomaru Shozokan. The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto 京都国立近代美術館, ed., *Yokoyama Taikan 横山大観*, Asahi Shimbunsha, 2004, pp. 124–125.

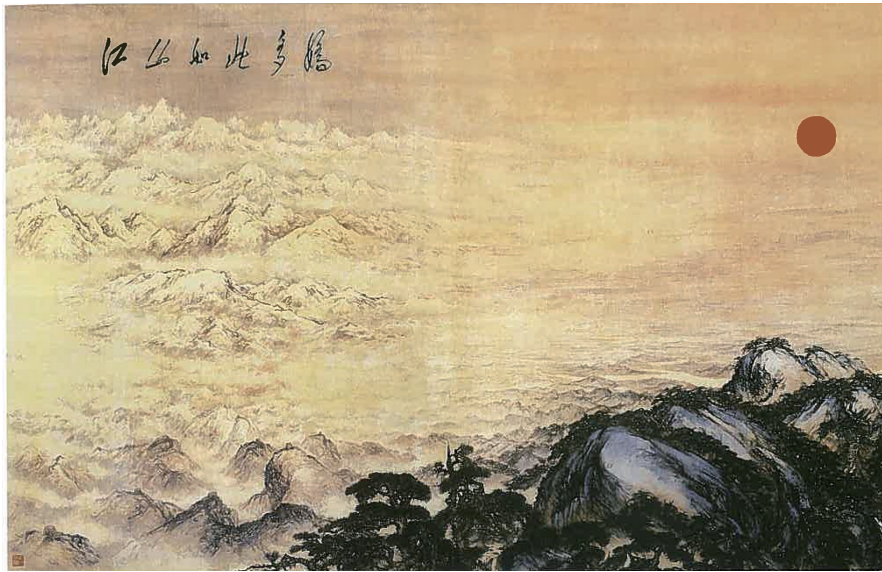


Figure 2. Fu Baoshi and Guan Shanyue, *Jiangshan ruci duo jiao*, color on paper, 650×900 cm, 1959, Great Hall of the People, Beijing. Nanjing Museum 南京博物院, ed., *Jiangshan ruci duo jiao: Fu Baoshi Mao Zedong shiyihua zuopinji 江山如此多娇: 傅抱石“毛泽东诗意画”作品集*, Beijing Rongbaozhai Chubanshe, 2010, p. 89.

*leagues. Gazing inward and outward the Great Wall, there is but one vast sight. Upstream and downstream, the Yellow River has suddenly lost its torrential current. Mountains rise like silvery serpents, plateaus sprawl like waxen elephants, as if vying with Heaven in their loftiness. When a clear day comes, one sees the exceptional allure of it all enveloped in white and adorned with red. Such are the bountiful charms of our rivers and mountains that beckon innumerable valiant men to bow before them. How regrettable that the Qin Emperor and Emperor Wu of Han were all but deprived of literary talent, and that the Tang and Song founders had meager poetic inclinations. Even Genghis Khan, the pride of heaven in his time, knew only of drawing his bow for shooting eagles. All of them have departed. For counting the truly great, look no further than the present reign.*  
 北国风光，千里冰封，万里雪飘。望长城内外，惟余莽莽；大河上下，顿失滔滔。山舞银蛇，原驰蜡象，欲与天公试比高。须晴日，看红装素裹，分外妖娆。江山如此多娇，引无数英雄竞折腰。惜秦皇汉武，略输文采；唐宗宋祖，稍逊风骚。一代天骄成吉思汗，只识弯弓射大雕。俱往矣，数风流人物，还看今朝。

Wang Xiaodong 王晓东, ed., *Mao Zedong shici jiedu 毛泽东诗词解读*, Shaanxi Renmin Chubanshe, 2016, p. 130.



