

BUSHIDO: THE CREATION OF A MARTIAL ETHIC IN LATE MEIJI JAPAN

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Asian Studies)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

FEBRUARY 2011

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the development of the concept of “bushido,” or the “way of the warrior,” in modern Japan, focusing on the period between the mid-nineteenth century and the early 1930s. The popular view holds that bushido was a centuries-old code of behavior rooted in the historical samurai class and transmitted into the modern period, where it was a fundamental component of Japanese militarism before 1945. In fact, the concept of bushido was largely unknown before the last decade of the nineteenth century, and was widely disseminated only after 1900, especially after the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5. This study argues that modern bushido discourse began in the 1880s, and was dependent on political and cultural currents relating to Japan’s modernization and the nation’s attempts to redefine itself in the face of foreign “others,” primarily China and the West. Following more than a decade of largely unquestioned thrusts towards modernization and Westernization after 1868, Japanese thinkers looked to their own traditions in search of sources of national identity. The first discussions of bushido at this time were not the work of conservative reactionaries, however, but were conceived by relatively progressive individuals with considerable international experience and a command of Western languages. Some of the first modern writings on bushido clearly posit the concept as a potential native equivalent to the English ethic of “gentlemanship,” which was widely admired in late-nineteenth century Japan, and much of early bushido discourse should be seen primarily as a response to outside stimuli. This study examines the causes and effects of the “bushido boom” that took place between 1898 and 1914, which firmly established the concept not only in Japan, but throughout the world. In this context, this study analyzes the use of bushido by the Japanese military and educational system, as well as its popularization by prominent figures in the early twentieth century. This study also examines the reasons for the decline in the popularity of bushido between 1914 and the early 1930s, thereby providing points of departure for future research on the trajectory of bushido from 1932 to the present day.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply indebted to the faculty, staff, and students at the University of British Columbia who have offered me constant support, guidance, and insight from my arrival in Vancouver onward. I owe special thanks to Dr. Nam-lin Hur and Dr. Peter Nosco, whose astute guidance and incisive questions are responsible for any contributions this study may make to the field, and whose excellent practical advice and support has made my research possible. I thank Dr. William Wray for introducing me to valuable methods and resources for Japanese historical research. I am also indebted to Dr. Tomoko Kitagawa and Hidemi Shiga for their engaging and challenging discussions in various courses and seminars we attended together, and also for directing me towards several sources that proved to be most useful to my project. I owe a great debt of gratitude to Jasmina Miodragovic, whose tireless and outstanding efforts on behalf of graduate students in Asian Studies have allowed this and many other theses and dissertations to be realized.

In Japan, I extend my thanks to Dr. Shuntarō Itō for initially encouraging me to conduct research on *bushidō* as the subject of my MA thesis at Reitaku University. I am extremely grateful to Dr. Yutaka Yoshida for invaluable advice and guidance on conducting historical research in Tokyo, and for providing me with the opportunity to do so. I thank Dr. Toshitada Kitsukawa for introducing me to new sources and approaches in Japanese historiography that have fed directly into this thesis.

I am indebted to Helena Simmonds, who has not only graciously and patiently endured, but has even assisted in the completion of this study. I also thank Renate, Walter, and Ilya Benesch, who have both morally and practically supported me through many years of education and research in faraway lands.

INTRODUCTION

“*Bushidō* is death.”

-Yamamoto Tsunetomo (early 18th century)

“Unformulated, Bushido was and still is the animating spirit, the motor force of our country.”

-Nitobe Inazō (1900)¹

“I believe that the nation as a whole, and every individual Japanese, as well, should now once again return to the *bushidō* spirit.”

-Nakatsugawa Hirosato (2004)²

Since the end of the nineteenth century, the Japanese concept of *bushidō* has been the subject of heated debate among scholars, politicians, writers, and everyday people both in Japan and abroad.³ The proponents of *bushidō* have often gone so far as to posit it as the very “soul” of the Japanese people, while its critics, fewer in number and lesser in public influence, tend to dismiss it out of hand, and seldom devote more than a few pages to the subject. These two diametrically opposed approaches to *bushidō* have resulted in several hundreds of books and articles dedicated to defining what *bushidō* is, and a mere handful of articles and passages in larger, peripherally-related works that attempt to show what *bushidō* is not. To date, no definitive works that can lay claim to the title of “authoritative representative” of either position have emerged. Instead, well over a century after its initial publication in 1900, Nitobe Inazō’s enigmatic *Bushido: the Soul of Japan*, continues to hold sway as the best-known work on the

¹ Nitobe Inazo, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, 98.

² Minutes of National Diet Budget Committee meeting held on February 24, 2004.

³ Although the term “*bushidō*” (武士道) is frequently translated as “the way of the warrior,” this translation becomes extremely problematic when discussing the history of the subject, as it is only one of many terms found in Japanese texts dealing with the issue. This is discussed in more depth in Part 1, and for the sake of eliminating as much ambiguity as possible, this study will rely on Romanization of the original Japanese terms to the extent that it is practical to do so.

topic in any language, and has been described as “being a textbook-like standard among books that have been written thus far under the heading *bushidō*.”⁴

One immediate difficulty facing interpreters of *bushidō* lies in the very existence of a historical Japanese warrior code or codes. The popular view holds that *bushidō* developed as a martial ethic along with the rise of warrior power around the Kamakura period, although *bushi* were too busy fighting to formally codify it before the end of the sixteenth century. According to this interpretation, aspects of *bushidō* changed as Japanese society changed, until the samurai class was ultimately eliminated in early Meiji. It is commonly held that the ethic was then appropriated and adapted by the Meiji, Taishō, and Shōwa governments as a ruling ideology that redirected loyalty from feudal lords to the emperor.⁵ After 1945, many thinkers dismissed what they regarded as corrupting modern developments in *bushidō* and returned to examinations of the historical samurai to draw conclusions regarding “traditional” Japanese culture and behavioral patterns. In contrast, especially in recent years, a number of scholars have emerged who dismiss the notion that a widely-accepted warrior ethic existed in pre-modern Japan, and maintain that *bushidō* is a much more recent phenomenon.⁶ Regardless of whether scholars focus on the modern or pre-modern periods in their discussions of *bushidō*, most agree that there are significant differences between the martial ethics of these two periods, although the reasons given for this disconnect vary greatly.

Discussions of Meiji *bushidō* have tended to focus on the writings of Nitobe, Uchimura Kanzō, and other Christian thinkers.⁷ Some scholars, such as Kanno Kakumyō, divide modern *bushidō* into competing “Christian” and “nationalistic” types, but this assessment is simplistic

⁴ Takahashi Tomio also lauds Nitobe’s work as fundamentally marked by “an outstanding understanding and organization of *bushidō*” (Takahashi Tomio, *Bushi no kokoro, Nihon no kokoro*, 2: 426-427).

⁵ According to Takahashi Tomio, imperial troops were expected to unite the virtues of martial valor as well as Confucian decorum and loyalty (Takahashi, *Bushidō no rekishi Volume 3*, 153).

⁶ Some of this research discusses government use of *bushidō* as a militaristic ideology in the years leading up to the Pacific War, when the concept was an important component of military education and propaganda, but there is still a great deal of work to be done in this specific field.

⁷ For example, Matsumae Shigeyoshi’s 1987 *Budō shisō no tankyū*.

and does not satisfactorily explain the development of either of these strains of thought, nor their relationship with earlier ideas.⁸ Further, most examinations of *bushidō* fail to account for the continued popularity of the concept in Japan today, when the country is not populated substantially by Christians or militant nationalists.

This study will examine the modern evolution of *bushidō*, first by analyzing the state of the concept at the end of the Tokugawa period. Although several writers on the subject featured prominently in twentieth-century *bushidō* discourse, this study will show that this was a retroactive development rather than a continuation of samurai thought from Edo to Meiji. This introduction will give a brief overview of pre-Meiji warrior history and thought, but this study does not focus on the evolution of martial ethics during these periods, which has been dealt with in other works. As I will show, an idealized view of pre-Meiji history provided some inspiration and points of reference for modern *bushidō* theorists, but historical texts and events were carefully selected and interpreted to legitimize and support modern agendas. For this reason, pre-Meiji samurai history has limited relevance to modern *bushidō*, and I will restrict discussion of earlier history to those instances in which direct connections between the two were drawn.

In this study, I will demonstrate that the development and dissemination of *bushidō* from the 1880s onward was an organic process initiated by a diverse group of thinkers who were more strongly influenced by the dominant *Zeitgeist* and Japan's changing geopolitical position than by any traditional moral code. These individuals were concerned less with Japan's past than the nation's future, and their interest in *bushidō* was prompted primarily by their considerable exposure to the West, pronounced shifts in the popular perception of China, and an apprehensiveness regarding Japan's relative strength among nations. Rather than being conservative reactionaries or expansionist militarists, however, the initiators of modern *bushidō*

⁸ Kanno, *Bushidō no gyakushū*.

included men who were among the most socially progressive advocates of diplomatic discourse between nations. This study argues that this multilateral process was responsible for the subsequent popularization of *bushidō* in a “*bushidō* boom” with international ramifications between 1898 and 1914. This *bushidō* boom, which I closely examine with regard to its influence on politics, literature, the military, and sport, is further significant as a model for the cycles of *bushidō* resurgence that occurred during early Shōwa and then again from the 1980s onward.

The fact that the concept of *bushidō* retains an increasingly high profile in Japanese media, politics, and culture seems unusual, given the nation’s traumatic experiences with nationalistic ideologies in the years leading up to the Pacific War, and an explanation for this state of affairs must take into account a wide variety of factors for this development. The diverse backgrounds of the formulators of *bushidō*, the breadth of the ideology’s application from popular media to governmental policy, and the multifarious interpretations and adaptations by those exposed to *bushidō* ideology in the prewar period mean that an examination of the subject must account for historical, political, social, cultural, technological, and even economic factors.⁹ Through a multi-faceted approach to *bushidō*, incorporating a broad spectrum of the myriad societal and cultural fields in which *bushidō* discourse took place in the late Meiji and early Taishō periods, this study seeks to understand the development of *bushidō* in modern Japan, which is central to understanding many of the *bushidō* theories prevalent in Japan today.

The continued resilience of *bushidō* has, from the first discussions of the concept in Meiji, arguably been primarily attributable to its unique characteristic of having a perceived historical pedigree without concretely verifiable historical roots. This has endowed *bushidō* with a combination of legitimacy and flexibility that few other ideological constructs possess, allowing it to be interpreted and adapted to very different eras and situations. Conversely,

⁹ The last two are relevant primarily in relation to the implementation of bushido-based “spiritual education” (*seishin kyōiku*) by the military, especially in the Taishō and early Shōwa periods.

when *bushidō* became too closely identified with a single mindset or ideal, as happened with militarism in the 1930s and 1940s, it was rejected along with its ideological partners. This study demonstrates that this same process took place in the years leading up to 1914, when many came to view *bushidō* as inextricably linked with the Meiji period, and especially the figure of General Nogi Maresuke. Through this examination, it is possible to gain insight into the reasons why this ideology was capable of being resurrected in the postwar period, as well as to provide points of departure for future research on the topic.

The etymology and historiographical uses of *bushidō*

In his 1992 *Antiquity and Anachronism in Japanese History*, Jeffrey Mass pointed out several significant areas of research on Japan that remained relatively untouched. One of these was the study of the “way of the warrior,” one of the most high-profile themes in popular culture both in Japan and overseas. In almost two decades since Mass pointed out this gap in the field, while progress has been made, there is still much work to be done.¹⁰ Apprehensiveness on the part of scholars means that much of the field of samurai thought and behavior has been left to popular writers, resulting in the continuation of considerable misconceptions. Although some good translation work has also been done in this manner, the selection of texts and passages has been especially problematic, and terms and concepts from different periods are often conflated or altered to create a homogeneity that is not necessarily supported by the source documents. For marketing reasons, for example, a variety of terms are uniformly rendered “*bushidō*,” as this is the best-known term relating to Japanese warrior ethics.¹¹

¹⁰ In 1997, Gomi Fumihiko saw considerable progress in research on the historical *bushi*, but also called for research on modern *bushidō*, which he felt was still neglected (Gomi Fumihiko, *Sasshō to shinkō: bushi wo saguru*, 7, 276).

¹¹ For example, Daidōji Yūzan’s *Budō shoshinshū* has been rendered “*Bushido Shoshinshu*” in the title of the most popular edition of the text, Thomas Cleary’s *Code of the Samurai: A Modern Translation of the Bushido Shoshinshu of Taira Shigesuke*. Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1999.

The etymology of the term “*bushidō*” has been a subject of considerable debate for over a century. In 1912, the renowned Japanologist Basil Hall Chamberlain (1850-1935) argued as follows:

“As for Bushido, so modern a thing is it that neither Kaempfer, Siebold, Satow, nor Rein--all men knowing their Japan by heart--ever once allude to it in their voluminous writings. The cause of their silence is not far to seek: Bushido was unknown until a decade or two ago! THE VERY WORD APPEARS IN NO DICTIONARY, NATIVE OR FOREIGN, BEFORE THE YEAR 1900. Chivalrous individuals of course existed in Japan, as in all countries at every period; but Bushido, as an institution or a code of rules, has never existed [original emphasis retained].”¹²

This view is supported by some Japanese scholars, such as Morikawa Tetsurō and Gomi Fumihiko, who agree that *bushidō* first became a subject of discussion in the Meiji period.¹³ The textual evidence confirms these claims, and the term “*bushidō*” does not appear in any texts before the seventeenth century, and only very sporadically after that time. Even Inoue Tetsujirō (井上哲次郎, 1855-1904), who dominated prewar *bushidō* discourse, admitted that it had not been codified before the early Edo period. Nitobe Inazō believed that he himself had invented the term, and was not aware of its use before the completion of his own book in 1899. It was only shortly before his death in 1933 that he became aware of earlier occurrences of the term.¹⁴ On the other hand, in a recent article on the etymology of “*bushidō*,” Kasaya Kazuhiko has argued that *bushidō* was a widely understood term before the middle of the Tokugawa period.

“Until the middle of the eighteenth century, *bushidō* existed in a form that struggled for supremacy with Confucianism...By the end of the Edo Period, the term ‘*bushidō*’ seems to have lost its status as a commonly used word, although many texts containing it existed...However, if one did not have a chance to see those texts, the actual state of affairs was that even among *bushi*, *bushidō* was no longer a usual term.”¹⁵

¹² Basil Hall Chamberlain, *The Invention of a New Religion*, 6.

¹³ Morikawa Tetsurō, *Nihon bushidō shi*, 3; Gomi Fumihiko, *Sasshō to shinkō: bushi wo saguru*, 7.

¹⁴ Ōta, Yūzō, *Taiheiyō no hashi toshite no Nitobe Inazō*, 20-21.

¹⁵ Kasaya Kazuhiko, “Bushidō gainen no shiteki tenkai,” 271.

Kasaya bases his argument on the existence of a handful of texts that mention *bushidō*, but does not provide compelling evidence that the word was anything more than a sporadically-cited literary term.¹⁶ Maruyama Masao similarly argued that *bushidō* existed in the transitional period between the Sengoku “learning of one who takes the bow and arrow (*yumiya toru mi no narai*)” and the Confucian *shidō* of the Tokugawa period.¹⁷

In spite of these latter assertions, the documentary evidence from pre-modern Japan supports the claims made by Chamberlain, Morikawa, and Gomi. The views of most historians familiar with the relevant documents are reflected in Ōtsuki Fumihiko’s *Daigenkai* (大言海, *Great Sea of Words*), which cites the *Kōyōgunkan* (甲陽軍鑑, *Martial Records of Kōyō*) as the origin of the term.¹⁸ This work is a collection of texts recording the tactics of Takeda Shingen, and is believed to have been compiled in 1656; i.e. well into the Edo period.¹⁹ The use of *bushidō* in the *Kōyōgunkan* set the pattern of only occasional use of the term that dominated until the last decade of the nineteenth century. While *bushidō* does receive mention in the *Kōyōgunkan*, terms such as *budō* (the martial way), *bushi (mononofu) no michi* (the way of the warrior), and *yumiya no michi* (the way of the bow and arrow) are far more common.²⁰

In addition to the *Kōyōgunkan*, another source that is frequently cited as the origin of *bushidō* is the large number of *kakun*, or house codes, that were attributed to the great military families of the late sixteenth century, although many of these documents appear to have been compiled in the middle of the seventeenth century. These house codes were viewed as a source

¹⁶ The main texts listed by Kasaya are *Kiyomasa ki*, *Kōyo gunkan*, *Hagakure*, *Budō shoshinshū*, *Bukō zakki*, *Kashō ki*, and *Shōbu ron*.

¹⁷ Maruyama Masao, *Chūsei to hangyaku*, 22.

¹⁸ Ōtsuki Fumihiko, *Daigenkai*, 1794.

¹⁹ Kasaya Kazuhiko, “Bushidō gainen no shiteki tenkai,” 235.

²⁰ Sagara Tōru ed., *Kōyōgunkan, gorinsho, hagakure-shū (Nihon no shisō Vol 9)*. In this abridged selection of the *Kōyōgunkan*, *bushidō* is found only once, on page 83; *bushi (mononofu) no michi* on page 175; *budō* appears on pages 83, 94, 172, 173, 175 (4 times), and 176. Saeki Shin’ichi, relying on an indexed version of the entire work, counts 39 mentions of *bushidō* versus 65 of *budō*. He does not mention other terms with similar meanings, such as *bushi (mononofu) no michi*, *buhēn*, or *otoko no michi*, the latter two of which appear dozens of times in the *Nihon no shisō* edition (Saeki Shin’ichi, *Senjo no seishinshi*, 200). Kasaya, in his “Bushidō gainen no shiteki tenkai” counts 30 and 34 occurrences in two different versions, but neglects to quantitatively analyze synonymous terms (p. 236).

of *bushidō* from an early stage in Meiji-era *bushidō* discourse, and a significant selection of these was published in 1906 under the title *Bushidō kakun shū* (武士道家訓集, *A Collection of Bushidō House Codes*). Interestingly, the term only appears thrice in this 323-page compendium, as three of the selected house codes include it once each.²¹ The first of these three is the well-known *kakun* attributed to the house of the powerful daimyo Katō Kiyomasa (加藤清正, 1562-1611), which also uses several other synonyms found frequently in the other house codes, including *otoko no michi* (the manly way) and the *hōkō no michi* (the way of service). The third of the three *bushidō*-relevant house codes, that of Honda Tadakatsu (本多忠勝, 1548-1610), similarly makes use of many different terms, such as *budō*, *bushi no seidō* (the true way of the warrior), and *shidō* (the way of the samurai). In addition, *bushidō* receives little or no mention in postwar scholarship on medieval house codes, including Kakei Kazuhiko's comprehensive study of the subject.²² The evidence indicates that the association of *bushidō* with Japanese military house codes is a product of late Meiji-era interpretations, and the decision to insert the term into the title of the aforementioned 1906 collection must also be considered in this context.

The word “*bushidō*” can be created simply by adding *dō* (“way”) to the term *bushi* (“warrior”), and it is surprising that the term does not occur more frequently in documents from the Edo period, when the concept of “way” was commonly used. Even during this time, however, most references to *bushidō* appear to have been inspired by references to earlier texts. In the few texts that do specifically mention *bushidō*, there are two characteristics that indicate a reliance on older works. The *Hagakure*, an early eighteenth-century work which came to be one of the most significant samurai texts after its eventual publication in the early twentieth century, provides an example of both of these characteristics. The first is a direct mention of an older text that mentions *bushidō*; for example, the *Hagakure* makes mention of the *Kōyōgunkan*,

²¹ Arima Sukemasa and Akiyama Goan eds., *Bushidō kakun-shū*. “*Bushidō*” found on pages 138, 141, and 147.

²² Kakei Kazuhiko, *Chūsei buke kakun no kenkyū*.

indicating that Yamamoto may well have discovered the word in this work.²³ The second indicator is the use of a version of the phrase “*budō* (or *bushidō*) *no ginmi*,” i.e. “the investigation of *budō* (or *bushidō*),” which is also found in the *Hagakure*.²⁴ The first occurrence of a version of this phrase appears to be in the *Budō shinkan*, which is dated 1577.²⁵ In this work, the phrase “*budō gu goginmi*,” or “the investigation of *budō* implements” is used with regard to the Sengoku *daimyō* Takeda Shingen (武田信玄, 1521-1573).²⁶ The earliest use of the exact phrase “*bushidō no ginmi*” appears to be in a collection of documents associated with Katō Kiyomasa²⁷ that scholars speculate was largely written in the period from 1658-1661.²⁸ The importance of these two indicators quickly becomes clear when one reads through the few texts that contain the term *bushidō*, and the trajectory of their frequency of use throughout the Edo period is also revealing.

The pattern of use for *bushidō* is best examined through study of the definitive *Bushidō zensho* (武士道全書, *Complete Texts on Bushidō*), compiled by Inoue Tetsujirō and Saeki Ariyoshi (佐伯有義, 1867-1945) in 1942. This thirteen-volume work brought together the most comprehensive collection of historical documents relating to the samurai class, and many of them have not been published in any other form. Of 118 pre-Meiji documents comprising well over 4,000 pages, including hundreds of poems and quotes, the term *bushidō* appears in thirteen of them. Among these thirteen, only six use the term more than once, and four use it with any degree of regularity, including both the *Hagakure* and *Budō shoshinshū*. Ten of the thirteen Edo documents containing *bushidō* were composed after 1700, and seven of these contain one of the two above characteristics indicating that the author relied on an earlier text as his source of the term. In addition, the frequency of use increases in the later documents,

²³ Saiki Kazuma et al. eds., *Mikawa monogatari, hagakure* (*Nihon shisō taikēi* Vol. 26), 533.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 237.

²⁵ Saeki Ariyoshi et al. eds., *Bushidō zenshō* Vol. 1, 358.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 353.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 357.

²⁸ Moriyama Tsuneyo, “Katō Kiyomasa denki ‘Zokusen Kiyomasa ki’ no seiritsu to sono tsuika shū no shōkai,” 336.

contradicting Kasaya and Maruyama's claims that *bushidō* was a widespread concept in early Tokugawa that gradually fell into disuse.

The evidence from documents dealing with Japanese warrior thought and compiled in collections such as the *Bushidō zensho* strongly indicates that, during the Edo period, *bushidō* was a minor literary variant of other, more commonly used terms referring to warrior behavior. An analysis of the spoken language is more difficult, and Kasaya's assertion that *bushidō* was a commonly-understood term would ultimately have to be confirmed or refuted on the basis of such an examination. Large differences between the written and spoken languages in Tokugawa Japan complicate attempts to make inferences from the former to the latter.²⁹ This is exacerbated in the case of *bushidō* by the fact that the texts that do use the term tend to be either the creations of individuals outside of the mainstream, such as the recluse Yamamoto Tsunetomo, or idealized historical documents such as the *Kōyōgunkan*.³⁰ Instead, useful information in this regard can be gained from popular literary and dramatic works from the period, whose dialogue can be seen as representative of the parlance of the age. Fortunately, there is a wealth of cultural material that used the samurai class as its focus, making it possible to glean an understanding of the frequency with which the term was used.

On the basis of an examination of some of the most popular, samurai-themed works from different periods of the Tokugawa age, *bushidō* appears to have been even less used as a spoken term than as written one. To this end, this study closely examined Ihara Saikaku's *Budō denraiki* (1687)³¹ and *Buke giri monogatari* (武家義理物語, *Tales of Warrior Duty*, 1688)³²,

²⁹ Terry Eagleton has discussed the difference between "academic" and "media" discourse in the modern United States, and it would seem that this gulf would have been more pronounced in Edo Japan, where scholars often wrote using linguistic structures that were very different from the spoken language. (Terry Eagleton, *Figures of Dissent*, 35.)

³⁰ The factuality of the *Kōyōgunkan* is questioned by most scholars as it is believed to have been compiled in the early 17th century (Eiko Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan*, 399). For an overview of the debates on the provenance of the work, see Kuroda Hideo, "Kōyōgunkan o meguru kenkyū shi: Kōyōgunkan no shiryō ron."

³¹ Asō Isoji and Fuji Akio eds., *Taiyaku Saikaku zenshū: budō denraiki*. *Budō* is used on pages 3, 104, 114, 130, 141, and 171; *buhēn* (martial affairs) on pages 194, 195, 224; *bushi no michi* on pages 144 and 298; *bushi no seidō* (the true way of the warrior) on page 74.

Takeda Izumo's (the younger; 竹田出雲, 1691-1756) *Kanadehon chūshingura* (仮名手本忠臣蔵, *A Treasury of Loyal Retainers*, 1748)³², Jippensha Ikku's (十返舎一九, 1765-1831) *Tōkaidō hizakurige* (東海道膝栗毛, *On Shank's Mare Along the Eastern Sea Road*, published in installments between 1802-1822), Takizawa (Kyokutei) Bakin's (滝沢馬琴, 1767-1848) *Nansō satomi hakkenden* (南総里見八犬伝, *Legends of Eight Dogs*)³⁴, and Katsu Kokichi's (勝小吉, 1802-1850) 1843 *Musui dokugen* (夢酔独言, *Musui's Story*). These works, covering every century of the Tokugawa period, are certainly among the most popular samurai-related narratives of the time, indicating that the terminology they contain was widely understood in Japan during the time in which each was published. In addition, the majority of these texts have been described as prime examples of *bushidō* literature by modern commentators.³⁵ In spite of this, the term *bushidō* does not appear in any of these texts. While the complete absence of the term *bushidō* from some of the most popular samurai-themed works from the Tokugawa period does not preclude the appearance of the term *bushidō* in other, lesser-known works, it calls into serious question the claim that the word was widely used or even generally understood by Japanese before the Meiji restoration.

³² Asō Isoji and Fuji Akio eds., *Taiyaku Saikaku zenshū: buke giri monogatari*. *Budō* is used on pages 15, 53, 148, and 153; *buhen* on page 50; *bushi no michi* on pages 53 and 124; *bu no michi* on pages 3, 34, 54, and 108.

³³ The only related term to appear in this text is *bushi no michi*, which occurs once in the latter half of the work (Takeda Izumo and Namiki Sōsuke, edited by Miyazaki Sanmai, *Kanadehon chūshingura*, 92).

³⁴ Takizawa Bakin, *Nansō satomi hakkenden Volume 1*. Not only *bushidō*, but *shidō* and *budō* are all absent from the first 510-page volume of the *Hakkenden*. Instead, Takizawa frames most of his ethical discussions in Confucian terms relating to filial piety and loyalty, although he still uses the term *bushi* to refer to his protagonists.

³⁵ Caryl Callahan, who undertook a partial translation of the *Budō giri monogatari* for publication in *Monumenta Nipponica* in 1979, writes that “When Neo-Confucian concepts and vocabulary permeated *bushidō*, the term *giri* was adopted to express many old concepts and a few new ones. By Saikaku's day, the concept was deeply meshed with *bushidō*, and fulfilling the requirements of *giri* had become the highest ideal of the *bushi*.” (Caryl Callahan, “Tales of Samurai Honor,” 2). In this passage, Callahan appears to look back at Saikaku's age with the understanding that *bushidō* was a firmly established concept, reflecting a widely-held view in much of the twentieth century. Similar examples include Miyazaki Sanmai's (宮崎三昧, 1859-1919) introduction to the *Kanadehon chūshingura*, which frames the text in the context of *bushidō* discourse (Takeda Izumo and Namiki Sōsuke, edited by Miyazaki Sanmai, *Kanadehon chūshingura*), and the Japanese electronic edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, which succinctly summarizes Takizawa's *Nansō satomi hakkenden*, as “Confucian and *bushidō*-like.” (*Britannica kokusai daihyakka jiten: shōkōmoku denshi jisho ban*. Tokyo: Britannica Japan, 2004).

An additional complication with the term “*bushidō*” is the confusion between its historical and historiographical usage. Although it was largely unknown before Meiji, since that time “*bushidō*” has come to be commonly used as a broad descriptive term for Japanese warrior behavior, whether it was originally uncoded or labeled with another name. This is especially problematic in the case of translations of historical documents into modern Japanese and other languages, which often render terms such as “*budō*,” “*shidō*,” “*hōkōnin no michi*,” and many others uniformly as “*bushidō*,” implying a homogeneity and universality that did not actually exist. This can be seen most clearly in later commentaries and translations of the *Hagakure*, both in English and modern Japanese, as it continues to be one of the most popular texts related to samurai thought. Modern commentators who may themselves be convinced of the importance of *bushidō* often choose to use one term for both “*budō*” and “*bushidō*.”³⁶ While this may, in fact, reflect Yamamoto Tsunetomo’s view of the two terms as having the same meaning, it is misleading in the sense that “*bushidō*” is generally used throughout modern translations in place of the historically far more common “*budō*.” This tendency is not found only in the works of nationalistic prewar *bushidō* ideologists, however, but also pervades recent scholarly texts. For example, in *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, the translation of a section of the *Hagakure* includes the following sentence: “The idea that to die without accomplishing your purpose is undignified and meaningless, just dying like a dog, is the pretentious *bushidō* of the city slickers of Kyoto and Osaka.”³⁷ A glance at the original text, however, reveals that the

³⁶ There is considerable confusion regarding the historical difference between *bushidō* and *budō*, two terms that have become well-understood in English. This difficulty stems largely from a shift in the meaning of the *budō* that occurred in the late nineteenth century. While it had earlier been used as a general term that could refer to any or all aspects of samurai life, including religion, behavior, learning, destiny, and military training, in the Meiji period *budō* came to be used almost exclusively to refer to individual military training and abilities, which had also been referred to using terms such as *bujutsu*, *bugei*, and *buhō* during the Edo period. It is this meaning, commonly rendered as “martial arts” in English, that *budō* continues to retain in both languages in the present day. In fact, the entry on *budō* in the *Kokushi daijiten* contains nothing more than a note to the reader to “see *bugei*” (which can be literally translated as “martial arts”). At the same time in late Meiji, the term “*bushidō*” began to replace “*budō*” and other words in discourse concerning aspects of the samurai that went beyond practical concerns such as strategy and martial arts (see: Inoue Shun, “The Invention of the Martial Arts: Kanō Jigorō and Kōdōkan Judo,” 163).

³⁷ Barry Steben, “The Way of the Warrior II,” 476.

Romanized term in the transcription is not “*bushidō*” at all: “*Moshi, zu ni ataranu toki ha, inuji nado to iu koto ha, Kamigatafū no uchiagari taru BUDŌ naru beshi* [my emphasis].”³⁸ Even Kasaya Kazuhiko, who is currently one of the most prolific and established writers on the subject of *bushidō* in Japan, transcribes *budō* as *bushidō* in an explanation of a brief passage of the *Budō shoshinshū*.³⁹ These are by no means isolated examples, and less academically rigorous works are guilty of far more serious transgressions. One such instance is the 1999 Charles E. Tuttle publication of Thomas Cleary’s translation of Daidōji Yūzan’s *Budō shoshinshū*, which has been given the misleading title *Code of the Samurai: A Modern Translation of the Bushido Shoshinshu of Taira Shigesuke* in an evident effort to appeal to readers who are more familiar with *bushidō* than with the term used by the original author.

Another approach taken by some scholars, such as Takahashi Tomio, has been to use the term historiographically while prefacing it with a specifier that limits unsustainable claims to universality. In his *History of Bushidō*, Takahashi uses labels such as “Mito *bushidō*,” “Aizu *bushidō*,” and “Satsuma *bushidō*” to refer to doctrines that are limited to specific temporal and physical spaces.⁴⁰ Takahashi’s approach presents one possible solution to the dilemma, but the

³⁸ Saeki Ariyoshi et al. eds., *Bushidō zenshō Vol. 6*, 30. There are several slightly different versions of the *Hagakure*, such as the *Nihon shisō taikēi* version mentioned above (p. 220), or the *Hagakure zenshū* published by Gogatsu Shobō in 1978 (p. 17), but all use the term “*budō*” in the disputed passage. A similar equivocation regarding the same passage is made by Stacey Day in the preface to the *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Hagakure*. After admonishing previous interpreters of the *Hagakure* for their lack of meticulousness concerning the use of specific terms, Day proceeds to render both “*bushidō*” and “*budō*” as “bushido” in the “improved” translation that he published in collaboration with Koga Hideo (Koga Hideo and Stacey Day eds., *Hagakure: Spirit of Bushido*, xix-xx. Day repeats the same error on the following page in a translation of *Hagakure kiki-gaki* 114 (113 in *Nihon shisō taikēi* version, p. 251). This is another sentence containing both terms, and Day simply renders both as “bushido.”). This admonition applies not only to foreign translators, however, and Japanese commentators are equally guilty of misleading transcriptions. In many post-Meiji versions of the *Hagakure* in Japanese, the above passage is rewritten so that both of the terms in question are rendered uniformly as “*bushidō*,” with no comment or explanation given. Two examples of this, one each from before and after 1945, are the *Hagakure* commentaries by Matsunami Jirō (1939) and Morikawa Tetsurō (1975) (Matsunami Jirō, *Hagakure bushidō*, 19; Morikawa Tetsurō, *Hagakure nyūmon*, 33). Ōkuma Miyoshi’s modern Japanese transcription goes so far as to use *bushidō* while *budō* remains in the original text on the facing page (Yamamoto Tsunetomo; Ōkuma Miyoshi ed., *Hagakure: gendaiyaku*, 33).

³⁹ Kasaya Kazuhiko, “*Bushidō gainen no shiteki tenkai*,” 253.

⁴⁰ Takahashi Tomio, *Bushidō no rekishi* 3: 84, 110, 128.

most effective method of minimizing the confusion between historiographical and historical usages of “*bushidō*” would be to use either period- or location-specific historical terms, or neutral descriptors such as “warrior morality.”⁴¹ In this study, “*bushidō*” is used exclusively to refer to the ideology of the same name that developed from mid-Meiji onward, and not as a synonym for any other term or related concept.

The reader will soon notice that there are a relatively large number of Romanized and Italicized terms in this work. Where widely accepted and directly corresponding terms exist, I use the English term with the Romanized Japanese original at the first mention of the term. Jeffrey Mass has criticized what he sees as John W. Hall’s excessive insistence on using original terms in Japanese historiography, but adherence to the original Japanese terminology is essential for understanding the historical development of *bushidō*.⁴² This admonition naturally applies to Western scholars, but is also directed at Japanese scholars and writers concerned with *bushidō*, as much of their work is riddled with similar terminological equivocations.

Warrior behavior in Japanese history before 1600

While the available evidence strongly indicates that the term “*bushidō*” was virtually unknown before 1890, and did not enjoy widespread use until the 20th century, there is a second issue which is more critical to the study of *bushidō*. This is the question of the very existence of a samurai code of ethics under one or several different names, or even no name, before the Meiji period. It would seem plausible to argue, as many have done, that a widely understood, centuries-old warrior code of ethics was merely put to paper and given a new moniker by Tokugawa thinkers before being resurrected and redirected by Meiji-era *bushidō* theorists. However, an examination of source materials and later scholarship relating to samurai morality

⁴¹ In a later text, Takahashi argues for the use of the concept “*budō tetsugaku* (*budō* philosophy)” to describe periods when *bushi* were not actually active, and he considers the concept of *budō* to be primary to *bushidō* (Takahashi, *Bushi no kokoro, nihon no kokoro*, 284, 290, 400-401).

⁴² Jeffrey Mass, *Antiquity and Anachronism in Japanese History*, 7-8

does not reveal the existence of a single, broadly-accepted, *bushi*-specific ethical system at any point in pre-modern Japanese history. The very identification of warriors as a separate class is problematic before the Edo period, and even after this point regional differences and temporal changes precluded the broad acceptance of a warrior-specific code of conduct, as the character and definition of *bushi* varied considerably from domain to domain.

Beginning in the late Meiji period, some prewar scholars sought the origins of *bushidō* in the exploits of the legendary first emperors, or even in the earlier Age of the Gods, while more reasoned accounts tended to search for the genesis of a warrior ethic in the Heian or Kamakura period.⁴³ While some *bushidō* theorists sought to push the origins of their subject as far back into history as possible in search of legitimacy, there was a broad consensus among scholars that no *codified* warrior ethic existed before the seventeenth century. Even Inoue Tetsujirō, who was *bushidō*'s most fervent promoter from 1901 until his death in 1944, and who traced the history of the “unique Japanese *bushidō* spirit” to the mythical Plain of High Heaven, contended that the subject was first codified in the works of Yamaga Sokō in the late seventeenth century.⁴⁴ Kanno Kakumyō, a more recent proponent of *bushidō*, also argues that the samurai were too busy fighting in earlier centuries, and only began to concern themselves with ethics in the relatively peaceful Edo period.⁴⁵ At the same time, most *bushidō* theorists, including Inoue and Kanno, have argued that the period of intermittent warfare before 1600 was critical in the formation of *bushidō*, which is fundamentally a martial ethic. To be sure, texts that are often held up as Edo-period formulations of *bushidō*, such as the *Hagakure* and *Budō shoshinshū*, are strongly colored by a nostalgic view of an earlier age when samurai still frequently clashed on the battlefield.

⁴³ Saeki Ariyoshi ed., *Bushidō Hōten*, 10.

⁴⁴ Inoue Tetsujirō, *Bushidō*, 41.

⁴⁵ Kanno Kakumyō, *Bushidō no gyakushū*, 20-21.

It is telling that historians of Japan's turbulent pre-Tokugawa centuries are almost all silent on the subject of *bushidō*, and do not frame their studies in the context of warrior-specific moral norms. When medieval historians do address the subject, the result tends to be critical of *bushidō*. Karl Friday, for example, has addressed the issues of loyalty and a stoic attitude towards death, which are among the characteristics most frequently attributed to the samurai. With regard to the former, he writes "however central the willingness to die might have been to twentieth-century notions of *bushidō*, it takes a considerable leap of faith to connect this sort of philosophy with the actual behavior of the medieval samurai." On the subject of loyalty, Friday points out that "the truth is that selfless displays of loyalty by warriors are conspicuous by their absence." Friday describes the situation between the rise of the warriors and the seventeenth century as follows:

"...the ties between master and retainer were contractual, based on mutual interest and advantage, and were heavily conditioned by the demands of self-interest. Medieval warriors remained loyal to their lords only so long as it benefited them to do so; they could and did readily switch allegiances when the situation warranted it. In fact, there are very few important battles in Japanese history in which the defection—often in the middle of the fighting—of one or more of the major players was not a factor."⁴⁶

This assessment of medieval loyalty is echoed by Cameron Hurst:

"In fact, one of the most troubling problems of the premodern era is the apparent discrepancy between the numerous house laws and codes exhorting the samurai to practice loyalty and the all-too-common incidents of *disloyalty* which racked medieval Japanese warrior life. It would not be an exaggeration to say that most crucial battles in medieval Japan were decided by the defection—that is, the disloyalty—of one or more of the major vassals of the losing general."⁴⁷

With regard to the supposed willingness of medieval warriors to offer up their lives, Hurst criticizes the belief that *seppuku* was a widespread custom, and was instead limited to hopeless

⁴⁶ Karl F. Friday, "Bushidō or Bull?" 341-342.

⁴⁷ G. Cameron III Hurst, "Death, Honor, and Loyalty: The Bushidō Ideal," 517.

situations in which a defeated warrior was certain to be subjected to torture, a common practice at the time.⁴⁸

The views put forth by Japanese historians are similar to those expressed above. Hurst cites Sakaiya Ta'ichi's comparison of the medieval samurai sense of loyalty with that of modern professional baseball players. According to Sakaiya, the samurai fought for a cause as long as they were allied to a certain "team," but fully expected to move teams or be "traded" during their careers.⁴⁹ This contractual view of medieval loyalty is borne out by the surviving documents from the time.⁵⁰ Warriors carefully recorded the services rendered to their lords, and expected payment commensurate to their sacrifices. As Friday has summarized the situation, "Warrior leaders could count on the services of their followers only to the extent that they were able to offer suitably attractive compensation – or, conversely, to impose suitably daunting sanctions for refusal."⁵¹ Loyalty that was not dependent upon compensation existed in some cases of bonds of kinship, but these were generally limited to the nuclear family, and even then bonds between siblings were often weak.⁵²

The makeup of the military before 1600 is another factor to consider in discussions of warrior behavior and ethics. In much the same way as medieval European knighthood was inseparable from the structure of feudal society, the changes in Japan's military technology and specialization were concomitant with shifts in the social hierarchies and lifestyles of the Japanese people. In contrast with China, Japan's early military evolved from corvee peasant armies to a much smaller professional class of mounted archers.⁵³ As a result, the sizes of armies shrunk dramatically, and some of the most famous battles in the 12th, 13th, and 14th centuries were contested by only a few hundred men. For example, at Minatogawa in 1336, during one of the

⁴⁸ Ibid., 520.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 518.

⁵⁰ For an analysis of 14th-century warrior documents, see , *State of War: The Violent Order of Fourteenth-Century Japan*.

⁵¹ Karl F. Friday, *Samurai, Warfare, and the State in Early Medieval Japan*, 59.

⁵² Ibid., 57.

⁵³ Karl F. Friday, *Hired Swords: The Rise of Private Warrior Power in Early Japan*, 39-40.

largest battles of the 14th century, and also one of the most significant battles in all of Japanese history, only an estimated seven hundred men perished together with the loyalist Kusunoki Masashige.⁵⁴ Generally, much like their contemporaries in Western Europe, Japanese warriors during this period tended to emphasize heroic individual actions and personal glory.

The gradual breakdown of central authority in the fifteenth century culminated in the form of the Ōnin War of 1467-1477, which resulted in major changes to the military order. The inability of super-regional governmental institutions to guarantee any semblance of protection to the lives and property of the citizenry resulted in a diversification and expansion of military entities. Temples, most of which had always had considerable fighting forces, increased these to the point that they represented some of the largest armies in the land. Peasants increasingly banded together in religious or secular *ikki* for protection. In some provinces, most notably Iga and Kōga, villages under the headship of *jizamurai* organized their own unique defenses against outside attackers, including composing constitutions and constructing extensive fortifications.⁵⁵ Warfare ceased to be the exclusive domain of the professionals, and even *bushi* families found themselves incorporating irregular units consisting of conscripted peasants into their military forces.

As a result, in the mid-to-late sixteenth century, when domainal consolidation increased armies to an unprecedented size, they included a large proportion of non-professionals and had a far higher ratio of pedestrians to equestrians than in previous centuries. The introduction of firearms in the middle of the sixteenth century increased the effectiveness of conscripted troops as they did not necessitate extensive training to use. Although the arquebus did require a certain amount of military drill, it did not take the same level of dedicated training required by equestrian archery, and those who used guns as their main weapon were not accorded the elite

⁵⁴ Thomas Conlan, *State of War: The Violent Order of Fourteenth-Century Japan*, 57.

⁵⁵ Pierre Francois Souyri, *The World Turned Upside Down: Medieval Japanese Society*, 190-191.

status of the mounted archers of earlier eras.⁵⁶ The sixteenth-century trend toward larger armies can be seen in the troop numbers present at the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600, where the competing factions were able to muster an estimated total of roughly 150,000 men.⁵⁷

Changes in the size and makeup of Japanese armies in the centuries before 1600 naturally affected the relationships within and between feudal houses and other social entities. When fighting forces were relatively small-scale, such as during the late Heian, Kamakura, and early Muromachi periods, horizontal relationships were more representative than in later times. Most *bushi* still had direct connections to, and drew their power from, their landholdings, and were able to use this authority as leverage when dealing with other warriors. Therefore, simple demands or orders to arrive and fight for an allied house were unusual, and “loyalty” required payment. Reciprocity was expected at every stage of the process, and merely arriving at the camp of the leader who had requested one’s presence was duly rewarded. According to Thomas Conlan, a fundamental error in the historiography of Japan’s medieval military has been the equivocation of two separate terms from different eras: both *chūsetsu* and *chūgi* are often understood to simply mean “loyalty,” with insufficient discrimination between the times and situations in which the two terms were used.⁵⁸ This misunderstanding results in some puzzling translations of medieval petitions, which seem to request compensation for different types of loyalty, including “the loyalty (忠節, *chūsetsu*) of dismembering an enemy” and “the loyalty (忠節, *chūsetsu*) of treason.”⁵⁹ The second of these seems particularly irreconcilable with most understandings of loyalty, but is made comprehensible when *chūsetsu* is translated not as “loyalty,” but as “service.” Rather than an abstract concept of loyalty of the type found in

⁵⁶ Arquebusiers, although more important than the bowmen or pikemen they fought alongside, also had their own units and were ultimately of relatively low rank in the military hierarchy. (Kasaya Kazuhiko, *The Origin and Development of Japanese-Style Organization*, 50-51)

⁵⁷ John Whitney Hall, “The Bakuhan System,” 163.

⁵⁸ Thomas Conlan, *State of War: The Violent Order of Fourteenth-Century Japan*, 141-164.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 142-143.

Confucian-influenced discourse after 1600, loyalty during this turbulent period was very pragmatic and would shift if not sufficiently rewarded.⁶⁰

Pre-modern writings on *bushidō*

Before 1945, the historiography of Japan's medieval period was heavily politicized, especially when it concerned the imperial house. The great controversy that erupted in 1911 concerning the proper interpretation of the period of the Northern and Southern courts, and the legitimacy of the two, is a prime example of this.⁶¹ Scholars were not prohibited from conducting their own research on these subjects, but public and governmental pressure made it difficult to publish views on sensitive subjects that did not conform to the orthodox interpretations, which were marked by an emphasis on *bushidō* values such as imperial loyalty, bravery, and self-sacrifice. Medieval war tales were selectively edited and incorporated into new dramatic forms in order to bring forth these virtues, and many elements from these prewar interpretations are still widely disseminated.

Among historians, revision of the prewar versions of medieval history began soon after 1945. One example of this is the work of Takayanagi Mitsutoshi (高柳光寿, 1892-1969), founder of the Japan Historical Society, who struck back at the idealized view of medieval Japan in a 1960 essay on *bushidō*. According to Takayanagi, the accounts of Sengoku warriors were largely products of the Edo period and more a reflection of seventeenth-century society than actual battlefield conduct.⁶² Takayanagi further rejected the notion of the existence of unilateral loyalty to a lord, much less an emperor, before the Edo period, and argued that most samurai would have considered their own lives to be considerably more important than the lives

⁶⁰ This situation can be seen clearly in the *Taiheiki* account of the abortive Kemmu Restoration attempted by the emperor Go-Daigo in 1333, which failed largely due to the sovereign's refusal to monetarily compensate the warriors who fought for his cause, instead expecting them to offer their services purely out of a sense of duty to the imperial house. (Andrew Edmund Goble, *Kenmu: Go-Daigo's Revolution*, 79)

⁶¹ John S. Brownlee, *Japanese Historians and the National Myths, 1600-1945*, 118-130.

⁶² Takayanagi Mitsutoshi, *Bushidō: Nihon bunka kenkyū* (Volume 8), 5.

of their superiors.⁶³ Naramoto Tetsuya presented similar arguments in his 1971 *Bushidō no keifu* (*Genealogy of Bushidō*), citing examples of warlords asking brave fighters to join their side from the enemy ranks as a common practice.⁶⁴ Naramoto further discussed the repeated looting of Kyoto as evidence of a lack of ethics, and the great importance warriors placed on appearance as the antithesis of the popular image of the austere and frugal samurai.⁶⁵ More recent expositions of the period are Gomi Fumihiko's 1997 *Sesshō to shinkō: bushi wo saguru* (*Killing and Faith: Searching for Warriors*) and Saeki Shin'ichi's 2004 *Senjō no seishinshi* (*History of Battlefield Mentalities*), which also reject the idea that a widely-understood warrior ethic existed before 1600. While these works focus on medieval history, Saeki deemed it necessary to include a discussion of *bushidō* in modern Japan, and one of the goals of his book is to dispel some of the prevalent *bushidō*-related myths concerning medieval Japanese warriors and society.⁶⁶

Aside from a handful of idealized accounts, such as that of Kusunoki Masashige and Godaigo, pre-1600 samurai behavior was not generally deemed suitable by interpreters of *bushidō* active between Meiji and 1945. The mercenary nature of *bushi* during Sengoku was at odds with the emperor-centered nationalistic core of the "orthodox" modern *bushidō* that rose to prominence after the Russo-Japanese War.⁶⁷ In addition, the Edo-period texts that showed the greatest nostalgia for pre-Tokugawa conditions were carefully selected, condensed, and edited to purge them of those elements which ran counter to the national project in the early twentieth century. For example, a pocket edition of the *Hagakure* was widely distributed by the army beginning in the 1940s, but in a highly abridged form compiled by the philosopher Watsuji Tetsurō (和辻哲郎, 1889-1960).⁶⁸ It is perhaps most telling, however, that while students of

⁶³ Ibid., 9-13.

⁶⁴ Naramoto Tetsuya, *Bushidō no keifu*, 30-31.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 33-39.

⁶⁶ Saeki Shin'ichi, *Senjō no seishinshi*.

⁶⁷ This development is discussed in greater depth in chapter three of this study.

⁶⁸ Unoda Shōya, "Bushidō ron no seiritsu: seiyō to tōyō no aida," 43.

bushidō would sometimes look to medieval history to seek evidence for their theories, historians of medieval history were, and are, seldom drawn to *bushidō* as an exegetical tool.

Changes in military technology and tactics in Japan between the early thirteenth and the end of the sixteenth centuries contributed greatly to the fluid nature of warrior society during this period. In turn, the diversity of martial culture defies retrospective attempts to superimpose codes of warrior morality on anything broader than local groups for more than brief periods. With regard to warrior morality, the importance of Sengoku lies primarily in providing samurai in the Edo period with historical reference points that, in an idealized form, gave considerable legitimacy for their domination of the political order. In addition, specific incidents or individuals from Sengoku could be selected by Tokugawa theorists to argue for or against certain points. One example of this is Yamamoto Tsunetomo's reliance on anecdotes concerning the lords of Nabeshima domain, which make up a considerable portion of the *Hagakure*. In terms of modern *bushidō*, however, the Edo period was by far the greatest source of historical references for thinkers who sought inspiration in earlier periods. This can be seen in the *Bushidō zensho*, with the vast majority of documents found in its 4,000 pages having been composed between 1600 and 1868.

While many of them were cited by *bushidō* theorists in the twentieth century, the large number of writings on samurai behavior and ethics that were composed during the Edo period do not represent a consensus on any specific issue or course of behavior. In this context, the most important theoretical shift from Sengoku to Edo was also a social one. During the earlier period, there can be no doubt that a certain martial elite perceived themselves to be primarily warriors, but the distinction between warrior and civilian was less clear among lower-ranking or part-time fighters.⁶⁹ The self-perception of the *bushi* is significant because, as Kanno Kakumyō

⁶⁹ Gomi Fumihiko has discussed the variety of warriors in late Heian and Kamakura, and the difficulties in

has summarized warrior ethics, “Ultimately, it can be said that *bushidō* is the awareness of each individual *bushi* that ‘I am a *bushi*.’”⁷⁰ Kanno presents a compelling argument regarding the core of what could be called a unique form of samurai thought. On a theoretical level, that which set Japanese warriors apart from other social groups, especially before they were given separate legal status by Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu, was nothing other than the awareness of being different from non-*bushi* in some way.

During the Edo period, much of the literature that was later integrated into the *bushidō* canon, such as the works of Yamaga Sokō, was concerned with elucidating the differences between *bushi* and the non-samurai classes. While *bushi* may have themselves been aware of their *bushi* status by virtue of their martial duties distinct from those of courtiers, monks, or other non-combatants, they would have been unable to point to any consistent, widely accepted, or unique ethical or moral norm that set their profession apart from the rest of the population.

The situation changed somewhat from the Azuchi-Momoyama period (1568-1600) onward, when *bushi* were at least able to rely on a vague, supposedly innate and usually inherited “warrior-ness,” which was given legal support by successive governments. As Douglas Howland and others have argued, it was only at the end of the sixteenth century that the concept of *mibun* (social status) became important in Japan as a representation of “a conservative wish to reduce social fluidity and to fix social status.”⁷¹ At the same time that the social classes were by and large being fixed by legislation in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, however, the *bushi* were quickly becoming removed from their role as active warriors, thereby losing the practical distinction that ostensibly set them apart from other classes. This created an awkward situation in which there was little or no application of the martial skills that formed the basis for samurai domination of the political sphere. For this reason, although Confucian

differentiating between groups of warriors, pirates, and bandits (Gomi, *Sasshō to shinkō*, 140, 256).

⁷⁰ Kanno Kakumyō, *Bushidō no gyakushū*, 225.

⁷¹ Douglas R. Howland, “Samurai Status, Class, and Bureaucracy: A Historiographical Essay,” 355.

models were applied by Yamaga, Ogyū Sorai (荻生徂徠, 1666-1728), and others to provide a theoretical justification for samurai rule, the parallels drawn between samurai and Chinese gentleman-scholars were not entirely satisfactory, as contemporary Japanese scholars and foreign observers realized full well.⁷² In addition, changing economic conditions meant that class distinctions were often at odds with social status, a realization that has led to a fundamental rethink of the applicability of the concepts of “class” and “status” in some recent scholarship. The situation is further complicated by regional differences that meant that certain groups were considered samurai in some domains but not in others.⁷³ This can partially account for the great discrepancies in the percentage of the population that was considered to be samurai in different domains.⁷⁴ As a result of regional and temporal variations in the character of the warrior class over the Tokugawa period, which trended heavily towards bureaucratization, a perceived need for definition and legitimization of the role of the *bushi* in an age of peace became pronounced.

It could be argued that the large number of surviving writings that sought to define the significance of the warrior class indicate that the *bushi* were highly aware of their unique status and desired to understand its nature. Conversely, these same texts could be interpreted as evidence that samurai found their social status increasingly challenged by economically powerful commoners, some of whom were also purchasing or receiving samurai privileges such as the right to wear swords.⁷⁵ These practices increased greatly as the Edo period drew to a close. In this environment, samurai would have felt considerable pressure to identify characteristics that made them different from, and superior to, the other classes. The sense that their position was under threat may also explain the vitriol directed towards commoners in the writings of some

⁷² Ibid., 356.

⁷³ Ibid., 361-362, 374.

⁷⁴ According to Sekiyama Naotarō's analysis of the period 1870-3, depending on the domain, the percentage of samurai ranged from 3.92% to 26.54%, with a national average of 6.40%. (Sekiyama Naotarō. *Kinsei nihon no jinkō kōzō*, 307-314)

⁷⁵ For example, the representatives of the Kaitokudō school were granted permission to wear swords when meeting with government officials. Najita Tetsuo, *Visions of Virtue in Tokugawa Japan: The Kaitokudō Merchant Academy of Ōsaka*, 74.

samurai commentators, such as Yamamoto Tsunetomo. On the other hand, especially towards the end of the Edo period, other commentators of both samurai and non-samurai extraction increasingly rejected the notion that there were fundamental differences between the classes. Depending on the specific domain and period, the variety of stratifications within the *bushi* and commoner ranks led to situations in which the differences within the classes were often greater than they were between certain members of either, resulting in a degree of overlap, especially in terms of lifestyles and economic status.⁷⁶

Writers on warrior ethics have often overlooked the ambiguities in the historical situation when considering class status, instead focusing on idealized notions of what a samurai should represent. In this context, one of the best-known texts on the subject is Yamaga Sokō's argument justifying the exalted status of the warrior class:

“The tasks of a samurai are to reflect on his person, to find a lord and do his best in service, to interact with his companions in a trustworthy and warm manner, and to be mindful of his position while making duty his focus. In addition, he will not be able to prevent involvement in parent-child, sibling, and spousal relationships. Without these, there could be no proper human morality among all the other people under Heaven, but the tasks of farmers, artisans, and merchants do not allow free time, so they are not always able to follow them and fulfill the Way. A samurai puts aside the tasks of the farmers, artisans and merchants, and the Way is his exclusive duty. In addition, if ever a person who is improper with regard to human morality appears among the three common classes, the samurai quickly punishes them, thus ensuring correct Heavenly morality on Earth. It should not be that a samurai knows the virtues of letteredness and martiality, but does not use them. Therefore, formally a samurai will prepare for use of swords, lances, bows, and horses, while inwardly he will endeavor in the ways of lord-vassal, friend-friend, parent-child, brother-brother, and husband-wife relations. In his mind he has the way of letteredness, while outwardly he is martially prepared. The three common classes make

⁷⁶ For example, in much of the country, *hatamoto* ranks were hereditary, whereas *ashigaru* were not. However, there were also *ashigaru* who were able to pass their positions to their descendants, further blurring the lines. Henry D. Smith relies on the differences within the ranks to explain a serious discrepancy in accounts of the Akō incident of 1703. In this incident, 47 masterless samurai carried out a famous attack, but only 46 of them surrendered to the authorities and were condemned to *seppuku* in the aftermath. According to Smith, the 47th and lowest-ranked *rōnin*, Terasaka Kichiemon (寺坂吉右衛門, 1665-1747) was dismissed by the group immediately following the attack as they did not want his low *ashigaru* status to reflect on the rest of them and cause difficulties or embarrassment. The government responded by simply striking his name from the list of accused. (Henry D. II Smith, “The Trouble with Terasaka,” 5, 38-41)

him their teacher and honor him, and in accordance with his teachings they come to know what is essential and what is insignificant.

...Therefore, it can be said that the essence of the samurai is in understanding his task and function.”⁷⁷

According to Yamaga’s reasoning, one of the major differences between samurai and commoners is that the former have more time to focus on the nature of ethical behavior and can therefore serve a role similar to that of idealized Confucian gentlemen in terms of their position as moral role models for the rest of society. There are two major problems with this view. In addition to unemployment or low stipends rendering many *bushi* unable to make an idealistic “Way” their “exclusive duty,” the specific content of the “Way” outlined by Yamaga was not sufficiently clear or widely accepted that it would serve as a moral guide in real situations. The latter reason meant that it was possible for Yamaga to be both lauded and criticized as the teacher of the Akō *rōnin*, although there is no evidence that he would have supported their actions, let alone acted as their teacher.

In comparison, Yamamoto Tsunetomo’s *Hagakure* provides more specific behavioral guidelines along with a class awareness that is more pronounced than Yamaga’s. According to Yamamoto, the disparity between the classes was also due to the inferiority of non-samurai, but this was due to the innate nature of the individuals in the classes rather than a product of the social structure.⁷⁸ Whereas Yamaga believed that the moral superiority of the samurai came from the personal cultivation made possible by their professional situation, Yamamoto felt that their martial nature and readiness to serve gave *bushi* the right to have the power of life and death over commoners. Legislation in the form of rudeness-killing laws (*burei-uchi*) did, in fact, permit samurai to kill commoners for perceived slights, but the obvious social disorder that this practice would cause meant that it was only seldom applied.⁷⁹ There was no love lost on

⁷⁷ Yamaga Sokō. *Yamaga Sokō (Nihon shisō taikēi Vol. 32)*, 32-3.

⁷⁸ This view can also be found in the *Kōyōgunkan*, which clearly stated that it was not possible for commoners to be like *bushi*. (Sagara Tōru ed., *Kōyōgunkan, gorinsho, hagakure-shū (Nihon no shisō Vol 9)*, 83)

⁷⁹ Ikegami Eiko, *The Taming of the Samurai*, 244-245.

the other side, either, and the disdain most commoners had for the samurai has been described as “legendary.”⁸⁰ By the mid-nineteenth century, however, increasing social mobility had further blurred the distinctions among warriors and between warriors and commoners, and even many influential *bushi* questioned the innate supremacy of their class.⁸¹

Ultimately, the Japanese *bushi* were a clearly defined class for only the last 250 years of their existence. During this time, they were politically specified as such and, on the whole, did not differ significantly from the general populace in terms of ability, religion, geography, or any other readily identifiable characteristic. Equally, aside from their ostensibly elevated status in the social order, and pronounced consciousness of the same, there were no other dominant factors that would have tied *bushi* together. Since their status was primarily a political and professional distinction, it is natural that their religious, behavioral, and ethical views were as varied as those of the population at large, and far more likely to be determined by influences other than their status as samurai. As a result of this diversity, it is possible to select certain examples of warrior writings and behavior to make a case for almost any interpretation of the “nature” of *bushi*. Such discussions tend to be a reflection of the times and situation of their authors, rather than an accurate depiction of any greater “way of the samurai.” Many samurai were naturally aware of their elevated status in the social order, even if they were surpassed financially by wealthy commoners. However, this consciousness of belonging to an elite varied greatly depending on time, location, and the specific situation of the individual *bushi*, and for many of them the differences within their class seemed greater than those between the classes.

⁸⁰ Leslie Pincus, *Authenticating Culture in Japan*, 130-132. Other examples include Andō Shōeki (安藤昌益, 1703-1762), who derided the samurai as parasites on society and the National Learning scholar Kamo no Mabuchi (賀茂真淵, 1697-1769) put forth the oft-cited social criticism that the more people one killed, the higher one’s rank, inferring that the shogun was the biggest murderer in the land. (Colin Holmes and A.H. Ion, “Bushido and the Samurai,” 310; Kanno Kakumyō, *Bushidō no gyakushū*, 39-40).

⁸¹ Yokoi Shōnan, for example, argued that the difficult lives of the peasantry made them surpass the warrior class in endurance and mettle, and with weapons and a bit of training a peasant force would be able to handily rout a comparable army of samurai. This view foreshadowed events almost two decades later, when the new imperial army defeated Saigō Takamori’s former samurai forces in the Satsuma Rebellion of 1877. (Yokoi Shōnan, “Kokuze sanron,” 463)

In addition, insofar as class consciousness can be argued to have been widely shared, it did not serve as the basis for a uniform accepted ethic, nor was it possible to easily integrate it into nationalistic modern *bushidō* ideologies that could serve a supposedly classless society.

Overview of the existing literature on modern *bushidō*

The literature on *bushidō*, especially in Japanese, is dauntingly vast, reflecting the prominent role of the concept throughout the last century. Most of these writings deal with pre-modern Japanese history, and there are very few studies of *bushidō* in late Meiji, which was the most important period in the development of the concept as it is commonly used today. There are no significant monograph-length studies of *bushidō* in English, let alone any studies specifically dealing with its modern development. With regard to specific treatments of *bushidō* in English, Cameron Hurst and Karl Friday have given good summaries of pre-Meiji *bushidō* and its problems, and have discussed its uses in the Pacific War, but do not discuss its development between these periods.⁸² In Japanese, there are far more works on *bushidō*, including many dedicated treatments. Some more recent works are those by Kanno Kakumyō and Kasaya Kazuhiko, focusing on pre-Meiji thought and behavior. Kanno's *Bushidō no gyakushū* is one recent example of a work on *bushidō* that also includes a brief overview of the uses of *bushidō* in Meiji, but Kanno makes it clear that he does not consider this period to be representative of "true *bushidō*." Other works that take a similar approach and make a brief mention of modern developments include Fuji Naotomo's *Nihon no bushidō* (*Japan's Bushidō*), Morikawa Tetsurō's *Nihon bushidō shi* (*History of Japanese Bushidō*), Saeki Shin'ichi's *Senjō no seishinshi* (*Spiritual History of the Battlefield*), Tawaragi Kōtarō's *Shin bushidō ron* (*New Bushidō Theory*), and Ozawa Tomio's *Rekishi toshite no bushidō* (*Bushidō as History*). Alexander Bennett's 2009 *Bushi no etosu to so no ayumi* (*The Warrior Ethos and its*

⁸² G. Cameron Hurst III, "Death, Honor, and Loyalty: The Bushidō Ideal," and Karl F. Friday, "Bushidō or Bull?"

Progression) focuses on martial arts in an attempt to trace warrior ethics throughout samurai history, and the seventh chapter of this work discusses “Meiji *bushidō*” with a dual emphasis on government policies and the role of Nitobe Inazō as a popularizer of the concept. Takahashi Tomio’s three-volume *Bushidō no rekishi* (*History of Bushidō*) includes broad discussions of several individuals and aspects of modern *bushidō*, including Yamaoka Tesshū, Fukuzawa Yukichi, Nitobe Inazō, and Christian *bushidō* in general, but their influence with relation to greater discourse is not always made clear.

There have been relatively few studies that specifically deal with the development of *bushidō* in modern Japan, and these are generally article-length. Essays published on the subject in Japanese include Suzuki Kōshi’s “Meiji ki nihon ni okeru bushidō no sōshutsu” (“The Creation of *Bushidō* in Meiji Japan”), Iida Kanae’s “Fukuzawa Yukichi to bushidō” (“Fukuzawa Yukichi and *Bushidō*”), Unoda Shōya’s “Bushidō ron no seiritsu: sei-yō to tō-yō no aida” (“The Birth of *Bushidō* Theory: Between East and West”), and my “Hakken sareta dentō toshite no bushidō: Nihon no dokuji no shisō nano ka” (“*Bushidō* as Invented Tradition: A Uniquely Japanese Ideology?”). Given the scope of the subject, however, these articles have only been able to either provide a general overview or deal with a very specific aspect of modern *bushidō*.

Bushidō is also discussed peripherally in monographs on aspects of modern Japanese history, including works on Japanese cultural nationalism (Minami Hiroshi, *Nihonjin ron: Meiji kara kyō made* (*Japaneseness Theory: From Meiji to the Present*)), the development of the concept of Yamato spirit (Saitō Shōji, *Yamato damashii no bunkashi* (*A Cultural History of the Yamato Spirit*)), Wang Yangming’s philosophy (Kojima Tsuyoshi, *Kindai Nihon no yōmeigaku* (*The Wang Yangming School in Modern Japan*)), and studies of historical figures such as General Nogi Maresuke (Yamamuro Kentoku, *Gunshin: kindai Nihon ga unda “eiyū” tachi no kiseki* (*War Deities: Tracking the “Heroes” Borne of Modern Japan*)). The few dedicated books on modern *bushidō*, such as Matsumae’s study of Christian and Western writers, focus on

specific aspects or theorists. A focus on Christian *bushidō* theorists is a common theme in English-language studies of modern *bushidō*. Ota Yuzo, A. Hamish Ion, Cyril Powles, Simon Edwards, and others have discussed *bushidō* in studies focused on the spread of the concept abroad and the role of Nitobe Inazō and Christian writers, with Ota also providing a brief overview of late-Meiji *bushidō* discourse in general. This study acknowledges and examines the important role Christians played in *bushidō* discourse, but is also careful not to overemphasize that role. Nitobe's writings on *bushidō*, for example, were not taken seriously by most Japanese scholars when his *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* was published in 1900, and the Japanese edition was not published until 1908. John Tucker and Carol Gluck have provided excellent discussions of certain aspects of modern *bushidō* in the context of other studies, but have not focused on the subject.

To date, there is no monograph-length study of *bushidō* in English, nor is there a comprehensive study of the modern development of *bushidō* in any language. In addition, there seems to be almost no reference to the development of *bushidō* between 1880 and 1900, an important period in which the modern concept first developed. These are major gaps in the scholarship that need to be filled, for the vast majority of works written on *bushidō* in the last four decades are unconsciously relying on interpretations and theories that were posited during the late Meiji period. There is a strong tendency for writers on *bushidō* to unwittingly examine samurai thought and behavior before 1868 through interpretive lenses ground in late Meiji.

The goals of this study

Even some of the staunchest supporters of *bushidō* ideology acknowledge that the term “*bushidō*” did not gain great currency in Japan until the late Meiji period, when the nationalistic climate following the Sino-Japanese War gave nativist concepts such as *bushidō* and *Yamato damashii* (Yamato spirit) an unprecedented degree of exposure. The work of Nitobe Inazō is

mentioned most often in this context, and he is generally portrayed as at least an important popularizer of the concept, even if his depth of knowledge has been called into question. Nitobe's *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* appeared in 1900, the year pinpointed by Basil Hall Chamberlain as a watershed in *bushidō* discourse. This view is supported by the 1930 military spiritual education text *Virtues of Military Men*, which was one of the first and most important works to revive *bushidō* discourse after it fell out of favor during the Taishō period. According to this text, following victory in the Sino-Japanese War, the world finally looked at Japan and began to research *bushidō*. In addition, the authors of the *Virtues* continued, it was at this juncture that many Japanese, including Nitobe, noticed *bushidō* for the first time, and the subsequent military success of the Russo-Japanese War then inspired a large number of novels and other popular works on *bushidō*.⁸³

These trends are reflected in the Digital Archives of the Meiji Era held at the National Diet Library in Tokyo. These archives, comprising over 127,000 works published between 1868 and 1912, provide digital images of all of these texts, and include fully searchable bibliographic records and, in many cases, tables of contents.⁸⁴ A search for “*bushidō*” reveals 202 works from the period that include the term in the title or table of contents, indicating that *bushidō* would be a central theme in the text. Only four works in the database, including a translated French novel titled *Bushidō*, mention the term before 1898.⁸⁵ The number of publications increases from a total of three in 1899 and 1900 to seven in 1901, six in 1902, and dozens per year from 1903 onward. On the basis of this evidence, the arrival of *bushidō* in Japan's mainstream culture can be dated to the early 1900s, and it is likely that by the end of the

⁸³ Kyōiku sōkan bu, ed., *Bujin no tokusō Vol. 1*, 26.

