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 CONTENTS

- 1** Birds and the Hand of Power: a Political Geography of Avian Life in the Gansu Corridor, Ninth to Tenth Centuries  
*Lewis Mayo*
- 67** A Tempestuous Tea-Port: Socio-Political Commentary in *Yokohama-e*, 1859–62  
*Todd S. Munson*
- 93** Taiwan's Search for National History: a Trend in Historiography  
*Q. Edward Wang*
- 117** Rai San'yō's Philosophy of History and the Ideal of Imperial Restoration  
*Barry D. Steben*

Cover calligraphy Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿, Tang calligrapher and statesman

Cover illustration Avian signature from the time of Cao Yanlu 曹延祿 — see p.52  
(S.24741, reproduced by permission of the British Library)

# RAI SAN'YŌ'S PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY AND THE IDEAL OF IMPERIAL RESTORATION

史 Barry D. Steben

It is when there is a fund of Chinese learning that the Japanese spirit  
[*Yamatodamashii*] is respected by the world.

—*Murasaki Shikibu* (c.918–c.1014)<sup>1</sup>

Nay men frequently appear to sink under their honest purposes; but it is  
only in appearance: the seed germinates more beautifully in a  
subsequent period from the ashes of the good, and when irrigated with  
blood seldom fails to shoot up to an unfading flower.

—*Johann Gottfried von Herder* (1744–1803)<sup>2</sup>

If a great people does not believe that the truth is to be found in itself  
alone ... if it does not believe that it alone is fit and destined to raise up  
and save all the rest by its truth, it would at once sink into being  
ethnographic material, and not a great people. ... A nation which loses  
this belief ceases to be a nation.

—*Fyodor Dostoevsky* (1821–81)<sup>3</sup>

The challenge to create a new history of societies ... consisted in finding  
a necessary articulation between describing the perceptions,  
representations, and rationalities of history's actors and identifying the  
unconscious interdependencies that both limit and inform the strategies  
of those actors. That articulation makes it possible to bypass the classical  
opposition between subjective singularities and collective determinations.

—*Roger Chartier*<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Yamagishi Tokuhei, ed., *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 [The tale of Genji], vols.14–18 of *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* [Compendium of classical Japanese literature], 2:227. Translation from Edward G. Seidensticker, *The tale of Genji*, 2 vols. (London: Secker & Warburg, 1976): 1, p.362. This statement is made by Hikaru Genji to his young son, Yūgiri.

<sup>2</sup> From *Outlines of a philosophy of the history of man*, translated from the German *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (London, 1800) by T. Churchill (New York: Bergman Publishers, 1966), p.231.

<sup>3</sup> Shatov in *The possessed* (1871–72). Translated by Constance Garnet, 2 vols.. (London and Toronto, J. M. Dent & Sons; and New York: E. P. Dutton & Co [Everyman's Library edition], 1931): 1, p.231.

<sup>4</sup> Roger Chartier, *On the edge of the cliff: history, language, and practices*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), p.4.

<sup>5</sup> From *Rai Noboru o ronzu 頼襄を論ず* [On Rai San'yō], published in January 1893 as a supplement to the spring edition of Tokutomi Sohō's journal *Kokumin no tomo 国民の友* [The people's friend]. Reprinted in Ōkubo Toshiaki, comp., *Yamaji Aizan shū* [A collection of Yamaji Aizan's works], *Meiji bungaku zenshū* [The complete collection of Meiji literature], vol.35 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1965), pp.296–304 (quotation from p.304), and Oka Toshirō, comp., *Yamaji Aizan shū*, 2 vols., Min'yūsha shisō bungaku sōsho [Min'yūsha thought and literature series] (Tokyo: San'ichi Shobō, 1983): 1, pp.286–96. In 1898, the translator Morita Shiken 森田思軒, who had been critical of Aizan's work, published a book

### *Rai San'yō as a "Hero" of Modern Japanese Nationalist Historiography*

In 1893, the Meiji historian, Christian nationalist, political commentator, and journalist Yamaji Aizan 山路愛山 (1864–1917) wrote the following regarding Rai San'yō's 頼山陽 (1780–1832) significance as a national historian:

Through him, the Japanese came to know the history of their fatherland. The Japanese came to know what the country of Japan was. They came to know why it is that the country of Japan is superior to all other countries. And they came to know of these things not merely in theory, but were taught them in language that had the quality of poetry, the quality of song. Subsequently, it came about that the country met with a succession of coastal emergencies.

The hearts of the people were suddenly awakened, and the cry of "revere the emperor and repel the barbarians" filled the four seas. Who can say that this was not a result of the lessons he had taught us? Ah! Such is the accomplishment of Rai Noboru!<sup>5</sup>

Here, based on the role of *Nihon gaishi* 日本外史 (An unofficial history of Japan) in popularizing a hero-centered loyalist view of Japanese history, Yamaji is virtually crediting San'yō with the creation of the national consciousness that was required to transform Japan into a modern nation-state. Yamaji was not the first to make this sort of evaluation of San'yō's historical role, and it has been perpetuated by a great many subsequent writers on Japanese thought. In his 1901 book *Ideals of the East*, for instance, Okakura Tenshin 岡倉天心 (1862–1913) refers to *Nihon gaishi*, as "that epic narrative of the country from whose pages the youth of Japan still learn the intensity of the raging fever that moved their grandfathers to the revolution."<sup>6</sup> In 1931 Tokutomi Sohō 徳富蘇峰 (1863–1957), who had originally invited Yamaji

#### Figure 1

*This portrait of San'yō was painted by his disciple Taiga Dōgiryō 大雅堂義亮 in the autumn of 1832, when San'yō was very ill and approaching death. In spite of his rather emaciated condition, in his expression one can still see the strong spirit that sustained his life of prodigious creativity (from the collection of Mr Rai Shin 頼新, Kyoto)*



/through Tokutomi's Min'yūsha called *Rai San'yō oyobi sono jidai 頼山陽及其時代* [Rai San'yō and his age] that included Tokutomi's and Aizan's writings on San'yō as well.

<sup>6</sup> Okakura Kakuzō, *The ideals of the East: with special reference to the art of Japan* (London: John Murray, 1903; New York: E. P. Dutton, 1904; reprint ed., Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle, 1970), p.210. This reference to San'yō occurs in a surprisingly militant passage affirming nativism and the expulsion of foreign ideas in Chinese and Japanese

into the Min'yūsha 民友社 back in 1892, gave a speech that reiterated Yamaji's conception of San'yō as the first formulator of the conception of Japan and the Japanese people as a "nation" (*kokumin*), adding that this was because San'yō understood that the central power that sustains the Japanese nation is the unbroken imperial line.<sup>7</sup> In 1942, in the first volume of his famous *Nibon rinri shisō shi* 日本倫理想史 (The history of Japanese ethical thought), Watsuji Tetsurō 和辻哲郎 (1889–1960) credits San'yō with inheriting and popularizing the ideals of Mito 水戸 domain's *Dai Nihonshi* 大日本史 (Great history of Japan) and thereby contributing immensely to the spread of the "national self-awareness" of the Japanese people. The passage by Yamaji quoted above is also quoted approvingly by Andō Hideo 安藤英男, the compiler of a seven-volume collection and study of San'yō's writings published in 1981–82 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of San'yō's death.<sup>8</sup>

This claim that one man—in fact one book—was almost singly responsible for the rise of a modern national consciousness in Japan that was an essential precondition for the Meiji Restoration sounds at first glance rather far-fetched, another of the myths of Japanese national historiography and national hagiography that needs to be submitted to the deconstructionist's scalpel. And if Yamaji was one of the chief originators of this claim, we must keep in mind that he was a passionate believer in the concept that history is made by heroic individuals (both writers and men of action), and that Rai San'yō was one of his greatest personal heroes and his model for himself as a historian.<sup>9</sup> In his eyes, that is, San'yō's *Nibon gaishi* was the forerunner of the Min'yūsha's

/history while also praising the loyalist histories which gave rise to the worship of great heroes like Kusunoki Masashige 楠木正成. Okakura even goes as far as to say that it was this "torch" of loyalist expulsionism that "burned in the hand of Sannyo [sic]" when he wrote *Nibon gaishi*.

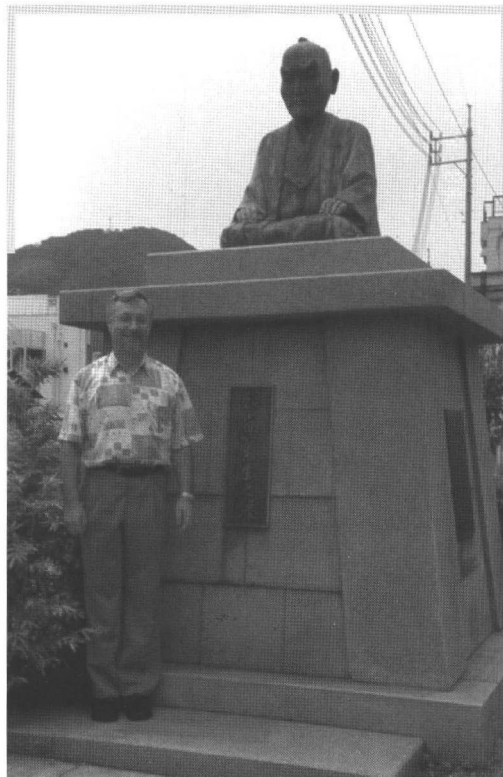
<sup>7</sup> See Tokutomi Sohō, *Ningen San'yō to shika San'yō* 人間山陽と史家山陽 [San'yō as a person and San'yō as a poet] (Tokyo: Min'yūsha, 1932), pp.20–3, cited in Miyagawa Yasuko, "*Nibon gaishi* no metahistoriiri" [The metahistory of *Nibon gaishi*], in *Sbisō* (Jan. 1997): 81–96, at 82. San'yō was exalted in the 1930s more as a major formulator of imperial loyalist ideology, whereas in the Meiji period he was seen more as a great man of letters (*bungō* 文豪). In 1931, on the hundredth anniversary of

/his death, he was "sainted" by being granted the imperial court rank of Junior Third Class.

<sup>8</sup> Andō Hideo, "Kaidai" [Explanatory notes], in Andō Hideo, comp., *Rai San'yō. Nibon gaishi* (Tokyo: Kondō Shuppansha, 1982), p.3. The full series, *Rai San'yō senshū* [Selected works of Rai San'yō] (Tokyo: Kondō Shuppansha, 1982), includes an extensive biography (vol.1), collections of San'yō's essays and poems (vols. 2 and 3), complete translations of *Nibon seiki* 日本政記 [A political account of Japan], and *Tsūgi* 通議 [Historiographical reflections] (vols. 4 and 5), the above-mentioned volume on *Nibon gaishi* containing translations of key passages as well as an account of the history of the text and its reception (vol.6), and a volume of documents

**Figure 2**

A memorial statue of San'yō in his ancestral home of Takebara 竹原 in the mountains near Hiroshima 広島, with author in foreground



/from a debate between two opposing camps of San'yō's followers between 1844 and 1848 regarding the evaluation of San'yō and his life, with Andō's explications (vol.7).

<sup>9</sup> Yamaji's other greatest heroes and character models were Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666–1728) and Jesus of Nazareth, whom he revered as a historical person, not as the Christ of the theologians. Yamaji wrote the biographies of Sorai and of Arai Hakuseki 新井白石 (1657–1725) in the Min'yūsha's 12-volume series of biographies. The following description of Sorai could be applied equally well to Jesus, to San'yō, to Aizan himself, and to some extent at least to Hakuseki: "He was constantly attacked from all sides, but he was unshaken. He walked through the towering mountains of controversy and argument with an unmoving mind. Never did he fall into the position of the defender, remaining always in the position of the attacker, and there was no argument or philosophical problem that was too difficult for his quick and lucid mind to conquer." Sakamoto Takao, *Yamaji Aizan*, ed. Nihon Rekishi Gakkai (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1988), p.82.

<sup>10</sup> Yamaji wrote that “Along with my senior colleagues [in the Min’yūsha], the center of our enterprise (*jigyō* 事業) was writing the biographies of the heroes of both East and West. This was because we believe that [history] consists of human beings—so that the biographies of heroes are equivalent to the history of mankind—and because we believe that this [type of historiography] is also a form of philosophy.” Yamaji Aizan, *Shironshū* [Collection of treatises on history] (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobō, 1958), p.469. See also Peter Duus, “Whig history, Japanese style: the Min’yūsha historians and the Meiji Restoration,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 33 (May 1974): 415–36.

<sup>11</sup> See Barry D. Steben, “Edo as method: an introduction to Koyasu Nobukuni’s recent scholarship,” in *Sino-Japanese Studies* 12.2 (April 2000): 29–40.

mission of publishing biographies of the great heroes of nation-building in East and West in order to inspire patriotic activism among the youth of Meiji Japan.<sup>10</sup> Thus Yamaji’s claim about San’yō’s historical significance, a product of his own deliberate effort to make San’yō into a national hero, may be open to the same sort of criticisms that have been directed at the hero-centered conception of historiography and its preference for inspiring stories over a rigorous and critical search for “historical fact.”

The present article proposes to examine what actually lies behind Yamaji’s claim, and how valid that claim is, by asking three interrelated questions. One: what was the significance of such an exaltation of Rai San’yō’s mode of history writing within the historiographical and ideological debates of Yamaji’s time? Two: what was the philosophy of history that lay behind San’yō’s writings, and what were the implications of this philosophy for political action among his readers? Three: what insights do these Meiji historiographical debates *and* San’yō’s philosophy of history offer us into the multivalent nature of the emperor-centered ideology upon which modern Japanese national identity was built? The second question really forms the core of my inquiry, but the other two questions must inevitably be dealt with in any attempt to answer it.

Many scholars of Japanese political thought have noted the contradictions within the imperial loyalist ideology that became the foundation for the modern Japanese state and national identity. There were the contradictions between the idea of the emperor as above the realm of political decision-making and the idea that the emperor should be the actual head of government, between the idea of the emperor as the foundation of the oligarchic authority of the government (*kan* 官) and the idea of the emperor as representing the voice of the people (*min* 民) *against* the concentration of power in the government and the bureaucracy, and so on. These contradictions are familiar to historians of Japan as they formed the basic structure of Meiji-period constitutional debates, but they are also all deeply rooted in the imperial loyalist ideology inherited from the Edo period, the ideology that Rai San’yō reportedly did so much to popularize. For this reason it is difficult to define San’yō’s historical writings categorically as belonging to the political discourse of the Edo period or that of the Meiji period, or as belonging to the political discourse of the anti-bakufu rebels and the Meiji advocates of popular rights, or to the political discourse of the ruling oligarchs both before and after the Meiji Restoration.

Some recent trends in Japanese intellectual history have emphasized the importance of understanding particular texts in the context of the specific discourses—both local and national—of the time in which they were written. An influential methodological stream in Japan, for instance, has focused on trying to extricate Edo thinkers from the “discourses of modernity” that have been woven around them since the Meiji period, in order both to clarify the nature and the distortions of “modernist” discourse and to reveal these thinkers in their original pre-modern discursive contexts.<sup>11</sup> One could certainly



approach San'yō from this methodological perspective, and the results would undoubtedly aid in our understanding of San'yō's writings by clarifying their relationship to contemporaneous discursive communities like that centered around the Kaitokudō 懷徳堂 academy in Osaka.<sup>12</sup> I will make a brief and tentative exploration of San'yō's contemporary context and the influence of other Edo-period histories on his historical philosophy in sections three and five. Since *Nihon gaishi* exerted its greatest impact during the two or three generations after San'yō's death, however, more relevant here is Paul Ricoeur's concept of the written text as escaping the circumstances of its production and becoming open to an indefinite series of possible readers, its meaning in suspense and always open to reinscription in new contexts. Rejecting both the Romantic attempt to grasp the soul or intention of the author *behind* the text and the structuralist endeavor to dismantle the structures inherent *within* the text, Ricoeur argues that what must be interpreted in a text is a "proposed world" *in front* of the text that the reader could inhabit and into which, through the "appropriation" of the text, the reader could project one of his or her ownmost possibilities.<sup>13</sup>

The meaning of San'yō's *Nihon gaishi* began to be appropriated and reinscribed by readers as soon as it began to be circulated, and its capacity to be reinscribed was undoubtedly an important reason for its popularity. Like the *sonnō jōi* 尊皇攘夷 (revere the emperor and repel the barbarians) texts produced by the Later Mito (*kōki Mitogaku* 後期水戸学) school and the nativist writings of National Learning (*kokugaku* 国学) scholars, however, it was particularly in the context of the political and diplomatic crises of the 1850s and 1860s that the story it told of Japanese history became capable of being read in radically new ways. The contradictions inherent in the ideology of imperial loyalism became manifest to an unprecedented degree in the 1860s when the emperor actually became a participant in the rapidly moving process of political action and political decision-making. This circumstance led to tremendous conflicts in the minds of a great many loyalists regarding just what was the right course of action, that is, just what was the real meaning in practice of "loyalty to the emperor" under the circum-

Figure 3

First page of the preface to *Nihon gaishi*, in San'yō's own hand (from the collection of Mr Rai Shin, Kyoto)

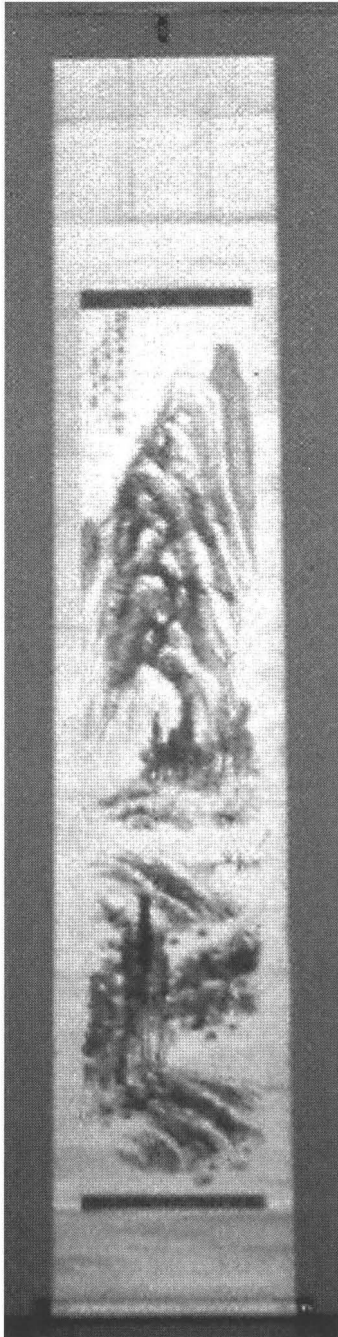
日本外史自序  
 日本外史二十卷襄弱冠時所著也襄自知喜  
 讀國史受業之暇偷讀不已既長覽常藩之史  
 苦其浩穰又恨其有闕至近古之事非無載藉  
 又未有以綜其終始者遂不自揣斷自源乎代  
 至於當代尚以中興諸將及割據群雄家別紀  
 之或錯而志之等其興壞以見世變蓋自便省  
 覽非蚤公世也故親如家君未敢乞正况他人  
 乎今也多聞而索觀者檢閱之往往不滿意而

<sup>12</sup> See the studies of San'yō by Koyasu's former student, Miyagawa Yasuko, particularly "Jukyōteki rekishi kijutsu to nashonarizumu" [Confucianist historical narration and nationalism], in *Edo no sbisō* 10 (Tokyo: Perikansha, 2000): 114–29. See also Tetsuo Najita, *Visions of virtue in Tokugawa Japan: the Kaitokudō Merchant Academy of Osaka* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

<sup>13</sup> "It is not a question of imposing upon the text our finite capacity for understanding, but of exposing ourselves to the text and receiving from it an enlarged self," a self that thus becomes constituted by the "matter" of the text. In this process of appropriation, "the subjectivity of the reader comes to itself only insofar as it is placed in suspense, unrealized, potentialized." Ricoeur, *From text to action*, trans. of *Du texte à l'action* by Kathleen Blamey and John B. Thompson (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1986; Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1991), pp.83–8.

**Figure 4**

A painting by San'yō in the Rai San'yō Memorial Museum in Hiroshima (photograph by the author)



stances of the time. One of the ways to deal with confusion about such fundamental matters of right and wrong, in a situation in which no one could predict the future course of events and in which “loyal vassals” could suddenly become “rebellious traitors” overnight, was to read and reread the texts that described and defined what loyalist action was during particular critical junctures in Japanese history.

Imperial loyalism was certainly a kind of religious faith, and its sacred text was the history of the imperial line—from the mythical story of the creation of the land by the imperial ancestor through the legends of ancient chieftains and martial heroes who fought to establish the Yamato polity against autochthonous tribes—even winning the submission of overseas kingdoms in Korea—to the historical accounts of the monarchs who established the country’s fundamental political institutions and the shoguns they deputized to defend and expand its territory, and then to the story of the decline of the imperial institution and the usurpation of its authority, punctuated by a few heroic but abortive attempts at restoration. The meaning of this story had to be redefined and reappropriated publicly by each new regime that established its rule over the land, and in a subjective way by each individual reader who sought to discover the basic principles and ethical imperatives of the polity in which he lived.<sup>14</sup> While *Nihon gaishi* did not cover the entire story, but only the key period of the rise and dominance of the military clans, it is true that it made the story of Japan’s history available in a highly readable form to a far greater number of readers than ever before.<sup>15</sup> Thus one is tempted to compare the role of San’yō’s loyalist history in the genesis of modern Japanese nationalism with the central role of the return to the Old Testament in the growth of English nationalism in the sixteenth century, which was made possible by the widespread circulation among an increasingly literate population of the vernacular translation of the Bible first printed in 1538. While Japanese nationalism did not share the individualistic and anti-monarchical nature of its English forerunner, in both cases, it would seem, the archetypal story of the trials and tribulations of the chosen people throughout history in attempting to realize their full historical destiny as an autonomous people became “the mirror of national self-imagining.”<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Regarding the young *shishi* 志士 activists of the bakumatsu 幕末 period (1853–68), Tokutomi wrote, “Their willingness to sacrifice themselves for the state differed not in the least from the sacrifice of a martyr for his religion” (Tokutomi Sohō, “Seinen no fūki” 青年の風紀 [The discipline of the youth], in *Dairoku nichiyōkōdan* 第六日曜講談 [The sixth Sunday story-telling], 1905). The series of heroic biographies that he and his Min’yūsha colleagues wrote was aimed at reawakening this spirit of self-sacrifice and commitment to the nation against what he saw as the pernicious spread of Western-style individualism.

<sup>15</sup> According to Andō Hideo, *Rai San’yō: Nihon gaishi*, p.1, the educated reading public in the bakumatsu-Restoration period is estimated at between three and four hundred thousand, a number that corresponds roughly to the number of copies of *Nihon gaishi* that were printed between the first widely-distributed Kawagoe edition of 1844 and around 1899 (Meiji 31).

<sup>16</sup> Quoted from Adrian Hastings, *The construction of nationhood: ethnicity, religion and nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.18. “The centrality in it [Protestantism] of the Old Testament was

*San'yō's Place in Meiji Debates about "Subjectivity" and "Autonomy"*

Later generations have remembered San'yō primarily as a historian and a master of *kanbun* 漢文 writing, but in his own time he was famous primarily as a poet and a calligrapher who played an important role in a Kansai-based network of sinophilic intellectuals who idealized the elegant literati culture of China in all of its dimensions—poetry, painting, calligraphy, historiography, and Confucian literary scholarship. *Nibon gaisbi* was full of exciting stories and anecdotes drawn from earlier popular histories written in Japanese, like *Heike monogatari* 平家物語 (The tale of the Heike) and *Taiheiki* 太平記 (Record of Great Peace), and in translating these stories into classical Chinese, he retained Japanese place names, titles, and colloquial expressions rather than trying artificially to replace them with elegant Chinese-style names like the Ogyū Sorai school, eschewing artificial ornamentation in favor of directness and lucidity in description. This led some Japanese scholars both before and after the Restoration to accuse San'yō's writing of having a "Japanese stench" about it, and of being markedly inferior to real Chinese written in China. The Rangaku 蘭学 scholar Hoashi Banri 帆足万里 (1778–1852), for instance, who was well versed in Western science, compared *Nibon gaisbi* unfavorably with Nakai Chikuzan's 中井竹山 (1730–1804) *Issbi* 逸史 (An unconventional history [1797, discussed later]), criticizing San'yō's writing style as vulgar and flawed by Japanese idiosyncrasies. He also found his methods of verification and argumentation seriously deficient.<sup>17</sup> Writing in 1905, Sir Basil Hall Chamberlain found it "impossible to believe that a book so intolerably dry could ever have fired a whole nation with enthusiasm."<sup>18</sup>

In spite of the incorporation of Japanese words, however, San'yō still managed to preserve the syllabic rhythm and tonal inflection characteristic of well-structured ancient-style Chinese prose, and he even considerably improved the narrative quality of some of the stories he transposed from earlier histories.<sup>19</sup> He was able to do this by modeling his style after the two most revered ancient Chinese histories, the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 (the most authoritative commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals* [Chunqiu 春秋]) and the *Shiji*

/of crucial significance, since it is there that one found the example of a chosen, godly people, a people which was an élite and a light to the world because every one of its members was a party to the covenant with God. ... The Old Testament provided them with the language in which they could express the novel consciousness of nationality, for which no language had existed before." "[I]n the first half of the sixteenth century the Bible was not simply a book they all read, but the only book they read." Liah Greenfield, *Nationalism: five roads to modernity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp.52, 54.

**Figure 5**

*Seals carved by San'yō himself that he used to sign his paintings and calligraphic works. Clockwise from top left the characters read 故達, 賴襄, 游戲, 山紫水明処, 賴子成, 彫蟲, 醉襄 (Rai Tsutomu, Rai Sanyō, p.6)*



<sup>17</sup> See Miyagawa Yasuko, "Nibon gaisbi no metahisutorii," p.84.

<sup>18</sup> See Chamberlain, *Things Japanese* (London: John Murray, 1905), p.285.

<sup>19</sup> Andō Hideo, *Rai San'yō: Nibon gaisbi*, p.29), offers a good example of a skillfully reconstituted version of a narrative drawn from the *Heike monogatari*.

<sup>20</sup> Burton Watson, “Historian and master of Chinese verse, Rai San’yō,” in Murakami Jyoe and Thomas J. Harper, eds, *Great historical figures of Japan* (Tokyo: Japan Culture Institute, 1978), pp.228–42, at 230, 238. San’yō’s only work that was actually published in his lifetime was *Nihon gafu* 日本楽府 [The *Yuefu* of Japan] (1830), a collection of sixty-six poems about famous incidents in Japanese history written in the process of working on *Nihon seiki*.

<sup>21</sup> Bakin, most famous for his 106-volume fee adaptation of the *Shuibuzhuan* 水滸傳 [Water margin] into Japanese (entitled *Nansō Satomi bakken den* 南総里見八犬傳 [The Eight Dog-Samurai of the Satomi clan of Kazusa]), wrote in his diary in 1831 that the rare hand-written copy of the manuscript he managed to borrow from a friend in Ise 伊勢 had already been read by the great *kokugaku* (National Learning) scholar Hirata Atsutane 平田篤胤 (1776–1843). See Andō Hideo, *Rai San’yō: Nihon gaishi*, pp.30–1.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p.27. Andō (pp. 21–30) outlines the types of criticisms made by Japanese scholars and offers reasonably well-documented arguments to defend San’yō against them.

<sup>23</sup> *Shinsen Nihon seiki*, preface, quoted in *ibid.*, p.29–30. Ichikawa Danjūrō (1660–95) was the hereditary name of a line of great Kabuki actors stretching through eleven generations from the sixteenth century to 1965. Nakamura was not only a forerunner of Yamaji’s exaltation of San’yō, but also of Yamaji’s belief that Christianity offered the way to Japan’s salvation.

<sup>24</sup> Tokutomi Sohō, *Rai San’yō* (Tokyo: Min’yūsha, 1926), paraphrased (p.653) in Uete Michiari, “Kaidai” [Explanatory notes], in Rai San’yō, *Nihon shisō taikai* [Compendium of Japanese thought] (hereafter *MSI*) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten), vol.49, pp.653–68.

<sup>25</sup> On the importance of *shutaisei* in Japanese intellectual discourse from the 1930s to the postwar period, see J. Victor Koschmann, *Revolution and subjectivity in postwar Japan* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1996), esp. pp.1–9.