1936. When Fu Baoshi was commissioned to do the work, the theme had already been decided by Zhou Enlai 周恩来 (1898–1976). Zhou Enlai was at the time the Premier of the State Council (1949–1976) and Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (1954–1976). According to Guan Shanyue’s account of the painting’s composition in his *Huainian Fu Baoshi* 怀念傅抱石 (Reminiscences of Fu Baoshi), although both he and Fu Baoshi proposed various drafts, initially none of them passed the officials’ examination because they “failed to grasp its main point.”<sup>7</sup> Fu Baoshi details in his own notes that they had originally planned to paint a snowy landscape, focusing on the description of “the scenery of the northern lands, enclosed in ice for a thousand leagues, with snow fluttering for ten thousand leagues.”<sup>8</sup>

After receiving instructions from high-ranking government officials in the Chinese Communist Party, they included different landscapes to represent the entire country. Figures listed in Fu Baoshi’s *Beijing zuohua ji* 北京作画记 (Records of painting in Beijing) from 1959, which documents his production, include Chen Yi 陈毅 (1901–1972), Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892–1978), Wu Han 吴晗 (1909–1969), and Zhou Enlai.<sup>9</sup> Guan Shanyue also mentions Qi Yanming 齐燕铭 (1907–1978).<sup>10</sup>

Chen Yi occupied at the time the two positions of Vice-Premier of the State Council (1954–1972) and Minister of Foreign Affairs (1958–1972). He emphasized the idea of “charms” (*jiao* 娇), from the verse “such are the bountiful charms of our rivers and mountains” (江山如此多娇), and requested the depiction of not only the Great Wall and the Yellow River mentioned in the poem but also the East China Sea, Xueshan 雪山, and the Jiangnan 江南 region. It was to encompass China’s geography in all four cardinal directions and throughout the four seasons. While Fu Baoshi does not mention the status of the person expressing these views, Guan Shanyue clearly specifies that they were those of Chen Laozong 陈老总 (General Chen), i.e., Chen Yi.<sup>11</sup>

In 1959, Fu Baoshi’s close friend Guo Moruo was Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress. When Fu Baoshi asked whether he should depict a red sun or not, it was Guo Moruo who answered that he should.<sup>12</sup> The original poem, with the verse “when a clear day comes,” describes a scene without the sun. Guo Moruo, arguing that the Communist Party and Mao Zedong were “China’s sun,” explained that as these verses were written before the establishment of the new China, the image they present symbolized the dark olden days before the sun had risen. At the tenth anniversary of the country’s founding, China had been brought to a bright new era thanks to the Communist Party. “The East had turned red.”<sup>13</sup> In other words, the sun of the Communist Party was ablaze with the red glow of the revolution. This is why it was

7 Guan, “Huainian Fu Baoshi,” p. 24.

8 Fu Baoshi, “Beijing zuohua ji” 北京作画记, in *Fu Baoshi meishu wenji* 傅抱石美术文集, Ye Zonggao 叶宗镐, ed., Shanghai Guji Chubashe, 2003, p. 478.

9 Ibid.

10 Qi Yanming worked next to Zhou Enlai in the 1950s, occupying the positions of Vice-Minister of Culture and Vice-Secretary of the State Council, among others. Guan, “Huainian Fu Baoshi,” p. 25.

11 Ibid.

12 Guan Shanyue, “Huai guolao” 怀郭老, in *Guan Shanyue lun hua* 关山月论画, Huang Xiaogen 黄小庚, ed., Hunan Meishu Chubanshe, 1991, p. 27.

13 Fu, “Beijing zuohua ji,” p. 478.



Figure 3. Fu Baoshi, *Jiangshan ruci duo jiao*, color on paper, 30.2×65.9 cm, July 1959, Nanjing Museum, Nanjing. Chen Lüsheng 陈履生 ed., *Fu Baoshi quanji* 傅抱石全集, vol. 3, Guilin Guangxi Meishu Chubanshe, 2008, p. 311.

necessary to add the sun at the center of the painting.