⁸⁴ Search conducted February 2009. There are several articles and other works on *bushidō* from this period that are not listed in any searchable databases, but the raw figures taken by the records of the National Diet Library are an accurate reflection of general trends.

⁸⁵ Kuroiwa Ruikō trans., *Bushidō ichimei himitsubukuro*. This work is a translation of the 1880 mystery novel *Les Cachettes de Marie-Rose* by the prolific French writer Fortune du Boisgobey. Kuroiwa (1862-1920) was an newspaper essayist and writer who attracted a great deal of notice for his translation of mystery novels into Japanese.

Russo-Japanese War in 1905, the term would have been familiar to most Japanese, although their understanding of the concept was vague.

The broad views of *bushidō* outlined by Chamberlain and the authors of the *Virtues* left many questions unanswered. As this study will demonstrate, the development of modern *bushidō* in fact began in the late 1880s, and the foundations for its rapid later development were laid before war broke out in 1894. Most of these early works were forgotten in the twentieth century as *bushidō* discourse changed, which is why this period has not been examined in great depth before. These texts are, however, key to understanding the trajectory of later *bushidō*, and especially the resiliency of the concept as Japanese society underwent great social and cultural change in the century that followed. The thinkers who initiated modern *bushidō* discourse came from diverse backgrounds and had very different worldviews, but they also had similar perspectives on Japan's place in the world order relative to China and the West. This study will show that modern *bushidō* developed organically from a cautious nationalism that had not entirely freed itself from a pronounced earlier lack of confidence vis-à-vis the West, and was simultaneously seeking increasing cultural and philosophical independence from China. The cautious perspective of some of the earliest *bushidō* theorists was a significant factor in the dismissal of their works in the more confident environment after 1895, but their influence can be seen in the thought of later writers on the subject.

Several scholars have pointed out the disconnect between historical samurai and modern *bushidō*, and this study agrees that the development of *bushidō* in Meiji was less a continuation of earlier thought than a response to cultural and geopolitical changes that were occurring at the time. It must also be pointed out that a *bushidō* discourse did exist in the waning years of the Edo period, and was marked by the involvement of the influential activist Yoshida Shōin and several other prominent figures. One of these, the noted swordsman and Bakumatsu figure Yamaoka Tesshū, has been credited with a series of lectures on *bushidō* delivered shortly before

his death in 1888. Takahashi Tomio argues that Yamaoka was one of the few individuals to bring “feudal *bushidō*” into the modern age unchanged and undiluted.⁸⁶ These thinkers received varying degrees of exposure in modern *bushidō* discourse, especially after 1900, and their close temporal proximity to the modern theorists means that they must be placed under consideration as possible bridges between Edo and Meiji *bushidō*. For these reasons, the first chapter of this study is an examination of Bakumatsu *bushidō* discourse, and the influence that it had on its Meiji counterpart. It will show that this influence, although significant in some ways, occurred after *bushidō* discourse had already become established around 1900, and that Bakumatsu *bushidō* theorists did not have a formative influence on the first modern exponents of the subject.

Chapter two of this study concerns the Meiji origins of modern *bushidō* as discussed above. Specifically, it examines the writings of Ozaki Yukio, Fukuzawa Yukichi, Suzuki Chikara, and Uemura Masahisa, all of whom were active before the Sino-Japanese War. Their contributions towards the development of *bushidō* were strongly influenced by three major trends in Japanese thought at the time. The first of these was the maturation of Japan’s relationship with the West, a process marked by a reevaluation of the idealistic adoration or rejection that defined the attitudes towards the West held by many Japanese thinkers in early Meiji. The second factor was a change in Japan’s views of China, which became increasingly negative in the years leading up to the Sino-Japanese War. The third factor that influenced the first generation of modern *bushidō* theorists was a raised interest in their nation’s culture. Whereas Japanese in the 1880s not infrequently claimed to be embarrassed by their culture in front of foreigners, by the early 1890s interest and pride in their own heritage was growing rapidly. The relationship between these three factors was continually evolving, and they influenced the individual *bushidō* theorists to varying degrees, but they were important to all of

⁸⁶ Takahashi Tomio, *Bushidō no rekishi Volume 3*, 223-224.

them. In this context, this study will show that the presence of a foreign “other” or “others” was an essential element in the initiation of modern *bushidō* discourse and that the first formulators of *bushidō* were equally or more influenced by current events beyond Japan’s borders than they were by the historical samurai class.

The third chapter examines the development of a “*bushidō* boom” that occurred after 1898, and traces its development through the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05. Buoyed by the success of the Sino-Japanese War, many currents of Japanese thought became increasingly nationalistic, and it was natural that a “native” ethic such as *bushidō* would gain currency during this period. Whereas *bushidō* theories before this time could be considered more “internationalist” than nationalistic, the tone of discourse changed considerably after the war. The newly confident, and sometimes chauvinistic, *bushidō* that marked the *bushidō* boom of late Meiji built on the earlier foundations but quickly superseded them. This change in tone even led Uemura Masahisa, an earlier writer on *bushidō*, to criticize the appropriation of the concept by nationalistic and militaristic elements in 1898. Uemura’s frustration at the “misuse” of *bushidō* reveals one of the greatest strengths of the ethic: resiliency. The legitimacy bestowed on the concept by its alleged relationship with the historical samurai, combined with a lack of concrete historical roots that could be used to define or refute it, meant that *bushidō* was an ideal vehicle for nationalist sentiments of the type that came to the fore in the years around 1900. *Bushidō* combined easily with other nationalistic terms such as *yamato damashii* and *kokutai* to form nationalistic and militaristic ideologies. In this context, this study examines the roles of the 1898 journal *Bushidō zasshi*, Nitobe Inazō, and Inoue Tetsujirō in the spread and development of *bushidō*. It will be shown that Nitobe’s significance to Meiji *bushidō* theory was not nearly as great as his current reputation would indicate. Instead, Inoue Tetsujirō was the undoubted primate of *bushidō* from 1901 until 1945, and the “orthodox” *bushidō* interpretation he developed became a dominant ideology from the Russo-Japanese War onward.

It was only during the second half of the *bushidō* boom, from 1905 until 1914, that *bushidō* became a widely popularized subject both in Japan and abroad. Chapter four examines the processes by which “orthodox” *bushidō* became firmly established, and how it and other *bushidō* interpretations spread throughout the diverse fields of literature, academia, sport, and religion. Due in no small measure to support from Inoue, *bushidō* came to play a central role in military and civilian education, especially with the growth of spiritual education programs used to indoctrinate the troops with the desired virtues of loyalty and self-sacrifice. “Orthodox” *bushidō* also came to play a key role in the national ethics education program known as “National Morality” (*kokumin dōtoku*), outlined by Inoue in a series of articles and books beginning in 1908. At the same time, the popularity and unquestioned patriotic credentials of *bushidō* led to its frequent mention by writers of both literature and pulp fiction, while academics wrote many volumes on the subject. Members of religious orders and promoters of various types of sport, both traditional and foreign, called upon *bushidō* to popularize their causes and give them the patriotic legitimacy that was deemed so important at the time. Foreign interpreters of Japan also showed great interest in the *bushidō*, further raising its profile. This study will demonstrate that by the end of the Meiji period, Japan was saturated with *bushidō* and, in a reversal of the situation from 1900, there would have been few Japanese or foreigners interested in Japan who would not have heard of *bushidō* and had a general idea of its meaning.

At the time of the Meiji emperor’s death in 1912, it seemed as though *bushidō* would continue to expand its reach, but this was not to be the case. Chapter five discusses the unexpected decline that *bushidō* experienced around 1914, which was closely tied to the end of Meiji and specifically the dramatic death of General Nogi Maresuke. In addition to examining the influences that led to this change in *bushidō*’s status, this study will provide an overview of *bushidō* discourse in the years before its ultimate revival in the early Shōwa period. Although a detailed analysis of *bushidō*’s role in the “dark valley” of the 1930s is beyond the scope of this

study and is a subject for future research, it will be shown that the strengths and resiliency that defined modern *bushidō* from its origins in late Meiji made a resurrection of the concept not only possible, but highly likely. This theme is also significant in the conclusions and suggestions for future research at the end of this study, in which subsequent cycles of *bushidō* popularization and decline are examined in the historical context of the subject's modern development.

CHAPTER 1 Bridges between Tokugawa and Meiji *Bushidō*

Developments in the Bakumatsu period, specifically the late 1850s, had a strong influence on modern *bushidō* discourse. Several developments in the use of the term “*bushidō*” occurred almost simultaneously, even if their significance was not noted at the time. *Bushidō* suddenly appeared in the works of several writers within a span of only a few years, although two of them were acquainted, and it is likely that they influenced one another with regard to their use of *bushidō*. Three writers whose surviving works contain reference to *bushidō* are Yoshida Shōin, Yokoi Shōnan, and Yamaoka Tesshū. Their usage of the term is consistent with many of the same patterns seen in earlier works, but two factors make their writings relevant to the rapid development of *bushidō* in the late 1890s. The first is that all three men had an influence on the leaders of the new Meiji government. Yamaoka was less prominent than Yoshida or Yokoi, at least before 1868, but served both the Tokugawa and Meiji governments, allowing him to develop his concept of *bushidō* over the course of several decades. Shortly before his death, Yamaoka reportedly gave a series of lectures attended by several influential government officials, and these talks may be the first major expressions of *bushidō* as their central theme. However, recent scholarship has cast considerable doubt on the accuracy of the records of these talks, which were not published until 1902, and it is questionable whether the talks actually took place.

This chapter examines the *bushidō* thought of these three individuals, and compares it with their impact on late-Meiji *bushidō* discourse. Their writings are at times inconsistent with their posthumous roles, and their status as bridges between Tokugawa and modern thought is not straightforward. As we shall see, the writings of Yoshida, Yokoi, and Yamaoka tended to be used less as inspiration for later writers than as carefully selected sources for the historical legitimization of modern agendas.

Yoshida Shōin

The first writer in the bakumatsu period to use the term *bushidō* in his writings was Yoshida Shōin. Yoshida was born in Hagi in 1830, and was adopted into the family of his uncle at five years of age. The Yoshida were in the employ of the Mōri family as teachers of the Yamaga school of military science, and Shōin began studying strategy at a very young age. The breadth of his studies expanded greatly in his early twenties, when he traveled throughout Japan and met with scholars from many different schools of thought. The most influential of these was Sakuma Shōzan (佐久間象山, 1811-1864), who introduced Yoshida to Western learning and supposedly encouraged him in his plans to stow away on an American ship in 1854. This led to Sakuma being arrested along with Yoshida when the latter was captured.¹ After Yoshida's plan failed, the two men were fortunate to escape execution, which was probably achieved only thanks to Sakuma's political connections. Instead, Yoshida was sent back to his domain, where he was imprisoned and placed under house arrest for almost two years, although he was still able to study and lecture during this period. Upon his release in 1856, Yoshida began to agitate more openly for the overthrow of the Tokugawa, and was arrested again in Chōshū in 1858 out of concern that he may have been involved in assassination plots against several high shogunal officials. The following year, he was sent to Edo, where he was executed during the Ansei Purge carried out by the Tokugawa government under the direction of Ii Naosuke (井伊直弼, 1815-1860). Although he only lived for thirty years, Yoshida's influence as a teacher was significant, and many future Meiji leaders studied at his Shōka Sonjuku, including Yamagata Aritomo (山県有朋, 1838-1922), Itō Hirobumi (伊藤博文, 1841-1909), and Kido Kōin (木戸孝允, 1833-1877).²

As the adopted son of a family that had traditionally served as teachers of Yamaga Sokō's military strategies, it was natural that these would become one of Yoshida's primary

¹ Shinobu Seizaburō, *Shōzan to Shōin: kaikoku to jōi no ronri*, 156.

² Thomas M. Huber, *The Revolutionary Origins of Modern Japan*, 40.

sources of inspiration. The most important of these was the *Bukyō zensho* (武教全書, *Complete Writings on Martial Teaching*), a textbook of Yamaga's writings used by his school of military strategy.³ The *Bukyō shōgaku* (武教小学, *A Small Martial Teaching*), which was often used as the introduction to the *Bukyō zensho*, attracted considerable interest until well into the Shōwa period. This was due to the emphasis the *Bukyō shōgaku* placed on the virtues of Japanese warriors, giving the text an appeal to nationalist thinkers even in later eras. In keeping with the tradition of his adoptive family, Yoshida Shōin devoted a great deal of time to the study of the *Bukyō zensho*, and supposedly began to lecture on the subject at the age of eleven. Yoshida was praised by the *daimyō* of his domain for a series of lectures in 1849-50,⁴ and in 1852 he went beyond lecturing to write the commentary *Bukyō zensho kōshō* (武教全書講章, *Lecture Section on the Bukyō zensho*).⁵ These early lectures and writings remained fairly loyal to Yamaga's original texts on military strategy, both in content and terminology, and dealt primarily with practical applications, such as defending and attacking castles, as well as managing troops (*yōshi*, 用士).

In his writings on strategy and tactics, Yamaga did not tend to use the term *shidō* (士道), and Yoshida's early commentaries on Yamaga's work followed this same pattern. For example, Yoshida's 1852 commentary does not include *shidō*, and although it does mention *budō*, the term is used to refer to military training rather than ethical prescriptions.⁶ Like Yamaga, Yoshida made no mention of *bushidō* in these early commentaries, nor in his other works before 1857. In that year, Yoshida composed yet another commentary on the *Bukyō zensho*, titled *Bukyō zensho kōroku* (武教全書講録, *A Record of Lectures on the Bukyō zensho*). Unlike Yoshida's previous writings, which had focused on Yamaga's teachings on military strategy, this work was almost exclusively a commentary on the *Bukyō shōgaku*, and had little to do with applied

³ Hirose Yutaka ed., *Yamaga Sokō zenshū Volume 1*, 479.

⁴ Yoshida Shōin, *Yoshida Shōin zenshū Volume 1*, 15-16.

⁵ Ibid., 14, 19.

⁶ Ibid., 86.

military science. The section headings of the *Bukyō zensho kōroku* correspond exactly to the nine sections of the *Bukyō shōgaku*, with an additional introduction and conclusion.

In this introduction, Yoshida lauded Yamaga's teachings, and especially the influence that Yamaga was widely believed to have had on Ōishi Yoshio (大石良雄, 1659-1703) and his accomplices in the Akō incident. Yoshida went on to posit *shidō* as a way of "cultivating the body and correcting the heart, as well as ruling the nation and pacifying all-under-heaven."⁷ Yoshida also discussed the existence of *shidō* in China, which he claimed had a different national polity (*kokutai*) than the land of the gods (*shinshū*, i.e. Japan), leading Yoshida to criticize those people who attempted to learn about Japan by reading foreign texts.⁸ This association between *shidō* and China led Yoshida to cease using the term, for it is not found in the remainder of the *Bukyō zensho kōroku* after being used five times in the opening paragraphs. Instead, Yoshida replaced *shidō* with nativist synonyms, including *budō*, *bushidō*, and *bushi no michi*. In his later works, Yoshida tended to use *budō* synonymously with *bushidō*, and not merely to refer to military training as he had in the *Bukyō zensho kōshō*.⁹ In addition to nationalistic considerations, Yoshida believed that the concept of *bu* (martiality) was essential in an age of crisis and conflict, such as Japan was experiencing during the late 1850s following Commodore Perry's arrival. Yoshida criticized prevailing attitudes towards military service,¹⁰ and emphasized *bu* as a type of all-encompassing concept of proper attitudes and behavior. Specifically, Yoshida stated that *bu* contained both *bun* (letters; civil) and *bu*, that *bu* was the same as *chūkō* (loyalty and filial piety), and that the teachings of *bu* (*bukyō*) contained Confucianism as well as all other teachings.¹¹

⁷ Yoshida Shōin, *Yoshida Shōin zenshū Volume 4*, 208.

⁸ Ibid., 208-210.

⁹ For an example of this broader usage, see Hirose Yutaka ed., *Kō-Mō yowa*, 267.

¹⁰ Yoshida Shōin, *Yoshida Shōin zenshū Volume 4*, 222.

¹¹ Ibid., 215, 266.

Yoshida's sudden elucidation of *bushidō* in commentaries on a subject he had discussed frequently throughout the previous decade is significant in the history of the concept. There are two factors that help explain Yoshida's interest in *bushidō* and his use of the term. First, Yoshida simply combined the concept of *bu*, which was the focus of this commentary, with the *shidō* he was reluctant to use due to its association with China. Yoshida's associate Yokoi Shōnan would repeat this lexicographical composition in his own work shortly thereafter. Second, Yoshida at this time had an interest in the *Kōyōgunkan*, citing it in the *Bukyō zensho kōroku*.¹² These two factors may well have acted in combination, with Yoshida coming across the term in the *Kōyōgunkan* at the same time that he was considering a new, *bu*-centered interpretation of Yamaga's *shidō* theories.

The new concepts in Yoshida's 1857 *Bukyō zensho kōroku*, and his increased interest in the *Bukyō shōgaku*, reflect a further radicalization of his thought during his imprisonment from 1854-6. His later thought was marked by an increased emphasis on death and an apparent willingness to sacrifice his life in the name of a great cause (*taigi*). Yoshida's time in prison also led him to write his most influential work, the Mencius commentary *Kō-Mō yowa* (講孟余話), the inflammatory content of which meant that it was distributed in manuscript form and published only after 1871.¹³ In spite of its title, this text tended to disregard those sections of the *Mencius* that did not agree with Yoshida's jingoistic emperor-worship.¹⁴ The *Kō-Mō yowa* was similar to the *Bukyō zensho kōroku* in that both were cases of Yoshida liberally borrowing from and reinterpreting well-known texts to expound his own theories. However, the *Kō-Mō yowa* does not mention *bushidō*, even though the two works were composed only months apart,

¹² Ibid., 264.

¹³ Ng Wai-ming, "Mencius and the Meiji Restoration," 53.

¹⁴ The *Kō-Mō yowa* is a confirming example of Nakamura Hajime's analogy regarding the *Mencius*, which he felt must have had a difficult voyage from China, as a few of its less agreeable books seem to have been washed overboard and thus failed to reach Japan. One example of this is the Mencian idea of just revolt against an emperor who has lost the mandate of Heaven, a notion that did not find favor in Japan. Nakamura Hajime, *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples*, 470-471.

indicating that Yoshida either discovered the word in the interval between these two works, or that he did not deem the subject sufficiently significant to mention in his best-known text.

In the short term, Yoshida's use of *bushidō* in the *Bukyō zensho kōroku* did not have an impact beyond its possible influence on Yokoi Shōnan's use of the term. This is due to several factors. For one, although Yoshida mentioned *bushidō* more than other similar terms in this text, he still considered this work to be an updated commentary on *shidō*, as he mentioned in his introductory paragraphs. *Shidō*, *bushidō*, and *bushi no michi* are not defined as separate concepts in the *Bukyō zensho kōroku*, and *budō* is also used in a context that indicates that its meaning largely overlaps with these other terms.¹⁵ A second factor is that Yoshida did not carry this use of *bushidō* over into any of his other writings, which encompass twelve volumes in one authoritative collection, but rather limited it to this one relatively minor text. This has led Wai-ming Ng and others to state that Yoshida did not use the term *bushidō*, reflecting the minor role the concept had in his theories.¹⁶ Another factor is that the political influence of Yoshida Shōin in the bakumatsu period is difficult to ascertain clearly. While Yoshida became one of the most important figures of the Restoration in later historiography, there were many factions clamoring for change at the time. There were countless "political cliques," as Albert Craig has termed them, with diverse motivations ranging from reform to complete overthrow of the regime.¹⁷ These cliques were aligned along political fault lines, but they also had strong regional loyalties. For example, when Yoshida heard that *sonnō jōi* movements from other domains planned to assassinate Ii Naosuke, he convinced the members of his Chōshū clique to kill a bakufu emissary first in order to enhance their standing among the various loyalist factions.¹⁸ On the other hand, Thomas Huber made Yoshida the focal point of his study on the

¹⁵ Yoshida Shōin, *Yoshida Shōin zenshū Volume 4*. In both his use of *bushidō* on page 220 and *budō* on page 232, Yoshida recommends that they be "polished" in order to serve one's lord and nation, and their meaning is broader than mere "martial arts." Also see p. 222.

¹⁶ Ng Wai-ming, "Mencius and the Meiji Restoration," 46, note 3.

¹⁷ Albert Craig, *Choshu in the Meiji Restoration*, 155-159.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 159-160.

origins of the Meiji Restoration, arguing that Yoshida was working on a “blueprint” for reform that closely resembled the policies implemented in early Meiji, when his former students held powerful posts in the government.¹⁹ As these works show, even modern historiography has not been able to make the role of Yoshida in the Restorationist movement completely clear.

The treatment of Yoshida’s legacy during Meiji is another factor that calls into question the positing of Yoshida as the primary forethinker of the Restoration. Yoshida was certainly respected in his home domain after his death, and is widely regarded as the primary exponent of the *sonnō* (emperor-revering) ideology that would later become the dominant interpretation,²⁰ but there do not seem to have been movements to commemorate him on a larger scale until the mid-1880s. A Yoshida Shrine was built in Tokyo’s Setagaya ward in 1882, and the Sonjōdō memorial hall was built in his honor in Kyoto in 1887, where it now serves as a repository for documents and other materials related to the restorationist movements.²¹ From 1887 until 1900, there was a considerable amount of official activity commemorating Yoshida, including his induction into Yasukuni Shrine (1888), posthumous awarding of the Senior Fourth Rank (*shōshi i*, 1889), and visits to Yoshida’s rebuilt school and another shrine by the future Taishō emperor (1898).²²

In addition to the temporal trajectory of government ceremonies and physical monuments to Yoshida, the publication records of his own texts and other research concerning his historical role are also revealing. According to Tanaka Akira, the Meiji period saw the publication of 14 books and magazines concerning Yoshida, in addition to 38 editions of his own writings. By comparison, the Taishō period, which was only one-third as long, had 20 research publications and merely two editions of his writings, while publications during the first decade of Shōwa (to 1936) included 34 research works on Yoshida, and eight editions of his own

¹⁹ Thomas M. Huber, *The Revolutionary Origins of Modern Japan*, 42.

²⁰ See, for example, Albert Craig, *Choshu in the Meiji Restoration*, 162-163.

²¹ Yoshida Shōin, *Yoshida Shōin zenshū Volume 1*, 47.

²² Ibid. 48.

writings.²³ The first work to discuss Yoshida did not appear until the 24th year of Meiji (1891), and the most significant early work on the subject, Tokutomi Sohō's (徳富蘇峰, 1863-1957) *Yoshida Shōin*, was not published until 1893.²⁴ In this latter work, the popular rights activist Tokutomi portrayed Yoshida as a type of social revolutionary comparable to the Italian activist Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872). This view of Yoshida as a revolutionary nationalist later inspired right-wing groupings such as those formed by young officers in the 1930s, and also provided a model for leaders of Chinese revolutionary movements, such as Confucian activist Kang Youwei (康有為, 1858-1927).²⁵

Tokutomi underwent a profound change in his ideological outlook during the Sino-Japanese War, adopting an imperialistic political philosophy that was opposite to his earlier thought. This shift was apparent in the second edition of his *Yoshida Shōin*, which he revised and published in 1908 after the success of the Russo-Japanese War. The chapter comparing Yoshida to Mazzini was left out of the new version, while new chapters titled “Yoshida Shōin and National Polity Theory (*kokutairon*),” “Yoshida Shōin and Imperialism,” and “Yoshida Shōin and *Bushidō*” were added.²⁶ Soon after the reissuing of *Yoshida Shōin*, there was a flood of publications accompanying the fiftieth anniversary of his death. These works argued for both the populist and imperialist interpretations of Yoshida, with the latter becoming the dominant view in the following three decades.

On the basis of publications and commemorative activities, it seems that interest in Yoshida Shōin reached significant levels only in the middle and end of the Meiji period, not immediately after the Restoration. Miyazawa Seiichi sees the lionization of Yoshida in the context of a larger “bakumatsu-Restoration boom” that began in the late 1880s and sought to

²³ Tanaka Akira, “Yoshida Shōin zō no henshen,” 35.

²⁴ Ibid., 26-27.

²⁵ Miyazawa Seiichi, *Meiji ishin no saishōzō*, 19.

²⁶ Tanaka Akira, “Yoshida Shōin zō no henshen,” 30.

reevaluate the importance of notable figures on both sides of the Restoration struggles.²⁷ Yoshida's relatively obscure writings on *bushidō* remained unknown during the hectic period immediately before and after 1868. In fact, the connection between Yoshida and *bushidō* would not be drawn until 1901, when Inoue Tetsujirō used Yoshida's writings as an example of the influence of Yamaga Sokō, who Inoue called the "sage of *bushidō*."²⁸

Yokoi Shōnan

Yokoi Shōnan's use of *bushidō* was more limited and specific than Yoshida's, but it was also more important to the development of the concept before 1901. There are two reasons for this. First, although Yokoi only used *bushidō* twice, he clearly defined the term when he used it in his best-known work, the *Kokuze sanron*. And second, Yokoi lived into the Meiji period and was an important figure for almost a decade after Yoshida was executed. Yokoi, like Sakuma Shōzan, was a generation older than Yoshida, and was already a respected thinker in reformist circles when the two became acquainted. Unlike Yoshida, Yokoi was more interested in practical reforms than revolutionary action, and supported attempts to avoid conflict through the unification of court and bakufu (*kōbu gattai*) shortly before the Meiji Restoration. This position was later responsible for his assassination by extreme loyalists.²⁹

Although Yokoi met and exchanged ideas with Yoshida and other young "men of spirit" (*shishi*), after the early 1850s his thought differed from theirs in important ways, which may

²⁷ Miyazawa Seiichi, *Meiji ishin no saisōzō*, 17.

²⁸ This is discussed in greater depth in Chapter 3.

²⁹ As William G. Beasley explains, the term "loyalist" is somewhat confusing, for it is often difficult to determine exactly who would fit into this category. The thought of many reformers and activists could at some point be labeled loyalist, but changes in personal ideology during this time were not infrequent. In addition, the activities and views of many restorationists were retroactively changed or exaggerated by either themselves or their biographers during the Meiji and later periods (William G. Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, 159). These difficulties are not limited to the loyalist label, however, and many different groupings and affiliations in the Edo Period would become subject to considerable historical revisionism during Meiji and beyond. One of the most complex examples of this process is the retroactive affiliation of thinkers and activists with the teachings of Wang Yang-ming, whether or not they were actually interested in his writings. For a discussion of this process, see Oleg Benesch, "Wang Yangming and Bushidō: Japanese Nativization and its Influences in Modern China."

largely be attributed to his greater age and experience. As William Beasley has pointed out, only 14 of the 121 loyalists in Satsuma and Tosa in 1862-3 were 35 years of age or older, a figure which also seems to be representative of loyalists in other *han*.³⁰ In contrast, Yokoi Shōnan turned sixty that year. The youth and eagerness of the *shishi* was reflected in a desire for “action,” although the content of this was rarely defined or agreed upon. Even when calling upon established philosophy, as in Yoshida Shōin’s commentaries on the *Mencius*, the *shishi* selectively interpreted and cited classical works to support their own revolutionary aims. Additionally, in the case of the *sonnō* factions, the emperor was posited as the focus of absolute loyalty, freeing the *shishi* from the traditional bonds of lord-vassal relations.³¹ More like a transcendent deity than a direct superior or even *daimyō*, the emperor’s inaccessibility made it possible to justify a wide scope of action on his behalf. As a result, the thought of Yoshida and many of the younger loyalists did not contain practical, constructive recommendations in case their revolutionary aims succeeded, leading some scholars to describe it as nihilistic. As Maruyama Masao argued, loyalty to one thing simultaneously represented rebellion against its alternatives, and for many of the *shishi*, absolute loyalty towards an idealized emperor represented absolute rebellion against the old order, resulting in the assassinations of Yokoi Shōnan, Sakuma Shōzan, and others whose views were considered too moderate in the 1860s.³²

In spite of their frequent collaboration and exchange of ideas during the 1840s and 50s, the later Yokoi Shōnan can be viewed as a conservative thinker in comparison with Yoshida and the loyalists.³³ During the earlier period, Yokoi’s thought contained many elements that were considered radical, earning him status as a venerated theorist among the younger reformers and activists. Yokoi’s practical approach and interest in technological and institutional adoptions from other nations was present from the outset, as recorded by Motoda Eifu (元田永孚,

³⁰ William G. Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, 158.

³¹ Ikegami Eiko, *The Taming of the Samurai*, 324.

³² Maruyama Masao, *Chūsei to hangyaku*, 11.

³³ Alistair Swale, *The Political Thought of Mori Arinori*, 9.

1818-1891), but even as late as 1853 he insisted that death would be preferable to the shame of making any concessions to foreigners, such as allowing them to land in Japan.³⁴ The conviction with which Yokoi argued for the preservation of the nation's honor deeply impressed younger loyalists such as Yoshida. Three decades after Yokoi's assassination, Katsu Kaishū (勝海舟, 1823-1899) remembered the fearless intensity Yokoi was capable of displaying, noting in his memoirs that Yokoi and Saigō Takamori (西郷隆盛, 1827-1877) were the only truly fearsome men he had ever encountered.³⁵ In spite of this intensity, Yokoi's pragmatic nature allowed him to realize when circumstances made his beliefs untenable. As a result, soon after the arrival of Perry's fleet, Yokoi's thought underwent a major change, and he advocated opening the country to trade with other nations, although he stipulated that this be limited to trading partners who would do so in a respectful manner.³⁶

The show of force put on by the American fleet certainly helped convince Yokoi that his earlier insistence on military resistance to the foreign threat was not practicable. Many scholars believe, however, that a more important factor was Yokoi's discovery of the *Kaikoku zushi* (海国図誌, *Haiguo tuzhi*, *Illustrated Treatise on the Maritime Countries*), a Chinese overview of the nations of Europe and America. This text, written by Wei Yuan (魏源, 1794-1857) in the aftermath of the Opium War in 1844, is credited with convincing Yokoi that Japan could not compete with the advanced weaponry of the European powers.³⁷ This text also addressed another problem that Yokoi and other Confucian-influenced thinkers in Japan faced when dealing with the West: the notion that the Europeans were barbarians and could therefore not be negotiated with. Yokoi and others realized that military resistance was futile, but rejected dealing with those nations that lacked righteousness and justice. They were able to overcome this obstacle with the aid of the *Kaikoku zushi*, which included a very positive assessment of

³⁴ D.Y. Miyauchi, "Yokoi Shōnan's Response to the Foreign Intervention in Late Tokugawa Japan," 270-1.

³⁵ Katsu Kaishū, *Hikawa shinwa*, 12.

³⁶ Miyauchi D.Y., "Yokoi Shōnan's Response to the Foreign Intervention in Late Tokugawa Japan," 274-5.

³⁷ Minamoto Ryōen, "Yokoi Shōnan ni okeru jōi ron kara kaikoku ron he no tenkai," 208-9.

Western politics and government. Russia, especially, was described as an enlightened nation with a ruler comparable to the Confucian sages.³⁸ Yokoi adopted this interpretation and, according to Motoda, later drew comparisons between George Washington and the sage-kings Yao and Shun.³⁹ This view of the West, which was almost as exaggeratedly laudatory as the traditional view had been unrealistically negative, eliminated many difficulties by providing a basis for negotiations with Europe and America.

This pragmatic approach differed greatly from the thought of the younger loyalists such as Yoshida, for whom negotiation with the West remained unthinkable. Yokoi's willingness to adapt resulted in his assassination by *sonnō jōi* activists, but his practical thought also earned him positions of great influence. After thoroughly impressing the *daimyō* of Echizen, Matsudaira Yoshinaga (Shungaku; 松平慶永, 1828-1890), Yokoi was summoned to Edo when the former was installed as highest government official (*seiji-sōsai*) in 1862. For roughly five months, Yokoi held a position that has been described as the "brain" of the shogunate.⁴⁰ Although his period in charge of political matters was limited, Yokoi had a major influence on the reform of the *sankin kōtai* (alternate attendance) system, a move made to reduce wastage that also severely weakened one of the last vestiges of control over the domains held by the central government.

Yokoi's proposals for the reform of currency policies, military defenses, agriculture, and especially trade were outlined in lectures and texts such as the *Kokuze sanron*, setting his approach apart from the "negative" one attributed to many loyalists. This difference can also be seen in the attitudes of Yokoi and Yoshida towards the condition of the samurai. Both men considered the samurai of their time to have degenerated from an ancient ideal, largely due to the misguided separation of *bun* and *bu* that had occurred during the Tokugawa peace. While

³⁸ Ibid. 203-4

³⁹ D.Y. Miyauchi, "Yokoi Shōnan's Response to the Foreign Intervention in Late Tokugawa Japan," 275.

⁴⁰ Okazaki Masamichi, "Yokoi Shōnan no seiji shisō," 115.

Yoshida emphasized the importance of reintroducing *bu*, as shown in the *Bukyō zensho kōroku*, Yokoi was not convinced that there was a place for all samurai in the reformed military he proposed, and their numbers had become a burden on the state. Instead, many samurai should contribute to society by pursuing other professions, such as silkworm raising, fishing, metalworking, and sericulture.⁴¹ In contrast, Yoshida focused on the necessity of samurai to be willing to die for their fathers, lords, domains, and especially their nation (蘭国, *kōkoku*), and would not stoop to discussing the possibility of them engaging in mundane tasks such as mulberry farming.⁴² As Yoshida stated, the primary meaning (*dai-ichi gi*) of his commenting on the Mencius was to explain that the people (*shinmin*) have a duty to die for the imperial state (皇国, *kōkoku*).⁴³ In other words, whereas Yokoi took a more practical approach to the difficulties facing the warrior class, Yoshida argued that any problems, including hunger, cold, and other tangible concerns, could be solved by strengthening the spirit and inculcating martial virtues.⁴⁴

In the context of purely military matters concerning the samurai, Yokoi and Yoshida's thought was less divergent, and they may well have influenced one another. Yokoi realized that it would not be possible to incorporate all samurai into a modern military, and he was also aware of the necessity of military technology, especially in naval warfare. However, he did not believe that technology alone could win conflicts, and argued that the proper spirit was essential for troops to succeed. Although many samurai had become "arrogant soldiers" (*kyōhei*) and could not currently compete with the West, it was possible to recover the lost martial spirit.⁴⁵

With regard to his usage of *bushidō*, Yokoi had been acquainted with Yoshida Shōin since at least 1853, and they had several discussions as well as written correspondence.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Satō Shōsuke et al. eds., *Nihon shisō taikēi Volume 55*, 443-4.

⁴² Hirose Yutaka ed., *Kō-Mō yowa*, 23, 193.

⁴³ Ibid., 336.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 36.

⁴⁵ Minamoto Ryōen, "Yokoi Shōnan ni okeru jōi ron kara kaikoku ron he no tenkai," 221.

⁴⁶ Huber claims that Yokoi and Yoshida first met when they were both in Kumamoto in 1850, but other sources

Yokoi may have been familiar with the *Kōyōgunkan*, which Yoshida certainly knew, and he referred to Katō Kiyomasa and Honda Tadakatsu as examples of martial valor and ability.⁴⁷ It is also possible that Yoshida was the source of Yokoi's usage of *bushidō*, as the former's *Bukyō zensho kōroku* appeared in 1857, a little more than two years before the 1860 *Kokuze sanron*. The *Bukyō zensho kōroku* was not published at the time, but it seems to have reached a large audience for a hand-written document, making it likely that Yokoi would have been aware of its existence. Yokoi and Yoshida also had many common acquaintances, including Sakuma Shōzan, Katsu Kaishū, and Aizawa Seishisai (会沢正志斎, 1782-1863). The timing of Yokoi's use of *bushidō* is further indicative of Yoshida's influence, for the term is not found in any of Yokoi's earlier works that predate the *Bukyō zensho kōroku*.

Yoshida did not specifically differentiate between *bushidō*, *bushi no michi*, *shidō*, and other terms, but his emphasis on the concept of *bu* may well have led Yokoi to create the term *bushidō* in the *Kokuze sanron*. Yokoi frequently used the term *shidō*, and it appears on almost every page of the *Kokuze sanron*, and is the title of the third section. However, Yokoi felt that existing *shidō* thought was excessively focused on letters, weakening the warrior class from its heyday in the Sengoku period. According to Yokoi, "Originally, *bu* was the principal content of *shidō*. Therefore, if one knows what a *bushi* is, he cannot fail to understand *bushidō*."⁴⁸ Through a reconciliation of military and civilian virtues, Yokoi believed that it would be possible to realize his goals of enriching Japan while strengthening her military so that the country could contend with the increasing foreign threats. Yokoi only mentioned *bushidō* twice in the *Kokuze sanron*, but his role in the development of the concept is significant for the fact that he was the first to clearly differentiate the term from other concepts that had hitherto been used synonymously. Like Yoshida, Yokoi did not have an immediate impact on the use of

indicate that the two missed one another on this occasion (Thomas M. Huber, *The Revolutionary Origins of Modern Japan*, 150).

⁴⁷ Satō Shōsuke et al, eds., *Nihon shisō taikēi Volume 55*, 459.

⁴⁸ Satō Shōsuke et al, eds., *Nihon shisō taikēi Volume 55*, 456, 461.

bushidō, but his writings entered into discourse on the subject in late Meiji. Both writers were introduced into modern *bushidō* by Inoue Tetsujirō, who cited Yokoi's contention that Western studies was merely management and economics, and was lacking the moral aspect of Chinese (Asian) thought.⁴⁹ For Inoue, Yokoi was more important for his perceived links with Wang Yangming's teachings than his specific statements on *bushidō*, although Inoue tended to conflate the two subjects.

While Yoshida and Yokoi's usage of *bushidō* did not set off a "*bushidō* boom" of the type that occurred from the late 1890s onward, the existence of their texts, as well as their posthumous status as Restoration heroes in the Meiji period, provided evidence and justification for those who developed, historicized, and politicized *bushidō* from the end of the nineteenth century onward, with Inoue Tetsujirō the most prominent among this group.

The curious case of Yamaoka Tesshū⁵⁰

Yamaoka Tesshū, who has been credited with developing *bushidō* and introducing it to the modern age through a series of lectures, was born in 1836 as Ono Tetsurō, the fifth son of a shogunal retainer in Edo. From a young age, Yamaoka was interested in military matters, studying strategy and swordsmanship under several renowned teachers. In 1855, Yamaoka Tesshū entered the bakufu military academy (*kōbusho*) and began to train under the guidance of Yamaoka Seizan (山岡静山, 1829-1855), the older brother of Takahashi Seiichi (Deishū; 高橋

⁴⁹ Inoue Tetsujirō, *Nihon yōmeigakuha no tetsugaku*, 558.

⁵⁰ Like many other famous historical figures, including Yoshida Shōin and Saigō Takamori, Yamaoka has been the subject of great public interest, which has resulted in a many different accounts of his life. Yamaoka appears to have been a giant of a man, and is often described as a great swordsman and peerless drinker. While many of the anecdotes relating to Yamaoka may be based on fact, others are almost certainly apocryphal, such as the belief that, when he was ready to die, he assumed the *zazen* position and expired without moving. Although there are fewer fantastic accounts regarding Yamaoka than there were concerning Yoshida and Saigō, Yamaoka's lesser status also meant that there were fewer reliable accounts by witnesses who could refute the more questionable claims. Historical events in which Yamaoka played an important role and disinterested accounts by contemporaries provide useful information, but unfortunately these do not add up to a full biography of the man. This is compounded by the fact that many writings attributed to Yamaoka are very likely partial or complete forgeries. As an authoritative and factually verifiable biography of Yamaoka is beyond the scope of this study, this chapter limits its discussion of Yamaoka's life and work to those aspects that are corroborated by the greatest number of sources, and indicates when an event or text appears to be apocryphal or is not sufficiently supported by independent accounts.

泥舟, 1835-1903). After Yamaoka Seizan drowned in the Sumida River, Tesshū married his eldest daughter and took the Yamaoka name. In late 1859, Yamaoka Tesshū joined Kiyokawa Hachirō (清河八郎, 1830-1863) and a handful of other *shishi* to form a *sonnō jōi* party known as the Kobi no kai (“Tiger-tail Society”).⁵¹ Although Yamaoka does not seem to have been actively involved in the *jōi* actions of his compatriot *shishi*, members of the Kobi no kai were responsible for several high-profile assassinations of foreigners in the 1860s, including the killing of Townsend Harris’ translator, Henry C.J. Heuskens, in January of 1861.⁵² Many of the Kobi no kai’s members, including Kiyokawa, were killed by the shogunate or rival factions during the 1860s, and at least seven of them were given posthumous imperial ranks after the Restoration.⁵³

Yamaoka’s association with the group seems to have been based primarily on personal friendships with some of its members, rather than a desire to participate in its activities. If anything, Yamaoka’s motivation in joining the *shishi* seems to have been to prevent open conflict between them and the bakufu, a strategy that he communicated in a letter to Matsudaira Yoshinaga.⁵⁴ The bakufu adopted this approach in 1863, creating a special army consisting primarily of 300 itinerant *shishi* in order to placate the renegade elements and better control them. The government soon regretted this decision, however, as the new forces threatened to become uncontrollable, and later that year bakufu assassins killed Kiyokawa and dispersed most of the *shishi*. The day after the assassination, one of Kiyokawa’s followers was able to recover his head and bring it to Yamaoka, who buried it in the temple in which he was currently staying.⁵⁵ Shortly thereafter, Yamaoka was arrested by the shogunate along with Takahashi, although both were soon released.⁵⁶ In spite of these connections with radical elements, Yamaoka was more

⁵¹ Katsube Mitake, *Yamaoka Tesshū no bushidō*, 20.

⁵² Reinier H. Hesselink, “The Assassination of Henry Heusken,” 344.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 351.

⁵⁴ Yamaoka Tesshū, Kuzū Yoshihisa ed., *Kōshi Yamaoka Tesshū: denki sōsho* 242 (Part I), 181-182.

⁵⁵ Reinier H. Hesselink, “The Assassination of Henry Heusken,” 350.

⁵⁶ Yamaoka Tesshū, Kuzū Yoshihisa, ed. *Kōshi Yamaoka Tesshū: denki sōsho* 242 (Part I), 202-203.

of an establishment man than a revolutionary, both before and after the Restoration. His forthright personality, which has been described as “stupidly honest” (*baka shōjiki*),⁵⁷ certainly made him better-suited to official service than revolutionary intrigue.

Regardless of these problems in the early 1860s, Yamaoka’s closeness to the last Tokugawa government can be seen in his progression through various official positions until he was appointed *ōmetsuke* (chief inspector) in 1868. Soon after, his brother-in-law Takahashi Seiichi introduced Yamaoka to the new shogun, Tokugawa Yoshinobu (徳川慶喜, 1837-1913). Through this meeting, Yamaoka was appointed as an aide to Katsu Kaishū, the commander of the bakufu military, and it was in this capacity that Yamaoka participated in the event which would make him most famous. With the Satchō armies approaching Edo, Katsu directed Yamaoka and another member of the Kobi no kai, Masumitsu Kyūnosuke (益満休之助, 1841-1868), to deliver a letter of surrender to the enemy commander, Saigō Takamori. Upon reaching Saigō’s camp in Sunpu (Shizuoka), they submitted the bakufu proposal for surrender on the condition that there would be no bloodshed when Saigō’s forces entered Edo. The agreement of these terms, which sealed the fate of the Tokugawa government while limiting the amount of potential violence during the civil war, was seen as Katsu and Yamaoka’s most significant achievement, making the latter famous overnight. The peaceful surrender of Edo was widely lauded, but there were also doubts regarding the honorableness of this action. Katsu’s role, especially, became the subject of debate in late Meiji, when his decision to capitulate was reassessed by Fukuzawa Yukichi in the context of *bushidō*.⁵⁸

Through the fulfillment of his mission, Yamaoka had impressed not only Katsu, but also Saigō, leading to Yamaoka’s appointment to various important posts over the remaining twenty years of his life. In Meiji, Yamaoka served as *sanji* (councilor) of Ibaragi Prefecture and *kenrei* (prefectural head) of Imari Prefecture, before being appointed the personal bodyguard of the

⁵⁷ Katsube Mitake, *Yamaoka Tesshū no Bushidō*, 14-5.

⁵⁸ See Chapter 2.

young Meiji emperor and then, in 1875, *kunai daijō* (position of fourth rank in the early Meiji imperial court). During his time in the imperial household, Yamaoka earned the favor of the emperor, who is said to have shared Yamaoka's fondness for drinking parties.⁵⁹ Although he reached the position of *kunai daisuke* (third rank), Yamaoka retired from palace duties in 1882 after ten years of service. During his time in the imperial court, Yamaoka continued to train in swordsmanship and study Buddhism, as he had been a devoted follower of the Boddhisatva Kannon since his youth.⁶⁰ After retiring, Yamaoka focused more intensely on these activities and is renowned as the founder of the *mutō* (no-sword) school of kendō. In addition, Yamaoka's interest in Buddhism led him to found a Rinzai Zen temple, Tesshū-ji, in the Shimizu area of Shizuoka in 1883.⁶¹ Yamaoka succumbed to stomach cancer in 1888, with the disease usually attributed to his legendary love of good food and strong drink. During the final two years of his life, when his health had begun to deteriorate, Yamaoka wrote prolifically, and was said to have written well over 100,000 pages in this period.⁶² Shortly before his death, he received visits from the emperor and empress, with both of whom he had maintained a warm relationship.

Yamaoka was busy in the year before his death, founding the conservative nationalist group Nihon kokkyō daidōsha (The Society of the Great Way of Japanese National Teachings) together with Torio Koyata (鳥尾小弥太, 1847-1905).⁶³ In addition, Yamaoka has been credited with delivering a series of lectures on the subject of *bushidō* that have been described as the point of origin of the concept in the modern sense.⁶⁴ These talks were not published until

⁵⁹ Donald Keene, *Emperor of Japan: Meiji and his World 1852-1912*, 288-9.

⁶⁰ Yamaoka Tesshū, Kuzū Yoshihisa ed., *Kōshi Yamaoka Tesshū: denki sōsho* 242 (Part I), 88.

⁶¹ Ibid., 139. Yamaoka's interest in Buddhism, and religion in general, was quite broad, and he first began to study Zen at the age of 13 (p. 87).

⁶² Ibid., "Kaisetsu," p. 3. This staggering figure has to be qualified, for most of Yamaoka's "writings" were *kigō* (drawings or calligraphy) made to raise money for various causes. For example, the Feb. 27, 1887 edition of the *Yomiuri shimbun* carried an article announcing that Yamaoka intended to "write" 200,000 *kigō* for the benefit of Matsudaira Tadanori (松平忠敬, 1855-1919).

⁶³ Donald H. Shively, "The Japanization of the Middle Meiji," 107.

⁶⁴ Anatoliy Anshin, "Yamaoka Tesshū no zuihitsu to kōwakiroku ni tsuite," 103.

fifteen years after Yamaoka's death, but many prominent figures were listed in the audience, indicating that they would have been known to much of Tokyo's elite. Yamaoka's writings indicate that he had been interested in the concept of *bushidō* for almost three full decades and, of the three individuals that are the focus of this chapter, Yamaoka's use of the term *bushidō* was the most developed, as shown by the various ways in which he used the word after discovering it in older texts.

Yamaoka first mentioned *bushidō* in a brief text written in 1858, using the term synonymously with more common phrases such as *bushi no michi*. Yamaoka initially used the term in conjunction with *ginmi* and *fuginmi*, following the pattern of *bushidō* usage established throughout the preceding two centuries.⁶⁵ The term *ginmi* is found in combination with *bushidō* in the majority of the few texts that mention *bushidō*, including works associated with Takeda Shingen and Katō Kiyomasa, as well as the *Hagakure*, *Bugaku keimō* (1801), and *Shijin roku* (1840). Kasaya Kazuhiko has argued on the basis of an 1860 text that Yamaoka was not familiar with the *Kōyōgunkan* or other early works containing *bushidō*, and must have heard the term in conversation, as Kasaya believes that it was commonly used at the time.⁶⁶ However, in the 1860 text, Yamaoka specifically stated that he was the originator of the term, casting doubt on arguments that *bushidō* was widely disseminated in the middle of the nineteenth century. Certainly, Yamaoka did not consider *bushidō* to be an established term, but he overstated his case by claiming that he was the first to discuss the subject. As the above analysis of Yamaoka's earliest mention of *bushidō* indicates, it is highly likely that he derived the term from a much older text. In this sense, Yamaoka may have felt that he was the first to introduce the term into contemporary discourse, for *bushidō* was an obscure linguistic relic that could be freely appropriated.

⁶⁵ Yamaoka Tesshū, Kuzū Yoshihisa ed., *Kōshi Yamaoka Tesshū: denki sōsho* 242 (Part II), 8.

⁶⁶ Kasaya Kazuhiko, "Bushidō gainen no shiteki tenkai," 264.

Although he mentioned *bushidō* in earlier texts, Yamaoka first set about appropriating and properly defining the term in the 1860 text, written when he was in the midst of his involvement with the Kobi no kai *sonnō jōi* movement. In this brief essay, Yamaoka began his argument as follows:

”For us Japanese, there exists a subtle (*bimyō*) way of ethical thought. It is not Shinto; it is not Confucianism, nor is it Buddhism. Integrating the three ways of Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism, there is a way of ethics (*dōnen*), the remarkability of which can be seen since ancient times especially in warrior houses (*bumon*). Tetsutarō (Yamaoka) has given this a name and called it *bushidō*. However, I have closely read the old existing texts, but have seen nothing that is written and transmitted in the sutras. Along with transitions in my affairs and various experiences, it is a type of morality (*dōtoku*) that has been born from my feelings and senses (*kannen*). Today, I am giving shape to this moral way (*dōnen*), but this should certainly not be a task of one morning and one evening. I have gone in and out between life and death in various ways, and have melted, cast, and cultivated these experiences so that today I have for the first time reached this point. I now work to actively develop this Way, for although in the past people have not spoken of it, it was secretly in their hearts and let them be without anxiety.”⁶⁷

Yamaoka continued by explaining that *bushidō*, although unspoken, could be put into practice. As it was undocumented, Yamaoka argued that it could not be understood by merely studying books and writing poetry like a scholar or technician, but that practice was all-important. However, Yamaoka emphasized that “practice” of *bushidō* did not necessarily mean “action,” and that the heart/mind (*kokoro*) should take precedence over form/action (*katachi*). Furthermore, “only knowing victory, and never knowing defeat, is not *bushidō*.”⁶⁸ According to Yamaoka’s relatively pacifistic outline of *bushidō*, “tragic incidents” such as revenge killings and assassinations were against *bushidō*, and were the misguided actions of those who had strayed from the correct path. Yamaoka cited Tokugawa Ieyasu as stating that “repaying compassion (*on*) with compassion is a weighty task, while repaying compassion with violence is

⁶⁷ Yamaoka Tesshū, Kuzū Yoshihisa ed., *Kōshi Yamaoka Tesshū: denki sōsho* 242 (Part II), 28-9.

⁶⁸ Yamaoka Tesshū, Kuzū Yoshihisa ed., *Kōshi Yamaoka Tesshū: denki sōsho* 242 (Part II), 30.

easy.” *Bushidō* meant emphasizing the original *kokoro*, and making *katachi* submit to the former when necessary.

This essay provides an insight into why, despite his prolific writing and relatively high personal profile, Yamaoka’s *bushidō* theories did not gain wide acceptance. Although he was a member of the Kobi no kai *sonnō jōi* group and close friend of Kiyokawa and other extreme radicals, Yamaoka revealed pro-establishment leanings by citing Tokugawa Ieyasu using his usual honorific Edo-period title of *shinkun* (god-ruler). Furthermore, Yamaoka’s *bushidō* theories, like most writings attributed to him, were filled with Buddhist terminology and ideas, giving them a degree of compassion and pacifism that differed greatly from the writings of *shishi* such as Yoshida and Kiyokawa. Yamaoka’s emphasis on Buddhism may not have been problematic in the 1860s, but the political climate of early and mid-Meiji was expressly hostile to Buddhism and would have made it difficult to find an audience for overtly Buddhist texts. This may explain why there does not seem to be any existing material concerning Yamaoka’s Buddhist-influenced *bushidō* theories from a period of about two decades from the mid-1860s.

By the late 1880s, however, the project of State Shinto had begun to show clear weaknesses, and official hostility towards Buddhism had begun to fade.⁶⁹ On a more personal note, Yamaoka’s retirement gave him time for other pursuits, and there are many newspaper reports from the 1880s mentioning his activities promoting swordsmanship and Zen Buddhism.⁷⁰ In addition, the rapid deterioration of his health after 1886 would have been a consideration in completing and presenting his lectures on *bushidō*. The *bushidō* that Yamaoka is said to have presented in 1888 was more developed than the brief outline he had composed in 1860, but his ideas were fundamentally unchanged. Buddhism continued to be the dominant theme of a

⁶⁹ Klaus Antoni, *Shintō und die Konzeption des japanischen Nationalwesens (Kokutai)*, 189-206.

⁷⁰ See, for example, the *Yomiuri shimbun* editions from May 17, 1882, regarding Yamaoka opening a Zen school at Tōzenji (p. 2), and Oct. 15, 1887, announcing Yamaoka’s pledge to write on 100,000 folding fan papers to raise funds for a fencing school (p. 2).

relatively pacifistic *bushidō* theory, and Yamaoka emphasized compassion to an even greater degree than in his earlier works.⁷¹

According to Kuzū Yoshihisa and Abe Masato, Yamaoka gave a series of four to six lectures on *bushidō* in the year before he died, attended by his old friends and acquaintances, including Inoue Kowashi (井上毅, 1843-1895).⁷² Abe Masato reports that he gathered the records of these seminars and asked Katsu Kaishū to comment on them ten years later, and Abe compiled and published all of these documents 1902.⁷³ By this point, *bushidō* had become widely understood in Japan, and the market for this type of work was favorable, given the status of both Katsu and Yamaoka. In 1888 however, *bushidō* remained almost completely unheard of, and the records of Yamaoka's lectures treated *bushidō* as a subject that was new to his audience. At the start of his second day of lectures, Yamaoka briefly mentioned his first lectures, stating that "I trust that you are now used to hearing the term *bushidō*. Moreover, this moral way called *bushidō* is largely as I explained it yesterday in my talk yesterday on the four kinds of compassion (of Buddhism; *shion*)."⁷⁴

The above passage reveals the novelty of the term *bushidō* in 1888, as well as showing the strong influence of Buddhist doctrine on Yamaoka's thought. In his opening remarks to his friend Koteda Yasusada, who is credited with recording the lectures, Yamaoka mentioned that "as you [Koteda] know already, my *bushidō* is drawn from Buddhist reason. This is because that teaching truly and completely teaches the way of humanity."⁷⁵ After this opening, Yamaoka introduced the first section of his lectures, stating that "now I will speak about an outline of the four kinds of compassion (*on*), which are the elements (*yōso*) and source (*engen*) of *bushidō*." The first of these four *on* was directed towards parents, and if properly practiced

⁷¹ The reader may notice some incongruities in Yamaoka's religious deeds and views as outlined in his lectures, which may reflect his eclectic beliefs or cast doubt on the authenticity of some of the writings attributed to him.

⁷² Yamaoka Tesshū, Kuzū Yoshihisa ed., *Kōshi Yamaoka Tesshū: denki sōsho* 242 (Part II), 67.

⁷³ Katsube Mitake, *Yamaoka Tesshū no bushidō*, 9.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 58.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 29.

would lead to a natural order of people and things.⁷⁶ The second *on* of *bushidō* was directed towards *shūsei* (*sattva*; all living things), and Yamaoka argued that one must be merciful not only to humans, but must consider all living beings as though they were one's own mother and father, including beasts, hungry ghosts and denizens of hell.⁷⁷ The third *on* of Yamaoka's *bushidō* would have found wider agreement among later *bushidō* theorists, as it was directed towards the ruler of the country (*kokuō*). According to Yamaoka, the Japanese people saw loyalty and filial piety as one and the same, which was the true merit of the Japanese national polity (*kokutai*) and the source of *bushidō*.⁷⁸ For Yamaoka, there was no difference between the ruler and the state in Japan, nor was there a difference between the ruler and the people.⁷⁹ The fourth *on* of Yamaoka's *bushidō* was the most explicitly Buddhist, and was directed toward the Three Treasures (*sanpō*; Skt. *triratna*), i.e. the Buddha, dharma, and sangha. As Yamaoka explained, without the Buddha, his teachings, and the Buddhist priesthood, it would not be possible to grasp either the other three *on* or *bushidō*.⁸⁰

Yamaoka was troubled by developments in Meiji society, and this seems to have provided some of the impetus for his *bushidō* lectures. After discussing the four types of compassion that are the foundation of *bushidō*, Yamaoka entered into a discussion of *bushidō*-based solutions to problems in contemporary society. The advancement of science and the implementation of a modern legal system were especially troubling for Yamaoka. These two developments separated people from their spiritual roots and made them behave improperly. Officials in the new bureaucracy were like common thieves who stole their monthly salary.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 32-34.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 34-36.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 36-37.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 72-74. Yamaoka further believed that the *shishi* of the bakumatsu period, whether they subscribed to *sonnō jōi*, supported opening the country, supported the bakufu, or fought against the bakufu, were all ultimately struggling for the emperor and nation, and thus following *bushidō*. In this context, Yamaoka defended Saigō Takamori, stating that if Saigō was a criminal, Yamaoka himself would certainly be one also. A similar view was expressed by Fukuzawa Yukichi in his *Meiji jūnen teichū kōron*, in which he harshly condemned the Japanese press for rushing to criticize Saigō following his failed uprising, although Fukuzawa's commentary would also remain unpublished until the twentieth century.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 37-40.

Instead of giving their lives to their country and honestly serving the nation, they worked only for their own glory and desires, while the rigid legal system had prompted everyone to try to exploit it as best they could for personal gain. At the same time, science, engineering, medicine, and other modern disciplines had complicated people's lives so they were no longer able to deeply and carefully contemplate ethics. Yamaoka did not advocate the rejection of Western ideas and technology, but instead warned that Japan had to be careful in its adoption of foreign thought. Just as there had been problems with Confucianism when it arrived from China, Yamaoka continued, current problems could be resolved if new imports were carefully screened for compatibility with Japan's *kokutai*, and damaging elements were rejected. Moreover, spirituality and native morality had to be reemphasized, and the unique Japanese *bushidō* had to reach into those places that were not covered by the power of modern laws.⁸¹

Yamaoka discussed historical events related to *bushidō* and traced its origins and development back through Japanese history to the founding of Japan,⁸² but the general content of his lectures was generally forward-looking and progressive. While cautioning against uncritical adoption of Western ideas, Yamaoka saw the future development of Japanese *bushidō* being led by a combination of spirituality and science that represented true civilization.⁸³ As he concluded his discussion on the future of *bushidō*,

“Essentially, it is necessary to maintain the *bushidō* spirit while formally using scientific methods. In the current state of the world, especially, we must increasingly bring forth *bushidō*. The heart and arts must be combined and firstly meet the great principle of ‘indivisible knowledge and ethics’ (*chitoku fuji*), this is my unique argument, *bushidō*.”⁸⁴

⁸¹ Ibid., 42-47. A very similar argument was made by Matsumoto Aijū in an 1891 article, although the wording is quite different. (reprinted in Matsumoto Aijū, “Bushidō,” 19).

⁸² Ibid., 59-70.

⁸³ Ibid., 101.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 109-110.

This relatively progressive approach is also reflected in Yamaoka's views towards women, who are rarely mentioned in *bushidō* texts by other writers. At the end of his last lecture, by which time it was reported to be well past midnight, Yamaoka apologized to his listeners, saying that he had finished his overview of *bushidō*, but that there was one thing he still needed to discuss, which was the role of women. It pained him to think that people might suppose that *bushidō* was limited to men, when in fact it made no distinction between men and women. In recent times, gender equality had become a major issue, and Yamaoka saw some validity in these movements, in spite of physiological differences. Women were often disparaged in contemporary Japanese society, Yamaoka continued, and were seen as far inferior to foreign women. He believed that the lack of educational opportunities for women was a great problem that had a negative effect on society as a whole. "No matter how intelligent a man may be, if the woman who maintains his line is 'imperfect' (*fukanzen*), any child that they have will be influenced by the mother's traits," Yamaoka admonished. Yamaoka did not advocate complete gender equality, and his views reflected the early Meiji discourse on "good wives, wise mothers" (*ryōsai kenbo*) initiated by Nakamura Masanao (中村正直, 1832-1891).⁸⁵ By echoing Western-influenced progressive views on gender, Yamaoka's writings on the subject were progressive for a work on martial ethics in mid-Meiji Japan.

The content of Yamaoka's *bushidō* lectures provides possible reasons for their lack of impact in the following years, and even the authors who began to write on *bushidō* in the 1890s did not mention Yamaoka's talks.⁸⁶ The most obvious reason would seem to be the fact that the talks remained unpublished, and Yamaoka's passing would prevent him from promoting the

⁸⁵ Hirakawa Sukehiro. *Ten ha mizukara tasukuru mono wo tasuku: Nakamura Masanao to Saikoku risshi hen*. 190-192.

⁸⁶ Yamaoka is first mentioned in the context of *bushidō* in 1895, in a brief note written by his eldest son Yamaoka Naoki (山岡直記, 1865-1927) commemorating the founding of the Dai nihon kōbu kan (Great Japan Martiality Promotion Society). In this text, Naoki pledges to "continue [my] late father Tesshū's sense of loyalty to the emperor and patriotism, and to support *bushidō*..." (supplement to: Mikami Reiji, *Nihon bushidō*). However, there is no specific reference to Yamaoka's *bushidō* theories or lectures.

subject further himself. The second contributing factor that immediately presents itself is the content of the talks, which, with their strong emphasis on compassion and especially Buddhist doctrine, would not have found much resonance with Fukuzawa Yukichi, Inoue Tetsujirō, Nitobe Inazō, and many other prominent *bushidō* theorists that followed. It seems plausible that, following the establishment of *bushidō* as a legitimate concept in the popular mind after 1900 through the work of other theorists, there finally existed a sufficient audience for Yamaoka's works, and his lecture records soon went through a large number of printings and continue to be published today, over a century after they were first issued. Even by the end of the Meiji period, writers such as Kashima Sakurako (鹿島桜巷, conjectural reading, dates unknown) were crediting Yamaoka with coining the term *bushidō*.⁸⁷

There is another possibility for explaining the lack of influence of Yamaoka's *bushidō* in the 1890s: the lectures never actually occurred, and were fabricated by Abe Masato shortly before their publication in 1902. This is the argument recently put forth by Anatoliy Anshin, and it has considerable exegetical force.⁸⁸ According to Anshin, Abe composed the talks, as well as the commentaries by Katsu and others, using other documents and biographies of Yamaoka for reference. All the figures mentioned in the commentaries or recorded as being present in the audience, including Yamaoka's wife, were dead by 1902, so there was no way of proving or disproving the validity of Abe's records. Abe made something of a cottage industry out of publications related to Yamaoka, issuing at least seven books in 1902-3.⁸⁹ Unfortunately, virtually nothing is known about Abe himself.⁹⁰ For this reason, it is not possible to determine if and where Abe would have received the records of these talks from Koteda, nor is it possible to verify his interviews with Katsu Kaishū, who passed away only a few months after these were supposedly conducted. In addition, it is not possible to determine Abe's motivations in

⁸⁷ Anatoliy Anshin, "Yamaoka Tesshū no zuihitsu to kōwakiroku ni tsuite," 103.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 104-92.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 104.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 97.

publishing these works, whether or not he wrote them himself. He may have been driven by financial motives, for in 1902 the publication of a work on *bushidō* that had purportedly been composed by famous figures such as Yamaoka and Katsu was virtually assured of commercial success. Abe may also have done this for ideological reasons, either as a devout Buddhist who desired to tie his religion more closely to *bushidō*, or as an admirer of Yamaoka who wanted to ensure that he was not forgotten. Regardless of Abe's intentions, he was almost certainly successful in his aims.

Anshin provides several reasons for believing that Abe authored the text himself, although it remains to be seen whether they unequivocally support this conclusion. Anshin points out that Ogura Tetsuju (小倉鉄樹, 1865?-1944), who was very close to Yamaoka for a long time as a student in his *dōjō*, expressed serious doubts as to how much of the lectures was Yamaoka's own work.⁹¹ Second, in Katsu's commentary on the dialogues, his outline of Yamaoka's life is strikingly similar to a separate biography published in 1893, and contains many of the same mistakes. In addition, Katsu's discussion of Yamaoka's role in the handover of Edo contains phrases that seem to have been lifted from a text on the subject that Yamaoka had written in 1882.⁹² Third, many of Yamaoka's statements on Buddhism seem to have been taken from contemporary texts on the subject. Fourth, while the lecture records and Abe's other texts state that Yamaoka's *bushidō* was a powerful influence on Inoue Kowashi and the drafting of the Imperial Rescript on Education, there is no mention of Yamaoka or *bushidō* in any of the documents dealing directly with the composition of the Rescript. Therefore, Anshin concludes, rather than Yamaoka influencing the ideology of the Rescript, the Rescript influenced Abe's portrayal of Yamaoka's ideology.⁹³ Anshin further examines other writings published by Abe that were attributed to Yamaoka but appear to have been composed after Yamaoka's passing.

⁹¹ Ibid., 101.

⁹² Ibid., 100.

⁹³ Ibid., 99.

Given the large number of apocryphal anecdotes and questionable biographical information regarding Yamaoka, it is perhaps not surprising that many of the writings attributed to him may not be his own.

In addition to Anshin's criticism, there are several other issues which cast doubt on the provenance of Yamaoka's *bushidō* dialogue records. One of these issues is the gap of more than a quarter century between Yamaoka's first writings on *bushidō* and his lectures. This could be explained by the turbulence of *bakumatsu* and Yamaoka's many official positions after 1868, which would have limited the time and energy he could have put towards a *bushidō* theory, but he always found enough to actively promote Zen Buddhism and swordsmanship. A second issue is the sudden occurrence of an entire lecture series on *bushidō* in the late 1880s when viewed in the greater context of the development of the concept during Meiji, which follows a comprehensible pattern of largely organic growth. Unfortunately, as with so much information regarding Yamaoka Tesshū's life and work, these issues raise both questions and answers.

Anshin presents compelling evidence that much of Yamaoka's *bushidō* dialogues and Katsu's commentaries were later creations, but this does not prove that they had no basis in fact. While Abe appears to at least have done a great deal of expanding and editing, this does not mean that the entire text must be a forgery, and that the lectures never took place. Yamaoka may have given lectures, and the subject may have been *bushidō*, as he had used the term several decades before. Katsu Kaishū may also have provided commentary on the texts, and Inoue Kowashi may have been in the audience. It may be that the lecture notes provided by Koteda were quite sparse and took considerable editing and embellishment to reach a standard suitable for publication. These issues are beyond the scope of this study, but the truth probably lies somewhere between the opposing viewpoints presented by Abe and Anshin.

Ultimately, in the context of the development of modern *bushidō*, these issues are not crucial. If one assumes that the lectures transpired exactly as transmitted by Abe, which would be a naïve assumption in light of Anshin's evidence, it would mean that the first discussion of *bushidō* in the Meiji period occurred quite suddenly in the late 1880s. However, as this work did not have an apparent impact until 1902, this view does not affect the trajectory of the development of *bushidō* discourse in the 1890s as it is presented in this study. If, on the other hand, one sides with Anshin and dismisses Yamaoka's *bushidō* monologues as a complete fabrication, then the lack of impact of these talks is confirmed, and the date of the first significant *bushidō* discourses in Meiji must be pushed back to the 1890s.