<sup>26</sup> It appears clear that the modern mode of national consciousness, incorporating in principle all the members of the national community, matured first in the Protestant countries or regions, most particularly Eng-

史記 [ *Records of the Historian* ] of Sima Qian 司馬遷). Burton Watson, who has translated the most famous parts of both the *Zuo zhuan* and the *Shiji*, was also moved to translate some of San’yō’s poetry. In this connection, he writes that “San’yō, like Michizane, had sufficient command of his medium that he could shape it to any theme or emotion he desired, though his low-keyed pieces on daily life perhaps hold the greatest appeal for us today. San’yō has been particularly admired in the past as a writer of poems on historical themes, a genre that he did much to popularize.”<sup>20</sup> Many Japanese masters of Chinese learning, as well, praised the literary quality of *Nihon gaishi*, including the famous Yōmeigaku 陽明学 scholar and anti-bakufu rebel of Osaka, Ōshio Heihachirō 大塩平八郎 (1793–1837), as well as the great playwright and master of Chinese colloquial literature, Takizawa Bakin 滝沢馬琴 (1767–1848).<sup>21</sup> Even an accomplished Chinese poet and historian of the late Qing, Tan Xian 譚獻, wrote in his diary *Futang Riji* 復堂日記 that San’yō’s writing resembled the ancient style of Chinese and that it was better than the ancient-style writing of the major Ming dynasty classical scholar, poet and historian, Wang Shizhen 王世貞.<sup>22</sup> In 1876, the Meirokusha 明六社 enlightenment intellectual Nakamura Keiu 中村敬宇 (Masanao 正直, 1832–91), translator of J. S. Mill’s *On Liberty* and Samuel Smiles’ *Self-Help*, wrote that San’yō was probably the greatest writer in Japanese history, comparing those who criticized him for factual inaccuracies in *Nihon gaishi* to a person reading Chikamatsu’s 近松 plays or watching Ichikawa Danjūrō 市川團十郎 appear on the stage suddenly complaining that “this does not correspond with the facts!”<sup>23</sup> Tokutomi Sohō also praised the literary quality of San’yō’s prose, claiming that it was neither the imprecise *kanbun* written by many Japanese scholars nor a mere imitation of the Chinese language, but a “completely Japanized” *kanbun*.<sup>24</sup> In other words, in the eyes of San’yō’s admirers at least, San’yō was not only highly skilled in the writing of classical Chinese, but had such proficiency in the language that he could use it freely to express his thoughts and feelings as a *Japanese* intellectual writing about the *Japanese* historical and cultural experience.

To express this conception of San’yō’s “subjective autonomy” as a *Japanese* intellectual in his use of the Chinese language, which as we shall see was paralleled by his “subjective autonomy” from the ideological pressures of serving in an official position, Japanese scholars would be likely to employ the term *shutaisei* 主体性, a concept used pervasively in contemporary East Asian intellectual discourse.<sup>25</sup> The meanings of the word *shutaisei* are defined as follows in Shogakukan’s *Kokugo daijiten* 国語大辞典 (1981): “(1) In contemporary philosophy, [the condition of] being an individual actor who acts ethically and practically upon the circumstances that surround him, while also being a being who possesses consciousness and a body; (2) The condition of being self-aware (*jikakuteki* 自覚的) in one’s actions, basing one’s actions on one’s own will and judgment. Or, such an attitude or character.” Obviously, to talk about the development of a modern mode of national consciousness is inseparable from talking about the development of a “national subject,” and a true “national subject” must have

*shutaisei*, particularly in the second sense.

These two discourses, of the nation and of the sort of independent ethical commitment that should ideally be possessed by every national citizen—of “national autonomy” on the one hand and the citizen’s “moral autonomy” on the other—are inextricably intertwined in Meiji nationalist discourse, especially in its anti-oligarchical variety typified by the Meirokusha in the 1870s and by the Min’yūsha in the 1890s. Again, we are reminded how the Protestant teachings of the priesthood of all believers and the individual’s direct ethical responsibility before God were intertwined with the development of English and European national consciousness.<sup>26</sup> Yamaji Aizan’s conception of the hero is actually one of several examples of the coming together of these two discourses of *shutaisei*—that of Protestant Christianity and that of the Japanese “national subject”—in one Meiji intellectual. Based on his conception of the original historical character of the Christian religion, his faith in Christianity as spearheading a spiritual revolution in Japan, Thomas Carlyle’s (1795–1881) concept of the hero as depicted in works like *On Heroes, Hero Worship, and the Heroic in History*,<sup>27</sup> and his own determination to overcome the fate of being on the side of the defeated in the Meiji Restoration, Aizan came to depict the hero as a subject with sufficient power of character that he is able to resist the current of his own times and, to the end, maintain and assert his own unique self. His hero is a person who dares to give up concern for immediate personal reputation and advancement in order to work for an “eternal enterprise,” the value of which is measured in units of hundreds or even thousands of years.<sup>28</sup>

While the word *shutaisei* is sometimes used a little too “subjectively” in Japanese accounts of the stages in the development of Japan’s national discourse from the medieval to the modern periods, I find it a useful concept for elucidating the relationship between San’yō’s text, its readers, and the realm of political action those readers may engage in. Thus I propose to use it in this article frequently in place of rather awkward English expressions like “subjective engagement” or “inwardly rooted moral commitment,” which capture some, but by no means all, of the word’s nuances. The concept of *shutaisei* can serve as a useful supplement to Ricoeur’s phenomenological hermeneutics in our attempt to “bypass the classical opposition between subjective singularities and collective determinations,” because it allows us to bring back a certain amount of the “Romanticism” (the recognition of individual genius, in both the intellectual realm and the realm of action) that Ricoeur was so concerned to banish from the methodology of textual interpretation.<sup>29</sup> The hero in San’yō’s and Aizan’s historiography is obviously

<sup>28</sup> In his commentaries on the state of Japanese society in the early 1880s, Aizan blamed the “moral decadence” of Meiji society as a whole on “the farce—or from our point of view the tragedy—perpetrated in Edo by the victors in war who are now in ascendancy in the world.” He believed that Christianity had a special meaning in this situation, because its God is “a God of adversity.” Christianity, therefore, having arisen out of resistance against this world, is capable of building a new spiritual kingdom (see “Yo to Kirisutokyo” 世と基督教, [The world and Christianity], reprinted in Oka Toshirō, ed., *Yamaji Aizan shū* [A collection of Yamaji Aizan’s works], 2 vols., Min’yūsha shisō bungaku sōsho [Tokyo: San’ichi Shobō, 1983–85]). Aizan wrote a history of the Christian faith in Japan in which he emphasized that those who became Christians tended to be former bakufu vassals. As those on the side of the defeated, it was paradoxically on their shoulders that the task of the moral and spiritual regeneration of Japan fell (“Gendai Nihonkyōkai shiron” 現代日本教会史論 [On the history of the contemporary Japanese church], in *ibid.*: “The prophets may have been killed, but they were never forgotten. The reform of the spiritual realm begins in the hands of a minority that is despised, persecuted, and killed” [*Shinkō kajō nakaru bekarazu* 信仰過剰なかるべからず [Faith must not be excessive], in *ibid.*).

<sup>29</sup> See “The hermeneutical function of distanciation,” in Ricoeur, *From text to action*, pp. 75–88, esp. p. 84. While Ricoeur emphasizes the power of the text to reconstitute the identity or self of the reader (see n. 13), I have found no precise equivalent to the concept of *shutaisei* in his writings. He does, however, mention a notion—borrowed from the Finnish philosopher G. H. von Wright’s work *Explanation and understanding* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971)—of “intentional intervention” in the world which starts a system in motion. In a critique of the inadequacy of Ricoeur’s theory that action can be interpreted as a type of “text,” John B. Thompson writes that, “while Ricoeur thus progresses beyond many analytical theories of action, I shall argue that he does not provide an adequate thematisation of the relation between action and social structure. The inadequacy is especially marked in the very discourse which seeks to resolve the antinomy between the individual and collective will, namely /OVER

/land, and was later transmitted to non-Protestant regions (and eventually to the rest of the world) through the Counter-Reformation, the spread of literacy, the Industrial Revolution, and the diffusion of the secularizing ideas of

/the Enlightenment and the ideals of the French Revolution.

<sup>27</sup> First published in London by Cassell in 1891; translated into Japanese as *Eiyū sūbai ron* 英雄崇拜論 in 1893.

/the dialectical discourse." See Thompson, *Critical hermeneutics: a study in the thought of Paul Ricoeur and Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p.128 ff.

<sup>30</sup> Ricoeur, *From text to action*, p.87.

<sup>31</sup> Robert Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the early Heian court* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1986), p.4, and Inoue Tetsujirō, *Sugawara no Michizane* (Tokyo: Hokkai Shuppansha, 1936), p.9. Inoue also wrote a short biography of Michizane (honorific title Kankō 管公) entitled *Kankō sbōden* [A short biography of Sugawara Michizane] (Tokyo: Fuzanbō, 1900).

<sup>32</sup> Michizane, whose grandfather and uncle had accompanied missions to China, was chosen to head the fourteenth mission to the Tang court in the year 894, the first to be contemplated for over fifty years, but due to reports of rebellions in China he proposed that the mission be called off. It now appears that the mission was never officially cancelled, but it was not sent, and no more official Japanese missions to China were sent for several hundred years. See Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the early Heian court*, pp.240–53. As Borgen points out, trade relations continued, but diplomatic relations "conflicted with Japan's sense of itself as China's equal, a central kingdom."

a Romantic symbol of *shutaisei* in its most highly developed form, designed not so much to be revered or worshiped by the reader, but to be internalized as a part of the reader's own ideal self-image through what hermeneutics refers to as the reader's "appropriation (Aneignung) of the text" and its "application (Anwendung) to the present situation of the reader."<sup>30</sup> When Aizan wrote, "Wherever the hero is he becomes the master of fate, and is not mastered by fate," he was referring as much to the hero as reconstituted subjectively in the present through the appropriation of the historical text by the reader as he was to the "objective" personages of the historical past.

Another hero of Meiji and post-Meiji nationalist discourse was Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真 (845–903), long worshiped on the popular level as the god of calligraphy and learning. Robert Borgen, in his well-known study, notes that the one-thousandth anniversary of Michizane's death in 1902 inspired many leading Meiji intellectuals to write biographies, and that Professor Inoue Tetsujirō 井上哲次郎 (1855–1944), in his widely-read biography, even "compared him favorably to Confucius, Socrates, Buddha, and Jesus."<sup>31</sup> In the discourse on Japanese national identity and national pride, Michizane's memory was also closely associated with the famous traditional slogan, *wakon kansai* 和魂漢才, "Japanese soul, Chinese cultural attainments." This slogan, while not necessarily originating with Michizane, had been used from the Heian period to emphasize the necessity of exercising a comprehensive and timely power of judgment in regard to particular situations—the exercise of the contextually sensitive indigenous "Japanese soul"—while studying the general principles of human affairs through Chinese learning. The phrase is a sinified coupling of two Japanese words: *yamatodamashii* 大和魂 and *karazae* 漢才, the *locus classicus* of the former concept being the quotation from *Tale of Genji* given at the beginning of this article.

With time the connotations of the term "Japanese soul" evolved and *wakon kansai* came to mean to adopt or reject appropriately the various elements of the learning imported from China and put this learning into practical use on the basis of the native Japanese spirit. It meant, that is to say, to preserve the Japanese *shutaisei*—the sense of subjective autonomy and of being the master of one's own actions—in the adoption of foreign learning, a connotation that was preserved in the new bakumatsu adaptation of the slogan, *wakon yōsai* 和魂洋才: "Japanese soul, Western techniques." Actually, Michizane's place in Japanese history is significant in this connection because he stands at the transition point between the first great period of Japan's "opening of the country" to the import of foreign ideas and technology and the "sakoku" policy that followed.<sup>32</sup> Thus nationalists familiar with Japanese history could further associate Michizane with the "restoration" of Japan's cultural and diplomatic sovereignty after a period of subordination to the China-centered world order, parallel to the Meiji government's core diplomatic objective of securing revision of the unequal treaties imposed by the Western powers in the 1850s.

The name of Rai San'yō, I would argue, could also carry a similar cultural meaning in the Meiji period, while tying it in with the powerful political and ideological symbolism of the Meiji Restoration—the symbolism upon which the *modern* concept of Japanese national autonomy was based. Like Michizane, San'yō could represent not only the principle of mastering and domesticating foreign learning for the purpose of articulating, glorifying, and protecting the Japanese *kokutai* 国体 (national polity) and the *yamatodamashii*, but also a force of popular faith that could, if necessary, be mobilized against the Westernizing forces within the Meiji government and its education system in a way that could shake the very foundation of that government's legitimacy (by way of threatening to reappropriate its fundamental concepts).<sup>33</sup> Yamaji's essay on San'yō quoted at the beginning of this section was written in 1893, just a few years after the leading academy historians of the History Bureau, Kume Kunitake 久米邦武 (1839–1931) and Shigeno Yasutsugu 重野安釋 (1827–1910), published their influential manifestos for their new German-inspired “scientific” historiography in their journal *Shigakkaï zasshi* 史学界雜誌.<sup>34</sup> Further evidence that the Min'yūsha's exaltation of San'yō was in part directed against the positivistic historiography being promoted by the academy historians is suggested by Yamaji's strong denial of the conception that contemporary historiography was something totally new, lacking continuity with pre-Restoration historiographical traditions, and by his insistence that historiography was an “art,” concerned with exerting an effect on the human heart, rather than a “science.”<sup>35</sup>

As we would expect, scholars affiliated with the Mito school and National Learning also rose to protest this trend in official historiography, and nationalist historians like Kuga Katsunan 陸羯南 (1857–1907), as well as the non-official (*minkan* 民間) history group that included Tokutomi, Yamaji, and Takekoshi Yosaburō 竹越与三郎 (1865–1950), ridiculed Shigeru, and later Kume as well, as “doctors of obliteration” (*massatsu bakase* 抹殺博士).<sup>36</sup> With his idealistic rejection of the objectivistic, analytical approach of Western thought and art, Okakura Tenshin was also a natural opponent to a scientific approach to national history, as evidenced by the great liberties he takes in his presentation of Japanese history in order to glorify the “Japanese spirit.”<sup>37</sup>

The conflict between the new “scientific” history—whether the positivism of Kume and Shigeno or the more theoretically inclined “world histories” of

/out, this has been misinterpreted as a progressive manifesto for the importance of the masses in history, but it is actually denying the autonomy of the hero and advocating instead the “autonomous act” initiated on the basis of one's *own* system of ideas which only later draws upon the hopes of the masses for support, without being swayed in the process (Miyagawa Yasuko, “Rekishii to shinwa to no aida: kōshō shigaku no kansei [陥穽] jiki” [Between history and myth: the period of the pitfall of positivistic historiography], in *Edo no shisō*, vol. 10 [1999], pp. 18–35), esp. pp. 26–7. In other words, Kume is advocating a philosophy of leadership wherein the leaders (and historians) should make up their minds independently from the inclinations and opinions of the people, a philosophy remarkably close to that of the Meiji oligarchs.

<sup>35</sup> See Yamaji Aizan, “Nihon gendai no shigaku oyobi shika” 日本現代の史学及史家 [Contemporary historiography and historians in Japan] (1909), in *Aizan bunshū* [A collection of Yamaji Aizan's writings] (Tokyo: Min'yūsha, 1917), p. 886.

<sup>36</sup> See Margaret Mehl, *History and the state in nineteenth century Japan* (London: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 108–12, 121–6. Takekoshi was the author of the extremely popular narrative history *Nisen goyaku nen shi* 二千五百年史 [A history of two thousand five hundred years] (Tokyo: Keiseisha Shoten, 1896).

<sup>37</sup> See, for instance, *The ideals of the East: with special reference to the art of Japan* (London: John Murray, 1903; New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1904; reprint ed., Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle, 1970), pp. 20, 22, and 209–10. Some of these accounts, while abbreviated and exaggerated in the extreme, appear to be indebted to San'yō's *Nibon gaisbi*, either directly or through paraphrases by bakumatsu expulsionists. See H. D. Harootyan, *Toward Restoration* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1970), pp. 263–9. On Okakura's close connections with the birth of Japanese national historiography, see Stefan Tanaka, *Japan's Orient: rendering pasts into history* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1992), p. 53, and “Imaging history: inscribing belief in the nation,” *JAS* 53.1 (Feb. 1994): 24–44, at 24–30 and 38–40; and F. G. Notehelfer, “On idealism and realism in the thought of Okakura Tenshin,” in *Journal of Japanese Studies* 16.2 (Summer, 1990): 309–55, specifically pp. 324–9.

<sup>33</sup> Even Kōtoku Shūsui 幸徳秋水, the radical socialist-anarchist thinker who was among those executed in the “Great Treason Incident” of 1910 for unproven associations with a plot to assassinate the emperor, believed deeply in the conception of the Meiji Restoration as a glorious revolution that had been made possible by the emperor-centered historical consciousness created by San'yō's histories, the *Dai Nibonshi*, and National Learning. See

/Kōtoku Shūsui, “Discussion of violent revolution, from a jail cell,” trans. George Elison, in *Monumenta Nipponica* 22.3–4 (1967): 468–81.

<sup>34</sup> One of these manifestos was Kume's 1891 essay “Eiyū wa minshū no dorei” 英雄は民衆の奴隷 [The hero is a slave of the masses], which implicitly attacks the hero-centered view of history promoted by the Min'yūsha (founded in 1887). As Miyagawa Yasuko points



<sup>38</sup> “Enlightenment” historians such as Taguchi Ukichi 田口卯吉 (1855–1905) tended to negate Japan’s cultural debts to India and China as corruptions in order to create a strong identification of “the original Japan” with the concept of historical progress, as embodied by modern Western civilization (and as denied to “the Orient” by Western historians and philosophers). See Stefan Tanaka *Japan’s Orient*, pp.36–8, 44. A similar emphasis on the idea that Japan constitutes a separate civilization from the Asian continent with a historical pattern similar to that of Europe is being promoted by the nationalist historiography movement spearheaded by the Society for History Textbook Reform (Atarashii rekishi kyō-kasho o tsukuru kai 新しい歴史教科書を作る会), as represented by Nishio Kanji’s *Kokumin no rekishi 国民の歴史* [The history of the nation] (Tokyo: Sankei Shinbunsha, 1999).

<sup>39</sup> This contradiction between an essentially spatial conception of the world in which Japan is in the center (and therefore unique and superior to the foreign) and a temporal conception which places Japan far from the center of civilization and in need of moving toward it (*datsua nyūō* 脱亜入欧) was closely related to what Harootunian calls “the clash of claims between community and polity,” “the space between religion [which

the enlightenment historians<sup>38</sup>—and the national history that had already been sacralized by the imperial loyalist movement was not merely an expression of the distance that always separates academic and popular historiography, the distance between the pre-Restoration and post-Restoration world-views, or even the distance between the traditional Chinese and the modern European historiographical traditions. Even more fundamentally, it was a manifestation of the contradiction that already existed in the ideology of the Meiji Restoration itself (and in the thought of Meiji government leaders like Ōkubo Toshimichi 大久保利通, 1830–78, and Itō Hirobumi 伊藤博文, 1841–1909) between the pragmatic resolve to modernize the country and open it to the West—symbolized by the Five Charter Oath of 1869 and the *bunmei kaika* 文明開化 movement—and the conception of national history that supported the exclusionist *sonnō jōi* ideology that had been utilized to overthrow the Tokugawa bakufu and was later remobilized to draw popular support to the Meiji government. The conflict, that is to say, was a manifestation of the contradiction mentioned earlier between the two moments of “restoration of antiquity” (*fukko* 復古) and “modernization” (*kaika* 開化) that existed within the conceptualization of the Restoration and was reproduced in the concept of the imperial institution constructed by the Meiji oligarchs.<sup>39</sup> By the same token, it was also a manifestation of the contradictions within bakumatsu and Meiji politics between bureaucratic or official power (*kan*) and the loyalist “voice of the people” (*min*), the latter of which tended both in the *sonnō jōi* movement and in the period spanning the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars to be more rabidly nationalistic than the government itself.<sup>40</sup> Of course, the balance of power among the different interpretations of the imperial loyalist ideology was continually evolving through the course

of the Meiji period, so that we must see the exaltation of San’yō in the 1890s not only synchronically as a polemic attack on the European-inspired academy historiography, but also diachronically as a part of the swing among Japanese historians in general away from

## Figure 6

*San’yō kinenkan garden (photograph by the author)*



/emphasizes *sameness* and engenders certainty] and politics [which emphasizes *difference* and engenders uncertainty],” or “the contradiction ... between the claims of the hidden world and those of the visible.” After the Restoration, he notes, this “tension was expressed in a struggle between culture [stressing ends and essences] and civilization [privileging means and instrumentality] in a desperate quest to resolve the aporia that had been prefigured by the assimilation of restoration [the nativist vision of returning to an agricultural arcadia that had existed before historical time] to Restoration [the syntax of events in linear historical time leading to the overthrow of the bakufu].” See H. D. Harootunian, *Things seen and unseen: discourse and ideology in Tokugawa nativism* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp.376–97.

<sup>40</sup> The words “popular” and “the people” refer in this study not principally to “the masses,” but to intellectuals not formally affiliated with the government bureaucracy or government-supported institutions of learning, plus the readers of their publications.



an enthusiasm for enlightenment history toward a concern for Japan's roots.<sup>41</sup>

To really understand how San'yō came to have such power as a symbol in the Meiji period, however, it is necessary to examine both the will that lay behind his original historiographical mission—the motivation that engendered his national histories—and the historical philosophy through which this will was objectified and communicated to his readers. In the process, we will also gain a new perspective on the ideology or faith that lay behind the Meiji Restoration—both as a historical event and as an historiographical creation—and which remains at the core of the vehement debates regarding the teaching of national history that continue in Japan today.

### *The Genesis of San'yō's Historiographical Mission*

The historiographical and political debates that lent San'yō his cultural significance in the 1890s were, needless to say, far removed from the historiographical and political debates that helped engender his histories in the first place. Thus, to understand the roots of San'yō's philosophy of history, we must give some attention to his biographical circumstances and his contemporary intellectual context. San'yō was the eldest son of Rai Shunsui 頼春水 (1746–1816), a well-known Confucian scholar of Osaka who was enlisted in the service of Aki 安芸 domain (Hiroshima) when San'yō was four years old.<sup>42</sup> After working to rebuild the domain school, Shunsui was sent to Edo to tutor the daimyō's heir apparent. Here he became a leading figure in the movement to reform the bakufu's educational system by prohibiting the study of "heterodox" schools of Confucianism other than Zhu Xi 朱熹 learning, a movement that led finally in 1790 to the promulgation of the Kansei Prohibition of Heterodoxy (*Kansei igaku no kin* 寛政異学の禁) by the bakufu's chief councillor (*tairō* 大老), Matsudaira Sadanobu 松平定信 (1758–1829). San'yō's mother was a lady of urban background who was also accomplished in the literary arts, and he had two uncles who were well-known Confucian scholars, assuring that San'yō received an excellent education from an early age. In 1796, at the age of seventeen, he accompanied his uncle and teacher Kyōhei 杏坪 to Edo, where he studied for a year at the Shōheizaka Gakumonjo 昌平坂学問所 (Shōheikō 昌平黌)—as the Hayashi college at Yushima 湯島 was called after its transformation by Sadanobu into the official academy for training bakufu retainers. Here, San'yō is said to have amazed scholars with his abilities in Chinese poetry and prose. By this time he already had lofty ambitions to serve in government, but as such a road was closed to him by the hereditary system of office holding based on ascribed status, during his more lucid moments in an increasingly dissipated lifestyle, he converted that ambition into the idea of writing a national history that would help inspire others to righteous action.<sup>43</sup>

Actually, San'yō's father had already set out himself to write a national

<sup>41</sup> See Stefan Tanaka, *Japan's Orient*, p.45. Tanaka argues that this shift, which gave birth to the field of *tōyōshi* 東洋史, was due in large part to the ultimate failure of enlightenment history to accommodate Japan as an equal, though he is well aware that the attempt to assert Japan's "equality" (a modern Western concept) never fully succeeded in separating itself from the urge to assert Japan's superiority.

<sup>42</sup> Born in Takehara, on the Inland Sea in Aki, Shunsui spent sixteen years in Osaka before being employed by Aki domain in 1781. In Osaka he developed a close acquaintance with several of the leading scholars of the Kaitokudō merchant academy, particularly Nakai Chikuzan. Like the Kaitokudō scholars, Shunsui was a commoner by background—the son of a merchant-farmer whose family operated a dyer's shop. Shunsui was also close friends with three eminent scholars who came to be called "the three doctors (*bakase* 博士) of the Kansei period"—Koga Seiri 古賀精里 (1750–1817), Bitō Nishū 尾藤二洲 (1745–1813), and Shibano Ritsuzan 柴野栗山 (1736–1807)—whom he helped convert to Zhu Xi learning. For a detailed biography of Shunsui, see Nakamura Shin'ichirō, *Rai San'yō to sono jidai* [Rai San'yō and his age], 3 vols. (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1976–77): 1, pp.132–61.

<sup>43</sup> See Andō Hideo, *Rai San'yō: Nibongaishi*, Foreword, pp.1–2.

**Figure 7**

*The main street in Takehara (photograph by the author)*



<sup>44</sup> Shunsui sent three appeals to his domain lord, shortly after being employed, to be commissioned to write a chronological history with the aid of his younger brother Kyōhei, who had also been employed as a Confucian scholar by the domain. See *ibid.*, p.2.

<sup>45</sup> In the Meiwa Incident 明和事変 of 1767, Yamagata Daini 山県大弐 (1725–67), author of a loyalist historical work (*Ryūshi shinron* 柳子新論 [Master Ryū's new thesis]) highly critical of all bushi governments, and his student Fujii Umon 藤井右門 (1720–67) were beheaded on suspicion of plotting rebellion, and Takenouchi Shikibu 竹之内式部 (1712–67) was banished (he died *en route*). Takenouchi had been banished from Kyoto earlier in the Hōreki Incident 宝曆事変 of 1758 for teaching Japanese history (using histories like *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 [Chronicles of Japan] and *Hōken taiki* 保建大記 [Account of the great events of the Hōgen and Kenkyū eras (1156–9 and 1190–9)]) from the point of view of Yamazaki Ansa'i 山崎闇斎 (1618–82) emperor-centered Shinto-

history, for which he had received the permission of the domainal leaders, but this permission was abruptly withdrawn four years after he began writing, probably due to bakufu pressure, and the manuscript was destroyed.<sup>44</sup> Hiroshima was a *tozama* 外様 (outside) domain, and the writing of a national history in a domain whose loyalty to the Tokugawa house might not be absolute was not something to be tolerated. Even the writing of a national history in Mito domain, one of three *go-sanke* 御三家 or three collateral families charged with protecting the bakufu, had led to the emergence of dangerous ideas about imperial loyalty that the shogunate realized could potentially undermine its own legitimacy.<sup>45</sup>

San'yō was apparently deeply impressed even as a child by the disappointment his father had felt when his historiographical project was aborted. East Asian moral thought puts great emphasis on the idea of inheriting an unfulfilled aspiration (*kokorozashi* 志) from one's father, one's lord, an ancestor, or a revered teacher, and on the moral or psychological necessity of fulfilling this aspiration. In this situation of a frustrated parental ambition, mixed with a complex psychological relationship between a moody, sickly and rebellious youth and a strict and authoritarian Confucian father, seems to have been very much involved in the birth of San'yō's consuming ambition to devote his life to the writing of history.<sup>46</sup> Especially after what had happened with his father, he realized that if he

/Confucian teachings to low-ranking Kyoto nobles, emphasizing that the country was in a moment of great crisis because of losing the Way (see *Analec*s 16:2, and Herschel Webb, *The Japanese imperial institution in the Tokugawa period* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1968], pp.248–53). Though Bob Wakabayashi has called into question the post-Meiji interpretation of these incidents as precocious attempts at imperial restoration, they do at least show (along with much other evidence) that the Tokugawa authorities were sensitive to the potential of imperial loyalist thought and historiography undermining the bakufu's legitimacy or even leading to restoration attempts. See Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, *Japanese loyalism reconstrued: Yamagata Daini's Ryūshi shinron of 1759* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995).