Drafts of *Jiangshan ruci duo jiao* were also sent to the then Chairman of the People's Republic of China, Mao Zedong, to get his advice. After gathering the views of such high-ranking officials, the first stage of the painting was concluded in mid-September and taken to the next step of being reexamined.<sup>14</sup> Starting with Zhou Enlai, political leaders came to the artists' atelier and voiced their opinions. Zhou Enlai was of the view that, in order to match the architectural space, the painting had to be enlarged, and the motif of the sun made more prominent.<sup>15</sup>

There are two known extant drafts of *Jiangshan ruci duo jiao*, one housed at the Nanjing Museum (figure 3) and another one in a private collection. As the sun is not depicted in either, they were presumably made before Guo Moruo was consulted, and are likely Fu Baoshi's own creations. In terms of composition, motifs, and color scheme, there are few similarities when compared to Yokoyama Taikan's *Chōyō reihō*. It was only after the painting incorporated the views of various figures that it finally became closer to the style of *Chōyō reihō*.

As for how the painting's final form came into being, decisions about its general composition and concrete ways for depicting certain elements did not belong to Fu Baoshi and Guan Shanyue. Instead, the final product strongly reflected the views of political leaders. That being said, when one looks at the careers of figures mentioned by both Fu Baoshi and Guan Shanyue, although they were classically educated men, trained in painting and calligraphy and with some experience as art collectors, none of them were particularly knowledgeable or interested in the visual arts. Moreover, few of them had studied or had a prolonged stay in Japan. It is therefore unlikely that any of these men were attuned to the styles of Japanese painting.

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14 Ibid.

15 Guan, "Huai guolao," p. 27. On September 27, 1959, the characters for *Jiangshan ruci duoji* handwritten by Mao Zedong were copied onto the screen by a professional calligrapher. After being adjusted and mounted, the painting achieved its final form on September 29 and was hung in the Great Hall of the People.

## 1.2. The Red Sun and “The East is Red”

What, then, was the source of the images that these political leaders conjured? Were they newly conceived in contemporary China or rather passed down since ancient times? Why did they resemble Japanese paintings from the 1930s and 1940s? In order to answer these questions and provide some clues about the red sun motif emphasized by figures like Guo Moruo and Zhou Enlai, I would like to present the context of the production of *Jiangshan ruci duo jiao* by starting with the famous song *Dongfang hong* 东方红 (The East is red).

Starting in the 1940s, the metaphor of the red sun was used in China to designate the leader of the revolution, Mao Zedong, in music, visual arts, films, theater, etc., turning him into a national idol based on a personality cult. More than a possible connection to Yokoyama Taikan, Fu Baoshi's work was deeply embedded in this context.<sup>16</sup>

However, there are no academic studies concerning precedents from art history. In this article, I will delve into the connections between *Jiangshan ruci duo jiao* and similar works to try and reconstruct Fu Baoshi's own pictorial vision. Building on this, I will then proceed to discuss the question of its artistic precedents in the second section.

In his account of *Jiangshan ruci duo jiao*'s creation process recorded in *Beijing zuohua ji*, Fu Baoshi himself refers to Guo's views by using the quotation “the East has turned red.”<sup>17</sup> When referring to Zhou Enlai's opinion that the depiction of the sun should be enlarged, Fu Baoshi writes the following: “We will impress upon the people the formidable spirit of the phrase ‘the East has turned red, the sun is rising.’”<sup>18</sup> It appears that both Guo and Zhou were referring to the lyrics of the popular song *Dongfang hong*.

In the winter of 1942, Li Youyuan 李有源 (1903–1955), a folk singer from Shaanxi 陕西 Province, set lyrics to the melody of a local ballad of northern Shaanxi and created *Dongfang hong*, in which he extols Mao Zedong. The anthem was widely circulated among the populace and came to represent the Mao Zedong era (1949–1976). The passage quoted by Fu Baoshi above comes from a particularly famous stanza: “The East has turned red, the sun is rising. In China, Mao Zedong has emerged. He works for the well-being of the people; he is the savior of the people.” Mao Zedong was viewed as China's “red sun.” Since red symbolized the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army of the Chinese Communist Party, it became the preferred color of Chinese painters.