The *bushidō* proposed in Yamaoka's lectures was a unique ethic that was firmly rooted in his Buddhist faith, containing equal measures of socially conservative and progressive elements that mirrored Yamaoka's own life and times. Statements regarding the centrality of the emperor, the importance of loyalty, and the duty of Japanese to give everything for their country reflect Yamaoka's own views, and would have met with broad approval from *bushidō* theorists in the following decades. Whether composed by Yamaoka or Abe, the statements warning Japanese to be careful in their adoption of foreign thought reflect the mood of the mid-1880s, which was marked by growing disillusionment with many aspects of modernization. However, Yamaoka's words were merely cautionary, and accepted the value of Western technology and institutions. On a related note, Yamaoka's lectures were not marked by the nationalistic chauvinism of many later theorists, and his comments regarding other nations are not generally couched in terms of superiority or inferiority. This lack of value judgments seems more representative of Yamaoka's own time than the early 1900s, when common views towards other nations, and especially Japan's Asian neighbors, were less egalitarian. Even his statements regarding Christianity, which Yamaoka saw as being the basis for current world

history due to the strength of the Powers,⁹⁴ were very balanced, and would not have offended a French academic who reportedly attended the lectures. By avoiding discussions of Japan's cultural "rank" or "status" in the world, the lectures do not fit into the discourse of the late 1890s, by which time Social Darwinism had become widely diffused and Herbert Spencer's ideas had become accepted by thinkers on both sides of the political spectrum.⁹⁵ Rather, the thoughts expressed in the lectures are closer to the value-judgement-free cultural comparisons that would finally become widely accepted by scholars in the Shōwa period, as Minami Hiroshi has argued.⁹⁶ The views on other nations expressed in the lectures also appear to have been influenced by his understanding of Buddhism as a universal religion, and Yamaoka stated that he was fortunate to have been born in a land that has received Buddhist teachings.⁹⁷

The emphasis Yamaoka's lectures place on compassion also differentiates him from most subsequent *bushidō* theorists, although similar currents can be found in the *bushidō* espoused by Christians such as Nitobe Inazō and Uchimura Kanzō, although they would search for other sources to explain the element of compassion in their theories. Just as Nitobe and Uchimura's *bushidō* was generally ignored by the establishment in the first half of the twentieth century, Yamaoka's interpretations found little mention in official textbooks and journals even after 1902.⁹⁸ The records of his lectures found a large popular audience, however, and went through nine printings in ten years.⁹⁹ Yamaoka would certainly have been aware of the

⁹⁴ Katsube Mitake, *Yamaoka Tesshū no bushidō*, 101-4.

⁹⁵ Yamashita Shigekazu, "Herbert Spencer and Meiji Japan," 83, 91.

⁹⁶ Minami Hiroshi, *Nihonjin ron: Meiji kara kyō made*.

⁹⁷ Katsube Mitake, *Yamaoka Tesshū no bushidō*, 38.

⁹⁸ By this point, an "orthodox" interpretation of *bushidō* was beginning to crystallize, and deviating views such as Yamaoka's or Nitobe's were largely shut out from mainstream *bushidō* discourse, developments that are discussed in Chapter 5 of this study. In addition, the publication of Yamaoka's lectures in 1902 may have had an adverse affect on views of Yamaoka in some quarters. During the Meiji period, there were 119 articles regarding Yamaoka published in the *Yomiuri shinbun*. Even after his death, an average of several articles a year referenced Yamaoka in some way. However, searches indicate that almost no articles were published concerning Yamaoka between November 1901 and July 1908, which roughly coincides with the publication and supposed peak of popularity of his lectures and other works edited and authored by Abe.

⁹⁹ Although Yamaoka's *bushidō* is rarely mentioned in "orthodox" works, its general popularity can be seen in popular writing after 1902. For example, the introduction to a collection of six *bushidō*-themed plays published in 1932 credits Yamaoka as the source of inspiration (Akimoto Rokutsū, *Shinsei bushidō-jidaigeki rokujō*. Retrieved from Waseda University Theater Museum). Katsube Mitake, *Yamaoka Tesshū no bushidō*, 9.

singularity of the ethic he was presenting, and this explains his selection of a unique and undefined term to describe it. There were no attempts to define *bushidō* in the decades since Yamaoka's first essay concerning the concept, but by 1898 (or 1902), Katsu Kaishū (or Abe Masato) spoke of "Tesshū's *bushidō*" in order to differentiate it from the other *bushidō* theories that had been put forward by that time.¹⁰⁰ By 1902, *bushidō* was widely understood not only in Japan, but worldwide, albeit in very different forms than Yamaoka could have imagined, especially if he did not compose the lectures himself.

Due to their active periods and political influence, Yoshida, Yokoi, and Yamaoka have all been presented as links connecting Edo and Meiji *bushidō* discourse. A comparative examination of their and later texts reveals, however, that they did not have a formative influence on the development of modern *bushidō*. Instead, they were resurrected into Meiji discourse only after it had already been established. In the case of Yoshida and Yokoi, their writings were later used for the legitimization of independently developed ideas, while Yamaoka served as a vehicle for Abe Masato and promoters of martial arts attempting to benefit from the *bushidō* boom. The next chapter shows that Meiji *bushidō* discourse was not a continuation of Sengoku, Tokugawa, or even Bakumatsu trends, but an organic movement influenced most strongly by changes in Japan's geopolitical status and accompanying shifts in Japanese ideas of "self" and "other."

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 53.

CHAPTER 2 First Explanations of *Bushidō* in the Meiji 20s

Theoretical considerations

Having reviewed the role of Yamaoka Tesshū as a bridge linking Tokugawa and modern *bushidō*, this study now turns to the greater historical currents in Meiji Japan. In spite of the uniqueness of the *bushidō* thought attributed to him in Abe Masato's book, Yamaoka's appeal to Asian and, more specifically, Japanese, virtues reflected broader trends that were steering intellectual and institutional changes at the time. Following the Meiji Restoration, Japan introduced sweeping reforms of its bureaucracy, military, and educational system, to name but a few examples. These reforms involved the importation and adaptation of foreign systems of government and management with the aid of European and American advisors. These changes were reflected in the Westernization of many aspects of society, such as diet, dress, and behavior, especially among the upper classes in major urban centers. While there remained a strong anti-Western conservative movement, and very few Japanese would actually meet a foreigner in person during the Meiji period, institutional changes such as the establishment of a modern education system and broad conscription laws affected all levels of society.

The changes that occurred under the Meiji government were resented in many sections of society. The former commoner classes were most directly affected by the school system and conscription orders, and were upset about the personal sacrifices they necessitated. In comparison, the upper classes, including many former samurai, were able to obtain exemptions from conscription through the payment of 270 Yen, a not insignificant sum at the time.¹ The Meiji system had ostensibly done away with much of the institutional inequality of the Tokugawa social structure, yet the reality was that social mobility was still considerably restricted, fostering discontent among those who had hoped for rapid improvement. At the

¹ Harada Keiichi, *Kokumingun no shinwa: heishi ni naru to iu koto*, 52.

same time, the Meiji government angered many former samurai, especially from the lower ranks, by gradually eliminating their stipends and special status. This created a large group of disgruntled *shizoku*, a number of whom gathered around Saigō Takamori and instigated a rebellion that the new government could only put down with great loss of life.

In the 1880s, tangible improvements in the social conditions of many Japanese were still slow to come, and much of the initial optimism that had greeted the new government had dissipated. It was natural for this disappointment with the Meiji establishment to result in increasing dissatisfaction with the West, as many of the institutional changes were Western in origin and often discussed in Occidentally-oriented concepts such as *bunmei kaika* (“civilization and enlightenment”). These sentiments were reflected in Yamaoka’s lectures, which cautioned against the unquestioning adoption of Western ideas. While the Western-style institutions continued to expand and evolve as the period progressed, their content came to be less explicitly foreign. This can be seen in the removal of foreign content from Japanese textbooks and the creation of a Japanese literary canon.

By the 1890s, even those Japanese who had earlier advocated wholesale adoption of Western systems, culture, and language began to distance themselves from this approach. Tokutomi Sohō’s sudden shift from French-influenced popular rights activist to ultra-nationalist after the Sino-Japanese War is an extreme example, but it does reflect broader trends in the 1890s and beyond.² These changes can also be observed in the development of *bushidō*. If one discounts Yamaoka’s dialogues, the significant writings on *bushidō* published before the Sino-Japanese War were almost all written by Japanese with extensive foreign experience and relatively favorable views towards Westernization. However, once the unquestioningly

² Miyazawa Seiichi, *Meiji ishin no saishōzō: kindai nihon no “kigenshinwa,”* 19. In comparison, Alistair Swale argues that the shift in Tokutomi’s thought was more gradual, although agreeing that “the well-known diplomatic reversal of the Triple Intervention which occurred following the Sino-Japanese War (1894-5) provided the greatest catalyst toward a shattering of [Tokutomi’s] internationalist vision...” (Alistair Swale, “Tokutomi Sohō and the Problem of the Nation-State in an Imperialist World,” 68-88.)

positive views of the West had begun to be tempered by disillusionment with Western attitudes towards Japan, firsthand experience with a foreign “other” led these Japanese thinkers to an increased awareness of their own culture, as Minami Hiroshi has argued.³ Ozaki Yukio, for example, first discussed *bushidō* in a dispatch he sent back to Japan during his travels through the U.S. and Europe in September 1888. Events twelve years later echoed this, when Nitobe Inazō wrote his *Bushidō: The Soul of Japan* during a stay in California.

The unease towards western individualism found in Yamaoka’s dialogues and other texts resulted in an increased emphasis on Eastern virtues, primarily Confucianism, although this was a “modern hybrid” rather than a faithful continuation of any previous traditions.⁴ For this reason, it has been said that Confucianism was never as strongly emphasized in Japan as during the Meiji period.⁵ This was certainly true of certain circles of government and society, and the Imperial Rescript on Education is often discussed in the context of its Confucian elements. This “return” to Confucianism would prove short-lived, however, due to its persistent connection with the unpopular *ancien regime*, as well as simultaneous developments in China.⁶ In addition, discourse on Confucianism in Meiji came to focus on Yōmeigaku (the Wang Yangming school) rather than Shushigaku (the Zhu Xi school), while “native” Japanese thought systems were also thoroughly explored. This aversion to Chinese thought was exacerbated by the deteriorating relationship between the two countries in the 1890s, culminating in the Sino-Japanese War, which had a profound effect on national sentiment.⁷

Just as efforts to separate Buddhism and Shinto in the Meiji period had resulted in a State Shinto that was strongly influenced by Buddhist and Confucian thought,⁸ attempts to define native Japanese morality were heavily indebted to both of these “foreign” philosophies, although

³ Minami Hiroshi, *Nihonjin ron: Meiji kara kyō made*, 15.

⁴ Alistair Swale, *The Political Thought of Mori Arinori*, 9.

⁵ Kurozumi Makoto, “Kangaku: Writing and Institutional Authority,” 216-17.

⁶ For a discussion of the former, see: Hannelore Eizenhofer-Halim, *Nishimura Shigeki (1828-1902) und seine Konzeption einer “neuen” Moral im Japan der Meiji-Zeit*, 217.

⁷ See, for example: Carol Gluck, *Japan’s Modern Myths*, 135.

⁸ Helen Hardacre, *Shinto and the State, 1868-1988*, Chapter 3.

the degree to which this was acknowledged varied widely. The search for native morality came to focus on the recent past of the Edo period, and the samurai class was posited as a type of moral compass for modern Japan. Carol Gluck has discussed the creation of Edo as historical space in mid-Meiji, and points out that there was a considerable revival of interest in the subject from the 1890s onward.⁹ Popular interest in the recent past can be seen in the popularity of samurai-related works such as the *Chūshingura* and *Hakkenden*, which surged in the 1880s.¹⁰ In his *Autobiography*, Fukuzawa Yukichi hinted at the continued interest in these narratives even among the most “Westernized” Japanese, recalling the Akō incident as a favorite topic of debate and discussion for him and his peers.¹¹

This chapter examines the development of *bushidō* in the third decade of Meiji in the context of three major trends in the discourse of the time. The first of these is the maturation of Japan’s views towards the West, which became far more nuanced during this period, moving away from idealistic positions of idolization or complete rejection that had been widespread before. The second factor is developments in Japan’s relationship with China and changing views towards the latter’s standing relative to Japan. The third factor is an explosion of interest in “native” Japanese culture, thought, and history. The relative importance of each of these three modes of discourse changed over time, generally in the order in which they are discussed here, with none of the three ever completely disappearing or completely dominating discourse. These three trends were intimately related, and many *bushidō* theorists were influenced by all of them. The importance this study places on Japan’s relationship with other nations in the development of an ostensibly native concept such as *bushidō* may initially strike the reader as orientalist and overstating the importance of the West. However, an examination of primary and secondary sources reveals that the origins of Meiji *bushidō* should be viewed under

⁹ Carol Gluck, “The Invention of Edo,” 264, 267.

¹⁰ Shirane Haruo, “Curriculum and Competing Canons,” 245.

¹¹ Fukuzawa Yukichi, Kiyooka Eichi trans., *The Autobiography of Yukichi Fukuzawa*, 78.

consideration of Japan's interactions with other countries, and that the presence of a foreign "other" or, more accurately, "others," was critical to the formulation of *bushidō*.

Development of Japan's views of itself and its relationships with China and the West

In 1888, diffusion of *bushidō* was limited to a few scholars and perhaps the audience of lectures on the subject given by Yamaoka Tesshū. Regardless of whether the words were his own, Yamaoka's warnings to his countrymen to exercise care in the adoption of foreign thought were less related to his *sonnō jōi* past than a reflection of the prevailing mood in the late 1880s. The sense of embarrassment many young Japanese had earlier felt towards their own culture began to wane around this time, and conservative elements in the government were increasingly skeptical of Western thought and culture, if not technology. These changing attitudes can be seen in the development of the Meiji primary school system, which was modeled on the French (1872), then American (1879), and then German (1886) systems.¹² At first, the content of primary education was imported along with the structure of the education system, but began to return to more traditional Confucian models around the fifteenth year of Meiji.¹³ The strongly foreign-influenced textbooks that had been in widespread use, and were often mere translations of Western texts, were gradually replaced by new versions with native content. While the early textbooks contained many references to historical personages such as George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, revisions of school texts following the promulgation of the Imperial Rescript on Education meant that the generation of school texts used in the Meiji 30s had eliminated most references to foreigners by 1900.¹⁴ It was not merely the formal content of the new textbooks that was different, but also the messages they attempted to convey. The early foreign texts focused on freedom and progressive values, resulting in obvious contradictions with imperial

¹² D. Eleanor Westney, *Imitation and Innovation*, 14.

¹³ Araki Ryūtarō, "Nihon ni okeru yōmeigaku no keifu," 412.

¹⁴ Kaigo Tokiomi ed., *Kindai nihon kyōkasho sōsetsu kaisetsu hen*, 113.

rescripts.¹⁵ Textbook writers increasingly drew on older military narratives that “emphasized such virtues as self-sacrifice and loyalty,” such as the *Taiheiki*, which was “frequently used as an example of *Chūkun*.” By the 1890s, these works represented a significant portion of the educational literary canon.¹⁶

Even Japanese with strong Western connections argued for a renewed emphasis on Eastern values. One example of this was Nishi Amane (西周, 1829-1897), who studied in Holland and was a founding member of the pro-Western Meiji Six Society (*Meirokeisha*). Nishi was a well-known translator, especially of Western philosophy, and is credited with the creation of many *kanji* terms to represent foreign concepts, most notably the term “*tetsugaku*” as a translation of “philosophy.” By the 1880s, however, Nishi was arguing for the implementation of a Confucian-style educational system, believing it necessary for the good of the nation.¹⁷ Another notable promoter of Confucian values and member of the *Meirokeisha* was Nishimura Shigeki (西村茂樹, 1828-1902), whose writings on Japanese morality were highly influential. The strength of this movement towards Confucianism can also be seen in the commentary of Katō Hiroyuki (加藤弘之, 1836-1916), also a member of the Meiji Six Society, who observed in 1887 that the *Analects* and “pure Chinaism (*shinashugi*)” were being taught to many of the upper classes.¹⁸

In his study of *kangaku* in the Meiji period, Kurozumi Makoto has argued that Confucianism became more widely diffused during this time than ever before in Japanese history, as its concepts and terminology were important tools for uniting the new state and standardizing language.¹⁹ Kurozumi explains the context of the decade between 1887-96 as “a period marked by reaction to Westernization and by the formation of nationalist thought,” in the course of

¹⁵ Ibid., 108-9.

¹⁶ Shirane Haruo, “Curriculum and Competing Canons,” 240.

¹⁷ Minami Hiroshi, *Nihonjin ron: meiji kara kyō made*, 28.

¹⁸ Katō Hiroyuki, *Tokuiku hōan*, 3.

¹⁹ Kurozumi Makoto, “Kangaku: Writing and Institutional Authority,” 216.

which “the need for a Confucian East Asian ethics became evident. Although based on the Shinto tradition linked to the emperor, the Imperial Rescript on Education (1890) expounded Confucian ethics—what might be described as a modern state version of the Shinto-Confucian syncretism developed in the Edo period.”²⁰ At the same time, Western-style institutions continued to be at least formally promoted, as evidenced by the establishment of the Meiji constitution in 1889, although this document seems to have been primarily designed to confirm the undemocratic existing order while giving Japan an additional bargaining chip in its continuous attempts at treaty revision.²¹ The juxtaposition of the externally-directed, Western-influenced constitution and internally-directed, Confucian-based rescripts shows the conflicting currents in the third decade of Meiji, with “traditionalist” movements increasingly gaining in strength, at least in more conservative official institutions such as the education system and the military.

Although the resurgence of Confucian values in the 1880s would continue, the deterioration of Japan’s relationship with China in the early 1890s over issues of control in Korea, combined with the obvious weakness of China in relation to the West, had a strong influence on Japanese nationalism and attitudes towards the continent. In spite of the perceived “need for a Confucian East Asian ethics,” Japan was not necessarily moving closer to her East Asian neighbors in any practical sense. Pro-Asianists did exist, and thinkers such as Miyake Setsurei (三宅雪嶺, 1860-1945) hoped to move Japan’s focus from the West to Asia,²² but on the whole, Japan’s association with Asia was seen as a handicap in efforts at treaty revision and in gaining acceptance from the Western Powers. Japanese abroad were frustrated by being mistaken for Chinese, and felt that the “backward” state of their Asian neighbors reflected poorly on Japan, as well. Fukuzawa Yukichi’s 1885 essay on “escaping from Asia” (脱亜論, *Datsu A*

²⁰ Ibid., 217.

²¹ Najita Tetsuo, *Hara Kei and the Politics of Compromise 1905-1915*, 206.

²² Kenneth B. Pyle, *The New Generation in Meiji Japan*, 156-7.

ron) was an early expression of this view.²³ In the subsequent decade, many former pro-Confucian conservatives came to agree with the basic premise of Fukuzawa's text.

It was in this environment of fundamental reassessments and even open hostility towards both China and the West that the first significant writings on *bushidō* and samurai ethics began to appear in the early Meiji 20s, although it took more than a decade for the term "*bushidō*" to become inextricably linked to the subject of warrior morality. Four writers in particular developed *bushidō* theories in the years before the Sino-Japanese War, their thought both reflecting and contributing to Japan's conception of itself. Ozaki Yukio (尾崎行雄, 1858-1954), Fukuzawa Yukichi (福沢諭吉, 1834-1901), Suzuki Chikara (鈴木力, 1867-1926), and Uemura Masahisa (植村正久, 1858-1925) belonged to different generations and had different social and religious backgrounds. However, there were also similarities that would play significant roles in their *bushidō* thought. All four of these writers were born before 1868 as members of the samurai class, at maybe the highpoint of *bushi* morale during the 200 years 1670-1870, sensitizing them to issues of warrior morality. In addition, they were all highly aware of Japan's place in an international world, and spent considerable time abroad. Their international experiences would be closely related to their respective views on *bushidō*, and were a similarly important factor for the better-known *bushidō* theorists that followed, including Nitobe Inazō, Inoue Tetsujirō, and Uchimura Kanzō. While all of these thinkers would draw on similar inspiration for their interest in warrior ethics, their respective *bushidō* theories were strongly influenced by their own backgrounds and experiences, and they were critical of one another's views.

²³ Ibid. 149.

The *bushidō* of Ozaki Yukio

Of the four writers discussed in this study as forerunners of *bushidō* in the Meiji period, Ozaki Yukio was the first, as well as the only one who would see the great transformations that the concept would go through between his first article in 1888 and the surrender of Imperial Japan in 1945. As the longest-serving member of the Japanese Diet and a committed supporter of constitutional government, Ozaki was undoubtedly dismayed by many of the *bushidō* interpretations that would follow his own, and he did not write widely on the subject in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, Ozaki's publications concerning *bushidō* appear to have prompted his former teacher Fukuzawa Yukichi to use the term as an alternative to his own *yasegaman*,²⁴ while Suzuki Chikara made a point of attacking Ozaki in the introduction to his *Kokumin no shin seishin*. Similarly, Uemura Masahisa's essays on *bushidō* criticized thinkers who attempted to link the ethic with trade, an apparent reference to one of Ozaki's later articles. Along with the later work of Suzuki Chikara, the relationship between Ozaki's *bushidō* theory and the social and cultural conditions in which he proposed it may best reflect the complex developments in Japanese self-awareness during the Meiji 20s. Ozaki's work also foreshadowed many of the issues that Nitobe Inazō would more famously wrestle with a decade later.

Ozaki was often a controversial figure during his political career, indirectly leading him to acquire a great deal of international experience. Born in what is now Kanagawa prefecture, Ozaki attended Fukuzawa's Keiō Gijuku before dropping out in 1876 to study science and mathematics. Ozaki continued to maintain a close relationship with Fukuzawa, who is said to have reprimanded him for his verbose writing style. When Ozaki submitted an essay during his time at Keio, Fukuzawa summoned Ozaki and asked him who his intended audience was. Ozaki replied that he desired that the intelligentsia of this world read his writing, to which

²⁴ The concept of *yasegaman* (瘦我慢) is discussed in greater depth in the next section on Fukuzawa Yukichi.

Fukuzawa is said to have responded with “Idiot. From now on, write as though you want monkeys to read it.”²⁵ Readers of Ozaki’s work will not feel that he followed Fukuzawa’s advice very closely, but this does not seem to have harmed Ozaki’s career, for in 1877 he became editor-in-chief of the *Niigata shinbun*, one of several journalistic positions he would hold. A few years later, in 1884, work as a reporter for the *Hōchi shinbun* took Ozaki to Shanghai for two months to cover a military conflict between China and France. This experience seems to have convinced him of the inferiority of China and Korea relative to Japan and the West, and he touched on this subject in later writings.²⁶

Ozaki’s parallel career as a politician began in earnest in 1882, when he joined Ōkuma Shigenobu’s (大隈重信, 1838-1922) Rikken Kaishin (constitutional reform) party. This association led to problems as well as opportunities in 1887, when the party’s protests against treaty reform caused Ozaki and others to be banished from Tokyo for two years. Ozaki made the most of the situation by leaving Japan and spending time in America and Europe, especially London, sending travel reports and other dispatches back to the *Asano Shinbun*.²⁷ Many of these reports were printed immediately, and others were compiled into the *Ōbei Man’yūki* (欧米漫遊記, *Record of Journeys to America and Europe*) and published after Ozaki’s return to Japan. Although he would later rise to very high office in Japan as government minister, party head, and mayor of Tokyo, Ozaki’s activities before 1900 are most significant in the context of this study.

As his subsequent writings reveal, Ozaki’s journey to China in 1884 convinced him that Japan was superior to her continental neighbors and had to take an active role in East Asian affairs. In the first of these beliefs, Ozaki was mirroring the nationalistic thought that his mentor Fukuzawa put forth in the *Datsu-A ron*.²⁸ The second part of this reasoning, that Japan should have a more prominent international role, can be seen in the context of the increasing

²⁵ Ishida Hideto, “Fukuzawa Yukichi to Ozaki Yukio,” 27-28.

²⁶ Ozaki Yukio, “Yū Shin ki (Records of a Journey to Qing),” 239-300.

²⁷ Nakahara Nobuo, “Ozaki Yukio ni okeru nashonarizumu,” 45.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 46.

interest in Japanese traditions and culture in the Meiji 20s, as represented by writers such as Miyake Setsurei and Shiga Shigetaka (志賀重昂, 1863-1927). Breaking with the more simplistic idealization of the West that had dominated discourse for most of the first two decades of Meiji, Ozaki contended that it was not sufficient for the nation to merely adopt European culture and systems. His travels to Europe and America in 1888-1890 convinced Ozaki that borders and modern institutions were necessary, but, like England, France, Prussia, and the various nations of Europe, Japan had its own structures, cultures, writings, customs, and climate. These factors formed a type of protective wall that defined and protected nations.²⁹ Ozaki's articles on *bushidō* were a clear attempt to create (or revive) a Japanese institution that corresponded to what he believed was the key to the success of British merchants and diplomats on the international stage- the English notion of gentlemanship.

Ozaki sent his first commentary on *bushidō* to the *Asano shinbun* as a dispatch during his stay in England on September 21, 1888. Titled simply "*Shinshi* (Gentleman)", Ozaki's primary goal in this article was to explain the virtues of English gentlemen to a Japanese audience, while at the same time criticizing shortcomings common among many of his countrymen who had taken to referring to themselves as *shinshi*. According to Ozaki, although the term "gentleman" was often translated as *shinshi*, these two Chinese characters did not capture the full meaning of the English original. In Japan, a *shinshi* was generally taken to be someone with a great deal of money and a luxurious lifestyle including requisite accoutrements such as gold watches, top hats, black carriages, and pastimes such as buying *geisha* and participating in *hanaawase* (card games). Unfortunately, Ozaki continued, these qualities differed greatly from those of an English gentleman, and the terms were not equivalent. Whereas Japanese *shinshi* "spread immorality," "take bribes," and were grovelers and snivelers who distinguished themselves

²⁹ Ozaki Yukio, "Ōbei man'yū ki," 512-3.

through immoral behavior, the English gentleman was responsible for “upholding morality and refining society” in that country, and any gentleman who committed but one mean offense in word or deed would no longer be known by that title. However, Ozaki lamented, since there was no other term for “gentleman” in Japanese, he was forced to use *shinshi* in his dispatch, but made it clear that he was referring to English gentlemen when he did so.³⁰

According to Ozaki, an Englishman became known as a gentleman on the basis of his deeds and actions. Material wealth was irrelevant in this regard, and if a man’s heart and intentions were good, he would be known as a gentleman even if he were poor. Conversely, some English aristocrats were disparaged as “not being gentlemen” in spite of their nobility and vast material wealth. As traits of an English gentleman, Ozaki listed characteristics such as “never forgetting higher ideals, valuing honor and rightness, and acting for the good of the country while forgetting private interests. One must be courageous but not violent, gentle but not weak...and all actions must be based on utmost trustworthiness.”³¹ To Ozaki, the word “gentleman” signified the pinnacle of grace and refinement, and to be called a “true gentleman” by one’s peers was the “greatest goal of an Englishman.” The concept was unique to England, however, and did not exist in other European nations. Although the French had adopted the term “*gentilhomme*”, argued Ozaki, there were no gentleman in that nation. Ozaki cited the letters of a certain “Dr. Arnold”, an Englishman who had traveled to France and determined that “The thing that surprises me most about France is the complete lack of gentlemen. There is not one person who has the education and attitude of a true gentleman. Even if there are some people who appear to be gentlemen, these are just outward appearances and decorations.”³² Statements of this nature are not surprising given the tense relations between England and France

³⁰ Ibid., 744.

³¹ Ibid., 745.

³² Ibid., 746.

in the late nineteenth century, and Ozaki felt that they were sufficient evidence upon which to conclude that England had a monopoly on gentlemanship in Europe.

The roots of the English gentleman, continued Ozaki, were in the feudal tradition and could be traced to the knighthood, although the ethic had evolved since the medieval period. This connection was important to Ozaki, for it provided the basis of his *bushidō* theory. While agreeing with Dr. Arnold that gentlemen were an English product that could not be found in other nations, Ozaki believed that Japan had a corresponding concept in “*bushi*,” which was superior to “*shinshi*” as a translation of “gentleman.” Similar to English gentlemen, Japanese *bushi* had their roots in a feudal age. Like gentlemen, *bushi* valued honor, did not commit mean or crude acts, did not bow to the strong or torment the weak, and were ashamed to sit idle and lose their dignity and prestige, to name but a few of the similarities that Ozaki claimed were too numerous to count. Unfortunately, he continued, *bushidō* declined after the warrior class disappeared, and the Japanese people had become shameless and frivolous. Unlike the English, Ozaki complained, the Japanese were too “excitable” and did not realize the importance of the qualities that made up *bushidō*, causing the ethic to be essentially boycotted. The result of this was a decline in propriety, shame, courage, rightness, while superficiality, toadying, coarse speech, and selfishness had increased.³³

Ozaki went on to summarize the plot of the moralistic tome *John Halifax, Gentleman* to demonstrate the lack of correlation between wealth and gentlemanship in the English eye. In Japan, the *shinshi* were defined exclusively by their wealth and manner, regardless of their mean intentions, but the “major reason that the English are respected throughout the world is not their wealth, but their gentlemanly qualities,” which were also qualities representative of Japanese *bushi*. If wealth was the most respected quality, stated Ozaki, the Jews would be the most

³³ Ibid., 747.

admired people, but this was certainly not the case.³⁴ This passage reveals that Ozaki had been influenced by the anti-Semitism prevalent in Europe in the late nineteenth century. In this and other articles, Ozaki drew parallels between Jews and Chinese, both of whom he saw as successful in business but lacking in trustworthiness and integrity.³⁵ He warned that if the Japanese continued to ignore the greater good and boycott *bushidō*, even if many people became wealthy, the nation would not be able to escape the fate of these two peoples and not be respected by the rest of the world.³⁶ Ozaki's adoption of Dr. Arnold's xenophobic condemnation of the French indicates that he would have been similarly accepting of anti-Semitic viewpoints he encountered in the West. In the same way, his views towards China, while certainly influenced by his time in Shanghai, represent broader trends in Japan that would develop throughout the Meiji 20s and reach a peak during the Sino-Japanese War.

In March of 1891, Ozaki wrote a second article on *bushidō*, which was published in his essay collection *Naichi gaikō* (内治外交, *Domestic Governance and International Diplomacy*) in 1893.³⁷ This second article was similar to the first in its essential arguments, but Ozaki's tone changed considerably in the two-year interval between these dispatches. In the first article, Ozaki regretted the decline of *bushi* virtues in Japan and lamented the state into which *bushidō* had fallen in comparison with the English "feudal" legacy. The second article contained the same exultation of the virtues of English gentlemanship as the first, but Ozaki's tone towards his countrymen had changed from one of almost resigned complaint to an exhortation to recover samurai virtues and aggressively compete on the international stage. Specifically, Ozaki saw *bushidō* as the key to success for Japanese businessmen and traders, while restating and strengthening his earlier assertions:

³⁴ Ibid., 747.

³⁵ Ibid., 452.

³⁶ Ibid., 747.

³⁷ Ibid., 231.

“in England they are called gentleman, here they are called *bushi*. Although the terms are different, they are ultimately the same. What makes English merchants are without equal under heaven is that most of them have the preparation of gentlemen, and are not cowardly or unskilled. The merchants of other countries are dazzled by insignificant interests, and easily divide their virtues, but the English merchants do not, they are completely trustworthy and even if they die they will not break their word. For this reason, all people under heaven desire to deal with them. The success of English trading is primarily due to the high degree of trust in their merchants. This high degree of trust is because they are rich in the qualities of honesty and chivalry (義侠, *gikyō*), is this not called the English quality of gentlemanship? Is this not called the quality of *bushi* of our country? Therefore, it can be said that those who do not know *bushidō* will not be great merchants, and in other words, if the level of *bushidō* falls then business can certainly not burn brightly.”³⁸

Therefore, Ozaki argued, if Japan desired to become a “civilizational heaven” and trade with other nations, it should not neglect *bushidō* for even a single day. Without the “beautiful characteristic nature” of the *bushi*, it would be impossible to carry out great projects or reap great benefits. Those who conduct business in a secret and underhanded way would only be minor figures in the world markets. According to Ozaki, dealing in mean and contemptible ways in the current business world was analogous to desiring to cross a river but smashing one’s boat.³⁹

Ozaki recounted some of the similarities between *bushi* and English merchants, i.e. gentlemen, from his earlier article. In this essay, however, Ozaki took a more prescriptive approach, stating that just as “gentlemanly” and “ungentlemanly” are two powerful words that decide the failure or success of a person in English, the term *bushi* should have a similar force in Japan. After all, he argued, the old proverb states that “as the flower is a *sakura*, the man is a *bushi*.” If Japanese merchants were to succeed in business and trade, they needed to be trusted as the English merchants were.⁴⁰ This trust could only be built through being strictly faithful, honoring agreements, and avoiding coarse and vulgar speech, all of which made up Ozaki’s *bushidō*. Successful business houses have always had a virtuous spirit that helped the weak and

³⁸ Ibid., 229.

³⁹ Ozaki Yukio, “Naichi gaikō,” 30.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 230.

challenged the strong. There were none that succeeded by being servile. If Japan's merchants did not respect and follow *bushidō*, they would surely fail in the contemporary business world among "roaring tigers and phoenixes."⁴¹

The *bushidō* theory put forth by Ozaki in these two articles represents one of the earliest discussions of the subject in the Meiji period, and among the first to be published. Ozaki was abroad during 1888, when Yamaoka is said to have held his lectures, precluding the possibility that these were a source of inspiration. There are three characteristics of Ozaki's *bushidō* that are significant in the context of the more nationalistic *bushidō* that became the mainstream interpretation in the twentieth century. The first of these characteristics is that Ozaki wrote his articles while traveling in the West, and was stimulated by his experiences to find a native Japanese equivalent to English gentlemanship, just as Nitobe Inazō would seek an equivalent for Christian morality a decade later. Changes in Ozaki's thought between 1888 and 1891 are evident in the articles, with the first essay being far more critical of Japan than the latter. Ozaki argued that English gentlemanship was superior to most other ethical systems in both articles, but by 1891 he was convinced that *bushidō* could fulfill a similar position in Japan, enabling Japanese merchants to become as successful as their English counterparts. In other words, Ozaki did not believe that Japan had reached the same "civilizational" level as England, but had come to feel that it was possible for the nation to attain that level in the future, views that mirrored developments occurring simultaneously in intellectual circles back in Japan during the early Meiji twenties.

The second characteristic of Ozaki's *bushidō* worth noting is the elitism of his ethic. Just as "gentleman" was a title of distinction in England, Ozaki argued that the label "*bushi*" should be restricted to individuals who were deserving of the title due to their deeds. In other texts, Ozaki would use the term *sōshi* (士) as a native concept that was equivalent to

⁴¹ Ibid., 231.

gentleman, but more suited to the modern age than *bushi*.⁴² The core ethic of Ozaki's *sōshi* remained *bushidō*, however, and they formed an elite whose task was to educate the common people about the importance of the nation.⁴³ Like gentlemanship, *bushidō* was not accessible to all people, and those who understood and practiced it would be called upon to guide those who did not. Ozaki advocated a meritocratic approach, but his arguments with regard to the structure of society bore distinct similarities to those of writers on *bushi* ethics before 1868. In the Edo period, writers such as Daidōji Yūzan, Yamamoto Tsunetomo, and especially Yamaga Sokō were firmly convinced that *bushi* had a monopoly on ethical behavior, and must therefore guide the other classes. In contrast, in the Meiji period it was claimed that all men were soldiers and class distinctions were nominally eliminated. This concept of equality was also the founding philosophy of the Imperial Army, which was vindicated by the modern forces' defeat of the samurai rebellion headed by Saigō Takamori in 1877. A core tenet of later *bushidō* thought, especially in the twentieth century, was that the warrior ethic had entered into all Japanese after 1868. Ozaki's interpretation of *bushidō* was somewhat isolated in this regard, for his strict insistence on meritocracy was at odds with the hereditary *bushi*-dominated society that existed before, while his elitism and exclusivistic arguments differed greatly from the egalitarianism of subsequent *bushidō* theories.

A third characteristic of Ozaki's *bushidō* that also delineated him from prior and subsequent interpretations of warrior ethics was his treatment of martial matters and the concept of loyalty. The nature of loyalty was the subject of much debate in the Edo period, and most writers on warrior ethics made mention of it. Similarly, there were few commentators on warrior ethics before or after Ozaki who were able to ignore the military aspects of the subject. Ozaki, however, focused on implementing *bushidō* in the interests of succeeding as a merchant, a profession for which most earlier *bushi* had nothing but contempt. For this reason, Ozaki's

⁴² Nakahara Nobuo, "Ozaki Yukio ni okeru nashonarizumu," 47.

⁴³ Ibid., 48-49.

subsequent use of the term *sōshi* was more suited to his project, for it did not have any martial connotations. The awkwardness of promoting warrior ethics while disregarding military issues is apparent when reading Ozaki's *bushidō* theories. Ozaki's position on loyalty was similarly vague in his *bushidō* articles, and differed greatly from those of subsequent writers. He did not address the issue specifically in his writings, and did not mention the emperor in the context of *bushidō*, either as a target for loyalty or otherwise. Ozaki did discuss the importance of serving the nation, implying a certain allegiance, but did not advocate dying for emperor and country as fundamental principles of *bushidō* as many later writers did. In fact, Ozaki's most significant statements on loyalty and *bushidō* were his assertions that *bushi* should be "strictly faithful," yet also "challenge the strong" and avoid "servility." In this passage, the virtue of faithfulness referred primarily to business partners, not superiors or feudal lords. The idea that one should challenge the strong and avoid servility appears to be in conflict with many other interpretations of loyalty, especially the absolute loyalty towards emperor and nation demanded by many *bushidō* theorists in the twentieth century. This interpretation was in keeping with Ozaki's personal convictions, however, and his later opposition to the Pacific War, resulted in serious sanctions against him.

Ultimately, although Ozaki Yukio's ideas differed considerably from those that came to be accepted as mainstream *bushidō* thought in the twentieth century, the *bushidō* theories in his foreign dispatches are important as the first outline of the concept in the Meiji period. In addition, unlike Yamaoka Tesshū, whose influence on other thinkers before 1902 cannot be verified, Ozaki's writings were noted by other theorists, including Fukuzawa Yukichi, Uemura Masahisa, and Suzuki Chikara. Furthermore, the publication of another article by Ozaki in the journal *bushidō* in 1898 meant that his work would have been known to the next generation of *bushidō* scholars, such as Inoue Tetsujirō, who played the greatest role in developing and popularizing the concept. The specific conditions under which Ozaki wrote his *bushidō* articles

are also significant. His travels to China and exposure to the teachings of Fukuzawa revised his views of the rest of East Asia, and during his travels to Europe he was more directly challenged by the necessity to reassess Japan's culture in relation to the West than were his countrymen back in Japan. These two international experiences were essential formative influences on Ozaki's *bushidō*. Ozaki would not write specifically on *bushidō* in the twentieth century, probably because of the way the concept had changed, but his early writings are significant because they foreshadow some of the developments in Japanese cultural theory that occurred in the following decade, and especially the work of Nitobe Inazō.

Fukuzawa Yukichi's view of martial honor

In late 1891, only a few months after Ozaki composed his second article on *bushidō*, his former teacher Fukuzawa Yukichi wrote *Yasegaman no setsu* (瘦我慢の説, *The Theory of Yasegaman*), a brief text criticizing the surrender of Edo by Katsu Kaishū in 1868. As would be expected given Fukuzawa's close relationship with Ozaki, their views were similar in many ways, but their approaches to *bushidō* were quite different. While Ozaki discussed *bushidō* in a forward-thinking manner in the context of Japanese mercantilism, Fukuzawa's *Yasegaman no setsu* was more focused on past events in domestic history. Fukuzawa's examination of Japanese warrior ethics in this text placed greater emphasis on Japanese cultural theory than on international comparisons, although the way in which Japan's cultural reputation affected foreign relations was also an important issue. The circumstances of Fukuzawa's life and his other writings mean that even a domestically-oriented work like the *Yasegaman no setsu* must also be considered in the context of cultural comparisons, especially with regard to Japan's changing position relative to Asia and the West. Fukuzawa Yukichi has been the subject of a great deal of research in Japanese and other languages, and his biography and general thought are widely

known and cited. For this reason, this study limits its discussion of his life and thought to those points that are of direct relevance to the development of *bushidō*.

Fukuzawa's *Yasegaman no setsu* can be interpreted on several levels. In the context of this study, his views on nationalism and outline of Japan's warrior ethic are of primary importance, but one must also be aware of the personal conflicts between Fukuzawa and Katsu Kaishū that provided the motivation for this work.⁴⁴ The two had met on the *Kanrin Maru* that travelled to America in 1860 with the first Japanese mission to cross the Pacific. Both men were supporters of the Tokugawa regime throughout the 1860s, although only Katsu held official positions of importance. The reasons for their support of the Tokugawa were also quite different, with Fukuzawa fearing the establishment of a xenophobic, specifically anti-Western, system of government should the imperial loyalists emerge victorious in 1868.⁴⁵ Fukuzawa understood better than most the importance of Western science, technology, and institutions, and the actions of the *sonnō jōi* factions in the imperial loyalist movement provided ample cause for concern. In contrast, Katsu's support for the Tokugawa was more pragmatic, in keeping with his general approach to political affairs. Rather than any idealistic attachment to the old regime, Katsu's motivation was essentially to prevent upheaval and bloodshed, which would weaken the nation even further relative to the Western powers. Katsu supported the Tokugawa as long as reform of the existing system seemed to be a realistic option, but when the loyalist armies approached Edo and a point of no return had been reached, he negotiated surrender rather than risking military confrontation that could at best result in a pyrrhic victory ultimately benefitting foreign powers. For this pragmatic decision, Katsu earned the eternal enmity of Fukuzawa, who felt that the surrender of Edo had sold out the entire nation, both practically and culturally.

⁴⁴ Iida Kanae, "*Yasegaman no setsu to Hikawa seiwa*," 1-18. Cited in M. William Steele, "*Yasegaman no setsu: On Fighting to the Bitter End*," 139-140.

⁴⁵ M. William Steele, "*Yasegaman no setsu: On Fighting to the Bitter End*," 139.

Fukuzawa opened the *Yasegaman no setsu* by discussing the nature of the modern nation-state and its formation processes. He did not believe that there was any natural necessity for nations to form, but once these groupings were created, citizens of a nation would do their utmost to promote its interests and disregard those of other states. As a result, patriotism and loyalty to the ruler came to be known as the greatest virtues, despite the fact that they are private emotions. Even if there were many regions in a nation, each with its own characteristic and interests, they must realize their unity and act together to face foreign threats.⁴⁶ This description is representative of the situation in Japan before 1868, and Katsu may well have agreed with Fukuzawa's assessment thus far.

For Fukuzawa, the patriotic feelings of a people for their country manifested themselves in the ethic of *yasegaman*. William M. Steele has rendered this concept into English as "fighting to the bitter end,"⁴⁷ which in the context of Fukuzawa's text is an apt translation. The term "*yasegaman*" also has connotations that go beyond dogged determination, and implies keeping a dignified and stoic posture in the face of insurmountable odds or certain defeat. For example, Fukuzawa mentioned Belgium and Holland as examples of *yasegaman*, for these small countries would surely have been swallowed up by their larger neighbors by conquest or voluntary amalgamation if patriotism and *yasegaman* did not drive them to preserve the honor and glory of their independent state.⁴⁸ In this context, *yasegaman* referred not only to military struggles against France and Germany, but also to the pride with which these nations insisted on their own cultural and linguistic independence during times of peace. This study uses the Romanized *yasegaman*, as an accurate and comprehensive translation of the concept, such as "stoic dignity and resilience," would be bulky and awkward.

⁴⁶ Fukuzawa Yukichi, *Meiji jūnen teichū kōron*, *Yasegaman no setsu*, 50-51.

⁴⁷ M. William Steele, "Yasegaman no setsu: On Fighting to the Bitter End," 139.

⁴⁸ Fukuzawa Yukichi, *Meiji jūnen teichū kōron*, *Yasegaman no setsu*, 53.

Fukuzawa conceded that actions displaying *yasegaman* could be found in many different parts of the world and time periods, but he saw the concept as being especially pronounced in Japan, as the “great ethic of *yasegaman* that is intrinsic to us Japanese.”⁴⁹ Furthermore, *yasegaman* was equivalent to the warrior spirit (*bushi no ikiji* or *shiki*) that was the “basis of the nation” (*rikkoku no konpon*), and *bushidō* demanded fighting on even when expecting failure.⁵⁰ According to Fukuzawa, the greatest realization of the warrior spirit in Japan was in the *bushi* of the Mikawa region, who served as vassals to the Tokugawa. The success of the Tokugawa was due entirely to the willingness of the Mikawa warriors to fight to the end for the family, regardless of the odds against them. This strict adherence to *yasegaman* allowed Tokugawa Ieyasu to conquer the nation and his house to rule for 250 years.⁵¹ For Fukuzawa, the warrior spirit was forged during the *sengoku* period, and continued to be refined and strengthened during the rest of the “feudal” age as the various small domains insisted upon their independent existence in spite of the overwhelmingly large houses surrounding them.

Fukuzawa lamented, however, that during the imperial Restoration twenty years earlier, the “important great ethic” of *yasegaman* was damaged by some Tokugawa retainers who decided to surrender and sue for peace, thereby critically injuring the warrior spirit (*bushi no kifū*) that had been cultivated over many hundreds and thousands of years.⁵² In this passage, Fukuzawa harshly criticized Katsu’s actions, stating that retainers of the *bakufu* were obligated to fight to the end, no matter how insurmountable the task may have been. Fukuzawa was further incensed by the early stage at which Katsu surrendered, for the government forces had only lost one battle, and still held Edo castle. In comparison, Enomoto Takeaki (榎本武揚, 1836-1908) held out at the Goryōkaku (five-sided fort) near Hakodate for several more months before surrendering from a truly hopeless position. Fukuzawa criticized Enomoto for his

⁴⁹ Ibid., 61.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 61, 63.

⁵¹ Ibid., 54.

⁵² Ibid., 55.

failure to fight to the very end and perish alongside his men, but commended him for acting in accordance with *bushidō* by holding out for as long as he did.⁵³ In contrast, Katsu's cowardly and short-sighted actions allegedly caused irreparable damage to the warrior spirit and the nation as a whole. Although Katsu's actions were beneficial to Japan's economy in the short term, argued Fukuzawa, the damage to the warrior spirit and *yasegaman* was a far greater tragedy for the nation in the long term.⁵⁴ In other words, while the surrender of Edo may have saved lives and maintained Japan's overall material strength by avoiding a terrible battle, an action for which Katsu was later widely revered as a national hero, Fukuzawa believed that Katsu should have spent the rest of his days in repentance and disgrace for failing his duty to *bushidō*.

As Fukuzawa explained using the examples of Holland and Belgium, even in times of peace *yasegaman* was an essential attribute for successful negotiation of international relations. Without the warrior spirit (*shiki*), the Great Japanese Empire would not be able to secure its continued independence in the civilized world.⁵⁵ In Fukuzawa's view, this independence was severely threatened by Katsu's actions, for foreigners observing the events of 1868 were perplexed by how easily a seemingly powerful 270-year old government crumbled without resistance when challenged by the forces of only two or three large domains. Although the Restoration conflict was a domestic quarrel pitting relatives and friends against one another, Fukuzawa feared that the lack of warrior spirit displayed by Katsu would become apparent if Japan was challenged by foreign powers, making them more likely to take an aggressive stance after observing the ease with which the *bakufu* was overthrown.⁵⁶ In his conclusion, Fukuzawa briefly considered the future of the warrior spirit (*shifū*, *shijin no fū*) and its importance to Japan's development over the next century, stating that his purpose in writing the *Yasegaman no*

⁵³ Ibid., 63-65.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 55-56.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 54.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 56, 58.

setsu was not to attack Katsu or Enomoto, but rather to call attention to the crisis in warrior spirit that manifested itself during and after the Meiji Restoration.⁵⁷

As the title of the work implies, *yasegaman* was the most important trait in Fukuzawa's theory of Japanese warrior ethics, but he did not have a specific term to refer to Japanese *bushi* morality as a whole. In addition to *bushidō*, which he may well have gleaned from one of the articles by his former student Ozaki, Fukuzawa also used terms such as *shiki*, *shijin no fū*, *bushi no kifū*, *shifū*, *bushi no ikiji*, and others interchangeably. This reflects the state of *bushidō* discourse in late 1891, when the word was still largely unknown and there was no specific term for the concept of warrior ethics. The *Yasegaman no setsu* also reveals both Fukuzawa's understanding of warrior ethics, and his views of Japan's position in the international community at the time.

There were considerable differences between Fukuzawa's understanding of *bushidō* and the ideas put forth by Ozaki Yukio. While Ozaki largely neglected to mention martial affairs in his *bushidō* theories, proper military action was a central theme of Fukuzawa's work. Fukuzawa is best known for his promotion of Western thought and systems, but he also had a strong interest in native *bushi* behavior from a young age. In his autobiography, Fukuzawa described debates concerning the Akō Incident and the actions of the 47 masterless samurai as one of his favorite pastimes in his youth. This subject appealed to Fukuzawa and his schoolmates due to the many possible sides that could be taken on the issue, and they alternated in trying to prove the loyalty or disloyalty of the former Akō retainers.⁵⁸ In recent years, there has been a considerable increase in research regarding Fukuzawa's nationalistic thought, which was at one time seen as being incompatible with his role as a prominent liberal. While the view of Fukuzawa as a liberal is not necessarily mistaken, it has also been argued that Fukuzawa's

⁵⁷ Ibid., 68-69.

⁵⁸ Fukuzawa Yukichi, Kiyooka Eichi trans., *The Autobiography of Yukichi Fukuzawa*, 78.

“...nationalism was so strong that Makiyama Norio has described Fukuzawa’s 1873 *Gakumon no susume* as ‘the first real work of nationalism (*kokuminshugi*) in Japan’. In Fukuzawa’s nexus of progressivism, wariness of the state, and commitment to both individualism *and* nationalism lies the key to understanding Meiji liberal nationalism.”⁵⁹

Fukuzawa believed that much of the strength of spirit and individualism that he found so admirable in his studies of the West had also existed in Japan, but had recently been weakened. As Inoue Isao has pointed out, Fukuzawa held that self-reliance and independence were the foundation for a “civilizational spirit” that he desired to find in contemporary society. Ultimately, he arrived at the same conclusion as Ozaki, namely that these qualities were most pronounced in the former *bushi* class. For this reason, Fukuzawa saw the redirection of loyalty from feudal lords to the nation as a positive development, and further believed that the spirit of the warrior class should be cultivated and promoted as much as possible, rather than being destroyed or lost.⁶⁰

As his comments on independence and self-reliance indicate, the loyalty towards the nation advocated by Fukuzawa was not the unconditional obedience desired by many promoters of *bushidō* in the twentieth century. Although Fukuzawa believed that patriotism was a positive trait, he was a staunch defender of the peoples’ rights to dissent and protest, which he feared were being eroded. In his *Meiji jūnen teichū kōron*, written in 1877 but published together with the *Yasegaman no setsu* in 1901, Fukuzawa harshly criticized the attacks on Saigō Takamori that filled the newspapers at the time. Fukuzawa believed that the crushing of Saigō’s rebellion simultaneously represented the elimination of the right to protest in Japan, and that the virtue of *taigi meibun* had come to mean nothing more than blindly following the government.⁶¹ Fukuzawa emphasized loyalty to a far greater degree than Ozaki, but their views on the subject were similar in that their loyalty was closer to a nineteenth-century Western

⁵⁹ Kevin Doak, “Liberal Nationalism in Imperial Japan,” 25.

⁶⁰ Inoue Isao, “Tokugawa no ishin: sono kōdō to rinri,” 263.

⁶¹ Koyasu Nobukuni, *Nihon kindai shisō hihan: ikkokuchi no seiritsu*, 307, 308.

understanding of patriotism than the absolute devotion to emperor and state espoused by extreme nationalists.

Fukuzawa and Ozaki agreed in their views of loyalty and insistence on the continued importance of warrior ethics, but they differed with regard to the elitism of their *bushidō*. Ozaki's *bushidō* was comparable to English gentlemanship in the sense that it was a virtue to be strived for but that could only be realized by an elite minority. In contrast, Fukuzawa was more strongly influenced by the egalitarianism of the American Declaration of Independence, leading him to reject class distinctions such as had existed under the Tokugawa.⁶² In this way, Fukuzawa's *bushidō* differed not only from Ozaki's interpretation, but also from most older writings on warrior morality, a common theme of which was the notion that the *bushi* class had a unique ability to understand and realize ethical behavior and guide the nation. On the other hand, Fukuzawa's classless view of *bushidō* became a dominant theme in twentieth-century *bushidō* theory, which superimposed the *bushi* mentality onto all Japanese citizens.

On the surface, in spite of Fukuzawa's denial that he desired to attack Katsu and Enomoto, the *Yasegaman no setsu* primarily concerns a domestic incident and is framed in the context of native ethics. However, Fukuzawa's status as one of the most prominent Meiji internationalists means that this text cannot be properly understood without examining the developments in Japan's views of itself and other nations during this time. In this context, Fukuzawa's views towards both the West and China are significant. With regard to the former, the trend towards reassessment of Japan's status relative to the West that became especially pronounced in the Meiji 20s was foreshadowed in Fukuzawa's earlier writings. As arguably the foremost expert on Western culture in Japan, from the 1870s onward, Fukuzawa argued for the realization of "independent self-respect (*dokuritsu jison*)" by every individual Japanese, and was

⁶² Iida Kanae, "Fukuzawa Yukichi to bushidō," 17.

often critical of Westerners' belief in their own superiority.⁶³ Accordingly, the *Yasegaman no setsu* mentioned the Western Powers as a foreign threat that could take advantage of a Japan weakened by the compromising of its warrior spirit. In contrast, references to contemporary China are missing from the *Yasegaman no setsu*. This appears unusual at first, since Fukuzawa's negative opinion of China as expressed in the *Datsu A ron* is echoed in many of Fukuzawa's other writings, including the *Autobiography*, which discussed his "hostility towards Chinese learning."⁶⁴ As Japanese cultural theory developed further in late Meiji and Taishō, many thinkers came to accept Fukuzawa's view of Japan as a part of what Annette Schad-Seifert has deemed "Western universality," rather than the "Asian peculiarity" that China was unable to escape.⁶⁵ Nitobe Inazō expressed a similar view in his *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, repeating another writer's statement that while men in China and India differed only in their level of ability, Japanese differed in their "originality of character," a "sign of superior races and of civilizations already developed."⁶⁶ The pervasiveness of the view of Japan as separate from and superior to Asia, and especially China, was reflected by the "fact that many Westerners and Japanese were prone to interpret Japan's victory in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-5) as a victory of Western civilization over Chinese (Asian) civilization."⁶⁷ Katsu Kaishū, on the other hand, lamented the outbreak of the war as a fatal blow to the cooperation between Asian nations he believed was necessary for Japan to be able compete with the West.

Fukuzawa's writings on Japan's relationship with China and the West were widely publicized, and insofar as they reflect the nationalistic *zeitgeist* of mid-Meiji they helped direct broader currents in Japanese thought. As for his specific theories of warrior ethics as discussed in the *Yasegaman no setsu*, however, these would have their greatest impact around the time of

⁶³ Minami Hiroshi, *Nihonjin ron: Meiji kara kyō made*, 18-19.

⁶⁴ Fukuzawa Yukichi. Kiyooka Eichi trans., *The Autobiography of Yukichi Fukuzawa*, 91.

⁶⁵ Annette Schad-Seifert, "Constructing National Identities," 63.

⁶⁶ Nitobe Inazō, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, 22

⁶⁷ Annette Schad-Seifert, "Constructing National Identities," 63.

Fukuzawa's death, when he was no longer able to participate in the resulting discourse. Although several copies of the *Yasegaman no setsu* were printed in 1891 and distributed to Katsu, Enomoto, and others along with a note affirming Fukuzawa's intent to publish the work at some point in the future, this would not occur until a month before Fukuzawa died in early 1901.⁶⁸ Katsu and Enomoto, whose exploits featured prominently in the *Yasegaman no setsu*, sent letters acknowledging that they had received the work and, according to Inoue Isao, Ishikawa Kanmei (石河幹明, 1859-1943), the editor of the *Jiji shinpō*, published these responses together with the *Yasegaman no setsu* through Fukuzawa's newspaper in 1892.⁶⁹ This earlier publication, which is subject to debate, would have been fairly limited in scope, since commentaries on the text did not appear until after 1901, when they ignited a heated debate in academic circles. The limited distribution of the text before 1901 reflects Fukuzawa's concerns that both the *Yasegaman no setsu* and the related *Meiji jūnen teichū kōron* (明治十年丁丑公論) were inflammatory and should not be published until his death.⁷⁰

The decade that elapsed between the writing and official publication of Fukuzawa's *Yasegaman no setsu* gives the text unique significance in the history of Meiji *bushidō*. While many other texts had been forgotten by the beginning of the twentieth century, when new interpretations of *bushidō* were being established and accepted, Fukuzawa's prominence meant that *bushidō* theorists were unable to ignore the publication of the *Yasegaman no setsu* in 1901. For this reason, the text is of interest not only as one of the earliest examples of Meiji *bushidō* discourse, but also serves as a bridge linking the first generation of *bushidō* theorists, including Ozaki, Fukuzawa, Suzuki Chikara, and Uemura Masahisa, with the next generation that would bring the subject to international attention at the turn of the century. The critiques of the *Yasegaman no setsu* written by Inoue Tetsujirō, Uchimura Kanzō, Tokutomi Sohō, and others

⁶⁸ Inoue Isao, "Tokugawa no ishin: sono kōdō to rinri," 262.

⁶⁹ Iida Kanae, "Fukuzawa Yukichi to bushidō," 23.

⁷⁰ On pages 307 and 322 of his *Nihon kindai shisō hihan: ikkokuchi no seiritsu*, Koyasu Nobukuni claims that Fukuzawa did not publish the works before 1901.

illustrate how *bushidō* had evolved throughout the 1890s. This study examines the debates surrounding the delayed publication of the *Yasegaman no setsu* in the next chapter, in the context of the *bushidō* discourse directed by the second generation of Meiji theorists.

Suzuki Chikara: *Bushidō*, militarism, and the rise of Japanese cultural nationalism

The writings of Suzuki Chikara, who referred to himself as Tenganshi (天眼子, “All-Seeing Master”), positioned Japanese culture in the world in a way that was new in the Meiji period. Suzuki’s theories were similar to Miyake Setsurei’s earlier comparisons of Western and Japanese culture in their emphasis on the national spirit,⁷¹ but Suzuki focused on the past, seeking the spirit of the Japanese people in the pre-Meiji warrior class. In this regard, Suzuki’s thought had similarities with that of Ozaki Yukio and Fukuzawa Yukichi, but unlike the former, whom Suzuki criticized, Suzuki emphasized the martial nature of *bushi* thought in his 1893 *Kokumin no shin seishin* (国民の真精神, *The True Spirit of the Japanese People*). Specifically, Suzuki believed that the *bushi* virtues of diligence and economy (*kinken*), as well as loyalty and honor, were essential to the success of the Japanese nation. His emphasis on the warrior spirit was superficially similar to Fukuzawa’s, but his arguments went considerably further in that while Fukuzawa was focused on the survival of the Japanese nation, Suzuki saw the warrior spirit as the key to an effective and aggressive foreign policy in East Asia. Like the arguments of Ozaki and Uemura Masahisa, Suzuki’s commentary was solidly anchored in the discourse regarding Japan’s status relative to the rest of the world, and Suzuki was at the forefront of some of the most dramatic shifts in this discourse during Meiji. In many ways, Suzuki’s nationalistic warrior ideal can be seen as a prototype of the interpretation of *bushidō* that was most influential in Japan between 1900 and 1945.

⁷¹ Miyake Setsurei’s “Shin-zen-bi nihonjin” and *Gi-aku-shū nihonjin* were both published in 1891 (see Minami Hiroshi, *Nihonjin ron: meiji kara kyō made*, 43-44).

A brief examination of Suzuki's life before and after he wrote the *Kokumin no shin seishin* at the age of 26 is useful for understanding his motivations. Born in 1867 in Fukushima, Suzuki's age and place of birth were important factors in the development of his thought. As the youngest of the writers discussed here, Suzuki did not have any meaningful memory of the reality of life in the warrior-controlled Edo period. In addition, he had an extreme dislike of the *hanbatsu* government, a bias that was almost certainly conditioned by his birth in the Tokugawa loyalist domain of Aizu, which saw some of the fiercest fighting during the civil war of 1868.⁷² Given this background, it was understandable that Suzuki developed a strong sense of idealistic nostalgia for the Edo period and the *bushi* who dominated it, and considered himself a member of the *shizoku* of Fukushima prefecture even after moving to Tokyo at the age of 14.⁷³ Unfortunately, aside from his father's death while Suzuki was still a child, little more is known about his early life before he went to Tokyo to pursue an education. In 1886, Suzuki completed a translation of the German educator Clemens Klöpfer's *Repetitorium der Geschichte der Paetagogik*,⁷⁴ an expansive history of educational systems from around the world, including discussions of India and China. Suzuki's translation, which was published by Hakubundō and seems to have enjoyed fairly wide circulation, indicates that he had a significant understanding of German language, and the content of this text also attests to Suzuki's awareness of the world outside of Japan.

After a brief period of study at a preparatory school in Tokyo, Suzuki abandoned his studies in order to travel to the Asian continent. After becoming ill during his stay in China, Suzuki returned to Nagasaki to convalesce, during which time he wrote an overview of the city that emphasized its close historical and economic ties with China.⁷⁵ Suzuki then moved back to

⁷² Minami Hiroshi, "Kaisetsu," Appendix p. 3.

⁷³ Shimonaka Kunihiro, *Nihon jinmei dai jiten Volume 3*, 482-483

⁷⁴ Clemens Klöpfer, Suzuki, Chikara trans., *Kyōiku tetsugaku shi*. This is a combined publication of two volumes that were published separately in November 1886 and March 1889, respectively.

⁷⁵ Suzuki Chikara, *Nagasaki miyage: shin shin* (Reissue).

The publication of this text was apparently partially funded by the China Japan Trade Commission (Shina Nihon

Tokyo and in 1890 began publishing the magazine *Katsu sekai* (活世界, *Living World*), which extolled the virtues of the Japanese spirit. In 1893, Suzuki became editor-in-chief of Akiyama Teisuke's (秋山定輔, 1868-1950) *Niroku shinpō* newspaper,⁷⁶ which was closely related to several powerful nationalist organizations, including the Gen'yōsha (玄洋社, Dark Ocean Society) and later the Kokuryūkai (黒龍会, Amur River Society). These connections gave the *Niroku shinpō* access to various Japanese groups active on the Asian continent, and these regularly provided exclusive content regarding their activities and the situation in China and Korea. One of these organizations, a loose collection of young adventurers and “journalists” centered on the Ōzaki Law Office in Pusan, became very important for the newspaper and Suzuki personally. This group, the members of which were generally referred to as “*Chōsen rōnin*,” consisted primarily of twenty-something *shizoku* from non-*hanbatsu* domains who felt locked out of the education and career paths that promised success within Japan. As Kang Ching-Il has argued, these members of the “second generation of Meiji” were marked by disillusionment with the government and opportunities available for them in Japan, while at the same time they had grown up with the bounties of modernization and held a firm belief in the strength of the Japanese nation.⁷⁷ These two factors combined to drive many young men to seek their fortunes abroad, especially in China and Korea. Suzuki himself fit this mold perfectly and, like the *Chōsen rōnin*, was drawn to the *Niroku shinpō*, the creed of which was the premise that “that Japan should rule all of Asia, the European powers all of Europe and Africa, the USA all of the Americas, and the South Pacific could be divided between them all.”⁷⁸

As relations between China and Japan deteriorated over the “Korean problem” in 1893-4, the group of adventurers centered around the Ōzaki Law Office hatched a plan to join with the Tonghak peasant rebellion that was sweeping across the Korean countryside, overthrow the Min

bōeki shōkai), and the last ten pages of the work consist of an advertising supplement from this organization.

⁷⁶ Minami Hiroshi, “Kaisetsu,” Appendix p. 4.

⁷⁷ Kang Ching-Il, “Tenyūkyō to ‘Chōsen mondai,’” 1339, 1341-1342.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 1341.

government, and drive out the Qing forces stationed in Korea. Although the Tonghak movement contained strong anti-foreign currents, the *Chōsen rōnin* believed that they would be able to form an alliance, achieve their goals, and then outmaneuver the Tonghak leaders and create a new Japanese-Korean government structure.⁷⁹ In order to realize their aims, Ōsaki Masayoshi (大崎正吉 1865-19??), who headed the law office that served as the group's headquarters, traveled to Tokyo to request funding from the sympathetic *Niroku shinpō*. Here, he met with Suzuki, who used his connections with Matono Hansuke (的野半介, 1858-1917) and Tōyama Mitsuru (頭山満, 1855-1944) of the Gen'yōsha to arrange funding as well as additional manpower. Suzuki found Ōsaki's arguments persuasive, for he agreed to accompany him back to Korea and join his cause. The two traveled back to Pusan via Osaka and Fukuoka, where they received considerable funds from sympathisers, but they were only able to collect three more men along the way due to strict monitoring of Gen'yōsha activities by the secret police.⁸⁰

After regrouping in Pusan, the group of 14 adventurers who had now taken to referring to themselves as the Ten'yūkyō (天佑侠, "Order of Divine Chivalry"), set out to make contact with the Tonghak and carry out a military strike on a Qing base in the north of the country. The Ten'yūkyō had planned to purchase weapons in and around Pusan, but their requests were refused, leading them to forcefully rob a Japanese-owned mine, making off with ten pounds of dynamite and several guns. Due to this action, the Ten'yūkyō were designated as bandits by the Japanese legation in Pusan, although there do not seem to have been any active attempts to apprehend them. They committed several other violent acts on their way north through Korea, but the local authorities were too afraid to deal directly with such a heavily armed group of foreigners and instead merely forwarded complaints to the Japanese legation.⁸¹ In July 1894

⁷⁹ Ibid., 1336-1338.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 1329.

⁸¹ Ibid., 1331.

the Ten'yūkyō met with Tonghak leaders and were officially inducted into the rebellion. They then continued north, hearing of the outbreak of war between China and Japan, as well as of the warrants for their arrest, along the way. Most of the group disbanded for various reasons before reaching their goal, although five members continued north chasing the retreating Chinese armies. Several others left to join with the Japanese army fighting the Qing forces, while Suzuki was in a group that were taken ill and forced to return to Japan via Seoul.⁸²

During the brief existence of the Ten'yūkyō, its members sent reports of their activities to the *Niroku shinpō* in Tokyo, and the newspaper came to bill itself as the “mouthpiece of the Ten'yūkyō.” Naturally, the publication of these exclusive and gripping reports from the field led to a considerable increase in the circulation of the paper.⁸³ It would also serve as a model for later activities by the *Niroku shinpō*, such as sending reporters along with Japanese troops suppressing the Boxer Rebellion.⁸⁴ As for the members of the Ten'yūkyō, their motivations for joining the group were diverse, as their dispersal for various reasons indicates. In addition, although they had connections to and funding from the *Niroku shinpō*, their relationship with the Gen'yōsha is not entirely clear. The Gen'yōsha supplied funding for the group, but Uchida Ryōhei's (内田良平, 1874-1937) desire that they attack the Qing army differed from some other members of the Ten'yūkyō, who primarily wanted to join the Tonghak and overthrow the Min.⁸⁵ The Gen'yōsha and *Niroku shinpō* were also not the only sources of funding for the Ten'yūkyō, and many Japanese residents and companies in Pusan seem to have contributed financially. On the whole, the Ten'yūkyō's activities can be seen as an outlet for a group of frustrated young *shizoku* who felt disenfranchised and disillusioned in their own country, yet were confident of Japan's strength and believed that the nation's rightful position was as the leader of East Asia.

⁸² Ibid., 1335.

⁸³ Ibid., 1323-1324.

⁸⁴ Chae Soo Do, “Kokuryūkai no seiritsu,” 172.

⁸⁵ Kang Ching-Il, “Ten'yūkyō to 'Chōsen mondai,’” 1336-1337.

In retrospect, it seems that clear that many of them used the Tonghak while they deemed it expedient, but left as soon as it became apparent that their goals diverged.

Suzuki's personal background was similar to those of the other members of the Ten'yūkyō and his ideas regarding the Japanese spirit, the strength of the Japanese nation, and his personal experiences in Korea and China made him quickly consent to joining the movement. The awareness of international affairs that is manifested in his decision to join the Ten'yūkyō was apparent in his writings before meeting with Ōsaki Masayoshi, and strongly influenced Suzuki's theories regarding warrior ethics. In this regard, the development of his ideas is representative of many Japanese thinkers during the 1880s and 1890s. After a strongly European-influenced education that included considerable language training, Suzuki became disillusioned with the West and turned towards Eastern thought. While respecting certain aspects of Chinese culture, and especially that nation's historical accomplishments, he also harshly criticized developments in contemporary China. Suzuki felt that both Western and Chinese thought were alien to Japan, and that the nation would have to focus on its own "true spirit" (*kokumin no shin seishin*) and promote "national spirit-ism" (国魂主義, *kokkon shugi*). These concepts are central to Suzuki's work, and he believed that they had been manifested in the former *bushi* class and their "*bushidō* learning," which should serve as the model for the nation. However, just as Fukuzawa Yukichi focused on the ethic of *yasegaman*, the term *bushidō* only appears once in Suzuki's 1893 *Kokumin no shin seishin*, and it is possible that he borrowed the term from Ozaki Yukio, whose writings are mentioned in the introduction to the *Kokumin no shin seishin*. The terms *shidō* and *budō* also occur once each in a synonymous manner, reflecting the situation that the usage of these terms was still in flux during the early 1890s. Like Fukuzawa and Ozaki, Suzuki focused on the necessity of reviving the martial ethics of an earlier time in order to ensure the nation's present and future, and many of his arguments can be found in mainstream *bushidō* thought in the twentieth century.