<sup>46</sup> In a long letter to a former teacher and benefactor written in 1810, San'yō states that he had a natural aptitude for writing history (as opposed to lecturing on the classics), and that he inherited the aspiration to write an annalistic history from his father, who had been unable to fulfill it himself on account of the burden of official duties. He emphasizes that even though he completed the writing of an account of the period of warrior government, *Nihon gaisbi*, he is not satisfied with this, and wants to write the "great standard" (*daiten* 大典) history that is needed in Japan." See Uete Michiari, "Kaidai," p.655.

was going to fulfill this ambition he would have to get away from the restrictions to his freedom of speech involved in being a vassal in the service of a domain. Like the ambition itself this was also connected with filial piety, because if he were to write something politically unacceptable while in such a position, it would cause great hardship and embarrassment to his parents.<sup>47</sup>

In short, in order to fulfill his aspiration, he would have to become an unattached “private citizen” (*sōmō no sbosbi* 草莽の処士). However, this was not an easy matter for a young man who was the designated heir to an important domain scholar and whose precocity had drawn much attention from the domain authorities. Leaving one's domain without special permission, moreover, was a crime under Tokugawa law. In 1800, however, his father was summoned to lecture for half a year at the Shōheikō, freeing San'yō from his supervision. At the age of twenty-one, when his mother asked him to convey condolences to a bereaved relative in Takehara, he took the opportunity to flee the domain and travel to Kyoto.<sup>48</sup> In addition to winning him a reputation as a rash and reckless person, this act led to his father angrily disinheriting him in order to fend off greater punishment, and it seriously estranged him from his father. He was further punished by being placed under house arrest for three years. This situation of confinement forced him to find another outlet than travel for his restless spirit, and as he was gradually allowed to have whatever books he needed, he was able to begin the writing of his *Unofficial History of Japan*.<sup>49</sup>

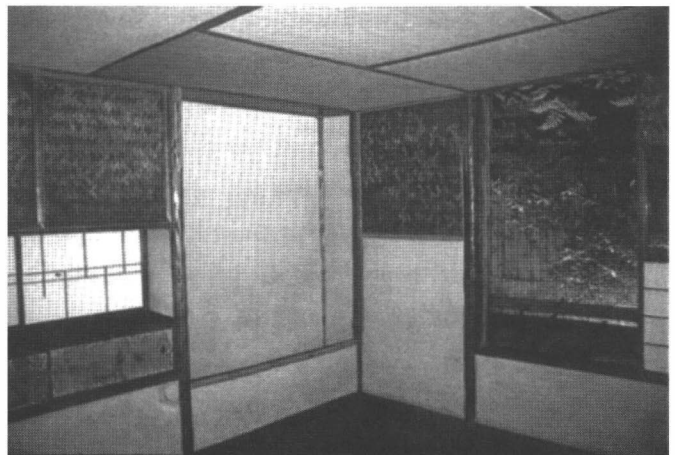
In 1809, at the age of thirty, San'yō was invited to be headmaster (*tokō* 都講) of a private school run by a close friend of his father, a distinguished poet of Song-style Chinese poetry named Kan Chazan 菅茶山 (1748–1827), in the neighboring province of Bingo 備後. Although Chazan was hoping to adopt San'yō as his heir and had arranged a well-remunerated position for him in the service of Fukuyama 福山 domain, this was hardly a route that would satisfy San'yō's real ambition, and he carefully explained to Chazan his desire to go to Kyoto. Chazan relented, and in 1811 San'yō finally managed to settle down in Kyoto, where he opened a small school of his own. Here he lived for twenty years as an independent man of letters, supporting himself by teaching, writing, painting, and calligraphy. In 1828 he constructed a simple tearoom-style studio in his home that he named

/rather weak physically and “so moody and temperamental his parents could barely manage him.” When he returned from Edo after only a year of study, his parents arranged for him to take a fourteen-year-old bride, hoping it would help settle him down. This tactic totally failed, however, and “San'yō seized every excuse to leave the house, often drinking heavily and not returning until after midnight. The bride, reduced to a state of hysteria, was eventually sent back to her own home and the marriage dissolved.” Thus his youthful ambition to realize a great “place in history” for himself, as in the case of many men of precocious intelligence, was evidently intertwined with a deep sense of emotional restlessness and a weak physical constitution. San'yō, however, did have his first son Itsuan 筆庵 (1805–56) by this marriage. Itsuan's upbringing was entrusted to San'yō's mother, and Shunsui later made him his heir.

<sup>49</sup> San'yō first planned to entitle the work *Honchō hasbi* 本朝霸史 [History of the hegemony of Japan], where “hegemony” is the Chinese word for military rulers, i.e., the shoguns. For various reasons, including no doubt the uncomfortable association with Hayashi Razan's official history, *Honchō tsūgan* 本朝通鑑 [The comprehensive mirror of Japan], as well as the air of illegitimacy associated with the word “hegemony,” he wisely decided to change the title.

#### Figure 8

*San'yō's studio in Kyoto (from Patricia J. Graham, Tea of the sages: the art of sencha [see n. 51], p. 102, photo by P.J.G., reproduced with permission)*

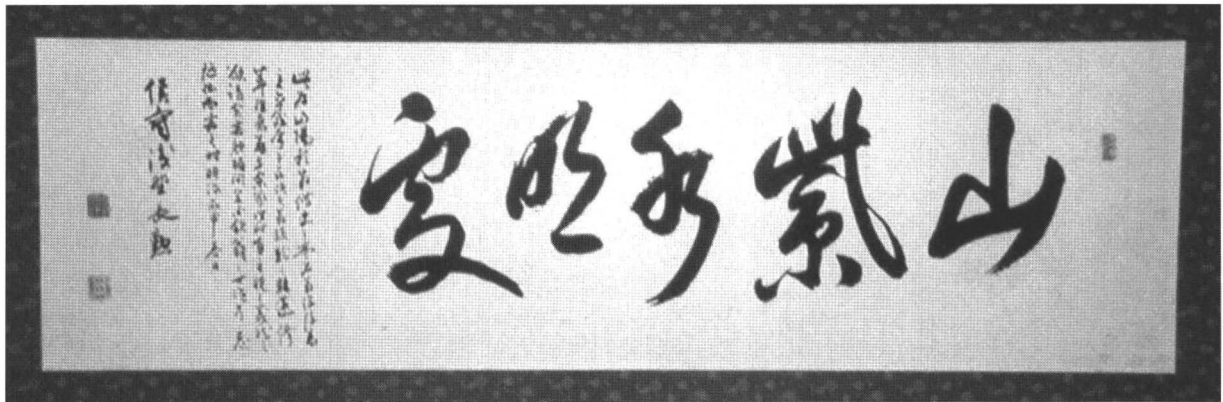


<sup>47</sup> That is, it was possible for San'yō to justify both his youthful desire to write a new kind of national history free from official ideological control and his “unfilial” desire to leave his father's control by appealing to the strong conventional norm of filial piety.

<sup>48</sup> Watson, “Historian and master of Chinese verse, Rai San'yō,” pp. 231–2. Watson also notes that San'yō was from his youth

## Figure 9

Calligraphy by San'yō in his Kyoto studio (photograph by the author)



<sup>50</sup> Yoko Woodson writes that, “San'yō was a pivotal figure in a large group of bunjin artists in the Kyoto and Osaka region, and with his strong personality and brilliant talents he was the figure who most influenced other artists. The rest of the artists are thought to have followed the life style he established.” See Woodson, “Travelling bunjin painters and their patrons: economic lifestyle and art of Rai San'yō and Tanomura Chikuden,” Ph.D. thesis (University of California, Berkeley, 1983), p.3. The source she gives for this view is Nakajima Sōin's 中島稍隱 (1779–1856) *Kinsei zuibitsu 近世随筆* [Miscellaneous writings on recent times], 1840.

<sup>51</sup> On the sinophilic ‘*bunjincha*’ 文人茶 culture of San'yō and some of his associates, see Patricia J. Graham, *Tea of the sages: the art of sencha* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), esp. pp.100–18. San'yō's studio still stands today, and Graham provides two photographs. Regarding Rai's relationship with his live-in lady-friend Rie りえ (who became his wife after bearing him a son), the refusal of Kyoto's Confucian scholar community to associate with him, his not-overly-strict observance of the three-year mourning period after his father's death in 1816, his year of travels in Kyushu (where he was still met coldly due to his reputation as an unfilial son and a libertine), his entry into the Shōheikō, etc., see Nakamura Shin'ichirō, *Rai San'yō to sono jidai*, vol.1, pp.72–97. The entire second volume of Nakamura's work deals with San'yō's associates in the various stages of his life, while the third volume deals with his disciples and his works.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted in Andō Hideo, *Rai San'yō: Nihon gaisbi*, Foreword, p.1.

Sanshi Suimeisho 山紫水明処, “An abode of azure mountains and clear-running water” (see Figure 9). Here, he associated regularly with some of the leading literati of Kyoto and Osaka in his time—poets, literati painting (*bunjinga* 文人画) artists, and a few reclusive Confucianists of literary inclination.<sup>50</sup> Most of these associates, being unattached scholars, followed a rather bohemian lifestyle cut off from officialdom and centering on aesthetic pursuits, their gatherings generously lubricated with *sencha* 煎茶 tea and at times with a little of Kyoto's famed local sake.<sup>51</sup>

The fact that these artist-intellectuals were not bound by the duties of official office, along with their idealization of the “amateur ideal” of the Chinese literati, appears to have made their circle into a fertile ground for nourishing a detached and critical attitude toward the government of their time, which in this period was grappling with a great many problems that could cast shadows on its legitimacy in the eyes of Confucian-trained intellectuals—including famines, peasant uprisings, and corruption scandals. At the very least, it was an environment which enabled San'yō to be quite free about the political views that he wrote into his historical writings, although Confucian scholars are always careful to disguise political criticisms as comments on historical events clearly removed from the present time. As Yoshida Shōin 吉田松陰 (1830–59) wrote, “San'yō's writing is deep in the admonitions it conveys, and it is not flattery.”<sup>52</sup>

In 1827, at the age of forty-eight, San'yō finally completed his *Unofficial History of Japan*, and in response to an invitation by Matsudaira Sadanobu, then living in retirement as a poet and painter, he presented it to the bakufu. He did this with considerable trepidation, because he could not be sure if the work would be accepted or lead to his punishment. A certain Buddhist priest had actually proposed to Sadanobu that the book be destroyed because of its potentially

dangerous nature.<sup>53</sup> To San'yō's great relief, however, the work was accepted and even praised by Sadanobu, helping make possible the wide circulation that it later enjoyed. This praise emboldened San'yō to send manuscript copies to friends and to domains where he had supporters.<sup>54</sup> It also motivated him to write two more major historical works, *Nihon seiki* and *Tsūgi*.<sup>55</sup>

In his late years, San'yō also presented his *Nihon gaishi* through his son to the daimyo of Hiroshima, and through his disciples to the daimyo of Kumamoto 熊本, Yonezawa 米沢, Himeji 姫路, Hikone 彦根, and other domains. That the views it expressed, as well as its very nature as a "private" history, were viewed with suspicion by the authorities is confirmed by the fact that the daimyo of Hiroshima, Kumamoto, Yonezawa, and other domains strictly prohibited its reading in public. Famous bakumatsu Confucian scholars like Yokoi Shōnan 横井小楠 (1809–69) had to get hold of the book surreptitiously and read it in secret.<sup>56</sup> In many domains, however, the manuscript gradually came to people's attention, although San'yō was still afraid to publish it for fear of drawing official criticism.

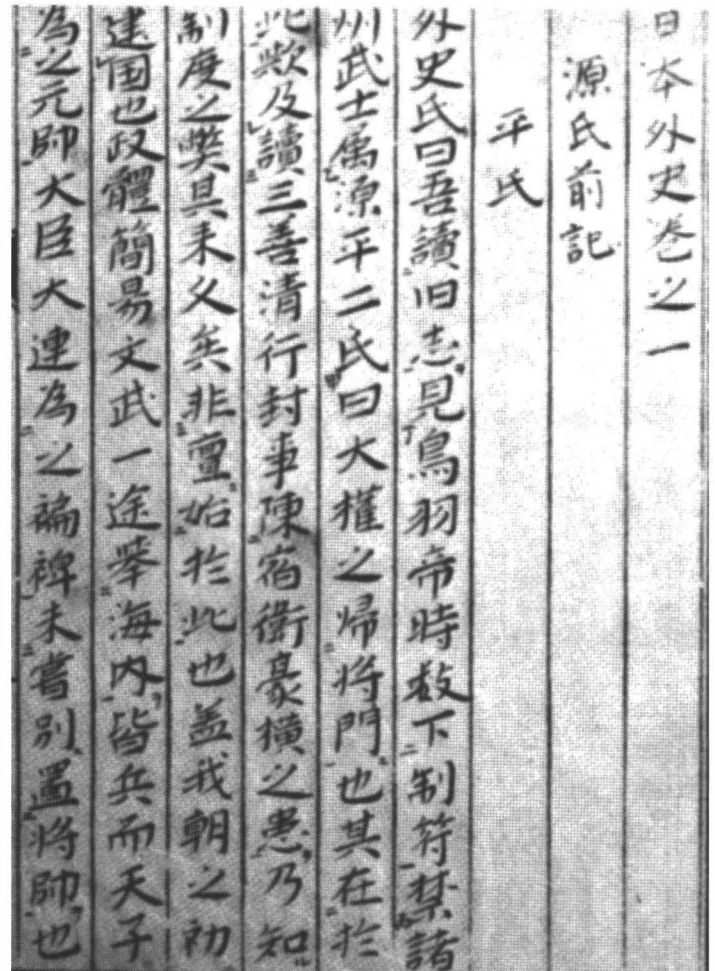
The work was finally published several years after San'yō's death, in 1836–37, but it began to be sold in large quantities only after Kawagoe 川越 domain (in present-day Saitama 埼玉 prefecture) published a conveniently-sized eleven-volume annotated block-printed edition (*Kōkoku Nihon gaishi* 校刻日本外史), originally for use in domainal education, at the end of 1844. The Rai family in Kyoto and Hiroshima, hearing of the large profits that were being made from the sale of the Kawagoe edition, decided in 1855 to issue their own block-printed "authorized edition," which came out four years after the first Kawagoe printing. A second Kawagoe edition was issued in 1864, and a third in 1873 (Meiji 6). In 1875 the Rai family signed a contract with Kawagoe splitting the copyright, which involved a payment of

/narration of events and more on historical and political analysis, presented in the appraisals (*ronsan* 論纂) that follow the narrative sections. *Tsūgi* was essentially completed in 1830, and consisted of essays on historiographical theory that grew out of reflections made while writing the appraisals for *Nihon seiki*. An earlier version, *Shinsaku* 新策 [New tactics], was published in 1842, and *Tsūgi* itself was published in 1850.

<sup>56</sup> Andō Hideo, *Rai San'yō: Nihon gaishi, Explanatory notes*, p.7.

Figure 10

First page of the first chapter of *Nihon gaishi*, in San'yō's own hand (from the collection of Mr Rai Shin)



<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p.7.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p.19.

<sup>55</sup> *Nihon seiki*, which begins from the mythical founding of the country by the first emperor Jinmu and extends all the way to the death of Hideyoshi 秀吉, was written between 1820 and San'yō's premature death in 1832, though it was not published until 1861. Compared with *Nihon gaishi*, the work puts much less emphasis on the

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p.20. This was a considerable sum at a time when the annual expenditure of the central government was 69,250,000 yen.

<sup>58</sup> Miyagawa Yasuko, “*Nihon gaisbi* no metahistorii,” pp.81–2.

<sup>59</sup> See *ibid.*, pp.19–20 and 31–2. One *monme* was equal to one-sixtieth of an ounce.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p.20.

<sup>61</sup> Miyake’s book *Ō Yōmei* [Wang Yangming] and Tokutomi’s book *Yoshida Shōin* were both published in 1893. Kuga contributed an afterword to Miyake’s book in which he honors the late-Ming iconoclastic thinker Li Zhi 李贄 (Li Zhuowu 李卓吾, 1527–1602) as the representative of a freedom of thought that is able to break out in new directions without being bound by precedents. On the exaltation of Wang Yangming in the Meiji period, which had many similarities with the exaltation of Rai San’yō, see Ogyū Shigehiro, “The construction of ‘Modern Yōmeigaku’ in Meiji Japan and its impact in China,” translated with an introduction and supplementary notes by the present writer, in *East Asian History* 20 (Dec. 2000): 83–120.

30,000 yen from the Matsudaira family (lords of Kawagoe domain) to Rai’s descendents.<sup>57</sup> By 1899, fourteen printings of the Kawagoe edition had been published, and an average of five to six thousand sets per year of this edition alone had been sold—in good years as many as ten thousand. The Rai family “authorized edition” also sold very well, and the bookstore in Kyoto that acquired their contract to publish it specialized only in selling this one book alone.<sup>58</sup> Bookstores in Osaka and Edo reportedly paid three *monme* 匁 of silver in royalties to the Rai family for each copy they sold. Kawagoe continued publishing the work even after the relocation of the domain in 1867, and it continued to be a major source of revenue for the domain the Matsudaira family until its copyright expired in 1899.<sup>59</sup> In a time when foreign countries were becoming increasingly concerned to understand “what made Japan tick,” between the bakumatsu period and the mid-Meiji period, reprints of *Nihon gaisbi* were issued in Guangdong and Shanghai, a Russian translation appeared in Vladivostok, and partial translations into French, English and German were also published.<sup>60</sup>

Obviously, there must have been something more than just the superior literary quality of San’yō’s Chinese prose that moved his readers and enabled his history of his country to play such an important role in the further unfolding of that very history. Andō remarks that *Nihon gaisbi*, through its grand but lucid historical narratives, wove many colorful images of individual historical figures that clarified and exalted the Japanese conceptions of “truth, goodness, and beauty.” Such a vivid portrayal of aesthetic and moral values that could define the Japanese people as a distinctive and unified community with a glorious historical heritage is of course one of the reasons Yamaji Aizan credits San’yō with catalyzing the rise of a modern national consciousness in Japan.

As popular writers like Yamaji and Tokutomi learned from the literature of European nation-building, the creation of national heroes was at least as important in the creation of nations and national loyalty as *abstract* ideas of a common racial and cultural identity. For biographies could move people to engage in new forms of action aimed at destroying outmoded social institutions and building new ones in their place. This is why Meiji nationalist writers like Tokutomi, Miyake Setsurei 三宅雪嶺 (1860–1945), and Kuga Katsunan chose to write biographies of activist and iconoclast thinkers like Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472–1528) and Yoshida Shōin, whose “subjective engagement” was based on deep inner conviction and unflinching determination rather than any external structures of authority and knowledge.<sup>61</sup>

Thus if the established evaluation of the historical role of *Nihon gaisbi* that we have traced back to Yamaji has any validity, the book must also have had the capacity to make young Japanese readers feel that they must take the responsibility of the historical destiny of their own nation into their own hands, in other words, the capacity to inspire readers toward subjective engagement in the national political struggles of their time, even at the possible risk of their lives. Let us, at any rate, take this as a hypothesis, to be tested by an actual examination of the philosophy of history that is developed in San’yō’s text.

### *San'yō's Philosophy of History and its Implications for Political Action*

As we would expect from the nature of San'yō's education, the basic principles of his exposition and interpretation of history were based on the tradition of Confucian historiography associated with the Zhu Xi school (J. *Shushigaku* 朱子学), but formulated during a time when the chief polemical thrust of the Zhu Xi school in Japan had shifted away from its early Tokugawa missions of debunking Buddhism, criticizing the Wang Yangming school, taming the samurai ethic, and building an orderly society through the construction of a strict hereditary status order and a corresponding system of ethics. The new mission of *Shushigaku* from the middle of the Edo period, in which San'yō's father was an important participant, was focused particularly on repudiating the schools of Ancient Learning, especially the teachings of Ogyū Sorai. This change in the structure of the polemical field in which *Shushigaku* concepts were promulgated necessarily affected the balance of emphasis among these concepts themselves, in a way clearly marked by the specific history of the development of Confucian thought in Edo Japan.

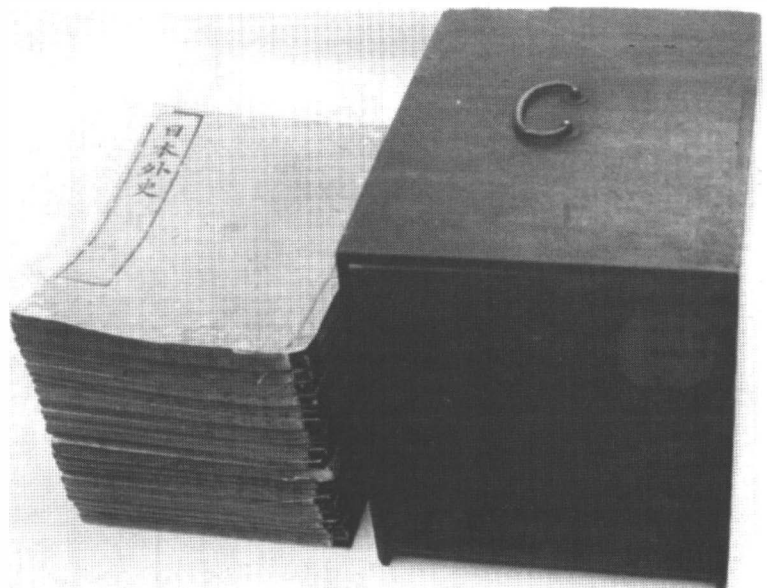
Now, in Zhu Xi school historiography, as best represented in Japan by the *Dai Nihonshi*, the main purpose of writing history was to clarify the meaning of *taigi* 大義—the “greater duty” owed by the subject to his ruler—and *meibun* 名分—the moral imperatives inherent in titles and status relationships. In accord with the principle of *meibun*, San'yō regarded the authority of the royal throne as absolute, and he considered it crucial to distinguish clearly between leaders of the country who were appointed shogun by the order of the sovereign and those who were not.<sup>62</sup> Where there is a distinction of title and status, such as that between ruler and subject, this distinction must never be overstepped.<sup>63</sup> Thus the original and only proper duty of all bushi was loyally to serve the sovereign, and

1817). [See Watanabe Hiroshi, “Ikutsuka no Nihonshi yōgo ni tsuite” [Regarding certain terms used in Japanese history], in *Higasbi Ajia no ōken toshisō* [East Asian royal authority and thought] (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1997), pp.1–13, at 7–8]. Accordingly, in *Nihon seiki*, San'yō reverts to the term *tennō*.

<sup>63</sup> This concept of a fixed status order, which needed to be anchored in the maintenance of legitimate royal power, was central to the Song-dynasty historiography of Sima Guang 司馬光 and Zhu Xi. Sima, however, emphasized the formal and hereditary criteria of legitimacy, followed in Japanese historiography by Kitabatake Chikafusa's 北畠親房 (1293–1354) *Jinnō sbōtōki* 神皇正統記 [Records of the legitimate succession of the divine sovereigns] (1339), while Zhu gave an important place to the Mencian criterion of legitimacy in the moral correctness of the ruler, as the *Taiheiki* tended to do in Japan, though as a bushi history it was more concerned with achievement than legitimacy. See Ian James McMullen, “Ashikaga Takauji in early Tokugawa thought,” in *The origins of Japan's medieval world*, ed. Jeffrey P. Mass (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp.321–44, at 325–8.

#### Figure 11

*A manuscript copy of Nihon gaishi in San'yō's own hand, in 22 fascicles (kan/maki 卷) (from the collection of Mr Rai Shin, Kyoto)*



<sup>62</sup> In *Nihon gaishi*, San'yō consistently refers to the Japanese sovereign as “king” (王), somewhat surprising considering the connotations of subordination to the Chinese emperor that this title had acquired after the Zhou dynasty. See Kate Wildman Nakai, *Shogunal politics: Arai Hakuseki and the premises of Tokugawa rule* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1988), pp.193–7, 227–8, 321–6. This usage probably reflects his desire to follow the model of the ancient Chinese histories. It is also a fact, however, that the title of *tennō* 天皇, established in Japanese national histories beginning with the *Kojiki* 古事記 and *Nihon sboki*, was not officially used from the time of Emperor Juntoku 順徳 (r. 1210–21) until revived in the time of Kōkaku tennō 光格天皇 (r.1779–



<sup>64</sup> Go-Daigo made two attempts to overthrow the Kamakura 鎌倉 bakufu, in 1324 and 1331, but the plots were discovered. After the second, Go-Daigo was exiled to Oki 隠岐 by the shogunal regent Hōjō Takatoki 北条高時. His rebellion, however, stimulated the rising of anti-bakufu armies in many areas, and the bakufu fell in 1333 under attacks from generals like Nitta, who eliminated the Hōjō clan. Ashikaga Takauji 足利尊氏, a Kamakura general who had been sent to suppress the rebellion but defected to the anti-bakufu side, helped in the achievement of the restoration (*chūkō*), but then he turned against Go-Daigo in 1336, founding a new bakufu and setting up an alternate imperial line in Kyoto.

<sup>65</sup> Andō Hideo, *Rai San'yō: Nibon gaishi*, "Nitta-shi ronsan" 新田氏論纂 [Appraisal on Nitta Yoshisada], fascicle 6, pp.115–23, 236–43.

<sup>66</sup> See W. T. de Bary, "Some common tendencies in Neo-Confucianism," in *Confucianism in action*, ed. David Nivison and Arthur Wright (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1959), pp.25–49, at 34–7.

<sup>67</sup> Harootunian, *Toward Restoration*, p.10.

<sup>68</sup> This view of history, in which the role of the emperor is purely passive, was developed particularly strongly in Mito historiography, as represented in the early eighteenth century by Asaka Tanpaku 安積澹泊 (1656–1737), and it was continued in the later Mito school. See Webb, *The Japanese imperial institution in the Tokugawa period*, pp.173–7, and Aizawa Seishisai's 会沢正志齋 (1781–1863) *Shinron* 新論 [New theses], "Kokutai, jō [I]," translated in Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, *Anti-foreignism and Western learning in early modern Japan: the New Theses of 1825* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1986), p.163.

San'yō's history takes pains to glorify historical examples of such loyal service. As is well known, his greatest loyalist heroes are Kusunoki Masashige and Nitta Yoshisada 新田義貞, both of whom devotedly served Emperor Go-Daigo 後醍醐 in his attempt to reestablish the political supremacy of the emperor in what is known as the "Kenmu Restoration" (*Kenmu no chūkō* 建武の中興, 1333–36).<sup>64</sup>

In his panegyric for Nitta, San'yō makes the interesting statement that, "At the time he died, he still had strapped to his waist the brocaded bag containing the Imperial edict. From this we can see that his will (*kokorozashi*) to devote himself completely to his country was something that could not be broken even through a hundred defeats. Even today, it retains its majestic force of life."<sup>65</sup> As mentioned above, it was a common idea in Confucian historiography that a frustrated will toward loyal action can survive the death of its subject and be passed down in history to be fulfilled by the person's descendants. Since Tokugawa Ieyasu had claimed to be a descendant of Nitta, a scion of the Minamoto 源 clan (the only clan with a historically established right to serve as shoguns), San'yō here was, on one level, paying conventional homage to the Tokugawa shogunate and its claims to historical legitimacy. However, it was the emphasis on the primacy of loyalty to the throne and the strong affirmation of the ideal of an imperial restoration that made the strongest impact on his readers.