When comparing the final version of *Jiangshan ruci duo jiao* with its previous drafts and considering the views expressed by political leaders, the most evident modifications are concentrated around two points. First, the depiction of the sun was added and became the central motif. Second, the shades of the sky were changed from a “dim gray” (*hui'an* 灰暗)<sup>19</sup> to brighter, more intense tones of red. These elements were meant to emphasize the presence of the Chinese Communist Party and of Mao Zedong as its central figure. The composition depicting the glow of

16 Gao Tianming 高天民 and Yuan Yuan 袁媛, “Jiangshan ruci duo jiao: Xinzhongguo zhongguohua zhongda ticali chuanguo yu zhongguohua de biange he chuangxin” 江山如此多娇：新中国中国画重大题材创作与中国画的变革和创新, in *Lishi jiyi yu minzu shishi zhongwai zhongda ticali meishu chuanguo yanjiu* 历史记忆与民族史诗中外重大题材美术创作研究, Zhang Xiaoling 张晓凌, ed., Anhui Meishu Chubanshe, 2015, p. 313.

17 Fu, “Beijing zuohua ji,” p. 478.

18 Ibid., p. 479.

19 Ibid., p. 478.

the sun and the red-tinted mists illuminating the Earth symbolizes China's brightness as it is led by the Communist Party and Mao Zedong.

*Jiangshan ruci duo jiao* was finalized in the short span of about two months between early August and September 29, 1959. It resulted from a combination of various viewpoints, so Fu Baoshi's and Guan Shanyue's own preferences were not necessarily reflected in the end. Furthermore, since the two artists had met for the first time to collaborate on the painting, at that point they did not understand each other very well and often could not agree on a consistent pictorial style. As a result, neither were satisfied with the final product, and they submitted a proposal to Zhou Enlai to rework the project. Zhou Enlai declined, planning instead a trip for the two to draw sketches of the country's northeastern regions.

Fu's later works such as *Gujing ying xinnian* 鼓劲迎新年 (Celebrating and ringing in the new year) (1960), *Hongri song mei tu* 红日松梅图 (Painting of the red sun, pines, and plum trees) (1962), and *Gaoshan xuri* 高山旭日 (High mountains and the rising sun) (1963), all held at Nanjing Museum, might be understood as partial expressions of this unfulfilled wish to rework the previous painting. They have in common with *Jiangshan ruci duo jiao* the combination of various elements such as the red sun, pine trees, mountains, and water, and depict a China aglow under the red sunlight of the Chinese Communist Party.

As a work commissioned for commemorating the tenth anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, *Jiangshan ruci duo jiao* is seen as a piece of political propaganda that served specific purposes. In the text (*bawen* 跋文) that appears on the similar painting *Gaoshan xuri*, it is written that it was made in commemoration of the fourteenth anniversary of the founding of the new China. Both *Gujing ying xinnian* and *Hongri song mei tu* are works for celebrating the arrival of the new year. All three of these works were conceived to extol the new China.

## 2. *Tianbao jiuru*: A Motif for Sovereignty in East Asia

The motivation behind the works described above is similar to Yokoyama Taikan's case. Between 1922 and 1940, he maintained a very close relationship with the imperial family, producing numerous paintings that were offered to the emperor or directly commissioned by him. Such works exalted Japan's scenery, venerating the imperial family and expressing admiration for its authority. These works were composed with well-established pictorial techniques that reflected the motifs of the sun, pine trees, and Mount Fuji.<sup>20</sup> *Chōyō reihō* was a folding screen commissioned by the emperor to be displayed in the Hōmeiden 豊明殿 banquet hall of the Meiji Palace.