Suzuki published his *Kokumin no shin seishin* shortly before leaving Japan to join the Ten'yūkyō, and the text reveals some of his motivations for joining an armed movement on the Asian continent. The *Kokumin no shin seishin* began with an overview of nationalists (*kokuminshugisha*), who Suzuki believed had grasped the concept of “national purity” (*kokusui*) in their examinations of the “true spirit” of Japan. In addition to these nationalistic thinkers, including Tani Tateki (谷干城, 1837-1911), Miura Gorō (三浦梧桜, 1847-1926), Takahashi Kenzō (高橋健三, 1855-1898), Kuga Katsunan (陸羯南, 1857-1907), and Sugiura Shigetake (杉浦重剛, 1855-1924), Suzuki also mentioned Inoue Tetsujirō and Ozaki Yukio as men who had travelled widely and understood the importance of the state.⁸⁶ Ultimately, Suzuki dismissed the thought of these and other thinkers as being too Westernized, arguing that even in their nationalism, the previous generation were following foreign models, whereas the current state of the world made it necessary for Japan to promote its own “true national spirit.”⁸⁷ Just as the Confucian scholars of a previous age had “drank Chinese learning into their brains,” Suzuki continued, Meiji Japanese were becoming overly enamored with Western thought. Although this had brought technical advancement, Suzuki lamented that these changes were superficial and that Japanese spirit had failed to progress since the Restoration.⁸⁸ The result of this was the creation of a split personality in the Japanese people, which had to be overcome by a return to native virtues.⁸⁹ This outline of Suzuki’s project reflected the trend of the Meiji 20s in which both Western and Chinese thought came under increasing scrutiny and were even discarded by certain groups of thinkers in favor of “native” ideas, although Suzuki’s attacks on Western thought were harsher than those of many of his contemporaries.

⁸⁶ Suzuki Chikara, *Kokumin no shin seishin*, Introduction, 3.

⁸⁷ Ibid., Introduction, 4.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 1-4.

⁸⁹ Minami Hiroshi, *Nihonjin ron: meiji kara kyō made*, 45.

While he was not alone in his criticism of foreign influences, Suzuki represented a new direction in Meiji nationalistic thought by seeking the “true national spirit” of Japan in the former *bushi* class. Fukuzawa and Ozaki discussed Japanese *bushi* virtues in the context of parallels with Western thought, but Suzuki contended that these ideals were superior to those of other nations. Long ago, Suzuki argued, the warrior class had formed the “marrow of society” and were the arbiters of morality. Farmers and townsmen provided the means of production, while the *bushi* instilled virtues of loyalty and duty and provided a model to guide the behavior of the entire nation.⁹⁰ During this time, the *bushi* were compelled to follow the “teaching of *bushidō*” from beginning to end, and there was a constant danger of being banished or having to commit *seppuku* if they acted irresponsibly or lost face for themselves or their lords. After 1868, however, the *bushi* became the new middle class of Meiji, and the conduct and morality of these gentlemen and bureaucrats were entirely untested. Under this system, if a man’s ability in even one area was slightly above average, he could join the “forest of officials” that was the cause of the excessive worship of the West among all people of Japan. Suzuki lamented that the demand for Western things created a situation in which translators and interpreters of minor talent earned far more than their ability justified. Even minimal knowledge of Western literature could lead to high salaries in government and industry, resulting in an elite class of “crowned monkeys” who had taken over the salaries of the *bushi* but lost their spirit.⁹¹ The solution to these problems, Suzuki contended, was that people had to understand morality by eliminating two “evil thoughts”, namely “the subservient spirit of worshipping the foreign and forgetting the native” and “the delusion of worshipping logic and reason.”⁹²

The first of these two “evil thoughts” is important with regard to Suzuki’s views on warrior morality. In the context of eliminating “the subservient spirit of worshipping the

⁹⁰ Suzuki Chikara, *Kokumin no shin seishin*, 8.

⁹¹ Ibid., 10-12.

⁹² Ibid., 44.

foreign,” Suzuki believed that awe of Western power and institutions had led to many negative changes during the Meiji period, and that the Japanese had to rid themselves of their belief that the country could challenge the West.⁹³ In addition, Suzuki deemed the creation of a Western-style parliamentary system to be an “assault on the emperor’s power” as well as a disguised attempt to make Christianity the state religion.⁹⁴ According to Suzuki, while some Western technology was vital, other imported accoutrements were detrimental to society. For example, Western weapons were a necessity, but the military should wear traditional garments rather than Western uniforms, which were meaningless.⁹⁵ Similarly, the use of Western languages should be curtailed as much as possible, and important texts should be translated by a few specialists and read in Japanese. Through this process, the Japanese language would become “complete” through the creation of new *kanji*-based terms, while eliminating the need for foreign instructors that could mislead the people.⁹⁶ As an example for the effectiveness of this policy, Suzuki mentioned the Chinese commander Zeng Guo-fan (Jp. Sō Kokuhan; 曾国藩, 1811-1872), who led the suppression of the Taiping rebels. According to Suzuki, Zeng realized the importance of Western weaponry, importing modern arms and implementing European drilling methods at the military academies that he built. However, he refused to allow in Western instructors, instead relying on Chinese to research and teach these subjects themselves. In this way, Suzuki continued, “although Chinese are today derided for being stubborn barbarians, they have admirably maintained their own culture and heritage.”⁹⁷

Along with eliminating the “the subservient spirit of worshipping the foreign,” Suzuki admonished his countrymen to ensure that they did not “forget the native,” and especially the virtues of loyalty, filial piety, thrift, and diligence (*chūkō setsugi*) that were the “soul and nature

⁹³ Ibid., 97-98.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 95, 124.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 146.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 136-137.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 135-136.

of Japan” and the “absolute standard for ethics that leads to happiness and beauty.”⁹⁸ In contrast, Meiji Japan was in danger of “creating foreigners in Japan” through its Westernized educational policies, and Suzuki demanded that the latter be replaced by “national spirit education” (*kokkonteki kyōiku*).⁹⁹ The core of Suzuki’s *kokkonteki kyōiku* was national literature and language, to which all foreign teachings should be secondary. For Suzuki, national literature had to be treasured and respected by Japanese as the heritage of their ancestors, and the study of this subject would prevent the current process of decline by which the Japanese were “forgetting *budō* and becoming lewd believers of Christianity.”¹⁰⁰ In order to create a “society in accordance with the national spirit” (*kokkonteki shakai*), educators were called upon to encourage “pure spirits and emphasize decorum” while ensuring that the students learn the virtues of purity and rightness. Suzuki believed that teachers were failing in their task by not discussing right and wrong or superior and inferior, but merely counted scores on tests.¹⁰¹ According to Suzuki, there had never been another country that valued its warriors as much as did Japan, and this spirit had to be recovered and implemented in the educational system.¹⁰²

In attributing the virtues of thrift, loyalty, and diligence to the *bushi* class and calling for their renewed emphasis in modern society, Suzuki’s recommendations for Japan resembled those of Ozaki Yukio and Fukuzawa Yukichi, although his aversion to Western thought and institutions was more pronounced. While these two earlier thinkers presented *bushidō* as a native ethic that could be compared with admirable moral systems in other cultures, Suzuki believed that Japan’s warrior-based culture was superior to those of other nations. Therefore, he argued, Japan should not only insist on the promotion of the national spirit at home, but also spread its language and culture to other countries, by force if necessary.¹⁰³ Here, Suzuki relied

⁹⁸ Ibid., 61, 63, 64.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 134.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 134-135.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 138.

¹⁰² Ibid., 94.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 81.

on historical precedent for military intervention overseas, pointing out that during the Sengoku period, the Japanese were known as *wakō* pirates who terrorized the coasts of China and Taiwan. This “natural spirit,” he reasoned, should be revived and Japan should again advance into these regions in a way that was not inferior to that of the Western powers.¹⁰⁴ Suzuki referred to the negotiating approach of Inoue Kowashi as a “mental illness,”¹⁰⁵ since diplomacy could only be used for peace, whereas Japan should expand its national rights not only through trade and navigation, but take up arms to spread its language and culture throughout the world to raise the nation’s international standing.¹⁰⁶

On the whole, Suzuki Chikara’s position in late-Meiji thought can be seen as a point of intersection of several different discursual trends that were developing during the 1890s. His international experience and awareness were similar to those of the other *bushidō* commentators of his time, including Fukuzawa Yukichi, Ozaki Yukio, and later Uemura Masahisa. However, his criticism of foreign thought, especially European, distinctly separated him from these other thinkers, who sought to find native equivalents of Western ethical concepts in *bushi* thought. To be sure, a thread of nationalism can be found in the writings of all four of these commentators, but Suzuki was the only one to argue for Japanese cultural superiority, rather than striving for mere equality. It was this firm belief in the exceptional nature of the Japanese spirit that places Suzuki in the developing discourse of “Japaneseness theory” (*nihonjin ron*), and he was the first thinker in this tradition to seek the roots of his cultural theory in the former warrior class, as Minami Hiroshi has pointed out.¹⁰⁷ These factors contributed to making Suzuki the first writer to connect militaristic nationalism and imperialism with *bushidō*, a trend that would later establish itself as dominant in the early twentieth century under the direction of Inoue Tetsujirō.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 82.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 92.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 83.

¹⁰⁷ Minami Hiroshi, *Nihonjin ron: meiji kara kyō made*, 45.

Kokumin no shin seishin remained Suzuki's most significant work relating to *bushidō*, but he would personally exert a considerable influence on later developments in Japan, and especially the nation's foreign policies on the Asian continent. Upon their return from their expedition through Korea, many members of the Ten'yūkyō were seen as Korea specialists and took influential positions as governmental advisers on Japanese policy in Korea up until the formal annexation of the country in 1910.¹⁰⁸ Suzuki himself continued to work in publishing, especially nationalistic newspapers such as the *Kyūshū hi no de shinbun* and *Tōyō hi no de shinbun*. His prominence and connections helped him be elected to the lower house of the Imperial Diet, although he gave up his seat after a relatively brief period.¹⁰⁹ More than through his official political roles, however, Suzuki was able to influence Japanese decision making through his connections with the Gen'yōsha and, more importantly, the Kokuryūkai, which Suzuki helped found in 1901.¹¹⁰ In addition to his own activities with the Ten'yūkyō, the connections that Suzuki established between *bushidō*, Japanese cultural nationalism, and militarism would have very real effects on Japan and the rest of East Asia several decades later.

Uemura Masahisa and early connections between *bushidō* and Christianity

The writings of Uemura Masahisa represent a connection between the first generation of *bushidō* theorists in the Meiji 20s and the explosive popularization of *bushidō* in the next decade. His first articles on *bushidō* were published in 1894, and address issues raised by Ozaki Yukio's earlier theories. Uemura continued to write on *bushidō* throughout the Meiji period, commenting and criticizing many of the developments in *bushidō* discourse, including Fukuzawa Yukichi and Nitobe Inazō's works on the subject. Uemura did not shy from criticizing anyone

¹⁰⁸ Kang Ching-Il, "Ten'yūkyō to 'Chōsen mondai,'" 1323.

¹⁰⁹ Minami Hiroshi, "Kaisetsu," Appendix p. 4.

¹¹⁰ Kang Ching-Il, "Ten'yūkyō to 'Chōsen mondai,'" 1348.

whose actions or ideas he disagreed with, and his harshest words were directed at the ultranationalistic *bushidō* interpretations that came to dominate in the early 20th century.

While his interpretations differed from those of Ozaki, Fukuzawa, and Suzuki Chikara, Uemura's earliest writings on *bushidō* developed in many of the same intellectual and political currents. For the earlier three authors, the motivation and framework for their *bushidō* theories was the position of Japanese culture in the context of reassessments of Westernization and Japan's deteriorating relationship with China. In Uemura's case, his Christian beliefs meant that his focus was primarily on Japan's interactions with the West rather than with the rest of Asia. On the other hand, his Christianity also added a new dimension to his cultural theories, foreshadowing the significant interest in *bushidō* displayed by many prominent Japanese Christians, including Nitobe and Uchimura Kanzō (内村鑑三, 1861-1930). The theories of the other *bushidō* writers of the Meiji 20s were influenced by their experience abroad, but Uemura's Christian faith necessarily gave him an additional "international" perspective that was more personal and conflicted, especially in what was a very difficult period for Japanese Christians. The struggle between patriotic sentiments and the adherence to a foreign faith runs through Uemura's writings on *bushidō*, and seems to be a primary reason that they are more extensive and span a longer period of time than those of Ozaki, Fukuzawa, and Suzuki.

Uemura Masahisa was born in Edo 1857 as the eldest son of a *hatamoto*, but his family fell into poverty in the Meiji Restoration turmoil and moved to Yokohama in the hope of a better life in the fall of 1868.¹¹¹ Living conditions were difficult, but the proximity to the foreign community provided Uemura with the chance to study at the Brown English school under Rev. James Ballagh, who exposed him to Presbyterianism. Uemura was baptized in 1873, and his parents and brothers later followed suit. Uemura was ordained in 1878 after finishing his

¹¹¹ Aoyoshi Katsuhisa, *Dr. Masahisa Uemura: A Christian Leader*, 17.

studies at Tokyo Itchi Shin Gakkō, which had been formed by the 1877 merger of Brown's school and the presbyterian Tsukiji Dai Gakkō.¹¹² After setting up Shitaya Itchi Church in 1880 and acting as pastor for three years, in 1885 Uemura formed the Ichibancho Church,¹¹³ precursor to the Fushimicho Church where he would serve as pastor until his death in 1925, when he suffered a heart attack often attributed to exhaustion from rebuilding the church following the Kanto Earthquake.

In both his political and religious activities, Uemura had strong convictions and an independent spirit, as native and foreign contemporaries recounted. Like Uchimura Kanzō and a number of other Japanese Christians, Uemura had reservations about the activities and attitudes of many of the foreign missionaries in Japan, and the religious organizations he established were not afraid to challenge their foreign counterparts. As missionary and Meiji Gakuin University professor A.K. Reischauer (1879-1971) stated, "There have been strong men in Japanese Christian history, but I feel it is true to say that no other Christian leader did quite as much as Dr. Uemura did towards naturalizing Christianity in Japan and at the same time making and keeping it thoroughly Christian in character."¹¹⁴ In this sense, Uemura's patriotism and the value he placed on Japan are beyond doubt. At the same time, however, Uemura was opposed to many of the nationalistic developments in Japan, and was willing to speak out against them when others were not. For example, in the uproar that followed Uchimura's famous failure to bow before the Imperial Rescript on Education in 1890, Uemura was one of the only Christians to support his actions, while most other Christians in Japan either kept silent or expressed favorable views towards the promulgation of the Rescript.¹¹⁵ An essay written by Uemura equating the government's policy on the Rescript with idol worship resulted in the suspension of his *Fukuin*

¹¹² Amemiya Eiichi, *Wakaki Uemura Masahisa*, 170, 202.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 333-334.

¹¹⁴ Aoyoshi Katsuhisa, *Dr. Masahisa Uemura: A Christian Leader*, 8.

¹¹⁵ Irokawa Daikichi, Marius Jansen trans., *The Culture of the Meiji Period*, 251.

shūhō newspaper.¹¹⁶ In addition, when Uchimura himself conceded in what had by then become a national debate, Uemura condemned him for this change of position.¹¹⁷

Uchimura's actions brought popular apprehensiveness regarding Christianity to the forefront. In the increasingly nationalistic climate of the Meiji 20s, the patriotic credentials of followers of "alien" faiths such as Buddhism, and especially Christianity, were under constant attack. On the whole, the response to this challenge was a defensive one, but Uemura chose an offensive approach to the criticisms, presenting his arguments in support of Uchimura's actions from the standpoint of a citizen of a modern nation, rather than as a Christian. Uemura argued that worship of the Rescript violated the separation between religion and politics that was a hallmark of constitutional government, and did not befit a modern state of the type Japan professed to be.¹¹⁸

Uemura also used a head-on approach to defend Japanese Christians from more general attacks unrelated to the Uchimura incident, contending that Christians were actually more patriotic than the self-professed "ultra-nationalists" (*kokusui shugi sha*). For Uemura, Christians were the "true patriots" due to their love for the nation being "true Christian love," whereas the ultra-nationalists were taking the nation down the wrong path. The meaning of true Christian love was to oppose this wayward movement, and to bring the nation back onto a correct course. As practiced by the ultra-nationalists, Uemura continued, "patriotism with a dull and stupid heart is like striving to destroy the country."¹¹⁹ The conflict between Uemura and the ultra-nationalists arose from differences in their respective understanding of the role of the state, rather than the degree to which they "loved" their country. For the ultra-nationalists, the supreme objects of patriotic sentiment were the Japanese emperor and nation, Uemura saw the state as merely one component of a universal order. According to Uemura, the nation was

¹¹⁶ Morioka Iwao and Kasahara Yoshimitsu, *Kirisuto kyō no sensō sekinin*, 120-121.

¹¹⁷ Winston Davis, "The Civil Theology of Inoue Tetsujirō," 11.

¹¹⁸ Ashina Sadamichi, "Uemura Masahisa no nihonron (1): kindai nihon to kirisutokyō," 17.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

significant as an ordered unit that was part of a greater world order, which was in turn a part of the highest order, that of the kingdom of God (*shinkoku*).¹²⁰ In this way, while love for one's nation was an essential part of Uemura's theological framework, it could not easily incorporate some elements of ultra-nationalist thought, such as the notion of a divine Japanese emperor or worship of imperial rescripts.

Most Japanese Christians at the time were forced to come to terms with the same issues as Uemura, although the ways in which they reconciled their simultaneous loyalties to their specific state and their universal religion varied. With the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1894, the patriotic feelings of Japanese Christians came to the fore, and support for military action was as strong in the Christian communities as it was in the rest of the nation. The mood of the time was reflected in events surrounding the Nihon Heiwa Kai (Japan Peace Society), which ceased publication of its journal *Heiwa* and was disbanded by Japanese Quakers in support of the war.¹²¹ Uemura spoke for his Christian compatriots as follows:

“...the Sino-Japanese incident...will become the point of Japan's arrival on the world stage. From the development of business and industry to the spread of missionary work in Asia, this war will truly be the curtain-raiser on this role of the Japanese people. When thinking of this, the Japanese Christians must experience extreme passion and intense desire and pray to God that this incident will increase the honor of the Japanese Empire, create a great record for the future, and even help open the edge of world civilization.”¹²²

Some Japanese Christians, including Uchimura Kanzō, who had written of the coming conflict in glowing terms, were disillusioned by the war and turned to more pacifistic teachings after its conclusion.¹²³ However, it was clear after 1895 that their “foreign” beliefs did not necessarily preclude Japanese Christians from being fervent patriots.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 3-4.

¹²¹ Sumiya Mikio, *Nihon Purotestanto Shi Ron*, 104.

¹²² Ashina Sadamichi, “Uemura Masahisa no nihonron (1): kindai nihon to kirisutokyō,” 7.

¹²³ John F. Howes, *Japan's Modern Prophet: Uchimura Kanzo 1861-1930*, 127-130.

Uemura's strong feelings for his country at this critical time can also be seen in his first two articles on *bushidō*, which were published in his *Fukuin shinpō* (*Evangelical Weekly*) newspaper in March and June 1994. These texts were attempts to reconcile native values with foreign ones, in this case the “warrior spirit” and Christianity. Like Ozaki and Suzuki, Uemura was motivated to write about *bushidō* by the perceived decay in morality and vitality that had taken place during the first 25 years of Meiji. He summarized the problems, as well as his proposed solutions, as follows: “current society is anesthetized and lifeless as never before. Without turning to Christianity we will not be able to revive this country. At the same time, we must look to our past.”¹²⁴ When identifying the major roots of this societal degradation, Uemura agreed with the many Japanese thinkers who called for a reevaluation of the nation's attitude towards the West. The problem, according to this theory, was that Westernization was undercutting Japanese traditions and ethics, and modernization exacerbated this by promoting materialism and increasing feelings of inequality among the people.¹²⁵ In other words, a moral vacuum had been created during Meiji, and dealing with this was one of the most pressing issues facing the country.

In these articles, titled “Kirisutokyō to bushidō” (キリスト教と武士道, “Christianity and *Bushidō*”) and “Nani o motte bushidō no sui o hozon sen to suru ka” (何をもって武士道の粋を保存せんとするか, “How can the Essence of *Bushidō* be saved?”), Uemura first attempted to establish similarities as points of reference between Europe and Japan. In this context, he was especially interested in the medieval period of the former. Like Ozaki Yukio, Uemura believed that the foundations for Western economic and military primacy could be found in feudal knighthood. Following the successive collapses of the Roman and Holy Roman Empires,

¹²⁴ Uemura Masahisa, “Kirisuto kyō to bushidō,” 396.

¹²⁵ Ashina Sadamichi, “Uemura Masahisa no nihonron (1): kindai nihon to kirisutokyō,” 7-8.

Uemura argued, medieval Europe was partitioned and dominated by warlike and barbarian Teutonic tribes. During this dark and isolated time,

“in feudal society another unique type of spirit was born. Fearing god and respecting man, revering the old and cherishing the young, earnestly striving for justice, this spirit did not shrink from flood or fire. Readily exposing false accusations and crushing arrogance, helping the weak and facing the strong, in turn being composed and silently praying for the emperor, offering one’s life for God or the church with purpose and dedication, and especially showing loving respect to women, all of these were viewed as being sacred. Historians have given this a name and call it chivalry. In short, this is what is known as warriors grasping a sword with the right hand and holding the Holy Scriptures in the left.”¹²⁶

Uemura further argued that this spirit of chivalry, this combination of warrior spirit and Christianity, was what enabled Peter the Hermit to gather “millions” of followers who discarded their possessions and friends, enduring countless hardships and tortures to reach the Holy Land.

“A love of freedom and reverence for independence, as well as a sacred view of women, were formed and nurtured in the dense Teutonic forests. ...the warrior spirit, i.e. the ancient spirit of the Teutons, received the Christian baptism and came to take on a completely new appearance.”¹²⁷

From this, Uemura concluded that although the outward forms may have changed, this warrior spirit continued to reside in Europe’s holy places and was key to the modern success of Western nations.

In comparison, Uemura pointed out that Japan had from ancient times been known as a martial land, and that “the thing known as *bushidō* is that which has come to take the most distinguished and beautiful form of the spirit that worships martiality.”¹²⁸ After briefly discussing the transmission of *bushidō* from ancient times, Uemura argued that it reached the pinnacle of its development under the Tokugawa, stating that

¹²⁶ Uemura Masahisa, “Kirisuto kyō to bushidō,” 391-392.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 392.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 393.

“the vitality of society was in the *bushi*, and the vitality of the *bushi* was in *bushidō*, while those areas of society that had *bushidō* had the truest character and were the best regulated. If one desires to understand European chivalry, one must not forget the influence of Christianity. If one desires to know the development of *bushidō*, one must not forget to the amount of strength that Buddhism and Confucianism contributed.”¹²⁹

However, Uemura contended, when feudal society collapsed, Buddhism and Confucianism collapsed with it, and even the remnants of *bushidō* were in the process of being buried, for when the samurai put away their swords and bows, they also consigned *bushidō* to the past. Uemura lamented the demise of *bushidō*, this “beautiful flower of the human mind” which had been nurtured by the Japanese people for hundreds of years.¹³⁰

Uemura did not believe that the Japanese should stand idly by while the nation’s spiritual inheritance from the warrior class slowly disintegrated, or even worse, was intentionally expunged from society. “*Bushidō*”, he argued, “is truly like a type of religion, and society was able to maintain its life through it...Society must revive the old *bushidō*. Or rather, what I desire is a *bushidō* that has received the baptism.”¹³¹ For Uemura, the void left by the “collapse” of Buddhism and Confucianism had to be filled, and the country could not succeed without recourse to both Christianity and its own historical past. His second article on *bushidō*, published three months after the first and less than two months before the outbreak of war with China, elaborated on the importance of warrior ethics, with its tone and brevity indicating great urgency. In addition, nationalistic themes are much more pronounced in this second text, as the first lines indicate:

“Japan’s unique martial character is something that its citizens should be proud of. How our ancestors trained and worked to create the style of this martial character! Even if it can be said that the temperament of the *bushi* had more than a few strange elements, it must be also be said that it contained the light and salt of Great Japan. With every passing day we become more vulgar and soft,

¹²⁹ Ibid., 394.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 394.

¹³¹ Ibid., 394-5.

are led by the followers of the religion of learning how to profit, and the principles of the people are eating and drinking. In this, our country, we must understand the great urgency of preserving the fading light of our ancestors that is *bushidō*, and conserving its essence. This is the way of patriotism, and the duty of descendants to their distant ancestors.”¹³²

Unfortunately, Uemura lamented, scholars had forgotten that the preservation of the warrior essence was critical for the future of the nation, and a more pressing issue than most other political matters. According to Uemura, one problem was that the world had changed, and simply revering *bushidō* in the old way was no longer feasible, necessitating other methods of preserving the warrior spirit. Uemura asked rhetorically, “Could trade be the thing that preserves *bushidō*? No. It is like trying to draw breath in a vacuum.” Furthermore, “Today’s education is useless. It merely fosters men with clever technical abilities. Politics are useless. National affairs should be done in the school of *shidō* (the “way of the samurai”).”¹³³ Uemura felt that the political and social structures of his day had caused the value of righteous spirits to decline, and despaired when comparing the “factory-like private schools” with the *shijuku* schools of earlier times. This change, he argued, was responsible for the decline of *shidō*, which he defined as an ethic of “sacrificing oneself for the common good” and as that which is “specifically required to swiftly and victoriously smash the materialistic spirit with a spirit of responsibility, duty, loyalty, and furious righteousness.” Uemura believed that since these problems were largely forgotten by the nation, the great responsibility of solving these issues had fallen exclusively to Japanese Christians, and desired that they should “... frequently theorize on the relationship between *bushidō* and Christianity...”¹³⁴

In these articles, Uemura dismissed Ozaki Yukio’s contention that *bushidō* was related to mercantilism. Despite agreeing with Ozaki that the key to contemporary Western power could be found in medieval knighthood, Uemura’s interpretation differed in its emphasis on Christian

¹³² Uemura Masahisa, “Nani wo motte bushidō no sui wo hozon sen to suru ka,” 397.

¹³³ Ibid., 398.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 398.

influences in European chivalry. Both writers were concerned with the creation of a new ethic based on the resurrection of traditional ideals, and their interpretations included universal elements that had been proven in the experience of the West, especially Europe. In this context, Ozaki focused on the secular elements of European chivalry and gentlemanship, as these could be transferred to the Japanese situation most easily. Uemura, on the other hand, included Christian influences in his theories, for he was simultaneously proposing the conversion of Japan to Christianity. At the same time, Uemura was skeptical of some elements of Ozaki's *bushidō*, especially trade, for these were parts of the "materialistic spirit" that Uemura felt had taken over Japan during Meiji.

Many writers on *bushidō*, even in the 20th century, tended to propose their own theories without reference to, or regard for, the ideas of other commentators on the subject. Instead, they generally relied on carefully selected historical sources and narratives to support their theories, thereby attempting to give their writings a historical legitimacy that would place it above the mean discourse of their own time. Uemura was an exception in that he was willing and, through his *Fukuin shinpō*, able to address issues in contemporary *bushidō* discourse. His advocacy for Christianity placed him (as well as Nitobe and Uchimura) outside of mainstream *bushidō* discourse in Japan, but his commentaries and criticism on other works make his writings an effective barometer for the development of *bushidō* thought during the late Meiji and Taishō periods. One example of this role is a series of articles published by Uemura in March 1898, which indicate that *bushidō* had been gathering interest and was reaching critical mass. The first of these articles, titled "Kirisutokyō no bushidō" (キリスト教の武士道, "The *Bushidō* of Christianity"), was centered on a discussion of *bushidō* as revealed in Paul's letter to the Corinthians, and reveals changes that had been occurring in *bushidō* discourse. Uemura characteristically opened the article with a critical assessment, stating that "The Japanese have a habit of taking pride in calling on the ambiguous Yamato spirit and claiming that they have a

sole monopoly on *bushidō*. This is nothing but a biased view. *Bushidō* can definitely not be said to be unique to our country.” Uemura went on to list Turkey, Rome, Greece, England, and Tartary as examples of other nations that possessed *bushidō*.¹³⁵ Here, Uemura attacked nationalistic currents that were increasingly interested in *bushidō*, a development that can be attributed to the nation’s victory over China, and was reflected in the publication of the *Budō shōshinshū* by the military organ Kaikōsha a short time before.¹³⁶

With regard to Uemura’s usage of the term *bushidō*, the second of his 1894 articles still used *bushidō* interchangeably with *shidō*, which dominates on the last page of the text. By 1898, Uemura had moved to exclusively using *bushidō*, reflecting the acceptance that the term had gained as a separate concept by that time, at least among writers on the subject. This, the first year of the third decade of Meiji would also mark a significant milestone in *bushidō* discourse with the publication of the journal *Bushidō*, to which both Uemura and Ozaki contributed. Uemura’s early *bushidō* theories, though set apart from those of Ozaki, Fukuzawa, and Suzuki by his Christian influences, are firmly positioned in this first generation of Meiji *bushidō* discourse in their aims and motivations. The reassessment of Japan’s relationship with the rest of the World and the search for a native identity and basis for a valid ethical structure can be seen in the works of all of these writers. This situation changed after the victory in the Sino-Japanese War, when the nation brushed aside many of its insecurities and concerns. As a result, *bushidō* discourse before this watershed, which was generally less nationalistic than that after 1895, did not have as great an effect on popular perceptions of the subject as it otherwise might have. In spite of this, the influence of Uemura’s *bushidō* theories on the relatively small group of Christian *bushidō* writers was significant, and Chien Shiaw-hua and others have argued that he directly impacted Nitobe Inazō’s writings, although Nitobe never admitted this

¹³⁵ Ibid., 399-400.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 403.

himself.¹³⁷ Retrospectively, Uemura's most important contributions to *bushidō* discourse were twofold: as an early promoter and popularizer of the subject during the late Meiji 20s; and as one of a small number of informed critical voices that were able and willing to oppose the nationalistic mainstream of *bushidō* discourse in the Meiji 30s and beyond.

The redefinition of *budō* and the evolution of the term *bushidō* between 1885 and 1895

With regard to the first usage of *bushidō* in Meiji, it is not possible to determine a specific occurrence. Some of the difficulties in evaluating sources can be seen in the controversy surrounding Yamaoka's lectures. In addition, an examination of all documents in the period is not realistic, and new ones will certainly appear. For example, a full-text search of the *Yomiuri shinbun* database revealed that the term appeared in two separate editorial articles between 1885 and the Sino-Japanese War, and there are no records of its usage in the *Yomiuri* before this time.¹³⁸ The first of these editorials, published in two parts on December 9 and 13, 1885, was a critical overview of warrior behavior, especially in the Tokugawa period. As the author stated in the first half of the editorial,

“before Genroku...*bushi* suppressed letteredness (*bun*) and created a special spirit called *bushidō*, whereby the *bushi* had an arrogant attitude like a unique race among the four classes and stood atop society. ...there was even the bizarre and abnormal situation in which *bushi* would see townsmen and farmer and cut them down like worthless dirt. ...due to living in the midst of the last two hundred years of the great peace, *bushi*, townsmen, and farmers became magnanimous and indifferent to things and affairs. ... as a result [after Genroku] *bushi* allowed true *bushidō* to decay and exist only in name, while Chinese studies, poetry, and letteredness surpassed martiality (*bu*) in the trends of the time...for the first time in Japan, the *bushi* were faced with poverty and took up the abacus to compete with townsmen and farmers for profits or to to take bribes and mix public and private matters.”¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Chien Shiaw-hua, “Xi lun zhicun zhengjiu zhi jidujiao yu wushidao guanxi,” 147-172.

¹³⁸ This data was retrieved from a search on September 9, 2008 at the National Diet Library in Tokyo, and examined the period 1875-1912.

¹³⁹ *Yomiuri shinbun*, Dec. 9, 1885. p. 1

The second part of the editorial published four days later, continued

“...when trying to understand the mentality known as *bushidō*, this *bushidō* mentality was extreme displays of false bravado and sophistry towards townsmen and farmers, while at the same time the interactions between *bushi* were filled with great respect and care to avoid causing others to lose face...”

At the present time, however, it is possible

“to proceed like the German government, emphasizing martiality and changing the character of the people to honor physical sword scars and bullet wounds. Otherwise, one could take the course of President Washington, while discarding his position like worn shoes, and to transfer the way of heaven (*tenchi no kōdō*) to the character of the people, as everyone knows the Americans have done. ...If we do not act to change the current situation, what condition will Japan come to? We cannot know, but might even fall to the level of a second China.”¹⁴⁰

Unlike many of the writings on *bushidō* that appeared during and after the Meiji 20s, this 1885 editorial was not written with a sense of nostalgia, nor did it argue for the reintroduction of any warrior ethic. Instead, *bushidō* was mentioned as one type of development of the human character in Japan, and not a very admirable one at that. The author argued that the Japanese character had to change for the country to succeed, and did not look to the nation’s own past for guidance for the future.

The above pattern can also be seen in the second pre-1894 editorial, published in the *Yomiuri* on July 22, 1891. In this brief essay, the author also viewed *bushidō*, which was mentioned only once, as a thing of the past. As the article stated,

“...in this nation from ancient times, in the time of the Tokugawa the ethical mind of the samurai and common people was dominated by Confucianism, Buddhism, and so-called *bushidō*. The great spread of false theories should be eliminated, for the results of superstitions and misunderstandings are far-reaching and cause countless errors to occur... When the old order was reformed by the Restoration,

¹⁴⁰ *Yomiuri shinbun*, Dec. 13, 1885. p. 1.

the roots of morality (incomplete as they were) were also swept away, Confucianism became servile and was driven out, while Buddhism lost its strength when it lost its vermilion seal. Western ethics came to dominate books and courses. Even the progress of Christianity is not very rapid. Because society does not have any strength to sanction, moral customs are largely deteriorating to an extreme point, and making money becomes the sole goal of human life.”¹⁴¹

The article went on to argue that Japan had to construct a new morality carefully, considering the strengths and weaknesses of foreign systems before introducing them to Japan, while complete adoption of foreign traits or total rejection of native elements would be mistaken approaches. In its assessment and recommendations, this article succinctly summarized the contemporary cultural trends of simultaneous reassessment of foreign influences and growing belief that native virtues should not be discarded entirely. Unlike the writings of Ozaki et al., however, *bushidō* was dismissed as a thing of the past, and the term itself preceded by the qualifier *iwayuru* (so-called), showing that the author had some reservations about its use.

Another early work that followed the appearance of *bushidō* in the *Yomiuri* editorials was a lecture given to the Great Japan Education Association (*Dai nihon kyōiku kai*) by Katō Hiroyuki on November 12, 1887.¹⁴² The thought of Katō, who has been described as “the leading Social Darwinist of Meiji Japan,” was primarily defined by his reliance on European sources, especially during mid-Meiji.¹⁴³ In this lecture, Katō discussed the state of ethics instruction in Meiji Japan, outlining some of the difficulties he felt the nation faced in this field.

“Before the Restoration, the upper levels of Japanese society relied on Mencius’ Confucianism, while the lower levels relied on Shakyamuni’s Buddhism as their moral teachings. Especially among the higher classes, there was also a type of thing called *bushidō* that reinforced morality. However, after the Restoration, society shifted entirely towards Westernization.”¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ *Yomiuri shinbun*, July 22, 1891. p. 2.

¹⁴² Katō Hiroyuki, *Tokuiku hōan*.

¹⁴³ Winston Davis, *The Moral and Political Naturalism of Baron Kato Hiroyuki*, vii.

¹⁴⁴ Katō Hiroyuki, *Tokuiku hōan*, 1-2.

According to Katō, although it was being revived in certain circles, Confucianism had lost its influential position immediately after the Restoration, due to the fact that the teachings of Mencius went “against the civilizational ideas of present Japan.” After the *bakuhatsu* system was eliminated, the *shizoku* fell into poverty, and Confucianism disappeared together with *bushidō*. Katō also mentioned recent efforts to revive Confucianism, but gave no indication of similar activities concerning *bushidō*, an unusual concept that he felt the need to preface with the qualifying phrase “a type of thing called....”¹⁴⁵ To Katō, like most other writers of the 1880s, the samurai class was a relic of the past. This can be seen, for example, in an essay Katō published in 1889 concerning the role of force in government and society. In this text, which does not use the term “*bushidō*,” Katō presented the samurai right of *burei-uchi* (“rudeness killing”- the legal use of force against commoners) as a negative example of private control of the means of violence, arguing that these should be left up to the control of the state.¹⁴⁶

Katō’s views on *bushidō* are echoed by several other thinkers in the early Meiji twenties. As the term *bushidō* began to appear in a number of academic works, at least, historians also decided to examine the subject. In a series of articles published in the journal *Shigaku fukyū zasshi* (史学普及雑誌, *Journal for the Promotion of Historical Studies*) in 1893, Tokyo Imperial University history professor Shigeno Yasutsugu (重野安繹, 1827-1910) took a historical approach to *bushidō*. While most scholars tended to place the origins of the *bushi* in the Kamakura period, Shigeno focused on earlier history, arguing that even though the term “*bushidō*” did not exist, the Monobe could be seen as the origin of Japan’s warriors.¹⁴⁷ In this series of articles, Shigeno juxtaposed the concept of *bushidō* with the rule of law, using it as a political term meaning rule by martial force.¹⁴⁸ This treatment of *bushidō* as a historical subject

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 2-3.

¹⁴⁶ Katō Hiroyuki, “Wanryoku ha toku ni kokka no shuken ni takusubeshi,” 212-217.

¹⁴⁷ Shigeno Yasutsugu, “Bushidō ha ōtomo-mononobe futauji no okiri hōritsu seiji ha fujiwara uji ni naru.” *Shigaku fukyū zasshi* no. 8 (April 1, 1893) p. 7.

¹⁴⁸ Shigeno, Yasutsugu. “Bushidō ha ōtomo-mononobe futauji no okiri hōritsu seiji ha fujiwara uji ni naru.” *Shigaku fukyū zasshi* no.11 (July 1, 1893) p. 10.

foreshadowed the great interest in the subject shown by historians in the Meiji thirties, although this later generation would generally be more focused on using historical examinations of *bushidō* to justify its application in modern Japan, conflating the two approaches of doing historical research (Shigeno) and creating a prescriptive ethic (Ozaki etc.).

With the increasing digitalization and publication of materials from the Meiji period, it is probable that additional documents relating to *bushidō* will be found in the future. On the basis of the writings analyzed thus far, however, it can be expected that new sources will follow the general trend of *bushidō* usage that can be seen in the texts examined above- i.e. that the concept was virtually unheard of before 1888, and only used sporadically by a small number of authors in the decade following. The increased appearance of the term *bushidō* in the Meiji 20s should be seen in the context of two developmental currents. The first of these is the series of cultural trends in which Japanese thinkers increasingly focused on native ethics after their fundamentally reevaluating their views towards Western and Chinese systems of thought. The second current is the linguistic evolution of the usage of the words *budō* and *shidō* that took place during the first two decades of Meiji. During this period, in which Japanese academia generally shied away from examinations of warrior morality, interest in martial arts grew steadily, and later exponentially, as these teachings were codified and controlled by federations and schools using modern organizational methods. Modern schools of *judō*, *aikidō*, and *kendō* are largely products of this time, during which the term “*budō*” narrowed in meaning. By the 1890s, “*budō*” had come to refer exclusively to martial arts, as Nakabayashi Shinji and others have pointed out.¹⁴⁹ Only a few years earlier, Nishimura Shigeki still used the term *budō* with its broader Tokugawa meaning in a series of lectures on ethics he gave at Tokyo Imperial

¹⁴⁹ Inoue Shun, “The Invention of the Martial Arts: Kanō Jigorō and Kōdōkan Judo,” 163.

University in 1886.¹⁵⁰ Nitobe also indirectly referred to this shift in meaning in a series of lectures he gave during a trip to North America in 1932-33, stating that

“Some thirty years ago, when I first wrote an essay on the moral code of the Japanese and called it ‘Bushido’, there was raised a question both in Japan and among some scholars abroad as to the legitimacy of such a term. They had heard of *Shido* or *Budo* but never of ‘Bushido’...Since it was made a class morality of the knights, samurai, it laid particular stress on honor; and because it was primarily meant for observance by that class, we may call it Bushido, the Way of the Fighting Knights.”¹⁵¹

By the time Nitobe’s *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* was published in 1900, the meaning of *budō* had become restricted to martial arts, and a text on warrior ethics using this term would have confused readers. Instead, writers on samurai morality in the Meiji 20s were forced to use the largely undefined term “*bushidō*” which, was essentially synonymous with *budō* in the few instances in which it was used during the Edo period.

With regard to *shidō*, the other term that was used synonymously with *bushidō* at various time, the trajectory of its development is less clear. Although still used by writers such as Uemura Masahisa and Suzuki Chikara in the early 1890s, *shidō* fell into disuse and essentially disappeared from discourse by the end of Meiji as *bushidō* gained in prominence. In the 1850s, Yokoi Shōnan still believed that a re-martialized *shidō* was the solution to Japan’s problems, and even here the close connection between *shidō* and the oft-maligned “soft” warriors of the Tokugawa age is clear. This identification of the term with Edo samurai-bureaucrats certainly contributed to the reduced popularity of *shidō* after 1868. Another factor that affected references to *shidō* in Meiji Japan was its close connection with Confucianism. Unlike *bushidō*, *shidō* was originally a Chinese term, and was not immune to the increasingly negative views of China that developed at the end of the nineteenth century. It is understandable that the desire

¹⁵⁰ Donald Keene, *Emperor of Japan: Meiji and his World 1852-1912*, 408-409.

¹⁵¹ Nitobe, Inazō. *Lectures on Japan*. 124-125.

for native concepts and terms, especially in the interwar decade centered on 1900, made the term *bushidō* more attractive than the overtly Confucian *shidō* of earlier times. Before this time, *shidō* (and *bunbu*) still appeared occasionally, such as in the 1885 *Yomiuri shinbun* article, or in a protest essay against the introduction of modern sports, especially baseball, written by a professor at the First Higher School in Tokyo in 1891.¹⁵² Even then this usage would have seemed anachronistic to many, however, and *shidō* came to be used less frequently as *bushidō* stepped into the breach from the margins of Tokugawa discourse.

As this chapter has shown, modern *bushidō* thought began to develop in the Meiji 20s, when authors first began to publish works dedicated to the concept. The writings of Ozaki Yukio, Fukuzawa Yukichi, Suzuki Chikara, and Uemura Masahisa were varied in their evaluation of the subject, but were inspired by many of the same factors. Reassessment of Japan's views towards the West and China, as well as the "rediscovery" of "native" attributes, were important themes that influenced all of these writers to varying degrees. Their theories were directly related to the foreign encounters that each of them had experienced, the nature of which was dictated by the time in which they lived and wrote. Their interpretations of a samurai ethic depended on the presence of a foreign "other," a pattern that one also observes in the works of a handful of contemporaneous, lesser-known commentators. For example, in a short article published shortly after the promulgation of the Imperial Rescript on Education, the politician and future head of Kokugakuin University, Yoshikawa Akimasa (芳川顕正, 1842-1920), took a similar approach to "so-called [*iwayuru*] *bushidō*," arguing that although the samurai were the ethical center of Japanese society, when the feudal system collapsed, *bushidō* collapsed with it, leaving the country in its current state.¹⁵³ Like his contemporaries, Yoshikawa framed his brief discussion in the context of foreign influences such as Christianity

¹⁵² Sakaue Yasuhiro, *Nippon yakyū no keifu gaku*, 40.

¹⁵³ Fuji Naotomo, *Nihon no bushidō*, 153.

and Western philosophy, as well as the collapse of China, and his mention of *bushidō* can be seen as a response to similar currents.¹⁵⁴

As specific references and personal relationships indicate, the four writers discussed in this chapter influenced one another, and others, with their *bushidō* theories, but the greater significance of their work would not be realized until the subject was taken up by the next generation of *bushidō* theorists in the Meiji 30s. The groundwork that these first theorists laid in the early 1890s has been largely ignored by much recent scholarship on *bushidō*, but the recurrence and spread of many of the themes they introduced confirm their importance. Their works give the growth of *bushidō* an organic dimension with greater exegetical power than models that focus more narrowly on the explosion of *bushidō*-related works around 1900, centered on the writings of Nitobe Inazō and Inoue Tetsujirō. The following chapter discusses the role of these two important figures, but with the influence of their intellectual predecessors firmly in mind.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 150.

CHAPTER 3 The Early *Bushidō* Boom, 1898-1905

Following the military success of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-5, increased confidence in the capabilities and geopolitical position of their nation led many Japanese to find favor with nationalistic ideologies and theories. In this environment, it was natural that a supposedly native ethic such as *bushidō* would experience unprecedented dissemination and discussion, even though most of its previous interpretations were internationalist rather than nationalistic. This led to dissatisfaction among some of the previous generation of *bushidō* theorists, prompting Uemura Masahisa to condemn the hijacking of *bushidō* by nationalistic elements in 1898.¹ The trajectory of *bushidō* growth was influenced by parallel developments in other ideological concepts, which also trended towards more nationalistic interpretations at this time. As Carol Gluck has pointed out, there were a great number of ideologies and ideologists in Meiji Japan, and these would often influence and reinforce one another.² Writers on subjects such as national morality (*kokumin dōtoku*) or Social Darwinism would frequently comment on one another's fields, and also engage in discussions of *bushidō* or the "Japanese spirit."

There was considerable overlap between ideologies in late Meiji, and *bushidō* was one of the concepts most commonly referenced by writers on other subjects. In the Meiji 30s, a large number of texts devoted to the subject of *bushidō* were published, but a major factor in the "*bushidō* boom" that occurred during that decade was the dissemination of the concept in publications that were not directly concerned with samurai ethics. This is also a reason for the continued interest in *bushidō* at the beginning of the 21st century. In addition to its presentation as a traditional ethic, there were other factors that made *bushidō* attractive to nationalistic elements. One of the most important of these was the paradoxical combination of *bushidō*

¹ See previous chapter.

² Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, 8-15.

being portrayed as a historical ethic, but without any fixed historical roots. Due to its promotion as a historical concept, *bushidō* was more easily accepted by academics and others who were skeptical of State Shinto and the religiously-based myths regarding the divinity of the emperor and nation.³ At the same time, the lack of a firm historical basis for *bushidō* allowed individuals to define the concept as they pleased, and many chose to combine it with elements from the official national mythology. By not having a historical basis that might contradict any specific interpretations, *bushidō*, especially at the beginning of the Meiji 30s, was a highly inclusive ideological current that accordingly experienced explosive growth throughout the decade.

This chapter examines the development of *bushidō* in the fourth decade of Meiji, while considering other ideological streams that influenced its evolution, as well as historical developments that shaped national sentiment and provided the environment for *bushidō* theories to flourish. This study also considers continuities with, and departures from, earlier *bushidō* thought, including the reactions of writers such as Uemura. This is especially important with regard to the roles of Nitobe Inazō and Inoue Tetsujirō, who are widely regarded as the most influential figures in modern *bushidō* thought. This study reassesses the contributions that these two writers made to the promotion of *bushidō*, placing them in a larger process of *bushidō* development that began in the previous decade.

Currents in Japanese thought in the late 1890s

The central theme of Carol Gluck's authoritative work on ideology in the Meiji period, that the notion of prewar Japan being dominated by a monolithic nationalistic ideology created by the government oversimplifies the historical situation, has become widely accepted in

³ The degree to which prewar Japanese internalized the mythology of the "emperor system" is increasingly being questioned by scholars in Japan and abroad. See, for example, Hirota Teruyuki, *Rikugun shōkō no kyōiku shakaish*, 12.

academic circles. In Gluck's words, "there was no single group with official, or even unofficial, status as mythmakers to the Meiji state...No one, in short, did ideology for a living."⁴ One result of this de-centralized process of ideological production in Meiji was the creation of countless different ideological currents. *Bushidō*, interpretations of which began to be widely disseminated in the Meiji 30s, was one such ideological stream. Just as no one "did ideology for a living," most writers on *bushidō* and other Meiji ideologies were not exclusively dedicated to a single ideology, but rather tended to comment on and be influenced by a variety of different thought patterns. In spite of the great diversity of thought at this time, however, the interactions between ideologies, combined with common reactions to national and international events, make it possible to identify broad trends that had a significant influence on most, if not all, contemporary ideological currents and can be said to represent the *Zeitgeist* of certain time periods. The impact of the Sino-Japanese War, for example, was virtually inescapable in Japan in 1894-5, and few "ideologues" left it unmentioned.

In discussing the development of *bushidō* in the Meiji 30s, this section examines other thought currents that were prominent during this period. However, as it is not possible to deal with all streams of thought that ran parallel to or intersected with *bushidō*, this study focuses on those ideologies that had a significant formative influence on *bushidō*. On the whole, ideologies that were most relevant to *bushidō* were motivated by the search for Japanese identity in a rapidly changing world order. In this sense, many of the influences on *bushidō* in the Meiji 30s were continuations of streams of thought that prompted the *bushidō* writings of the early 1890s, although they became more developed by the end of the period, and their relative importance had shifted. Interest in "native" aspects of Japanese culture, which grew during the Meiji 20s, became a dominant trend after the Sino-Japanese War. At the same time, the role of the foreign "other" continued on a course of pejorative development, with China relegated to a

⁴ Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, 9.

defeated backwater and the West being further lowered from its pedestal. The changes in these three currents of thought were boosted by historical events such as the revision of unequal treaties in 1894, the defeat of the Qing, and international recognition of Japan as a significant entity on the stage of global power politics.

Diverse concepts such as *Yamato damashii* (Yamato spirit), *kokutai* (national essence), *kokumin dōtoku* (national morality), and *bushidō*, all experienced unprecedented growth at the end of the last century, should be seen in the context of the development of Japanese cultural nationalism. The historical model conceived by Minami Hiroshi and outlined in his 1994 *Nihonjin ron: Meiji kara kyō made (Japaneseness Theory: From Meiji to the Present Day)* is a useful tool for locating these currents of Japanese thought in a larger context. In establishing a framework for locating the development of *bushidō* in greater ideological currents, this study focuses on the three trends outlined above, and simultaneously consults works by Minami and others on the growth of Japanese cultural nationalism in late Meiji.

The Middle Kingdom becomes peripheral

As discussed in the last chapter, there was a strong movement towards the “resurrection” of Confucian ideals during the first half of Meiji. This was largely a reaction to what many conservative elements in Japan saw as excessive Westernization, and posited Oriental ethics as a counterbalance to Western technology. The Confucian case was forcefully and effectively argued by activists such as Nishi Amane, Motoda Eifu, and Nishimura Shigeki throughout the 1880s, and reached its pinnacle in the promulgation of the Imperial Rescript on Education at the end of the decade. After this point, interest in Confucianism began to wane even among those elements that had formerly supported it. Stephen Tanaka provides several reasons for this, including the contradictory views of the emperor in Japan and China, and “the paradox of relying on a Chinese system of ethics to reinforce loyalty to the Japanese emperor

while denouncing China for its backwardness.”⁵ The latter reason is especially relevant to the development of *bushidō*. Most writers on samurai ethics in the Meiji 20s held unfavorable views towards China, and would have welcomed the decline of ostensible Confucian influences in Japan. Naturally, in addition to China’s “backwardness,” the fact that the two nations were headed towards military conflict contributed to the hostility Japanese felt towards their continental neighbor.

Another reason for the reluctance of many Japanese to promote Confucianism was the perceived connection between this philosophy and the Tokugawa regime. Hannelore Eizenhofer-Halim has argued that this made Confucianism an anachronism, and that it was not possible to use Confucian ethics to educate Meiji Japanese.⁶ This position may be correct if one limits it to views of the Zhu Xi school (*Shushigaku*), which was most closely associated with the former *bakufu*, but Confucianism was not a monolithic system in the Meiji period. Certainly, both consciously and unconsciously, lingering resentment towards the Tokugawa and the increasingly negative views towards China prompted Japanese thinkers to look for other, especially native traditions as alternatives to Confucian thought, at least on a formal level. However, the centuries-long dissemination and integration of Confucian values in Japanese society made the actual separation of “native” and “foreign” thought impossible, just as the elimination of Buddhist elements from State Shinto had turned out to be. Nevertheless, by changing the terminology used for existing Confucian concepts, scholars were able to nativize and appropriate Confucian tenets for their own ideological constructs.

This process accelerated following the defeat of the Qing in 1895, and was reflected in the development of Wang Yangming’s neo-Confucianism (*Yōmeigaku*) during the last two decades of Meiji. In mid-Meiji, *Yōmeigaku* became more popular in Japan than ever before, as it came to be viewed as an East Asian, Confucian alternative to Western thought that was not

⁵ Stefan Tanaka, *Japan’s Orient: Rendering Pasts into History*, 131-132.

⁶ Hannelore Eizenhofer-Halim, *Nishimura Shigeki (1828-1902) und seine Konzeption einer “neuen” Moral*, 217.

tainted by association with the Tokugawa regime. Following the Sino-Japanese War, however, disaffection with China led to various attempts to sever *Yōmeigaku* from its continental roots, either by disavowing its importance in China or by reinterpreting it using Japanese terminology. These developments can be seen in the writings of Katsu Kaishū, who had a generally negative opinion of Chinese studies (*kangaku*), but was interested in the thought of Wang Yangming, especially as it had been transmitted by Nakae Tōju.⁷ One result of this process was that many of the *bushidō* theories that emerged during this period were, at least in part, a result of the nativization of Wang's teachings. The *bushidō* theories that evolved from this process found great favor among Chinese and Korean activists who spent time in Japan during late Meiji, prompting them to disseminate *bushidō* on the continent after they returned to their countries, resulting in a tremendous increase in the popularity of Wang Yangming studies.⁸

Reconsideration of the West and the production of national culture

Even during the first years of Meiji, there were a significant number of Japanese who were apprehensive about Western influences on their country's moral fiber. Given the obvious differences in technological and institutional advancement between Japan and the West, however, at least among the upper classes the general mood of the time was pro-Western. Disillusionment with the West began to gather momentum during the 1880s over issues such as treaty revision, and texts such as Nakae Chōmin's (中江兆民, 1847-1901) 1887 *San suijin keirin mondō* (三酔人経綸問答, *Discourse of Three Drunkards on Government*) reflected a

“...rejection...of the West as the manifestation of an ideal to be strived for and, instead, a concern for progress—though keeping Western ideas and Europe in mind—within the particular context of

⁷ Katsu Kaishū, *Hikawa shinwa*, 134, 213.

⁸ See Chapter 4 of this study, and also: Oleg Benesch, “Wang Yangming and Bushidō: Japanese Nativization and its Influences in Modern China.”

Japan's history and capacity. The West, in other words, becomes merely another culture (though in some aspects still a superior one), a fellow competitor on this rocky path toward progress.”⁹

These complex changes in Japan's attitudes towards the West could also be seen in the 1888 publication of the journal *Nihonjin* (日本人, *The Japanese*) by Shiga Shigetaka (志賀重昂, 1863-1927). *Nihonjin* collected articles that focused on the reevaluation of Japan's relationship with the West, but still recognized the importance of Western science and technology. The contributions to *Nihonjin* dealt with issues fairly objectively, and did not generally frame discussions in terms of superiority or inferiority.¹⁰ When arguments did center on issues of superiority in the 1880s, including in *Nihonjin*, they tended to focus on a perceived inferiority in the Japanese. For example, Fukuzawa Yukichi's former student Takahashi Yoshio (高橋義雄, 1862-1937) believed that the Japanese race was inferior to Europeans, and proposed that it should be “improved” through intermarriage, which would transmit “superior foreign traits” such as physical height, weight, and cranial capacity.¹¹ In 1889 Inoue Tetsujirō voiced similar concerns in his opposition to treaty reforms that would allow mixed residence, fearing that the Japanese race was inferior and would be disadvantaged in direct competition.¹² Echoes of these sentiments can be seen in the earlier *bushidō* writings of Ozaki Yukio, which Suzuki Chikara saw as being overly fawning towards the British gentleman ideal.

By the early 1890s, much of Japanese discourse on the nation's relationship with the West was in keeping with Nakae Chōmin's views, although Suzuki Chikara and others had already begun to argue from a more nationalistic standpoint. The movement towards cultural independence from the West received theoretical support from the same in the form of Darwinist social theories that were popular towards the end of the nineteenth century. Whereas many Japanese had rejected their own culture in favor of Westernization early in the period, foreign

⁹ Stefan Tanaka, *Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts into History*, 47.

¹⁰ Minami Hiroshi, *Nihonjin ron: Meiji kara kyō made*, 36-40.

¹¹ Ibid., 31.

¹² Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, 136.

academics teaching at Japanese institutions admired many aspects of Japan and encouraged cultural preservation. Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908), for example, was enamored with the ideas of Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) and taught them in his philosophy courses at Tokyo Imperial University. Members of the Meiji political elite such as Mori Arinori (森有礼, 1847-1889) and Kaneko Kentarō (金子堅太郎, 1853-1942) were also taken with Spencer, and personally received advice regarding institutional reorganization.¹³ While it would be a mistake to overemphasize the influence of Spencer or other foreign thinkers in Japan, as their theories may merely have reinforced ideas that were already developing, there was a resonance between Darwinist thought and the movement towards greater cultural independence, especially after 1890. The connection of Social Darwinism and *bushidō* is evident in the writings of the philosopher Kobayashi Ichirō (小林一郎, 1876-1944) in the *Tetsugaku zasshi* (*Journal of Philosophy*),¹⁴ as well as in the works of Inoue, Nitobe, and many others.

The successful conclusion of the Sino-Japanese War in 1895, which Funabiki Takeo has described as the beginning of a decade-long “golden age of Japaneseness theory,”¹⁵ was a boost for the nation as a whole. In addition to vindicating those who had argued for Japan’s ability to defend itself, it also appeared to discredit theories of Japanese inferiority. The surge in patriotic feeling following the war can also be seen in the formal establishment of “Japanism” (*Nihon shugi*) as a scholarly movement. This was symbolized by the 1897 founding of the Great Japan Society (*Dai nihon kyōkai*) around Inoue Tetsujirō and Takayama Chogyū (高山樗牛, 1871-1902) and the publication of its official organ, *Nihon shugi*. As defined by Takayama in an article in his other journal, *Taiyō* (*The Sun*), Japanism was founded on the principle of using the independent spirit based on unique characteristics of the Japanese people to demonstrate the original foundations of the nation.¹⁶

¹³ Yamashita Shigekazu, “Herbert Spencer and Meiji Japan,” 83-85.

¹⁴ Kobayashi Ichirō, “*Bushidō no hihan*,” “*Bushidō no hihan* (II),” and “*Hābāto, Spensā*.”

¹⁵ Funabiki Takeo, *Nihonjinron saikō*, 45.

¹⁶ Minami Hiroshi, *Nihonjin ron: Meiji kara kyō made*, 41.

The increasing interest in domestic culture and the meaning of Japaneseness at this point in time has several reasons, including demographics. In the Meiji 30s, most Japanese would have been too young to have any meaningful memories of the Tokugawa period, when the country was still divided into hundreds of smaller domains with much stronger local than national ties. Research by Benedict Anderson and others regarding European state creation has recently been applied to other parts of the world, including Japan.¹⁷ In this case, as Stephen Vlastos and others have argued, aside from a very small elite, most Japanese did not identify with the modern state until after it was created in 1868.¹⁸ The fading collective memory of the period before the nation was created was a contributing factor, and much of the research on Japanese cultural theory was done by the generation that had grown up in Meiji and was reaching intellectual maturity in the 1890s. As Kenneth Pyle's study has shown, the period before 1895 was still very much a search for identity, and continued to display a lack of confidence towards foreign "others," both Western and Chinese.¹⁹ For this reason, demographics can only be considered as a part of the identity-forming process, and the very different tone of texts in the Meiji 30s cannot be solely attributed to their influence. Instead, the demographic shift must be seen in conjunction with two historical events. The first was the long process of treaty revision that was finally concluded in 1894, after helping "to spread the gospel of national pride beyond the confines of political activity into the wider world of elite public opinion."²⁰ The second event was the Sino-Japanese War, which galvanized and, in certain respects, even created the modern Japanese nation, at least in the popular consciousness.

The confidence that Japan gained through improving its geopolitical position influenced virtually all aspects of society, including discourse on Japanese culture, which gained in stature. For example, at the First Higher School in Tokyo, while baseball had been growing rapidly since

¹⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*.

¹⁸ Stephen Vlastos, "Tradition: Past/Present Culture and Modern Japanese History," 10-11.

¹⁹ Kenneth B. Pyle, *The New Generation in Meiji Japan: Problems of Cultural Identity, 1885-1895*.

²⁰ Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, 114.

the formation of a school team in 1886, the number of practitioners of “traditional” martial arts increased dramatically immediately following the war.²¹ Not surprisingly, the domestic acceptance of Japanese culture and related nationalistic currents frequently turned into cultural chauvinism, directed especially against other Asians. The “Orientalization” of Asia by Japanese historians and cultural theorists allowed the nation to remove itself from the perceived backwardness of the continent and attempt to deal with the West on level terms, a project for which it was deemed necessary to define a unique national history and culture.²²

While the cultural chauvinism of writers like Ozaki, Fukuzawa, and Nitobe was typically directed towards “Japan’s Orient” and was motivated by finding common ground between Japan and the West, other thinkers were voicing disparaging views towards the West, which had largely been above such criticism. There had always been criticism of specific aspects of the West, especially Christianity, but arguments that posited the West as inferior to Japan only entered the popular consciousness after 1895. Whereas Inoue and others had still lamented perceived genetic and moral deficiencies of the Japanese around 1890, a mere decade later theories regarding the innate uniqueness and superiority of the Japanese had become common. For this reason, Minami has called the time between the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars the period in which “Japanese superiority theory” (*nihonjin yūetsu setsu*) was born.²³ Although this view would be revised as nationalistic feelings waned in Taishō, many of the theories created during this period would be revived during the “dark valley” of early Shōwa. By the end of the Meiji 30s, the “Orientalizing” of Japan’s neighbors would even come to include “Occidental” powers. As Uemura Masahisa wrote during the Russo-Japanese War,

²¹ Sakaue Yasuhiro, *Nippon yakyū no keifu gaku*, 22, 98-99.

²² Stefan Tanaka, *Japan’s Orient: Rendering Pasts into History*, 19, 47.

²³ Minami Hiroshi, *Nihonjin ron: Meiji kara kyō made*, 50-51.

“Although Russia bears the fine name of being Christian, she clings in fact to many of the old Oriental characteristics, occasionally these are given expression to in a form that is at once recognizable, as can be seen in the famous anti-alien movement of Bobedonoschef’s party, which sought to drive out Christianity and all other branches of learning and systems which were introduced from the West. So-called Slavophilism has come into the ascendancy, and the whole country is likely to be carried away by an Oriental current. Russia has alienated herself from Western European civilization and is also disliked in America. Though Caucasian by race, she is thus suspected of being a yellow peril herself. After all, the yellow peril does not consist in the color of skin but is a matter of spirit.

The Japanese may have yellow skin but their daring work of reform and new birth will fully exonerate them from the false charge of being a yellow peril.”²⁴

With regard to *bushidō*, the period that Minami has called the age of “Japanese superiority theory” has also been referred to as a time of “impregnation with *bushidō*.”²⁵ As Stefan Tanaka has argued, if Japan was to remove itself from the West and negotiate on equal footing, the nation needed to define its own culture and history. Nishi Amane had presented a similar argument in 1878 in discussions that led to the 1882 Rescript for Soldiers and Sailors (*gunjin chokuyu*), stating that the Japanese army needed its own mentality, which could not be imported from abroad in the manner of weapons. At the time, Nishi’s suggestion, which relied on a national spirit based on a redefinition of National Learning scholar Motoori Norinaga’s (本居宣長, 1730-1810) *yamatogokoro* (大和心, Yamato mind), did not have broad appeal, as Western ideas were fashionable and movements emphasizing Confucianism were also gathering momentum.²⁶ Two decades later, Japan was far more receptive to proposals concerning native morality, including Nishi’s *kokugaku*-based theories, but there was also a correspondingly larger amount of ideological competition. Late Meiji was, as Minami has described it, a time “filled with empty words such as Yamato spirit, *bushidō*, and Japanese spirit.”²⁷ In the fourth decade

²⁴ Aoyoshi Katsuhisa, *Dr. Masahisa Uemura: A Christian Leader*, 199-200.

²⁵ Sakaue Yasuhiro, *Nippon yakyū no keifu gaku*, 96.

²⁶ Kanno Kakumyō, *Bushidō no gyakushū*, 246-249.

²⁷ Minami Hiroshi, *Nihonjin ron: Meiji kara kyō made*, 79.

of Meiji, efforts to provide content for these “empty words” reached unprecedented levels. This chapter focuses on the development of *bushidō* in the context of this process.

A first collection of writings on *bushidō*

Understandably, writings on *bushidō* increased immediately after the Sino-Japanese War, when nationalistic fervor in Japan had reached a peak. In identifying a watershed for the dissemination of *bushidō*, however, the year 1898 is more significant than the end of hostilities in 1895. Several articles on *bushidō* were published during 1896-7, relating to history, politics, and even baseball.²⁸ Despite these sporadic appearances of the word, it is telling that Nitobe Inazō, who left Japan for California in 1898, could claim that he had never heard of the term. Ota Yuzo and others have criticized Nitobe for his lack of awareness of previous usage of the term “*bushidō*” when writing his own book on the subject in 1899, but this may be harsh. Nitobe had been teaching at the Sapporo Nōgakko and was in poor health before traveling to California to convalesce. As a result, he missed key developments in 1898-99 that brought *bushidō* to the attention of Japan’s educated political and cultural elite.

In this context, the most significant event during this period was the ambitious publication of the journal *Bushidō zasshi* in early 1898.²⁹ This periodical is important for several reasons. First, the trajectory of the project clearly shows the extent of *bushidō* research up to the date of initial publication of the journal, and the motivations for its publication are in keeping with the ideological developments discussed thus far. Second, the breadth of interpretations and backgrounds of contributors to *Bushidō zasshi* reveals the lack of consensus regarding the content of *bushidō*. Last, the prominence of the authors, combined with the authority of a unified stage for presenting their views, resulted in broad dissemination of the

²⁸ Sakaue Yasuhiro, *Nippon yakyū no keifu gaku*, 101, fn. 33..

²⁹ Dai nihon bujutsu kōshū kai, ed. *Bushidō* (Issue 1, February 1898).

subject among elite circles and had a strong influence on the acceptance of *bushidō* as a legitimate subject of research in the following years. This section uses these three considerations as a framework for examining the content and role of the *Bushidō zasshi* in the *bushidō* boom of the Meiji 30s.

The precise origins of the *Bushidō zasshi* are difficult to determine. It was published by the Great Japan Martial Arts Lecture Society (Dai nihon bujutsu kōshū kai), which was formed in April 1895, the month the peace treaty between Japan and China was signed at Shimonoseki.³⁰ According to the society's constitution and founding charter, the Great Japan Martial Arts Lecture Society was one of many organizations founded in the late 1890s to promote "traditional" martial arts in Japan. According to Article 2 of its constitution, "the goal of this society is to practice the unique martial arts of our Japanese empire," while Article 22 stipulated that "the society shall hold tournaments twice a year in February and September...in order give vitality to the martial arts of the great Japanese empire."³¹ In addition to the society officers, 29 instructors from various schools of swordmanship were listed in the founding documents, and the constitution called for branches to be established in all Japanese prefectures. This organization was founded with lofty aspirations to become a dominant organization in the rapidly expanding martial arts field of the late nineteenth century. However, as the Great Japan Martial Morality Society (Dai nihon butoku kai), which was founded in the same year, quickly expanded to all parts of Japan, membership migrated to this organization and the Great Japan Martial Arts Lecture Society faded away a few years after the publication of the *Bushidō zasshi*.³²

There were many competing martial arts organizations in Japan around the turn of the century, typically with nationalistic and militaristic leanings. Although the charter of the Great

³⁰ Nakamura Tamio ed., *Shiryō kindai kendō shi*, 31.