The advocacy of "restoration" (Ch. *fugu*; J. *fukko* 復古)—fundamental socio-political reform through reviving the institutions of antiquity—is one of the basic characteristics of Neo-Confucian thought as a whole, from which it passed into Edo-period Shinto thought as well.<sup>66</sup> The English word "restoration" is also used, however, to translate the above-mentioned historiographical concept of *zhongxing* (J. *chūkō*): a resurgence of vigorous leadership that brings a dynasty a new lease on life. As Harootunian notes in his 1970 study, *Toward Restoration*, "This concept had great resonance in Chinese historical and moral writing, which saw in it a reassertion of talent, ability, and moral responsibility in public affairs as a means of arresting domestic failure."<sup>67</sup> In the early Edo period this term was used in reference to Ieyasu's establishment of the Tokugawa order after a period of severe disorder, seen as completing a process of *restoring* (!) authority to the emperor that was begun by the Kamakura bakufu.<sup>68</sup> Harootunian claims, however, that this concept of *chūkō* was abandoned in the bakumatsu period in favor of another concept of restoration, *fukko*, literally "return to antiquity," which, "while it also had Chinese origins, was immersed in native Japanese associations." "This notion stressed the sacral right of the emperor to rule directly, as he had in ancient Japan," he argues, so it no longer meant a regeneration of the political order and its realignment with the natural moral order (bound to the lessons of history), but a reorganization of society around a new principle of political authority (which liberated men from history into the flexible world of myth). Thus, he argues, "the intellectual history of this period is a transition between



these two metaphors of restoration.”<sup>69</sup>

This theory bears marked similarities to Maruyama Masao's theory developed in the 1940s of a two-stage transition in the course of the Edo period from Neo-Confucian orthodoxy through Ogyū Sorai to National Learning, a theory that, at least in regards to the first transition, has been almost totally discredited. Moreover, if Harootunian's theory is true, it seems to leave no place for the Confucian concept of imperial “restoration” (*chūkō*)—as symbolized most powerfully by Go-Daigo and his loyal retainers—to play any significant part in the Restoration, unless it was completely reconceived as *ōsei fukko* 王政復古 (restoration of the ancient royal government). It is true that the leading formulator of the restoration decree of 3 January 1868 (second day of the third month of Keiō 慶応 3), the court nobleman Iwakura Tomomi 岩倉具視 (1825–83), in the last two years before the Restoration, abandoned the Kenmu model of restoration (*chūkō*) in favor of an *ōsei fukko* (restoration of royal government) based on the much more ancient model of Emperor Jinmu's 神武天皇 state foundation. As Harootunian himself points out, however, this more ancient model had already been articulated as much as ten years earlier by Maki Izumi 真木和泉 (Yasuomi 保臣, 1813–64) and Ōkuni Takamasa 大国隆正 (1792–1871).<sup>70</sup> Moreover, as glimpsed in quotations given in the present article, the term *chūkō* was still used ubiquitously in bakumatsu writings, as it was by San'yō and Shōin, to refer to historical instances of the restoration of imperial rule, even by leading *sonnō jōi* thinkers such as Maki Izumi who were strongly influenced by nativist thought. Iwakura also used the term *kōshitsu chūkō* 皇室中興 (restoration of the court as the *public* principle of government) increasingly to refer to his new concept of restoration.<sup>71</sup>

Accordingly, while the concept of a transition is not without validity, it would seem more appropriate to argue that the evolution in the meaning of “restoration” in the bakumatsu period involved a *fusion* of the two concepts of *chūkō* and *fukko*, in both their Confucian and Shintoist connotations, a fusion that expanded the capacity of the concept of “restoration” to carry different meanings for different thinkers and to acquire new meanings under changing political circumstances. Harootunian himself hints at the possible validity of such an interpretation when he writes, “Over and above the language of myth, Mito writers delivered to discourse the notion of *restoration*. They themselves were calling for a restoration of the traditional domestic order, the *bakuban* system, to prop up the domain; but their call awoke later writers to other possibilities.”<sup>72</sup> Regarding the applicability of the concept of “fusion” in Edo intellectual history, Tetsuo Najita has written that:

Fusion is crucial to the dispersion and appropriation of ideas that interconnect “high thought” with generalized social thought, or “center” with “periphery.” It illustrates the gradual expansion of the outer reaches of political and ethical discourse, suggesting a centrifugal widening of the parameters in traditional thought. New ethical constructs that are formulated in this process provide organizing meaning to changing historical circumstances... explaining

<sup>69</sup> Harootunian, *Toward Restoration*, pp.10–11 and 25–9. As mentioned in n.34, Harootunian's 1988 work (*Things seen and unseen: discourse and ideology in Tokugawa nativism*) continues to argue for such a transition in the meaning of “restoration,” but the direction of movement is reversed to one from myth to history. The story of the Restoration becomes, that is, a story of the defeat of the nativist Utopian discourse because its commitment to the invisible realm (the unity of religion and politics) made it impossible for it to give lasting political representation to the “epic political events in the visible realm” that occurred in 1867 and 1868, depriving it of “all means to make the necessary accommodation to the mediation of politics” (pp.395, 402, 406). That is, the nativists were not intellectually or temperamentally prepared to take on the task of constructing the new order which their discourse of restoration had called for, a task which required establishing and maintaining control over the rapidly expanding discourse regarding the meaning of the Restoration, now an historical *fact* rather than a Utopian ideal.

<sup>70</sup> Harootunian, *Things seen and unseen*, pp.392–4.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p.392.

<sup>72</sup> Harootunian, *Toward Restoration*, p.37. Harootunian also calls attention (pp.254, 257) to the combination of Takenouchi Shikibu's and Yamagata Daini's style of loyalism (which, if the two thinkers are actually linked, already represents a synthesis of Shinto and Confucian concepts) with nativist restorationism among Kyoto loyalists like Umeda Unpin 梅田雲浜 (1815–59) and the Chinese-style poet and *sonnō jōi* advocate Yanagawa Seigan 梁川星巖 (1789–1858).

<sup>73</sup> Tetsuo Najita, “The conceptual portrayal of Tokugawa intellectual history,” in Tetsuo Najita and Irwin Scheiner, eds, *Japanese thought in the Tokugawa period 1600–1868* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp.3–38, at 14.

<sup>74</sup> *Nihon gaishi, kan* 9, “Ashikaga-shi ronsan” 足利氏論纂 [Appraisal on Ashikaga Takauji]. See Andō Hideo, *Rai San'yō. Nihon gaishi*, pp.124–35 and 244–9, and Rai Tsutomu, ed., *Rai San'yō* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1972), pp.445–8.

<sup>75</sup> Yoshimitsu also set up a new system of hereditary government offices in imitation of the imperial court, consisting of three families qualified to serve as governors-general (*sankanrei* 三管領), four families who could serve as the head of the Samuraidokoro 侍所 (*sbishiki* 四職), and seven “head” families ranking below the *sankanrei* (*sbichitō* 七頭).

<sup>76</sup> For Keisai’s arguments regarding *taigi, meibun* and Japan’s national dignity, see his famous essay “Chūgoku ben” 中國辯 [A critical inquiry into the name ‘Middle Kingdom’], in *Yamazaki Ansai gakuba 山崎闇齋学波* [The Yamazaki Ansai School], *NST*, vol.31, pp.416–20 (on Yoshimitsu, see p.418). For a consideration of this matter from the point of view of diplomatic history, see Ron Toby, *State and diplomacy in early modern Japan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp.24, 58.

<sup>77</sup> For Hakuseki’s views on these matters see Nakai, *Sbogunal politics*, pp.225–34 and 282–7. Hakuseki also criticized Yoshimitsu for usurping authority, but his chief criticism was the way he treated ministers of the court as if they were retainers of his own house.

what is happening, what might be reasonably expected to happen, and, therefore, what kinds of action are appropriate in the present.<sup>73</sup>

While Najita is speaking particularly of the fusion over time of conceptual structures developed in different schools of thought, rather than the fusion of single concepts, his observations do much to clarify the way interpretive concepts drawn by individual historians from the collectively determined pattern of a nation’s past can, when diffused through society by works like *Nihon gaishi*, give rise dialectically to new concepts for making sense of change in the present, moving in the process from the realm of historiography to the realm of will, the realm of political action—the realm where history is *made*, not just written.

To observe an archetypal example of this process at work, let us first consider San’yō’s explanation of the historical loss of political power by the emperors:

In the realm, there are names and there are actualities. In the old days, our royal house ruled over the entire country, receiving foodstuffs and clothing as taxes, and they rewarded meritorious persons by giving them official ranks and emoluments. In those days, both the name and the substance of authority resided in the court. Subsequently, there was a case where someone stole the name and met with defeat. This was Taira no Masakado 平将門 [d. 940]. There was a case where someone stole the substance and met with success. This was Minamoto no Yoritomo 源頼朝 [1147–99]. There was a case where someone wanted to possess both the name and the substance, but he lost them both. This was Ashikaga 足利 [Yoshimitsu 義満] . . . Nevertheless, where there is a name-and-status distinction, this must not be overstepped . . . In my opinion, when Ashikaga wished to possess both the name and the substance, in the fact that he took the matter completely into his own hands he had already lost the righteousness that comes from fulfilling one’s duty.<sup>74</sup>

Ashikaga Yoshimitsu’s usurping of the “name” of imperial authority refers to his adoption of the title “King of Japan” in diplomatic correspondence with the Ming empire, which he did in order to be accepted into the Ming tributary system and enhance his own legitimacy with the court aristocracy in Japan.<sup>75</sup> This had been viewed by earlier defenders of *taigi meibun*, such as Asami Keisai 浅見敬齋 (1652–1711) and the Mito historians, as an extreme case of the violation of *meibun*—the duty and limits of authority proper to one’s status position. However, while for Keisai the most serious implication of Yoshimitsu’s change of title was the subordination of Japan to China, compromising her national autonomy and national pride in a world in which each state should see itself as the center of its own world, San’yō was more concerned with what he saw as its flagrant encroachment on the titular authority of the imperial throne.<sup>76</sup> Accordingly, San’yō excoriated Arai Hakuseki—who had managed to convince the Tokugawa shoguns to assume the title of “King of Japan” in their diplomatic relations with Korea between 1710 and 1717—for writing in his history *Tokusbi yoron* 読史余論 (Alternative

views from my reading of history [*kan* 3]) that Yoshimitsu, having become the sovereign of the realm, should have consulted the various rituals and institutions laid down in the past and instituted a new title that would express the fact that, while he was one rank below the emperor, all of the people in the realm except the court nobility were his subjects.<sup>77</sup> On the other hand, San'yō is lenient in his evaluation of the Fujiwara 藤原, even though they appropriated imperial authority, because they never went as far as to actually rebel against the emperors, usurp their titles, or take military power into their own hands.<sup>78</sup> He also extols Nobunaga 信長, Hideyoshi, and Ieyasu 家康 for fulfilling the great task of unifying the country, comparing them to famous loyalists praised in the *Spring and Autumn Annals* for having realized the great duty of reverence to the king (*sonnō no taigi* 尊皇の大義), again on the basis of the fact that they did not usurp the titles of the imperial throne or assume the title of "King of Japan."

Another historiographical concept as important in San'yō's histories as *taigi* and *meibun* is the idea of the momentum (*ikioi* 勢い) of affairs, an explanatory factor in the unfolding of history that is relatively independent of the moral correctness and political acumen of individual political leaders. For instance, in San'yō's view, the founding of the Kamakura bakufu by Yoritomo was the result of "a momentum of affairs that could not be controlled (亦不得已之勢也 [*yamu • ezaru no ikioi nari* 止むを得ざるの勢ひなり]).<sup>79</sup> The fact that Oda Nobunaga was assassinated when he was only halfway toward the achievement of his enterprise was "something that had to happen according to the momentum of affairs, so we need not be overly concerned with assigning blame or condemnation."<sup>80</sup> It is the emphasis on this concept in San'yō's histories that has led Maruyama Masao and other post-war Japanese historians to exalt San'yō for his role in helping liberate Japanese historiography from what they regarded (in agreement with Ogyū Sorai) as the "straitjacket" of *Shushigaku* moralism.<sup>81</sup>

While *meibun* is more emphasized in *Nihon gaisbi* than in San'yō's later work, *Nihon seiki*, the opposite is true of the concept of *ikioi*. In the latter work, the basis of changes in political regime is sought in "the momentum of affairs" (*ikioi*), "the movements of Heaven" (*ten'un* 天運), or "the momentum of the time" (*jisei* 時勢), three concepts which carry virtually the same meaning. There is a force operating in history independently of human will whereby an original condition where the ruler's will reaches down to the people and the people's feelings are communicated up to the ruler decays with the long continuation of peace, producing an alienation between above and below that leads eventually to an overturning of the realm or a change in regime, and these changes are irreversible.<sup>82</sup> The loss of the power of the imperial throne is to be deeply lamented, but there was something inevitable about it and it is no easy thing to bring about a restoration. On the other hand, particular political successes and failures are also, of course, attributed to human factors such as the appropriateness of governmental measures or the diligence and sincerity of the leaders of the government. San'yō discusses the relationship between these two sorts of factors in *Tsūgi*:

<sup>78</sup> *Nihon seiki, kan* 1, "Suijin ki ronsan" 垂仁記論纂 [Appraisal on the account of Emperor Suijin], *NST*, vol.49, pp.20–1, 464. Elsewhere in *Nihon seiki*, San'yō tries further to legitimate the historical role of the Fujiwara by arguing that their assuming of control over the court and the imperial succession had accorded with "the hearts of the people" (*minshin* 民心), which most likely refers to the courtiers involved directly in government. See *Nihon seiki, kan* 4, "Shōtoku Kōken ki ronsan" 称徳孝謙記論纂 [Appraisal on the account of Shōtoku and Kōken], *ibid.*, pp.100–1, 494.

<sup>79</sup> "Genji ronsan" 源氏論纂 [Appraisal on Minamoto Yoritomo], in Andō Hideo, *Rai San'yō: Nihon gaisbi, kan* 3, pp.70–7 (original text p.219).

<sup>80</sup> "Oda-shi ronsan" 織田氏論纂 [Appraisal on Oda Nobunaga], in *ibid.*, *kan* 14, pp.174–80.

<sup>81</sup> In a famous study, Maruyama argued that archaic Japanese conceptions of the beginning of the universe and temporal change that managed to preserve themselves against powerful Chinese influence in the cosmogonic language of the *Kojiki* (conceptions that lacked the idea of an absolute originator) functioned throughout the Japanese historiographical tradition to impede the establishment of a providential view of history or a norm-centered view of history, supporting rather a "historical optimism of *ikioi*" that was the reverse side of a logic in which the energy of life-generation (*seisei* 生生) is *itself* the beginning point. He summarizes this Japanese view of creation/time as "In the beginning was *ikioi*!" See Maruyama Masao, "Rekishi ishiki no 'kosō'" [The ancient stratum of historical consciousness], in *Rekishi shisō shū* [A collection of essays on historical thought], ed. Maruyama Masao (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1972), pp.3–46, esp. p.24, republished with additional notes by Maruyama in *Chūsei to bangyaku* [Loyalty and rebellion] (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1992), pp.295–351. See also Miyagawa Yasuko, "*Nihon gaisbi* no metahistorii" and "Jukyōteki rekishi kijutsu to nashonarizumu."

<sup>82</sup> "Go-Reisen ki ronsan" 後冷泉記論纂 [Appraisal on the account of Go-Reisen], *Nihon seiki, kan* 8; "Ōgimachi ki ronsan" 正親町記論纂 [Appraisal on the account of Emperor Ōgimachi], *ibid.*, *kan* 16; "Yōzei ki ronsan" 陽成記論纂 [Appraisal on the account of Yōzei], *kan* 6, *NST*, vol.49, pp.219–20, 224–5.

<sup>83</sup> “Ron sei” 論勢 [On “momentum” in history], *Tsūgi, kan 1*, in Kizaki Aikichi and Rai Seiichi, comp., *Rai San’yō zenshō* [The complete works of Rai San’yō], chief ed. Tokutomi Sohō, 8 vols. (Hiroshima: Rai San’yō Iseki Kenshōkai, 1931–32): 6, pp.1–6.

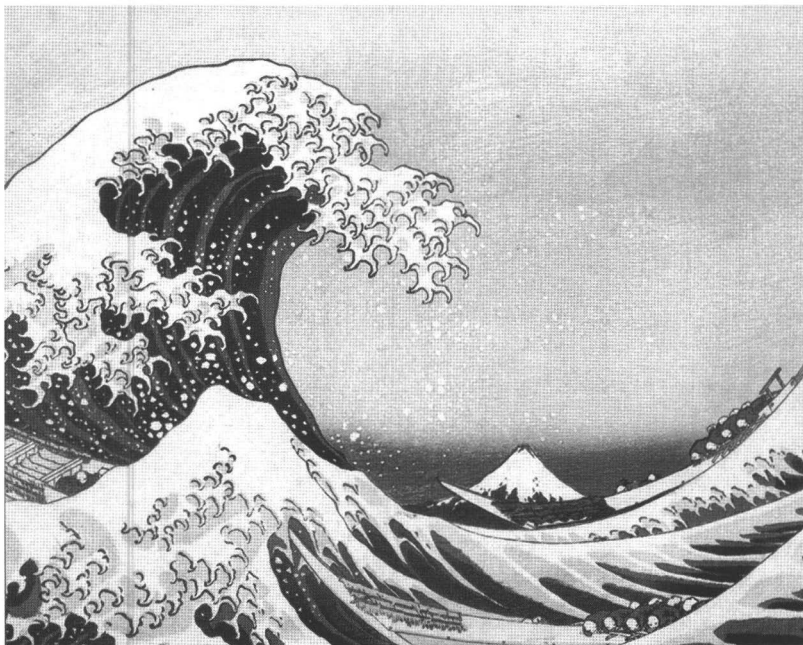
The disintegration and unification of the realm, political order and disorder, and the security or insecurity of the state are all based on *ikioi*. *Ikioi* is a matter of things changing gradually and coming to completion gradually. It is not something that is within the power of human beings to control. However, when changes are beginning to take place and the change has not yet come to completion, it is within human power to act so as to direct the process of change, as long as one relies on that momentum. Even though it is not possible for human beings to go against the momentum of affairs, the momentum of affairs is also sometimes brought to completion by human beings. To evade one’s responsibility on the pretext that what is happening is all due to “the momentum of affairs,” being unwilling to devise strategies to deal with the situation, or to try to come up with strategies that do not accord with the momentum of affairs, are both instances of not understanding *ikioi*...

Accordingly, when a person has been able to get control of the momentum of affairs, the result will be enduring political order and unity. When a person has been unsuccessful in getting control over the momentum of affairs, disorder and disintegration will follow rapidly. What happens rapidly is of course much less desirable than what lasts a long time. However, even in the case of what lasts a long time, one should not just rely on the fact that it has lasted a long time. For the basis of political order and unity is nothing other than *ikioi*. And the basis of disorder and disintegration is also nothing other than *ikioi*. *Ikioi* in the realm is like water; it is not possible to stop the water once it has started flowing powerfully in a certain direction... . When the momentum reaches its culmination, there will be a change, and once this change has occurred, it is complete.<sup>83</sup>

Read in the context of its time, this piece of historical philosophy—while ostensibly a commentary on medieval history—is quite clearly a warning to the leaders and officials of the Tokugawa bakufu that if they are not *very* careful in watching for signs of dissatisfaction with their rule and taking appropriate measures to deal with the causes of such dissatisfaction, they will lose control of the momentum of the realm and end up seeing their government overthrown. In *Shinsaku*, an earlier version of *Tsūgi*, San’yō clearly says that if those in superior positions do not properly care for the people below, they will lose the “hearts of the people” (*minshin*), which will lead to a change in the Mandate of Heaven, where, in Dylanesque fashion, those who were on the bottom end up on top and those who were on top end up on the bottom. Thus those on the top should fear the *ikioi* that would be unleashed by such lack of fulfillment of the responsibility that comes

## Figure 12

Katsushika Hokusai’s 葛飾北斎 “In a wave off Kanagawa” (Kanagawa oki rōri 神奈川冲浪裏), a famous depiction of “*ikioi*.” Hokusai (1760–1849) was twenty years older than San’yō. His celebrated series of “Thirty-six scenes of Mt Fuji” (Fugaku sanjūroku-kei 富嶽三十六景), of which this painting is one, was produced between 1831 and 1833. San’yō died in 1832. (From the collection of Nihon Ukiyoe Hakubutsukan 日本浮世絵博物館, Matsumoto 松本, Nagano prefecture 長野県)



with their status (*bun* 分) as rulers. Nevertheless, those in the position of vassals and ministers must not take *ikioi* as an excuse for not respecting (i.e., for overstepping) their status position as inferiors. This is how *bun* and *ikioi* are always in a relationship of serving and supporting each other.<sup>84</sup>

In spite of this emphasis on warning those in power, undoubtedly written in the hope of *preventing* the collapse of the Tokugawa government, it is not difficult to see that, especially under historical circumstances where the sort of momentum of affairs that San'yō refers to was already visible, it could also be read as a denial of the unconditional legitimacy and permanence of the Tokugawa government, and even as a methodology of how to lead a successful rebellion against the bakufu. It is particularly the potential of this latter reading that supports my hypothesis that San'yō's history could inspire and fortify the *shutaisei* of its readers—the will and determination to engage in political action directed to changing the course of history. The philosophy here obviously draws much from the concepts of the *Yijing* 易經 (Book of changes). A famous passage from the *Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳 (Commentary on the appended phrases), Part Two, states: *Yi, qiong zebian, bian zetong, tong ze jiu* 易,窮則變,變則通,通則久: “[The principle of the *Book of*] *Changes* is: when it reaches the limit [where it can go no further], it changes; once it changes, [a new path] opens up; once [a new path has] opened up, it can remain [viable] for a long time.”<sup>85</sup>

This passage occurs in the context of an explanation of how the ancient sage-kings established the institutions of civilization on the basis of their understanding of the hexagrams of the *Yijing*, i.e., on the basis of their understanding of the principles by which change occurs and by which change can be successfully brought about. The passage goes on to say that if a ruler understands the laws of change in this way he will receive the assistance of Heaven and achieve success and good fortune “easily” (the other meaning of the character *yi*) without any unnatural exertion of effort. The characters *bian* (to change) and *tong* (to penetrate, pass through, or understand) also appear together in the same *Yijing* commentary, in a much-used compound that means to adapt oneself freely and flexibly to the circumstances in which one finds oneself. In one passage, being *biantong* 變通 is likened to the way change occurs in the progression of the four seasons, wherein an accumulation of gradual, incremental changes suddenly changes into a qualitative change from one season to another.

Like the *Yijing* as a whole, the original intention of the passage is to teach the principles of leadership and successful action. However, since it is also presented as a statement of the way change occurs objectively in the natural world and the world of human affairs, it has been extremely popular as a concept for understanding the process of historical change, becoming associated early on with the concept of the dynastic cycle. Since the purpose of writing and studying history in Confucianism, however, is to learn the principles of successful political action, there is a natural connection between the use of this *Yijing* teaching as an explanatory principle on the level of “collective determinations” or objective laws and its capacity of functioning

<sup>84</sup> *Sbinsaku, kan 3*, “Kō Kamakura gi” 後鎌倉議 [My judgement on the later Kamakura period], in *ibid.*, pp.49–50.

<sup>85</sup> The first sentence of this passage can also be read as “When [one process of] change (*yi* 易) reaches its limit, a change [from one state to another] (*bian* 變) occurs.” This is the way Lynn has translated the passage, under the influence of Wang Bi's commentary of the third century. See Richard John Lynn, trans., *The Classic of Changes: a new translation of the I Ching as interpreted by Wang Bi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p.78. His translation continues: “As such, change achieves free flow, and with this free flow, it lasts forever.” The presence of two different words for “change,” the lack of an English word that corresponds precisely to *tong* 通, and the need in English to specify a subject for any verb (such as “lasts forever” here), makes this passage almost impossible to translate without distortion.

<sup>86</sup> Tanaka, *Japan's Orient*. Tanaka's quotation is from Clifford Geertz, *The interpretation of cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p.5. As Harootian writes about Yoshida Shōin, for instance, "He felt in fact so vast a distance between a classical past and a unique present that past solutions were of little value for present problems." Harootian, *Toward Restoration*, p.195.

<sup>87</sup> As mentioned in n.81, Maruyama shows that the concept of historical time as unidirectional, propelled forward in uninterrupted succession by an irrepressible energy of life symbolized by the sprouting forth of a reed-shoot, was already embodied in the creation myths recorded in the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*. However, he emphasizes that it was in Edo 江戸-period historiography that the consciousness of the *irreversibility* of history took root. For San'yō and other late-Edo historians the archetypal case of an irreversible historical change (a turn from quantitative, continuous change to qualitative change, or, in the *Yijing*'s vocabulary, from *yi* to *bian*) in Japanese history was Yoritomo's establishment of a national network of *shugo* 守護 (provincial constables) and *jitō* 地頭 (land stewards) subordinate to him. This is a change which also established the uniqueness of the pattern of Japanese history when compared with China. See Maruyama Masao, "Rekishishi no 'kosō,'" pp.22–8.

<sup>88</sup> For insightful analyses of some earlier Tokugawa histories, see Herschel Webb, "What is the *Dai Nihon Shiryō*," in *Journal of Asian Studies* 19.2 (1960): 135–49; Kate Wildman Nakai, "Tokugawa Confucian historiography: the Hayashi, early Mito School, and Arai Hakuseki," in *Confucianism and Tokugawa culture*, ed. Peter Nosco (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1984), pp.62–91; Matsumoto Sannosuke, "Kinsei ni okeru rekishijojutsu to sono shisō" [Historical narration in the early modern period and its philosophy], in *Kinsei shiron shū* [A collection of early modern writings on the theory of history], *NST*, vol.48, pp.578–615; and McMullen, "Ashikaga Takauji in early Tokugawa thought," pp.321–44.

as a principle of action and decision-making on the level of "subjective singularities." Accordingly, the subtle changes in the balance and interrelationship of explanatory concepts in San'yō's histories, catalyzed by objective changes in the condition of the Japanese polity, inevitably brought changes in the philosophy of political action that emerged from the reading of his historical text. As Stefan Tanaka has written, during the nineteenth century, "the categories that were used to understand the complex events and processes of a previous age were no longer appropriate; ... therefore, new categories had to be created that would 'render otherwise incomprehensible social situations meaningful [and] so construe them as to make it possible to act purposefully within them'."<sup>86</sup>

Even if all of their basic concepts were derived from previous Confucian histories, Rai's histories—both in their bakumatsu readings and in their nationalistic reappropriation in the Meiji period—undoubtedly played an important part in the creation and propagation of such new categories for comprehending social situations—particularly the category of *ikioi*. But if a category for *comprehending* historical change is also, as I have argued, a principle of making action-decisions aimed at *bringing about* historical change, what we have is a transference of will-energy (*ikioi*) from a text—the story of the wills that have made history in the past—into action, the realm of the present where history is *being made* through the intermittent conjunction of individual wills with a momentum of ideas and circumstances that it is beyond the power of any individual to control.

Now, if we consider such a process of the transfer of will-energy from the record of the past into the present and future, the change of the last character *tong* 通 (to become unblocked) in the *Yijing* saying to *cheng* 成 (to become complete) in San'yō's *Tsūgi* is very interesting. This change of wording, while not likely original with San'yō, serves to emphasize the idea that once a fundamental change in the trend of the realm or the government of the realm has occurred, it cannot be reversed, creating both an urgency for action and a necessity for developing mechanisms to gauge the present condition of change within the realm. Moreover, in San'yō's version, the subject of the *Yijing* phrase now becomes *ikioi*: when the *momentum of affairs* reaches its limit, a fundamental political change occurs that cannot be reversed. The idea of the inevitability of the dynastic cycle—the alternation of order and disorder—that was a core feature of traditional Chinese historiography still figures prominently in San'yō's histories, adapted to allow for the fact that in Japan there can be no revolution against the imperial line itself, but only a change in the *de facto* ruling regime.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, San'yō's idea that the statesman must divine the present configuration or momentum of the forces of yin and yang in the realm and make his political decisions so as to accord with this momentum is based, at least in its original formulation, on the philosophy of the *Book of Changes*. Nevertheless, there is a definite feeling of a difference of emphasis in Rai's histories in comparison with histories written earlier in the Edo period.<sup>88</sup>

The difference between San'yō's philosophy of acting in accord with the momentum of the time and "orthodox" Neo-Confucianism becomes clear if we consider Rai's close friend Shinozaki Shōchiku's 篠崎小竹 (1781–1851) following criticism of *Tsūgi* as a whole: "Not to discuss moral principles but only how to get on top of the momentum of affairs is not the teaching of Confucius and Mencius!"<sup>89</sup> Mencius taught that, "The wise kings of ancient times loved goodness and forgot about *shi* 勢. How could wise scholars of antiquity have been any different? Take delight in their Way and forget about the *shi* of other people (*Mencius* 7A:8)." <sup>90</sup> As Maruyama points out, clearly the "principle of adaptation" is being applied by San'yō in a way that markedly dilutes its ethically normative nature, a way that is reminiscent of the use of the concept of *shi* 勢—the configuration of objective forces and their force of movement in a particular direction—in the ancient Chinese classics of military strategy such as *Sunzi: The Art of Warfare* (*Sunzi bingfa* 孫子兵法) (probably fifth century BC). In Chapter 5, "Strategic Military Power" (Bingshi 兵勢), *Sunzi* states that "The strategic configuration of power (*shih* 勢) [is visible in] the onrush of pent-up water tumbling stones along. The [effect of] constraints (*chieb* 節) [is visible in] the onrush of a bird of prey breaking the bones of its target." ... "Thus one who excels at warfare seeks [victory] from the strategic configuration of power (*shih*), not from reliance on men. Thus he is able to select men and employ strategic power (*shih*)." <sup>91</sup> In *Sunzi*, in different contexts, *shih* 勢 carries meanings like "circumstances," "configuration," or "disposition," but as a military concept it refers primarily to strategic advantage that results from configuring military forces in accord with, and to the exploitation of, the terrain, or, in Roger Ames' words, "occupation of high ground and the 'purchase' or strategic advantage it offers."<sup>92</sup> *Strategies of the Warring States* (*Zhanguo ce* 戰國策), compiled in the first century BC from earlier materials, adduces the same concept as a general principle of successful action: "Therefore, when the sage undertakes something, he always avails himself of existing circumstances (*quan* 權) and begins when the time is right. He who avails himself of existing circumstances is the commander of all things, and [he who comprehends] the momentum of the time is the master of all affairs."<sup>93</sup> Because of this emphasis on strategy, flexibility, and the seeking of advantage over commitment to unchanging moral principles, both *Sunzi bingfa* and *Zhanguo ce* were subjected through the ages to the same sort of vilification by Confucian scholars as Shinozaki directed to San'yō's historiographical philosophy.<sup>94</sup>

Maruyama suggests that the Japanese historiographical concept of *ikioi* (or *jisei* 時勢) grew from a fusion of this Chinese strategic concept with the ancient Japanese concept of *ikioi*—a power of generation and reproduction that unfolds in unidirectional temporal succession—under the situation of the cultural and political ascendance of the military class. In the 1992 version of his article, he adds certain quotations from Chinese sources to emphasize that he is well aware of similar uses of the concept of *shishi/jisei* 時勢 in Chinese texts outside of the orthodox Confucian tradition and official historiography,

<sup>89</sup> See Maruyama Masao, "Rekishi ishiki no 'kosō,'" pp.25–6, and its 1992 reprint in *Chūsei to hangyaku*, pp.328–30. Shinozaki, a Confucian scholar of Osaka, first studied Sorai learning, but later studied Zhu Xi learning under Bitō Nishū and Koga Seiri.