Among the similarities between Yokoyama Taikan's *Chōyō reihō* and Fu Baoshi's *Jiangshan ruci duo jiao*, they were both produced for political propaganda purposes, and aimed to venerate national idols. By looking at Japanese and Chinese art history, one finds multiple instances of analogous works among court paintings as well as popular "auspicious paintings" (*jixiang hua* 吉祥画) that combine the motifs of the sun, mountains, water, pine trees, etc. As this topic has been generally overlooked in studies of East Asian art history, the cataloging and research on

20 Museum of the Imperial Collections, Sannomaru Shozokan, *Yokoyama Taikan no jidai*.



correlated works is still insufficient.<sup>21</sup> I would like, therefore, to provide some examples of earlier works to explore the origins of the imagery shared by Yokoyama Taikan, Fu Baoshi, and Chinese political leaders.

Using as an example the relatively well-known pictorial genre called *Tianbao jiuru* 天保九如 (Nine similes of heavenly protection), I will consider how Fu Baoshi and Yokoyama Taikan continued this legacy.

The expression *Tianbao jiuru* is derived from the *Tianbao* 天保 (Heavenly protection) section of the *Xiaoya* 小雅 (Minor odes) chapter of the *Shijing* 诗经 (Classic of poetry), written between the eleventh and sixth centuries BCE. The section dates from the Western Zhou 西周 period (1046–771 BC) and contains poems in which vassals praise the sovereign and wish for his good fortune. It emphasizes the political notion that the ruler was supposed to exercise his virtue by venerating the heavens and protecting the people. When the emperor “maintained a virtuous conduct” as the legitimate ruler under the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming* 天命), the heavens would protect him. Therefore, the aim of paintings themed around *Tianbao jiuru* was generally to exalt the emperor.

The term *jiuru* 九如 refers to nine similes used in the *ci* poetic genre to wish for the prosperity and longevity of the sovereign. These are mountains (*shan* 山), mounds (*fu* 阜), hills (*gang* 冈), large mounds (*ling* 陵), rivers, the moon, the sun, the Zhongnan 终南 Mountains, and evergreen trees like pines and cypresses (*songbai* 松柏). *Tianbao jiuru* paintings contained depictions of these nine auspicious symbols. When the terms for mountains and rivers are combined—*shanhe* 山河 in Chinese—they denote the country or its soil.

The perennial and immutable character of the moon and the rising sun are fitting figures of speech for describing the self-proclaimed “Son of Heaven” (*tyanzi* 天子), i.e., the emperor. Moreover, pine trees, which do not wither even in the winter, and the simile known as *shoubi Nanshan* 寿比南山 (“as long-lived as the southern mountains”)—in reference to the Zhongnan Mountains—are symbols of a long life and eternal youth. Due to its meaning of longevity, the subject was sometimes used in paintings from the seventeenth century onward to commemorate elders’ birthdays.

The earliest extant example of the *Tianbao jiuru* genre can be found in the sixth panel, titled *Tianbao* 天保 of *Luming zhi shi tujian* 鹿鸣之什图卷 (Painted scroll of the deer’s call), held at the Palace Museum in Beijing.<sup>22</sup> It has been traditionally attributed to the court painter Ma Hezhi 马和之 (d.u.), active between the end of the Northern Song 北宋 (960–1127) and the beginning of the Southern Song 南宋 (1127–1279) periods. The art specialist Xu Bangda, an authority in the field, considers that, although this work is not by the hand of Ma Hezhi, the level of calligraphy and painting are among the finest within existing works, dating it to the Song dynasty.<sup>23</sup>

Later examples from the Ming 明 dynasty (1368–1644) are found in *Chengshi moyuan* 程氏

21 There are some studies on these political works’ authenticity and estimated time of production, but not on the red sun motif. See, for instance, Xu Bangda 徐邦达, “Zhaogou shu Ma Hezhi hua ‘Mao shi’ xin kao” 赵构书马和之画《毛诗》新考, *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 故宫博物院院刊, vol. 1, 1995, pp. 11–24.

22 This painting’s visual image can be found in Palace Museum’s website: <https://www.dpm.org.cn/collection/paint/228353.html>.

23 Xu Bangda, “Zhaogou shu Ma Hezhi hua ‘Mao shi’ xin kao.” Although there are different perspectives on the authenticity of this painting, none seem to contradict Xu Bangda’s conclusion that it dates to the Song dynasty.