³¹ Ibid., 32-4.

³² Nakamura Tamio ed., *Kendō jiten: gijutsu to bunka no rekishi*, 316.

Japan Martial Arts Lecture Society only hints at this, the *Bushidō zasshi* essays penned by a certain Mizuho Tarō (瑞穂太郎, dates unknown), the presumed editor of the journal, indicate that this organization was no exception. As discussed in the previous chapter, the role of a foreign “other” was of paramount importance in the first modern *bushidō* theories written in the Meiji 20s, and the very first pages of the *Bushidō zasshi* show that this periodical followed this trend. If one considers that Ozaki Yukio’s first articles revealed a lack of confidence relative to the West, that his later works and those of Fukuzawa and Uemura were more confident with regard to Japan’s national identity, and that Suzuki Chikara took a more aggressive and even superior tone, then the *Bushidō zasshi* was a natural development in this direction.

The journal also included more moderate articles by Ozaki and Uemura, but Mizuho’s personal motivation appears to have been concern regarding the West, and he saw the “resurrection” of *bushidō* as vital to Japan’s efforts to resist and compete with Western imperialism. In his introductory essay to the first issue of *Bushidō zasshi*, Mizuho explained the resurgence of *bushidō* in geopolitical terms, arguing that in the current situation, the “jeweled sword should be taken from its scabbard. Look at Egypt, India, Vietnam, China, Korea and even the South Sea Islands. All have been violently attacked and taken over by the blue-eyed, red-haired Europeans, who closed in on them.” According to Mizuho, the Europeans first came speaking of humanitarianism, freedom, and equality, and requested diplomatic relations on this basis. However, as soon as the gates of a country were opened, the Europeans showed their true intentions and a fierce struggle for existence ensued, in the course of which the Europeans would conquer the country. Their economic policies were only designed to benefit themselves, and instead of following heavenly principles they were robbers and brigands who abused their strength in animalistic dog-eat-dog actions.³³

³³ Mizuho Tarō, “Hatsujin no koe (Voice of First Publication),” 1.

While all the smaller countries are conquered, Mizuho asked rhetorically, who would be able to resist subjugation in this animalistic world and reverse the beastification of humanity? He answered: “not India, not China, not Korea...Our Great Japanese Empire, as the protective wonder-working shrine of the Orient, as the protective deity that creates harmony between heaven and humanity, has this great responsibility. If *bushidō* is the great spirit and model of all humanity,” Japan would be able to fulfill its duty in the Orient and bring things in line with the Way of Heaven.³⁴ Although Mizuho framed his discussion of *bushidō* in global terms and insisted on the relationship between it and the “Way of heaven,” he saw the key to realizing *bushidō* in the practice of traditional martial arts, stating that “*bushidō* occurs through the cultivation of the more than seventy schools of swordsmanship and over twenty schools of *jūjutsu*.”³⁵ In this passage, Mizuho combined the loftier aspirations of subsequent *bushidō* theories with the immediate goals of the Great Japan Martial Arts Lecture Society, which were the promotion of martial arts practice in Japan.

By this point, the term “*bushidō*” had developed separately from modern martial arts, which were generally referred to as “*budō*” or “*bujutsu*,” and this journal was one of the first works to redraw the connection between these concepts. A major reason for the gulf between *bushidō* and modern martial arts was the different basis for their respective developments. Although “traditional” Japanese martial arts in their modern incarnations are largely products of the Meiji period, they arose from practices that had existed in some form for hundreds of years and their development occurred largely in a domestic context, with practitioners banding together and codifying rules to enable competition and promote their styles. *Bushidō*, on the other hand, was less indebted to domestic occurrences and was more of a response to challenges by foreign “others”. In other words, while the martial arts could plausibly have evolved into their modern forms without the country opening to foreign contact, *bushidō* could not. This is

³⁴ Ibid., 4-5.

³⁵ Ibid., 4.

evident in Mizuho's introduction to the *Bushidō zasshi*, which posits *bushidō* as a necessary tool for resisting hostile Western advances.

Mizuho's commentary was in keeping with the Japan/other dichotomy that defined the *bushidō* theories of the Meiji 20s, but his hostility to the West and confidence in Japan's strength were even more pronounced than Suzuki Chikara's. This attitude can be explained by two historical developments that affected the opinion of almost all Japanese. The sudden increase in national confidence was a result of the military success of the Sino-Japanese War and the worldwide esteem that accompanied this victory. At the same time, hostility towards the West became even greater than during the treaty negotiations around 1890. The Sino-Japanese War was fought between two East Asian nations, but the Western powers became involved through the subsequent Triple Intervention of Russia, France, and Germany. These powers forced Japan to return the Liaodong Peninsula, which it had received in the Treaty of Shimonoseki. This resulted in a great deal of resentment among Japanese, who felt that the territorial gains and payment of an indemnity were their due after this costly military achievement. The interpretation of *bushidō* reflected in Mizuho's writing reflects the increase in nationalism and anti-foreign sentiment resulting from these events.

In addition to mirroring the national mood with its nationalistic aims, the *Bushidō zasshi* reveals a great deal about the state of *bushidō* in 1898. In spite of the support of many prominent individuals, and the reissuance of older texts, the trajectory of the journal indicates there was still insufficient interest in the subject to fill a monthly journal. Each issue of the *Bushidō zasshi* was divided into four sections, the first of which was an introductory paragraph by Mizuho Tarō. The second section, titled "*hekireki kan*" (霹靂觀, "Views of Thunder"), included articles and poems from famous contributors. The third section, "*fūu kan*" (風雨觀, "Views of the Wind and Rain"), was comprised of articles on swordsmanship and other martial arts, while the final section, "*manzō kan*" (萬象觀, "Views of Ten Thousand Pictures"), included

poetry, brief articles on history, stories, and other miscellaneous texts composed by members of the Great Japan Martial Arts Lecture Society.

The February issue, which was the first and most impressive, ran to 52 pages and contained eleven articles and poems from prominent contributors, including a brief article by Ozaki Yukio titled “Shōgyō to bushidō” (“Commerce and *Bushidō*”).³⁶ The March issue contained 56 pages and eight articles by prominent contributors, including a lengthy reprint of Uemura Masahisa’s “Kirisutokyō to bushidō.”³⁷ By the April issue, the number of prominent contributors had shrunk to three, and the number of pages to 46. The fourth and final issue only included a single lead article and a brief poem in the section reserved for prominent contributors, and the entire issue ran to 42 pages. In comparison, the number of articles on martial arts, which comprised the back half of each issue, remained fairly steady throughout all four issues. There are two possible explanations for the failure of the magazine, which appears to have been due to a lack of significant content regarding *bushidō*. The first is that the editors of the journal were unaware of the paucity of writings on *bushidō* that existed at the time, but this seems unlikely. A more probable scenario is that the organizers of the project were encouraged by the notable contributors they had arranged for the first issues, and assumed that interest in the subject would soon reach levels that could sustain the journal with articles. This latter calculation might have proven successful if the journal had been quarterly or semi-annual, but as it stood the supply of articles could not keep up with the demands of a monthly publication.

Prominent contributors to the *Bushidō zasshi*

The *Bushidō zasshi* provides information regarding the historical feeling and extent of writings on *bushidō* at the time of its publication, and also reveals how *bushidō* was interpreted

³⁶ Ozaki Yukio, “Shōgyō to bushidō,” 10-11.

³⁷ Uemura Masahisa, “Kirisutokyō to bushidō,” 13-22.

at the time. Two things strike the reader of the *Bushidō zasshi* today, and their impact would have been similar in 1898. The first is the array of prominent Meiji intellectuals and public figures who contributed to the project in some way, be it with a piece of calligraphy or a brief note encouraging the success of the periodical. Having digested the list of contributors' names, the reader is next intrigued by the variety of backgrounds of these individuals. If the roster of authors was presented without explanation, it would be virtually impossible to guess any context, aside from a Meiji biographical dictionary, in which such a diverse group would be gathered together. In the following, this study examines some of these contributors in two contexts: significant characteristics of their personal backgrounds; and the content of their specific contributions to the *Bushidō zasshi*.

The social, religious, and political backgrounds of the authors gathered in the *Bushidō zasshi* are interesting in several respects. One important difference between these writers and the *bushidō* theorists of the previous decade is that many of them were not of samurai stock. Ozaki, Fukuzawa, Suzuki, and Uemura were all former samurai, and Ozaki's writings convey the sense of elitism that often accompanied this status until well into the Meiji period. In contrast, a large proportion of the *Bushidō zasshi* contributors were not descendents of samurai, including Nakamura Yūjirō (中村雄次郎, 1852-1928), Fukuchi Gen'ichirō (福地源一郎, 1841-1906), Kanō Jigorō (嘉納治五郎, 1860-1938), Kiyoura Keigo (清浦奎吾, 1850-1942), Saitō Shūichirō (斎藤修一郎, 1855-1910), and Ōi Kentarō (大井憲太郎, 1843-1922). Most of these individuals reached adulthood before the Restoration, and would therefore have had memories of the old class structure, but by the Meiji 30s they were ready to see an ethic based on the former *bushi* class expanded to include all Japanese. This was an important criterion for the broad dissemination of *bushidō* in modern Japan, where over ninety percent of the population was descended from classes that had generally resented the ruling *bushi*. Although the majority of contributors were former *shizoku*, it was the acceptance of the ethic by men of "common" stock

that made it possible for Kobayashi Ichirō (小林一郎, 1876-1944) to claim in 1902 that “to insult *bushidō* is to insult all Japanese,”³⁸ and was also at the core of Hashimoto Minoru’s (橋本実, 18?-1945) later argument that “*bushidō* did not die with the samurai...it entered all Japanese and is especially pronounced in the soldier spirit.”³⁹ The breaking down of residual class consciousness in Japan after 1868 was a gradual process, and the conscripted military was the greatest force for promoting feelings of social equality, as Yoshida Yutaka has argued.⁴⁰ The fact that much of this social leveling process occurred in a martial environment would have made it easier for ordinary Japanese to identify not only with their countrymen, but with an ethic such as *bushidō* that was identified with the former *bushi* elite.

The political backgrounds of the contributors to the *Bushidō zasshi* were equally diverse. Predictably, many of the authors were closely affiliated with the military and Meiji government, including Katsu Kaishū; Itō Sukeyuki (伊東祐亨, 1843-1914), Commander in Chief of the Japanese combined fleet during the Sino-Japanese War; Shinagawa Yajirō (品川弥二郎, 1843-1900), a student of Yoshida Shōin, hero of the Bōshin War, and Interior Minister in Matsukata cabinet; Kawamura Kageaki (川村景明, 1850-1926), a career soldier who rose to high rank during Seinan War and received a baronage for his service in the Sino-Japanese War; and Takeda Hidenobu (武田秀山, 1853-1902), a Major General who distinguished himself in the Sino-Japanese War. With the exception of Katsu, these individuals were all military men from the pro-Restoration domains of Satsuma, Chōshū, and Tosa, and their loyalty to the imperial government was unquestioned. In other words, if *bushidō* had been created purely as a nationalistic, pro-government ideology imposed on the populace from above, men with backgrounds such as these would have been its ideal promoters.

³⁸ Kobayashi Ichirō, “Bushidō no hihan” in Akiyama Goan ed., *Gendai taikē bushidō sōron*. 73.

³⁹ Hashimoto, Minoru, *Bushidō shiyō*, 22.

⁴⁰ Yoshida Yutaka, *Nihon no guntai: heishi tachi no kindai shi*, 70.

This, however, was not the case, as another group of contributors to the *Bushidō zasshi* shows. In addition to Ozaki Yukio, who was banished from Tokyo for alleged anti-government activities related to party politics, authors also included Nakae Chōmin, a popular rights theorist and founder of the Jiyūtō; Fukuchi Gen'ichirō (福地源一郎, 1841-1906), a famous journalist and writer who traveled widely in the West before 1868 and was arrested and had his newspaper shut down for criticism of the Meiji government; Ebara Soroku (江原素六, 1842-1922), a politician and educator very active in party politics; Kataoka Kenkichi (片岡健吉, 1843-1903), a politician and leader of the freedom and popular rights movement who was imprisoned for over two years for not leaving Tokyo along with Ozaki; and Ōi Kentarō, another politician and leader of the freedom and popular rights movement who was imprisoned for four years following the Osaka Incident of 1885. Although these men were certainly patriots, their closeness to party politics and often antagonistic relationship with the Meiji government differentiated them from the career military men mentioned above, and they did not fit the mold of governmental “ideologists,” had such a position existed at the time.

The diversity of the contributors to the *Bushidō zasshi* can also be seen in their religious affiliations, to the extent that these are known. The Christian Uemura Masahisa discussed *bushidō* long before Nitobe Inazō and Uchimura Kanzō addressed the subject, and one of Uemura's articles was reprinted in the *Bushidō zasshi*. However, the connections between *bushidō* and Christianity go beyond the well-known theories of these three individuals, and there were at least three other Christian contributors to the *Bushidō zasshi*, including Ebara Soroku, a politician and educator active in party politics who converted to Christianity in 1877; Kataoka Kenkichi, a Christian and one-time head of Dōshisha University; and Ōi Kentarō, who was a member of the Russian Orthodox Church. From the beginning, therefore, Christians represented a disproportionately large number of commentators on *bushidō*. As discussed in the previous chapter, this can be attributed to the more direct and personal international

experience Christians had by virtue of their adherence to a foreign faith, which in turn instilled an interest in their own culture. An additional factor, which is discussed in the next chapter, was that in their attempts to identify a national character, Christians were far less likely to rely on religious foundations such as Shinto or the various schools of Buddhism. *Bushidō* presented a possibility to define a “national ethic” that was based on historical rather than religious ideals, and was therefore more compatible with the Christian faith.

Aside from the military men mentioned above, there were several other authors who appear to have been selected due to their backgrounds. For example, Kanō Jigorō, the “Father of Judo,” was the founder of Kōdōkan jūdō and a great promoter of the martial arts, while Watanabe Noboru (渡辺昇, 1838-??) was a famous swordsman who had been a member of the *sonnō jōi* movement in Hizen. Kanei Yukiyasu (金井之恭, 1833-1907) was a noted calligrapher, and his reputation as an important *shishi* earned him *genrō* status. The individual who most embodied the ultra-nationalistic interpretation of *bushidō* was Fukuba Bisei (福羽美静, 1831-1907), a former samurai who arrived at *sonnō jōi* thought through his study of National Learning and Yamaga Sokō’s strategies. Fukuba served as an educator in the palace before being dismissed for his strong objections to the introduction of foreign thought.

The diversity of content among the articles in the *Bushidō zasshi* was as great as would be expected from such a medley of contributors, many of whom had probably not heard of the concept before being approached for a contribution. As a result, the contributors generally discussed *bushidō* in the terms they used in their other writings, and the language of the essays is accordingly diverse. Fukuchi Gen’ichirō distinguished between “metaphysical” (*keijijō*) and “physical” (*keijika*) *bushidō*, with the latter having died out after the Restoration. Writing in the first issue of the *Bushidō zasshi*, Fukuchi was frank about his uncertainty regarding the project, commending the editors for publishing the journal and giving it this title, for “although I do not know if what I acknowledge as *bushidō* is the same as they do, I like the title

Bushidō...”⁴¹ Ebara Soroku and Watanabe Noboru took more traditional approaches to the subject, with the former defining *bushidō* as “an activity of life and death- living when you should live and dying when you should die” and drawing comparisons between warriors and falling cherry blossoms.⁴² Watanabe, in turn, wrote a brief paragraph tying *bushidō* to the Yamato spirit, virtues of filial piety, loyalty, duty, and bravery, and pointing out that its roots could be found in the very founding of the country.⁴³

In comparison, similar to Uemura Masahisa’s reprinted article, Kataoka Kenkichi’s contribution sought the roots of *bushidō* in feudalism, Christianity, and Confucianism, with the Chinese Classics and the bible as its texts. According to Kataoka, in the Edo period 400,000 *bushi* ruled the country and made the nation strong. In the future, however, Japan would have to increase its Christian population tenfold to 400,000 in order that an equal number of Christians could take the role of the former warrior class and lead the country.⁴⁴ The liberal journalist and anarchist Kutsumi Sokuchū (Kesson) (久津見息忠(蔵村), 1860-1925) cited Western, especially German, educational theorists in his discussion of *bushidō*. Kutsumi wrote that it was no longer necessary to carry swords three *shaku* in length, but the current situation demanded that people carry a mental sword five *shaku* in length, with which they could safeguard independence, self-realization, honesty, and humanism. He warned against thinking in terms of past or present, East or West, and argued that all people must become one. After the Restoration, stated Kutsumi, Japan thought only of technology and forgot that the purpose of education is creating human beings. Kutsumi mentioned the German philosophers and educators Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841) and Johann Karl Friedrich Rosenkranz (1805-1879) as having taught how to develop people. With regard to *bushidō* specifically, Kutsumi believed that Japan needed military drill, exercise, and martial arts in schools, for while the old ways

⁴¹ Fukuchi Gen’ichirō, “Bushidō,” 8-9.

⁴² Ebara Soroku, “Shukushi,” 9.

⁴³ Watanabe Noboru, “Bushidō,” 6.

⁴⁴ Kataoka Kenkichi, “Hōken bushi to kirisuto shinsha (Feudal Warriors and Christian Believers),” 6.

could not really be applied to the present day, there were elements of *bushidō* that could be useful in modern education.⁴⁵ Ōi Kentarō went so far as to criticize *bushidō* in his contribution, considering it a product of the feudal age that was no longer relevant in a time of civilization. According to Ōi, the deficiencies of *bushidō* were its emphasis on social stratification, individual action, and rejection of foreign influences, all of which were contrary to the ideals of modern society. For these reasons, Ōi could not see the benefits of reintroducing *bushidō*.⁴⁶

Ultimately, although a handful of contributors to the *Bushidō zasshi* had written on the subject of *bushidō* before 1898, most seem to have been selected primarily due to their public stature and prominence in some field. In addition, there does not appear to have been any systematic selection based on political orientation, family descent, or religion. This indicates that the initial intention of the editors of the *Bushidō zasshi* was to popularize and disseminate both the concept of *bushidō* and the martial arts teachings of the society. To this end, in spite of the very militaristic and anti-foreign agenda of Mizuho Tarō, many prominent persons were selected regardless of the way in which they interpreted *bushidō*. This is an important consideration when assessing the impact of the *Bushidō zasshi*.

The impact and limitations of the *Bushidō zasshi*

The lack of agreement on the content of *bushidō* had a twofold effect on the influence of the *Bushidō zasshi*. On the one hand, the selection of prominent contributors from many different fields gave it the broadest possible appeal. On the other hand, the variety of interpretations resulted in a lack of depth that would have hindered the journal's acceptance as a scholarly work. In spite of this limitation and its short publication run, the *Bushidō zasshi* was

⁴⁵ Kutsumi Sokuchū, "Kyōiku to bushidō (Education and *Bushidō*)," 6-8.

⁴⁶ Ōi Kentarō, "Bushidō ni tsuite (About *Bushidō*)," 7-8.

important in shaping the future development of *bushidō* in several ways. As indicated above, the journal's greatest impact was raising the profile of *bushidō* to a level where the term became known to many educated Japanese. There are not many direct references to the *Bushidō zasshi* in later writings on *bushidō*, but a major project involving such an assembly of prominent individuals is significant, especially in the context of the chronology of *bushidō* publications, which increased rapidly from 1898 onward.

In 1899, Mikami Reiji (Kaiundō; 三神礼次 (開雲堂), dates unknown) published his *Nihon bushidō ron* (日本武士道論, *Japan Bushidō Theory*), the first book-length treatment of the subject. Mikami's interpretation of *bushidō* was an eclectic assembly of influences that were found in earlier works on *bushidō*. Similar to Ozaki Yukio, Mikami criticized the materialism of contemporary Japanese society, and especially self-professed "gentlemen."⁴⁷ Similar to the lectures purportedly given by Yamaoka Tesshu, whose picture was on the inside cover of the book, Mikami's *Nihon bushidō ron* relied heavily on traditional religious and philosophical ideas, including Buddhism, Confucianism, Shinto, and Shingaku.⁴⁸ On the other hand, Mikami had strong anti-foreign sentiments similar to those of Mizuho Tarō or Suzuki Chikara, arguing that international laws and diplomacy only existed to benefit the Christian nations, and that Westerners called themselves civilized and spoke of equality and compassion, but were actually morally impoverished and ignored their own rules in taking advantage of weaker nations.⁴⁹ Mikami's work, which emphasized the position of the emperor as the "focus of *bushidō*,"⁵⁰ was very much in the style of the *Bushidō zasshi* with regard to its diversity of influences. *Nihon bushidō ron* addressed many issues that were raised in relation to *bushidō*, but was consistent only in the nationalism of its interpretations. For this reason, despite its status as the first monograph on the subject, Mikami's work, like the *Bushidō zasshi*, was

⁴⁷ Mikami Reiji, *Nihon bushidō*, 2-4.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 11.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 195-196, 198.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 233.

ignored by most subsequent commentators on *bushidō*. However, the publication of *Nihon bushidō ron* almost exactly one year after the last issue of the *Bushidō zasshi* is indicative of two possibilities: either the *Bushidō zasshi* laid the necessary groundwork for Mikami's work through its popularization of the term, or both of these works can be seen as barometers of a growing *bushidō* discourse that was about to reach critical mass.

A significant characteristic of the *Bushidō zasshi* was that it specifically tied the concept of *bushidō* to the modern Japanese military. Fukuzawa Yukichi and Suzuki Chikara had included martial elements in their *bushidō* theories, but did not specifically tie the concept to the modern military. In comparison, the *Bushidō zasshi* incorporated the Imperial Army and Navy in two different ways. First, through the selection of military men as contributors, even though these generally only provided brief words of congratulations or a poem, rather than detailed discussions of the subject at hand. This strategy was also clearly evident in the March issue, which was dedicated to Yamagata Aritomo (山県有朋, 1838-1922), the man who dominated the army unlike any other before or after, and his portrait adorns the inside cover of the journal. Second, Mizuho Tarō explicitly discussed the important connection between *bushidō* and the military, rhetorically asking “who, if not the soldiers, is upholding and preserving *bushidō* today?”⁵¹ According to Mizuho, no one but soldiers could grasp the important concept of life and death. Therefore, politicians, scholars, religious men, and craftsmen should be led by the military, just as the country was led by the *bushi* in ancient times, and “*bushidō* should be made the great moving force of the nation.”⁵² This militaristic interpretation of *bushidō* was strikingly similar to the mainstream interpretation of the subject that evolved in the last decade of Meiji and lasted until 1945. It was also reflected in the first major work on *bushidō* by Inoue Tetsujirō, which took the form of a lecture to army cadets in 1901.⁵³

⁵¹ Mizuho Tarō, “*Bushidō wo goji kankō suru mono ha dare zo* (Who upholds and preserves *bushidō*?),” 2-3.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵³ Inoue Tetsujirō, *Bushidō*. Tokyo: Heiji zasshi sha, 1901.

In spite of its brief run of four months and subsequent descent into obscurity, the *Bushidō zasshi* was an important bridge between the scattered *bushidō* theories of the Meiji 20s and the *bushidō* boom of the Meiji 30s. The editors could not have known it at the time, but by bringing together the most important works on *bushidō* written before 1898, and soliciting contributions from the military, the journal revealed the state of *bushidō* research at the time, and foreshadowed the future evolution of the subject. In 1898, the content of *bushidō* was still in flux, but the broader dissemination of the term by the *Bushidō zasshi* would make it possible for Inoue Tetsujirō and others to develop the nationalistic ideology that became the mainstream interpretation of the warrior ethic in prewar Japan.

Nitobe Inazō and the internationalization of *bushidō*

Like Yamaoka Tesshū's lectures, Nitobe Inazō's *bushidō* theories can be difficult to temporally and thematically place in the development of modern *bushidō* discourse. This is due to the fact that Nitobe was geographically detached from the centers of *bushidō* research, i.e. Japan's metropolitan areas. Nitobe was in the United States during the publication of both the *Bushidō zasshi* and Mikami's *Nihon bushidō ron*, and it is doubtful that he knew of their existence. However, the *bushidō* boom initiated by these works, especially the former, had a major influence on Nitobe's *bushidō*-related activities in Japan. For this reason, this study briefly departs from the *Bushidō zasshi* and domestic developments to examine the role of Nitobe Inazō, returning to the subject when these two streams first intersected in 1900.

Nitobe's *bushidō* writings, like those of Inoue Tetsujirō, must be evaluated on the basis of the content of their respective *bushidō* theories, which were less original or significant than one would expect given their prominence, and the impact their writings had on *bushidō* discourse as a whole, which was considerably more varied than many later studies portray it. In looking at Nitobe's work, especially, this study argues that he was not central to prewar *bushidō*

discourse in Japan, and only attained this status in recent decades. The differences between these two authors were greater than their similarities, and their respective works accordingly enjoyed their greatest popularity at different time periods. This disparity has led many recent commentators on *bushidō* to posit the two as heads of separate streams of modern *bushidō* thought, and this distinction has some merit. As shown in the discussion of the Meiji twenties in the previous chapter, however, *bushidō* discourse was quite diverse from the beginning, and simplistic categorization of writings into “Christian *bushidō*” and “nationalistic *bushidō*”, as Kannō Kakumyō has done, will throw up more questions than answers.⁵⁴ For this reason, in dealing with Nitobe and Inoue, this study not only considers commonalities and differences between their interpretations and backgrounds, but also between them and other contemporaneous writers.

With regard to Nitobe Inazō’s *bushidō* theories and impact, his popularity in both Japan and other countries from the 1980s onward has strongly influenced the way he is currently viewed. Nitobe is widely regarded as the most famous commentator on *bushidō*, and his name has become virtually synonymous with the subject. In contrast, Inoue Tetsujirō’s vast corpus of work on the subject has been almost entirely ignored since 1945 due to its state-sanctioned militaristic chauvenism, and his dominant role in prewar *bushidō* discourse is rarely mentioned. This state of affairs is perhaps natural given the great differences in the Japanese political climate at either end of the twentieth century, but it hinders the development of a balanced view of the history of *bushidō*, and has resulted in many recent writers on *bushidō* ignoring the Meiji period entirely. Given that the concept of *bushidō* was first widely theorized and disseminated during Meiji, as this study holds, attempts to examine *bushidō* without reference to modern processes tend to be compromised by methodological flaws. Even among commentators who recognize

⁵⁴ Kanno Kakumyō, *Bushidō no gyakushū*, 260-261. Another example of this approach can be found in Unoda Shōya, “Bushidō ron no seiritsu: sei-yō to tō-yō no aida.”

the importance of modern developments, many works focus on Nitobe Inazō, without considering the reception his work received when it was originally published.

There are several reasons for the focus on Nitobe in recent evaluations of *bushidō*. One is the timing of the publication of Nitobe's *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* in 1900.⁵⁵ Indeed, this was only the second book-length specific treatment of the subject in modern Japan, with Mikami Reiji's *Nihon bushidō ron* published, in April 1899.⁵⁶ However, Mikami's work, along with the *Bushidō zasshi* and other earlier writings on *bushidō*, were almost completely forgotten after 1945. The content of Nitobe's work further reinforces the reader's impression that his was the first discussion of the subject, as Nitobe argued as though he had invented the term, and he believed this himself until being told otherwise several decades later.⁵⁷ Even in a lecture given during a 1932-3 trip abroad Nitobe continued to take credit for the rise of *bushidō*:

“Some thirty years ago, when I first wrote an essay on the moral code of the Japanese and called it “Bushido”, there was raised a question both in Japan and among some scholars abroad as to the legitimacy of such a term. They had heard of *Shido* or *Budo* but never of “Bushido”. Some of them went even further and doubted the existence of such a code. ... But the more I think of it, the stronger grows my conviction that we have been under the sway of ideas and opinions unformulated but none the less potent, whose guiding principle was Honor. And as it came to existence during the days of feudalism, it partook the coloring and taste of the period. Since it was made a class morality of the knights, samurai, it laid particular stress on honor; and because it was primarily meant for observance by that class, we may call it *Bushido*, the Way of the Fighting Knights.”⁵⁸

Significantly, this lecture was given in English to a foreign audience, and Nitobe would probably not have made such bold claims in Japan by this time. In fact, Nitobe's *bushidō* theories were not taken seriously by most Japanese scholars, and he had very little influence on the

⁵⁵ The dates for publication of this text are often given as either 1899 or 1900, with researchers roughly evenly divided on what date they use. Nitobe's preface to the first edition is dated December 1899, but the book seems to have been published in January 1900. This study uses the latter date for the sake of simplicity, and as it did not have a significant impact before 1900.

⁵⁶ Mikami Reiji, *Nihon bushidō*. Tokyo: Kokubunsha, 1899.

⁵⁷ Ota Yuzo, “Mediation between Cultures,” 242.

⁵⁸ Nitobe Inazō. *Lectures on Japan*, 124-125.

development of mainstream *bushidō* in Japan, aside from giving the concept international legitimacy. The fame his book had attained in the West seems to have been the primary reason the Japanese translation sold fairly well in Japan when it was finally published in 1908.⁵⁹

In other words, the current popularity of *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* in Japan, as well as its related centrality in much of recent *bushidō* research, are not indicative of continuous prominence dating back to its initial publication. Nitobe himself was not a major subject of research until fairly recently, in spite of his many writings and remarkable career as the principal of the Tokyo Number One Higher School, chair of Colonial Policy at Tokyo Imperial University, President of the New Tokyo Women's Christian College, and Under-Secretary General of the League of Nations. As John Howes points out, "One would expect that the name of such a man would be memorialized in numerous institutions and studies, but this is not the case. Sixty years later almost no one remembers Nitobe. A student will seek in vain reference to him in standard sources."⁶⁰ Ota Yūzō relates that by the 1970s, many Japanese did not know how to read Nitobe's name.⁶¹ An examination of the records at the National Diet Library seems to confirm these assessments.⁶² If one excludes the publication of compendia of his complete works, a book relating to Nitobe was published on average every other year in the fifty years between his death and 1984. In that year, Nitobe's image appeared on the new 5000 Yen note, allegedly due to the efforts of former Prime Minister and fellow Christian Ōhira Masayoshi (大平正芳, 1910-1980).⁶³ After this time, the number of research works relating to Nitobe increased dramatically, with over one hundred books published during the span 1985-2008. This trend corresponds to that of publication of new editions of *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, with

⁵⁹ Nitobe Inazō, Sakurai Ōson trans., *Bushidō*. Tokyo: Teibi Shuppansha, 1908.

⁶⁰ John F. Howes and George Oshiro, "Who was Nitobe," 4.

⁶¹ Ōta Yūzō, *Taiheiyō no hashi toshite no Nitobe Inazō*, 1

⁶² Search conducted April 2009.

⁶³ Mark W. Fruin, "Foreword," ix.

new versions of the Japanese translation appearing at a rate of more than one every year for the past two decades.

In contrast with its later popularity, the Japanese reaction to Nitobe's *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* at the time of its initial publication was muted, as the responses from Japanese writers show. For example, Tsuda Sōkichi (津田左右吉, 1873-1961) and Inoue Tetsujirō both commented on the English version of Nitobe's book in 1901. The rationalist Tsuda provided the most scathing critique, rejecting most of Nitobe's central arguments. According to Tsuda, although Nitobe's book was popular among the public, the author knew very little about his subject. Nitobe's very equation of the term "*bushidō*" with the "soul of Japan" was flawed, as *bushidō* could only be applied to a single class at a specific time. Instead, Tsuda argued, Nitobe should have written his thesis on the *Yamato damashii*, which had been a subject of discussion from Motoori Norinaga onward. Tsuda further chastised Nitobe for not distinguishing between historical periods, and for positing Buddhism (especially the Zen schools), Shinto, and lastly Confucianism (especially Wang Yangming's teachings), as the roots of *bushidō*. According to Tsuda, Nitobe's assertion that Buddhism influenced the *bushi* in the Heian period was pure nonsense, while Confucianism was irrelevant before the Edo period, and even then the influential teachings were those of Zhu Xi and not Wang Yangming. Instead, Tsuda argued that *bushidō* was merely a product of the Kantō family structure that then spread throughout the country. In addition, Tsuda rejected Nitobe's assertion that love of the sovereign and patriotism were part of *bushidō*, for these virtues were much greater than *bushidō*.⁶⁴

Inoue's criticism was similarly harsh, although he directed his attention to a different aspect of Nitobe's work than Tsuda. Specifically, Inoue focused on this claim by Nitobe that *bushidō* was an unwritten ethic:

⁶⁴ Tsuda Sōkichi, "Bushidō no engen ni tsuite," 316-318.

“Chivalry is a flower no less indigenous to the soil of Japan than its emblem, the cherry blossom; nor is it a dried-up specimen of an antique virtue preserved in the herbarium of our history. It is still a living object of power and beauty among us; and if it assumes no tangible shape or form, it not the less scents the moral atmosphere, and makes us aware that we are still under its potent spell.... The Japanese word which I have roughly rendered Chivalry, is, in the original, more expressive than Horsemanship. Bu-shi-do means literally Military-Knight-Ways—the ways which fighting nobles should observe in their daily life as well as in their vocation; in a word, the “Precepts of Knighthood,” the noblesse oblige of the warrior class....Bushido, then, is the code of moral principles which the knights were required or instructed to observe. It is not a written code; at best it consists of a few maxims handed down from mouth to mouth or coming from the pen of some well-known warrior or savant. More frequently it is a code unuttered and unwritten, possessing all the more the powerful sanction of veritable deed, and of a law written on the fleshly tablets of the heart.”⁶⁵

According to Inoue, Nitobe had erred by overlooking the existence of Yamaga Sokō’s *Bukyō shōgaku* and *Yamaga gorui*, the former text having been made famous by Yoshida Shōin’s lectures.⁶⁶ Several years later, Inoue convinced Nitobe to include references to Yamaga in his discussions of *bushidō*.⁶⁷ Tsuda and Inoue’s criticisms are typical of those directed at Nitobe by Japanese academics, most of whom did not consider his work to be sufficiently scholarly.

Criticism of Nitobe’s *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* was not limited to Japanese academia, although attacks from this area were the most prolific. Uemura Masahisa, a fellow Christian who had himself written several articles on *bushidō* several years before Nitobe discussed the subject, criticized what he felt to be Nitobe’s overly idealistic portrayal of the samurai, stating “I am sorry that Mr. Nitobe in his English language work *Bushido* assumed an attitude which was excessively advocatory” (Ota Yuzo translation).⁶⁸ Negative reviews of Nitobe’s book also came from abroad, with an anonymous reviewer in *The Athenaeum* giving one of the harshest reviews.⁶⁹ This reviewer, who is widely thought to be the noted Japanologist Basil Hall Chamberlain (1850-1935), dismissed Nitobe’s theories as fabrications without any historical

⁶⁵ Nitobe Inazō, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, 1, 4-5.

⁶⁶ Inoue Tetsujirō, *Bushidō*, 36-7.

⁶⁷ John Allen Tucker, “Tokugawa Intellectual History and Prewar Ideology,” 52.

⁶⁸ Ota Yuzo, “Mediation between Cultures,” 249.

⁶⁹ *The Athenaeum*, Number 4060 (August 19, 1905), p. 229.

validity, cobbled together through “partial statement and wholesale suppression.”⁷⁰ The reviewer in *The Athenaeum*, like Uemura, Tsuda, and Inoue, seems to have had a far more thorough understanding of Japanese history and culture than Nitobe did. Nitobe was painfully aware of his own lack of knowledge regarding Japanese history, and frequently admitted as much in Japanese-language lectures and writings (but rarely, if ever, in his English works).

This insecurity regarding the content of his *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, combined with the harsh reviews it received in Japan in 1900, seem to have been the primary reasons that Nitobe did not publish a Japanese translation of the work for almost a decade after the English version appeared. By this point, his book had been translated into many other languages, including Marāthī, German, Bohemian, Polish, Norwegian, and French.⁷¹ Given the rapidly growing interest in *bushidō* in Japan at the time, and the book’s cachet as an international bestseller, one would expect Nitobe to have sought a Japanese translator much earlier. The fact that a mainstream, orthodox interpretation of *bushidō* was being established by Inoue and others from 1901 onward, and was far more militaristic and xenophobic than Nitobe’s views, may also have contributed to the delay, but hesitation to subject his work to additional scrutiny by Japanese specialists would appear to have weighed more heavily on Nitobe’s mind. Nitobe indicated as much in the foreword he wrote for Yamagata Kōhō’s (山方香峰) 1908 *Shin bushidō* (新武士道, *The New Bushidō*), which appeared shortly after the Japanese translation of Nitobe’s *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*. Here, Nitobe stated that he resisted the Japanese translation of his book for years out of fear of what Japanese readers might think, and was only persuaded by his good friend Sakurai Ōson (桜井鷗村, 1872-1929) to let him translate it. In addition, although almost certainly an exaggeration of his feelings, Nitobe admitted that he would probably not have published it if he had been aware of Yamagata’s (superior) work.⁷²

⁷⁰ Ota Yuzo, “Mediation between Cultures,” 249.

⁷¹ Cyril H. Powles, “*Bushido: Its Admirers and Critics*,” 112.

⁷² Yamagata Kōhō, *Shin bushidō*, 1-2.

Readers of *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* are usually struck by the great number of references to historical events and individuals from Western traditions, especially in comparison with the relative paucity of Oriental sources in the book. Although many foreign readers simply assumed that as a Japanese, Nitobe's understanding of his own country must be even greater than his knowledge of the West, his reliance on foreign sources was due to the fact that Nitobe was much better versed in Occidental traditions. This condition, including Nitobe's lack of knowledge regarding Japan, was a result of his unique upbringing and education.

Nitobe was born in 1862 to a wealthy family in Nambu domain, near present-day Morioka. At the young age of fifteen he went to Hokkaido to study at the Sapporo Nōgakkō (Sapporo Agricultural College), an elite institution that had been founded to facilitate the development of Hokkaido and employed American instructors, led by William S. Clark (1826-1886). At this school, classes were conducted in English, and the subject matter was also Western. In this environment, Nitobe, along with Uchimura Kanzō and other classmates, converted to Christianity, forming what would be called the Sapporo Band. After graduation, Nitobe left Japan, and spent the period 1884-91 studying in the United States and Germany. Upon his return to Japan, he took a teaching post at his alma mater in Sapporo. During his time at this school, Nitobe took on all manner of pedagogical and supervisory duties which, combined with the relatively harsh environment, conspired to ruin his health by 1897. On the advice of a doctor in Sapporo, Nitobe again left Japan to convalesce in Monterey, California, which proved to be an effective remedy. Nitobe stayed in the United States for almost three years this time, and it was during this period that he wrote *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*. The book did fairly well in the United States upon its publication in 1900, and editions in the original English were also released in Japan the same year, serving as the basis for the reviews by Tsuda, Inoue, and others. *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* became a major bestseller in 1905, when it was republished

in the wake of Japanese victories in the Russo-Japanese War, which sparked a surge of interest in Japanese culture and history around the world.

Although Nitobe would go on to hold many prestigious posts, for the purposes of this study, his life up until the publication of *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* is most significant. By 1900, the 38-year-old Nitobe had spent ten years abroad in the West and another thirteen in the isolated, American-influenced enclave that was the Sapporo Agricultural College. He was more comfortable in English than Japanese, especially with regard to written language, and had received very little education regarding Japanese history and religion, a condition that he often lamented. There are many examples of Nitobe's lack of knowledge regarding things Japanese, but his uncertainty never prevented him from holding forth like an authority in front of foreign audiences.⁷³ In contrast, Nitobe's observations on Western culture were highly regarded both in Japan and in the West, demonstrating that this was his true area of expertise.

Looking at *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*

Despite writing almost a decade and a major international conflict later than Ozaki Yukio and Uemura Masahisa, Nitobe's motivations in outlining his *bushidō* theories were closer to those of these earlier thinkers than to those of most of his contemporaries. Although these earlier two writers were addressing a Japanese audience and Nitobe a foreign one, all three had a common goal of establishing or identifying a native Japanese ethical system that was both comparable to Western thought and relatively independent of the Chinese influences that had dominated most earlier discourses on morality. Nitobe also believed that he was outlining a new concept, and selected a new term as the label for his ethic, stating that "I named it 'Bushido' or 'the Way of the samurai' because the culture to which it referred was most noticeable among

⁷³ Ōta Yūzō, *Taiheiyō no hashi toshite no Nitobe Inazō*, 29-32.

the samurai class.”⁷⁴ If one considers this explanation together with Nitobe’s other Japanese-language statements regarding *bushidō*, it is clear that Nitobe was not only attempting to explain Japanese culture to foreign audiences, but also to understand it himself. In contrast, Inoue Tetsujirō and many other thinkers writing in the Meiji thirties and forties generally accepted the existence of *bushidō* as a unique Japanese ethic that was still relevant in the current day and age. With the exception of a few dissenting voices, such as Ōi Kentarō, *bushidō* research during this time was focused on determining its specific aspects and historical roots, which some writers even claimed to have traced back to the mythical age of the gods.

Nitobe’s lack of awareness regarding previous usage of the term “*bushidō*”, as well as his overestimation of his own impact on the subject, has been held up as evidence of how detached he was from the activities of Japanese intellectuals.⁷⁵ This detachment, which was exacerbated by Nitobe’s physical isolation from the academic center, Tokyo, can explain why Nitobe’s *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* is a unique interpretation relative to contemporary writings in Japanese, even appearing somewhat anachronistic when placed in the framework of *bushidō*’s development within Japan. One example of this is the nature of Nitobe’s book as a response to a foreign stimulus, just as Ozaki and Uemura’s *bushidō* theories from the early Meiji twenties were responses to traits they believed to have identified in Western culture. In Nitobe’s case, the reason he gave for composing his *bushidō* theory was a question asked by a Belgian jurist regarding the nature of Japanese ethics, and he found a foreign equivalent for every aspect of his *bushidō* (or vice versa). In contrast, when Nitobe’s contemporaries in *bushidō* discourse, such as Mikami Reiichi or Inoue Tetsujirō, discussed European chivalry or other foreign ethical systems, they did so with the implicit understanding that their *bushidō* existed entirely independently of these traditions, and was in no way a response to them.

⁷⁴ Ota Yuzo, “Mediation between Cultures,” 242.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 243.

Nitobe's *bushidō* theories as outlined in *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* were a hodge-podge of different sources, arguments, and observations, often contradictory, that seemed to attribute the entire range of human emotion and personality to the influence of the warrior class. For Nitobe, *bushidō* was far more than the ethic of a single class, and was manifested in all Japanese behavior even in his own time, a point he emphasized repeatedly:

“What Japan was she owed to the samurai. They were not only the flower of the nation, but its root as well. All the gracious gifts of Heaven flowed through them.”⁷⁶

In addition,

“There was no channel of human activity, no avenue of thought, which did not receive in some measure an impetus from Bushido. Intellectual and moral Japan was directly or indirectly the work of Knighthood.”⁷⁷

According to Nitobe, *bushidō* “permeated all social classes,” eventually becoming a “moral standard” for the entire nation.⁷⁸ This was especially true of the modern period, in which *bushidō* was still the “animating spirit” and “motor force” of Japan. In this context, *bushidō*, “the maker and product of Old Japan, is still the guiding principle of the transition and will prove the formative force of the new era.”⁷⁹ With considerable pride, Nitobe wrote that

“The transformation of Japan is a fact patent to the whole world. Into a work of such magnitude various motives naturally entered; but if one were to name the principal, one would not hesitate to name Bushido.”⁸⁰

Bushido: The Soul of Japan is filled with generalizations and tautologies, and where Nitobe did address a specific characteristic of his *bushidō*, he often qualified it to the point of

⁷⁶ Nitobe Inazō, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*. Tokyo: Kenkyusha., 1939. p. 167

⁷⁷ Ibid., 169

⁷⁸ Ibid., 170-171, 177, 178.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 179

⁸⁰ Ibid., 181

meaninglessness or contradicted it later in the work. With regard to honor, for example, Nitobe stated that

“Our sense of honour is responsible for our exaggerated sensitiveness and touchiness; and if there is the conceit in us with which some foreigners charge us, that, too, is a pathological outcome of honour.”⁸¹

This heightened sensitivity should not be dismissed as a fault, argued Nitobe, for

“as in religious monomania there is something touchingly noble as compared with the delirium tremens of a drunkard, so in that extreme sensitiveness of the samurai about their honour do we not recognise the substratum of a genuine virtue?”⁸²

On the other hand, writing about “self-control,” Nitobe stated that

“The discipline of fortitude...and the teaching of politeness...combined to engender a stoical turn of mind, and eventually to conform it into a national trait of apparent Stoicism....It was unmanly for a samurai to betray his emotions on his face. ‘He shows no sign of joy or anger,’ was a phrase used in describing a great character.”⁸³

In other words, according to Nitobe, if a Japanese person was quick-tempered and reacted impulsively to some insult, this was a manifestation of his *bushidō*-founded sense of honor. If, instead, he stoically bore the same provocation with great patience, his actions were also in line with the ethic of *bushidō*.

Nitobe’s discussion of loyalty was similarly confusing:

“The individualism of the West, which recognizes separate interests for father and son, husband and wife, necessarily brings into strong relief the duties owed by one to the other; but Bushido held that the interest of the family and of the members thereof is intact, —one and inseparable. This interest

⁸¹ Ibid., 184

⁸² Ibid., 80

⁸³ Ibid., 108-109

bound it up with affection—natural, instinctive, irresistible; hence, if we die for one we love with natural love (which even animals possess), what is that?”⁸⁴

In spite of this emphasis on the family,

“Bushido never wavered in its choice of loyalty. Women, too, encouraged their offspring to sacrifice all for the king...Since Bushido, like Aristotle and some modern sociologists, conceived the state as antedating the individual—the latter being born into the former as part and parcel thereof—he must live and die for it or for the incumbent of its legitimate authority.”⁸⁵

However,

“Bushido did not require us to make our conscience the slave of any lord or king...A man who sacrificed his own conscience to the capricious will or freak or fancy of a sovereign was accorded a low place in the estimate of the Precepts.”⁸⁶

In this case, as well, there appeared to be an interpretation of *bushidō* that would sanction any action on the part of a samurai.

One final example of the tone of Nitobe’s *bushidō* relates to education and learning, in which regard

“An intellectual specialist was considered a machine. Intellect itself was considered subordinate to ethical devotion...Bushido made light of knowledge of such. It was not pursued as an end in itself, but as a means to the attainment of wisdom. Hence, he who stopped short of this end was regarded no higher than a convenient machine, which could turn out poems and maxims at bidding.”⁸⁷

This statement was qualified by Nitobe in a later chapter which stated that

“Intellectual superiority was, of course, esteemed; but the word *Chi*, which was employed to denote intellectuality, meant wisdom in the first instance and gave knowledge only a very subordinate place...A samurai was essentially a man of action. Science was without the pale of his

⁸⁴ Ibid., 92

⁸⁵ Ibid., 93

⁸⁶ Ibid., 96-97

⁸⁷ Ibid., 18

activity...Philosophy and literature formed the chief part of his intellectual training; but even in the pursuit of these, it was not objective truth that he strove after,—literature was pursued mainly as a pastime, and philosophy as a practical aid in the formation of character.”⁸⁸

In spite of this focus on practicality,

“A subject of study which one would expect to find in military education and which is rather conspicuous by its absence in the Bushido course of instruction, is mathematics...the whole training of the samurai was unfavorable to fostering numerical notions.”⁸⁹

In a later discussion of his own time, however, Nitobe wrote that

“it is fair to recognise that for the very faults and defects of our character, Bushido is largely responsible. Our lack of abstruse philosophy—while some of our young men have already gained international reputation in scientific researches, not one has achieved anything in philosophical lines—is traceable to the neglect of metaphysical training under Bushido’s regimen of education.”⁹⁰

Inoue Tetsujirō, who considered himself the “greatest philosopher East of Suez,” may well have taken personal offense to this assessment. More importantly, if “philosophy” was the “chief part” of intellectual training, and science and mathematics were wholly absent, the success of Meiji Japanese science and failure of its philosophy, as described by Nitobe, seem difficult to reconcile as continuations of a unified *bushidō* tradition.

As these passages indicate, Nitobe’s definition of the warrior ethic in *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* was often contradictory. There are several reasons for this. Tsuda Sōkichi pointed out one problem: Nitobe did not distinguish between places and periods of history in selecting references for his *bushidō*. This meant that actions that occurred at any time in Japanese history, or were at least recorded in a poem or story, were accepted by Nitobe as a manifestation of *bushidō*. The problems with this approach are evident when one considers, for example, the

⁸⁸ Ibid., 99-100

⁸⁹ Ibid., 101-102

⁹⁰ Ibid., 183-184

difference in attitudes towards learning between rough warriors from the Kamakura period and refined Neo-Confucian scholars from the eighteenth century.

Another source of inconsistencies in Nitobe's work was a direct result of his stated goal in theorizing *bushidō*. Nitobe tried to explain Japan to foreigners by pointing out commonalities between Japanese and Western history and culture. In this context, Nitobe desired to discuss as many different aspects of thought and behavior as possible in order to show that Japanese and Westerners were fundamentally similar.

“I did not intend [*Bushido: The Soul of Japan*] for a Japanese audience but for foreigners who seem to think that the Japanese are really a very strange people. I wanted to show in it that the Japanese are not really so different, that you can find similar ideas to those of the Japanese even in the West, though under a slightly different guise, and that there is no East or West as far as human beings are concerned.”⁹¹

Human actions are often contradictory, making it difficult to incorporate all their variety in a single ethic. In this sense, Nitobe's *bushidō* was usually too broad to derive many meaningful specific conclusions regarding Japanese culture or behavior from it. On the other hand, these same qualities were key to the success of Nitobe's book in a world that knew very little of Japan. By demonstrating that Japanese were capable of the same emotions, and had the same hopes and fears as Westerners, he contributed to intercultural understanding at a time when biological and psychological theories of racial difference (especially in terms of superiority or inferiority) were very much in vogue. However, Nitobe undermined his own arguments by appealing not just to the common humanity of Japan and the West, but by invoking the concept of *bushidō* as the reason behind Japanese actions, thereby implying that Japanese were unique in the foundations of their common humanity.

⁹¹ Ota Yuzo, “Mediation between Cultures,” 250.

Nitobe and contemporary intellectual trends

Parts of *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* seem anachronistic and more in line with *bushidō* discourse from the previous decade, but there were other aspects in which Nitobe was in line with contemporary Japanese intellectual currents. One example of this, despite Nitobe's stated goal, was the premise of Japanese uniqueness, which has prompted scholars to place Nitobe firmly in the early *nihonjinron* tradition.⁹² There are many references in *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* that, while on the surface appealing to universal humanity, were simultaneously arguments for Japanese singularity. For example,

“If what M. Boutmy says is true of English royalty—that it ‘is not only the image of authority, but the author and symbol of national unity,’ as I believe it to be, double and trebly may this be affirmed of royalty in Japan.”⁹³

Similarly, Nitobe cited an unnamed “Russian statesman” on the dependence of people on social networks and the state, agreeing with his theories and stating that they were “doubly true of the Japanese.”⁹⁴ In the same way, Nitobe explained that some Japanese customs might strike foreign observers as being “hard-hearted,”

Yet we are really as susceptible to tender emotion as any race under the sky. I am inclined to think that in one sense we have to feel more than others—yes, doubly more—since the very attempt to restrain natural promptings entails suffering.”⁹⁵

In other words, while the Japanese were subject to the same emotions and experiences as people in other nations, Nitobe maintained that they were unique in the degree of intensity of the same.

Another issue in which Nitobe was very much in line with post-Sino-Japanese War intellectual currents was in his attitudes towards the rest of East Asia. A reassessment of

⁹² See, for example: Minami Hiroshi, *Nihonjin ron: meiji kara kyō made*, 202.; and Funabiki Takeo, *Nihonjinron saikō*.

⁹³ Nitobe, Inazo. *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*. Tokyo: Kenkyusha., 1939. pp. 14

⁹⁴ Ibid., 41-42

⁹⁵ Ibid., 109

Japan's relationship with China, especially, was an integral part of the *bushidō* theories of Ozaki Yukio, Fukuzawa Yukichi, Suzuki Chikara, and Uemura Masahisa. In *bushidō* discourse in the Meiji thirties, however, arguments against China had begun to take on a dimension of racial or national superiority/inferiority, often bolstered by Social Darwinist theories from abroad. Simon Edwards has argued that Nitobe was always "happily agnostic towards the kind of racist rhetoric" that pervaded the Victorian social sciences, which in turn represented perhaps the greatest influence on Nitobe's thought.⁹⁶ Some of his statements in *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* and other works seem to indicate otherwise. For example, Nitobe cited in full the opinion of the French Orientalist Antoine Rous de la Mazaliere (1864-1937), writing that

"the sixteenth century displays in the highest degree the principal quality of the Japanese race, that great diversity which one finds there between minds (*esprits*) as well as between temperaments. While in India and even in China men seem to differ chiefly in degree of energy or intelligence, in Japan they differ by originality of character as well. Now, individuality is the sign of superior races and of civilizations already developed."⁹⁷

A similar attitude can also be seen in later writings from Nitobe's time as a colonial administrator. With regard to the "Korean race," Nitobe argued that they were an "inferior race" with no "attributes for development" and an "insufficient capacity for nation-founding and administration" that could only continue to exist under imperial Japanese administration.⁹⁸ His opinion of China, the history of which he generally praised in his earlier works, became similarly prejudiced after the Manchurian Incident, when Nitobe pronounced that the "Chinese race" did not have the political capability to stabilize and rule their nation, and were in general an "irresponsible, chauvinistic race."⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Simon Edwards, "*Bushido: Romantic Nationalism in Japan*," 133.

⁹⁷ Nitobe, Inazō, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*. Tokyo: Kenkyusha., 1939. p. 22

⁹⁸ Asada Kyōji, *Nihon shokuminchi kenkyū shi ron*, 178.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 179.

As these passages indicate, the fundamental goal of Nitobe's arguments for equality was that Japanese be viewed as equal to Westerners, which was no easy task given the blatant racism inherent in the European-dominated international system, an aspect which Nitobe spent his life combating.¹⁰⁰ While excepting Japan, however, Nitobe internalized many of the racist theories that Western Orientalists had directed at non-Caucasian peoples.¹⁰¹ Through the use of *bushidō* and Victorian social theories, Nitobe could on the one hand appeal to the common humanity of Japanese and Westerners, while at the same time separate Japan from the rest of Asia, albeit in a more subtle way than Fukuzawa's earlier *Datsu-A ron*. In this process of removing their nation from Asia, many Japanese intellectuals desired to "appropriate" aspects of Chinese culture and philosophy as their own, and this motivation can be seen in Nitobe's writings. This trend is closely tied to the development of *bushidō* in the Meiji thirties, and this study deals with it in greater depth in Chapter 4.

Nitobe's impact on *bushidō* discourse

If one considers Nitobe Inazō in the context of the two criteria mentioned at the beginning of this section, the central role in modern *bushidō* discourse that is often attributed to him must be reassessed. The content of his *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* was not exceptionally original if one considers the state of the subject in Japan at the time. In some respects, such as his motivations for theorizing about *bushidō* and his treatment of the term itself as his own invention, Nitobe was several years behind Japanese developments, and his writings were more similar to *bushidō* theories from the Meiji twenties than contemporaneous works. In other ways, such as his racial theories and confidence in Japan's high status in the contemporary world

¹⁰⁰ Unoda Shōya makes a similar argument, proposing that the dichotomy "*tōzai* (East-West)" as found in Nitobe's work should more accurately be rendered "*ōbei to nihon* (Europe/America and Japan)." See, Unoda Shōya, "Bushidō ron no seiritsu: seiyō to tōyō no aida," 36.

¹⁰¹ Thomas W. Burkman, "Nationalist Actors in the Internationalist Theatre," 108.

order, Nitobe was in line with the Japanese intellectual currents of his time, even if he did not contribute many original ideas to them.

With regard to the second criterion, i.e. the impact of his writings on *bushidō* discourse, the standard view is also in need of revision. Nitobe was largely ignored by Japanese thinkers writing on *bushidō* in the Meiji thirties, and did not generally receive favorable reviews from those that did take note of his work. This can be largely attributed to the fact that his major work on the subject was only available in English during the Meiji thirties, and the impact *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* would have had on *bushidō* discourse if a Japanese translation had been available in 1900 is difficult to assess. The few Japanese scholars who read the original were highly critical of Nitobe's work, but he may have been able to influence popular discourse on the subject. Nitobe was fully aware of the problems with his *bushidō* theories, and was reluctant to submit the work to the scrutiny of more knowledgeable domestic readers. Nitobe's book did quite well on the market when a translation was finally published in 1908, but this was due primarily to its reputation as an international bestseller and the prominence of its author, and the work was still not taken seriously by academics.

Nitobe was, however, successful with the dissemination of his *bushidō* theories in the West, and his book remained popular abroad up to the 1930s. The validity of his *bushidō* was not questioned as widely as in Japan, and there were no other dominant *bushidō* interpretations for him to compete with. The flexibility of interpretation endowed by the often contradictory nature of Nitobe's *bushidō* theories meant that his book was cited to support a wide range of arguments made by foreign commentators on Japan. While some of Nitobe's statements were interpreted as demonstrating an innate militarism in the Japanese, others were used to argue for pacifistic ends. An interesting example of this flexibility can be seen in the pre-war arguments of James Sakamoto, publisher of the *Japanese American Courier*, which relied on Nitobe's *bushidō* theories to demonstrate the loyalties of the Nisei community in Seattle. Sakamoto

cited Nitobe in arguing that Japanese could only serve one lord or nation, and were therefore devoted to serving the country of their birth, i.e. the United States.¹⁰²

Nitobe's primary role in the history of modern *bushidō*, therefore, was that of a popularizer of the concept, especially in the world outside of Japan. Within Japan, although he liked to take credit for the wide dissemination of *bushidō* after 1900, his influence on discourse was limited. As a subject of research into the history of modern *bushidō*, Nitobe is most important not for his theories themselves, but for what his thought and reactions to it reveal about the intellectual climate of the time.

Inoue Tetsujirō: the doyon of 20th-century *bushidō*

There is no evidence that he occupied himself with the subject before 1900, but Inoue Tetsujirō came to be the single most important figure in the history of modern *bushidō*. By the turn of the century, Inoue was already one of the most influential figures in the Japanese intellectual sphere, and was referred to by other writers on *bushidō* as early as 1893.¹⁰³ His position as professor of philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University placed him at the center of academia, and his close ties with the government, especially the military, gave him an opportunity to disseminate his ideas beyond the ivory tower. Along with Ozaki Yukio, Inoue was one of the few Meiji *bushidō* theorists to live long enough to see the tragedy of the Pacific War. However, whereas Ozaki did not deal with *bushidō* in the twentieth century, Inoue dominated discourse on the subject from the Meiji 30s until his death in 1944, also publishing commentaries on the *bushidō* theories of Fukuzawa Yukichi, Nitobe Inazō, and others. Inoue's *bushidō* theories had little original content, but brought together many of the factors that

¹⁰² Azuma Eiichiro, *Between Two Empires : Race, History, and Transnationalism in Japanese America*, 130-132.

¹⁰³ Suzuki Chikara, *Kokumin no shin seishin*, 3

influenced the evolution of the subject in the writings of other thinkers, such as the internationalist perspective discussed in the last chapter.

Inoue's background was similar to those of the *bushidō* theorists of the Meiji twenties with regard to his international experience and view of Japan's position in the world. Inoue was recognized as intellectually gifted at a young age, and received an advanced classical education. In adolescence, he began to study history, science, mathematics, and English, which led him to enroll in a school of foreign studies at the age of twenty. In 1882, he became assistant professor of literature at Tokyo Imperial University, having graduated from the same institution two years earlier. From 1884 to 1890, Inoue studied at various institutions throughout Europe at the expense of the Japanese government, in the process meeting many of the most famous scholars active at the time. This experience had a similar impact on Inoue as Ozaki Yukio's travels had on the latter. The feeling of inferiority relative to England that is apparent in Ozaki's earliest articles was shared by Inoue, who expressed it even more directly and with greater urgency. While Ozaki criticized the Japanese *shinshi* as a fraudulent imitation of English gentlemen, Inoue went further in arguing that the Japanese lagged behind Westerners in terms of their evolutionary development, and warned of grave consequences for Japan if foreigners were allowed to live among the Japanese populace.¹⁰⁴ The reasoning behind Inoue's views echoed the racial theories put forth by scholars such as Takahashi Yoshio (高橋義雄, 1862-1937). In his 1884 *Nihon jinshu kairyō ron* (日本人種改良論, *Theories for Improving the Japanese Race*), Takahashi argued that the "Japanese race" was "inferior to" Westerners, but could be improved through intermarriage.¹⁰⁵ Inoue, however, rejected this suggestion and reached the opposite conclusion—that foreigners should be kept in separate residential zones until such a time as the Japanese had "caught up" evolutionarily. Despite largely agreeing with

¹⁰⁴ Winston Davis, "The Civil Theology of Inoue Tetsujirō," 7-8.

¹⁰⁵ Minami Hiroshi, *Nihonjin ron: meiji kara kyō made*, 30-31.

Takahashi's assessment of racial differences, Inoue's pronounced "defensive" nationalism at this time prompted him to support measures that would "protect" the Japanese.¹⁰⁶

Immediately after his return from Europe, Inoue accepted a position as professor of philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University, the first Japanese to hold this post. In this capacity, Inoue was approached by the government to compose an official commentary on the Imperial Rescript on Education in 1891. Contemporary witnesses recalled that Inoue was selected for this task due to his being "neither infatuated with the West" nor being a member of the "old conservative school."¹⁰⁷ In other words, Inoue's reputation at the time mirrored the feelings of many Japanese in the early 1890s, including the first generation of Meiji *bushidō* theorists. Wholesale Westernization had come under increasing scrutiny, and traditional Confucian ethics were also considered unviable. Although the Rescript is often seen as a last brief victory for the latter, subsequent commentaries and interpretations varied widely, and their tone often reflected the new national confidence in native thought, with writers such as Yoshikawa Akimasa tying the Rescript to *bushidō*.¹⁰⁸

Inoue did not comment on *bushidō* until the beginning of the following century, but had he written on the subject in the early 1890s, Inoue's *bushidō* interpretations may well have been marked by a similar nuanced nationalism as Ozaki Yukio's writings. By 1901, however, Inoue's nationalism was anything but defensive or subtle, and his *bushidō* theories reflect this. This would have a profound impact on the development of general *bushidō* discourse after this time, for it was one of Inoue's favorite subjects. Winston Davis has summarized Inoue's broader role as follows:

¹⁰⁶ Winston Davis, "The Civil Theology of Inoue Tetsujirō," 8.

¹⁰⁷ Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, 128.

¹⁰⁸ Winston Davis, "The Civil Theology of Inoue Tetsujirō." On page 10, Davis cites Minamoto Ryōen as criticizing Inoue's *Chokugo engi* for its "emphasis on bushido", but this appears to be a retroactive judgment with Inoue's later works in mind, for he does not refer to *bushidō* in this text. Ref: Inoue Tetsujirō, *Chokugo engi*. Tokyo: Inoue Sokichi, 1891.

“The influence of Inoue Tetsujirō on the cultural life of prewar Japan can hardly be overestimated. At that time his books, unimaginative as they are, sold in the millions. As a commissioner in charge of compiling books for teaching moral education in the public schools and as an educator of educators, his impact on the Japanese school system was deep and longlasting. From his position at Tokyo Imperial University, where at one time he had over ten thousand students, he dominated the Japanese academic world politically...”¹⁰⁹

This assessment was made primarily with regard to Inoue’s activities in the field of National Morality, but is even more true of his influence on *bushidō*, and Inoue’s considerable impact on military training and spiritual indoctrination must also be mentioned in this context. In terms of the number of works on *bushidō*, Inoue was far and away the most prolific author and editor in the field, publishing multi-volume series until shortly before his death in 1944. For example, in Inoue Tetsujirō and Akiyama Goan’s 1905 *Gendai taikē bushidō sōron* (現代大家武士道叢論, *A Collection of Bushidō Theories by Prominent Modern Thinkers*), which brought together articles on *bushidō* from the previous fifteen years, eight of the thirty-three essays were written by Inoue.¹¹⁰ Even in works he did not write himself, Inoue was quick to offer a brief preface or introduction, and there are many books on *bushidō* from late Meiji that bear his mark. The addition of a few words from Inoue signified that a work was in line with the “orthodox” interpretation of *bushidō*, and therefore presumably suitable for use as educational material.

Intellectual currents that flowed into Inoue’s *bushidō*

Inoue Tetsujirō’s philosophy was a melting pot of ideas he had gleaned from various thought systems, and his *bushidō* theories were no exception. In addition to possessing an internationalist perspective comparable to that which influenced writers like Ozaki and Uemura, Inoue’s *bushidō* was colored by Western, Chinese, as well as Japanese thought. More than these earlier writers, however, the diverse philosophies that Inoue drew upon reinforced or

¹⁰⁹ Winston Davis, “The Civil Theology of Inoue Tetsujirō,” 33.

¹¹⁰ Akiyama Goan ed., *Gendai taikē bushidō sōron*.

shaped his strong nationalism, which was at the core of all of his writings. Inoue's initially "defensive" nationalism of the early 1890s was strengthened by Japan's economic and military development, and by 1903 Inoue's interpretation had become so "aggressive" as to equate nationalism with imperialism,¹¹¹ thereby supporting Japan's ambitions regarding territorial expansion. The eclectic and often contradictory nature of Inoue's thought makes it difficult to categorize, although it is possible to identify specific sources for the bulk of his ideas that had been presented before by other thinkers. Davis' blunt description of Inoue is representative of most post-war assessments: "Though he claimed to be the greatest philosopher east of Suez, his logic was tendentious, his arguments forced and artificial. In fact his philosophy was little more than a smorgasbord spread with the leftovers of former ideological feasts, East and West."¹¹² Inoue's *bushidō* theories, fit this methodological pattern, and invoke direct and indirect references to fields such as Social Darwinism, *Nippon shugi* (Japanism), Wang Yangming's neo-Confucianism, *Kogaku* (Ancient Learning), Shinto, and *Kokumin dōtoku* (National Morality), the common denominator of these thought systems being that they could be appropriated by Inoue for nationalistic ends.

From the early Taishō period onward, Inoue was best known for his work in the field of National Morality, and he closely tied this concept to his later *bushidō* thought. In the Meiji 30s, however, *bushidō* was the primary tool with which Inoue promoted his nationalistic agenda. By positing *bushidō* as a central characteristic of the "Japanese spirit", Inoue was acting within contemporary trends, whereby a nation's "unique culture" was posited as the basis for nationalistic consciousness and confidence, a process that had begun several decades earlier in Germany and impressed Inoue during his stay in that country.¹¹³ Like Okakura Tenshin (岡倉天心, 1862-1913), Inoue had probably also been influenced by the teachings of Ernesto

¹¹¹ Winston Davis, "The Civil Theology of Inoue Tetsujirō," 31.

¹¹² Ibid., 5-6.

¹¹³ Margaret Mehl, *Eine Vergangenheit für die japanische Nation*, 282

Fenollosa (1853-1908), whose activities in support of the preservation of Japanese culture during his tenure as professor of philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University are well-known.¹¹⁴ Inoue's name can be found on countless publications, organizations, and projects that sought to identify and promote a unique Japanese spirit in late Meiji. In 1897, for example, Inoue worked with Takayama Chogyū (高山樗牛, 1871-1902) to found the *Dai nihon kyōkai* (Great Japan Society), an organization dedicated to the study of Japanism.¹¹⁵

Inoue was also ideologically motivated in his *bushidō* thought, as his attitude to Yamamoto Tsunetomo's *Hagakure* demonstrates. Although a product of the early eighteenth century, *Hagakure* was not published until 1906, several years after Inoue's first works on *bushidō*, and was (and still is) widely regarded as the most significant historical text relating to the subject.¹¹⁶ It was especially popular in the years before 1945, both among the general public and as a tool for spiritual education (*seishin kyōiku*), with the philosopher Watsuji Tetsurō (和辻哲郎, 1889-1960) even publishing a pocket edition in 1940-1 for soldiers to carry into battle.¹¹⁷ In contrast, Inoue's reaction to the *Hagakure* was more muted, for he considered the text to be too localized and not suitable for application on a national level.¹¹⁸ Educational and ideological motives were constantly on Inoue's mind when composing his *bushidō* theories, and he selected and discarded texts and thought systems as he pleased in order to suit his needs. This process can be seen in his early publications on *bushidō*, which also reveal his most important contributions to the field.