<sup>90</sup> Following the traditional interpretation, D. C. Lau translates the two *shi* 勢 characters in this passage as "their own exalted position" and "the exalted position of others" (which incidentally makes apparent the connection with the original military meaning of the character seen in *Sunzi*). See Lau, *Mencius* (Harmondsworth, Midd.: Penguin Books, 1970), p.183. Thus the contextual meaning of the character is different from San'yō's *ikioi*. The point, however, is that one commits oneself to moral principles to the point of forgetting the possibility of relying on one's power and position to get one's way, and to the point of forgetting the power others may have to obstruct the realization of one's moral will.

<sup>91</sup> See Ralph D. Sawyer, *Sun Tzu: the Art of War* (Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1993), pp.187–8, and his notes on the history of English translations of the word, pp.292–3.

<sup>92</sup> See Roger T. Ames' chapter "Strategic advantage/political purchase," in *The art of rulership* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994), pp.65–107, at 67.

<sup>93</sup> *Zhanguo ce*, "Book of Qi," episode 45, "Su Qin shui Qi Min Wang." My translation. Cf. J. Crump, *Chan-kuo Ts'e*, revised ed. (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan, 1996), p.200.

<sup>94</sup> "... whereas *Shi-chi* is purged of its bad name with the passage of time, *Chan-kuo Ts'e* forever remains one of that limited group of book titles (Machiavelli's *The Prince* is a Western example) the mere mention of which greatly stimulates the flow of choleric humors in proper guardians of public morality." Crump, *Chan-kuo Ts'e*, p.28.

<sup>95</sup> See Maruyama, “Rekishu ishiki no kosō,” 1992 reprint, pp.322, 330. Su Xun (1009–66) was the father of the great Northern Song poet, painter, and calligrapher Su Shi 蘇軾 (Su Dongpo 蘇東坡) and the acclaimed writer Su Che 蘇轍. His essay *Shenshi* was included in the widely-read collection of famous Tang and Song writings, *Tang–Song ba dajia wen* 唐宋八大家文 [Writings of eight great writers of the Tang and Song].

<sup>96</sup> Maruyama does not mention Wang Fuzhi, so it is not clear to what degree he was familiar with his writings. For a study of the development of the concept of *shi* 勢 in the history of Chinese thought and theories of art that takes its starting point from Wang Fuzhi, see François Jullien, *The propensity of things: toward a history of efficacy*, trans. Janet Lloyd (New York: Zone Books, 1995), especially “Situation and tendency in history,” pp.177–218. See also Stephen Owen’s account of the use of the concept in literary theory by Liu Xie 劉勰 (c.465–c.522), author of *Wenxin diaolong* 文心彫龍 [The literary mind and the carving of dragons], in *Readings in Chinese literary thought*, ed. S. Owen (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1992), pp.230–9. “*Shih* is a force that inheres in some thing or event [or action] and directs its movement along ‘the path of least resistance’.” Liu Xie derived the concept of *shi* from the theory of calligraphy, describing the unfolding of a literary work as an organic process that extends beyond the will of the writer and is self-generated in resonance with the rhythm of cosmic pulse. As a master calligrapher, poet, and writer, it might not be unreasonable to suggest that San’yō had a highly developed feeling for the reality of *ikioi* in the temporal unfolding of creative works of art that helped him apply the concept effectively to the unfolding of historical events.

<sup>97</sup> See Najita, *Kaitokudō*, p.15.

<sup>98</sup> See Heiner Roetz, *Confucian ethics of the axial age: a reconstruction under the aspect of the breakthrough toward postconventional thinking* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1993) for a strong defense of Confucianism against the influential Western view, typified classically by Hegel and Weber, that pre-modern China never got beyond a heteronomous, conventional type of ethics in which there is no development of “Subjectivity,” transcendence, or critical thinking in either the political totality or the mental disposition

such as the texts on strategy mentioned above as well as the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, the *Huainanzi* 淮南子, and Liu Zongyuan’s 劉宗元 (773–819) *Fengjianlun* 封建論 (On feudalism). Yet he insists that even where such texts were widely read in Japan, like the latter, or avidly read by San’yō, like Su Xun’s 蘇洵 *Shenshi* 審勢 (Judging the configuration of affairs), the nuances of the word are different from the same word as used in Japanese texts, lacking the idea that there is a momentum (*ikioi*) within the flow of time itself.<sup>95</sup> Historians of Chinese thought are invited to investigate this claim, and one place they should not forget to look is the writings of the great Qing-dynasty nationalist historian, philosopher, and literary critic Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619–92).<sup>96</sup>

Both San’yō and Wang Fuzhi put much emphasis on the inevitability and irreversibility of the momentum of affairs. Nevertheless—and this is certainly one of the reasons for Maruyama’s argument—the weight of San’yō’s concept of *ikioi* or *shishi* is not on a fatalistic conception that the unfolding of history is beyond human control, but on the idea that if one correctly perceives the momentum of affairs when it is just getting underway, *before* the great irreversible change has occurred, and acts appropriately at the right moment to direct that momentum in a certain desirable direction, one can change the direction of history. Moreover, if we *combine* this concept with Mencius’s principle that the person committed to the victory of the Way in the world gives no heed to whether or not his official positions gives him the authority to enact his beliefs, or whether others in more exalted positions will stand in his way, we end up with the basic ingredients for a philosophy of radical political action applicable to those whose official rank places them outside of the established power structure.

In this “egalitarian” thrust of San’yō’s philosophy of history, we can observe the influence of the Kaitokudō’s anti-aristocratic conception that ordinary commoners also have the capacity to cognize moral truth and enact it in their lives, which in turn drew inspiration from the commoner-directed ethical teachings of Itō Jinsai 伊藤仁齋, Kaibara Ekiken 貝原益軒, and Nishikawa Joken 西川女見.<sup>97</sup> Before considering such contemporary influences on San’yō’s historiographical philosophy that may help account for its distinctive character, however, let us look at the way he uses another of the basic principles of Confucian historiography: the concept that Heaven rewards good actions and punishes evil.

It is hardly necessary to point out that that the cultivation of the ethical maturity or *shutaisei* of the individual in Confucianism has always been supported by faith in Heaven, even if the way Heaven was conceived may have varied significantly over the centuries and across different social strata.<sup>98</sup> As in more overtly theistic ethical traditions, this means that trust in Heaven as the author and guarantor of ethical principles—and as the power that grants *conditional* legitimacy to rulers—can give a person the strength to stand up for those moral principles even against external coercion or at the risk of his or her life because he or she believes Heaven will ultimately prevail. This, again, is a teaching particularly associated with Mencius. Now, if historiography is to inculcate the faith necessary for such courageous



ethical action, this means that Heaven must be given sovereignty over the fate of rulers and statesmen through the power to reward and punish, that is, the power to enforce the moral laws that it has laid down. That is to say, in some sense or other, Heaven must have the power to act in history, even the power to remain sovereign over history *no matter what man does* (Ch: *tian ding sheng ren* 天定勝人; J. *ten kanarazu hito ni katsu*).

Such a view of the active ethical involvement of Heaven in history is strongly affirmed in San'yō's histories, particularly *Nihon seiki*. We have already seen his affirmation of the Mencian concept that Heaven's Mandate will be removed from a government that fails to care properly for the people. In *Nihon seiki*, San'yō quotes the words of Emperor Nintoku 仁徳天皇 (the fifteenth sovereign in the traditional lineage) that "Heaven sets up the ruler for the sake of the people. ... If the people are wealthy, the ruler is wealthy," adding that these words were uttered by Nintoku as a principle to be practiced and passed down by the Japanese imperial line for all time. Ever since, emperors who have followed this principle have been secure, and those who have violated it have been in peril. Exactly the same thing has applied, he emphasizes, since the rise of the bushi to the position of rulers of the realm.<sup>99</sup>

Since this concept of the Heaven-decreed responsibility of the ruler emphasizes the need to care for the people economically and conduct government in such a way that it retains the support of the people, it is clear that it is not only a matter of the moral rectitude of the ruler that is in question, but the actual efficacy of his government. In 1689, Kuriyama Senpō 栗山潜鋒 (1671–1706) had written a history of the fall of the Heian court and the rise of the Kamakura bakufu entitled *Hōken taiki*, in which he had blamed the imperial court's loss of power and authority largely on the failure to observe the proper rules of precedence within the imperial family in matters involving the imperial succession. That is, the observance of Confucian moral principles and status order within the imperial house was seen as the key to the emperors retaining the support of Heaven, i.e., to retaining political power and authority.<sup>100</sup> This sort of "meibun-ist" concern, based on the concept of the interconnectedness of intrafamily moral order and the ruling of the realm articulated most famously in the *Great Learning*, has almost disappeared in San'yō's history, or at least it does not get very much emphasis. In one passage, San'yō writes, "If [the ruler is] fair and sincere [to those both inside and outside the court], the hearts of the people will follow him. If the hearts of the people follow him, then the will of Heaven (*ten'i* 天意) will follow him. Thus I say that the parallel flourishing of the Fujiwara and the imperial house was the Way of Heaven."<sup>101</sup>

But what about cases where a ruler who has not won the "hearts of the people" remains in power? Ashikaga Yoshimasa 足利義政 (1436–90), the eighth Ashikaga shogun, inherited the position of shogun in 1449 when it had become a totally empty title with no political power, and according to San'yō, he was a ruler who had "lost the original heart of a human being." Regarding the question of why such a "ruler" would be able to hold on to his position

/of the subject. This is not to say, however, that Confucian ethics aimed to cultivate "moral autonomy" in the Kantian sense of the word.

<sup>99</sup> *Nihon seiki*, kan 1, "Nintoku ki ronsan" 仁徳記論纂 [Appraisal on the account of Emperor Nintoku], *NST*, vol.49, pp.34–5.

<sup>100</sup> Senpō had studied under Kuwana Shōun 桑名松雲 (桑名黙齋, 1662–1731), a scholar in the school of Yamazaki Ansai. Three years after completing *Hōken taiki*, he was invited to work on the *Dai Nihon shi* project of Mito domain, becoming president (*sōsai* 総裁) of the Shōkōkan 彰考館 in 1697 (Genroku 元禄 10).

<sup>101</sup> *Nihon seiki*, kan 4, "Shōtoku Kōken ki ronsan," *NST*, vol.49, p.101. For an explanation of the historiographical context and nuances of meaning in this statement, see Ishige Tadashi, "Kinsei Jukyō no rekishi ishiki—Rai San'yō no shiron o chūshin toshite" [The historical consciousness of early modern Confucianism: centering on the historical theory of Rai San'yō], in *Kikan Nihon sbisōshi* 16 (1981): 3–26, 17.

<sup>102</sup> *Nihon seiki, kan* 15, “Go-Tsuchimikado ki ronsan” 後土御門記論纂 [Appraisal on the account of Go-Tsuchimikado], *NST*, vol.49, p.416.

<sup>103</sup> See Andō Hideo, *Rai San'yō: Nihon gaishi*, pp.70–1, 216–17. For accounts of the campaigns, recent views on their significance, and explanations of why the Court was unable to support or reward Yoshiie in the second conflict, see George Sansom, *A history of Japan: to 1334* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1958), pp.249–55; Jeffrey P. Mass, “Yoritomo and feudalism,” *Antiquity and anachronism in Japanese history* (1982: reprint ed., Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992), pp.35–7, 70–90; and William Wayne Farris, *Heavenly warriors: the evolution of Japan's military, 500–1300* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1992), pp.223–41.

<sup>104</sup> *Nihon seiki, kan* 11, “Fushimi ki ronsan” 伏見記論纂 [Appraisal on the account of Emperor Fushimi], *NST*, vol.49, p.322.

for a long time (he took the tonsure and yielded the position of shogun to Yoshihisa in 1473) and die an ordinary death, San'yō writes,

Heaven deeply despised the Ashikaga house, and wanted to overthrow it. Therefore, it caused such a depraved person to be born, and did not have him die an early death in order that the disorder he brought about would be able to reach its culmination. If the disorder had not been allowed to reach its culmination, the situation would not have been sufficient to overthrow the Ashikaga house.<sup>102</sup>

This set up the situation where, after the country had descended for a century into the depths of disorder, Nobunaga and Hideyoshi arose—according to the will of Heaven—to turn the tide. But since they treated the imperial realm in an arrogant and overbearing way, Heaven took away their positions just as quickly as it had given them.

It is clear here how the principle of *ikioi*, which as we have seen above was carefully harmonized with the principle of *meibun*, was also skillfully intertwined with the principle of Heaven's action in history in the support of good government. That is, Heaven rewards good government and punishes bad government in accord with the force of *ikioi*, the “momentum of affairs” which, once it reaches a certain intensity, is beyond the power of human beings to control. And the *definitive* reward or retribution of Heaven is manifested in the point where *ikioi* reaches its culmination, that is, at the great turning points of history where the mandate to rule is given or taken away. Even the “inevitable” *ikioi* that led to Yoritomo's founding of the Kamakura bakufu was also a result of the reward of Heaven. In *Nihon gaishi*, this was credited to the great merits of Yoritomo's ancestors Yoriyoshi 頼義 (988–1075) and Yoshiie 義家 (“Hachiman Tarō 八幡太郎,” 1039–1106) in suppressing disobedient *emisbi* 蝦夷 chieftains in the northeast whose recalcitrance, if left unchecked, would eventually have threatened the imperial capital. The Abe 安部 and Kiyohara 清原 clans, represented in San'yō's account by their most formidable chieftains Sadatō 貞任 and Iehira 家衡, were suppressed with great difficulty in 1051–63 and 1083–87 respectively while the Fujiwara regents were preoccupied with internecine power struggles. San'yō reasons that as Yoriyoshi and Yoshiie were not sufficiently rewarded by the Court, which went on to inflict great punishments on the clan in the twelfth century, Heaven had to bestow the just rewards for their merit and loyalty to the throne on their later descendants.<sup>103</sup>

In *Nihon seiki*, on the other hand, the benevolence of Yoritomo's own rule is given more prominence: “Heaven took its substance [the *de facto* power of government] and granted it to the Minamoto clan. This, I say, was because in the past they had done everything within their power for the good of the people.”<sup>104</sup> In either case, the accumulation of merit eventually bore fruit in a natural *ikioi* favoring Yoritomo's victory and the success of his new system of government, which was not achieved by usurping the power of the throne, but by the throne's own relinquishing of its political authority (to a scion of the imperial line). Thus the victory or defeat of the “Heavenly cause” is not

to be judged only by the span of a short period of time, and its defeat in one generation might be righted in another generation by its victory—as evidenced by the rise of Tokugawa Ieyasu, supposedly a descendant of Nitta Yoshisada, two hundred years after Nitta's demise.<sup>105</sup>

Regarding the distinction between name and actuality that we have encountered above, San'yō writes that "Official positions are names; power and profit are actualities. Names [titles] are things that are given out by the court, but actualities are things that are given by Heaven. The Hōjō 北条 clan of their own accord were satisfied with the position of shogunal regent (*shikken* 執權), and they did not covet 'names'.<sup>106</sup> Moreover, their rule, which was based on the 'actualities' they controlled, was benevolent and solicitous toward the people. Accordingly, their government was in accord with the Way of Heaven." This is the reason, San'yō explains, that the Hōjō, even though they had come to power as rebels against the imperial throne in flagrant violation of *meibun*, were able to hold on to the reins of government for nine generations. However, inevitably, their day of retribution arrived, and in response to the lack of virtue and ineffective government of the last Hōjō leader, Takatoki 高時, their clan was wiped out (defeated and forced to commit suicide) by Nitta Yoshisada.<sup>107</sup>

How do these different historiographical principles all fit together? The ancestors of the imperial house regarded the hearts of the people as if they were their own hearts, and ruled them benevolently for seven or eight hundred years. The blessings of their benevolent rule spread through the nation, penetrating into the very bones of the people. This is something that was not seen even in ancient China, where none of the early dynasties was able to avoid extinction. Yet only Heaven was aware of all this. Accordingly, when the emperor became unable to fulfill his responsibilities as ruler, Heaven had no choice but to take the *de facto* power of government away from the imperial house. But because of the great merit of the imperial ancestors, Heaven made sure that the emperor retained the *name* of supreme ruler, so that the unchanging morality of *meibun* would be preserved.<sup>108</sup>

In this way, San'yō conceived of *two types* of reward/retribution on the part of Heaven, one of which was unchanging through time, tied to the great blessings bestowed on the people by the ancestors of the imperial house. This was an expansion of the Confucian concept of later generations reaping rewards for the virtue of their ancestors. The other was a force that led to periodic *change* in the holders of *de facto* governmental power, according to the effectiveness or lack of effectiveness of the conduct of government, and manifesting itself in history through "the momentum of affairs." The unchanging type of Heavenly reward was closely tied to the theory of *taigi meibun*, which absolutized the status order between ruler and vassal on the basis of "names," that is, official titles. The concept that recognized *change* in the rewarding and retribution of Heaven, on the other hand, was closely tied to the realm of "actuality," that is, the theory of benevolent government that was concerned with the disposition of actual political power. Accordingly, San'yō writes,

<sup>105</sup> Andō Hideo, *Rai San'yō: Nibon gaishi, kan* 6, "Nitta-shi ronsan," pp.115–23. See also Ishige Tadashi, "Kinsei Jukyō no rekishi ishiki—Rai San'yō no shiron o chūshin toshite," pp.18–19.

<sup>106</sup> The Hōjō clan, descended from a branch of the Taira clan, established themselves as the *de facto* heads of government under the Kamakura shogunate after the death of Yoritomo (whose wife was of the Hōjō clan). See H. Paul Varley, "The Hōjō family and succession to power," in *Court and bakufu in Japan*, ed. Jeffrey P. Mass (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1982), pp.143–67.

<sup>107</sup> *Nibon seiki, kan* 11, "Fushimi ki ronsan," *NSJ*, vol.49, pp.321–4. See also Ishige Tadashi, "Kinsei Jukyō no rekishi ishiki—Rai San'yō no shiron o chūshin toshite," pp.19–20. The *Taiheiki*, noted for its exaggerated use of numbers, depicts this event as a coordinated mass suicide (*junshi* 殉死) of as many as 6000 members and vassals of the Hōjō clan located in various parts of the country.

<sup>108</sup> This idea that the eternal continuation of the imperial line was guaranteed by the assistance of the legacy of the Imperial ancestors, making Japan unique in comparison with China, had been *rejected* by former emperor Hanazono 花園 (the emperor who immediately preceded Go-Daigo) in a 1330 essay *Kaitaishisho* 戒太子書 [Admonitions to the Crown Prince], in favor of the idea that, as in China, a different family might seize the throne if the government was not conducted properly. See Andrew Goble, "Visions of an emperor," in Mass, *The origins of Japan's medieval world*, ed. Jeffrey P. Mass (Stanford, Calif.: 1997), pp.113–37, at 133; and Goble, "Social change, knowledge, and history: Hanazono's Admonitions to the Crown Prince," in *Harvard Journal of Asian Studies* 55:1 (1995): 611–28. Thus San'yō's concept of two levels of Heaven's operation was an attempt to solve a very longstanding contradiction in the Japanese theory of sovereignty, one which can be traced even further back to the period of the founding of the imperial institution itself.

<sup>109</sup> *Nihon seiki, kan* 16, “Ōgimachi ki ronsan,” *NST*, vol.49, p.438. This passage continues with an explanation that Japan, unlike China, has been able to achieve this unchanging imperial house because the imperial ancestors did not dare take their high rank for granted and become remote and proud, keeping a close communion of mind with their ministers, the common people, and even servants and slaves in their labors, accumulating a vast fund of what could certainly be called “Confucian virtue.”

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> A similar dualism can be found, for instance, in Sakuma Shōzan’s 佐久間象山 concept that “the natural moral order of personal behavior was governed by changeless principles, while the outer realm, political action and history, obeyed laws of change ascertained by constant investigation” (Harootunian, *Toward Restoration*, p.162). Thus, according to Yokoi Shōnan, Shōzan said that in the realm of politics and the tactics of warfare the West is superior to East Asia, and of the Confucian books only the *Book of Changes* is useful. See Matsuura Rei, ed. and trans., *Sakuma Shōzan/Yokoi Shōnan*, *Nihon no meicho*, vol.30 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1970), p.387.

<sup>112</sup> Mikisaburō made friends with the activists Umeda Unpin and Yanagawa Seigan, and was an active backer of the Hitotsubashi 一橋 side in the shogunal succession conflict of 1858. San’yō’s literary side, on the other hand, was inherited by his other two sons. His first son Itsuan, though growing up with little contact with his father, had a fondness for historical poetry, and his poems include a eulogy written on visiting the shrine dedicated to Kusunoki Masahige. His second son, Shihō 支峯 (1823–89), who grew up in Kyoto with both his parents and with the affection and tutelage of his father’s disciples, was able to go Edo to study, and on his return followed in his father’s footsteps by setting up a family school. He lived well, basking in the light of his father’s fame, until 1889, eight years after presiding over the celebration for the fiftieth anniversary of his father’s death.

Even when change reaches this culmination, there is nevertheless something that remains that does not change. What is it? I say, even if a person at the very bottom ends up at the very top, there is still one rank above him, a rank which he can never hope to achieve.<sup>109</sup>

Obviously, in order to sustain the idea of the limitless benefaction bestowed on the people by the emperors in ancient times that was the basis of his idea of the unchanging Heavenly sustenance of the imperial line, San’yō had to draw an extremely idealized picture of Japanese antiquity and of the virtue of the primal ancestor, Amaterasu Ōmikami 天照大御神, and the first emperor, Jinmu. This he endeavored to do in *Nihon seiki*, since *Nihon gaisui* had dealt only with the period of bushi rule.<sup>110</sup>

Thus it is not only in its greater application of the explanatory concept of *ikioi* in the realm of change that Rai’s histories depart from the model of Zhu Xi school historiography, but in the dual concept of Heavenly reward and retribution, which drew on the Japanese historiographical tradition to replace the Zhu Xi school’s concept of *tenri* 天理—unchanging Heavenly ethical principles with which man must harmonize his behavior—with the concept of the unchanging virtue and immovable status position of the imperial house. This combination of the dynamic concept of *ikioi* with the “static” concept of the eternal virtue of the imperial line, while not creditable exclusively to San’yō, provided an essential ingredient to the formation of the belief system of imperial loyalism, with its focus on radical political action aimed at fulfilling the long-frustrated imperial will for the restoration of the supremacy of the throne.<sup>111</sup> Many of San’yō’s disciples, responding to the “momentum of the times” in their own time, got involved in radical politics in the turbulent bakumatsu period, and San’yō’s third son, Mikisaburō 三樹三郎 (Ōgai 鴨厓, 1825–59), was executed in the same Ansei 安政 purge (1858–59) of *sonnō jōi* activists that took Yoshida Shōin’s life.<sup>112</sup>

Later I shall go on to examine the climate of bakumatsu loyalist thought within which San’yō’s histories acquired their activist significance. First, however, I would like briefly to consider some of the influences on San’yō’s historiographical philosophy that helped produce its distinctive qualities, focusing on the nature of the conception of imperial restoration, particularly in its association with Emperor Go-Daigo, that San’yō inherited from the existing historiographical tradition and especially from other Edo historians not very far removed from him in time.

### *Influences on San’yō’s Historical Thought and the Significance of Political Disengagement*

One factor that certainly influenced the evolution of Edo historiography was the appearance of new trends in *Chinese* historiography in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, trends reflecting (1) the rise of a vitalistic metaphysics that denied the transhistorical nature of moral principle, and (2)

the pragmatizing and popularizing tendencies in Confucian scholarship and the greater interest in personal experience stimulated particularly by the Wang Yangming school. These changes in historiographical climate have been summarized by Wm. Theodore de Bary as an emphasis on present realities and recent times as opposed to antiquity, an intensified consciousness of historical change and growth, an interest in verifiable facts as opposed to the reiteration of principles and moralistic historical judgments, and an affirmation of the expression of personal opinion by scholars over the tradition of concealing one's own personality behind the convention of writing commentaries on the classics.<sup>113</sup> Interestingly, these are all characteristics that numerous Japanese scholars have attributed specifically to San'yō's historiography, portraying this liberation from a static, moralistic view of history (implicitly or explicitly likened to the liberation from Natural Law-based historiography in Europe) essentially as a revolution within Japanese thought in the Edo period, an idea that has often been used to argue for the superiority of Japan's early modern intellectual trajectory over that of China.<sup>114</sup> De Bary's emphasis on the dynamism of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Chinese thought also, of course, has a rhetorical agenda, including attacking vestiges of the "static" view of the history of Chinese thought common in traditional Western (and Japanese) historiography. In the present context, however, it serves to remind us that in Ming thought, as typified by the Wang Yangming school, and in less "ardent" ways in early Qing thought, we see a definite affirmation of the subjectivity of the individual, at least partly in the sense that I have explained above in connection with the term *shutaisei*.<sup>115</sup> This trend was picked up and developed in different ways by many thinkers in Edo Japan, including historians such as Arai Hakuseki, Asaka Tanpaku, and Kaitokudō writers such as Nakai Riken 中井履軒 (1732–1817). All three of these historians had important influence on the development of San'yō's historiography, to the point that some of Rai's critics even accused him of "stealing" some of his historical judgments from other historians.

Hakuseki's *Tokushi yoron* broke new ground in the world of Japanese historiography by conceiving Japanese history rationalistically as a unified and continuous story of the movement of political power from one institution to another in fourteen stages (nine of imperial and five of bushi history), appealing to no mysterious realms of causation beyond the human realm. Recognizing the imperial institution as in fact defunct and abandoning the idea of its divine origin, Hakuseki focused purely on the actions of men and the transformations of political power. True to his Confucian education, however, the ultimate causative force in history remained the moral character of the sovereign. Since history often fails to unfold according to this principle, however, he introduced the explanatory notion of the "force of the times" (*toki no un* 時の運), a momentum that could at times not even be resisted by a virtuous ruler or reversed by an unworthy ruler. He was very vague, however, about the meaning of the concept of Heaven and how Heaven acts in history.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>113</sup> See W. T. de Bary, "Neo-Confucian cultivation and the seventeenth-century 'enlightenment,'" in *The unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, ed. de Bary et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), pp.141–216, esp. 194–9.

<sup>114</sup> See, for instance, Miyagawa Yasuko, "*Nihon gaisbi no metahisutorii*" and "Jukyōteki rekishi kijutsu to nashonarizumu," and Maruyama Masao, *Nihon seiji shisōshi kenkyū* [Studies in the history of Japanese political thought] (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1952), translated by Mikiso Hane as *Studies in the intellectual history of Tokugawa Japan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, and Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1974).

<sup>115</sup> Other historians of Chinese thought who have observed such a trend in post-Song thought, in spite of the increasing tendency toward autocratic government, include Naitō Konan 内藤湖南 (1866–1934) and Mizoguchi Yūzō 溝口雄三 (1932–). See Yue-Him Tam, "An intellectual's response to Western intrusion: Naitō Konan's view of Republican China," in *The Chinese and the Japanese: essays in political and cultural interactions*, ed. Akira Iriye (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp.161–83; Mizoguchi Yūzō, "Futatsu no Yōmeigaku," *Risō* 572 (Jan. 1981): 68–80; and Togawa Yoshio, Hachiya Kunio, and Mizoguchi Yūzō, *Jukyōshi* [A history of Confucianism] (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1987), pp.303–43.