墨苑 (Ink collection of the Cheng clan), a printed compilation of carvings on ink sticks from the Wanli 万历 era (1575–1620) containing printed illustrations of *Tianbao jiuru* motifs, currently held at the Waseda University Library. It confirms that these motifs were used in everyday objects such as ink sticks. One also finds the works of painter Gao Qipei 高其佩 (1660/1672–1734), active in the Qing 清 dynasty's imperial court. His own *Tianbao jiuru tu* 天保九如图 (Painting of the nine similes of heavenly protection, 1708), housed at the Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts, was produced with the unusual technique of finger painting.<sup>24</sup>

Concerning its connections with Japan, Gao Qipei's *Tianbao jiuru tu* was publicly displayed on November 11 and 12, 1939, at an art salon in Tokyo as part of the collection of Abe Kōjirō 阿部孝次郎.<sup>25</sup> Photographs of the work taken on glass plates that same year are now preserved at the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties.

Although research on *Tianbao jiuru* motifs in art history are scarce, there are many extant examples produced by Japanese artists. Among them is *Tenpō kyūjo* (the Japanese pronunciation of *Tianbao jiuru*) by Tani Bunchō 谷文晁 (1763–1841), a painter in the *Nanga* 南画 (Southern-style painting) tradition from the late Edo 江戸 period (1603–1867), dated 1824 and held at the Tokyo National Museum,<sup>26</sup> and another *Tenpō kyūjo* by Ishizaki Yūshi 石崎融思 (1768–1846) housed at the Kobe City Museum. Ishizaki's work was featured in the eighth art salon of September 9, 1932, “Exhibition of Western-Style Paintings in the Nagasaki School” (*Nagasaki-kei yōfūga tenrankai* 長崎系洋風画展覧会). It is possible that painters such as Yokoyama Taikan and Fu Baoshi were able to see it then.

Although the subject is different, a folding screen from the Muromachi 室町 period (1392–1568) titled *Nichigetsu shōkaku zu* 日月松鶴図 (Painting of the sun, the moon, pines, and cranes) (figure 4) depicts the elements of the sun and the moon, pine trees, rivers, and so on, containing certain commonalities with the *Tianbao jiuru* genre. The mountains are omitted, and the smaller elements of pines and cranes stand out, weakening the sense of spatial distance on the screen. While this can be ascribed to aesthetic considerations and technical adjustments, the motifs and their auspicious meanings remain unchanged.

Summarizing the discussion above, *Tianbao jiuru* appeared as a genre in the Song dynasty at the latest and was widely used during the Ming dynasty as a standardized motif in everyday objects. It also had an impact in ancient Japan, where numerous similar examples are found. These works were exhibited in Tokyo and appeared in printed publications during the 1930s. Therefore, Japanese painters such as Yokoyama Taikan, and also Fu Baoshi, who often attended Tokyo exhibitions and constantly read art journals and catalogs, had plenty of opportunities to be exposed to such pieces.

The *Tianbao jiuru* genre represents pictorial subjects that combine specific motifs of the sun, mountains, water, pines, etc., to exalt the country or the sovereign. We have seen that it has been adopted widely throughout Japan and China since ancient times. As Fu Baoshi and Japanese

24 *Ōsaka Shiritsu Bijutsukan zōhin zuroku* 大阪市立美術館蔵品図録, Ōsaka Shiritsu Bijutsukan, March 1970, figure 154.

25 *Bijutsu konwakai tenkan, Abe Kōjirō shi shozō, Shina kaiga tenkan mokuroku* 美術懇話会展観・阿部孝次郎氏所蔵・支那絵画展観目録, Bijutsu Kenkyūsho, November 11–12, 1939.

26 <https://webarchives.tnm.jp/imgsearch/show/C0012236>.