Similar to Nitobe Inazō, Inoue Tetsujirō's role in the history of modern *bushidō* was that of a facilitator and propagandist, rather than as a developer of original ideas. While Nitobe was responsible for the dissemination of the subject abroad, the rapid spread of *bushidō* within Japan

¹¹⁴ John Allen Tucker, "Tokugawa Intellectual History and Prewar Ideology," 37-38.

¹¹⁵ Minami Hiroshi, *Nihonjin ron: meiji kara kyō made*, 34.

¹¹⁶ The 1906 publication was limited to a few excerpts from the text. The full *Hagakure* was not published until 1934. For a discussion of the history of its publication, see Koike Yoshiaki, *Hagakure: bushi to 'hōkō*, '43-45.

¹¹⁷ Unoda Shōya, "Bushidō ron no seiritsu: seiyō to tōyō no aida," 43.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 42.

in the first five years of the twentieth century was in no small part due to Inoue's efforts. Unlike Nitobe, however, Inoue had another role in the development of *bushidō*, namely as a self-appointed defender of the "orthodox" interpretation he espoused. Inoue was known for his polemical nationalistic attacks ever since his denunciation of Uchimura Kanzō's failure to bow before the Rescript on Education, and many of his works on *bushidō* were compiled in a similar vein. After 1905, Inoue's writings on *bushidō* generally rehashed things he had written before, merely updating them for current issues, such as the promotion of *kokumin dōtoku* or Japan's military involvement on the Asian continent. The various facets of Inoue's *bushidō*-related activities can be seen in his work from the Meiji thirties, which should be considered with the nature of his roles in mind.

Due to Inoue's prevalence in *bushidō*-related writings from 1901 to 1944, he is mentioned in several different areas of this study. His involvement and interest in *bushidō* theories mirrored broader interest in the subject, with the greatest activity in late Meiji and early Shōwa. This section focuses on Inoue's activities and influence during the *bushidō* boom of the fourth decade of Meiji, when he was at his most prolific. Inoue wrote a large number of texts during this time, although many of these are repetitive nationalistic polemics and there is little to be gained from a detailed dissection of their content. Instead, this study examines two works that provide insight on Inoue's various roles in *bushidō* discourse at the time. The first of these, simply titled *Bushidō*, was a record of a lecture given by Inoue at the Rikugun yōnen gakkō (Military Preparatory School) in 1901. The second work, the 1905 *Gendai taikē bushidō sōron*, was a collection of articles on *bushidō* from the 1890s onward, and there are many parallels between this text and the *Bushidō zasshi* with regard to what it reveals about the nature of *bushidō* discourse at the time, and especially Inoue's role. Interestingly, there is no overlap between the *Bushidō zasshi* and *Gendai taikē bushidō sōron* (the latter ran to 500 pages), neither

in their texts or included authors, showing how much *bushidō* had evolved over the seven years between their respective publications.

Inoue's entry into *bushidō* discourse

Inoue's 1901 lecture at the Military Preparatory School, the record of which was published in a book-length edition and widely distributed under the simple title *Bushidō*, was significant in several ways.¹¹⁹ It can be seen as a concise manifestation of Inoue's multifarious roles in *bushidō* discourse, and outlined themes that became prominent in his later work in other fields, as well. Inoue's *bushidō* theories were marked by five primary elements: a close relationship with the military as an educator and ideologist; ultranationalism and the emphasis on a unique Japanese spirit; pronounced anti-foreignism framed in the rhetoric of Japanese superiority; aggressive intolerance of other views as a self-appointed defender of "orthodoxy"; and the exaltation of Yamaga Sokō as one of the most important thinkers in Japanese history. In the following, this study examines Inoue's *Bushidō* lecture under consideration of these five elements.

The lecture was an introductory overview of *bushidō* as interpreted by Inoue, and the fact that it was held at the Military Preparatory School demonstrated his close relationship with the military. It was one of many collaborations between Inoue and the military, which he would supply with ideological ammunition until his death in 1944. In this capacity, Inoue was involved in the publication of countless military-related books, articles, and pamphlets. These included works commissioned and published by the military, such as the *Bushidō* lecture, as well as military publications by other authors that Inoue supplied with a boilerplate preface or introduction, generally related to *bushidō*. Scholars in Japan and abroad have discussed the roles of Inoue and other "ideologists" in the employ of the government, and the way in which

¹¹⁹ Inoue Tetsujirō, *Bushidō*. Tokyo: Heiji zasshi sha, 1901.

Inoue “defined his academic interests in ways consistent with the ideological needs of the imperial state.”¹²⁰ Inoue’s interpretation of *bushidō* as outlined in this lecture was relatively tame when one considers his later prescriptive texts extolling the necessity and virtues of soldiers committing suicide.

With regard to Inoue’s *Nippon shugi*-focused nationalism as revealed in the *Bushidō* lecture, his contention that the “Japanese race” possessed a divinely-mandated uniqueness was a fundamental component of his understanding of the origins of *bushidō*. Inoue outlined this early in the lecture:

“If one says that *bushidō* is an ethic consisting of things that were traditionally practiced by our nation's warriors, this would include a general meaning of *bushidō*. ... And if one were to say what the content of this thing called *bushidō* is, then ultimately the spirit of the Japanese race is its primary principle. ... However, *bushidō* developed gradually, aided by Confucianism and Buddhism, and in this way gradually came to be perfected. Because of this, *bushidō* in its fully finished form is the product of a balanced fusion of the three teachings of Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism. ... It is not possible to say with accuracy in what age *bushidō* arose. ... If one thinks further and further back, it is possible to already discover some of the principles of *bushidō* even in the tales of the Japanese gods. ... The Japanese race has a spirit that primarily respects martiality, and it must be said that this is the source [of *bushidō*]. In other words, it would certainly be safe to say that *bushidō* has existed since ancient times.”¹²¹

Just as Inoue’s relationship with the military strengthened over time after the publication of this lecture, his belief in a unique Japanese martial spirit also increased. For Inoue, the Japanese spirit as manifested in *bushidō* was vital for the survival and success of the nation, and was the “source of the Japanese military’s great strength,” for anyone could purchase guns and machines, but the spirit necessary for their victorious operation could not simply be imported or taught.¹²² At the time, the contention that a soldier’s spirit was equally or more important than matériel was widespread both in Japan and the West, where it would have tragic results in 1914-8, epitomized

¹²⁰ John Allen Tucker, “Tokugawa Intellectual History and Prewar Ideology,” 38-39.

¹²¹ Inoue Tetsujirō, *Bushidō*, 2, 3-4, 8-9.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 12-13.

by futile “over-the-top” charges against devastating new automatic weapons. Japan did not directly experience this conflict, however, and Inoue’s belief in the superiority of spirit was not shaken for several decades, with his emphasis on *bushidō* becoming a central pillar of military policy in the form of *seishin kyōiku* (spiritual education).¹²³

One aspect of Inoue’s thought closely related to his belief in a unique Japanese spirit was his anti-foreignism, which grew more pronounced over time. Inoue’s xenophobic warnings a decade earlier had been prompted by concerns regarding the “evolutionary stage” of the Japanese at the time, but by 1901 his anti-foreign rhetoric was generally framed in the context of Japanese superiority. This trend can be seen in his *Bushidō* lecture in a discussion of chivalry. European chivalry had been held up as a point of comparison from Ozaki’s earliest writings to Mikami Reiji’s 1899 *Nihon bushidō*.¹²⁴ Although the assessments of different authors varied considerably, Inoue presented the harshest critique of European knighthood. Inoue stated that while there were a few superficial similarities between *bushidō* and chivalry, *bushidō* had “developed from a far more severe spirit” than chivalry, which should be dismissed as nothing but “woman-worship.”¹²⁵ Another European thought system that Inoue mentioned as being frequently likened to *bushidō* was stoic philosophy, agreeing that the idea of self-denial in stoicism was similar to that in *bushidō*, and many stoics committed suicide like Japanese warriors. However, Inoue argued that the two were definitely not the same, for “the practical spirit in *bushidō* was much stronger than in stoicism.” In addition, “stoicism lacked the spirit of endurance of hardship and pain that could be found in *bushidō*.”¹²⁶ This anti-foreign tone would increase in Inoue’s subsequent writings, and his frequent attacks on Japanese thinkers with whom he disagreed would infer that they were “un-Japanese” or “Western minds in Japanese bodies.”

¹²³ This subject is dealt with in greater depth in Chapter 6.

¹²⁴ Mikami, Reiji. *Nihon bushidō*. Tokyo: Kokubunsha, 1899. p. 40.

¹²⁵ Inoue Tetsujirō, *Bushidō*, 6-7.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

The criticism that Inoue directed at others was related to his understanding of his role in society—i.e. as a self-appointed defender of orthodox ideology. His aggressive intolerance of conflicting views is especially pronounced in his works on *bushidō*. The lack of a uniform interpretation of *bushidō* at the turn of the twentieth century led Inoue to appropriate the subject as his own intellectual domain and posit himself as the arbiter of correct interpretations. Moreover, by the end of Meiji most writers on *bushidō* came to at least nominally recognize Inoue's authority in the field. Inoue's actions to defend his nationalistic *bushidō* theories can be seen from the beginning of his occupation with the subject. In his *Bushidō* lecture, for example, Inoue countered Nitobe Inazō's statement that *bushidō* was not a written ethic, citing Yamaga Sokō's *Bukyō shōgaku* and *Yamaga gorui* as evidence to the contrary.¹²⁷ While Inoue merely dismissed Nitobe's opinion in this case, another text published the same year illustrated the aggressiveness with which he would defend *bushidō*. Earlier that year, shortly before his death, Fukuzawa Yukichi finally published his *Yasegaman no setsu*, a move he had resisted for almost a decade out of concern for how the controversial work and its criticism of Katsu Kaishū would be received.¹²⁸ Some of the attacks subsequently directed at the *Yasegaman no setsu* seemed to justify Fukuzawa's concerns, with Tokutomi Sohō among the most vociferous critics of the text.¹²⁹ The harshest response, however, came from Inoue in the form of a relatively long article that was not so much an analysis of Fukuzawa's text as it was a polemical assault on Fukuzawa's person. In this critique, Inoue argued that although Katsu had surrendered the walls of Edo castle, Fukuzawa had surrendered the walls of his mind to Western thought, which was a greater transgression.¹³⁰ The content of Inoue's text supports the notion that his criticism was personally motivated, for the central ideas in the *Yasegaman no setsu* were similar to

¹²⁷ Ibid., 36.

¹²⁸ Koyasu Nobukuni, *Nihon kindai shisō hihan: ikkokuchi no seiritsu*, 307, 322.

¹²⁹ Inoue Isao. "Tokugawa no ishin: sono kōdō to rinri," 269.

¹³⁰ Inoue Tetsujirō, "Bushidō wo ronjiawasete *Yasegaman no setsu* ni oyobu," 85-100.

Inoue's own views on *bushidō*, especially with regard to loyalty and choosing death over surrender.

While Inoue's criticism of Fukuzawa was a personal attack as well as an example of his own anti-foreignism, Inoue's dismissal of Nitobe's views was tied to Inoue's focus on Yamaga Sokō as the most significant formulator and "sage of *bushidō*," although Yamaga himself never used the term.¹³¹ On the whole, Inoue's roles in *bushidō* discourse were centered on actively promoting and defending the concept, rather than providing original and reasoned contributions to its content. One area where Inoue did have a lasting impact on *bushidō* interpretations was in his elevation of Yamaga and Yoshida Shōin as the pivotal figures in the formulation and promotion of *bushidō*. Inoue deemed Yoshida important primarily for his resurrection of Yamaga's thought in the mid-nineteenth century, and there were two main reasons for Inoue's emphasis on Yamaga in the context of *bushidō*. The first of these was Yamaga's negative opinion of China, while the second was his supposed influence on the *rōnin* who carried out the Akō Incident. John Tucker has provided an overview of these aspects as they appear in Inoue's 1903 *Nihon kogakuha no tetsugaku* (日本古学派之哲学, *Philosophy of the Japanese Ancient Learning School*).¹³² These were also central themes of his *Bushidō* lecture in 1901, showing Inoue's practice of repackaging previous material, which is how he achieved his remarkable volume of output. According to Inoue's lecture, Yamaga was "the first person with the intellectual ability to formulate texts [on *bushidō*]." ¹³³ Other scholars of his day were too focused on China, but Yamaga recognized that Japan was the land of "civilization" and "superior to China, which was the land of revolutions." Inoue believed that Yamaga's "research and writings about the [Japanese] age of the gods were powerful works, even if viewed in the present day," and marked an important departure from the Confucians who knew only China and nothing

¹³¹ Inoue Tetsujirō, *Bushidō*, 15.

¹³² John Allen Tucker, "Tokugawa Intellectual History and Prewar Ideology," 42-44.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 40.

about Japan.¹³⁴ Yamaga's views of China, and Yoshida's even more nationalistic interpretation of these views, were welcomed by nationalistic Japanese like Inoue soon after the Sino-Japanese War.

With regard to Yamaga's role as the alleged inspiration of the Akō *rōnin*, this became an important issue in Meiji as the *rōnin* became an important part of the new imperial ideology, with the emperor even issuing a proclamation praising their actions and paying a publicized visit to their graves in 1868.¹³⁵ Their prominence would increase steadily, especially in the twentieth century, and modern accounts of their exploits often introduced the figure of the emperor in a central role. Ideologically "correct" versions of the *Chūshingura* story were printed and distributed as educational materials, and the military used them for purposes of "spiritual education."¹³⁶ According to Inoue, who based his arguments on texts by Yoshida and obviously biased Tokugawa Confucians, the actions of the *gishi* were "certainly the result of the teachings that Yamaga spread in Akō over 19 years" in that domain. This incident, which was "without parallel in world history," was "entirely the result of Sokō's *bushidō* teachings."¹³⁷ However, there is no evidence for any connection between Yamaga and the Akō incident, and with few prominent exceptions, Japanese historiography after 1945 has generally dismissed the notion that Yamaga taught or even influenced the *gishi*.¹³⁸

Aside from emphasizing Yamaga's anti-foreign sentiments, Inoue did not examine Yamaga's thought in great detail in the *Bushidō* lecture, although he did mention Yamaga's concept of *shisetsu*, explaining it as "the teaching whereby *bushi* must be at one with death at all times," and crediting this notion with steeling Yoshida's resolve.¹³⁹ On the whole, in spite of frequent references to the importance of Yamaga's writings, Inoue tended to focus on Yamaga's

¹³⁴ Ibid., 39-40.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 41.

¹³⁶ For example: Nagahori Hitoshi, *Seishin kyōiku teikoku gunjin sōsho dai-ikken: akō gishi*.

¹³⁷ Inoue Tetsujirō, *Bushidō*, 49-50.

¹³⁸ John Allen Tucker, "Tokugawa Intellectual History and Prewar Ideology," 35-6.

¹³⁹ Inoue Tetsujirō, *Bushidō*, 42-43.

supposed impact more than on his specific theories. This was especially true in the case of educational materials such as the *Bushidō* lecture, and Inoue confirmed this approach in 1909, stating that Yamaga “rendered greater service to his country as an advocate of *Bushidō* than as a moral philosopher.”¹⁴⁰

From the very start, Inoue Tetsujirō’s works on *bushidō* followed patterns set in his 1901 lecture. The tone of his *bushidō* would become increasingly nationalistic and aggressive, and he would sometimes contradict things he had written earlier, but many of his themes would be consistent through to the 1940s. Evaluating Inoue’s *Bushidō* lecture in hindsight is complicated due to the weight of subsequent history, but at the time it was published it does not seem to have been an exceptional work. Aside from Inoue’s introduction of Yamaga Sokō into modern *bushidō* discourse, most of his arguments had been made by other writers in the preceding decade, although perhaps not as forcefully and from positions of academic authority. If 1901 marks the point of Inoue’s entry into the field of *bushidō* research, the rapidity with which he came to dominate discourse on the subject is astounding. Due largely to Inoue’s own efforts, the trajectory of *bushidō* during the boom of the Meiji thirties closely mirrors his own involvement in the field. These developments can be seen most clearly by comparing Inoue’s 1901 works with his activities in 1905, and this study next considers his most important work from the latter period.

A Collection of Bushidō Theories by Prominent Modern Thinkers

Like the Sino-Japanese War a decade earlier, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5 had profound effects on all facets of Japanese society, although the aftermath of this latter conflict was considerably more nuanced. The more developed and extensive reporting of this conflict

¹⁴⁰ John Allen Tucker, “Tokugawa Intellectual History and Prewar Ideology,” 44f. According to Tucker, this quote came from an article by Inoue titled, “Japanese Religious Beliefs: Confucianism” published in Okuma Shigenobu’s *Fifty Years of New Japan*, 57-58.

meant that more Japanese were able to follow the events, and the first military victories, especially as they were portrayed by the sensationalistic press, were accompanied by an unprecedented surge of nationalistic fervor. This was further enhanced by the fact that the “defeated” adversary was not an Asian nation, but one of Europe’s great imperial powers, even if Uemura Masahisa referred to Russia as an “Oriental despot” that had removed itself from the West, leaving Japan as the “beacon of civilization” in Asia.¹⁴¹ The feeling of euphoria was mirrored in *bushidō* discourse, and the years 1904-5 represent the peak of the “*bushidō* boom.” During these two years, *bushidō* was a subject of intense discussion and debate to a degree unmatched until the 1930s.

In this context, the publication of the *Gendai taike bushidō sōron* (*A Collection of Bushidō Theories by Prominent Modern Thinkers*) in December 1905 is significant. This text included articles dating back as far as the early 1890s, but its focal point was works written in the twentieth century, especially after the outbreak of war with Russia. Inoue Tetsujirō was listed as co-editor of the *Gendai taike bushidō sōron* along with Akiyama Goan (秋山梧庵, dates unknown), and had a strong influence on the composition of this work. In addition to contributing eight articles himself, Inoue applied his ideological approach to the selection of contributions by other authors. The goals of the *Gendai taike bushidō sōron* were outlined at the beginning of the text:

“1) This book is designed to collect lectures and essays on *bushidō* from famous persons of the present day, and to do comparative research into old and new *bushidō*, thereby demonstrating Japan’s unique ethic.”

“2) In addition to being a direct discussion of *bushidō*, this book also gathers essays and commentary related to the Russo-Japanese war, observes currents in our nation’s current ethics, and aims to be used as material for future national education.”

¹⁴¹ Aoyoshi Katsuhisa, *Dr. Masahisa Uemura: A Christian Leader*, 199-200.

In spite of the above statements, and the broad temporal catchment of this compilation, it does not include any writings by Ozaki, Uemura, Nitobe, Fukuzawa, or, in fact, by any of the writers featured in the *Bushidō zasshi* of 1898. As most of the essays in the *Gendai taikē bushidō sōron* were reprinted from other journals, it is unlikely that the omission of articles from the defunct *Bushidō zasshi* was due to fear of being repetitive. Instead, most *bushidō* interpretations from the 1890s were likely deemed insufficiently compatible with the “orthodox” nationalistic and militaristic interpretation that had developed in the interim.

The stated objectives of the *Gendai taikē bushidō sōron* provide an insight into Inoue’s role as a defender of orthodoxy and promoter of *bushidō*, especially in the fields of military and civilian education. As Inoue stated in his preface,

“Russia has three times the population and is 60 times the size of Japan, and the Japanese victory was like David’s over Goliath. There are many reasons for the Japanese victory...however, there can be no doubting that *bushidō*, which has existed since the feudal period, played an especially important role in this victory.”¹⁴²

With regard to the content of *bushidō*, Inoue directed the reader to examine the *Gendai taikē bushidō sōron* together with the *Bushidō sōsho* (*Bushidō Library*), compiled by Inoue in the same year. This text contained excerpts from Edo-period writers that Inoue considered particularly important to his interpretation of *bushidō*, including Nakae Tōju, Kumazawa Banzan, Yamaga Sokō, Kaibara Ekiken, and Daidōji Yūzan, but no writings from the Meiji twenties.¹⁴³ At the end of the *Gendai taikē bushidō sōron*, which even at roughly 500 pages could not come close to containing all Meiji writings on *bushidō*, Inoue’s selectiveness was apparent. A two-page appendix titled “Titles of Discussions Relating to *Bushidō* not Included in this Book” listed 26 other articles and essays, again omitting any reference to Ozaki, Uemura, and other

¹⁴² Akiyama Goan ed., *Gendai taikē bushidō sōron*, 1-2.

¹⁴³ Inoue Tetsujirō ed., *Bushidō sōsho*. Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1905.

writers from the early 1890s. One of Nitobe Inazō's later articles was mentioned, but his more famous and controversial *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* was not.

The above examples show how Inoue acted to defend his “orthodox” interpretation of *bushidō* by ignoring works and authors he did not agree with. However, the *Gendai taikē bushidō sōron* also contained examples of Inoue's more aggressive strategies in this regard, and included his 1901 attack on Fukuzawa Yukichi's *Yasegaman no setsu*, which Fukuzawa was not able to respond to.¹⁴⁴ In another essay in the collection, titled “*Bushidō to shōrai no dōtoku*” (武士道と将来の道徳, “*Bushidō* and Future Ethics”), Inoue repeated his attacks on Nitobe and Fukuzawa as found in earlier works.¹⁴⁵ Aside from these retrospective attacks on relatively “soft” targets, other essays in the *Gendai taikē bushidō sōron* demonstrated how Inoue continued to actively police *bushidō* discourse. In a series of articles originally published primarily in the journals *Nihon* and *Taiyō* in 1904, Inoue allied with Major General Satō Tadashi (佐藤正, 1849-1920), a Sino-Japanese War veteran and former mayor of Hiroshima, to condemn Waseda University professor Ukita Kazutami (浮田和民, 1860-1946) for what they considered to be a disrespectful interpretation of the Japanese martial spirit. Ukita responded to the challenges, resulting in an extended debate that demonstrated Inoue's role as apologist and defender of *bushidō*.

This controversy, which has been dubbed the “POW Exchange Student Debate” (*furyō ryūgaku ron*), centered on the obligation of Japanese soldiers on the battlefield to commit suicide rather than being captured. Inoue and Satō framed their arguments on the basis of Japan's “unique *bushidō* spirit,” while Ukita's counterarguments were more pragmatic. The instigation for the debates was an incident that occurred on June 15, 1904, in which three Japanese transport ships, the *Hitachi Maru*, *Sado Maru*, and *Izumi Maru*, were attacked by Russian warships. As the transports were virtually defenseless, the latter two ships, which were carrying

¹⁴⁴ Akiyama Goan ed., *Gendai taikē bushidō sōron*, 59-69.

¹⁴⁵ Inoue Tetsujirō, “*Bushidō to shōrai no dōtoku*,” 129, 139.

non-combatants, surrendered to the Russians. The Hitachi Maru, however, was carrying almost 1,000 troops bound for the continent, and refused to surrender despite the overwhelming firepower it faced. The Russian ships reportedly shelled the Hitachi Maru for several hours before it sank, killing most of the troops and crew. According to sensationalistic Japanese newspaper reports, although a few sailors managed to escape in lifeboats and were rescued, “most of the officers committed suicide through *seppuku* or shooting themselves with pistols” on the deck of the ship, while others threw themselves into the ocean to die rather than become prisoners of war.¹⁴⁶ Detailed reports purporting to describe their final moments appeared soon thereafter.¹⁴⁷ At the time, although public opinion was generally supportive of the reported actions of the officers, surrendering and becoming a prisoner of war was not widely condemned in Japan, as it would be several decades later.¹⁴⁸ Throughout the course of the war, about 2000 Japanese soldiers surrendered or were otherwise captured, with most of them transferred to POW facilities in European Russia, and contemporary accounts from Japanese POWs indicate that these were actually quite comfortable.¹⁴⁹

This incident instigated a debate when Satō, who had himself lost a leg in the Sino-Japanese War, read the records of a lecture by Ukita which defended the actions of soldiers who surrendered. This lecture, hosted by Ozaki Yukio at the Tokyo City Education Society on September 18, 1904, was summarized and published in *Taiyō* shortly thereafter. In this work, Ukita argued that one should not needlessly commit suicide, but to live as long as possible to fight for one’s country. In any case, argued Ukita, becoming a prisoner of war was not shameful, but was actually an excellent opportunity to learn about another country, and was

¹⁴⁶ *Nihon*. June 17, 1904, p. 5. The front page of the following issue of *Nihon* lauded the behavior of the troops, while stating that “according to the *bushidō* of the Sengoku Period, the blame should be on the superiors” who allowed the ships to be placed in such a position.

¹⁴⁷ For example, *Nihon*. June 19, 1904, p. 5; *Nihon*. June 22, 1904, p. 1.

¹⁴⁸ Ichinose Toshiya, *Meiji, taishō, shōwa guntai manyūaru: hito ha naze senjō he itta no ka*, 95-99.

¹⁴⁹ Hata Ikehiko, *Nihon no horyō: hakusonkō kara shiberia yokuryū made*, 14-15.

similar to becoming a foreign exchange student.¹⁵⁰ Satō's response was published in *Nihon* on October 2nd and reprinted in the *Gendai taiki bushidō sōron*, and described Ukita as follows:

“I have heard that he is held in esteem by scholars in education...However, in this talk he demonstrated mistaken views that can truly not be allowed in a scholar and educator.

Ukita attacked the fact that we Japanese believe that dying in battle is honorable, and becoming a prisoner of war is the greatest embarrassment. He also criticized the fact that we hold the ideal that we can commit suicide in order to preserve our honor. He states that it is possible to die out of duty, but not for honor, and that many of the suicides on the battlefield are for the sake of honor, which is barbaric and not courageous.”¹⁵¹

Satō also attacked Ukita's other views as being contrary to *bushidō*, stating that “Ukita claims that as long as you have personnel, matériel, and technology, you will win wars. However, this is nonsense. What if both armies have these things? There must be a non-material, non-technological ‘true cause’ of our victory. This is the essence of our military spirit, in other words our *shiki* (士気).” According to Satō, the Russians were not inferior to Japan in terms of men and matériel, but lacked Japan's martial spirit. While the Russians merely fought out of a sense of duty, the Japanese fought for the honor of their ancestors and nation. Satō admitted that “giving one's most valuable life for the imperial nation is also a duty,” but countered that focusing on the notion that it is a task out of duty will inevitably lead to failure. This argument was based on the rationale that the Europeans were more advanced than Japan in military arts and technology, and Japan would certainly have lost if wars were entirely technological. Instead, continued Satō, while the Europeans fight with technology, the Japanese fight with spirit, and this was the secret of Japan's victory. In conclusion, Satō summarized Ukita's views as highly dangerous due to his position as an educator. If he were merely a private individual, his views could simply be dismissed as mistaken, but if scholars were permitted to teach this sort of

¹⁵⁰ Ukita Kazutami, “Nichiro sensō to kyōiku.”

¹⁵¹ Satō Tadashi, “Gakusha no jasetsu wo yabusu,” 228. Originally printed in *Nihon*, October 2, 1904, p. 1.

disinformation, it would severely weaken the country and make it impossible to win great victories.¹⁵²

Inoue soon waded into the debate with his own essay in *Nihon*, presented as an objective overview of the debate, but really a critical assault on Ukita's position.¹⁵³ According to Inoue, Ukita's reasoning was entirely academic, his distinction between honor and duty was incorrect, and he was guilty of conflating "lower" forms of suicide (for reasons of poverty, illness, etc.) and the "higher" suicide of soldiers in battle. Inoue attributed this deficiency to Ukita "seeing things through Western eyes" when this case was clearly related to Japan's unique "true spirit," which prioritized suicide over surrender.¹⁵⁴ The focus of Inoue's criticism in this article was that Ukita had been corrupted by Western ideas and was not able to understand the Japanese spirit, charges that Inoue had also leveled at Fukuzawa Yukichi in his evaluation of the *Yasegaman no setsu*.¹⁵⁵ In both of these cases, Inoue's attacks consisted of vague references to ambiguous spiritual virtues combined with limited reasoned argumentation, his primary *modus operandi* as defender of nationalistic "orthodox" *bushidō*.

Ukita, who a decade earlier had resigned a position at Dōshisha University due to an ideological dispute, and was renowned for his stubborn principles, did not submit quietly to this criticism. His response, published in *Nihon* on October 22, briefly noted criticisms by Satō and segments of the press, but its thrust was directed at Inoue. According to Ukita, a *Mainichi shinbun* editorial by Shimada Saburō (島田三郎, 1852-1923) had already persuasively argued that there was no fundamental difference between Ukita and Satō's views on the reasons for dying in battle for one's country, and that the point of contention was the difference in Inoue and Ukita's evaluation of suicide.¹⁵⁶ In this regard, Ukita found Inoue's characterization of his

¹⁵² Ibid., 229-234.

¹⁵³ Inoue Tetsujirō, "Ukita Satō ryōshi no ronsō ni tsuite," 235-241. Originally printed in *Nihon*, October 18, 1904, p. 7.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 236-238.

¹⁵⁵ Inoue Tetsujirō, "Bushidō wo ronjiawasete Yasegaman no setsu ni oyobu."

¹⁵⁶ Ukita Kazutami, "Bungaku hakase Inoue Tetsujirō kun no hihiyō ni tou," 243. Originally printed in *Nihon*,

arguments to be misleading, with Inoue falsely attributing to him an advocacy of ready surrender with the goal of becoming a prisoner of war and traveling to another country. Ukita denied that his views encouraged surrender, and that he merely criticized needless suicide for the sake of honor.¹⁵⁷ It is worth noting that Ukita did not mention *bushidō* in his arguments, although in a later article reiterating his views, he stated that if *bushidō* required that one commit suicide for short-term honor, thereby removing oneself and making long-term victory impossible, then the “future form of *bushidō* would have to be revised.”¹⁵⁸

Ukita’s defense, combined with Shimada’s conciliatory editorial, did not have their intended effect on Satō and Inoue, and the former responded with a harsh polemic and personal attack directed at Ukita.¹⁵⁹ Satō repeated that his view of honor and Ukita’s reliance on duty were entirely different, and also picked up Inoue’s charges that Ukita had become too Westernized. Ukita’s negative view of the act of committing suicide when one’s position in battle had become unfavorable was, according to Satō, a result of Ukita having learned his *bushidō* from Westerners. Moreover, the idea that one could easily become a prisoner of war and go on “foreign exchange” originated in “Christian individualistic survivalism (*yasokyō teki kōjin seizon shugi*).”¹⁶⁰ This was a reference to Ukita’s status as a member of the Kumamoto Band, although his religiosity has been the subject of debate.¹⁶¹ Satō went further than Inoue in criticizing the foreign influence on Ukita, stating that “Ukita physically appears Japanese, but his spirit is that of a Westerner” and that he thought that Ukita was “not Japanese,” which was why Ukita felt that it was alright for “Japanese soldiers to lose their [honor-valuing] spirit and become as weak as Americans and Europeans.”¹⁶² In closing, Satō denounced Ukita’s arguments for

October 22, 1904, p. 1.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 244-245.

¹⁵⁸ Ukita Kazutami, “Nichiro sensō to kyōiku,” *Nihon*. October 31, 1904, p. 4..

¹⁵⁹ Satō Tadashi, “Futatabi Ukita shi no benron ni tsuite,” 248-255.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 248.

¹⁶¹ Eida Takahiro, “Hankotsu no genron nin Ukita Kazutami: Waseda daigaku sōsōki no kyōjin.”

¹⁶² Satō Tadashi, “Futatabi Ukita shi no benron ni tsuite,” 249, 250, 252.

peace and diplomacy, and called on the government to take action to protect the youth from his “dangerous” and “foolish” ideas.¹⁶³

Inoue’s next retort to Ukita, which was published in *Nihon* on October 25, was not as vitriolic as Satō’s, but his tone was no more conciliatory. Inoue reiterated that Ukita’s criticism of suicide was made from a Western perspective, and that Japanese *bushidō* demanded suicide in certain situations.¹⁶⁴ In this situation, Inoue had met an adversary who refused to concede to the pressure applied by the ultranationalists. Ukita’s position at Waseda allowed him to challenge government-promoted interpretations to a greater degree than most other scholars, the bulk of whom would certainly have yielded to attacks from Inoue and Satō, as well as Katō Hiroyuki, who later sided with these two in a critique of Ukita’s position.¹⁶⁵ Inoue was unable to convince Ukita to retract his claims, but his role as a defender of *bushidō* orthodoxy in this case is significant. Ukita’s resistance was the primary reason that such an extensive exchange occurred in print, and most others would have engaged in self-censorship or withdrawn controversial ideas at a much earlier stage. Inoue’s actions in this situation, and his alliance with Satō, are especially disconcerting with the benefit of hindsight regarding the events that transpired in early Shōwa. Another essay by Satō included in the *Gendai taikē bushidō sōron* is filled with imagery that would become widely used in the 1930s. For example, Satō argued that “the most important element of war is a martial spirit, which is similar to *shinigurui* (death madness), which in turn involves charging through bullets without fear and enjoying battle.”¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, Satō believed that “death in battle was the flowering of soldiery,”¹⁶⁷ invoking aesthetic imagery that would become closely associated with the Special Attack Forces of the late Pacific War.¹⁶⁸ The insistence of suicide over surrender, was tied to *bushidō* from the

¹⁶³ Ibid., 254-5.

¹⁶⁴ Inoue, Tetsujirō, “Ukita shi no kōben wo yomu,” 256-264. Originally printed in *Nihon*, October 25, 1904, p. 2.

¹⁶⁵ Katō Hiroyuki, “Satō tai Ukita ron nit suite,” 265-272.

¹⁶⁶ Satō Tadashi, “Ōi ni shiki wo shinsaku seyo,” 224.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 225.

¹⁶⁸ For a discussion of this imagery, see: Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms*.

Russo-Japanese War onward, and Inoue played a vital role in this development. His co-authored *Senjin kun* (戦陣訓, *Instructions for Warfare*), published in 1941 and widely distributed to the military, emphasized self-destruction as a central tenet of *bushidō*.¹⁶⁹

Inoue's influence on the *bushidō* boom

Inoue Tetsujirō's writings during the *bushidō* boom of the Meiji 30s and 40s are important not only as evidence of his personal role in discourse, but also as a barometer of the state of *bushidō* in general in 1901 and 1905. With regard to Inoue's contributions to the content of *bushidō*, his introduction of the figure of Yamaga Sokō into modern discourse represented an original development in that it introduced the usage of Edo-period writings as a historical basis for the warrior ethic. This approach continued in Inoue's 1905 *Bushidō sōsho*, a three-volume collection of historical documents from pre-Meiji writers, and would culminate in the thirteen-volume *Bushidō zensho* (*Complete Writings on Bushidō*) of 1942. By compiling older texts, Inoue attempted to give the concept of *bushidō* a historical legitimacy that went far beyond Nitobe's vague appeals to an "unwritten ethic." Indeed, by the end of the Meiji *bushidō* boom the historical pedigree of *bushidō* was largely accepted and, with the notable exception of Basil Hall Chamberlain, even critics of the concept tended to focus on its interpretations rather than discuss its recent vintage. Inoue was aided in the dissemination of his ideas by his connections to official channels in education and the military. The importance of the latter, especially, should not be underestimated, for the military was the vehicle for the transmission of many innovations in diet, garments, behavior, and thought to average Japanese in the modern period, as Yoshida Yutaka has shown.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ John Allen Tucker, "Tokugawa Intellectual History and Prewar Ideology," 49.

¹⁷⁰ Yoshida Yutaka, *Nihon no guntai: heishi tachi no kindai shi*.

The nature of Inoue's forceful promotion and defense of *bushidō* also reveals a great deal about the content of the ethic during the Meiji thirties. As the articles in the *Bushidō zasshi* show, the concept was still very open to interpretation in 1898, and even in 1901 Inoue's views on *bushidō* were but one approach to the subject. Beginning with his criticisms of Fukuzawa and Nitobe's theories, however, Inoue indicated the direction the subject would take in the future, and by the 1930s Inoue's polemics against divergent *bushidō* theories were no longer necessary as "orthodox" *bushidō* ideology had established itself so firmly as to be beyond critique. Even by 1905, Inoue and others had made sufficient progress in promoting their nationalistic, emperor-centered *bushidō* that Nitobe Inazō was reluctant to publish a translation of his own work. The challenge brought to Inoue's authority by Ukita in the 1904 debates is important also because of its uniqueness. Various interpretations continued to be formulated, but it was unusual for someone to openly and persistently repudiate the charges leveled by government-affiliated figures such as Inoue and Satō, and the inclusion of these debates in the *Bushidō sōron* bears witness to their significance.

These interactions, and the ultimate publication of Nitobe's translated work, show that *bushidō* did not exhibit a central orthodoxy with a cohesive interpretation before the end of Meiji. Inoue's own writings include ideas that had to be changed in order to adapt to current political developments, undercutting the historicity of *bushidō*. Consistency was never Inoue's strong suit, as several scholars have pointed out, and reversals were often dictated by his need to reflect the official government line. One example of this from Inoue's Meiji *bushidō* writings deals with his treatment of *seppuku*. In his 1901 lecture, Inoue condemned *seppuku* as a "barbaric aspect of *bushidō*" that had no place in the modern world, leading him to argue that while the spirit of *bushidō* was vital, much of its form would have to be discarded.¹⁷¹ In the wake of the accounts of heroic *seppuku* by naval officers during the 1904 sinking of the Hitachi Maru,

¹⁷¹ Inoue Tetsujirō, *Bushidō*, 56-57.

however, Inoue was compelled to change his official stance on the subject, and presented a more nuanced differentiation between “high” and “low” types of suicide. In 1912, the *seppuku* of General Nogi Maresuke (乃木希典, 1849-1912) and his wife led Inoue to describe suicide in even more laudatory terms, arguing that this event “demonstrated the power of bushidō,” and speculating that “the suicide would exert an extraordinary impact on Japan.”¹⁷² The evolution of Inoue’s views on *seppuku* demonstrates that, while a *bushidō* orthodoxy was becoming increasingly authoritative and influential, it was also undergoing a process of definition and refinement, having only been formulated in earnest from the beginning of the 20th century onward.

¹⁷² John Allen Tucker, “Tokugawa Intellectual History and Prewar Ideology,” 46-47.

CHAPTER 4 The Late *Bushidō* Boom, 1905-1914

Nature is often said to abhor straight lines, and the same is true of the history of ideologies in Imperial Japan. For expediency it is often helpful to delineate temporal and ideological categories, but these must be clearly explained. In the case of the first *bushidō* boom, the publication of the *Bushidō zasshi* in 1898 and the first manuscripts dedicated to the subject in 1899 and 1900 make the former date a natural starting point that, perhaps not entirely coincidentally, also marks the first year of a new decade of Meiji. In contrast, the end of this initial flurry of *bushidō*-related activity cannot be specified with similar precision. In the decade following the Russo-Japanese War—a complex period difficult to summarize whether one is discussing economics, politics, literature, etc.—interest in *bushidō* waxed and waned depending on the context in which it was used.¹

Publications on *bushidō* did not cease after 1905, although there was a slight lull in the number of publications immediately following the Treaty of Portsmouth. By the Meiji forties, *bushidō* had become firmly established, and there was a spike in interest in *bushidō* following the deaths of the Meiji emperor and, even more importantly in this context, General Nogi Maresuke in 1912. From roughly Meiji 40 (1907) onward, the nature of writings on *bushidō* also began to change, with the number of “academic” works specifically concerning *bushidō* remaining fairly static as the number of *bushidō*-themed historical novels, *kōdan*-based texts, and other works for popular consumption increased. At the same time, the term “*bushidō*” began to

¹ The difficulties with delineating time periods can be seen in Hiraoka Toshio’s extensive overview of Japanese literature in the years after the Russo-Japanese War, in which he labored over the problem of focusing his study on the post-Russo-Japanese War period, the Meiji forties, or the 1910s. Hiraoka explains that cases could be made for the selection of each of these periods before settling on the first of the three (Hiraoka Toshio, *Nichirō sengo bungaku no kenkyū*, 1-2). With regard to economics, Earl Kinmonth’s description of the period between 1906 and 1916 as one of “fitful economic growth” shows the difficulty of summarizing the changes in these years (Earl H. Kinmonth, *The Self-Made Man in Meiji Japanese Thought: From Samurai to Salary Man*, 280).

appear in a rapidly expanding variety of contexts, as authors and organizations sensed that relating their work to the concept would increase sales and/or awareness of their causes.

This study places the end of the first *bushidō* boom around 1914, by which time the number of eulogies and panegyrics concerning General Nogi Maresuke, many of which were framed in the context of *bushidō*, had decreased considerably. Nogi's influence on *bushidō* discourse as a whole should not be underestimated, and is dealt with in greater depth in the next chapter. Also, soon after the Russo-Japanese War much of the nationalistic and militaristic fervor that had accompanied the conflict had begun to decline, a process that accelerated as the nation entered Taishō.² The uncertainty was reinforced by events such as the political crisis of 1912-1913, which further undermined faith in the government. In addition, following the war, socialist organizations and other movements with anti-establishment elements extended their reach beyond intellectual circles to the industrial workforce. Japan's success in the Sino-Japanese War had greatly increased national confidence and unity, thereby laying the groundwork for the development of *bushidō*, but the situation was considerably more ambiguous after the war with Russia. On the one hand, the latter conflict was considered a much greater victory than the former, both in Japan and abroad, and the experience gained in 1904-5 would shape Japanese military tactics for decades.³ On the political and social fronts, the Russo-Japanese War has been credited with giving Japanese militarists a resounding success which they could reference in future debates concerning military budgets and the involvement of the army in civilian life.⁴

On the other hand, Japan entered the war with Russia with greater internal divisions than a decade earlier. As discussed earlier, there were virtually no peace movements or other organizations that questioned Japan's actions against the Qing in 1894, and it is widely believed

² Yoshida Yutaka, *Nihon no guntai: heishi tachi no kindai shi*, 149.

³ See S. P. MacKenzie, "Willpower or Firepower? The Unlearned Lessons of the Russo-Japanese War," 30-40.

⁴ Sandra Wilson and David Wells, "Introduction," 19-20.

that there was “no discord at the time of the Sino-Japanese War.”⁵ There was some subsequent disillusionment with the reality of the conflict, however, especially the massacres that were reported at Port Arthur after the Japanese victory there. As a result, quite a few individuals spoke out against war in 1904. Some, including Uchimura Kanzō, objected on religious grounds, while others had been influenced by socialist and other leftist ideals in their opposition to the war.⁶ Ukita Kazutami argued against the suicidal tactics preached by the militarists, even though he was not fundamentally opposed to *bushidō* or military action itself. The oppositional voices were in the minority, but they were given force by the human and economic costs of the war, which made the conflict with the Qing pale in comparison. According to one account, General Nogi’s ill-conceived attacks on Port Arthur resulted in 60,000 Japanese casualties, and a further 41,000 men were killed at Mukden in the final two months of the war, bringing the total number of men lost on the Japanese side to well over 100,000.⁷ These losses appear to have been accepted with relative stoicism on a national level, but the great sacrifices made by soldiers and their families could not but incite a certain degree of hostility towards those who conducted the war, especially after the disappointment of Portsmouth. The literary critic Higuchi Ryūkyō (樋口龍峽, 1887-1929), for example, wrote that the “terrible destructive force of modern weapons claims hundreds of precious lives with a single shell and in a flash produces the tragedy of mountains of bodies and rivers of blood. Even if it is said to be for emperor and country, among the relatives of many war dead are those who sink into such misery that one cannot meet their eyes.”⁸

The conclusions and repercussions of the 1894-5 and 1904-5 wars also differed with regard to the way they were perceived within Japan. In both cases, most Japanese were

⁵ Banno Junji, “External and Internal Problems After the War,” 164.

⁶ For a discussion of left-wing responses to the war, see Sandra Wilson, “The Russo-Japanese War and Japan: Politics, Nationalism, and Historical Memory,” 168-175.

⁷ S. P. MacKenzie, “Willpower or Firepower? The Unlearned Lessons of the Russo-Japanese War,” 32. According to Sandra Wilson’s “The Russo-Japanese War and Japan: Politics, Nationalism and Historical Memory,” in the same volume, the total Japanese losses were slightly less than 90,000 (p. 161).

⁸ Hiraoka Toshio, *Nichirō sengo bungaku no kenkyū*, 17.

dissatisfied with the meager spoils obtained after conflicts that the domestic press had portrayed as successions of overwhelming victories from beginning to end. In both cases, foreign diplomatic pressure forced Japan to relinquish some of its demands on the “vanquished” foe. The French, German, and Russian Triple Intervention of 1895 was viewed as further proof of the Western Powers’ heavy-handedness and united Japanese against a perceived continuation of foreign injustice, with some criticism also leveled at the Japanese government for its concessions.⁹ On the whole, however, martiality and patriotism defined the dominant mood for several years after 1895.¹⁰ In contrast, the negotiations at Portsmouth in 1905 provoked an entirely different reaction. In this case, most Japanese blamed domestic factors for the failure to obtain an indemnity from the Russians. In a speech on July 30, 1905, the rightist Ogawa Heikichi blamed the unsatisfactory result on the poor state of the army, interference on the part of the *genrō*, the incompetence of Japanese delegation leader Komura Jutarō, and apathy on the part of the populace.¹¹ In reality, the Russo-Japanese War was far from a resounding victory, and Japan’s military was stretched to the breaking point while Russia still had large numbers of reserves in Europe. Internal unrest and opposition to the war forced the Russians to agree to a ceasefire, and a long-term continuation of the conflict would almost certainly have resulted in Japan’s defeat.¹² Few Japanese were aware of the precariousness of the military situation, however, and the “capitulation” at Portsmouth was met with anger not towards Russia, but rather towards Japan’s own leaders. This outrage was fuelled by the press, finally boiling over in the Hibiya Riots in September 1905, in which over 350 buildings were destroyed, 17 people killed, 1,000 injured, and more than 2,000 arrested.¹³ The new sense of uncertainty was aptly summarized in a December 1905 lecture on the “national spirit” (*kokuminteki seishin*) by the

⁹ S.C.M. Paine, *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895: Perceptions, Power, and Primacy*, 287-290.

¹⁰ Carol Gluck, *Japan’s Modern Myths*, 223, 150.

¹¹ Sandra Wilson, “The Russo-Japanese War and Japan: Politics, Nationalism, and Historical Memory,” 178.

¹² Sandra Wilson and David Wells, “Introduction,” 13.

¹³ Okamoto Shumpei, “The Emperor and the Crowd: The Historical Significance of the Hibiya Riot,” 262-265.

scholar Ōtsuka Yasuji (大塚保治, 1869-1931), who felt that Japanese society was in the process of dissolving into two anti-national streams: one of self-centered individualism, and another of internationalism as promoted by the growing leftist movements.¹⁴

The two conflicts also differed in their long-term economic impact on the country. Japan was able to fund the Sino-Japanese War on its own primarily through internal bonds without raising taxes, but the cost of the Russo-Japanese War was more than seven times greater, requiring the government to rely primarily on foreign loans for its financing, as well as raising land taxes substantially.¹⁵ Moreover, between 1903 and 1907 the total Japanese national debt more than quadrupled, with external debt increasing almost 12-fold over the same period, from 98 million to 1.166 billion yen.¹⁶ One result of this situation was that the government was not able to provide sufficient support for local administrations and was forced to beseech them to reduce expenditures and even look for alternative sources of revenue while maintaining the same level of service.¹⁷ With regard to the general economy, some writers have described the period between 1906 and 1913 as one of “fitful economic growth” (Kinmonth), while others more clearly call it a “slump” (Banno).¹⁸ Different sectors of the economy fared better than others, but the situation on the whole could not be described as one of unbridled prosperity, especially when compared with the tremendous economic expansion that took place after Japan’s entry into the First World War in 1916. The general financial situation following the Russo-Japanese War had a strong influence on society as a whole, providing fertile ground for the growth of socialism, anarchism, and other thought considered dangerous by the establishment. Massive industrial unrest at mines, factories, and shipyards rocked the country in 1907, leading it to be known as

¹⁴ Hiraoka Toshio, *Nichirō sengo bungaku no kenkyū*, 9.

¹⁵ G.C. Allen, *A Short Economic History of Modern Japan, 1867-1937*, 43-44.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 187.

¹⁷ Carol Gluck, *Japan’s Modern Myths*, 193

¹⁸ Earl H. Kinmonth, *The Self-Made Man in Meiji Japanese Thought: From Samurai to Salary Man*, 280. Banno Junji, “External and Internal Problems After the War,” 165.

the “year of the strike.”¹⁹ Uprisings were not limited to the industrial proletariat, and seemed to break out at a moment’s notice for a host of reasons, leading some to call the years 1905-18 “a period of urban mass riot.”²⁰ For example, changes in educational policy resulted in no less than 97 violent incidents in rural Japan between the end of the war and 1911.²¹ Educated urban elites were also affected by these changes, and the difficulties many graduates faced in finding employment, a situation unthinkable a decade earlier, led to widespread feelings of hopelessness.²²

The disparate causes and effects of unrest were the result of, and contributing factors to, a pronounced feeling of uncertainty among Japanese at the time, and the very state of the nation was called into question. David Titus has summarized this dynamic as follows:

“Japan’s victory over Imperial Russia in 1905 signaled the achievement of Japan’s national purpose during the Meiji period: to stand tall in the world as one of the Great Powers by building “a Rich Nation and a Strong Military” (*Fukoku Kyōhei*).

“...where was the nation to go now? What was to be the new national purpose? Into the void of national purpose left by the very success of Meiji modernization rushed every conceivable social and political theory—from Japanist reactionism to revolutionary Marxism, from Shinto obscurantism to Christian internationalism, from bureaucratic statism to liberal democracy.”²³

In a similar vein, Oka Yoshitake sees the “supreme order of the state” since 1868 as “the consolidation of national independence,” to which end “the ruling class had sought to marshal and direct the energy of the people, and it was likewise for that purpose that the people were expected to spare no devotion of sacrifice.”²⁴ Oka, like Titus and others, argues that the defeat of Russia accomplished this goal. With regard to the period immediately following, Banno Junji has used Tokutomi Sohō’s 1916 *Taishō seikyoku shiron* as a basis for his argument that the

¹⁹ Carol Gluck, *Japan’s Modern Myths*, 175.

²⁰ Quote from Miyachi Misato and Masumi Junnosuke, cited by Okamoto Shumpei, “The Emperor and the Crowd; the Historical Significance of the Hibiya Riot,” 268.

²¹ Carol Gluck, *Japan’s Modern Myths*, 167.

²² Earl H. Kinmonth, *The Self-Made Man in Meiji Japanese Thought: From Samurai to Salary Man*, 212-214, 227.

²³ David A. Titus, “Political Parties and Nonissues in Taishō Democracy,” 181.

²⁴ Oka Yoshitake, “Generational Conflict after the Russo-Japanese War,” 201.

period 1905-14 was defined by serious conflicts within and between the military power structure, financial circles, and increasingly influential popular (party) power.²⁵ A detailed examination of these factors is beyond the scope of this study, but it should be pointed out that this historical period can be defined and delineated from those that came before and after precisely through its turbulence and the difficulty in summarizing its character in even single aspects.

In this climate, the nature of interest in a fundamentally nationalistic ethic such as *bushidō* changed considerably in the years following the war. As the perceived necessity to galvanize and “spiritually” mobilize the populace in wartime faded, the focus of writers on *bushidō* shifted to meet new peacetime challenges and opportunities. There was a postwar decline in the number of publications relative to 1905, but the volume of works on *bushidō* remained relatively high, and only dropped off steeply after 1914. In the years between, many writers and publishing houses attempted to cash in on the *bushidō* boom, and *bushidō* was related to many different subjects. One example of this was the long-delayed publication of the Japanese translation of Nitobe Inazō’s *Bushidō: The Soul of Japan* in 1908. While it did not meet with any more domestic critical acclaim than the English original had at the beginning of the decade, the release of the text demonstrates that publishers felt that the subject was relevant or, perhaps more importantly, profitable. Another example of this was the number of works edited by Abe Masato and attributed to Yamaoka Tesshū or his wife, Eiko, which were published widely before and after the war.²⁶ Yamaoka Eiko passed away in 1898, well before the publication of the 1903 text *Women’s Bushidō*, attributed to her by the enigmatic Abe Masato.²⁷ There is very little extant information regarding Abe, but the continuing popularity of his texts indicates that his “cottage industry” of Yamaoka-related publications was quite lucrative.

²⁵ Banno Junji, “External and Internal Problems After the War,” 168-169.

²⁶ In the preface to the 1907 *A Record of Tesshū’s Words and Deeds*, Yamaoka Tesshū’s oldest son Naoki, who is portrayed as somewhat of a black sheep by most of Tesshū’s biographers, thanks Abe Masato for compiling his parents’ writings for the benefit of the youth of the world. Abe Masato, *Tesshū genkō roku*. Tokyo: Kōyūkan, 1907.

²⁷ Abe Masato ed., *Joshidō: Tesshū fujin Eiko danwa*. Tokyo: Daigakukan, 1903.

This chapter focuses on the nature of *bushidō* discourse in the years 1906-1914, during which time the concept was related to a wide variety of fields. The orthodoxy that had been posited and viciously defended by Inoue Tetsujirō and others during the war years provided a broadly-accepted foundation for these later *bushidō* commentaries, and there were few works that criticized or attempted to redefine the concept. Although most writers on *bushidō* would have remembered the recent past before *bushidō* was popularized, the broad dissemination of the concept by the end of Meiji meant Basil Hall Chamberlain's strong words on the invention of the warrior ethic were very much the exception.²⁸

With regard to the *bushidō* orthodoxy that dominated discourse during the Russo-Japanese War, and continued to do so until at least 1945, its exact nature is difficult to specify in detail. Essentially, *bushidō* was widely equated with the *yamato damashii*, or was at least seen as one of the most important manifestations of the latter.²⁹ As such, *bushidō* was believed to have its origins in ancient history, and many writers traced its formation back to the Age of the Gods and the Plain of High Heaven. In addition, *bushidō* was generally seen as a uniquely Japanese trait with no equivalent to be found in other cultures or nations, although European knighthood and other ideals could serve as subjects for comparison.³⁰ One of the most important elements of this orthodox *bushidō*, which Inoue had defended in his debates with Ukita Kazutami, was the notion that *bushidō* called for absolute loyalty to the sovereign and nation, and entailed willingness or even desire to die for these causes. The majority of authors wove their *bushidō* theories around this basic framework, or implicitly accepted it when discussing the subject. Another aspect of most *bushidō* interpretations of this period was the

²⁸ Basil Hall Chamberlain, *The Invention of a New Religion*. London: Rationalist Press, 1912.

²⁹ This equivocation, which Tsuda Sōkichi had criticized in his review of Nitobe's *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, became one of the most common elements of *bushidō* in later decades. During the first *bushidō* boom, however, the vast majority of commentators agreed that the two concepts were largely identical.

³⁰ Understandably, these comparisons tended to conclude that *bushidō* was the superior ethic, as can be seen in Inoue's dismissal of Western chivalry as "woman-worship."

notion that *bushidō* had weakened in the early decades of Meiji due to excessive “worship of the West” (*seiyō sūhai*), but that the conflicts of 1894-5 and 1904-5 demonstrated its resurgence and vitality. This did not give call for complacency, and some believed that the spirit demonstrated during the war would have to be maintained through concentrated effort. For example, as early as 1906, literature scholar Togawa Shūkotsu (戸川秋骨, 1870-1939) lamented that “...compared to ten years ago Western thought was extremely widespread among the young, and accordingly the hold on young minds of Confucianism and *bushidō* had weakened immeasurably.”³¹ While promoting *bushidō*, however, many late-Meiji *bushidō* theorists also rejected specific elements of earlier warrior society, such as class divisions. There was also some criticism of suicide, as evidenced by Ukita’s position in his debates with Inoue Tetsujirō, and the latter had himself dismissed *seppuku* as anachronistic in his 1901 *Bushidō*.³² In broader society outside of *bushidō* discourse, attitudes towards suicide were more negative, and a perceived explosion in the number of suicidal youth between 1903 and 1908 became a subject of national debate.³³ Opinions shifted, however, and the *junshi* of Nogi Maresuke and his wife Shizuko in 1912 was largely viewed as a noble act both in Japan and abroad, creating considerable difficulties for writers on *bushidō*.³⁴ Even Ukita felt compelled to call Nogi’s death admirable, if anachronistic.³⁵ In other quarters, Nogi’s suicide was more contentious, and many progressives

³¹ Oka Yoshitake, “Generational Conflict after the Russo-Japanese War,” 221.

³² Inoue Tetsujirō, *Bushidō*, 56-57.

³³ Earl H. Kinmonth, *The Self-Made Man in Meiji Japanese Thought: From Samurai to Salary Man*, 209.

Kinmonth points out that this perceived increase in suicides may have been largely due to more accurate statistics and record-keeping, as well as the greater reach of the press at this time. This view is borne out by data from the time, which shows steady numbers of suicides beginning in 1902 before decreasing by almost 20% between 1904 and 1906, and only climbing steadily after 1907. Hiraoka Toshio, *Nichirō sengo bungaku no kenkyū*, 90.

³⁴ Although this act is commonly viewed as a double-suicide in which Shizuko followed her husband in death, the actual circumstances are not completely understood. It seems clear that Shizuko died before Nogi through a dagger to her heart, but there is speculation regarding whether she was killed or assisted by him, or whether she perhaps even committed suicide first to give her husband the confidence to do so himself. For an overview of some different theories, see Doris G. Barga, *Suicidal Honor: General Nogi and the Writings of Mori Ōgai and Natsume Sōseki*, 70-74.

³⁵ Carol Gluck, *Japan’s Modern Myths*, 223.

felt that it had damaged Japan's image as a "civilized nation," although the general consensus was that Nogi's death was an expression of *bushidō*.³⁶

As the differences of opinion regarding the nature of suicide show, there was considerable room for interpretation of specific elements and manifestations of *bushidō*, even though the aforementioned core tenets of *bushidō* orthodoxy were rarely called into question. In the following, this study examines some of the many forms that *bushidō* discourse took during the decade after the Russo-Japanese War. The clearest trends during this period were towards a nationwide dissemination of the concept of *bushidō* among all sections of society, as well as an explicit and implicit acceptance of the validity of the "orthodox" view of *bushidō*. In this context, this study discusses the continued role of Inoue Tetsujirō as a *bushidō* propagandist, the increasing use of *bushidō* in military and civilian education, the increasing appearance of *bushidō* in novels and popular literature, the widespread use of *bushidō* as a catchphrase in order to promote or legitimize unrelated or marginally relevant organizations and causes, and the dissemination of *bushidō* in other countries. The usage of *bushidō* in these different contexts was not homogeneous, but the examination of a broad cross-section of *bushidō* discourse makes it possible to gain an understanding of the evolution of the subject as a whole, and to see how this period laid the foundations for the second *bushidō* boom of early Shōwa.

Orthodox *bushidō* after the Russo-Japanese War

Following the end of the Russo-Japanese War, Inoue Tetsujirō and other proponents of "orthodox" *bushidō* faced several challenges that changed the nature of discourse. The end of the conflict removed the urgency behind promoting a martial code among the general populace, but the new difficulties arising from popular unrest, the spread of socialist and anarchist thought, and other perceived social malaises meant that the ideological leaders closest to the government

³⁶ Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, 221-224.

could not stand idly by. After 1906, the nation was seen as facing a different, internal crisis, and although *bushidō* would continue to play an important role in institutional attempts to mold public behavior, it was primarily as a component of a larger system later known as the teachings of National Morality (*kokumin dōtoku*). At the same time, *bushidō* was more thoroughly disseminated by government institutions than before, and educational texts were saturated with the subject. The broad acceptance of *bushidō* by this point meant that it no longer had to be defended from the proverbial rooftops by Inoue and others, and could instead be matter-of-factly included in educational materials, especially those for military use. In this way, as *bushidō* reached new heights in popular discourse, the firm establishment of the “orthodox” interpretation in the nation’s barracks and schools after the war meant that deviating interpretations were perceived a relatively minor threat.

After his pivotal role in the publication of the *Gendai taikē bushidō sōron* and *Bushidō sōsho* in 1905, Inoue Tetsujirō’s *bushidō*-related activities slowed slightly as he moved into other fields that he deemed more essential to preserving domestic order. His interest in *bushidō* remained strong, however, and references to the concept are found in almost all of his writings during and after this time. Like Nitobe Inazō, who was called upon to write prefaces to works such as the first publication of the *Hagakure* (1906), *New Bushidō* (1908), and *Western Bushidō* (1909), Inoue conferred his seal of approval in the form of forewords to texts that corresponded to the “orthodox” interpretation of *bushidō*, such as *Eastern Ethics: Models for Character Development*.³⁷ In addition, Inoue continued to discuss *bushidō* in articles on other themes, such as a 1913 *Chūō kōron* article on *bushidō* views of mortality and a 1914 essay in the journal *Oriental Philosophy* discussing *bushidō* and the swordsman Miyamoto Musashi, but he did not

³⁷ Yamamoto Tsunetomo, Nakamura Ikuichi ed., *Hagakure*. Tokyo: Teiyūsha, 1906. Yamagata Kōhō. *Shin bushidō*. Tokyo: Jitsugyō no nihonsha, 1908.; Maeda Chōta, trans. *Seiyō bushidō [Leon Gautier La Chevalerie no yakuhon]*. Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1909.; Iwashi Junsei and Toyoshima Yōzaburō eds. *Tōyō rinri: shūyō hōkan*. Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1909.

contribute any major works specifically on the subject.³⁸ Instead, Inoue began a series of articles in 1908 on the structure of the “national family,” eventually leading to a series of lectures and the publication of his 1912 *Outline of National Morality* (*Kokumin dōtoku gairon*).³⁹ Richard Reitan has summarized the importance of the National Morality movement initiated by Inoue’s work as follows:

“This discourse emerged as the dominant form of moral inquiry among academic moral philosophers by the close of the Meiji period. As a state-sponsored intellectual movement concerned with identifying and legitimizing the unique moral sensibilities of the Japanese, National Morality played a crucial role in the formation of national identity in Japan. Through imperial edicts, public lectures, and school textbooks on moral training, scholars and bureaucrats disseminated a morality of loyalty to the state, filiality to one’s parents, and patriotism, representing each as distinctly ‘Japanese’ virtues.”⁴⁰

During the Russo-Japanese War, the nationalistic and militaristic sentiments rising from the conflict, directed through discussions of *bushidō* and the Yamato spirit, were sufficient to forge most of the nation into a patriotic whole. After Portsmouth, however, appeals to these ideologies alone appeared to be incapable of resolving the domestic turmoil that seemed to grip the nation. Carol Gluck cites a 1911 *Taiyō* article that dismissed *bushidō* as an anachronism because “we have to compete with the powers, and all the samurai had to do was be frugal.”⁴¹ Inoue’s National Morality was intended as a modern system that, while heavily dependent on traditional values, was able to counteract the ills of socialism, anarchism, and what was deemed to be a general lack of patriotic feeling among the populace. The project was heavily invested in by the government, and discourse on National Morality resulted in the publication of dozens of works over the ten years that followed the appearance of Inoue’s *Outline*, while from 1910

³⁸ Inoue Tetsujirō, “<Shi no kenkyū> bushidōgaku namida no shiseikan,” *Chūō kōron* Vol. 28 (Oct. 1913); Inoue Tetsujirō. “Miyamoto Musashi to bushidō” *Tōyō tetsugaku* Vol. 21 No. 1 (1914).

³⁹ Wilbur M. Fridell, “Government Ethics Textbooks in Late Meiji Japan,” 829.

⁴⁰ Richard Reitan, “National Morality, the State, and ‘Dangerous Thought,’” 23.

⁴¹ Carol Gluck, *Japan’s Modern Myths*, 153.

onward lectures by Inoue and others at schools and teacher training institutions were designed to instill the ideology at all levels of society.⁴² Already in 1909, Inoue was instrumental in composing ethics texts that, while not directly referring to National Morality, certainly contributed to its formulation. In his *Ethics and Education*, Inoue provided an overview of *bushidō* that foreshadowed the later treatment of the concept in the *Outline*, defining *bushidō* as the “spirit of revering the emperor and loving the nation” (*sonnō aikoku no seishin*).⁴³

At the heart of National Morality was a desire to redefine Japanese society in terms of a “national family” with the emperor as the benevolent father figure at its head. Individual families were incorporated into the larger national family structure, thereby combining the two traditionally competing elements of loyalty and filial piety. The issue of whether loyalty to a lord or filial devotion to parents was primary had caused considerable debate, especially in considerations of samurai ethics that took place in the Meiji period. Filial piety was most often associated with Confucianism, whereas loyalty to a lord was generally viewed as a core aspect of *bushidō*, and therefore as more Japanese virtue. Points of emphasis may have varied, but dismissing either concept would have meant disparaging either one’s family or the emperor, neither of which was a socially acceptable stance. National Morality attempted to resolve this dilemma by fusing filiality with loyalty and then combining the whole with patriotism. By positing the state as a family, the emperor became the object of both loyalty and filial piety, the focus of the “great principle of loyalty and filialty” (*chūkō no taigi*). A lesson on the subject from an ethics textbook stated:

“It is only natural for children to love and respect their parents, and the great loyalty-filial piety principle springs from this natural feeling. ... Our country is based on the family system. The whole country is one great family, and the Imperial House is the Head Family (*sōka*). It is with the

⁴² Richard Reitan, “National Morality, the State, and ‘Dangerous Thought,’” 27, 40.

⁴³ Inoue Tetsujirō, *Rinri to kyōiku*, 431.

feeling of filial love and respect for parents that we Japanese people express our reverence toward the Throne of unbroken imperial line.”⁴⁴

This argument was then extended to include patriotism as a part of a comprehensive whole that was most commonly rendered *chūkun aikoku* in the texts of National Morality.⁴⁵

Befitting an ideological project steered by Inoue Tetsujirō, *bushidō* featured prominently in texts on National Morality, especially those penned by Inoue himself. For example, a clumsily-titled book on *Theories and Realization of Propriety and Etiquette that are the Focus of National Morality*, which appeared several months before the *Outline of National Morality*, stressed *bushidō* for the reason that, “in ancient times, *bushi* valued righteousness (*gi*) more than anything.” However, the author lamented, while in the military and in Germany people valued honorific speech, “in everyday Japanese society there are many people who do not know honorific speech, and respect for one’s superiors has almost completely disappeared.”⁴⁶ Therefore, a renewed emphasis on *bushidō* was seen as a method of resolving the perceived problems with contemporary propriety and etiquette. In the definitive work on the subject, Inoue’s *Outline*, a chapter on the “history, special characteristics, and future of *bushidō*” took up over 50 pages of the 370-page book, sandwiched between discussions of Shinto and the “family system.”⁴⁷ Inoue’s views of *bushidō* as they appear in the *Outline* were largely a reiteration of those he had expressed in earlier documents. In this text, Inoue divided the history of *bushidō* into four periods, as he had done in other works.⁴⁸ The first of these periods was covered in a brief discussion of *bushidō*’s roots in Japan’s pre-history through to the end of the Heian period.⁴⁹ The second period of *bushidō*’s development spanned roughly four

⁴⁴ Translation from Wilbur M. Fridell, “Government Ethics Textbooks in Late Meiji Japan,” 831.

⁴⁵ Wilbur M. Fridell, “Government Ethics Textbooks in Late Meiji Japan,” 831.

⁴⁶ Kokumin reihō chōsakai, *Kokumin dōtoku wo chūshin to shitaru reigi sahō no riron to jissai*, 150, 156. *Bushidō* remained an important part of National Morality discourse, and large sections are devoted to it in later texts. For example, see: Yoshida Seichi, *Kokumin dōtoku yōryō*, 249-325.

⁴⁷ Inoue Tetsujirō, *Kokumin dōtoku gairon*, 148-199.

⁴⁸ For example: Inoue Tetsujirō, *Rinri to kyōiku*, 426-431.

⁴⁹ Inoue Tetsujirō, *Kokumin dōtoku gairon*, 150-154.

centuries from the Genpei wars until the Edo period.⁵⁰ In Inoue's chronology, "the third period of *bushidō* was the entire Tokugawa period," when "*bushidō* was developed through education."⁵¹ In this context, Inoue addressed what he considered the pivotal roles of Yamaga Sokō, the Akō *rōnin*, and Yoshida Shōin, much as he had in his first lecture on the subject more than a decade earlier. The fourth age of *bushidō* began in 1868, and was the focus of two-thirds of Inoue's discussion of the subject.