<sup>116</sup> See John S. Brownlee, *Political thought in Japanese historical writing: from Kojiki (712) to Tokushi yoron (1712)* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1991), pp.116–28. Uete Michiari notes that, while the concept of the force of the times (*jiun* 時運) was used in medieval histories such as *Gukanshō* 愚管抄 [Notes on stupid views] and *Jinnō shōtōki*, it represented a force of fate imposed on man from beyond the human realm by Buddhas, gods, and vengeful ghosts, which man can do nothing to alter. In Edo-period Confucian historiography, by contrast, the concepts of *ten'un* 天運, *jiun*, and even *tenmei* 天命 (the Mandate of Heaven) become much more humanized and historicized, signifying things that come upon man of necessity at a certain time, but which are the result of the accumulation of previous human actions. See Uete Michiari, "Kaidai," pp.653–68, at 79. As San'yō wrote, "That which changes [in history] is the /OVER

/heavenly destiny [*ten'un*]. But what causes the changes is always human actions [*jūnji* 人事]” (*Nihon seiki, kan* 16, “Ōgimachi ki ronsan,” *NST*; vol.49, p.437). Ogyū Sorai made a similar statement in his work *Taiheisaku* 太平策 [A strategy for great peace].

<sup>117</sup> See Brownlee, *Japanese historians and the national myths, 1600-1945: the age of the gods and Emperor Jimmu* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, and Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1997), pp.33-4. Of course, the fact that *Dai Nihonshi* was to be presented to the imperial court was also an important factor in this decision.

<sup>118</sup> *Dai Nihon shi sansō* 大日本史贊藪 [Grove of appraisals on the *Great history of Japan*], *NST*; vol.48, pp.66-7.

Considering the major differences between Hakuseki's and San'yō's historical and political views, however, the influence of Asaka Tanpaku, who wrote the Appraisals (*ronsan* 論纂) for the *Dai Nihonshi* during the decade ending in 1720, would seem to be even more important. In the mainstream Chinese historiographical tradition, “appraisals” that express the personal opinions of the historian are in principle kept separate from the historical accounts themselves, since personal evaluations of historical figures may at times be politically sensitive, and because it was believed that a clear distinction should be maintained between historical “fact” and “opinion.” Tanpaku's appraisals ended up getting excised from the *Dai Nihonshi* in 1809 after a long and heated debate, because it was judged by Miyake Kanran 三宅観瀾 (1674-1718), Fujita Yūkoku 藤田幽谷 (1774-1826) and Takahashi Tanshitsu 高橋坦室 (1771-1823) that in Japan, where there had never been and could never be a change of dynasties, it was a violation of *meibun* for an official history to contain judgments regarding historical emperors put forth by a mere private individual—a *subject* of the imperial line who could by definition never stand above the imperial house as its judge.<sup>117</sup> However, Tanpaku's appraisals were subsequently circulated in manuscript form in a non-official capacity, and they came into the hands of Rai San'yō, exerting strong influence on his own passion for writing *ronsan*. Tanpaku's appraisal regarding Emperor Go-Daigo prefigures San'yō's in romanticizing Go-Daigo's “unfulfilled will” in his failed restoration and claiming that the spirit of the restoration of power to the imperial house that motivated him will never die. After frankly recognizing Go-Daigo's many faults in character, strategy, and intelligence that led to his defeat, Tanpaku nevertheless concludes that:

His declaration refusing to hand over the regalia to the new king was correct in rectitude and rigorous in its choice of words. His decree dispatching a prince to pacify Mutsu 陸奥 [the northernmost province of Honshū] did not split the civil and military arts into two paths. ... This is something that rulers have not been able to achieve since middle antiquity. The thought of restoration only grows more intense when it is frustrated. Facing death he took hold of his sword and braced himself for battle. Thus he was able to keep the regalia safe among deep mountain crags, and lay down the foundation for a court that held out for more than fifty years. The place where the legitimate line dwells shines bright like the sun and the moon! Was this not a magnificent accomplishment?<sup>118</sup>

The idealization of a restoration of the throne continued in San'yō, though as we have seen he considered it to be something extremely difficult to realize. San'yō's exaltation of the undying spirit of Go-Daigo's loyal general, Nitta Yoshisada, is also directed at least on the surface level to extolling and accounting for the great accomplishment of Tokugawa Ieyasu in uniting the realm. Nevertheless, the fact that views regarding loyalty to the imperial line that had emerged from the Mito historiographical project itself (and its *Shushigaku*-based historiographical principles) were expunged by the Mito scholars as improper and potentially disloyal, flowing thereafter into the realm of private (*minkan*) historiography, was highly significant for the later

development of Edo and even Meiji historiography. Moreover, with the excision of Tanpaku's appraisals, the whole concept of the right of the individual historian to make his own judgments regarding sensitive historical questions was pushed out of the realm of "official history," monopolized by the military aristocracy, and into the realm of scholarship by commoners or unattached samurai who were excluded from the official power structure, including the Kaitokudō historians and their student Rai San'yō.

This realm of private historiography was closer than official scholarship to the realm of popular literature, and thus in closer proximity to the world of popular religious beliefs regarding the survival of the soul after death and the worship of deified historical personages—the world referred to earlier in connection with the worship of Sugawara no Michizane and of the loyalist martyrs to the cause of Go-Daigo's southern court. In the realm of popular historiography, the most widely read work regarding the history of the Northern and Southern Courts before the appearance of San'yō's *Nihon gaishi* was the *Taiheiki*, written cumulatively in the middle decades of the fourteenth century and popularized from the mid-fifteenth century through oral recitation (*Taiheiki-yomi* 太平記読み).<sup>119</sup> In addition to disseminating the idea of the legitimacy of the southern court against the generally accepted official preference for the northern court—the ancestors of the present emperors—the work had also preserved fourteenth century stories that the vengeful spirit of Go-Daigo had caused an epidemic in the capital to punish the Ashikaga shoguns who had usurped his power.<sup>120</sup>

Such beliefs in the power of vengeful spirits—the ghosts of powerful or noble-hearted men who died unjustly with their ambitions unfulfilled—seem to have been just as prevalent among the ruling class in the fourteenth century as they were in the tenth, when they were responsible for Sugawara no Michizane's progressive steps up the ladder of deification. In a study focusing on painted portraits of Go-Daigo, Andrew Goble paraphrases a source from the year 1340 that recounts that "when a blazing light (i.e., vengeful spirit) had appeared before Takauji it had been decreed that the late Go-Daigo was to be worshiped in accordance with precedents laid down originally for Emperor Sutoku (1119–64)."<sup>121</sup> Goble notes that "Takauji, long troubled by the ideological implications of his revolt against the reigning emperor, had begun his own expiatory effort to ameliorate the imperial spirit virtually from the moment of Go-Daigo's death in 1339. In particular, he prevailed upon the eminent Zen prelate Musō Soseki 夢窓疎石 (1275–1351) to become the founding abbot of a new temple, Tenryūji 天龍寺 (Temple of the Heavenly Dragon), the principal purpose of which was to offer prayers for the salvation (and thus pacification) of Go-Daigo's soul."<sup>122</sup>

Takauji's 尊氏 younger brother and ally in the revolt, Tadayoshi 直義 (1306–54), was so disturbed by the references in *Taiheiki* to Go-Daigo's spirit that he ordered an entire chapter destroyed and other entries suppressed.<sup>123</sup> Musō himself, an advisor to Tadayoshi on ideological matters, was critical of the Ashikaga and much concerned about the problem of "how to heal the terrible rupture that had been brought about by the assault on Go-Daigo, the

<sup>119</sup> On the content and authorship of the *Taiheiki* and the traditional historical judgment of Go-Daigo's restoration, see Varley, *Warriors of Japan: as portrayed in the War Tales* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994), pp.159–213. In depicting *seppuku* 切腹 (self-disembowelment) and *junsbi* 殉死 (following one's lord in death) for the first time as standard expressions of bushi loyalty, and in creating the ideal of the martyred loyalist hero, *Taiheiki* had an incalculable influence on the development of the Edo-period ideology of samurai loyalty and its culmination in imperial loyalism. As Varley observes (p.181), it was not so much that the legitimacy of Go-Daigo's cause made his loyal vassals into heroes, but that their extraordinary spirit of self-sacrifice and faithfulness to the cause (in a world of turncoats) made it impossible to conceive that their cause was not legitimate.

<sup>120</sup> See Goble, "Visions of an emperor," p.114.

<sup>121</sup> *Gyokueki sbō*, entry for 1340/3/18, as paraphrased in *ibid.*, p.115.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> Such Ashikaga criticisms of the *Taiheiki* as historically inaccurate and biased culminated in the work *Nan-Taiheiki 難太平記* [A critique of the *Taiheiki*], written by Imagawa Ryōshun 今川了俊 (1326–1420) in 1402, which may have led to further alterations in the text in the early fifteenth century. See Varley, *Warriors of Japan*, pp.169–70.

<sup>124</sup> Goble, "Visions of an emperor," pp. 115–16.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 122–4. Goble's analysis of these portraits draws from the analysis by Kuroda Hideo as given in Kuroda, "Go-Daigo tennō to Shōtoku taishi" [Emperor Go-Daigo and Prince Shōtoku], in the series *Rekishi o yominaosu: Asahi hyakka Nihon no rekishi* [Rereading history: the Asahi encyclopedic Japanese history] (Asahi Shinbunsha), vol. 3: *Tenmu · Go-Shirakawa · Go-Daigo: Ōken no henbō* [Tenmu · Go-Shirakawa · Go-Daigo: the transformation of royal authority] (Dec. 1994), ed. Amino Yoshihiko; and *id.*, *Ō noshintai, ō no shōzō* [The king's body, the king's portrait] (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1993).

<sup>126</sup> Goble, "Visions of an emperor," p. 125.

legitimate embodiment of the political order," believing that "no stability would be forthcoming until Go-Daigo was properly positioned, properly worshiped, and properly understood."<sup>124</sup> Thus even in the first half of the fourteenth century, Go-Daigo had become a historical figure of great ideological significance for the Japanese polity, focused around the fundamental questions of the legitimacy of the shogunate, the relationship between the shogunate and the imperial court, and the relationship of both with the court aristocrats, whose authority as "embodiments of the state" was bound up with the authority of the emperor.

Goble explains that in portraits of Go-Daigo his portrayal is clearly distinguished from that of other emperors, his face exuding a strong sense of confidence and poise, or even of general bemusement, and his figure accompanied by powerful symbols of political authority—including both a sword representing military power and writing tools for issuing imperial decrees. The same Daitokuji 大徳寺 portrait that shows the sword and writing tools draws heavily on a well-known genre of paintings of Shōtoku Taishi 聖徳太子 (574–622), another divinized sovereign who symbolized the constitutional foundations of the Japanese polity.<sup>125</sup> A portrait in the Shōjōkōji 清浄光寺 goes even further:

It positions Go-Daigo literally at the center of the universe, and as the incarnation of the fount of knowledge and authority that is second only to Heaven, the Buddha, and Amaterasu Ōmikami. It is a large claim, well beyond the portrayal of any other emperor in Japanese history. ... At the top of the picture are three banners inscribed with the names of deities: in the center and raised above the others is Amaterasu Ōmikami (progenitress of the imperial family), to his right Kasuga Daimyōjin (春日大明神) (tutelary deity of the Fujiwara), and to his left Hachiman Daibosatsu (八幡大菩薩) (tutelary deity of the Minamoto and the warrior class as a whole).<sup>126</sup>

Go-Daigo is also represented as a divinity, which, in spite of the conception of the divine origin of the imperial line, is a claim made in no known image of any other emperor. Shingon 真言 Buddhist symbols in the portrait imply that he is an avatar of Kongō satta 金剛薩埵, second of the bodhisattvas in the Shingon pantheon, and further associate him with Dainichi Nyorai 大日如来, the Shingon personification of the Dharmakaya (ultimate reality) who was also defined as the "original ground" (*honji 本地*) of Amaterasu, and with Kōbō Daishi 弘法大師, the founder of Shingon who was believed to be a transformation body of Shōtoku taishi.<sup>127</sup>

Since these portraits were commissioned post-

### Figure 13

*Emperor Go-Daigo. Detail of portrait 29 in "Portraits of Emperors, Regents, and High-Ranking Ministers": "Scroll of Emperors" (Tennō-ei 天皇影), attributed to Fujiwara Temenobu 藤原為信 and Gōshin 豪信, late-Kamakura period (fourteenth century) (Imperial Household Agency, Archives and Mausolea Department)*





humously to pacify Go-Daigo's soul and to serve as icons in his worship as a deity, it is difficult to interpret the real religio-political significance of such an unparalleled iconographic expression of what we might call "absolute *shutaisei*." But Goble finds documentary evidence that the portraits accurately reflect Go-Daigo's own belief that he was supreme among emperors and not bound by the actions of previous emperors.<sup>124</sup> He had made fundamental changes in the ruling system by abolishing the institution of retired emperors (*insei*院政), divesting the rival Jimyōin 持明院 line and rivals in his own line of the right to succession, revalidating the bases of legitimate authority in the Shingon Buddhist order, reconfirming land rights that had formerly been guaranteed by the Kamakura shogunate, attempting to make the aristocracy dependent on imperial benefices, establishing regional commands under imperial princes, and so on—in short, by carrying out nothing less than a new founding of the ruling house, parallel in Go-Daigo's eyes to the reconstitution of the Han dynasty in AD 25 after the Wang Mang 王莽 usurpation.<sup>129</sup> "My new practices," he declared, which were designed to cut through all the accumulated traditions that had removed the emperor from active participation in government and divested him of supreme legal authority, "shall be precedents for the future."<sup>130</sup>

Go-Daigo's reconstruction of ritual and ceremony to make ceremonial life in the capital pivot around the imperial personage constitutes a clear historical antecedent for the creation of imperial pageantry and national imperial celebrations in the Meiji period, demonstrating that the idea of initiating a new era through the establishment of new rituals—understood as a restoration of the ancient rituals created by the sage-kings who first laid down the institutions of civilization—was an integral part of the original Sino-Japanese conception of imperial restoration. Goble emphasizes, against the conventional historical judgment of the Kenmu Restoration, that Go-Daigo represents a *disruption* in the course of Japanese history wherein the debate over sovereignty that he unleashed led to the dissection of inherited ideologies seen as inadequate to the times. By the same token, he emphasizes the significance for Japan's political future of Go-Daigo's strong belief that his reign signified a new beginning in the history of the Japanese polity. "Go-Daigo's grand visions and ideology lost out," he concludes, "not because of his claims—as we have seen, those claims and Go-Daigo's image remained potent and could not be ignored—but because of their encounter with another part of the vision, the need to control enough military might to undergird and stabilize an ideology."<sup>131</sup>

The idea that Go-Daigo and his period represent a turning point in the development of Japanese political ideology is supported by the fact that both the *Taiheiki* and the other famous loyalist history of the period, *Jinnōshōtōki* 神皇正統記 (Record of the Orthodox Line of Gods and Emperors, 1339–43), are informed by a much clearer theory of imperial sovereignty and legitimacy than earlier histories, and the fact that all later debates concerning the fundamental nature of the Japanese polity revolved around the interpretation of the Northern and Southern Courts period.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., p.126.

<sup>128</sup> See, for instance, his letter to the bakufu in 1324, after his failed plot, that begins, "I am the Lord of this entire country. All below are in receipt of the favors of the Court." Quoted in *ibid.*, p.127.

<sup>129</sup> Chūgan Engetsu 中巖円月 (1300–75), a Zen priest who had just returned from China in 1332, believed that the triumph of Go-Daigo "constituted nothing less than a change of dynasty, the succession of a ruler who enjoyed Heaven's mandate." As was typical of those with a strong Sinitic education, he conceived of the legitimacy of the throne as deriving from *two* sources: the Zhou 周 dynasty, and the divine descent. See *ibid.*, pp.128–32. The *Taiheiki* as well, in its first chapter, portrays Go-Daigo as a virtuous emperor who "adheres to the way of the Duke of Chou and Confucius" (Varley, *Warriors of Japan*, p.180).

<sup>130</sup> From a celebrated statement of mid-1333; quoted in Goble, "Visions of an emperor," p.128.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Confucianism itself was notoriously ambivalent regarding popular beliefs in ghosts and gods, and it had highly developed concepts regarding what sort of people could and should be deified after their death. For an illuminating examination of Confucian ideas regarding the worship of the spirits of loyal vassals and righteous martyrs (*chūsbin gishi* 忠臣義士) in China and Edo Japan, see John Allen Tucker, “Rethinking the Akō debate: the religious significance of *Chūsbin gishi*,” in *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 26.1–2 (Spring 1999): 1–37.

<sup>133</sup> Nevertheless, like San’yō, Chikuzan followed the theory of *meibun* in emphasizing that the shogun ranked below the emperor, and emphasized historical change over the unchanging nature of principle. See Miyagawa, “Jukyōteki rekishi kijutsu to nashonarizumu,” p.121.

<sup>134</sup> Najita, *Kaitokudō*, pp.182–3. Chikuzan lived between 1730 and 1804, and Riken between 1732 and 1817. Thus Riken was forty-eight years older than San’yō, and even fourteen years older than San’yō’s father.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.187–8.

A Confucian-educated reader of the *Taiheiki* in the Edo period might be skeptical of some of the beliefs in vengeful spirits, as was Musō Soseki himself in the fourteenth century, but the *Taiheiki*’s idea that Go-Daigo’s ghost could still act from beyond the grave to further the eventual triumph of his cause was close enough to the more purely Confucian concept of the survival of a person’s “spirit” or “will” after death that the two could reinforce one another in forging a conception of self-dedication to the cause of imperial restoration that was more than just an intellectual or political ideal, but a *faith* with the power to mobilize all of the spiritual, religious, and emotional energies of the “*yamatodamashii*.”<sup>132</sup>

San’yō and his father are known to have had frequent contacts with the Kaitokudō Academy scholars in Osaka, where they always stayed on their journeys from Hiroshima to Edo and back, and San’yō came to be much influenced by the sort of history writing that was being carried out there, typified by Nakai Chikuzan’s *Isshi* (1797) and Nakai Riken’s *Tsūgo* 通語 (Penetrating Words) (1760s). In *Visions of Virtue in Tokugawa Japan*, Tetsuo Najita argues that Chikuzan’s history was designed to establish that Kaitokudō scholarship stood in a formal and sympathetic relationship with the Tokugawa house, and it thus portrayed the shogunate in a very favorable light.<sup>133</sup> Accordingly, the shogun rewarded Chikuzan handsomely with two elegant ceremonial outfits, and even summoned him to serve as chief of the newly created bureau of historical studies—although Chikuzan declined. However, “his brother Riken took strong exception to Chikuzan’s history, seeing it as a ploy to gain bureaucratic advancement and as unvirtuous in the light of the moral premises of the academy.”<sup>134</sup> In other words, Chikuzan wanted to confirm the strictly “public” nature of the academy, while his brother was a scholar highly suspicious of “the temptations of official life” who “would not surrender the autonomy and solitude that he had come to cherish.” Like other “eccentrics” of his time, Riken had developed a profound pessimism about the existing order, and he came to conceptualize justice as a dream.

“To Riken,” Najita explains, “the ‘dream’ referred either to a fabricated space designed to protect one’s intellectual autonomy or to an ideal that may someday be realized but that remained totally outside the realm of possibility in the present.” He wished to disengage this autonomous personal world from the public order, in the hopes of creating “his own reality without compromise to the political order.”<sup>135</sup> As Najita points out, such a Taoistic attitude of disengagement from the political world was not unusual among intellectuals in this period, particularly among artists and poets. Most of the artists and poets whose company San’yō enjoyed in his little tearoom studio in Kyoto, with their idealization of the “out-of-office” literati of China, were apparently of this bent of mind, and it is a fact that the attainment of the sublimer realms in artistic or literary creation often requires such an attitude of disengagement from the world of practical affairs. In his studies of the tradition of hermetic literary production in medieval Japan, Michele Marra presents a cogent critique of the idea that literature produced in a condition

of disengagement from the public world is somehow uninvolved in the political and ideological debates of its time, arguing that for a courtier or literatus to adopt a position of disengagement is itself a political statement.<sup>136</sup> How much more is this so in the case of a “disengaged” intellectual who writes history as well as poetry.

Riken's pessimistic view of the political world, catalyzed no doubt by the demystifying rationalism of Hakuseki and the merciless deconstruction of traditional systems of learning by the *enfant terrible* of the Kaitokudō, Tominaga Nakamoto 富永仲基 (1715–48), led him deeply to question traditional Confucian concepts of historical explanation. Regarding the Kenmu Restoration, for instance, he wrote,

After several hundred years [of bushi rule], we encounter the rule of Kenmu. What a great thing! Was this [the work of] Heaven? But before the wounds of battle had healed, he was again compelled to flee to the south, and the royal house just continued to decline further and further, as it has down to the present time. How could this not also be [the work of] Heaven? Did Heaven desire from the beginning not to revive the imperial house? If so, it would have been better not to initiate this enterprise in the first place. Or did Heaven, after all, truly wish to restore the imperial house? If so, why in the end did it not lend its assistance? In that case, does the ‘Way of Heaven,’ after all, not really exist?<sup>137</sup>

Riken concludes that Go-Daigo's defeat was purely due to his own confusion of good and bad and his refusal to listen to his loyal ministers' advice, leading to the loss of the “hearts of the people” (*minshin*), and that it cannot be blamed on Heaven. The Way of Heaven exists, to be sure, but only a special person with special insight can know it.<sup>138</sup> That is, ordinary men cannot fathom the operations of Heaven, and “Heavenly principles” cannot be used to explain human affairs.

Riken's poignant questioning of these basic Confucian historiographical concepts is suspended somewhere between the realistic Razan-Hakuseki-Chikuzan line of bakufu-legitimizing historiography, designed to affirm the historical rise of the bushi, and the idealistic, disengaged, imperial-loyalist view of history, which saw history as a steady decline from the ideal age of imperial sovereignty. The question, that is, is whether it was Heaven's will for the imperial house to continue its decline even after Go-Daigo, or for it to be restored to sovereignty over the military clans—if indeed it makes sense to talk of “Heaven's will” at all. Such questioning regarding the possibility of rationally knowing the will of Heaven, which San'yō was certainly familiar with, may well have helped engender his dual concept of Heaven, which relegated the Confucianist working out of the moral law of Heaven to the historical judgment of *de facto* rulers and left the “transcendental” sovereign outside of the system—in his ideal function as defined by *meibun*, not in his human identity.

In this position, the “disengaged” sovereign was free to receive the projection of the highest ideals of the Japanese polity, whether these were

<sup>136</sup> Michele Marra, *The aesthetics of discontent: politics and reclusion in medieval Japanese literature* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1991); and id., *Representations of power: the literary politics of medieval Japanese* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993). In the Chinese Confucian tradition, of course, the option of refusing to serve one's ruler on moral grounds (not merely to gain aesthetic freedom) was widely recognized as a powerful means of political protest, and rulers often made great efforts to win the service of scholars with known intellectual and political acumen.

<sup>137</sup> *Tsūgo*, *kan* 4. Quoted in Miyagawa Yasuko, “*Nibon gaisbi no metahisutorii*,” pp.91–2.

<sup>138</sup> *Hyōchū tsūgo* 評註通語 [Penetrating words, annotated], *kan* 4. Human affairs, instead, must be understood in terms of *human* principles; history is made by men; the Way of Heaven is something that responds in an ultimately unfathomable way to the actions of men. See Miyagawa Yasuko, “*Nibon gaisbi no metahisutorii*,” pp.91–3.

<sup>139</sup> Regarding the way Yoshida's theory was realized by restorationist brotherhoods in the early 1860s, and later by the formation of an anti-Tokugawa army of consisting of disaffiliates, see Harootunian, *Toward Restoration*, pp.252–3.

<sup>140</sup> See Miyagawa Yasuko, "Nihon gaishi no metahistorii," pp.90–1.

conceived in terms of Confucian norms of benevolent government not realized by the shogunate or in terms of ancient, pre-Confucian conceptions of sacred kingship. These doubts themselves, as well as San'yō's quite creative attempt to deal with them, also certainly helped set the stage for Yoshida Shōin's leap of faith into an intuitive and religious mode of knowing the imperial will (see below). In this case, a stance of political disengagement served to promote the decay of the system of beliefs about history upon which the bakufu's legitimacy was based. There is an obvious logical and psychological connection, as well, between San'yō's need to disengage himself from hereditary domainal service in order to write a national history without the eyes of "political correctness" looking over his shoulder, and Yoshida Shōin's discovery that only "unattached patriots" or "grass-roots heroes" (*sōmō no shōshi*) free from domainal loyalties could be relied upon to engage in revolutionary action against the established government of their own land.<sup>139</sup>

#### Figure 14

Wooden image of Yoshida Shōin (Kyoto University Library collection)



The position of disengagement from politics is also interesting for the way it brings the individual subjectivity of the poet-historian into the foreground. When Riken wrote history, he made no attempt to conceal his personal existence as writer, boldly including statements of personal opinion right in the text itself, introduced by the words "Mr. Out-of-Office Historian says" (*Yashi-shi iwaku* 野史氏曰く). Like a poet or painter who travels to famous places for inspiration, Riken also attempted to visit the places where the historical incidents he recounts actually occurred, and he mentions the visits in his text.<sup>140</sup> Both of these devices were imitated by San'yō, who introduces his *ronsan* giving his personal thoughts and feelings with the famous phrase "Mr. Unofficial Historian says" (*Gaishi-shi iwaku* 外史氏曰く). It is clear that San'yō similarly considered the preservation of his "private" and "disengaged" status absolutely essential to the fulfillment of his historiographical mission, in other words, that he believed that the writing of the history of one's nation, to be fully valid, must arise from same consciousness of subjective autonomy and freedom that empowered his poetic and calligraphic creativity.

Freed from Chikuzan's sort of commitment to inspiring the bakufu's leaders to adopt Confucian ideals, and yet free from Riken's pessimism and skepticism about the possibility of Heaven's sovereignty over human history, he was able to focus on bringing real historical people in real historical time alive. In his case, a disengagement from political involvements on one level actually enabled a much deeper engagement with fundamental political questions on another level, allowing San'yō, unlike either the over-engaged Chikuzan or the under-engaged Riken, to gain unquestioned entry into the hall of historiographical immortality.

## *Historical Consciousness and Bakumatsu Loyalist Thought*

Yoshida Shōin, from the time of his trip to Mito and his meeting with Aizawa Seishisai in the winter of 1851–52, believed that nothing was more important for awakening the spirit of loyalty than the study of the national histories. He loved *Nihon gaishi* so much, in fact, that he used it as a basic text at his school, the Shōka Sonjuku 松下村塾, founded in 1856.<sup>141</sup> In *Jigi ryakuron* 時義略論 (A brief treatise on the demands of the time), one of several policy recommendations submitted to his domainal government in 1858, he bemoans the historical loss of the authority of the throne and the emperor's freedom of movement in a way reminiscent of *Nihon gaishi*, adding how this situation has made impossible the enactment of the emperor's will (*eiryō* 英慮).<sup>142</sup> The distinctive way in which he used historical consciousness to motivate and direct political activism is also evident in the following letter to Akagawa Awami 赤川浅水, written in the eleventh month of 1856:

In your letter you first discuss the situation in the realm, and your ideas are not much different than mine were eight months ago. If you concentrate your mind and pay reverence toward the East, prostrating yourself and thinking about what it is that his Holy Luminence is worried about today, then recite the teachings handed down by the imperial ancestors<sup>143</sup> and contemplate the events of the Enreki [延暦, 782–805] and Kenmu eras, you will certainly have an awakening [*satori* 覚り] like the one that I have experienced. Previously when your elder brother entered Kyoto he wrote a poem that said, "I wonder what it is that the sovereign is meditating upon this evening." It seems that he had the same awakening before me.<sup>144</sup>

Here Yoshida objects to Nakamura's tedious dwelling on the *objective situation* of the foreign threat Japan was faced with, and urges him to put such "discouraging" meditation on objective circumstances second to meditation on the sacred will or mind of the sovereign as revealed in history. If he does so, he insists, he will experience the sort of spiritual awakening that he himself had just experienced as a result of an exchange of letters with his monastic friend Utsunomiya Mokurin 宇都宮黙霖 (1833–1906) over the past eight months. But just how does one know what the sovereign is worried about at the present moment, and make that the content of one's *own* mind? By reciting the sacred instructions of Amaterasu to the founders of the imperial line, contemplating the intentions of Emperor Kanmu 桓武天皇 (r.781–806) in appointing the first barbarian-subduing shogun and founding a new imperial capital at Heian, contemplating the frustration of Emperor Go-Daigo's will to restore this original relationship between sovereign and shogun in the Kenmu Restoration, and *in that context* recalling the threat that the nation is faced with today.<sup>145</sup> The will of the emperor, that is to say, is to be known through a combination of *faith* in the identity of one's own original mind of *makoto* 誠 with the original mind of the sovereign, and a

<sup>141</sup> Albert Craig, *Chōshū in the Meiji Restoration* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961), p.158; David Magarey Earl, *Emperor and nation in Japan* (Washington, DC: University of Washington Press, 1964), pp.138, 143–4; and Harootunian, *Toward Restoration*, p.36.