**Figure 4.** Unknown artist, *Nichigetsu shōkaku zu*, color and gold leaf on paper, pair of six-panel folding screens, 157×353.2 cm (left), 157×367.4 cm (right), 16th c., Mitsui Memorial Museum, Important Cultural Property. Tokyo National Museum 東京国立博物館 and Yomiuri Shimbunsha 読売新聞社, eds., *Momoyama: Artistic Visions in a Turbulent Century: Special Exhibition 桃山：天下人の100年：特別展*, Yomiuri Shimbunsha, 2020, pp. 127–128.

painters, starting with Yokoyama Taikan, were part of this tradition, it is only natural that one can find certain similarities between their visual expressions on the screens.

## Conclusion

Fu Baoshi's works from the 1950s and 1960s that depict the red sun motif emerged from the interplay of a variety of elements. First, starting in the 1930s, China saw the development of the cult of the red sun (*hong taiyang*). Second, artists inherited long-lasting representations of sovereignty and auspicious symbols from traditional pictorial styles in East Asia. As *Jiangshan ruci duo jiao* and *Chōyō reihō* were created for analogous purposes, their similitude stems from traditional East Asian imagery shared by figures like Fu Baoshi, Guan Shanyue, the Chinese officials who provided advice, and Yokoyama Taikan.

「紅太陽」モチーフの由来  
——中国と日本の絵画に見る国家アイドル——

陳 藝婕\*

本論文は、中国の画家・傅抱石が1950～60年代に制作した作品に見られる、紅い太陽（中国語で「紅太陽」）の由来の解明を試みるものである。このモチーフは、1920～30年代の日本画との類似点が見られるものの、直接的な影響関係は十分に実証されていない。本論文では、紅い太陽のイメージはむしろ、東アジアの絵画に長く存在する王権表象や、「天保九如」に代表されるように中国と日本で早い時代から流通したものが、傅抱石や日本人画家に深い影響を与えたと考える。

キーワード：傅抱石、横山大観、中国絵画、新日本画、毛沢東

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## Local, Regional, and Global: Notes on the EAJS Next-Generation Workshop

ローカル、リージョナル、そしてグローバルへ  
——EAJS 2021「国際次世代ワークショップ」参加記——

GU Xueni\*

谷 雪妮

In this next-generation workshop, we explored the development of political orders, religions, and representations surrounding the concept of sovereignty in East Asia between the early modern and modern periods from a transnational and transdisciplinary perspective. We were able to shed light on three points: (1) the formation of local political orders throughout the East Asian region, their respective intellectual contexts, and the activities of mediators between different political orders (Cheng Yongchao's and Mick Deneckere's papers); (2) issues of contemporaneity and correlation across various Asian regions brought by the movement of people and their interactions on the cusp of modernity (Kameyama Mitsuhiro's and Chen Yijie's papers); (3) the crisis and revival of traditions in face of the emergence of modernity and modern nation-states (Deneckere's, Kameyama's, and Chen's papers).

As my research focus is modern East Asian intellectual history and the history of international relations, I am not a specialist on the subject of each paper. I have therefore based my comments on the content of the presentations and the issues that pertain to my field.

In the first presentation, Cheng analyzed the diplomatic correspondence of Tsushima to elucidate how the domain deliberately concealed commercial negotiations with Pusan from the Tokugawa shogunate. In my comments, I evoked the research of Watanabe Miki on early modern Ryukyu—specifically her book *Kinsei Ryūkyū to chūnichi kankei* (“Early Modern Ryukyu and Sino-Japanese Relations”) published in 2012 by Yoshikawa Kōbunkan. The author demonstrates that the Ryukyuan court likewise concealed and fabricated information when communicating with both the Qing dynasty and the Tokugawa shogunate in order to consolidate its own political autonomy. Furthermore, I indicated that when comparing the position of places like Tsushima and Ryukyu as mediators in the interstices of different political orders, one could also explore the perspective of their own mutual connections. Cheng agreed with my comments.