Inoue began his analysis of modern *bushidō* with the common argument that, although *bushidō* was greatly influenced by the feudal age, it did not perish with the samurai class. Instead, just as *bushidō* existed during the non-feudal first period of its development, it had a strong impact after 1868. Inoue's reasoning was that *bushidō* was actually stronger in the non-feudal ages, as it was not monopolized by a single class, but rather spread throughout all of society.⁵² In this way, Inoue established a spiritual link between the Meiji period and an idealized ancient Japan before the introduction of foreign thought such as Confucianism or Buddhism. On the other hand, Inoue lamented the disappearance of the samurai due to their important role in refining and upholding *bushidō*. Fortunately, he continued, after 1868 this role of guardians of the *bushidō* spirit and model for the nation was transferred to the Japanese military, as encapsulated in the Imperial Rescript for Sailors and Soldiers.⁵³ As part of his examination of the nature of *bushidō*, which could be summarized as *chūkun aikoku*, Inoue addressed the issue of suicide in general, and *seppuku* in particular. In this passage, published only a few weeks before Nogi Maresuke's suicide, Inoue reiterated his argument from 1901, that times had changed away from this sort of action, but that the spirit of being willing to die for one's lord and country was still an essential part of the *bushidō* spirit.⁵⁴ On the whole, there

⁵⁰ Ibid., 154-162.

⁵¹ Ibid., 163-166.

⁵² Ibid., 167-168.

⁵³ Ibid., 168-169.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 176-177.

was little new material in Inoue's overview of *bushidō*, but a certain change of tone could be detected in some of the views he expressed concerning *bushidō* in the modern age.

The most interesting section of Inoue's National Morality *bushidō* concerned "trends that destroy the *bushidō* spirit," in which he dealt with issues that he saw as affecting the moral fiber of the nation. One major factor that undermined *bushidō* was the "development of industry and commerce," which was nothing but the growth of individualism, and the two were impossible to separate. Here, Inoue took a different tack than in many of his earlier writings, stating that "commerce and industry are not necessarily incompatible with *bushidō*," and required *bushidō* values such as "modesty, honesty, and courage" in order to succeed. "As everyone knows, during the Russo-Japanese War, Japan's *bushidō* was greatly celebrated overseas, but at the same time Japanese business and industry were harshly criticized." According to Inoue, this was because foreigners had no trust or confidence in Japanese businesspeople due to the lack of honesty and ethics among the latter. For this reason, Inoue argued in a manner similar to Ozaki Yukio and Ukita Kazutami, *bushidō* had to be introduced into the Japanese business world.⁵⁵ In this context, Inoue also addressed the issue of individualism:

"individualism is naturally opposed to *bushidō*, but this is a matter of strengths and weaknesses. National polity-ism (*kokutai shugi*) like *bushidō* has its strengths, and individualism has its strengths. One should not only head towards individualism. Also, it may not always be beneficial to insist on national polity-ism, so evidently there is a necessity to harmonize and strengthen the two. National polity-ism is necessary, and individualism is necessary."⁵⁶

Inoue did not specify how this was to be done, aside from warning against excessive emphasis on individualism, but the softening of his attack on business and individualism is significant. A similarly conciliatory approach can be seen in Inoue's comments on the other elements that were

⁵⁵ Ukita's writings on *bushidō* and business ethics are dealt with later in this chapter.

⁵⁶ Inoue Tetsujirō, *Kokumin dōtoku gairon*, 184-191.

destroying *bushidō*. For example, Inoue considered excessive interest in arts and literature detrimental to the spirit, but qualified this by stressing the importance of a balance between *bun* and *bu*, thereby making a certain amount of culture, such as military marching music, not only tolerable, but necessary.⁵⁷ Another thing that was “often viewed as a *bushidō*-destroying influence” was “foreign religions, i.e. Christianity and others.” It must be remembered that Inoue had been one of the harshest critics of Christianity from the early 1890s onward, but his views had changed considerably since Uchimura Kanzō’s refusal to bow to the Imperial Rescript on Education. In the *Outline*, Inoue discussed Christianity as follows:

“I do not think that Christianity is entirely incompatible with *bushidō*. In Christianity, the very heroic martyr spirit has been passed down. This refers to giving one’s life for one’s religion. Aspects of this are very similar to *bushidō*. The only difference is that they act for their religion, while we act for our lord. This means that if they prioritize their religion and take their country lightly, it will be very damaging. However, if Christianity can become Japanese and transfer the martyr spirit to the spirit of the Japanese race, I think it is possible for Christianity to become able to support *bushidō* in exactly the same way that Buddhism supported *bushidō*.”⁵⁸

The change in Inoue’s views of Christianity was in no small part due to the great efforts of many Japanese Christians to demonstrate their patriotism over this period.⁵⁹

With regard to the types of “dangerous thought” that had made the project of National Morality seem necessary in the first place, Inoue was not as accommodating as he was towards his old nemeses in the realms of business and religion.⁶⁰ According to Inoue, “the importation of incomplete, sick thought” like socialism, naturalism, destructionism, and anarchism was diametrically opposed to *bushidō*. These thought systems, like “extreme individualism,” threatened to “destroy *bushidō*” and could not be tolerated.⁶¹ To combat these dangerous

⁵⁷ Ibid., 192-194.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 195.

⁵⁹ These efforts will be discussed later in this chapter in the context of *bushidō*.

⁶⁰ For an overview of the direct backgrounds to the development of the National Morality project, see: Richard Reitan, “National Morality, the State, and ‘Dangerous Thought,’” 33-36.

⁶¹ Inoue Tetsujirō, *Kokumin dōtoku gairon*, 196-197.

influences, Inoue once again called for the increased study and practice of *bushidō*, “the most unique aspect of the Japanese race.” In the future, he advised, “educators have to take the utmost care with regard to the development of *bushidō*.”⁶² On the whole, in spite of the harsh criticisms of socialism et al., Inoue presents his views on *bushidō* in the *Outline* in an almost conciliatory manner when compared with his earlier writings. The outline of National Morality was certainly the most important task Inoue had undertaken up to this point, and was a much larger project than his earlier commentaries on the imperial rescripts. The tone of the *Outline* reflects the enormity of the project. Whereas Inoue’s earlier views on *bushidō* had often been in the context of lectures to military officers or students, or polemics attacking those individuals he deemed to be insufficiently patriotic, National Morality was directed at the entire nation. As such, it had to be considerably more inclusive if it was to have the desired impact of bringing the nation together as a family and leading the people away from the specters of socialism and anarchism. At the same time, Inoue almost certainly did not feel the urgency he had earlier felt with regard to the promotion of *bushidō*. By 1912, the concept had become firmly established in Japanese society, and his “orthodox” interpretation had become a key component of the military educational system and was on the verge of assuming a similar role in civilian ethics education.

The appearance of *bushidō* in spiritual education

It is not surprising that the direct application of “orthodox” *bushidō* to the military began when the concept was first being developed. Inoue’s 1901 lecture on *bushidō* to army officers was his first contribution to discourse on the subject, and set an important precedent. Before 1900, military education was largely bereft of ideological components and did not emphasize “spiritual education” (*seishin kyōiku*). Even if the Imperial Rescript for Soldiers and

⁶² Ibid., 199.

Sailors was noted before this time, it did not become a part of the curriculum until the twentieth century, and its memorization was not required until early Shōwa.⁶³ From the establishment of the modern military until after the Sino-Japanese War, the content of officers' education was primarily copied from French models, and focused on practical subjects such as tactics and weaponry.⁶⁴ Among regular recruits, illiteracy rates were still around 30% in 1900, making the efficacy of spiritual education materials before this point questionable.⁶⁵ Given more pressing demands on the military, such as bringing the troops up to certain physical and educational standards, it is not surprising that issues such as inculcation of loyalty to the emperor ranked behind physical training for most of Meiji.⁶⁶ As Yoshida Yutaka has pointed out, even by 1910 only 0.8% of military recruits had worn Western-style clothing before joining the army, and reversed shoes and backwards pants were common.⁶⁷

After the turn of the century, however, with the successful prosecution of a major war under its belt, the military began to introduce elements of what would later be called “spiritual education” (*seishin kyōiku*) into the curriculum, at least in the case of the more educated officer corps. This seems to have been quite informal at first, with Inoue and others invited to give talks at the military academies. Over the next several years, the content and regularity of ideological lessons would increase, and *bushidō* became an important part of the teaching material, thus mirroring its development in the civilian realm. The nationalistic fervor and rapid changes surrounding the advent of war in 1904 ensured that *bushidō* spread quickly after this point, as soldiers began to take an interest in it beyond formal education. This development can be seen in the comments of Ninagawa Tatsuo in his 1907 book *Nihon bushidō shi* (*History of Japan's Bushidō*):

⁶³ Hirota Teruyuki, *Rikugun shōkō no kyōiku shakaishi: risshin shusse to tennōsei*, 178.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁶⁵ Yoshida Yutaka, *Nihon no guntai: heishi tachi no kindai shi*, 103. Carol Gluck mentions an illiteracy rate of 24.9% in 1902, decreasing to 5.5% by 1912; Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, 172.

⁶⁶ Hirota Teruyuki, *Rikugun shōkō no kyōiku shakaishi: risshin shusse to tennōsei*, 176-177.

⁶⁷ Yoshida Yutaka, *Nihon no guntai: heishi tachi no kindai shi*, 34-35.

“Since the Russo-Japanese War, *bushidō* has become a great issue and subject of research both among Japanese and foreigners. Whether politicians or businesspeople, soldiers or scholars, people of all types have joined in *bushidō* research. In spite of my lack of ability, during 1904-5 I served in the Imperial Guards, where I gladly received the army’s military education and greatly benefited from training and nurturing my mind and body. During my time in the army, I was most impressed by *bushidō* and decided to research its roots. Moreover, I attempted to research the period after its development based on historical facts, and am presenting it here under the title *History of Japan’s Bushidō*.”⁶⁸

In addition to demonstrating the effectiveness of *bushidō* education in the military, this passage further reinforces the sense that *bushidō* had still not reached all Japanese before the war. After the Russo-Japanese War, the army began to more actively promote ideological elements such the emperor system in its educational curriculum, which also led to its increased dissemination among the general populace.⁶⁹ The Japanese army distanced itself from most of its European advisors and, content to rest on its laurels from the Russian campaign, believed that the deciding difference in future military action would be the mental toughness of a nation’s soldiers, not its military technology, which many in Japan believed could not be greatly improved. As Leonard Humphreys states, “In addition to a heavy emphasis on spiritual training and the inculcation of the military virtues, [the revised military regulations of 1908] veered sharply from the old rational European standards of interior management to a family system based on transposed Confucian relationships.”⁷⁰ The ideological content of the new regulations could also be seen in the “army’s penal code (*rikugun keihō*), issued in 1908 and not revised until 1942,” according to which “dereliction of duty occurred when a commander surrendered to the enemy, whether or not he ‘did his best.’ If he ‘did his best,’ he was liable to imprisonment of up to six months; if not, the sentence was death.”⁷¹ Policy-makers went even further in the following year,

⁶⁸ Ninagawa Tatsuo, *Nihon bushidō shi*, 2-3 of preface.

⁶⁹ Yoshida Yutaka, *Nihon no guntai: heishi tachi no kindai shi*, 117.

⁷⁰ Leonard A. Humphreys, *The Way of the Heavenly Sword: The Japanese Army in the 1920s*, 14

⁷¹ Alvin D. Coox, *Nomonhan: Japan Against Russia, 1939*, 958.

changing the manuals for every branch of the army to agree with its new overall strategy as laid out in the most important infantry manual, which, in Leonard Humphreys' words,

“while giving lip service to a doctrine of combined arms tactics, actually placed the total burden on the infantry to attain victory. Infantry attack with small-arms fire followed by a bayonet charge was the doctrine in which army tactics centered. The activities of other branches were strictly peripheral to this main action. By its very nature, this doctrine emphasized *seishin* and almost automatically relegated technology to a secondary role.”⁷²

This approach formed the core of Japanese tactics through the Pacific War, despite having been discredited in the West after World War I.⁷³ With the exception of some of the more technologically-dependent services such as the navy and later motorized units, *seishin* was placed before materiel, and *bushidō* was one of its most important components.

By the end of Meiji, the army was confident of its role as the “school of the people,” and one of the self-described roles of military education was to “instill *bushidō* into the people.”⁷⁴ As Humphreys describes the situation after 1905:

“The army was no longer receiving stolid, malleable yeomen of rural Japan with only one or two years of formal education. Postwar draftees had six or more years of school, and increasing numbers of young men came from the morally suspect urban areas. For an army that relied on the *seishin* of its soldiers for victory, it was essential that the content of the soldier's education foster and support the army's spiritual ideal.”⁷⁵

This process would continue apace, so that in 1922 a commentator on the military's relationship with society would write that “The military education of many foreign countries makes much use of battlefield movements, but I could not recognize any sign of extreme efforts to cultivate the soldier's spirit and martial lore to a similar extent that our nation does.”⁷⁶ The influence of the

⁷² Leonard A. Humphreys, *The Way of the Heavenly Sword: The Japanese Army in the 1920s*, 15

⁷³ Fujiwara Akira, *Gunjishi*, 147-148.

⁷⁴ Raku Yōsei, *Seishinteki kakko kyōren* (Volume 1), 22, 24.

⁷⁵ Leonard A. Humphreys, *The Way of the Heavenly Sword: The Japanese Army in the 1920s*, 14

⁷⁶ Katō Yōko, *Chōheisei to kindai nihon*, 5.

military education system went far beyond the army due largely to the efforts of Tanaka Giichi (田中儀一, 1864-1929), under whose direction

“Japan’s ground forces were transformed from the principal tool of Japanese imperialism into a spiritual guide for the entire nation. ...At the same time, in November 1910, Tanaka created the Imperial Military Reservists Association that dramatically expanded the mobilization potential of the Imperial Army and, through the establishment of local branches, brought a martial spirit and the values of loyalty and filial piety to the village level.”⁷⁷

Primarily through this organization, the army was able to extend its ideological influence throughout the entire country. As Richard Smethurst has pointed out in his influential study of the Imperial Military Reserve Association, about half of its members had never served on active duty, and after the establishment of youth and women’s organizations in subsequent decades, well over ten million people in Japan would have been within the direct reach of the military education system.⁷⁸

The specific usage and content of *bushidō* in the context of military education in the decade after 1904 essentially corresponded to the “orthodox” interpretation put forth by Inoue Tetsujirō, with greatest emphasis placed on the virtues of loyalty, duty, self-sacrifice. The effect of the 1908 military reforms can be seen in the development of *bushidō* in military education, as most texts on the subject appeared after this time. One important book that did appear before Tanaka’s revisions was *Spiritual Training for Soldiers* (*Gunjin seishin kun*), which was compiled in 1907 by Central Military Preparatory School (*rikugun chūō yōnen gakkō*) professor Makise Goichirō, and emphasized loyalty to the *kokutai* and emperor.⁷⁹ Makise, a noted scholar of psychology and education, ensured that *bushidō* played a prominent role in this text, mentioning it frequently throughout the work and making it the sole subject of the final chapter. The sources for the author’s discussion of *bushidō* are not clear, but links to Inoue’s

⁷⁷ Frederick R. Dickinson, *War and National Reinvention: Japan in the Great War, 1914-1919*, 68.

⁷⁸ Richard J. Smethurst, *A Social Basis for Prewar Japanese Militarism: The Army and the Rural Community*, xiv.

⁷⁹ Hirota Teruyuki, *Rikugun shōkō no kyōiku shakaishi: risshin shusse to tennōsei*, 180.

work can be inferred. This text traces the history of *bushidō* back to the Mononobe family, an argument made by Shigeno Yasutsugu in his 1893 articles, which were reprinted in Inoue's *Gendai taikē bushidō sōron*. Another telling reference in *Spiritual Training for Soldiers* is the inclusion of a quote from Izawa Banryū's 1715 *Bushi kun*, an obscure text that Inoue included in his 1905 collection of historical documents, the *Bushidō sōsho*.⁸⁰

By 1909, the Military Education Association (*gunji kyōiku kai*) had geared up for the new educational directives and the mobilization of *bushidō* for spiritual education was fully under way. In *A Discussion of Soldier Bushidō* (*Gunjin bushidō ron*), published that year, the first page declared that “this book was compiled for the purposes of spiritual education.”⁸¹ In familiar fashion, this text focused on the development of *bushidō* throughout history, expounding on its importance to soldiers, the people, and especially the imperial house. A similar approach can be found in other texts published by the Military Education Association, such as *Mirror of Bushidō* (*Bushidō kagami*) and *Individual Drills for Spiritual Training* (*Seishinteki kakko kyōren*), both of which appeared in 1910. The first of these books was published by Takahashi Seiko, who would compile a collection of Nogi Maresuke's *bushidō* commentaries for publication by the Military Education Association in 1913.⁸² In addition to promoting the “orthodox” idea that *bushidō* was equivalent to the Yamato spirit, Raku Yōsei's *Individual Drills for Spiritual Training* explained the task of spiritual education. The role of the army was that of “school of the people,” and through the military education system it would be possible to instill the spirit of *bushidō* into the general populace.⁸³ Raku summarized the role of the army as follows:

“In actuality, the military is not a place where the only goal is drilling for bloody combat. In fact, the military is a place that gives the people vigor, and is a school that nourishes the spirit of the

⁸⁰ Hirota Teruyuki, *Rikugun shōkō no kyōiku shakaishi: risshin shusse to tennōsei*, 183.

⁸¹ Tōgō Kichitarō, *Gunjin bushidō ron*, 1.

⁸² Takahashi Seiko, *Bushidō kagami*.

⁸³ Raku Yōsei. *Seishinteki kakko kyōren* (Volume 1), 22.

people. It is a school that promotes *bushidō* and polishes the Yamato spirit. It is the *dōjō* that exercises the ultimate truth of loyalty to the emperor and love for the country, as well as the great duty of offering one's self and dying for the nation.”⁸⁴

The books put out directly by the Military Education Association were complemented by texts written and disseminated by instructors at the military colleges in cooperation with other publishers. For example, Tomoda Yoshikata, a well-known Japanese language (*kokugo*) instructor, published his 1908 *Bushidō Training (Bushidō kun)* through Tokyo's Ōno Shoten. This text, which was primarily an “orthodox” overview of *bushidō* focused on the Akō vendetta, prominently displayed Tomoda's status as an “army professor” (*rikugun kyōju*) on its front cover.⁸⁵ *Bushidō* also filled the pages of materials printed specifically for the use of the Imperial Military Reserve Association, such as a 1912 text using *bushidō* to explain techniques for controlled breathing.⁸⁶ This text, which includes suggestions for breathing exercises for students, housewives, and workers, is an example of the methods by which *bushidō*-based military education attempted to influence broad sections of civilian society.

The development of spiritual education in the prewar Japanese army has been widely researched, but there have been far fewer examinations of its naval counterpart. The sharp divide and competition between the two services in the prewar period also extended to their education systems, and there appears to have been little exchange of information. The view of many historians has traditionally been that the navy's necessary reliance on technology meant that spiritual education was conducted with less vigor than in the army, but there do not seem to be any major studies analyzing this claim. On the contrary, a brief examination of some of the materials used for naval education after the Russo-Japanese War reveals similar themes as could be found in army ideology. For example, the *Naval Reader (Kaigun dokuhon)* published by the Navy Education Department in 1905 discussed *bushidō* as a vital teaching that is “not just the

⁸⁴ Ibid., 24.

⁸⁵ Tomoda Yoshika, *Bushidō kun*.

⁸⁶ Shimano Sōsuke, *Kokyū seizajutsu bushidō shin eisei*.

spirit of the *bushi*, but the spirit of all Japanese.”⁸⁷ In an overview of the history of *bushidō*, this text also argued that rural fighters had always been valued more highly than those from urban areas.⁸⁸ This belief in the strength of the countryside, where traditions such as Japan’s martial spirit supposedly still existed in a form that was relatively uncorrupted by industrialization and modern ideas, was a core tenet of army policy throughout the prewar period, leading to considerable discrimination against soldiers from the population centers.⁸⁹

Parallels between army and navy ideology in a *bushidō* context are especially clear in texts such as the 1910 publication of the *Bukkyō shōgaku*, *Bukkyō honron*, *Bukkyō kōroku*, *Shiginokugatachi* by the naval research and cultural organization Suikōsha. This text was compiled by the army under orders from Nogi Maresuke for purposes of spiritual education, and then adopted by the navy.⁹⁰ Another example is the *Cultivating the Spirit of Military Men* published by naval academy professor Iwasa Shigekazu in 1913, which emphasized *bushidō* virtues such as honor and loyalty to the emperor.⁹¹ A detailed examination of spiritual education in the Japanese navy is a subject for a future study, but there appear to have been many parallels between army and navy policies, especially with regard to *bushidō*. These continued into early Shōwa, when navy discourse on *bushidō* was dominated by the figure of naval captain Hirose Yutaka (廣瀬豊, 1882-1960), who composed dozens of texts on *bushidō*, Yamaga Sokō, Yoshida Shōin, and imperial loyalty.⁹²

In civilian education, *bushidō* was not emphasized as strongly as in the military during Meiji and Taishō, but nevertheless became a recurring theme in textbooks after 1910. Unlike the military, which gradually phased in *bushidō*-related material from 1901 and then at an

⁸⁷ Kaigun kyōiku honbu, *Kaigun dokuhon* (Volume 4), 12.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 10-11.

⁸⁹ Leonard A. Humphreys, *The Way of the Heavenly Sword: The Japanese Army in the 1920s*, 13-14

⁹⁰ Chihara Masatake, ed., *Bukkyō shōgaku*, *Bukkyō honron*, *Bukkyō kōroku*, *Shiginokugatachi*.

⁹¹ Iwasa Shigekazu. *Gunjin seishin no shūyō*.

⁹² See, for example, Hirose’s 1927 *Gunjin shōkun* (revised 1935), 1928 *Gunjin dōtoku ron*, 1942 *Kō-Mō yowa* and 1944 *Yamaga Sokō heigaku zenshū*, the first two of which were published by the *Bushidō* Research Society.

accelerated rate after 1908, the government did not revise school textbooks between 1903 and 1910, which meant that they were relatively unaffected by the militaristic fervor surrounding the Russo-Japanese War. The accepted view of the educational system after 1890 is that the government “...increasingly manipulated the Imperial Rescript on Education to exercise a conservative, ultranationalistic emphasis upon native and Confucian values, but it did not formulate a rigid conception of domestic attitudes and values until 1910 at the earliest.”⁹³ The school textbooks issued in 1903, and used until 1910, were considerably more progressive than most of their predecessors or successors before 1945, to the point that they were subjected to considerable criticism for their “lack of emphasis on national values.”⁹⁴ These criticisms became stronger throughout the years after their publication, and included calls for the introduction of *bushidō* into the schools. For example, in a 1905 article on “*Bushidō* and Future Education” (*Bushidō to kongo no kyōiku*), legal scholar and later Diet member Tomizu Hirono (戸水寛人, 1861-1931) called for *bushidō* and the Russo-Japanese War to be instilled in Japan’s children through the educational system.⁹⁵ Three years later, writing in his *Japanese Budō Teaching Methods* (*Nihon budō kyōhan*), kendo master Chiba Chōsaku insisted that “our most earnest desire is that texts with suitable explanations and examples concerning *bushidō* must be added to today’s national education at all costs, thereby deeply instilling the *bushidō* spirit into the minds of children.”⁹⁶ Ultimately, the textbook revision undertaken in 1910 was intended to correct many of the perceived shortcomings with regard to patriotic and moralistic content. In the context of *bushidō*, the fact that textbook revision did not occur until 1910 meant that the concept would not feature as prominently as it might have. By this point, Inoue Tetsujirō and other establishment *bushidō* theorists had already begun to shift their focus towards projects such

⁹³ Harold J. Wray, “A Study in Contrasts. Japanese School Textbooks of 1903 and 1941-5,” 69.

⁹⁴ Wilbur M. Fridell, “Government Ethics Textbooks in Late Meiji Japan,” 826.

⁹⁵ Tomizu Hirono, “*Bushidō to kongo no kyōiku*,” 219.

⁹⁶ Chiba Chōsaku, *Nihon budō kyōhan*, 43.

as national morality. Although *bushidō* was an important part of this discourse, it was only one of several components, as it was in school textbooks at the time of its introduction in 1910.

***Bushidō* in literature in late Meiji and early Taishō**

The Russo-Japanese War was a watershed in modern Japanese history, and arguably only the Meiji Restoration and defeat in 1945 were more significant events. The 1904-5 conflict has been widely posited as the point when Japan “arrived” as an international power, and been argued to mark the beginning of Japanese imperialism.⁹⁷ The year after the war, 1906, is important in the history of Japanese literature, with the appearance of groundbreaking works by Natsume Sōseki (*Wagahai wa neko de aru*), Shimazaki Tōson (*Hakai*), and others signaling the dawn of a new age. These writers, especially Sōseki and Tōson, have been credited with achieving the task of uniting the written and spoken languages, thereby creating the linguistic prototype for modern Japanese realistic novels.⁹⁸ At the same time, less “literary” popular writing, often based on traditional storytelling (*kōdan*), rode the nationalistic currents from the Russo-Japanese War and sought its material in the nation’s pre-Meiji past, or at least a modern interpretation of the same. This resulted in a flourishing of historical novels and resurrection of traditional themes, including a “*gishi* boom” focused on the Akō incident from three centuries before.⁹⁹ The rediscovery of Japan’s past had begun much earlier, in the 1880s, but the impetus and apparent legitimacy it received from the successful prosecution of the conflict with Russia should not be underestimated.

With regard to the development of *bushidō* after 1905, the theme of warrior morality played a prominent role in typical Japan-focused popular historical novels and adventure stories, as well as in ambitious new forms of literature and corresponding literary criticism, although the

⁹⁷ Peter Duus, “The Takeoff Point of Japanese Imperialism,” 153-7.

⁹⁸ Edwin McClellan, “Tōson and the Autobiographical Novel,” 376.

⁹⁹ Henry D. II Smith, “The Trouble with Terasaka,” 30.

concept was understandably more influential in the former genres. In fact, the use of *bushidō* by the “literary giants” of late Meiji is primarily significant in demonstrating the dissemination of the concept among all intellectual and social strata, and they did not otherwise contribute greatly to the development of the content of *bushidō*. For this reason, this study first examines the use of *bushidō* in the mainstream popular press in the years after the Russo-Japanese War, before providing an overview of the subject’s treatment in literary and critical works from the more highbrow *milieu* that was in the process of being established and recognized during this time.

By the end of the Russo-Japanese War, the “orthodox” interpretation of *bushidō* had become widely accepted, and it became an important element in popular writing. Modern *bushidō* was ideally suited as a literary device, for it provided a transcendent moral norm that could serve as the basis for conflict when fictional characters or fictionalized historical figures were placed in situations in which other obligations, e.g. to their family, were not reconcilable with the strict demands of the supposed warrior code. This sort of plot arrangement, which typically resulted in the birth of tragic heroes, had been in use even before the development of *bushidō*. The best-known example of this was the incident involving the Akō *rōnin* which, depending on the views of the individual interpreter, was framed in the context of their duties towards their deceased lord, his house, their families, society, the shogunate, Confucian ideals, Buddhist morality, and other factors. A popular topic from the early 18th century onward, this historical event was well-suited for use in fiction after the development of *bushidō*, which eliminated much of the earlier ambiguity resulting from the lack of a dominant moral interpretation of the event immediately after it occurred.

Although faith in the government and military faded among many Japanese at the end of Meiji, there was an increased pride in being Japanese due to the nation’s achievements on the

world stage. This, combined with developments in publishing industry capacity and a tremendous increase in the number of literate consumers of popular writings, caused the number of works with historical themes to grow exponentially in the fifth decade of Meiji. In addition, increasing temporal distance from the realities of pre-Meiji society contributed to the rise of nostalgic feeling among many for what they perceived to have been a simpler, more honest age. Writing about the years 1910-30, Carol Gluck has argued that “Edo became a refuge” for many Japanese intellectuals who “judged the modern condition to be spiritually vacuous, moving at ever-higher speeds toward greater individual alienation, sunk in materialist and commodified values that were the enemy of true culture and inner authenticity.”¹⁰⁰ These sentiments did not suddenly appear in a specific social class, however, and had been gradually building before this time. In addition, while the sense of nationalistic nostalgia focused on the recent past of Edo, it was not strictly limited to this period, and included references to pre-Tokugawa history. In the context of *bushidō*, the most significant themes related to pre-1600 history were the so-called war tales (*gunki monogatari*) that had become increasingly popular throughout the Meiji period, as well as works concerning important figures from the late Sengoku period.

It is understandable that fictionalized accounts of historical events for popular consumption would fare best if they dealt with military exploits and adventures, and with the exception of the Akō vendetta and events surrounding the fall of the Tokugawa shogunate, this type of material generally had to be sought in the centuries preceding the Tokugawa peace. The popularity of medieval history could also be seen in official channels, and national language education (*kokugogaku*) introduced a large number of pre-Edo war tales such as the *Heike monogatari* from the 1890s onward.¹⁰¹ However, as accounts of warrior activity from the medieval period were defined by heroic individualism rather than selfless loyal sacrifice,

¹⁰⁰ Carol Gluck, “The Invention of Edo,” 270-271.

¹⁰¹ Shirane Haruo, “Curriculum and Competing Canons,” 237.

textbook editors were forced to walk a fine line in the selection of their texts.¹⁰² As Maruyama Masao argued with regard to Japanese history, apparent loyalty to a cause or lord was simultaneously a manifestation of rebellion or rejection of others.¹⁰³ While these sentiments were entirely fitting with the multi-polar order of pre-Meiji Japan, they were not deemed useful to the project of constructing a monolithic emperor-centered state.¹⁰⁴ In spite of some misgivings, a careful selection of warrior narratives formed an important part of the educational canon until at least the end of Meiji, by which time Japanese of the modern age had two major military victories of their own to mine for educational material.

The Japanese youth who were exposed to medieval war tales in the 1890s later contributed to the dramatic increase in the appearance of these themes in popular literature after the Russo-Japanese War. This development was aided by the rapid spread of literacy and growth in publishing capacity, and also by the use of *bushidō* for contextualizing both classical and classically-themed texts, giving them relevancy to the present. *Bushidō* found use in popular literature from an early stage of its modern development, with the prominent storyteller San'yūtei Enchō (三遊亭圓朝, 1839-1900) using the term three times in his 1892 story “Seidan tsuki no kagami” (“Mirror of the Moon: A Political Tale”). In this story, one of many historical pieces composed by San'yūtei, a character accused of a crime in 1750s Japan refuses to divulge his lord's name as he feels that this action would bring shame to his lord and domain and therefore be “against *bushidō*.”¹⁰⁵ *Bushidō* also found early use in translated popular works, such as the prolific Kuroiwa Ruikō's (黒岩涙香, 1862-1920) 1897 *Bushidō ichimei himitsubukuro*, a Japanese rendition of the mystery novel *Les Cachettes de Marie-Rose*, penned

¹⁰² David T. Bialock, “Nation and Epic: *The Tale of the Heike* as a Modern Classic,” 159-160.

¹⁰³ Maruyama Masao, *Chūsei to hangyaku: tenkei ki nihon no seishin shiteki isō*, 11.

¹⁰⁴ This is a reason given for why the *Hagakure* was not immediately accepted by the establishment upon its first publication in 1906. According to Unoda Shōya, Inoue Tetsujirō did not initially approve of the *Hagakure* because it was too localized and could not be applied on a national level. In 1940, however, a pocket version edited by Watsuji Tetsurō was published specifically for soldiers to take with them into battle. See: Unoda Shōya, “*Bushidō ron no seiritsu: seiyō to tōyō no aida*,” 42-43.

¹⁰⁵ San'yūtei Enchō, *San'yūtei Enchō zenshū* (Vol. 2), 594.

by the prolific French author Fortune du Boisgobey in 1880.¹⁰⁶ Kuroiwa's mention of *bushidō* in the title of a foreign work shows that the concept was being used more widely by this point, but had not yet been clearly defined or associated exclusively with Japan. A degree of uncertainty with regard to the orthodox interpretation of *bushidō* among popular writers continued for at least another decade, as Natsume Sōseki's (夏目漱石, 1867-1916) 1906 short story "Maboroshi no Tate" ("The Phantom Shield") reveals. This story is set in the England of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, and at one point a character at a banquet regales the party with tales of battle, beginning with an accounting of the "the crimes against *bushidō*" committed by a certain castle lord.¹⁰⁷ It is significant that, immediately after the Russo-Japanese War, Natsume was sufficiently aware of the concept of *bushidō* to include it in his story without further explanation, but also saw nothing unusual about removing the term "*bushidō*" from Japan and applying it to a medieval European context.

The orthodox interpretation of *bushidō* put forth by Inoue and others during the Russo-Japanese War was not immediately disseminated among writers of popular literature. This process would take several more years as the public continued to wrestle with digesting both the war and the repercussions of Portsmouth. As a result, the greatest growth in *bushidō*-related popular literature took place after Meiji 41 (1908), as seen in the publication of Ryūbunkan's *Complete Collection of Bushidō Novels* (*Bushidō shōsetsu sōsho*), a series of fictionalized historical tales written by Watanabe Katei (渡辺霞亭, 1864-1926). Subjects in this series, which continued until 1910, included pre-Edo warlords Katō Kiyomasa (Dec. 1908), Gotō Mototsugu (1908), and Kusunoki Masanori (1909). Ryūbunkan's offering was followed in 1912 by Hakata Seishōdō's more extensive *Bushidō Pocketbooks* (*Bushidō Bunko*) series, which in addition to yet another rendition of the Akō incident, included accounts of historical figures such as Sakamoto Ryōma and the Byakkotai ("White Tigers of Aizu"; these works

¹⁰⁶ Kuroiwa Ruikō trans., *Bushidō ichimei himitsubukuro*. Tokyo: Fusōdō, 1897.

¹⁰⁷ Natsume Sōseki, *Rondon tō / Maboroshi no tate*, 53.

appeared in 1912). However, it also placed more contemporary subject matter, including events from Japan's recent wars with China and Russia, into a *bushidō* context. Examples from the latter conflict included *The Bloodstained Regimental Colors* (*Chizome no rentaiki*, 1912), *Height 203* (*Nihyakusan no kōchi*, 1913), *The Bloodstained Turret* (*Chizome no hōtō*, 1913), and *Suicide Corps in the Siege of Port Arthur* (*Ryojun kōi kesshi tai*, 1913).

A more significant and popular series with a *bushidō* theme was the Tachikawa Bunko, which continues to be republished in various formats even today. The Tachikawa Bunko, “in which fictional Edo heroes lived by sincerity and the sword,”¹⁰⁸ consisted of about 200 small paperbacks published in Osaka between May 1911 and 1925.¹⁰⁹ Most of these texts were written versions of stories told by popular *kōdan* performers (*sokki bon*, shorthand books), and the series quickly gained a popularity among youth throughout the country that has been compared to that of manga comics in the postwar period.¹¹⁰ Initially read by young workers in Osaka, it soon became popular among elementary and middle-school students, and its influence can be seen in the nationwide interest in ninja arts that the publication of Tachikawa's *Sarutobi Sasuke* excited in early 1914.¹¹¹ The Tachikawa Bunko was loosely organized into several themed series on subjects such as “famous ninja,” “loyal retainers of Akō,” and “masterpieces of horror,” as well as various series on Sengoku warlords. One of the most popular themes was the “flower of *bushidō*” (*bushidō no seika*), and at least 44 books were published in this series. The *bushidō* series was especially popular in the early years of the Tachikawa Bunko, with at least seven texts published in 1911, six in 1912, eight in 1913, fifteen in 1914, six in 1915, two in 1916, and none thereafter.¹¹² Paperbacks in this series were generally devoted to one or two

¹⁰⁸ Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, 172.

¹⁰⁹ Adachi Ken'ichi, *Tachikawa bunko no eiyūachi*, 12.

¹¹⁰ Namekawa Michio, “Taishūteki jidō bungaku zenshi toshite no ‘tachikawa bunko,’” 162.

¹¹¹ Adachi Ken'ichi, *Tachikawa bunko no eiyūachi*, 13.

¹¹² These figures are based on a list of works compiled by Adachi, Ken'ichi and, while it is the most complete available, it is missing a few works and some bibliographical information for the period after 1918, due to the fact that the lists of prior publications included in the paperbacks themselves were often contradictory. (Adachi Ken'ichi, *Tachikawa bunko no eiyūachi*, 195-208.)

historical figures each, and included famous individuals such as Ōishi Kuranosuke (Mar. 1911), Miyamoto Musashi (Aug. 1911), Saigō Takamori (Oct. 1911), Nogi Maresuke (Feb. 1913), and Takeda Shingen and Uesugi Kenshin (Sept. 1913). Along with other pocketbook publishers, the Tachikawa Bunko did very well throughout the late Meiji and Taishō periods as increasing literacy rates, especially among the youth, opened up new possibilities for the distribution of popular tales. By the end of Taishō, however, larger firms came to dominate the market and many of the smaller, family-run publishing houses, including Tachikawa Bunmeidō and Hakata Seishōdō, were no longer able to compete and disappeared.¹¹³ The largest of these new publishing houses, Kōdansha, generated such popularity through its flagship magazine *Kingu* (*King*) that the culture of early Shōwa Japan has been described as “Kōdansha culture” by some scholars.¹¹⁴

On the whole, these mass-produced texts for popular consumption were formulaic and adhered to the orthodox interpretation of *bushidō* that had emerged and become accepted by this point. Some writers, especially those affiliated with the Hakubunkan publishing empire, may have been partially motivated by a desire to convey moral lessons to their readership, but the vast majority of popular texts were written to sell. Popular writers in modern Japan tended to go with the flow, and their adoption of *bushidō* reflects a growth of general interest in the subject in late Meiji, an interest that they in turn helped stoke and maintain through their widely-distributed works. When the mood began to shift away from *bushidō* in early Taishō, writers and editors turned elsewhere for subject matter, and most *bushidō*-related series did not continue for very long thereafter. This development can be seen in the *Yomiuri shinbun*, which printed a series of historical profiles titled “*Bushidō* Biographies” (“*Bushidō meimei den*”) beginning on July 4, 1910. This daily column replaced the long-running “*Akō gishi den*” (“*Tales of the Loyal Retainers of Akō*”), which had appeared on page four of the paper since

¹¹³ Namekawa Michio, “Taishūteki jidō bungaku zenshi toshite no ‘tachikawa bunko,’” 162-163.

¹¹⁴ Satō Takumi, “*Kingu*” *no jidai: kokumin taishū zasshi no kōkyōsei*, xi.

November 1, 1908. With the exception of a few brief intervals, such as its temporary replacement by the “Biography of General Nogi” (“Nogi taishō den”) in the fall of 1912, the “Bushidō meimei den” appeared in almost every issue of the *Yomiuri shinbun* until February 10, 1914, when the feature was finally dropped in favor of the short-lived “Biographies of Other Loyal Retainers” (“Gishi gai den”), also written by Hayakawa Teisui (早川貞水, 1861-1917), the primary author of the “Bushidō meimei den” since August 1912.

In addition to its wide dissemination in popular culture, *bushidō* also became a frequently-discussed subject in literary and intellectual circles. The reactions to the subject among the latter were more varied than in the *Bushidō shōsetsu sōsho*, and there were even a few critical voices. The period following the Russo-Japanese War was viewed both optimistically and pessimistically by different writers, but all agreed that it would mark a major turning point in Japanese literature. Natsume Sōseki, for example, was full of confidence when he compared the war to the destruction of the Spanish Armada, to which he attributed the flowering of Elizabethan literature.¹¹⁵ Other writers were more cautious, wondering whether the recent conflict would usher in an era of world-class literature in Japan, or whether it would result in “mere island-mentality writing,” using the concepts of Genroku and *sakoku* as analogous for the two paths open to Japanese literature.¹¹⁶ The latter possibility was clearly a concern for some intellectuals, with the writer and critic Ueda Bin (上田敏, 1874-1916) fearing that chauvinistic currents would dominate the post-war period, resulting in a disregard for foreign thought and a focus on *bushidō*-related navel-gazing.¹¹⁷ Ultimately, all of these predictions were fulfilled to some degree. The last years of Meiji were marked by a growth in nationalistic publications, but they are better remembered for the emergence of a sophisticated national literature of a modern

¹¹⁵ Hiraoka Toshio, *Nichirō sengo bungaku no kenkyū*, 12.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. 13.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. 15.

form, with the works of Natsume, Nagai Kafū (永井荷風, 1879-1959), and Shimazaki Tōson (島崎藤村, 1872-1943) separated from what came before “by the relatively complex way in which the characters are handled, by the modernness of the language used, and by the content.”¹¹⁸

With regard to the treatment of *bushidō* by literary figures after 1905, one can identify several strains of thought that, taken together, reveal the view of *bushidō* among educated Japanese at the time. Some writers, such as the naturalist Iwano Hōmei (岩野泡鳴, 1873-1920), took a more orthodox approach to the subject. In what Donald Keene has called his “most celebrated work of criticism,” the 1906 essay “Mystical Half-Beastism” (“Shimpiteki hanjū shugi”), Iwano laid out his own philosophy in reaction to the works of Emerson, Swedenborg, Schopenhauer, and others.¹¹⁹ In his discussion of Emerson’s essay “Compensation,” Iwano stated that because Emerson was born in America, his writings may seem somewhat unpleasant to Japanese readers, whose “point of view is colored by *bushidō*.”¹²⁰ In this essay, Iwano promoted his own theory of “half-beastism” as the reason for Japan’s victory in the Russo-Japanese War, for without this supporting force *bushidō*, Japanism, and other characteristics credited with Japan’s success would not be able to unfold their full strength.¹²¹ If one disregards Iwano’s unique spiritual theory and focuses on his use of *bushidō*, his views on the subject largely reflected the orthodox interpretation. Another example of a prominent modern literary figure relying on the orthodox interpretation of *bushidō* was Mori Ōgai’s (森鷗外, 1862-1922) 1913 historical drama *The Vendetta of Gojin Plain* (*Gojiin ga hara no katakiuchi*). In this piece, which was set in Edo and deals with a samurai revenge killing, the protagonist Yamamoto Kurōemon applies for permission to carry out vengeance. Fortunately for Yamamoto, the official to whom he applies is a man “deeply inscribed by *bushidō* (*bushidō*

¹¹⁸ Edwin McClellan, “Tōson and the Autobiographical Novel,” 356-357.

¹¹⁹ Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era* (Vol. 1, Fiction), 290-291.

¹²⁰ Iwano Hōmei, *Meiji bungaku zenshū* 71: *Iwano Hōmei shū*, 332.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 354.

ni kokoroire no fukai hito)” and hears his request immediately.¹²² In this case, Mori used the term in line with the orthodox interpretation of *bushidō* as a historical moral norm dictating warrior behavior. According to Tamiya Torahiko, Mori was moved to compose a series of feudal tales by the death of Nogi Maresuke, prompting a nostalgic desire to seek material for his stories in Japan’s past.¹²³

In addition to these orthodox views, mentions of *bushidō* in the fiction and criticism of modern literary figures could also be quite different than references to warrior ethics in popular romances and works of the type published by the various *bunko* discussed above. One major difference was the frequent, albeit generally implicit, criticism of *bushidō* in more literary works. The orthodox interpretation of *bushidō* permeated the entire social and political spectrum by the Meiji forties, at least with regard to the idea that a universally-accepted warrior ethic existed in earlier Japanese history, but there were doubts regarding the applicability of such a moral code to the modern age. The *tanka* poet Ishikawa Takuboku (石川啄木, 1886-1912), for example, accepted *bushidō* as a historical component of the Japanese character, but also criticized it as an anachronistic relic of an earlier time. In a 1910 essay lamenting the “Impatient Thought” (“Sekkachi na shisō”) of his countrymen, Ishikawa stated that “speaking of old things, that thing called *bushidō*...can be said to be one of the most impatient ethics in the entire world.”¹²⁴ Uchida Roan (内田魯庵, 1868-1929) took a similar approach, arguing that *bushidō* would have disappeared following 1868 if the former samurai class had not had their hereditary positions protected by the new government.¹²⁵ Another prominent literary figure who saw *bushidō* as an anachronism was the romanticist Izumi Kyōka (泉鏡花, 1873-1939). In his 1912 article “Indian Saraca” (“Indō sarasa”), Izumi was critical of both *bushidō* and Japanese traditional

¹²² Mori Ōgai, *Gojiin ga hara no katakiuchi*, 12.

¹²³ Ibid., 99-100.

¹²⁴ Ishikawa Takuboku, *Meiji bungaku zenshū* 52: *Ishikawa Takuboku shū*, 254.

¹²⁵ Uchida Roan, “Nijūgonenkan no bunjin no shakaiteki chii no shinpo,” 146.

society in general, although he did not question the historical validity of the concept.¹²⁶ The same ideas are implicit in Izumi's 1913 play "Yaksa Lake" ("Yasha ga ike"), based on a legend from the early Heian period but set in the present. In this play, a character who professes *bushidō* explains the concept as condoning the killing of women and children for the sake of one's country.¹²⁷

After 1914, interest in *bushidō* among literary figures declined, and criticism of the subject became harsher than before, going beyond mere portrayal of *bushidō* as an anachronism to questioning its legitimacy. This is perhaps best illustrated by the works of Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (芥川龍之介, 1892-1927), whose 1916 short story "The Handkerchief" ("Hankechi") is one of the most critical works of the prewar period. This work, which Mishima Yukio would later call the "ultimate" short story, was written as a thinly-disguised satire of Nitobe Inazō, especially with regard to the Nitobe's views on *bushidō*.¹²⁸ In "The Handkerchief", an aging professor (Nitobe) listens to a woman as she tells him about the passing of her son, one of the professor's former students. The professor is impressed by her stoicism and detachment, which he attributes to *bushidō*, a subject in which he is much interested. It is only near the end of her account that he notices the handkerchief the woman has been tightly grasping and wringing as an apparent silent outlet for her suppressed emotions. The Nitobe figure is more impressed than ever with the power of *bushidō* after this encounter. Later that day, however, he happens to read in a Western book a criticism of poor acting techniques, one of which is symbolizing tension by tearing a handkerchief in two while keeping a smiling countenance.¹²⁹ In this text, Akutagawa was highly critical of Nitobe's approach to *bushidō*,

¹²⁶ Izumi Kyōka, "Indo sarasa," 324.

¹²⁷ Izumi Kyōka, "Yasha ga ike," 455.

¹²⁸ Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era (Vol. 1, Fiction)*, 590 note 31.

¹²⁹ Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, "Hankechi," 27-31.

intending to, as Roy Starrs puts it, “undercut tradition, reducing bushido to a mere mannerism out of an old-fashioned sentimental melodrama.”¹³⁰

Akutagawa’s view that *bushidō* had become an anachronism was in keeping with the patterns of criticism set by late-Meiji writers, but he went further in leaving the issue of the historical legitimacy of *bushidō* unaddressed. Mishima Yukio did not read Akutagawa this way,¹³¹ but there was an implicit questioning of the efficacy of *bushidō* in Akutagawa’s work. In his 1923 “The Battle of the Monkey and the Crab,” for example, a lawyer for a crab accused of killing a monkey mounts a defense that sees the crab’s actions as being in line with *bushidō*, but there “is no way that anyone would lend an ear to this type of outdated argument.”¹³² The lawyer is portrayed as a drunken fool, and there are rumors of his position being motivated not by higher ideals, but by spite towards the monkey resulting from an unpleasant incident between the two at the zoo years earlier. Akutagawa took a similar approach in the same year with his short story “From Yasukichi’s Notebook”. In the closing lines of this work, a tough-talking military officer ostensibly strikes a match for the protagonist’s cigarette, but in actuality does so primarily so that the latter “can observe his *bushidō* in its light.”¹³³ In this case, as well, Akutagawa reduces *bushidō* to an affected expression that stands out against the thoroughly modern subject matter of the rest of the story.

The use of *bushidō* in literature, criticism, and popular writings after the Russo-Japanese War was strongly influenced by prewar trends, but it also played an important role in disseminating the concept in the popular consciousness, paving the way for its resurrection in the early 1930s. Writers of fiction did not greatly contribute to the content of *bushidō*, instead

¹³⁰ Roy Starrs, “Writing the National Narrative,” 219.

¹³¹ For all of his praise of “The Handkerchief,” Mishima Yukio disliked the ending of the story, which he attributed to Akutagawa’s “usual spirit of irreverence towards acts of heroism or noble gestures.” (Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era (Vol. 1, Fiction)*, 590 note 31.)

¹³² Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, “Saru kani gassen,” 259-262.

¹³³ Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, “Yasukichi no techō kara,” 198-203.

generally adhering to the orthodox interpretation put forth by Inoue Tetsujirō and other “academic” commentators. In this way, especially through widespread references to the Akō incident, the majority of Japanese became familiarized with the concept, and came to believe that *bushidō* was a historically valid moral code dictating samurai behavior. In addition, the idea that *bushidō* was wholly or partially representative of a “Japanese spirit” gained wide acceptance, in spite of claims to the contrary by Tsuda Sōkichi, Okakura Kakuzō (岡倉覚三, 1862-1913) and a handful of other dissenting voices.¹³⁴ Acceptance of *bushidō* was also conversely promoted by works that were seemingly critical of the subject, such as the writings of Ishikawa Takuboku and Izumi Kyōka. By focusing their criticism of *bushidō* on its alleged incompatibility with the modern age, literary figures in late Meiji and early Taishō were implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) giving *bushidō* historical legitimacy. In the later Taishō period, this characterization of *bushidō* as authentic yet anachronistic would become the dominant interpretation, providing fertile ground for *bushidō* “revivalists” in the early 1930s, of which Hiraizumi Kiyoshi’s (平泉澄, 1895-1984) widely published 1933 text *The Revival of Bushidō* (*Bushidō no fukkatsu*) is perhaps the best example.¹³⁵

Adoption of *bushidō* for historical and patriotic legitimization

The firm establishment of *bushidō* as a commonly accepted and even fashionable concept during and after the Russo-Japanese War led to its adoption by a broad spectrum of Japanese institutions and social groups during the last decade of the *bushidō* boom. By claiming a link to *bushidō*, organizations and individuals could promote sports, religious orders, and other causes in a patriotic manner. In this context, *bushidō* was used to give religions of

¹³⁴ Okakura’s criticism as outlined in *The Book of Tea* is discussed later in this chapter.

¹³⁵ Hiraizumi Kiyoshi, *Bushidō no fukkatsu*. According to John Brownlee, this text acted as a catalyst for the young officers who led the failed 1936 “Shōwa restoration” (John S. Brownlee, *Japanese Historians and the National Myths, 1600-1945*, 177-178).

foreign origin a native Japanese connection and, somewhat ironically, provide relatively recent constructs with historical legitimacy apparently stretching back centuries or even millennia. In addition, the concept was used for commercial purposes; for example, to improve the sales of a text on an unrelated or indirectly related subject by including *bushidō* in the title. The frequent invocation of *bushidō* for these purposes demonstrates not only the pervasiveness of the concept at the time, but also its largely unquestioned patriotic credentials. This section deals with two closely related, yet distinct developments in the usage of *bushidō* during this period. First, it examines the opportunistic appropriation of *bushidō* as a catchphrase or brand, in which case the subject was usually not dealt with in great depth and the “orthodox” definition was not questioned. Second, this study analyzes the widespread usage of *bushidō* by religious orders, especially Japanese Christians and Buddhists, whose patriotism and devotion to the national cause was frequently called into question, and who often relied on *bushidō* to prove their “Japaneseness.” Understandably, calling upon *bushidō* for religious purposes meant that the “orthodox” interpretation put forth by Shinto nationalists and anti-Christians could not be accepted unchanged, and most writings on the connection between *bushidō* and “foreign” faiths relied on their own interpretations. Through an examination of these different ideological currents, this study attempts to demonstrate the breadth of appeal of *bushidō* during late Meiji and early Taishō, as well as illuminating the motivations of certain groups and individuals writing on *bushidō* for whom the subject at first glance seems to bear no relation or even appears contradictory to their own goals and contentions.

One of the fields in which discussions of *bushidō* featured most prominently was in the world of martial arts, many of which were only being codified and developed into their modern forms during the Meiji period. From an early stage in the modern development of *bushidō*, the concept was linked to Japan’s traditional martial arts. The clearest demonstration of this was the publication of the *Bushidō zasshi* by the Great Japan Martial Arts Lecture Society in 1898,

which kicked off the *bushidō* boom. At the beginning, *bushidō* was linked primarily with kendo and judo, which were organized into associations during mid-Meiji.¹³⁶ The promotion of the martial arts was given a boost by the nationalistic feeling resulting from the Sino-Japanese War, and the number of students joining martial arts associations increased rapidly after this time.¹³⁷ *Bushidō* was also used to promote sumo and other martial arts with a less obvious connection to the samurai class, however, and even recently-imported games such as baseball. In these cases, especially the latter, *bushidō* was invoked to give patriotic and historical legitimacy to these sports to counter attacks from promoters of judo and kendo who saw them as unwelcome competitors.

In the case of sumo, many aspects of the current form of the sport are products of the late Meiji period, as Lee Thompson has shown, and the time of greatest change coincided with the late *bushidō* boom. In the year 1909, for example, referees began to wear colorful robes and headwear rather than a *kamishimo*, wrestlers became obliged to wear *haori* and *hakama* rather than casual clothing to the tournaments, the first national sumo stadium was completed at Ryōgoku, and the rank of *yokozuna* was first recognized by the Sumo Association, which also unilaterally designated sumo as the national sport of Japan.¹³⁸ In the context of sumo's rapid growth and popularization, the appropriation of *bushidō* for propagandistic means was most evident in Kitagawa Hakuai's (北川博愛, dates unknown) 1911 book *Sumō to bushidō* (*Sumo and Bushidō*). Kitagawa's text was essentially a mythologized history of Japanese sumo, and he incorporated *bushidō* primarily as a catchphrase in the introduction and conclusion of the work to raise the book's profile. As such, Kitagawa uncritically adopted the "orthodox"

¹³⁶ For a discussion of the development of judo, see: Inoue Shun, "The Invention of the Martial Arts: Kanō Jigorō and Kōdōkan Judo." For an examination of the development and changes in kendo in modern Japan, see: Kinoshita Hideaki, "'Gekiken' 'kenjutsu' kara 'kendō' he no ikō ni kansuru shiteki kōsatsu."

¹³⁷ Sakaue Yasuhiro, *Nippon yakyū no keifu gaku*, 99.

¹³⁸ Lee A. Thompson, "The Invention of the *Yokozuna*," 177-178.

interpretation of *bushidō* promoted by Inoue Tetsujirō, merely drawing connections with unsubstantiated claims regarding sumo:

“Japan has been a martial land since the age of the gods, giving it a long history in the world. For three thousand years, *bushidō* has been the essence of Japan. The national spirit was trained by *bushidō*, and is the crystallization of the Yamato damashii... However, when one asks through what research and methods *bushidō* must be trained, the answer is through strengthening the physique and completing the spirit, and there is a simple method for doing this. If one then asks what this simple method is, it goes without saying that it is sumo. The fact that sumo has a great deal of force in the training of *bushidō* is already best illustrated by our nation’s ancient history. From this we can say that sumo is the *bushidō* of our nation”¹³⁹

According to Kitagawa, there was originally no difference between sumo and *jūjutsu*, and therefore sumo is the “oldest *bushidō* of Japan,” having been practiced for at least five or six thousand years. Later, during the Tokugawa period, sumo wrestlers were permitted to wear swords, demonstrating that “sumo was respected as a type of *bushidō*, and *rikishi* were equal to outstanding *bushi*.”¹⁴⁰ The *bushidō* inherent in sumo, wrote Kitagawa, could be seen in an incident in Aizu in the late 16th century, in which the warlord Gamō Ujisato insisted on a match with one of his retainers who was a great wrestler. The retainer, Nishimura Samanosuke, pulled no punches and handily defeated his lord not once but two times. In Kitagawa’s estimation, this single-minded focus on defeating one’s opponent, even if he was one’s lord, was “true *bushidō*.”¹⁴¹ It is doubtful that this interpretation of *bushidō* would have found agreement among those commentators who emphasized the principles of loyalty and fair play rather than victory at all costs, or even among proponents of sumo in the twenty-first century. For Kitagawa, however, sumo was equivalent to *bushidō* and, as such, it was a patriotic duty for Japanese to support and participate in sumo.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Kitagawa Hakuai, *Sumō to bushidō*, 4.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 6,7.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 195-196.

With regard to baseball, the wholly foreign origins of the sport resulted in harsh attacks from martial arts practitioners and nationalists from the time of its introduction onward. For this reason, baseball, more than native sports such as sumo, required a great deal of promotional work in order to gain acceptance. In this case, as well, *bushidō* was frequently cited in support of the adoption of baseball, resulting in a situation in which promoters of very diverse athletic activities were each claiming *bushidō* as their own in an attempt to capitalize on the subject's high profile during the *bushidō* boom. As with martial arts, baseball was related to *bushidō* discourse at an early stage, with a handful of articles mentioning the two subjects appearing soon after the Sino-Japanese War.¹⁴³ After 1895, there was a dramatic increase in the number of martial arts practitioners in educational institutions, a result of the nationalistic and militaristic sentiments created by the victory over China.¹⁴⁴ This development presented a problem for the promoters of “civilizational” (i.e. Western) sports such as baseball, who were put on the defensive by the patriotic credentials of the martial arts. The solution to this dilemma was for baseball to seize the initiative with regard to patriotic legitimacy, a course taken with great success. As the author and critic Takayama Chogyū argued in an 1898 article, the martial arts were effective for instilling courage in the individual, but “baseball was also superb for spiritual training.” Unlike the martial arts, which focused on man-to-man combat, baseball “brought two groups of nine individuals together into a team unit, where they attacked and defended together over the course of nine battles.” In the context of inter-civilizational struggles, Takayama continued, it was essential for the individual to give up his own self-interest for the good of the group. In his words, the problem facing Japan was that “the people of our country have always had a very strong individual spirit, but have been wanting in their communal spirit.”

¹⁴³ Sakaue Yasuhiro, *Nippon yakyū no keifu gaku*, 101.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 99.

For this reason, it was essential that Japan promote baseball in order to survive in the age of imperialistic competition.¹⁴⁵

Following Takayama, other writers argued for the spread of baseball in terms of its team-building effects and usefulness as a spiritual training tool. In the early twentieth century, the spiritual aspects of baseball were further expounded by writers such as Hirano Masatomo, who argued in 1903 that baseball was equally or more capable of fostering a martial spirit as were the martial arts, a development that Sakaue Yasuhiro has referred to as “samurai baseball” (*bushi teki yakyū*).¹⁴⁶ The combination of “native” martial virtues with “civilizational” baseball reached a peak after 1905, when the wide dissemination of *bushidō* led to its introduction into discourse on sport. One example of this was the introduction to the 1905 *Recent Baseball Techniques*, a practical guide written by Hashido Shin (Makoto), who had considerable playing experience in the United States.¹⁴⁷ The introduction to this text was penned by former Waseda player Oshikawa Shunrō and provided a *bushidō* framework for baseball in Japan:

“Japan’s *bushidō*, which is unparalleled in the world, is partly a product of spiritual training, and partly a product of martial training and the strengthening of courage... By training martiality and strengthening the physique, by strengthening the physique and refining the spirit, and to this adding mental power, one will not fear anyone under heaven. This is the origin of Japan’s *bushidō*.

...

In Japan, from ancient times there have been kendo, judo, and techniques for mounted archery, and these have been used to train the physique and form the spirit for over three thousand years... However, martial skills that train the physique and form the spirit are not necessarily limited to those that use the sword and spear, but also include football, rowing, and baseball. These are originally products of the West, and although I do not know what the Westerners used these skills to prepare for, when these skills are brought to Japan and we apply our true Japanese *bushi*-like spirit to them, with regard to training the physique and forming the spirit, they bear comparison with our ancient martial skills. Baseball, especially, is truly a civilizational martial skill, and at the same time a *bushi*-like sport.”¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 82-83.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 88-89.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 109-10.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 111-112.

In the decade after 1905, the identification of baseball with *bushidō* continued to increase, to the extent that it became what Ariyama Teruo has called “*bushidō* baseball.” Ariyama cites an editorial from the November 20, 1908 edition of *Baseball Monthly* as arguing that, in spite of the American origins of baseball, “our nation’s baseball techniques are a complete departure from the old forms, and pure Japanese *bushidō* baseball techniques can be expected to eventually become the champion of the world (*sekai no hashu*).”¹⁴⁹ The identification of baseball with *bushidō* established during the years after the Russo-Japanese War was of long duration, and *bushidō* became a key component of the expansion of baseball to the development of a national championship in the Taishō period.¹⁵⁰ The idea of a unique Japanese “samurai baseball” would last well beyond the *bushidō* boom and even into the twenty-first century.

As demonstrated by the frequent invocation of *bushidō* in relation to baseball, its deployment as a marketing device in late Meiji was not limited to native concepts and organizations, although this usage was often in opposition to the “orthodox” interpretation put forth by Inoue Tetsujirō. This can be seen in the use of *bushidō* in works translated from Western languages, especially those dealing with chivalry. One of these was the translated version of Louis Albert Banks’ moralistic tome *Twentieth Century Knighthood: A Series of Addresses to Young Men*, the title of which was rendered *20 seiki no bushidō* in Japanese.¹⁵¹ This text, which Banks originally published in 1900, used examples from the recent past to demonstrate how the ideals of medieval European chivalry could be successfully applied to the modern age.¹⁵² Another example of this sort, which was published by Hakubunkan and endorsed by Nitobe Inazō, was the 1909 *Occidental Bushidō* (*Seiyō no bushidō*), a translation of Léon Gautier’s 1884 history of medieval European chivalry.¹⁵³ Neither of these texts had any

¹⁴⁹ Ariyama Teruo, *Kōshien yakyū to nihonjin: media no tsukutta ibento*, 55.

¹⁵⁰ Ariyama has called this process “the story of ‘Japan’s unique *bushidō* baseball’” (Ibid., 80-103).

¹⁵¹ Louis Albert Banks, *20 seiki no bushidō*.

¹⁵² Alan and Barbara Lupack, *King Arthur in America*, 59-60.

¹⁵³ Maeda Chōta trans., *Seiyō bushidō* [*Leon Gautier La Chevalerie no yakuhon*].

direct relation to Japan, but rather than use the term “*kishidō*,” the common translation of “chivalry,” the publishers elected to use *bushidō*, most likely in order to improve sales. This usage of *bushidō* to refer to chivalry would certainly have displeased Inoue, who dismissed the Western ethic as mere “woman-worship.”

The quest for patriotic credentials extended beyond secular organizations of the type discussed above, however, and was also conducted by followers of “foreign” religions. The establishment of State Shinto as a tool for the suppression of Christianity and Buddhism presented a serious challenge to these two religions.¹⁵⁴ Buddhism suffered the greater shock during this process, as Buddhist institutions had suddenly gone from being the official registries of all Japanese households during the Tokugawa period to being persecuted, disowned, and even disbanded. The government policies against Buddhism met with widespread protest, and the military was required to quell uprisings in some parts of Japan. The state soon realized that the harshest policies were not tenable, and attempted measures of limited reconciliation and incorporation of Buddhism into the State Shinto structure, which was sufficient to prevent major additional outbreaks of violence. Buddhism remained distinctly second-class relative to Shinto in official eyes throughout the Meiji period and beyond, but it continued to dominate religious life in many areas. For their part, following the protests of early Meiji, Buddhists tended to meet the challenge from the government through a process of almost aggressive conformation. This included proving to the government that Buddhism could play a practical role within the new emperor-focused order, and can be seen in the founding of organizations such as the United Movement for Revering the Emperor and Revering the Buddha (*sonnō hōbutsu daidōdan*), formed in 1889 in order to “preserve the prosperity of the imperial household and increase the

¹⁵⁴ Helen Hardacre, *Shinto and the State, 1868-1988*.

power of Buddhism.”¹⁵⁵ As part of the process of regaining national acceptance, Buddhists focused on the long history of their religion in Japan, an argument that simultaneously separated them from the more recently-arrived Christianity. The supposedly inseparable roots of Buddhism and the Japanese character were frequently invoked, and discourse on Buddhism’s links with *bushidō* should be seen in this context.

Discounting the lectures attributed to Yamaoka Tesshū, the connections between *bushidō* and Buddhism can be traced at least to the very beginning of the *bushidō* boom, when the first issue of the *Bushidō zasshi* carried a congratulatory statement from an author described only as “Sugiyama the Tendai monk.”¹⁵⁶ While only a brief note, Sugiyama’s contribution was representative of *bushidō*-Buddhist discourse in late Meiji in that it appears to have been primarily for promotional purposes. In this case, the editors of the *Bushidō zasshi* desired to gain as much exposure among as many sections of society as possible. During and after the Russo-Japanese War, however, when *bushidō* had become firmly established in the popular consciousness, the relationship was reversed, with Buddhists relying on *bushidō* to promote their own faith and causes. This can be seen in the 1905 *Bushidō sōron*, which included a reprint of a *Chuō kōron* article by the renowned Buddhist scholar Nanjō Bun’yū (南条文雄, 1849-1927) titled “Concerning the Relationship between *Bushidō* and Buddhism.” In this article, Nanjō wrote that “people commonly say that the basis of Buddhism is mercy, and therefore it not only provides no benefit to *bushidō*, but there is even a danger that it will weaken the warrior spirit.” However, continued Nanjō, this was only a very superficial understanding of Buddhism, and he proceeded to discuss Prince Shōtoku, Kusunoki Masashige, and Commander Hirose Takeo as examples of brave men who derived strength from Buddhism. “Our *bushidō* has received the Buddhism of causality spanning the past, present, and future (*sanze’inga*), and even if the body dies the spirit continues, so that one will be born as a human for seven lives” in order to reach

¹⁵⁵ Brian Daizen Victoria, *Zen at War*, 18.

¹⁵⁶ Sugiyama Tendai Dōshi. “Eisetsu jūdai,” 7-8.

one's long-cherished goals of repaying the kindness of the nation (*kokuon*) and supporting the imperial house.¹⁵⁷

The patriotic propaganda and activities on the part of Buddhists paid dividends by the end of Meiji, although the costs were sometimes great. In addition to aiding in the colonization of Hokkaido and the other northern territories, Buddhist sects sent missionaries and medical workers to the wars with China and Russia, while at the same time spreading morale-boosting information and collecting donations and supplies on the home front.¹⁵⁸ By 1912, the Buddhists and Christians, whose similar efforts are discussed below, had become accepted by the state to the point that they were included by the Home Ministry in a "Meeting of Three Religions" designed to promote national morality.¹⁵⁹ Events such as this did not lead to complacency, however, and Buddhists continued to expound on their patriotic credentials with the aid of *bushidō*. In his 1913 book *Bushidō and Buddhism*, Nakatani Togetsu attributed the nation's great victory in the Russo-Japanese War to the emperor and to the loyalty and bravery of the nation's soldiers, in other words, *bushidō* and the Japanese spirit. According to Nakatani, the origins of *bushidō* were the same as the origins of the Japanese race, and the ethic had been refined and developed until it was distilled in the Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors in 1882.¹⁶⁰ In recent times, however, dangerous thought had been imported into Japan, causing the people to forget the foundations of their "national morality" and turn to materialistic civilization. Therefore, it was necessary to again spread Buddhism, for "since ancient times, Buddhism has harmonized with our national polity and thus helped strengthen *bushidō*" throughout the nation's history.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ Nanjō Bun'yū, "Bushidō to bukkō no kankei ni tsuite," 416-419.

¹⁵⁸ James Edward Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and its Persecution*, 133.

¹⁵⁹ Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, 135.

¹⁶⁰ Nagatani Togetsu, *Bushidō to bukkō*, 3-4.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

Even within Buddhism, there were different levels of interest in the promotion of *bushidō*. For example, in a lecture titled “Nichiren Buddhism and *Bushidō*” (“Nichiren shugi to bushidō”), the naval strategist and future admiral Ogasawara Naganari (小笠原長生, 1867-1958) expounded on what he believed were the historical ties between these two thought systems. According to Ogasawara, Buddhism was often seen as overly passive (*shōkyokuteki*), and although some Buddhism had these elements, the teachings of Nichiren were not at all passive. Instead, Nichiren “not only insisted vehemently on *Lotus Sutra*-ism (*Hokkekyō shugi*), but also read the Buddha’s teachings to conclude that ‘the world is the Japanese nation.’” In addition, argued Ogasawara, the most fundamental virtue of both *bushidō* and Nichiren Buddhism was the concept of *taigi meibun*, giving the two identical, uniquely Japanese roots.¹⁶² Followers of many denominations engaged in *bushidō* discourse, but of all the Buddhist schools, Zen appealed most strongly for a specific connection with *bushidō*, and the effects of this activity can still be seen in current popular conceptions regarding historical links between the two. The historical relationship between Zen and the samurai was tenuous at best, but this did not prevent certain prominent figures from presenting arguments to the contrary, especially during the *bushidō* boom.¹⁶³ The writings of samurai who were also Zen followers, such as Suzuki Shōsan, Takuan, and Yamamoto Tsunetomo, were frequently presented as evidence that Zen represented the true spirit of the samurai and was responsible for the oft-heralded stoic or even welcoming attitude towards death and killing that defined Japanese warriors, in spite of the fact that the views of these thinkers were considerably more nuanced than many of their modern interpreters conceded.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Ogasawara Naganari, “Nichiren shugi to bushidō,” 8-9.