<sup>142</sup> See Yamaguchi-ken Kyōikukai, comp., *Yoshida Shōin zenshū*, 10 vols. (Tokyo: Daiwa Shobō, 1972–74): 5, p.200.

<sup>143</sup> The term "imperial ancestors" (*kōso* 皇祖) refer to Amaterasu or Emperor Jinmu, or to all of the primal imperial ancestors from Amaterasu to Jinmu. Here it would appear that "the teachings" refers primarily to the command Amaterasu gave her grandson Ninigi no Mikoto 瓊瓊杵尊 when she sent him down from Heaven to rule the just-pacified "Central Land of the Reed Plains" for all time.

<sup>144</sup> *Yoshida Shōin zenshū*, vol.2, p.442. Akagawa Awami, also called Naojirō 直次郎 (and later Sakuma Sabē 佐久間佐兵衛), became Shōin's student in military science in 1849, along with his elder brother Nakamura Michitarō 中村道太郎. He also studied under Aizawa Seishisai, and later became a teacher at the Chōshū domainal school, Meirinkan 明倫館. Both he and his brother were executed by the conservative faction (*zokurontō* 俗論党) in Chōshū for involvement in the Hamaguri Gate (Hamaguri gomon 蛤御門) Incident of 1864. See "Yoshida Shōin," *NST*, vol.54, pp.42, 104, and Kasuga Yūhō, *Nihonteki shinjōron no kōzō* [The structure of the Japanese theory of sentiment] (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1981), pp.19–21.

<sup>145</sup> On the original temporary, emergency, and provincial nature of the title *sei-i-tai-shōgun* and the Hōjō creation of the concept of a [figurehead] shogunal succession to legitimize their rise to power, see Mass, *Court and bakufu in Japan*, pp.124–30, reprinted in Mass, *Antiquity and anachronism in Japanese history*, pp.70–8.

<sup>146</sup> See Maruyama Masao, "The structure of Maturigoto: the *basso ostinato* of Japanese political life," in *Themes and theories in modern Japanese history*, ed. Sue Henny and Jean-Pierre Lehmann (London: Athlone Press, 1988), pp.27–43.

<sup>147</sup> See Manabu Waida, "Sacred kingship in early Japan: a historical introduction," in *History of Religions* 15.4 (May 1976): 319–42, at 342.

<sup>148</sup> *Yoshida Shōin zenshū*, vol.5, p.235.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, vol.8, p.322.

<sup>150</sup> Harootunian writes that, "Between 1854 and 1857 he changed his view on expulsion. Originally he had accepted the Mito expulsionist policy and had learned from Sakuma Shōzan the value of Western military technology in executing it. Even for Mito writers, *jōi* meant preparation and defense; Sakuma extended this notion by pleading for a national defense network along Western lines. And Yoshida for a while agreed. But later he changed expulsionism as preparation and defense into attack and expansion, and reformulated his theory of action accordingly" (Harootunian, *Toward Restoration*, p.205). To judge from the letter to Nakamura quoted above, however, it seems that the change in his theory of action may have grown out of his "satori" experience as much as the change in his conception of the meaning of *jōi*.

<sup>151</sup> See Thomas M. Huber, *The revolutionary origins of modern Japan* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1981), pp.72–3. According to Huber, it was actually from early 1858 that Shōin really began to set up the wide network of communication that would later become the cornerstone of the Chōshū 長州 movement's political effectiveness.

<sup>152</sup> From Shōin's *Shōkyū shigen* 招及私言 [Private words about impending events] in *Yoshida Shōin zenshū*, vol.1, pp.298–9 (quoted in Earl, *Emperor and nation in Japan*, p.180). As Harootunian notes (*Things seen and unseen*, p.379), this preoccupation with current events was a characteristic of restorationist thought in general.

*knowledge* of the history of the imperial line sufficient to apprehend the original—and fundamentally unchanging—imperial will.

This conception of the transcendental nature of the imperial will should be considered in relation to what Maruyama identifies as the basic concept of government evident in Japanese political and historiographical documents of the late seventh and early eighth centuries: "It is the ministers, the *maetsukimi* (*maetsugimi*) (公卿, 卿, 大夫), who are the positive actors concerning matters governmental, but only when the emperor hears, only when the emperor is reported to, only then do all activities concerning matters governmental become legitimate." Action and decision-making were clearly excluded from the vocabulary expressing the role of the emperor—the "level of legitimacy."<sup>146</sup>

The ideology of sacred kingship was forged in the second half of the seventh century in a situation of national crisis—a perceived foreign threat from Korea plus intense domestic disturbance due to wars over royal succession—and canonized in the earliest Japanese historiographical works. From there it was distilled and Confucianized by restorationist historians like Kitabatake Chikafusa and Rai San'yō and by the scholars of the Later Mito school, enabling it to be called back to life in another time of national crisis in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>147</sup> In the case of a "self-appointed" political actor not officially engaged in the service of the emperor (or in the service of his deputy, the shogun), perhaps the only way to fulfill the imperative created by the absolute distinction and yet absolute interdependence between the emperor and his loyal ministers was to "spiritualize" or "internalize" the relationship as Yoshida did—to turn it into a kind of activist religious faith.

Yet loyal action in the name of the imperial will still requires an objective understanding of the momentum of the time, acquired from a combination of the study of history and a close attention to the impetus of current events. This concept of "the momentum of the time" is a double-edged sword, however, for it can serve just as well as an excuse for not acting *now* as it can as an empowerer of action. Thus Yoshida complained on 1859.3.5 that "In the *sonjō* [*sonnō jōi*] of my friends, when the momentum of the time acts they will act, and when the momentum of time does not act, they will not act. Thus they regard me as hot-headed (*kyō* 狂) and foolish."<sup>148</sup> In the next month he wrote to his disciple Takasugi Shinsaku 高杉晋作 (1839–67), "All of you say, 'just wait for the right time, just wait for the right time'. When *this* time has been lost, will you still be waiting for the right time?"<sup>149</sup>

From this letter it is evident on the one hand that the concept of *jisei/ikioi* was very important in the thinking of Shōin's disciples, and on the other hand that since his *satori* of late 1856 and the conservative victory of 1857–58 the balance had changed between the two principles of his own philosophy of action: the one beyond time (the imperial will) and the one within time (*ikioi*).<sup>150</sup> After the shogunate brazenly defied the imperial will in signing the commercial treaties in 1857–58 and the reformist *kaikoku* 開国 faction supporting Hitotsubashi Keiki 一橋慶喜 as shogunal successor was defeated on the twenty-fifth day of the sixth month of 1858 (4 August by the

Gregorian calendar), Shōin was convinced beyond doubt that there was no choice left but acts of “loyal rebellion,” and he struggled to convince his disciples of the same. Yet this change of balance seems only to have intensified Yoshida’s hunger for the most up-to-date political information so that he could continually adjust his strategies in accord with the changes in circumstances.<sup>151</sup> Close observation of the changing *ikioi* of the moment, that is to say, was even more important now that he had decided that his own prompt action was necessary in order to “bring tranquility to the mind of the emperor.”<sup>152</sup>

Since the original will of the emperor could only be realized through the exercise of one’s own will of “perfect sincerity,” which had to be proven in action to be genuine, we must even grant a certain validity to Shōin’s belief that the two “original wills” were originally one. As long as the imperial will was not actually involved in the formulation of political policy, it seems, the physical existence of an actual living “emperor” was only necessary to provide an objective focal point and public verification of a subjective faith in a divine will known through meditation on a few crucial founding principles in the Bible of national history, and, since this will can only truly become known when it is activated as one’s *own* will, the process of *knowing* the imperial will, i.e., *studying* history, is inseparable from actually engaging in loyal action in the name of that will directed against the forces that oppose or impede its enactment in the world, i.e., *making* history.<sup>153</sup>

However, the maturation of Shōin’s philosophy of political action occurred in the context of a momentous reconstruction of the conception of the Japanese polity by which the concept that the sacred will of the emperor existed transcendently outside of the political realm—a concept articulated most clearly by the Later Mito school as an ideological affirmation of the Tokugawa status order—was sublated into a concept that the imperial will should be the *active* center of the political system.<sup>154</sup> The crucial turning point occurred when the court issued an imperial reply (*chokutō* 勅答) to the bakufu on the 20th day of the 3rd month of 1858 (3 May) that, by refusing Hotta Masayoshi’s 堀田正義 request for approval of the commercial treaty until further consultations had been conducted with the daimyo, clearly expressed the court’s strong reluctance to approve the opening of the country.<sup>155</sup> By this act, the “imperial will” for the first time became a key participant in the factional struggles of the time, in manifest conflict with the political authority of the shogunate.<sup>156</sup>

<sup>153</sup> This seems to be something like what Miyagawa means when she writes that, through *Nihon gaisbi*’s narrative, “History as a story that existed as fact in the past is projected onto the future; that is, the present that was the field (*ba* 場) for the production of the historical text is transformed into a field [for future-oriented action?] that is produced by the text” (Miyagawa Yasuko, “*Nihon gaisbi* no metahisutorii,” p.88). Consider also Maru-

/yama’s comment on the story of Jinmu’s state founding enterprise that “at times of the initiation of new historical eras, one can always see a tendency for the impetus (*ikioi*) of the initial emergence [of the world and of the land of Japan] to become the energy source for action directed toward the future” (Maruyama Masao, “*Rekishu ishiki no ‘kosō’*,” p.24).

<sup>154</sup> Webb argues that the court was drawn into the policy-making process because of a particular, almost accidental concatenation of /circumstances: the reemergence of autocratic authority in the shogunate (as against the multi-centered, and thus potentially indecisive, consular system of *fudai* 譜代 daimyo) and the emergence of incompatible policy positions within the government that could only be resolved by outside arbitration (Webb, *The Japanese imperial institution in the Tokugawa period*, pp.245–6). Elsewhere, he offers indirect evidence that bakumatsu loyalists did not view the emperor’s participation in politics as a permanent ingredient of the ideal state (Herschel Webb, “The development of an orthodox attitude toward the imperial institution in the nineteenth century,” in Marius B. Jansen ed., *Changing Japanese attitudes toward modernization* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965], pp.182–4).

<sup>155</sup> The court, however, soon bent over backwards to oblige the shogunate by approving the shogunal succession settlement in favor of Iemochi 家茂 in August 1858, both before and after the previous shogun’s death. As Webb writes, “The extreme reluctance of the court to offend the shogunate, to break precedents, and even to shoulder the burden of decision which so many bushi were attempting to thrust upon them are apparent in all their acts at this time.” Webb, *The Japanese imperial institution in the Tokugawa period*, p.245.

<sup>156</sup> See Yamaguchi Muneyuki, “Bakumatsu notennō-kan” [The conception of the emperor in the final decades of the Tokugawa period], in *Kikan Nihon shisōshi* 13 (1980): 3–20, at 4–5; W. G. Beasley, ed., *Select documents on Japanese foreign policy 1853–1868* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), p.181; and id., “The foreign threat and the opening of the ports,” in *The Cambridge history of Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), vol.5, pp.259–307, at 282. An imperial letter of 1846 urging the bakufu to strengthen coastal defenses to “put the imperial mind at ease,” written apparently under the influence of Tokugawa Nariaki 徳川斉昭 (Mito daimyo from 1829 to 1844), is usually cited as the first example of the entry of the “imperial will” into politics. See, for instance, Webb, “The development of an orthodox attitude toward the imperial institution in the nineteenth century,” pp.178 and 231–4. However, this and further imperial commands in 1847 and 1850 had little real impact on the shogunate.

<sup>157</sup> Yamaguchi Muneyuki, “Bakumatsu no tennō-kan,” pp.7–9.

<sup>158</sup> Accordingly, for daimyo or domainal samurai—vassals of the shogun, not the emperor—to appeal to the court for support was nothing less than an act of disloyalty. See *ibid.*, pp.10–11.

<sup>159</sup> In line with the basic concept of *meibun* that was also followed by San'yō, in his 1858 writing *Yūsō zuibitsu* 幽窗隨筆 [Random jottings from a secluded window] (*Yoshida Shōin zenshū*, vol.5, p.59), Yoshida condemned the *Taiheiki*'s reference to a “rebellion by the emperor” as an exceedingly strange and dangerous conception.

When Ii Naosuke 伊井直助, pressed by fears of British naval action in the wake of Britain's imposition of the Treaty of Tientsin in China, went ahead and signed the treaty on his own on 1858.6.19 (29 July), the *sommō jōi* radicals regarded this as an act of rebellion. Jumping over the traditional status hierarchy, they appealed directly to the court, resulting in the issuance of a secret imperial decree (called the *bogo no mitchoku* 戊午の密勅, *bogo* being the name of the year 1858 in the sexagenary cycle) bemoaning the signing of the treaty and urging Mito to push forward with its expulsionist policy. In violation of tradition, the decree was issued first to Mito's representative in Kyoto, and only on the next day to the bakufu. The bakufu immediately prohibited Mito from circulating the document.

This situation led to an intense struggle in Mito domain between the radicals who held that all imperial edicts should be obeyed and promptly conveyed to the daimyo concerned (*yūshi no daimyō* 有志の大名), and those who held that such transmission could precipitate domestic disorder and foreign interference, thus violating the “fundamental” imperial will for peace and national autonomy, and accordingly must be conditional on obedience to the shogun. Aizawa, leading spokesman of the second faction, even said that expressions of imperial intent that were not based on a clear apprehension of “the great momentum of affairs (*taisei* 大勢) in ancient times and the present” (i.e., a historically based comprehension of the real nature of the crisis Japan was facing in domestic politics and foreign relations) should be suppressed, as they could lead to great disorder in the realm.

For Aizawa to take such a position was a shock to the radicals, with whom he had formerly been allied, but it was fully consistent with the ancient conception that the imperial personage should remain outside the realm of action and political decision-making. In this it was both conservative and realistic, not questioning the fundamental legitimacy of the bakufu and its status system while reaffirming the primacy of the principle of benevolent and effective government—which the imperial court with its lack of practical experience could not be relied upon to provide.<sup>157</sup> Hashimoto Sanai 橋本佐内 (1834–59), the radical reformist thinker from Fukui 福井 domain (and a great admirer of *Nihongaishi*), went as far as to say that, since the court was totally inexperienced in the realm of foreign affairs, a restoration of royal government would result in the country's being annexed by foreign powers. He was willing to do away with the whole concept of the inviolable dignity of the “imperial will,” with all of the outmoded ceremonial conventions and hereditary privileges surrounding it that stifled effective decision-making, recognizing its value only as a last resort in silencing opposition to strategic bakufu decisions that were necessary to save the country from destruction.<sup>158</sup>

Yoshida Shōin, however, held a diametrically opposed view of the imperial will as something absolute that *itself* embodied the life and ideals of the state. Thus by definition it could not be regarded either as a potential source of political disorder or as a mere means for achieving practical political ends.<sup>159</sup> In 1856 he had written that even if the emperor was a tyrant, the Japanese people could do nothing but wail and pray for his repentance, and



that even if in anger he were to sentence them all to death, it would be better to die obediently than to resist.<sup>160</sup> After the imperial will was made manifest by the imperial reply of 1858.3.20 (3 May), Shōin wrote that “A command of the Son of Heaven is the will of the imperial gods, and it goes without saying that it must be obeyed and implemented. If one were to die in obeying it, one’s death would be like remaining alive. If one were to stay alive by disobeying it, one’s life would be worse than death.”<sup>161</sup> So it is not surprising that after Ii Naosuke, acting on behalf of the chief imperial vassal in the land, went ahead and signed the commercial treaty without imperial approval, Shōin wrote, “The shogun is a rebel against the realm. If I were to sit by and fail to attack, then what would future generations in the realm say of me?”<sup>162</sup>

Shōin’s consciousness of both the fundamental principles and the present momentum of the national history, in other words, had convinced him that assuring that his name would go down in history on the side of righteousness was more important than preserving his physical life. As a samurai trained in military strategy as well as history, however, Shōin was not unaware of the possibility of a mistaken imperial command being given in a rapidly changing strategic situation, or of the possibility that imperial decrees would lose their authority if they were based on unrealistic conceptions of the objective situation. Well aware that the old established policy of *sakoku* was no longer in accord with the times, he urged that the emperor make every effort to investigate the contemporary “momentum of affairs” both within and beyond Japan and reform the court accordingly, and, through contemplating the difficulties faced by Emperors Go-Toba 後鳥羽 and Go-Daigo, take measures to arouse the righteous indignation of the people so that loyal vassals of the likes of Masashige and Yoshisada would rise up to drive out the foreigners. Otherwise, the divine realm (*shinsbū* 神州) would become a possession of the barbarians and the sacred decree of the imperial ancestor-god would come to an end.<sup>163</sup>

Thus even for Shōin, righteous action was not merely a matter of the sort of passive obedience that implies a lack of *shutaisei*. Tied in with the very preservation of the sacred *kokutai* itself, it was something that could only be achieved by both ruler and vassal internalizing the will of the emperors of the past through the study of history and resolving to carry out to the end the moral Way incumbent in their positions. “The ruler should fulfill the Way of the ruler and move the vassal to rectify himself accordingly. The vassal should fulfill the Way of the vassal and move the ruler to rectify himself accordingly.”<sup>164</sup> In other words, to recall again the quotation from Roger Chartier at the beginning of this article, righteous action within the ruler-vassal relationship was only achievable through the coming together of the freely exercised, sincere will of the individual and a collective will imposed upon the individual by an established normative pattern revealed in a sacred national history. All of these moral imperatives are somehow implied in the concept of *makoto* or *shisei* 至誠—perfect sincerity. And as Shōin was fond of reiterating right up until his execution, “Never has there been one of perfect sincerity who failed to move others” (*Mencius* 4A:12).

<sup>160</sup> *Yoshida Shōin zenshū*, vol.4, pp.139–41.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, vol.5, p.143.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.192–3. Rather than advocating immediate rebellion, however, in view of the bakufu’s “two hundred years of merit (*ongi* 恩義),” Shōin advocated mediation by the Chōshū daimyo to restore relations between the court and the bakufu so that they could work together to deal with the foreign enemy. Only when the appeal to the daimyo failed did he transfer his hopes to the domainal samurai and then to the “unattached patriots,” leading him to a “modern” conception of a national loyalty to the imperial will that transcended all status distinctions. See Yamaguchi Muneyuki, “Bakumatsu no tennō-kan,” p.14.

<sup>163</sup> *Yoshida Shōin zenshū*, vol.5, pp.153–5, 250–3; quoted in Yamaguchi Muneyuki, “Bakumatsu no tennō-kan,” pp.14–15.

<sup>164</sup> *Kōmō yowa* 孔孟余話 [Incidental digressions on the *Mencius*], in *Yoshida Shōin zenshū*, vol.3, p.182.

<sup>165</sup> Harootunian, *Things seen and unseen*, p.379.

<sup>166</sup> As Harootunian writes, “Yoshida devoted much of his energy to determining whether men were worthy of joining him in such an undertaking [imperial restoration]. In calling for a rising of unattached patriots like himself, Yoshida demanded fidelity of motive and complete self-sacrifice in execution. This he called loyalty to the emperor—a willingness to act out of selfless devotion, at any risk, to rescue the imperial court from defilement” (Harootunian, *Toward Restoration*, p.41).

<sup>167</sup> See Webb, *The Japanese imperial institution in the Tokugawa period*, pp.237, 244–5.

<sup>168</sup> *Yoshida Shōin zenshū*, vol.4, p.141.

<sup>169</sup> See Yamaguchi Muneyuki, “Bakumatsu no tennō-kan,” pp.5, 8–12.

As Harootunian points out, the emphasis on *intent*, sincerity, and the authority of personal experience in restorationist thought was directly proportional to the lack of attention to the objective details of designing the new political order that was called for by the restorationist movement.<sup>165</sup> But within this very emphasis on subjectivity, in both senses of the word (*shukansei* 主観性 and *shutaisei*), lurks the even more complex problem of whether the loyal vassal knows the imperial will objectively or subjectively. To serve as the basis of an indomitable will to righteous action, the knowledge of the divine will must be certain, but as long as there are layers of authority separating the actor from the emperor himself, or as long as there is a possibility that the emperor's decree is misguided, absolute certainty is impossible. Thus Shōin urged his students to spend time in Kyoto to be closer to the emperor. But he himself never had the opportunity to learn directly about the circumstances in the court and the intentions of the emperor.

Once the imperial will had become directly involved in politics, moreover, the pressure on those with access to the emperor to exert their own factionally motivated leverage increased greatly, and switches occurred in the imperial decrees emerging from the court, confusing the already complex issue of just who were the loyal retainers and who were the traitors. This situation can only have reinforced Shōin's belief that the true will of the emperor was not being enacted or communicated by those around him, so that it was up to a small number of “unattached patriots” who have special knowledge of the emperor's *original* will to enact that will on the historical stage.<sup>166</sup>

The unprecedented insertion of the imperial will into the political realm in 1858 was followed first by Mito domain's declaration that the decree was unjust (*bidō* 非道), then by Ii Naosuke's decision to sign the commercial treaty anyway, which brought on Yoshida's denunciation of the shogun as a traitor. This intense opposition by the *sonnō jōi* activists led in turn to Naosuke's Ansei purge, carried out *in the name of obedience to the imperial will*.<sup>167</sup> The purge's victims included not only radical loyalists like Yoshida, who had by 1858 turned against the bakufu and its status system for a concept of a nation-state in which all citizens would take the welfare of the imperial realm as their own responsibility,<sup>168</sup> but even the progressive *kaikoku* advocate, Hashimoto Sanai, who wanted to build the shogunate into a strong central government that could mobilize all the best talent in the land for the goal of *fukoku kyōbei* 富国強兵 (enrich the country and strengthen the military) without regard for status and precedent.<sup>169</sup>

Since Yoshida was martyred while the anti-bakufu movement was still in its earlier stages, he never had to cope with the situation of having to disobey an imperial command because it conflicted with his inner conviction regarding the true imperial will. That is, he never had to experience a contradiction between the emperor as ideal and the emperor as a human being. Another leading bakumatsu loyalist, Maki Izumi, however, was not so fortunate. Maki was under house confinement during the purge so he survived to become nominal leader of the *shishi* activists in Kyoto during the early 1860s. All of the major restorationist *shishi* active in Kyoto in the 1860s were indebted in

their ideas to Maki, whom Harootunian calls “the most indefatigable and original restorationist of all.”<sup>170</sup> More than other *sonnō jōi* activists, he adds elsewhere, Maki “structured the idea of an *ōsei fukko* (royal restoration) into a coherent theory of purpose to supplement what hitherto had been action in the service of will and sincerity.”<sup>171</sup>

As hereditary priests of the Suitengū 水天宮 Shrine in Kurume 久留米 (in northwestern Kyushu) who claimed descent from the Taira 平 clan, his family's sacred duty was to serve the departed spirit of Antoku 安徳, the infant emperor who perished in the great sea battle of Dannoura 壇ノ浦 in 1185 when the Taira were destroyed by the Minamoto. This gave Izumi an even stronger claim than Yoshida to having a special mystical access to and a special responsibility for protecting the will of the emperor. His consciousness of himself as a direct vassal of the emperor was intensified in his youth through his reading of an illustrated biography of Kusunoki Masashige, *Ehon Nankō ki* 絵本楠公記, and by his receipt in 1832 of the honorific rank of imperial vassal of the “Lower Junior Fifth Class, Governor of Izumi 和泉.”<sup>172</sup> The loyalism he inherited through his father was further reinforced by a syncretic Shinto-Confucian education in the learning of the Kimon school, founded in the seventeenth century by Yamazaki Ansei.

The two core axes of Ansei's teachings were summarized in the slogan, “Devotion to straighten the inner; righteousness to rectify the external.”<sup>173</sup> The devotion or reverence of the first axis was directed to the national gods and particularly to the eternally unbroken imperial line, which, identified with the Neo-Confucian concept of “Heavenly principle” (*tenri*), served as the unchanging metaphysical anchor for all moral norms and political institutions. The second axis refers to the school's distinctive theory of righteous action, based on belief in “the indefinable potential within human personality to act out one's convictions in a public context and thus bring history into line with the norms of goodness.”<sup>174</sup> The two dimensions are, in turn, tied together because this spiritual power within people to transform themselves into something extraordinary through action was also symbolized supremely by the emperor, “man as god-king in a continuous history.”<sup>175</sup>

From his youth, Maki identified with certain heroic imperial loyalists who had achieved such self-transformation and self-deification by dying gloriously for their cause, particularly Kusunoki, whose death anniversary he celebrated every year by a solemn observance and a vow to receive the heroic spirit into his body. Among Kyoto firebrands Maki even came to be known as “the Lord Kusunoki of our times.”<sup>176</sup> Between 1830 and 1844, after a pilgrimage to Mito, he adopted the Mito rhetoric, developing a particularly high reverence for Aizawa Seishisai.<sup>177</sup> Due to his attempts to implement Mito-style reforms in Kurume domain, however, in 1852 he was placed under domiciliary confinement in his brother's home. For the next ten years, he immersed himself in reading Chinese and Japanese histories, Aizawa's *Shinron*, and many other books, wrote prodigiously, taught students, and received surreptitious visits from *shishi* from many domains. In his confinement he took solace again in identifying himself with a historical personage, Sugawara

<sup>170</sup> Harootunian, *Toward Restoration*, p.281.

<sup>171</sup> Harootunian, *Things seen and unseen*, p.381.

<sup>172</sup> Yamaguchi Muneyuki, “Bakumatsu no tennō-kan,” p.16.

<sup>173</sup> *Jing yi zhi nei, yi yi fang wai* 敬以直内，義以方外. This is a phrase from the *Book of Changes* that was made into a core slogan of Neo-Confucian teaching by Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033–1107).

<sup>174</sup> Tetsuo Najita, *Japan: the intellectual foundations of modern Japanese politics* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1974), p.32. Kimon 崎門-school followers were among the strongest proponents of the Kansei Prohibition of Heterodoxy, in which, as we have seen, San'yō's father was closely involved.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, p.31.

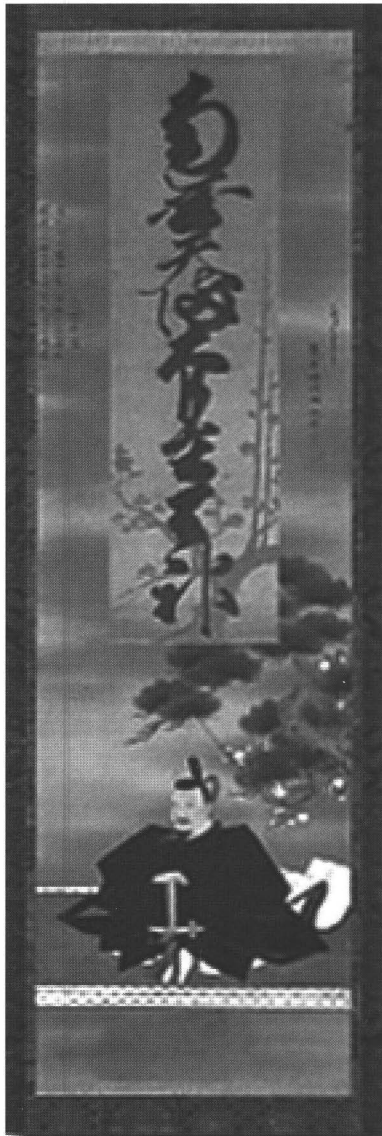
<sup>176</sup> Harootunian, *Toward Restoration*, p.284; Yamaguchi Muneyuki, “Bakumatsu no tennō-kan,” p.3.

<sup>177</sup> Aizawa's *Shinron* was one of the major sources of the *sonnō jōi* thought of the bakumatsu period (see Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, *Anti-foreignism and Western learning in early modern Japan: the New Theses of 1825*), and Maki promoted this work as the most essential guide to the restoration cause until 1863. It is obvious that the structure of the slogan *sonnō jōi* corresponds almost uncannily to the Kimon theory of *keigi naigai* 敬義内外 (see n.173), except that the primary meaning of “inner” and “outer” has been transferred from the ethical or psychological level to the political or national level—an example of how the Confucian vocabulary of spiritual self-cultivation was adapted to provide the vocabulary for modern Japanese nationalism.