In the second presentation, Deneckere revealed the persistent influence of Shin Buddhism within the Chōshū domain at the end of the Tokugawa period and identified the sect's support of the Meiji Restoration as one of the causes for the brevity of the early Meiji anti-Buddhist movement known as *haibutsu kishaku*. I reacted with two questions. The first one concerned the extent

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to which Chōshū officials employed by the Meiji government promoted Buddhism and the Shin sect. Deneckere offered the example of Kido Takayoshi. Kido, a samurai from Chōshū, realized that Buddhism could be the religion to spearhead Japan's modernization during a trip to Europe in the early Meiji period, when he had the opportunity to interact with a Shin Buddhist monk. He was also the first Meiji official to hold a Shin Buddhist funeral at the temple Nishi Honganji. Therefore, although a staunch supporter of the Meiji Restoration, Kido can be seen as representative of those who backed Shin Buddhism. Secondly, concerning Shin Buddhist monk Gesshō's *Buppō gokokuron* ("Discourse on protecting the country with the Buddha's doctrine") mentioned in the presentation, I asked whether the sermons of Shin Buddhist monks on the notion of sovereignty had an impact on other Buddhist sects. Deneckere explained that while it is difficult to assess the precise impact of Gesshō himself, Shin Buddhist monks were an important force in criticizing the religious policies of the Meiji government.

The next presentation was also themed around late Tokugawa and early Meiji religious history, and Kameyama introduced the "Precepts Revival Movement" of Shingon monk Shaku Unshō. My questions were about the connection between modernity and Shaku Unshō's movement, and how the fact that Shaku Unshō sent his nephew Shaku Kōnen to South Asia contributed to Unshō's "True Dharma Movement." Kameyama, citing the previous research of Buddhologists like Ōtani Eiichi, explained that returning to the original teachings of Shakyamuni was one of the defining traits of modern Buddhism. He added that, although research on the subject has traditionally focused on the efforts of Shin Buddhist monks toward modernization, the desire of Shingon monks to reform Buddhism by promoting the revival of an idealized, lost form of the religion from antiquity was also informed by modernity. In addition, Kameyama noted that Shaku Unshō sent Shaku Kōnen to South Asia because he saw Sri Lanka's Theravada Buddhism and the traditions of local Vinaya monks as an ideal model for his own Buddhist reform.

The last presenter, Chen, focused on the symbols of modern nation-states and considered the interactions between Japanese and Chinese artists and their creations depicting the Japanese emperor and the Chinese leader Mao Zedong as "red suns." Through an analysis of the works of Yokoyama Taikan and Fu Baoshi, Chen discussed how both of them drew from traditions of ink wash painting in East Asia to produce their own expressions of the "red sun" symbol. In response, I mentioned that, beyond the analysis of painters' forms of expression from a history of art perspective, it is also necessary to study how the red sun became a central symbol for modern nation-states from the point of view of its social history. I referred to the idea of "invented traditions" in modern nations proposed by Eric Hobsbawm, and suggested pursuing further the notions of circulation and consumption of pictures in mass society, as well as the reproduction of images through media.

This is an overview of my comments on the papers from the aforementioned presenters. While the subjects spanned the various disciplines of diplomatic and religious history alongside religious thought and art history, they all had in common a research approach that questions the framework of nation-states. Despite all falling within the field of Japanese studies, not only did they highlight local areas and contexts such as Tsushima and the Chōshū domain, but they also emphasized transnational movements of people and the reappropriation of knowledge and traditions around the East Asian region.

The research approach of each presenter has greatly inspired me. I only regret that, due to



time constraints and my own limitations, we were not able to discuss the position of local and regional experiences and histories in relation to contemporary global history. I would like to explore further in the future the ways that our own research can contribute to the humanities on a global scale as we unravel local and regional historical contexts.

As a final note, I would like to thank the professors and staff at the Consortium for Global Japanese Studies and the Office of International Research Exchange for their efforts to ensure the seamless organization of this workshop.

表紙図版

*Les contes du vieux Japon, no.11 Le lièvre d'Inaba* (因幡の白兎), 1903.

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完倉正師



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非売品

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