<sup>178</sup> See Harootunian, *Toward Restoration*, pp.286–8.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, p.298.

<sup>180</sup> See his *Kei gusetsu 経緯愚説* [My humble views regarding the warp and the woof] (1858); *Taiyumeki 大夢記* [Record of a great dream] (1860); and *Missho sōan 密書草案* [Draft of a secret document] (1861), discussed in Harootunian, *Toward Restoration*, pp.296–309, and Harootunian, *Things seen and unseen*, pp.378–9.



no Michizane, whom he believed had similarly been exiled to Kyushu for his loyalty to the throne. Maki even set about copying thirteen volumes of Michizane's writings (the *Kanke bunsō* 菅家文章 collection of Chinese-style poetry), which he later offered to Michizane's spirit at the Tenmangū 天満宮 Shrine in Sanda 三田 (north of Kōbe 神戸).<sup>178</sup>

Here again we see how important to the development of imperial loyalism was (1) the idea of internalizing the unfulfilled will of heroic loyalists of the past—both through studying history and through studying their original writings—and allowing this will-energy to empower and direct one's own will to action in the present, and (2) the definition of the imperial line as something eternally beyond the struggles of politics and the rises and falls of regimes in history, sufficient to provide an unmoving foundation for the exercise of one's moral will in political action. However, Maki objected to the long tradition that had removed the emperor from direct involvement in political decisions in the name of his transcendent divinity, arguing that his divinity itself made it necessary for him to act in the political world.<sup>179</sup> Accordingly, while the Kimon and Mito schools had focused only upon the *principle* of imperial authority, Maki worked to personalize the emperor by emphasizing the concrete historical qualities of ancient emperors. Toward the end of his confinement, in 1860–61, he formulated the concept of an “imperial campaign” against the bakufu led personally by the emperor and authorized by historical examples of great acts of institutional initiation by Emperors Jinmu, Tenji 天智 (r.668–71), and Tenmu 天武 (r.673–86).<sup>180</sup>

In the twelfth month of 1861 Maki met with the fugitive *sonnō jōi* activists Hirano Kuniomi 平野国臣 and Kiyohara Hachirō 清原八郎. In the second month of 1862 he secretly left Kurume for Satsuma 薩摩 to help Ōkubo Toshimichi and Arima Shinshichi 有馬新七 plan a trip to Kyoto on the part of their daimyo, Shimazu Hisamitsu 島津久光 (1817–87). Later that year he planned an uprising in Osaka, but he was captured during the Teradayay incident 寺田屋騒動, in which imperial loyalists clashed with Satsuma samurai, and returned to confinement in Kurume. The next year he was pardoned by order of the court, but the conservatives soon had him imprisoned for his strong representations to the daimyo in favor of *sonnō jōi*.

**Figure 15**

*Invocation and seated image of Tenjin 天神 (Sugawara no Michizane). Inscription: “Nanmu Tenman Daijizai Tenjin” 南無天満大自在天神 [Hail to the Tenman Great Lord God of Heaven], thirteenth century (property of Dazaifu Tenmangū 大宰府天満宮, Dazaifu, Fukuoka 福岡 prefecture – used with permission)*

Some court nobles and Chōshū activists again secured his release, and after a trip to Chōshū to meet with the radically reformist daimyo Mōri Takachika 毛利敬親, he went to Kyoto, where he taught at the Gakushūin 学習院, a school for the nobility that had become a center of the anti-bakufu movement. After the coup of 1863.8.18 (30 September), in which forces from Aizu 会津 and Satsuma expelled the Chōshū-led *sonnō jōi* radicals from Kyoto, he fled to Chōshū, where he continued to write activist pam-

phlets. In 1864 Mōri put him in charge of the Chōshū forces sent out to take back control of Kyoto, in violation of the imperial prohibition on their entering Kyoto that had been issued after the coup. Two days after the insurgents met defeat at the Hamaguri Gate of the imperial palace, Maki committed suicide with a group of his *rōnin* 浪人 followers.

As we would expect, the concept of *ikioi* figures prominently in Miki's philosophy of history and political action, as shown in the following statement regarding what could be regarded as the archetypal "Imperial Restoration" in Japanese history, Nakatomi (Fujiwara) no Kamatari's 中臣鎌足 anti-Soga 蘇我 coup of 644–45:

Although the restoration [*chūkō*] achieved by Emperor Tenji [Prince Naka no Ōe 中大兄皇子] was something that he himself planned, he was successful because he took advantage of the momentum [*ikioi*] of people's anger and hatred toward the Soga clan due to the insubordinate authority they had built up over several generations, ... obtaining a great release of energy by executing the rebels on the side of the emperor, and blowing and fanning that momentum [into an irresistible force].<sup>181</sup>

Already in *Keii gusetsu*, under Aizawa's influence, Maki had put together a conception of restoration in which the world of ethico-political decision-making was mapped on two axes, the warp (*kei* 経) and the woof (*i* 緯), where the warp (the fundamental vertical lines that structure the political world) referred to "moral purpose" or "the greater righteousness" (*taigi*), the normative principles expressed in the foundational achievements of Jinmu and Tenji, and the woof (which comes later and meshes with the warp) referred to "contemporary conditions." "Today," he wrote, "the warp and the woof are separated": worship is divorced from politics, ritual ceremonies are divorced from administration, community is divorced from polity, purpose is divorced from practice, laws are divorced from human feelings (*ninjō* 人情). In order to bring about a "great event," it was necessary that the two be linked together again. The time was ripe, moreover, for men of talent and ability (especially locally rooted Shinto priests who understood the original meaning of their office) to weave together the two threads—past and present—to produce a new fabric, destroying all of the old accumulated abuses that separated existing institutions from those of distant antiquity.<sup>182</sup>

In its basic structure, this two-axis scheme is similar to the Heian concept of *wakonkansai*: "context-sensitive situational judgment" versus "fundamental principles." In its synthesis of a dimension of reality that is eternally still and another that is always moving, it obviously also resembles the Kimon scheme of reverence (worship and self-discipline) versus righteousness (loyal political action)—except that righteousness, absolutized with the important modifier "greater," is now associated with the inner, fundamental level, as opposed to the external. Maki's concept has an even closer resemblance, however, to San'yō's conception of *meibun* versus *ikioi* and its reflection in the dual conception of the operation of Heavenly reward and retribution in history.<sup>183</sup> As Uete Michiari and Victor Koschmann have pointed out, the

<sup>181</sup> From *Seidanrō sanjō* 勢断劳三条, quoted in Maruyama Masao, "Rekishii ishiki no 'kosō,'" p.24 (p.328 in 1992 edition). While the anti-Soga coup, the beginning of the Taika Reform, was conceived of as a "restoration," it was actually only after the accession of Emperor Tenji or of his brother Tenmu that the sovereign combined substantial political power with his (or her) original sacerdotal roles, an untypical situation that continued only through the reign of Emperor Kanmu, who incidentally was the ancestor of the Taira clan.

<sup>182</sup> Harootunian, *Things seen and unseen*, p.381–7.

<sup>183</sup> This resemblance becomes even clearer if we recall that the concepts of *taigi* and *meibun* had been increasingly used together in Japanese ethico-political thought at least since the Kimon-school writings of Asami Keisai, until they became fused into a single concept: *taigi meibun*: the supreme righteousness (i.e., loyalty) as defined by the title-and-status relationship between ruler and vassal.

<sup>184</sup> J. Victor Koschmann, *The Mito ideology: discourse, reform, and insurrection in late Tokugawa Japan, 1790–1864* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1987), pp.60–1, paraphrasing Uete Michiari, “Edo jidai no rekishi ishiki” [The historical consciousness of the Edo period], in Maruyama Masao, *Rekishi shisōshi*, pp.77–9.

<sup>185</sup> Uete, “Edo jisei no rekishi ishiki,” pp.77–8.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>187</sup> Koschmann, *The Mito ideology*, p.61.

<sup>188</sup> Harootunian, *Toward Restoration*, p.284; Yamaguchi Muneyuki, “Bakumatsu no tennō-kan,” pp.16–17.

<sup>189</sup> The attack on Ii was carried out by eighteen *rōnin* from Mito and Satsuma domains, while that on Andō was carried out by six men led by a *rōnin* from Mito, under the influence of the restorationist ideas of Ōhashi Totsuan 大橋訥庵 (1816–62) of Utsunomiya. Andō was a shogunal councillor (*rōjū* 老中) who had promoted the *kōbu gattai* 公武合体 (fusion of court and bakufu) policy and implemented the marriage between the younger sister of Kōmei, Princess Kazu no Miya 和宮 (1846–77), and the child shogun Iemochi (1846–66), who had been named heir by the dying shogun at Ii’s behest in July 1858, at the expense of Hitotsubashi Keiki.

<sup>190</sup> Yamaguchi Muneyuki, “Bakumatsu no tennō-kan,” p.18. Maki himself described his actions aimed at carrying out a military coup in 1864 as “unprincipled steps,” justifying them “by the authority and justice of his personal feelings which, he believed, informed all his judgments” (Harootunian, *Toward Restoration*, p.285), overriding the fact that he was actually acting in violation of imperial decrees. Since his actions were aimed only at winning the approval of the national gods, not his contemporaries, he was confident to leave the judgment of their rightness or wrongness to future historians (Yamaguchi Muneyuki, “Bakumatsu no tennō-kan,” p.18). For accounts of Maki’s life and thought and quotations from his writings, see also Harootunian, *Toward Restoration*, pp.278–314; Yamaguchi Muneyuki, *Maki Izumi* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1973); and Harootunian, *Things seen and unseen*, pp.379–89.

historical texts of Aizawa and other late Mito school writers “follow the pattern elaborated primarily by Rai Sanyō (1780–1832), according to which history has to do less with the personal virtues and benevolent action of the ruler than with a relatively autonomous form of historical dynamism, usually expressed through some variant of the term *tkioi* (the *sei* component of Aizawa’s term *jisei no ben* 時勢の變, meaning force, momentum, or tendency).” That is to say, the transformation of Edo historiography typified by San’yō was characterized by a “more holistic concept of change over time” and “a sense of politics and government that goes beyond the comportment of the ruler to encompass broad structural arrangements (the historicization of politics) and, conversely, a process of politicization by which history writing becomes a matter of characterizing structural change in government and society.”<sup>184</sup> As Uete puts it, in the development of Edo historiography,

As people became aware of the discontinuity between self-cultivation and government, the concern of the ruler for the welfare of the people came to be considered more important than his personal moral discipline [*shūshin* 修身], leading to an emphasis on grasping the sentiment of the people [*ninjō*] and the momentum of the times [*jisei*], and to a recognition of the importance of political institutions to government. And this tendency is intimately connected to the recognition that there is a certain historical dynamism in the alternation of order and disorder and the rise and fall of political regimes . . . . There thus emerges a tendency for, on the one hand, political theory to assume a historical nature, and, on the other hand, for history to be treated as the material for political theory. One can say that Rai San’yō’s *Tsūgi* and *Nihon seiki* clearly express both of these tendencies.<sup>185</sup>

Moreover, Uete argues, with the expansion of the scope of history’s actors beyond the narrow world centered on the court, and with the diversification of concepts and categories of historical explanation, there arises a greater awareness of the social and economic power of the masses, tied in with the increasing influence of the Confucian concept that the people are the root of government.<sup>186</sup> Koschmann summarizes this argument by saying that, in the new historiography, “the role of human agency in history is given increased credibility, and [there is] a nascent recognition of the role in historical change of the social and economic power wielded by the masses (*minshū*).”<sup>187</sup> These observations establish that, whether or not Maki Izumi was himself an avid reader of *Nihon gaishi*, his historical consciousness was influenced by San’yō’s philosophy of history through San’yō’s influence on the *sonnō jōi* scholarship of the Later Mito school. They also support our earlier observation that there was an intrinsic connection between San’yō’s unusually strong interest in the overall collective patterns of historical change and his belief in the power of human will to affect the course of history.

In the autumn of 1863, Maki wrote an important tactical essay in which he laid out a strategy for liberating Emperor Kōmei 孝明天皇 from his “imprisonment” in the imperial palace, because he believed that after the probakufu coup of the eighteenth day of the eighth month, 1863, the emperor was issuing decrees that did not reflect his real will.<sup>188</sup> Some fifteen months

before the coup, Kōmei had expressed his sympathy for the victims of the Ansei purge as well as the “independent patriots” from Mito and Satsuma who had assassinated Ii Naosuke on 1860.3.3 (24 March) and the six from Mito and Utsunomiya 宇都宮 who had attempted to assassinate Andō Nobumasa 安藤信正 on 1862.1.15 (13 February).<sup>189</sup> After the coup, however, the emperor made it quite clear that while he was in favor of an expulsionist policy, he was firmly opposed to the idea of overthrowing the bakufu and establishing direct imperial rule. For Maki, this meant that everything he had risked his life to achieve was now defined as treason, and he could not believe that the imperial will that had remained firm for ten years could suddenly change so drastically. Attempting to explain how a loyalist as staunch as Maki could actually decide to disobey an imperial command, Yamaguchi Muneyuki reasons that:

For Izumi, who idealized the age of direct imperial rule before the Nara period, the realization of the overthrow of the bakufu and the restoration of royal government represented the concentration (*shūyaku* 集約) of the will of the emperors through the ages beginning with the imperial ancestral gods, and as such they outweighed the temporary and changeable intentions of the present emperor. Besides, had not the emperor until very recently uttered words of praise for the actions of Izumi and the other anti-bakufu activists? In spite of that, those close to him had been easily able to reverse his position through their machinations, and there was no telling just what further unforeseen calamities would be brought about by such a situation.<sup>190</sup>

Here again we see in loyalist thought the prevalence of the idea that the emperor's will is being usurped by those issuing orders in his name—an idea which was to reemerge in the “Shōwa Restoration” movement of the 1930s—and of the idea that the way of the highest righteousness is not simply to obey reverently and unconditionally the decrees of one's lord and ruler, but to lay down one's life in supplication, entreaty and action aimed at *rectifying* those decrees in the name of a higher will. Both of these ideas are founded on the premise that one has a privileged means of knowing the true, unchanging imperial will that does not derive from external, and therefore profane and corruptible, sources of knowledge, such as bureaucratic structures of authority based on self-subordination and obedience to externally-imposed norms, but from an inner conviction and strong *shūtaisei* nourished by faith, hero worship, an uncompromising resolution to act, and—as the foundation of all the others—a clear and certain knowledge of the archetypal expressions of the imperial will in the national history.<sup>191</sup>

A similar conclusion to Maki's was reached in the following year by Ōkubo Toshimichi, when he judged that an imperial decree issued on the twenty-first day of the ninth month, 1865 (9 November) ordering a second expedition against Chōshū was merely a cover for a “private” struggle on the part of the bakufu, that it would lead Japan in the same direction of loss of national autonomy that the Qing dynasty had taken, and that it should thus be disobeyed by everyone, even down to the common soldier. “An imperial decree that is not righteous,” he wrote, “is not an imperial decree, and for that

<sup>191</sup> The same principle of the absolute subordination of the will of the living emperor—whose will might not be “selfless”—to the will of the imperial ancestors was reasserted in the “*shirasu*” theory of rule worked out by Inoue Kowashi 井上毅 (1843–95) after the coup of 1881. In the mid-1880s he re-discovered the ancient word *shirasu* (知らず, 治す, 統治す) honorific for “to rule” to express this concept. As Suzuki Masayuki explains, “in a situation where it was assumed that the people are the ‘object’ of rule, the idea that the emperor is equivalent to the public realm could be powerfully authorized if it was ‘proven’ to be rooted in the imperial ancestors. ... Following the suggestions of *kokugaku* scholars, Inoue interpreted the *Kojiki* myth of Amaterasu sending down the thunder god to tell the Great Lord of the Country that her descendants would rule the land as meaning that the descendants of the imperial ancestor god had established a type of rule over the great clans of prehistoric Japan that was ‘public and fair’, without selfishness or partiality, as opposed to the ‘private-possession’ type of rule that the great clans had originally exercised over the territories and people they controlled. On this basis he claimed that the principle of ‘public rule’ (modern-style state government) was already established in Japan as the emperor's principle of rule from the age of the gods in high antiquity, in contrast to Europe, where states had only begun to practise this principle two centuries earlier with the overthrow of feudalism. This is how he established the legitimacy of the idea that the emperor was the exclusive possessor of the right of rule in the modern Japanese state.” Suzuki, “Kindai Nihon ni okeru kō · kan · min” [The emperor, the officials and the people in modern Japan], ● *to ōyake* [The monarch and the public] (Tokyo: Kashiwa Shobō, 1998), pp.263–315, at 270–7.

reason it should not be obeyed.” As a result of his deep awareness of the tremendous danger involved if the emperor does issue an “unrighteous decree,” which he had witnessed in the tragedy of Maki Izumi, Ōkubo devoted himself untiringly after the Restoration to the task of setting up institutions that would assure that the emperor was properly educated and institutions that would assure that control over the “will of the emperor” would not fall into the hands of his political enemies or bureaucratic factions. For similar reasons, he also moved the emperor to Tokyo to remove him from the control of the court, surrounded him with his own henchmen, and started propagating the idea that the emperor was the mother and father of the people. In other words, ironically, it was Maki’s and Ōkubo’s own *disobedience* to the emperor that led to the setting up of an oligarchic monarchy centered on the values of reverence, obedience, and loyalty.

### Conclusions

Postwar critiques of the *tennōsei* 天皇制 ideology and the emperor-centered view of history (*kōkoku shikan* 皇国史観), under strong Marxist influence, have tended to lump the various sources of imperial loyalist thought together as elements in the construction of a *shutaisei*-suppressing ideology that was foisted from above on the Japanese people. The recent popularity, under Foucaultian and Hobsbawmian influence, of the idea that this *tennōsei* ideology was an artificial fabrication of the modern period, while providing many new insights, has tended to reinforce this negative image of manipulation and brain-washing by élites. The conception of loyalty to the emperor propagated during Japan’s militaristic period has also left a strong impression that such loyalty meant unquestioning obedience even to the most “unrighteous” orders issued in the emperor’s name. A closer look at the nature and genesis of Rai San’yō’s historical philosophy, however, has helped to remind us that the philosophies of imperial loyalism that contributed most to the restoration movement—developed by “outsider” thinkers such as Yamagata Daini, Ōshio Heihachirō, Aizawa Seishisai, Rai San’yō, Hirata Atsutane, Yoshida Shōin, and Maki Izumi, were originally *protest* philosophies that emerged from outside of the established power structure—even if

remaining couched in terms originally designed to legitimate and glorify the Tokugawa shogunate—and aimed at cultivating the capacity of an inwardly anchored ethical commitment on the part of individuals that was not dependent on the established structures of access to knowledge, power, and status.

In other words, these are philosophies that, in different ways and in various degrees of intensity, asserted the *shutaisei* of the individual—the authority of spirit, will, and *yamatodamashii*—against the materialistic and coercive power of external structures of authority. Drawing in different ways from the rich heritage of ancient Chinese and Japanese political ideas available to intellectuals in the Edo period, these philosophies all helped turn their readers’ hopes for the salvation of the nation away from the shogunate and toward the imperial throne in Kyoto, which, because of its very powerlessness and transcendence, combined with its historical identification with the ultimate foundations of the political system, could become a focus for the projection of ideals that seemed unrealizable within the order represented by the shogunate.<sup>192</sup>

Yet even among the most radical imperial loyalist thinkers, it required drastic changes in the “great momentum of the realm”—specifically a collapse, due to the opening of the country, of the ideological structures that supported the legitimacy of the shogunate as a *national* government—to transform these philosophies into a belief system capable of engendering a movement to overthrow the legally constituted government that had ruled the country for over two and half centuries. The resulting shift of faith from shogun to emperor made it imperative for its converts to engage in radical political action directed at harnessing “the momentum of the times” (particularly, the forces of dissatisfaction toward the shogunate) in order to realize the historically frustrated but inextinguishable aspiration of the imperial line for the restoration of its own “*shutaisei*” within the political

<sup>192</sup> As Herschel Webb wrote of the royal institution in the Edo period: “Contemporary Japanese thought of the imperial throne as an image of the ideal state. . . . It was a quasi-aesthetic notion of a moral ideal.” “More and more he [the emperor] came to connote the moral duties that transcended particularistic bonds of obligation between persons,” making him uniquely capable of representing, in a time of *national* crisis, the uniformity of the state’s authority and responsibility in every region and towards every subject. See Webb, *The Japanese imperial institution in the Tokugawa period*, pp.8–9, 217, 218.



system—an idea that had been constructed by Edo historians like Rai San'yō on the basis of their study of the pre-Edo history of the imperial institution.<sup>193</sup>

While it is true that the Meiji oligarchy later managed to turn this radical philosophy of imperial loyalism into a statist ideology capable of *suppressing* and *defusing* the anti-authoritarian ideas of the popular rights movement, as in the case of all revolutionary ideologies converted into legitimating ideologies, they could never be totally free of the fear that the stick they wielded would turn back into a snake and bite its holders.<sup>194</sup> Itagaki Taisuke 板垣退助 (1837–1919), the leader of the popular rights movement, blamed the oligarchic concentration of power in the bureaucracy on the failure to grant power *both* to the emperor *and* to the people, who he believed should rule the country jointly. Itagaki held that, “The people who have the duty of paying taxes to the government have the right to participate in government. This is a universally recognized principle, and it is not necessary for us to wait for the government ministers to tell us about it.”<sup>195</sup> Liberal draft constitutions put forward in the 1880s by Fukuzawa Yukichi 福沢諭吉 and the Kōjunsha 交詢社<sup>196</sup> were considered a threat within the government precisely because they grounded their concept of government on the same concept of the divinity of the emperor upon which the oligarchy had based its own legitimacy.<sup>197</sup> In their acceptance of the centrality of the imperial institution within the Japanese polity, these advocates of popular rights were as much heirs to San'yō's view of history as were the oligarchs, and in their opposition to arbitrary government they were closer to him in spirit.

As we turn back to reevaluate San'yō's legacy today, we should be able to look beyond his post-Meiji associations with what became the straitjacket of imperial loyalist ideology to affirm his belief in the motivating power of history, the spirit of intellectual independence, and, yes, the spirit of righteous rebellion, that originally inspired his historiographical mission. It was this spirit of intellectual independence and righteous rebellion that allowed San'yō to find a proper balance between articulating the deep-rooted collective patterns that determined the parameters of action within his nation's history and the assertion of the capacity of the individual to design timely strategies in line with those patterns that could have a significant impact on the way in which the future history of the nation would be written.

I have referred to San'yō's view of history as emperor-centered, but that is only true in the sense that the emperor in his *meibun* dimension—existing permanently outside the realm of action and change—becomes the unmoving foundation for the loyal actions of his vassals who are charged with managing the changing realm of *ikioi*. As an historian, however, San'yō had to recognize that the emperors were also human, participating with all of their human foibles in the decision-making processes that give rise to political history. In that human dimension, Emperor Go-Daigo could hardly serve as a model for the character formation of imperial loyalists. It was his martyred loyal vassals, his servitors in the realm of military *action* and *strategy*, who became the ideal models. Bakumatsu loyalists, however, also had to find models of ideal sovereigns to represent their goal of an imperial restoration in which the emperor would be established as the center not only on the invisible axis of eternal virtue, legitimacy, and sovereignty, but also on the temporal axis of politics, where, through resolute and well-informed decision-making and institution-

<sup>193</sup> This is an excellent example of what Prasenjit Duara refers to as the re-enacting of “the historical memory of archaic totalizations”—“representations of community as a social totality”—in the mobilization of modern national communities (Duara, *Rescuing history from the nation* [Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1995], p.56). As he says, “The past does not shape the present simply by persisting in it. It enables the transformation of the present and in that transformation, is itself much transformed” (p.76).

<sup>194</sup> Here perhaps it is necessary to consider the concept of ideology formulated by Althusser and Therborn, wherein ideology “implies a dialectical field of tension between subordination and freedom” (Koschmann, *The Mito ideology*, p.6). As Therborn writes, “Ideologies not only subject people to a given order. They also qualify them for conscious social action, including actions of gradual or revolutionary change.” See Göran Therborn, *The ideology of power and the power of ideology* (London: New Left Books, 1980), p.2.

<sup>195</sup> *Minsen giin setsuritsu kenpakusho* 民選議院設立建白書 [Proposal for the establishment of a popularly-elected legislature], January 1874, in Irokawa Daikichi and Gabe Masao, comp., *Meiji kenpakusho shūsei* [A complete collection of Meiji memorials], (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1986), vol.3, p.23.

<sup>196</sup> The Kōjunsha was a social club founded by Fukuzawa for graduates and other affiliates of Keiō Gijuku 慶応義塾, also founded by Fukuzawa. Its members included many entrepreneurs, who were naturally interested in the bourgeois model of limited constitutional monarchy.

<sup>197</sup> As Suzuki Masayuki writes, “the idea of eliminating the ruler entirely must have been less threatening in reality than the idea of someone else attempting to seize political power by the same logic which they themselves had used—i.e., putting the emperor in the position of representing only the dignity of government while removing him from the actual practice of /OVER

/of government. This is why Inoue Kowashi, who worked out the basics of the government's constitutional thought, had a tremendous hostility toward the Kōjunsha and Fukuzawa." Suzuki Masayuki, "Kindai Nihon ni okeru kō · kan · min," p.271.

<sup>198</sup> John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, eds, *Nationalism: critical concepts in political science*, 5 vols. (New York: Routledge, 2000): 1, Introduction. Smith's term *ethnie* means essentially the same as "ethnic communities."

building, Japan had to be brought into the modern world of powerful, centralized, self-assertive, and expansionistic nation-states.

The "restoration" of ancient imperial sovereignty, that is to say, in theory required the destruction not only of the shogunate, but of the entire traditional imperial institution as it had been built up since the Heian or even the Nara period. For this task, San'yō's *Nihon seiki*, with its idealization of the misty "first seven or eight hundred years" of imperial rule, was much more useful than the more widely read *Nihon gaishi*, not the least because it was compatible with the conception of the continuity between cosmic creation and history that was put forth in Japan's most ancient histories. And it is in *Nihon seiki* that San'yō fully developed his concept of the dual process of Heavenly reward and retribution that lay at the core of his mature conception of imperial restoration.

Through the bakumatsu process of transferring the concept of restoration from the history books to the historical stage, from the ideal realm to the realm of actuality, the concept of the two axes of history—which come together in the ruler-vassal relationship centering on the imperial line—was transferred from the text of pre-Tokugawa history into the fundamental moral and institutional structure of the modern Japanese state. It is particularly visible in the dual conception of the emperor as both divine and human, as both within and beyond the process of political decision-making and historical change, an inherently contradictory synthesis of Chinese and Japanese concepts of sovereignty that required the support of European political theory before it could be stabilized as the constitutional foundation of a modern nation-state.

As is well known, the voices of political protest in modern Japan have claimed almost without exception that the Meiji Restoration/Revolution was betrayed or left incomplete, and that the task of bringing it to completion still remains to be taken up. Thus ideological struggles in Japan today over how the Japanese nation should be defined continue to anchor themselves in different interpretations of the real significance of that complex series of events that we still identify using the ancient historiographical concept of "restoration." One of the reasons that different interpretations of "the Restoration" will always be possible is because, viewed in its full historical context spanning the whole of the nineteenth century, it combined elements of both of the basic models of nation-formation identified by Anthony D. Smith: "bureaucratic incorporation of the lower classes and outlying areas by the strong state of an aristocratic *ethnie*," and "the vernacular mobilisation of 'the people' of a demotic *ethnie* by an indigenous intelligentsia intent on rediscovering 'authentic' folk traditions."<sup>198</sup> If it is still possible to see Rai San'yō as a symbol of this process of nation-forming in Japan, it would be because he devoted all of the resources available to a member of the sinically educated "aristocratic *ethnie*" to the task of rediscovering the authentic traditions, values, beliefs and collective memories that had defined the Japanese "demotic *ethnie*" historically, and did it with such grace and style that his book became Japan's first national '*besuta seraa*'. But this is just to say that he carried the spirit of *wakon kansai* (or better, "*kansai wakon*") to an even higher level than his illustrious forebear Sugawara no Michizane, without of course realizing that the momentum thus set into motion would lead to its "irreversible" transformation into the inherently unstable *wakon yōsai* ethos of modern Japan.

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