¹⁶³ For a discussion of Zen’s relationship with the samurai, see Martin Colcutt, *Five Mountains: The Rinzai Zen Monastic Institution in Medieval Japan* and “Musō Soseki”; Kenneth Alan Grossberg, *Japan’s Renaissance: The Politics of the Muromachi Age*; Carl Bielefeldt, “Koken Shiran and the Sectarian Uses of History”; Donald Keene, *Yoshimasa and the Silver Pavillion: The Creation of the Soul of Japan*; Brian Victoria, *Zen at War*.

¹⁶⁴ For example, the *Hagakure* explicitly states that Buddhism is something for old men, not warriors, and Yamamoto Tsunetomo is generally seen to have retired to a Zen temple primarily as a symbolic suicide and withdrawal from the world, rather than as a devoted practitioner. See: Brian Daizen Victoria, *Zen at War*, 229.

The notion that Zen and *bushidō* were closely linked had the support of influential figures in *bushidō* discourse, which played a more important role in the broad dissemination of this theory than did any actual historical ties between the two. This can be seen in one of the most extensive discussions of the subject, Akiyama Goan's 1907 book *Zen and Bushidō* (*Zen to bushidō*). Akiyama, who along with Inoue Tetsujirō, compiled the definitive 1905 *Gendai taikē bushidō sōron*, opened his text on Zen by stating that although *bushidō* and Zen had a very close relationship, most people were not aware of the reasons behind this.¹⁶⁵ Akiyama's argument focused on the historical fact that the period of Zen Buddhism's spread in Japan coincided with the establishment of warrior power. According to Akiyama, warriors developed a powerful connection with Zen during the Kamakura period, and during the Sengoku period, when their lives were constantly at risk, the "affinity between Zen and *bushidō* became ever closer."¹⁶⁶ Akiyama dismissed the idea that warrior patronage of Zen institutions was primarily due to secular reasons, as well as the notion that other Buddhist schools with greater popularity during and after the Kamakura period could have had a strong influence on *bushidō*. With regard to the Pure Land and Tendai schools of Buddhism, Akiyama stated that these were mere "superstition" and "reasoning," respectively, and therefore "absolutely did not have the power to cultivate and nurture Japan's unique ethic, i.e. the *bushidō* spirit."¹⁶⁷ Instead, Akiyama argued that Zen was the key to the effectiveness of *bushidō*, and "just as Kamakura Zen worked with Kamakura *bushidō*, we need to strive to combine Meiji Zen with Meiji *bushidō*."¹⁶⁸ Through the emphasis on *bushidō*, the necessity of which was largely accepted in Japan by 1907, Akiyama and others worked to promote Zen Buddhism's nationalistic credentials.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Akiyama Goan, *Zen to bushidō*, 1.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 77-85.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 292.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 293.

¹⁶⁹ For other discussions of Zen and *bushidō* from this period, see: Katō, Totsudō, *Zen kanroku*, 22-60; Yamagata Kōhō, *Shin bushidō*, 167-223.

The effectiveness of these endeavors was increased by Nogi Maresuke's connection with Zen Buddhism. By the end of the Russo-Japanese War, Nogi had become a symbol of *bushidō*, a subject he had been interested in from an early point in the *bushidō* boom.¹⁷⁰ Nogi was introduced to the Rinzai Zen master Nakahara Nantembō (中原南天棒, 1839-1925) in 1887, studying the latter's teachings with such dedication that Nantembō attested to Nogi's enlightenment and named him as a successor.¹⁷¹ Some aspects of Nogi's interest in Zen and *bushidō* reflect the revisionism practiced by many *bushidō* theorists at the time. According to Nogi, who was a keen student of Inoue Tetsujirō's *bushidō*, Yamaga Sokō was the "sage of *bushidō*" and single most important exponent of the warrior ethic, with his later interpreter Yoshida Shōin a close second. In actuality, both Yamaga and Yoshida were extremely critical of Zen, and the latter criticized it harshly in his writings on *bushidō*.¹⁷² Such inconsistencies were generally overlooked in the name of *bushidō*, however, and in cases of conflict the efforts of modern promoters had more sway than ancient texts.

Another promoter of Zen who relied on *bushidō* as a vehicle for its dissemination was Suzuki Daisetsu. In Suzuki's case, his writings on *bushidō* and Zen during the period immediately after the Russo-Japanese War are not extensive, but are significant in light of his role in spreading the concept of the connection of Zen and *bushidō*, especially during the last four decades of his life. Suzuki can be seen as the most significant figure in this context, especially with regard to the dissemination of a Zen-based *bushidō* outside of Japan. His writings from as early as 1895 are revealing with regard to the later development of his *bushidō* thought. On the occasion of the Sino-Japanese War, Suzuki wrote that in the face of the challenge from China, "In the name of religion, our country refuses to submit itself to this. For this reason, unavoidably we have taken up arms. ... This is a religious action."¹⁷³ This passage

¹⁷⁰ Nogi's relationship with *bushidō* is discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁷¹ Brian Daizen Victoria, *Zen at War*, 36-37.

¹⁷² Yoshida Shōin, *Yoshida Shōin zenshū* (Volume 4), 240.

¹⁷³ Translation by Christopher Ives. Found in: Christopher Ives, "Ethical Pitfalls in Imperial Zen and Nishida

shows Suzuki's willingness to combine Zen with militarism, a trend in his thought that became more pronounced. In 1906, for example, Suzuki wrote the following in an article in the *Journal of the Pali Text Society*:

The Lebensanschauung of Bushido is no more nor less than that of Zen. The calmness and even joyfulness of heart at the moment of death which is conspicuously observable in the Japanese, the intrepidity which is generally shown by the Japanese soldiers in the face of an overwhelming enemy; and the fairness of play to an opponent, so strongly taught by Bushido—all these come from the spirit of Zen training...¹⁷⁴

These views would have found agreement with Nogi Maresuke, during whose headship Suzuki taught at Gakushūin in 1909. Suzuki has been subjected to criticism by scholars in recent years, but his influence on popular conceptions of Zen Buddhism is still strong, especially outside of Japan, and continues to contribute to the notion that Zen formed a sort of spiritual foundation for the samurai in general and *bushidō* in particular. In spite of the widespread rejection of *bushidō* in Japan and abroad immediately after World War II, Suzuki's works continued to emphasize the importance of the alleged historical connections between *bushidō* and Zen. Regarding the Sengoku period, Suzuki wrote as follows:

“In those days we can say that the Japanese genius went either to priesthood or to soldiery. The spiritual co-operation of the two professions could not help but contribute to the creation of what is now generally known as Bushido, ‘the way of the warrior.’

At this juncture, let me touch upon one of the inner relationships that exist between the samurai mode of feeling and Zen. What finally has come to constitute Bushido, as we generally understand it now, is the act of being an unflinching guardian-god of the dignity of the samurai, and this dignity consists in loyalty, filial piety, and benevolence. But to fulfill these duties successfully two things are needed: to train oneself in moral asceticism, not only in its practical aspect but in its philosophical preparation; and to be always ready to face death, that is, to sacrifice oneself unhesitatingly when occasion arises.”¹⁷⁵

Philosophy: Ichikawa Hakugen's Critique,” 17.

¹⁷⁴ Brian Daizen Victoria, *Zen at War*, 105.

¹⁷⁵ Suzuki Daisetz, *Zen and Japanese Culture*, 69-70.

Through the largely successful process of postwar historical revision of Zen's prewar role, which has recently been examined by Brian Victoria and others, Zen came to be even more closely identified with a supposed historical samurai spirit. At the same time, Zen and *bushidō* were detached from problematic associations with the early twentieth century, in spite of the fact that the connection between the two was a product of this very period.

The contributions of Christians to the development of *bushidō* in modern Japan are perhaps the most-studied aspect of the subject, especially outside of Japan. Christian *bushidō* theorists, foremost Uemura Masahisa, Nitobe Inazō, and Uchimura Kanzō, were strong promoters of the ethic from the very beginning of modern *bushidō* discourse. Their work is often seen as a homogeneous ideology that can be clearly differentiated from non-Christian interpretations. Kannō Kakumyō, for example, divides Meiji *bushidō* into “Christian” and “nationalistic” types.¹⁷⁶ Matsumae Shigeyoshi has gone further, focusing on Christian writers in his examination of the modern development of *bushidō*.¹⁷⁷ However, while the prominent Christians were all known to one another, and there were similarities among some of their *bushidō* theories, clear connections are not always easy to establish, nor is a “homogeneity” always apparent. An example of this is the relationship between Uemura and Nitobe. Uemura was one of the first modern commentators on *bushidō*, as well as an outspoken Christian activist, but Nitobe never mentioned his work and claimed to be unaware of it when he composed his own *bushidō* theories.¹⁷⁸ Even if no clear links can be established between the ideas of some of the Christian *bushidō* theorists, for many of them, the common attraction to the subject resulted from a similar dynamic as that which motivated most Japanese Buddhists writing on the subject.

¹⁷⁶ Kanno Kakumyō, *Bushidō no gyakushū*, 260-261.

¹⁷⁷ Matsumae Shigeyoshi, *Budō shisō no tankyū*.

¹⁷⁸ This can be inferred from Nitobe's belief that he invented the term himself, and that he was primarily responsible for its popularization.

In the ostensibly Shinto-dominated political and social order of Meiji Japan, *bushidō* represented a non-religious yet unquestionably Japanese spirit that was “the best stock upon which to engraft the gospel,” to use Uchimura and Nitobe’s words.¹⁷⁹ By emphasizing the similarities between *bushidō* and Christianity, a process which generally entailed defining *bushidō* in a Christian way, Japanese Christians endeavored to combine their “foreign” religion with a “native” spirit, thereby hoping to overcome some of the difficulties their choice of faith created for them in the nationalistic climate of late Meiji, as well as making Christianity more suitable for proselytization among other Japanese.

This situation did not apply to Nitobe, however, and for this reason it is a mistake to simply group him with the other Christian writers on *bushidō*. Nitobe tended to define himself more as a Japanese among Westerners than as a Christian among Japanese, and his *bushidō* theories were motivated by this consideration. His primary reason for discussing *bushidō* was to show parallels with Western thought and religion, thereby creating a bridge between cultures. In addition, Nitobe’s devotion to Christianity has frequently been called into question, and he was certainly not as fervent a defender of the faith as Uemura or Uchimura. For most Japanese Christian writers on *bushidō* aside from Nitobe, their concerns were primarily domestic, and their work was intended to demonstrate the compatibility of Christianity with Japanese culture, not the compatibility of Japanese values with Western ones. In general, a distinction can be made between Christian *bushidō* writings in English and those in Japanese, although there are also cases which defy this taxonomy.

The contributions of Uemura and Nitobe are discussed in greater depth in Chapters 2 and 3 of this study, and the overview of the *Bushidō zasshi* that marks the beginning of the *bushidō* boom in 1898 points out the large number of Christians among its contributors, including Ebara Soroku, Kataoka Kenkichi, and Ōi Kentarō. This section focuses on the

¹⁷⁹ John F. Howes, *Japan’s Modern Prophet: Uchimura Kanzo 1861-1930*, 315.

lesser-known writings of Uchimura Kanzō, Ukita Kazutami, Saeki Yoshirō (佐伯好郎, 1871-1965), and John Toshimichi Imai (1863-1919). The selected works examined here are intended to provide an impression of the broad appeal that *bushidō* had to Japanese Christians in the modern period, as well as to demonstrate the diversity of “Christian” *bushidō* theories which, with the exception of their common reference to Christianity, often differed more from one another than they did from non-Christian interpretations.

Along with Nitobe and Uemura, the figure most frequently mentioned in connection with “Christian *bushidō*” is Uchimura Kanzō, a close associate of both. Uchimura first came to national prominence, or rather notoriety, in 1891, when, as a teacher at Japan’s most elite high school, he refused to bow to the Rescript on Education that had been bestowed to the Japanese people by the emperor a year before.¹⁸⁰ Uchimura was compelled to resign under a barrage of criticism over this incident, with some of the harshest condemnation originating from Inoue Tetsujirō.¹⁸¹ In 1903, Uchimura’s activism again forced him to resign a post, when his open advocacy of absolute pacifism in the face of mounting militarism resulted in an inability to continue working for the *Yorozu Chōhō* newspaper.¹⁸² In apparent contradiction to his advocacy of pacifist, Christian, and socialist agendas, Uchimura’s also had a strong interest in *bushidō* and the teachings of Nakae Tōju, whose role in Japan he likened to that of John the Baptist.¹⁸³ Uchimura held *bushidō* up as an integral part of the Japanese character, and placed special emphasis on its virtues of sincerity, courage, and ethical prescriptions.¹⁸⁴ As he summarized in later articles,

“We can solve nearly all of the problems in our lives by relying on *bushidō*. For honesty, noble-mindedness, tolerance, the keeping of promises, not going into debt, not chasing fleeing foes, not taking pleasure in the misfortune of others, for these things we do not need to rely on Christianity.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 71-75.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 80-81.

¹⁸² Ibid., 153-154.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 227-228.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 315-316.

To solve these problems without failure we can rely on the *bushidō* that has been handed down from our ancestors. However, with regard to our duties towards God and our future judgment, *bushidō* does not teach us about these things... Those who cast aside *bushidō* or take it lightly have no chance of becoming virtuous like Christ's disciples. The individuals that God has demanded from among the Japanese people are those who allow Christ to dwell within the soul of a *bushi*.”¹⁸⁵

“*Bushidō* is the greatest product of the Japanese nation, but *bushidō* itself does not have the power to save Japan. Christianity grafted to the stock of *bushidō* is the world's greatest product, and has the power to not only save the Japanese nation but the entire world.”¹⁸⁶

In many ways, Uchimura was more ostensibly traditional than the other Christian writers on *bushidō*, as Mark Mullins has argued with regard to the “Confucian” structure of Uchimura's Non-Church movement and his insistence on the superiority of men to women.¹⁸⁷ At the same time, while certainly nationalistic, his interpretation of *bushidō* rejected the militarism of most contemporary commentators on the subject. Instead, Uchimura relied on *bushidō* and his reading of Yōmeigaku to justify his resistance to the war with Russia in the face of overwhelming popular opinion.¹⁸⁸ Although Uchimura was not the most prolific writer on the subject, he was one of those most strongly impressed by the ethic. Uchimura's disassociation with the foreign churches and strong criticisms of the course his own government took at various times resulted in his alienation from much of society. On the one hand, his Christian faith and belief in *bushidō* combined with his strong-willed nature to give him the strength to pursue his own course, while on the other hand, Uchimura's amalgamation of these two elements presented a possibility for reconciling the frequently conflicting “Japanese” and “foreign” aspects of his life.

¹⁸⁵ Uchimura Kanzō, “Untitled” *Seisho no kenkyū* No. 210 (1916). Reproduced in Matsumae Shigeyoshi, *Budō shisō no tankyū*, 92.

¹⁸⁶ Uchimura, Kanzō. “Untitled” *Seisho no kenkyū* No. 186 (Jan. 10, 1916). Reproduced in Matsumae Shigeyoshi, *Budō shisō no tankyū*, 91.

¹⁸⁷ Mark Mullins, *Christianity Made in Japan: A Study of Indigenous Movements*, 64-66.

¹⁸⁸ For an overview of Uchimura's interest and reliance on the teachings of the Japanese Wang Yangming school, see: Kojima Tsuyoshi, *Kindai nihon no yōmeigaku*, 72-92.

The *bushidō* writings of Ukita Kazutami, a member of the Protestant Kumamoto Band, are significant in part because of his direct challenge to the orthodoxy represented by Inoue Tetsujirō. In Ukita's public debates with Inoue, he rejected the notion that a soldier in a hopeless situation should choose suicide over surrender. On the contrary, a period spent as a prisoner of war could be an opportunity to learn and gain experiences that would help both the individual and the nation in the long term. Ukita's primary criticism of the *bushidō* interpretation put forth by Inoue and Satō Tadashi was that it denied the value of the individual, a core component of Ukita's trademark liberalistic thought.¹⁸⁹ In spite of these misgivings, however, Ukita was not fundamentally opposed to the concept of *bushidō*, and even contributed to the development of *bushidō* discourse after the war. For Ukita, as for many Japanese Christians, *bushidō* had greater relevance outside of the military sphere, and should be implemented to improve ethics in other fields. In this context, much like Ozaki Yukio had almost two decades earlier, Ukita desired to introduce *bushidō* into the world of commerce to shore up Japan's business ethics.¹⁹⁰ Writing the editorial in the July 1910 edition of *Taiyō*, Ukita gave an overview of three contemporary *bushidō* interpretations that he considered to be the most dominant. The first of these was centered around the notion that *bushidō* and the *kokutai* were one and the same; the second interpretation rejected *bushidō* and was intent on replacing it with a different ideology for serving the emperor and strengthening the country; and the third accepted the historical value of *bushidō* but desired to create a more superior "national morality" for the future.¹⁹¹ Ukita claimed to adhere to this third position, and outlined what he saw to be the three major problems with *bushidō* as it was commonly accepted. The first problem was that *bushidō* did not "value character" (*jinkaku no kachi*) sufficiently, and ignored all virtues that were not martial in nature. The second problem was that *bushidō* caused "genius

¹⁸⁹ Takeda Kiyoko, "Ukita Kazutami no 'teikoku shugi ron' to kokumin kyōiku: meiji jiyū shugi no keifū," 17.

¹⁹⁰ Ukita outlined these opinions in 1908 and 1910 articles in the magazine *Taiyō*, where he was a prominent writer (Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, 223).

¹⁹¹ Ukita Kazutami, "Bushidō ni kansuru sanshu no kenkai," 1.

to atrophy” (*tensai wo ishuku*), for unless a person’s abilities were in a military field, they were not considered. Thirdly, and most importantly to Ukita, *bushidō* did not currently apply to the business world, which would determine the future of the nation. In Ukita’s words, “As the people of a martial nation, the Japanese have astounded the world. However, for some reason our credentials as a nation of business people are in a state that the level of trust is even lower than among the Chinese. One cannot avoid saying that this is truly a matter of national shame for Japan.” According to Ukita, the solution to Japan’s problems in the realm of commerce could be solved by adapting *bushidō* to this non-military purpose, and the result would be economic success and the creation of a new national spirit that would be even greater than *bushidō* and could “truly nurture the qualifications of a great cultural people.”¹⁹²

Saeki Yoshirō, like Uchimura, was not one of the most prolific writers on *bushidō*, but the unique nature of his views on the subject demonstrate the diversity of Christian opinion during the late *bushidō* boom. Saeki was an influential Sinologist who first rose to prominence as a scholar in 1908 with an essay on the Nestorian stele of Xi’an, and the history of Christianity in East Asia was the focus of his long academic career. Saeki’s theories were influential, if unorthodox, and the latter traits perhaps best represented by his argument that the Japanese had Jewish ancestry resulting from a Jewish community that had emigrated from the continent and settled on the outskirts of Kyoto in the middle of the fifth century.¹⁹³ Due to his emphasis on the historical connections between Japan and its continental neighbors, Saeki’s thought was popular among many pan-Asianists, and he also sought the roots of *bushidō* in the interaction between cultures. As Saeki wrote in his 1911 *Research on the Nestorian Monument*,

“Chinese Buddhism changed to become Japanese Buddhism. The Chinese learning of the Nara period became the Japanese literature of the Kamakura period. The Great Buddhist art of the Nara period became the filigreed art of Kannon figures. The service of Wen Tianxiang and Xie Bingdei

¹⁹² Ibid., 5-7.

¹⁹³ David G. Goodman and Miyazawa Masanori, *Jews in the Japanese Mind*, 64-65.

in name of Chinese Confucian morality became Japan's unique 'Japanese spirit, Chinese learning'; it became the Yamato spirit; it became *bushidō*. It is not difficult to speculate on these processes.”¹⁹⁴

While acknowledging the influence of Chinese thought and civilization on Japan, Saeki also presented some nationalistic arguments that were more in line with mainstream Japanese thought at the time. In chapter six of his *Research*, titled “The thing called *bushidō* and Confucian morality,” Saeki opined that the unique innate characteristic of “our superior race of the Land of the Gods” is the ability to absorb and digest first Chinese and now Western culture and civilization.¹⁹⁵ In this spirit of amalgamation of foreign ideas, Saeki argued elsewhere in 1908, even with *bushidō*, it was still necessary for Japan to adopt Christianity.¹⁹⁶ For Saeki, *bushidō*, like the *Yamato damashii*, was a unique characteristic arising from Japanese interaction with other peoples, rather than a divinely ordained racial trait. The latter portion of this argument is in line with the views of other Christian writers on *bushidō*, and Saeki also saw the combination of *bushidō* with Christianity as essential. On the other hand, his pan-Asian ideals and close interest in China differentiated him from Christians like Nitobe and Uemura, who were generally dismissive of their continental neighbors. In this regard, Saeki can be seen as the least nationalistic of Christian *bushidō* commentators from this period.

The writings of the Anglican John Toshimichi Imai are some of the most intriguing Christian texts on *bushidō*. Imai was closely affiliated with the British organization Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and through these connections was able spend a year studying in the UK, including stays at Oxford and Cambridge.¹⁹⁷ Writing in English in 1906, Imai's ostensible motivation was to counter the “mistaken” view of *bushidō* being promoted in the West, especially by Nitobe and various British commentators.¹⁹⁸ In his book

¹⁹⁴ Saeki Yoshirō, *Keikyō hibun kenkyū*, 6.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

¹⁹⁶ A. Hamish Ion, “Japan Watchers: 1903-31,” 85.

¹⁹⁷ Adrian Pinnington, “Introduction,” xlii-xliv.

¹⁹⁸ This issue is dealt with in greater depth later in this chapter in the context of *bushidō* developments outside of

Bushido in the Past and Present, Imai attempted to portray a *bushidō* that was more compatible with the Anglican sensibilities of his British acquaintances than the sensationalistic militarism that dominated discussions of the subject in the Western press during the Sino-Japanese War. In doing so, Imai downplayed some of the more nationalistic aspects of *bushidō* as a unique and dominating ethic:

“...it is not always easy to separate what is purely Bushido from the teachings of religion and philosophy. But this is only because Bushido was a simple thing, nothing but a peculiar characteristic energy of the Japanese affected by whatever was the spirit of the times. It had no special doctrine of its own but appropriated from the prevailing forms of religion or philosophy whatever was fit to harmonize with itself or to help in elevating its practical ethics.”¹⁹⁹

“Shintoism and Bushido nevertheless are not to be confused; for the former is a religion while the latter embodied the practical ethics of the Feudal times. If Bushido could go hand in hand with Shintoism, it was equally open to it to pay its adieus to its religions elder sister and form alliance with Buddhism or Confucianism or Taouism, --then, why not also with Christianity?”²⁰⁰

“Let us not be misled for a moment into supposing that the Bushido spirit could ever have originated institutions like the Red Cross Society, or could have lifted into principles such as humanity to prisoners, generosity to the conquered, refraining from loot, and respect for female virtue.”²⁰¹

According to Imai’s reasoning, *bushidō* was not only compatible with Western Christianity, but rather required it to become complete and appropriate for the modern age.²⁰² On the one hand, this line of argumentation was similar to that put forth by Uemura and Uchimura, although Imai’s criticism of *bushidō*’s defects went considerably further, which can be largely attributed

Japan.

¹⁹⁹ Imai John Toshimichi, *Bushido in the Past and Present*, 7.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 9.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 71.

²⁰² Interestingly, another 1906 text presented precisely the opposite argument to Imai’s view of the Red Cross. The authors of *The History of the Development of the Japanese Red Cross Society* stated that while Christianity may have formed the basis for the European Red Cross, the Japanese Red Cross developed purely from the principles of *bushidō* and the Yamato spirit, which were one and the same. (Teikoku haihei isha kai, ed., *Nihon sekijūjisha hattatsu shi*)

to his intended audience being foreign Anglicans. On the other hand, in writing this text, Imai relied almost entirely on the *bushidō* theories of Inoue Tetsujirō as a source of information, making it unavoidable that some of the most nationalistic elements of *bushidō* would seep through. Imai appears to have selected Inoue, who was the best-known commentator on *bushidō* in Japan at the time, due to his criticism of Nitobe's work. As a Christian, Imai must have been aware of Inoue's strong anti-Christian inclination, especially in his earlier writings and harsh condemnation of Uchimura Kanzō fifteen years earlier, but Imai does not allude to this.

Imai's *Bushido in the Past and Present* illustrates the different motivations and currents in Japanese Christian *bushidō* thought at the time. By writing in English and arguing for the compatibility of *bushidō* and Christianity, Imai was similar to Nitobe in trying to promote understanding between cultures. At the same time, by relying almost entirely on the "orthodox" *bushidō* interpretation put forth by Inoue himself, Imai showed a desire to reconcile Christianity with the Japanese character and culture, putting him in line with most Japanese-language writings on *bushidō* by Christian authors.

For both Christians and Buddhists, *bushidō* was seen as an "ideal stock" because of its largely secular nature. While some *bushidō* theorists traced the concept back to the Age of the Gods, many others identified it with the rise to national power of the warrior families in the Kamakura period, thereby making *bushidō* a national character that had developed through historical processes rather than divine providence. In contrast, the *Yamato damashii*, which was often equated to or compared with *bushidō*, was tightly interwoven with Shinto beliefs, making its adoption by adherents of "foreign" religions more problematic. For writers on *bushidō* who used the concept to promote secular ideas, such as Kitagawa Hakuai, the religious connotations of the concept of *Yamato damashii* posed no difficulties, and they simply equated

the two concepts. Promoters of the martial arts, especially, found it expedient to characterize *bushidō* as a martial manifestation of the Yamato spirit from an early stage. Following the successful prosecution of two wars and the intervening intervention in the Boxer Rebellion, however, the idea of a militaristic national character gained appeal among a much broader cross-section of society, and the popularity of *bushidō* led to its increased use in many different contexts, thereby further raising its profile in a reciprocal process that continued until the First World War.

The development of *bushidō* outside of Japan

From its very beginnings, the development of *bushidō* in modern Japan was inextricably linked to the international situation of the time. As this study shows, the most important impetus for the first *bushidō* theories in the Meiji twenties came from a desire among Japanese to redefine their nation against a foreign “other” that was drastically different from China, the previous cultural and scientific center of East Asia. The first *bushidō* theorists were among the most internationally-aware Japanese of their day, and had considerable experience with both the West and China. As such, it is not unusual that the rapid development of *bushidō* in the early twentieth century was mirrored by a parallel *bushidō* boom in other countries. The increase in Japanese publications on the subject was accompanied by a similar rise in English-language publications, albeit on a smaller scale. Just as many Japanese were using *bushidō* as a tool to understand themselves, foreigners were using it as a method to understand the first non-Western international power of the modern age. The nationalistic character of *bushidō* was accepted largely without reservations by Western interpreters, who were generally impressed by and positively disposed to the Japanese immediately after the victory over Russia. The notion that a nation could be defined by an honorable martial spirit appealed to Japan’s allies, impartial observers, and even other Asian nations who desired to follow in Japan’s footsteps.

In the late 1920s, and especially after the Manchurian incident, as Japan's activity on the continent increased misgivings among Western nations who saw their own positions threatened, *bushidō* came to be seen as a negative characteristic responsible for all of the nation's actions that were criticized by the international community. This view was naturally enhanced during the 1930s and the Second World War, and *bushidō* featured prominently in condemnations and polemics against the Japanese.²⁰³ In the years before 1914, however, especially in the period immediately following the Russo-Japanese War, Japan and *bushidō* were viewed almost wholly positively in the West, and even continental Asian thinkers saw much that they desired to emulate. This section examines the nature and extent of the *bushidō* boom outside of Japan, both in the West and in East Asia, with an emphasis on the characteristics of the individuals who acted as interpreters and emissaries of *bushidō* to foreign lands.

The dates of the *bushidō* boom in the Anglophone world can be marked with greater precision than in Japan. Nitobe Inazō's *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* was published in 1900, but it was not until the outbreak of war against Russia that the book was republished and became a resounding success as the world looked with astonishment to the events transpiring in Northeast Asia. Before this, Nitobe's work had failed to make an impression as there were many other, more popular works on Japan by established writers such as Basil Hall Chamberlain, Isabella Bird, and Lafcadio Hearn. The successful prosecution of the war with Russia made the world more receptive to a specifically martial interpretation of the Japanese character, and *bushidō* soon rose to the fore.

After Nitobe's *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* appeared in 1900, it took only one more year for the subject to be given another extensive treatment in English, this time within the pages of Francis Brinkley's (1841-1912) survey of Japan published in 1901-2. In this sensationalistic work, Brinkley, a former British Army officer who lived in Japan through the entire Meiji period,

²⁰³ See, for example, Edward F.L. Russell's *The Knights of Bushido* or Taid O'Conroy's *The Menace of Japan*.

focused on martial aspects of Japan and *bushidō* to a greater degree than Nitobe, arguing that “in the earliest times revealed by history the Japanese nation consisted entirely of soldiers. The sovereign was the commander-in-chief; the *Oomi* and *Omuraji* were his lieutenants. There was no distinction of ‘civil’ and ‘military.’”²⁰⁴ Brinkley also went further than Nitobe in his exaltation of *bushidō*’s place in the Japanese religious firmament. While Nitobe acknowledged the influence of Shinto, Buddhism, and Confucianism on *bushidō*, Brinkley dismissed these as significant factors:

“It is usual to call Buddhism or *Shinto* the religion of Japan, but if religion be the source from which spring the motives of men’s noblest actions, then the religion of Japan was neither the law of the Buddha (*Buppō*) nor the Path of the Gods (*Shin-tō*) but the Way of the Warrior (*Bushi-dō*). *Shin-tō* was never more than a cult. It invited men to obey the suggestions of conscience and to leave the rest to heaven. ... Buddhism, indeed, was a living faith; a faith which often stirred its propagandists to deeds of high devotion and its disciples to acts of enthusiastic self-sacrifice. Yet in all ages Buddhism sat very lightly on the Japanese people. ... Buddhism helped to develop the soldier’s creed, but never played as large a part as the latter in shaping the nation’s moral history.”²⁰⁵

If one considers the controversy that ensued after the publication of Kume Kunitake’s (久米邦武, 1839-1931) objective study of Shinto ten years earlier, it seems unlikely that Brinkley’s comments on Shinto would have been published by a Japanese writer at the time.²⁰⁶ Similar views on *bushidō* were put forth by myriad other commentators, with laudatory assessments coming especially after 1904 from individuals concerned with military affairs.²⁰⁷ Prominent examples included the writings of Charles A’Court Repington (1858-1925), who reported on the Russo-Japanese War for *The Times*. Repington’s opinion of *bushidō* was similar to that of Nitobe in his belief that it was the very soul of the Japanese nation, and he also echoed Inoue’s

²⁰⁴ Frank Brinkley, *Japan, its history, arts and literature* (Volume 2), 176.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 173-174.

²⁰⁶ For an overview of the debates surrounding Kume, see: John S. Brownlee, *Japanese Historians and the National Myths, 1600-1945*, 98-99.

²⁰⁷ For a discussion of *bushidō*-related reports in the British press, see: Colin Holmes and A.H. Ion, “Bushido and the Samurai: Images in British Public Opinion, 1894-1914,” 318-325.

views in disparaging chivalry in favor of *bushidō*. According to Repington, chivalry had never managed to penetrate beyond a small elite, whereas *bushidō* was an ethic of the highest moral and philosophical principles that, to use Holmes and Ion's words, was "relevant not only to the warrior but also to ordinary men and women in times of peace. In short, it greatly accounted for Japan's social as well as military progress."²⁰⁸

Although Nitobe often played down militaristic aspects of his *bushidō*, at least in his early writings, it is impossible to separate the *bushidō* boom abroad from the events of the Russo-Japanese War. As S.P. MacKenzie has pointed out, during and immediately following the conflict, most observers tended to define the war in terms of "patriotism" and "fighting spirit" rather than tactics and armaments. The "human bullet" attacks against Russian positions deeply impressed the assembled French, British, and German observers, and even the Russian commanders later blamed their defeat on the superior fighting spirit of the Japanese.²⁰⁹ The Europeans would take these ill-guided conclusions back to their home countries, where they would prove to be disastrously mistaken in 1914. For the time being, however, most foreign observers and reporters, as well as the readers of their dispatches at home, were enamored with the Japanese fighting spirit as manifested in *bushidō*.

As Nitobe's work demonstrated, *bushidō* was not necessarily limited to wartime, and an idealized view of samurai and warrior society also captured the imaginations of British social reformers. Fabian Socialists, for example, became interested in *bushidō* as a possible model and solution for the difficulties facing Britain as the economic power of the nation declined relative to the United States and Germany. Among the Fabians, especially Beatrice Webb (1858-1943) and Oliver Lodge (1851-1940), the apparent devotion with which Japanese subordinated individual desires for the good of the nation and society was promoted as an ideal model, and H.G. Wells named the "voluntary nobility" of the ideal state portrayed in his 1905

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 318.

²⁰⁹ S. P. MacKenzie, "Willpower or Firepower? The Unlearned Lessons of the Russo-Japanese War," 33-34.

novel *A Modern Utopia* “samurai.”²¹⁰ On the whole, there was much that foreigners could find admirable in the vision of Japan that was transmitted to them during and after the Russo-Japanese War, and promoters of *bushidō* such as Nitobe, Brinkley, and Repington were eager to supply them with a continual flow of select information and idealistic theories.

The end of the *bushidō* boom in the West occurred around 1914, as Europe became too involved with its own conflicts to devote much attention to Japan, which was only a peripheral actor in the First World War from a Western standpoint. Even after 1918, the West was preoccupied with the consequences of the war for many years, and the end of the *bushidō* boom in Japan meant that there was not much stimulus coming from Japan itself in this regard. The *bushidō* boom that took place in the West in the decade after 1904 was also dependent on coincidental shifts in the makeup of the foreign community in Japan during this period. As Hamish Ion has argued, almost an entire generation of experienced Japan hands left Japan around the time of the Russo-Japanese War, and was not replaced by expatriots with sufficient Japanese linguistic and cultural competency until the 1920s.²¹¹ Others, like Basil Hall Chamberlain, remained longer but did not contribute to discourse as actively as before.²¹² At the same time, a new generation of Japanese with a high degree of English fluency, including Nitobe Inazō, Okakura Kakuzō (Tenshin), and Suematsu Kenchō (末松謙澄, 1855-1920) had arisen and were enthusiastic and able to fill the void. As a result, the *bushidō* boom that occurred in the English-speaking world was essentially directed by Japanese writing about their own culture in English, with few non-Japanese critiquing or questioning their claims. The *bushidō* transmitted to the outside world in this way was fundamentally nationalistic, as would be expected, but it was not always homogenous. Some of the arguments that divided *bushidō*

²¹⁰ Colin Holmes and A.H. Ion, “Bushido and the Samurai: Images in British Public Opinion, 1894-1914,” 321-2.

²¹¹ A. Hamish Ion, “Japan Watchers: 1903-31,” 82-83.

²¹² According to Ōta Yūzō, Chamberlain spent his last decade in Japan reediting and publishing his more popular general-interest works rather than doing much new academic research. See: Ota Yuzo, *Basil Hall Chamberlain: Portrait of a Japanologist*, 85-6.

interpreters within Japan were carried over into English-language writings, with Inoue Tetsujirō's views featuring prominently, albeit in the words of others more versed in English.

Understandably, one of the greatest differences between *bushidō* discourse in Japan and the West was the prominence of Nitobe Inazō's interpretations in the latter. While the content of his *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* was not taken seriously by most Japanese who were familiar with it, outside of Japan it was translated into more than a dozen languages and acted as the cornerstone for discussions of *bushidō* abroad. Even writers who disagreed with Nitobe's views were obliged to explicitly or implicitly frame their own interpretations as responses to his work, which also accounts for much of the significance that has been attached to Nitobe's role since the 1980s. *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* remained the dominant interpretation of *bushidō* in the West at least up to World War II, as can be seen in the writings of Japanese-American leaders in Seattle in the 1930s. James Sakamoto, publisher of the *Japanese American Courier*, cited *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* to argue that Japanese could only serve one lord or nation, and would therefore be loyal to the United States, the country of their birth.²¹³

Nitobe's influence on Western notions of *bushidō* has been studied in depth elsewhere,²¹⁴ and this study focuses on examining some other, lesser-known works that demonstrate the extent of the English-language *bushidō* boom, as well as its characteristics. In the context of currents within domestic Japanese *bushidō* affecting foreign discourse on the subject, perhaps the most important example is John Toshimichi Imai's 1906 book *Bushido in the Past and in the Present*.²¹⁵ In this work, Imai provided foreign audiences with an explanation of Inoue Tetsujirō's views on *bushidō*, including his criticisms of Nitobe's theories, while at the same time emphasizing *bushidō*'s links with Christianity. As Adrian Pinnington has pointed out, Imai did not always agree entirely with Inoue's conclusions, especially where

²¹³ Azuma Eiichiro, *Between Two Empires : Race, History, and Transnationalism in Japanese America*, 130-132.

²¹⁴ The best treatment of Nitobe in English remains John Howes ed., *Nitobe Inazo: Japan's Bridge across the Pacific*.

²¹⁵ Imai John Toshimichi, *Bushido in the Past and Present*.

they conflicted with his Christian beliefs, but most of his arguments were taken directly from Inoue's works.²¹⁶ Imai's discussion of the origins of *bushidō* was largely in agreement with Inoue's:

"All I can say is, that we believe there is a spirit peculiar to the Japanese, inborn in the old Yamato race, and that this spirit began to reveal itself in a more or less definite shape as *Bushido* during the Feudal system founded by Yoritomo (A.D. 1186), and that it reached its zenith at the beginning of the Shogunate of the Tokugawa family in the beginning of the 17th century."²¹⁷

With regard to the post-Tokugawa development of *bushidō*, Imai also concurred with Inoue in seeking *bushidō* in the armed forces:

"We cannot, as Professor Inouye well says, point to any one as the founder of Bushido, as we can in the case of Buddhism, Confucianism &c. We can only say that, the spirit gradually and almost spontaneously expressed itself in the form that we call 'Bushido' during a period of about six hundred years, which covers Japanese history from Yoritomo's founding of the Feudal system to the Shogunate of the Tokugawa family; and that it ceased as Bushido, in the technical sense of the term, at the downfall of the Feudal system. It is none the less unquestionable that its tradition has been transmitted to our Army and Navy, and that to the Bushido spirit must mainly be ascribed the glory that our country displayed in the China Japan war; in the time of the Boxer outbreak; and more recently in our momentous conflict with Russia."²¹⁸

"For the Feudal system was the body which Bushido animated. With the dissolution of the body came the disembodiment of the soul. And where could it find a new abode other than in the barracks and beneath the uniforms? So the officers in our Army are to-day the heirs of Bushido; it is preserved in the military life but has had to adapt itself to strange new conditions."²¹⁹

Perhaps the clearest connection between Imai and Inoue is in their explanation of the development of *bushidō* as a written and codified ethic:

²¹⁶ Adrian Pinnington, "Introduction," xlvii-xlviii.

²¹⁷ Imai John Toshimichi, *Bushido in the Past and Present*, 5.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 16-17.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 61.

“It is not, as some might imagine, a *Philosophy*. There was nothing philosophical in its course of development... Writings of sages and scholars were read and meditated upon but they did not affect Bushido proper further than in suggesting practical application of moral ideas, and there their influence stopped.”²²⁰

“But to revert once more to my statement that Bushido is not a philosophy. While maintaining the truth of this I am prepared to admit that under the treatment of the illustrious disciples of Wang Yang Ming such as Nakae Toju (1608-1848) and Kumazawa Banzan [sic] (1619-1691) it indeed developed into a form of Socratic doctrine.”²²¹

In addition to citing Yōmeigaku as a strong influence on *bushidō*, Imai also followed Inoue in positing the first formulation of *bushidō* in the works of Yamaga Sokō:

“But if Bushido had no originator in the true sense, and if we cannot wholly get to the secret of it by studying the writings of its masters, Professor Inoue cites one Yamaga Sokō as having best claim to the title of founder, and I think he is right; for whether founder or not, by his teachings and personality he did more than any other to raise Bushido to its height. In any case he is quite a typical master on Bushido to be introduced to the world.”²²²

While Imai cited Inoue heavily, including his derision of European chivalry as “woman-worship” (*josei sūhai* in Inoue’s words), he disagreed with him in some respects. Imai echoed Tsuda Sōkichi’s criticism of Nitobe in stating that rather than *bushidō*, focus should be on “the Japan Spirit or ‘*Yamatodamashii*,’ for Bushido was the form in which this spirit developed itself under the feudal system; and it is *Aikokushin* or Patriotism in which this spirit finds its new development under the restored government of the Emperor.”²²³ Imai further criticized *Bushidō* because he felt that it was “against the present idea of venerating the Emperor” and “against the idea of constitutional government.”²²⁴

²²⁰ Ibid., 6.

²²¹ Ibid., 10.

²²² Ibid., 17.

²²³ Ibid., 69.

²²⁴ Ibid., 67

Imai's arguments on *bushidō* were often contradictory, although in all fairness many works on the subject suffered from this deficiency. In Imai's case, the inconsistencies arose from conflicting motivations. His work was primarily a response to Nitobe's *Bushidō: The Soul of Japan* and similarly-themed works popular in Britain at the time, especially a 1904 *Times* article by Repington.²²⁵ Imai was prompted to write his book by members of the Anglican community in Japan at the time, including the missionary Lionel Cholmondeley (1858-1945).²²⁶ As Hamish Ion has argued, there was considerable animosity towards Nitobe among those with British connections, due largely to his American affiliation.²²⁷ Imai was also a staunch patriot who was not wholly averse to the concept of *bushidō*, prompting him to rely on Inoue's nationalistic arguments. Reliance on Inoue made problems of interpretation inevitable for a Christian like Imai, and his text betrayed the difficulties Imai had in reconciling the conflicting demands of his patriotism and Anglicanism, as well as the desire to critique Nitobe and Repington through reliance on a scholar with whom he would have had fundamental disagreements.

In addition to Imai's specific criticism of certain *bushidō* interpretations, but which ultimately took a favorable view of the martial ethic, there were other English-language commentators, both Japanese and foreign, who attacked *bushidō* more harshly and comprehensively. The most prominent of the Japanese *bushidō* critics writing in English was Okakura Tenshin, who disliked the militaristic light in which his nation was being cast around the time of the Russo-Japanese War. In his 1906 *The Book of Tea*, Okakura attempted to define the Japanese character in terms of peaceful "teaism" rather than warrior virtues:

"Those who cannot feel the littleness of great things in themselves are apt to overlook the greatness of little things in others. The average Westerner, in his sleek complacency, will see in the tea ceremony but another instance of the thousand and one oddities which constitute the quaintness and

²²⁵ Peter O'Connor, "General Introduction."

²²⁶ Adrian Pinnington, "Introduction," xxxvii.

²²⁷ A. Hamish Ion, "Japan Watchers: 1903-31," 100

childishness of the East to him. He was wont to regard Japan as barbarous while she indulged in the gentle arts of peace: he calls her civilised since she began to commit wholesale slaughter on Manchurian battlefields. Much comment has been given lately to the Code of the Samurai,--the Art of Death which makes our soldiers exult in self-sacrifice; but scarcely any attention has been drawn to Teism, which represents so much of our Art of Life. Fain would we remain barbarians, if our claim to civilization were to be based on the gruesome glory of war. Fain would we await the time when due respect shall be paid to our art and ideals.”²²⁸

Okakura’s criticism of *bushidō* and the contemporary tendency to measure degrees of civilization by levels of militarization reflected liberal and pacifistic trends that had developed in Japan over the previous decade and were continuing to gain momentum. There is also a sense of frustration that underlies this passage, and Okakura obviously felt as though the wave of popularity on which *bushidō* was riding would be difficult if not impossible to break. On the other hand, it is evident that even in his critique, Okakura accepted the historical legitimacy of *bushidō* as a martial ethic handed down from the samurai and animating modern Japanese soldiers, demonstrating that *bushidō* had become so thoroughly disseminated in Japan by this point that even its critics did not doubt its validity.

The most comprehensive questioning of *bushidō*’s pedigree in late Meiji came from foreigners who had spent considerable time in Japan, although it is doubtful that any of their comments would have been picked up in Japan. According to Alexander Bannerman, a British language officer in Japan during the Russo-Japanese War, “Bushido has on the modern Japanese spirit much the same influence that the principles of the Sermon on the Mount have at the present time in England.”²²⁹ C.A.L. Yate, also a language officer and acquaintance of Bannerman, went even further, stating that “I have read ‘Bushido’ from cover to cover. ... I feel convinced that the ancient feudal classes knew and cared little about a great deal that is written in it.”²³⁰

²²⁸ Okakura Kakuzō, *The Book of Tea*, 6-8.

²²⁹ This quotation is from a 1910 lecture given at the Royal United Services Institute, and is cited in A. Hamish Ion, “Japan Watchers: 1903-31,” 89.

²³⁰ Bannerman was present in the audience at the lecture by Yate mentioned above, and his comments are cited in *Ibid.*, 89.

Both Yate and Bannerman were commenting several years after the war itself, and identified Japan's modern systems of education, conscription, and armament as the primary reasons for Japan's victory.²³¹ Currently, most historians agree that a combination of Russia's internal problems, long supply lines, and poorly equipped troops, as well as the geopolitical situation were the deciding factors in the conflict, but for decades after 1905 commentators such as Yate and Bannerman who denied the role of *bushidō* were a small minority.

The harshest dismissal of *bushidō* in any language was the well-known assessment by Basil Hall Chamberlain in his 1912 pamphlet *The Invention of a New Religion*.²³² Chamberlain's assertion that *bushidō* was a complete fabrication that had not existed before about 1900 has frequently been cited by critics of *bushidō* in recent decades, but it is doubtful that it had a great effect at the time of its publication. Chamberlain had become disillusioned with developments in Japan and returned to Britain in 1911, but his opinion must be given due consideration given the fact that he was an accomplished scholar and had a greater knowledge of Japanese language, literature, history, and culture than almost any other foreigner of his day. Given the historical evidence cited in this study regarding the development of *bushidō* in the modern period, it seems that instead of ignoring or questioning Chamberlain's view of *bushidō*, as some recent promoters of the subject have done, it would be more useful to enquire why no similar statements seem to have been made by Chamberlain's Japanese contemporaries.

Chamberlain's efforts notwithstanding, critical assessments of *bushidō* in the West remained the exception rather than the rule during the *bushidō* boom, and works promoting the subject enjoyed far greater popularity than the writings of a small group of detractors, especially since discourse during this period was dominated by English-speaking Japanese and other Japan-friendly commentators. The fascination with *bushidō* as a martial spirit or force for social order was not limited to Western nations, however, and the subject also garnered

²³¹ Ibid., 90.

²³² Basil Hall Chamberlain, *The Invention of a New Religion*. London: Rationalist Press, 1912.

considerable interest among Japan's neighbors in Asia.²³³ The large numbers of Chinese and Korean students and activists in Japan during the *bushidō* boom meant that the concept would not go unnoticed in those nations, which, in spite of their political difficulties with Japan, saw the country as a model of Asian modernization that should ideally be emulated.²³⁴ Among these exiles, the Chinese journalist and reformist leader Liang Qichao (梁啟超, 1873-1929) spent considerable time in Japan under these circumstances, and experienced the height of the *bushidō* boom. Liang found *bushidō* to be an attractive notion and believed that there was a considerable potential for introducing it into China to strengthen the “national spirit” of the country. Like most other contemporary observers, Liang sought the reasons for Japan's military successes in *bushidō*, but in his estimation *bushidō* was not specifically limited to the Japanese. There were two primary reasons for Liang's conviction that *bushidō* could be transplanted to other countries, especially China. The first was Liang's strong interest in the Social Darwinist theories that were popular at the time.²³⁵ In this context, an ideology such as *bushidō* was simply an element of the nationalistic spirit created and inculcated by the Meiji government, and a tool that could be adopted for use in the great evolutionary struggle between people and nations. The problem of nationalism, or rather a lack thereof, was one of the most important issues for Chinese activists in the modern period, and Sun Yat-sen made it the first of his Three Principles of the People.²³⁶ The second factor that made Liang confident that *bushidō* could be introduced to China was the close connection between the warrior ethic and modern Yōmeigaku. In this regard, some of Liang's writings are quite similar to those of Inoue

²³³ For an overview of the dissemination of *bushidō* from Japan to China, especially in the context of Wang Yangming's teachings, see: Oleg Benesch, “Wang Yangming and Bushidō: Japanese Nativization and its Influences in Modern China.”

²³⁴ For a discussion of Chinese exchange students in late-Meiji Japan, see: Douglas R. Reynolds, *China 1898-1912: The Xinzhen Revolution and Japan*. and Paula Harell, *Sowing the Seeds of Change: Chinese Students, Japanese Teachers 1895-1905*.

²³⁵ Christine Reinhold, *Studying the Enemy: Japan Hands in Republican China and Their Quest for National Identity, 1925-1945*.

²³⁶ Sun Yat-sen (Frank W. Price, trans.). *San Min Chu I: The Three Principles of the People*.

Tetsujirō at this time, as Sueoka Hiroshi has pointed out.²³⁷ Wang Yangming, along with his Japanese interpreters Nakae Tōju and Kumazawa Banzan, was one of the figures mentioned most frequently by modern *bushidō* theorists. It was perhaps natural that a nationalist such as Liang would seize on the Chinese teachings that he saw at the heart of the *bushidō* ethic, and use them as a bridge for his attempts to spread *bushidō* in China.

The culmination of Liang's interest in *bushidō* was the 1904 publication of *China's Bushidō* (*Zhongguo zhi wushidao*), a book in which he argued for a native Chinese martial spirit but consciously used the Japanese term.²³⁸ After reiterating the popular belief that Japan was a militaristic culture relative to China's more literature-focused civilization, Liang stated that China also had a storied *bushidō* tradition that it could call upon to strengthen the nation in this time of crisis. To this end, Liang cited examples from Chinese history to demonstrate the nation's own *bushidō*, beginning with the military character of the unification processes in China that brought the country together from "10,000 states" to a single one.²³⁹ Liang's ideas promoting *bushidō* and the revival of Wang Yangming studies had a powerful influence on Chinese leaders in subsequent decades, including Yan Xishan (閻錫山, 1883-1960) and Chen Cheng (陳誠, 1897?-1965), who desired to introduce these teachings into Chinese society and the military. Chinese studies of *bushidō* became common in the 1920s and 1930s,²⁴⁰ and Yan authored a pamphlet arguing that only through the adoption of *bushidō* could China hope to resist the Japanese advances.²⁴¹ For his part, Chen decreed that the cadets at the Paoting Military Academy memorize large sections of Liang's *China's Bushidō*.²⁴²

There were also movements to promote *bushidō* in Korea, especially at the end of the Meiji period. In this context, Pak Un-sik (朴殷植, 1859-1925), a Confucian scholar and

²³⁷ Sueoka Hiroshi, "Liang Qichao to nihon no chūgoku tetsugaku kenkyū," 179-181.

²³⁸ Liang Qichao, *Zhongguo zhi wushidao*.

²³⁹ Ibid., 1-2.

²⁴⁰ Wu Anlong and Xiong Dayun, *Chūgokujin no nihon kenkyū shi*, 224.

²⁴¹ Donald G. Gillin, "Portrait of a Warlord: Yen Hsi-shan in Shansi Province, 1911-1930," 291.

²⁴² Donald G. Gillin, "Problems of Centralization in Republican China," 839.

historian who was elected president of the Korean Provisional Government in exile shortly before his death, was strongly influenced by Japanese Yōmeigaku and *bushidō* in the first decade of the twentieth century. For Pak and others, the threat of a complete Japanese takeover of Korea prompted them to look for solutions in many different areas. To some, Liang Qichao's writings held considerable sway, and they agreed that the increased development of nationalism would be of immeasurable aid to Korea's efforts to maintain her independence.²⁴³ Pak also saw the implementation of Yangming's philosophy as a way of revitalizing Korea and paving the way to modernization and prosperity similar to that occurring in Japan, which he attributed largely to a Japanese reliance on Yōmeigaku.²⁴⁴ Pak had originally been a traditional scholar of the Zhu Xi School before rejecting those teachings as outdated and unable to make relevant contributions to the troubles facing the nation. Pak's break with the Korean Confucian tradition and adoption of Wang Yangming's philosophy was a radical step for a nationalist activist such as himself, and his promotion of *bushidō* was even more unusual given his fierce resistance to the imminent annexation of Korea by Japan. Nonetheless, Pak was able to transcend his antipathy towards Japanese designs in Korea and suggest that Koreans should adopt a military spirit similar to *bushidō*, hoping that the ideology would have a similar effect on his countrymen as it did on the Japanese, strengthening their national consciousness and courage in their struggle against colonial control.²⁴⁵

The overseas *bushidō* boom that took place during and after the Russo-Japanese War was a global phenomenon. It was most pronounced in the Western nations that had close relations with Japan and sent observers to the conflict, as well as among Japan's neighbors in East Asia. The translation of Nitobe's *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* into other languages, including German, Polish, Russian, Hungarian, Norwegian, French, Chinese, Bohemian, and

²⁴³ Chizuko Allen, "Northeast Asia Centered Around Korea: Ch'oe Namson's View of History," 789.

²⁴⁴ Chai-Sik Chung, "The Case of Neo-Confucian Yangban Intellectuals," 353-354.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 354-355.

Maharati, shows that its reach extended to these nations, as well.²⁴⁶ The overseas *bushidō* boom was almost as diverse as its Japanese counterpart, although both were defined by the existence of a dominant interpretation and responses to it. In Japan, this was the “orthodox” *bushidō* promoted by Inoue and other nationalists, while in the West Nitobe’s book was the primary point of reference. In East Asia, linguistic and cultural affinities meant that Nitobe had little impact, and Chinese and Korean commentators were able to directly follow the development of *bushidō* in Japanese. In these nations, those interested in *bushidō* perhaps found more worthy of emulation than did thinkers in the West, but they were also forced to review and revise some of the nationalistic and Japan-specific characteristics of *bushidō*, leading many of them to focus instead on the study of Wang Yangming. The overseas *bushidō* boom is also important in that its occurrence, if not necessarily its content, was certainly registered by Japanese at home and abroad, and their own beliefs in the validity of the ethic were reinforced by international recognition of the same. In spite of the differences in their content, the various contemporaneous *bushidō* booms that took place throughout the world in the decade from 1904 had a reciprocal effect by which mutual recognition of the subject led to increased interest in *bushidō* in each discursal sphere.

Conclusions regarding the late *bushidō* boom

Following the Russo-Japanese War, Japan’s uncertain economic and political state resulted in considerable changes in *bushidō* discourse. On one hand, the *bushidō* boom had reached a peak by the end of the war, and the emperor-centered interpretation of *bushidō* promoted by Inoue had become established as the orthodox view. On the other hand, the great popularity of the subject during the late *bushidō* boom meant that it was appropriated by many

²⁴⁶ These are the languages for which Nitobe states full or partial translations have been undertaken by the time of publication of the tenth edition of his *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* in 1905.

different causes and individuals for their own ends. In addition, parallel *bushidō* discourses in other countries gave the concept even greater legitimacy, and it came to be one of the central themes used by both Japanese and foreigners to discuss Japanese culture and society.

By 1914, *bushidō* was a key component of military and civil ethics education, especially in the form of National Morality teachings. The notion of “loyalty to the emperor, love for the nation” was closely linked with *bushidō*, contributing to the rapid popularization of the warrior ethic during periods of nationalistic and martialistic fervor, such as 1904-05. The high profile of *bushidō* then led to its adoption by promoters of religious groups, sports, magazines, and books in a reciprocally-influencing cycle that continued throughout Meiji and into early Taishō. In this sense, the development of *bushidō* was both market-driven and market-driving. The broad framework of the government-approved orthodox *bushidō* gave the concept legitimacy and aided its dissemination through the education system and military, but allowed sufficient leeway for other interpreters to adapt the concept to their own purposes.

The combination of theoretical flexibility with an apparent nationalistic and historical pedigree lent *bushidō* resilience that kept it vital and growing throughout the late Meiji period, and explains its resurgence in early Shōwa and again at the end of the twentieth century. As the next chapter shows, however, the identification of *bushidō* with the nation and emperor could also negatively affect its popularity when Japanese attitudes towards these institutions shifted, and these changes would also damage its status in popular culture.

CHAPTER 5 The End of the *Bushidō* Boom

The end of the Meiji period was one of the most symbol-laden conclusions to an imperial reign in Japanese history. Over the course of less than half a century, the nation had gone from an isolated state unable to resist the demands of the Western powers to the dominant player in Northeast Asia with its own colonial territories. This transformation was identified with the figure of the Meiji emperor, and his death signaled the end of an era of great progress as well as the beginning of an age of uncertainty with regard to the nation's future course. After the Russo-Japanese War, the specters of socialism and anarchism came to weigh most heavily on those in power, culminating in the Great Treason Incident of 1910. While the extent of this alleged plot to assassinate the emperor is debatable, it shocked many Japanese for whom the very possibility of such an action was inconceivable. In this sense, both the reported attempt on the sovereign's life, as well as his natural passing two years later, signified a break with the past and a chance to reflect on how far the nation had come. This feeling was brought to a point on the day of the imperial funeral by the apparent suicides of General Nogi Maresuke and his wife, Shizuko (b. 1859).¹ The emperor symbolized the nation in its entirety, including its modernization and development, but Nogi was viewed as the incarnation of Japan's traditional virtues and sense of honor, and was referred to as the "flower of *bushidō*" (*bushidō no hana*) and "epitome of *bushidō*" (*bushidō no tenkei*).² For this reason, his death by *seppuku* had a tremendous impact on *bushidō* discourse, and the debates that followed this event can be viewed as an exclamation point at the end of the *bushidō* boom.

Between 1898 and 1912, *bushidō* went from being a little-known concept to a household word that was widely used to define the character of Japan both at home and abroad.

¹ There are still considerable uncertainties regarding the exact circumstances surrounding the death of the Nogis, as the subsequent investigation revealed that Shizuko died before her husband. This has led some to speculate that she was either killed by him, or committed suicide first to spur him into action. For an overview of the arguments in English, see: Doris G. Bargen, *Suicidal Honor*, 70-74.

² Kōno Masayoshi, *Bushidō no tenkei Nogi taishō*.

This transformation was facilitated by a reciprocally-strengthening combination of institutional support and popular interest. During the Taishō period, however, the balance of these two factors shifted, resulting in a significant decline in the profile of *bushidō*. On one hand, institutional promotion of *bushidō* in civilian and military education remained fairly constant during the 1910s. On the other hand, mainstream popular culture turned away from *bushidō* during this same period, and did not begin to rediscover the subject in earnest until early Shōwa. The lack of interest in *bushidō* during most of Taishō was due to a complex interplay of factors, including shifts in nationalism, views of Japan's status in the world, the person of the emperor, and militarism. At the same time, institutional promotion of *bushidō* kept the concept relevant and gave it greater legitimacy through collective exposure, creating the conditions for its resurgence in early Shōwa.

This chapter examines the factors that led to the end of the *bushidō* boom around 1914, and especially the role of General Nogi in this process. It further provides an overview of the character and trajectory of *bushidō* discourse in Taishō and early Shōwa, thereby identifying the conditions that made a second *bushidō* boom in the 1930s and 1940s possible. A comprehensive examination of *bushidō* discourse in the “dark valley” of Shōwa and its uses in the Pacific War is a subject for a future study, but this chapter highlights several broad trends and important works that indicate the significance of the concept to wartime education and propaganda.

Nogi Maresuke and the end of the *bushidō* boom

Nogi Maresuke was born the third son of his father, a high-ranking retainer of the Mōri clan of Chōshū. After his two older brothers died at a young age, Nogi became heir of the main Nogi house, a role he seems to have accepted reluctantly. Nogi is said to have been a frail child, one of whose nicknames was “crybaby” (*nakito*), and was reportedly subject to considerable

bullying by his peers.³ As a youth, Nogi displayed more interest in literature than military matters, running away from home at fifteen to study under Yoshida Shōin's uncle Tamaki Bunnoshin (玉本文之進, 1810-1876), a renowned scholar and founder of the Shōka Sonjuku school.⁴ Through this ostensibly academic connection, Nogi became involved in the armed conflicts of the late 1860s, in which a large number of Shōka Sonjuku students and alumni assumed prominent roles in the Chōshū cause. In 1869, Nogi was transferred to the imperial guard, and gradually moved up the army ranks. In 1875, Nogi was the aide-de-camp of Yamagata Aritomo, a connection that proved to be important in Nogi's later career.

The first major crises in Nogi's professional life were his roles in putting down rebellions in his own domain of Chōshū in 1870 and again in 1876, with the death of his younger brother on the opposing side of the latter conflict leaving Nogi with powerful feelings of guilt. After Nogi's death, this incident was one of several put forth as possible motivations for his *seppuku*.⁵ Only one year later, Nogi suffered another shock when he rashly attacked a vastly superior rebel force during the Satsuma Rebellion, losing the imperial banner in the process. This incident greatly shamed Nogi, and he referred to it in the first line of his final farewell letter.⁶ After an 18-month spell in Germany in the late 1880s to study Prussian military techniques, Nogi was placed in charge of the Imperial Guards and then the Fifth Infantry Brigade in Nagoya. However, Nogi briefly resigned from the military in 1892, with one theory holding that this action was prompted by a feeling of humiliation due to the "laughter of young officers when he lost his dentures and his horse stepped on them."⁷

Nogi had reached a high rank by this point, and was called back to the army in 1893, but his promotion process was far from smooth. Nogi's rate of promotion was among the

³ Doris G. Bargen, *Suicidal Honor*, 34.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 40-3.

⁶ "Nogi taishō yuigonsho," 57.

⁷ Doris G. Bargen, *Suicidal Honor*, 48.

slowest of his class, and Ōhama Tetsuya has argued that this was due to Nogi's lack of strategic knowledge and leadership ability. Instead, it seems that the fact that Nogi was promoted at all was largely due to his roots in Chōshū and close personal relationships with Yamagata and exceptional soldiers like Katsura Tarō and Kodama Gentarō. According to Ōhama, Nogi's tactics were largely restricted to direct frontal assaults, leading to his forces being consistently routed on the training fields by those of Kodama and other colleagues.⁸ This single-minded and seemingly reckless approach, which resulted in the loss of the imperial banner in 1877, brought Nogi considerable fame in 1894, however, when his forces took the supposedly indomitable fortress of Port Arthur in a single day, making him an instant national hero. There had been considerable unrest among the Chinese troops within the fortress following the Japanese victory at Dalian shortly before, and word of this situation had begun to spread. Morale was allegedly so low among the defenders that Chinese soldiers were looting the town before the attack and the Chinese officers fled on board two small ships, leaving their men and effectively surrendering the fortress.⁹ Due to the deplorable conditions in the fortress, Nogi's frontal assault met with little resistance, although it is difficult to know whether this easy victory was due to good intelligence or good fortune.

The view that this success was a one-off was strengthened by events ten years later, when recently-promoted General Nogi attempted the same feat again, this time against Russian forces holding Port Arthur. His direct, "human bullet" (*nikudan*) approach cost tens of thousands of lives, including those of both of his sons, over several months. Nogi was finally relieved by Kodama Gentarō (児玉源太郎, 1852-1906), who managed to take the fortress after several more weeks of fighting. In spite of this, the surrender ceremony was conducted by Nogi and the Russian general Stoessel, and most people believed that the victory had been Nogi's. In the interest of maintaining wartime morale, the Japanese government decided

⁸ Ōhama Tetsuya, *Nogi Maresuke*, 104-109.

⁹ S.C.M. Paine, *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895: Perceptions, Power, and Primacy*, 207-209.

against exposing the internal wrangling in the military and, as an established hero, Nogi was useful for purposes of domestic and international propaganda. As a result, Nogi was again celebrated as the hero of Port Arthur, but was fully aware of his own failure and the factors behind the honors he received. These dynamics, combined with the deaths of his sons, are frequently given as factors in his desire to commit suicide as a means of atonement and release.¹⁰ The last years of Meiji were especially difficult for Nogi, as he was under pressure to maintain the pretense of being a heroic and able commander, while he and his peers were aware of his failings. This can be seen in events after the war, when Nogi once again left active duty and was “appointed to the Peers school because the government maintained popular respect for his image as hero of Port Arthur while excluding the failed general from the inner circles of power.”¹¹

Nogi had a strong interest in *bushidō* from early on in the *bushidō* boom, and perhaps even before. Many biographers have argued that Nogi’s involvement with the Shōka Sonjuku would have exposed the young Nogi to the teachings of Yamaga Sokō and his interpreter Yoshida Shōin, but it is questionable whether Nogi came across the concept of *bushidō* at that time. According to Ōhama Tetsuya, it was Nogi’s later experience of contemporary German emphasis on cultural traditions that caused him to go back to the texts he had studied in his youth.¹² *Bushidō* appears in Nogi’s diaries as early as 1901, when Nogi mentioned borrowing a book on the subject from fellow general Terauchi Masatake (寺内正毅, 1852-1919).¹³ According to Inoue Tetsujirō, an unexpected visit from Nogi in the same year requesting a lecture led to Inoue’s first discussion of *bushidō*.¹⁴ After this, claimed Inoue, Nogi unfailingly attended his weekly lectures at the Gakushūin school.¹⁵ Nogi also pushed for the founding of a

¹⁰ Doris G. Bargen, *Suicidal Honor*, 57-59.

¹¹ James A. Fujii, *Complicit Fictions: The Subject in the Modern Japanese Prose Narrative*, 135.

¹² Ōhama Tetsuya, *Nogi Maresuke*, 112.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 107-8.

¹⁴ Inoue Tetsujirō, “Yamaga Sokō sensei to Nogi taishō,” 801-802.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 804.

society for the promotion of Yamaga Sokō, whose works he eagerly read, and was actively involved in their publication and distribution.¹⁶ Anecdotes concerning Nogi's promotion of Yamaga abound, including presenting his works to the crown prince and ensuring that Yamaga was posthumously given high imperial ranks.¹⁷ Adhering to Inoue's interpretations, Nogi closely identified Yamaga with *bushidō*, and penned several articles on the subject.¹⁸

As would be expected, Nogi's dramatic death led to a surge *bushidō* discourse that lasted for well over a year after the event. Opinions regarding Nogi's actions were far from uniform, however, and even the majority of Japanese who interpreted his suicide in terms of *bushidō* were divided. Carol Gluck's outline of the general situation in 1912 is instructive: "Neither Meiji nor modernity met with universal approval. The devoutest wish of some progressive youth was to be quickly quit of Meiji so that modernity could move ahead, while the direst fear of many of their elders was that Meiji's end would enable modernity to swamp the remains of their familiar world."¹⁹ In this light, Nogi's *junshi* provoked either strong approval or condemnation, with various reasons given for these reactions by different commentators. Most seemed to agree that Nogi's action was representative of *bushidō*, and debates centered on the nature of the *bushidō* that it manifested, as well as whether or not this *bushidō* was suitable for the modern age.

Inoue Tetsujirō was a leader among Nogi supporters who saw his action as the ultimate realization of *bushidō*, and Inoue's criticism of seppuku as an anachronistic custom a decade earlier was quickly granted an exception in the name of the mythologization of the deceased general.²⁰ Inoue presented his views clearly in a lecture presented at the Yamaga Sokō Society

¹⁶ Ibid., 798-799.

¹⁷ John Allen Tucker, "Tokugawa Intellectual History and Prewar Ideology," 50-51.

¹⁸ For example: Nogi Maresuke, "Bushidō mondō" *Shiyū*. Tokyo: Gunji Kyōiku Kai, 1907.

¹⁹ Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, 226.

²⁰ Inoue Tetsujirō, *Bushidō*, 56-57

on September 26, 1912, less than two weeks after Nogi's death. This lecture, titled "Yamaga Sokō and Nogi Maresuke," is worth quoting at some length.²¹

"There are many different opinions with regard to Nogi's *junshi* suicide. Although General Nogi cannot be completely removed from discussions concerning the allowance or rejection of suicide, especially *junshi*, this situation should be examined separately.

Many of the suicides in the world are of extremely foolish origins. They are born of personal failures, hopelessness, and disappointment resulting in the necessity of suicide. For this reason, many of the world's suicides should be condemned, but there are other cases in which great and outstanding individuals carefully plan and calculate their suicide. Rather, when viewed objectively this can have very positive results. If General Nogi had continued to live, he would certainly have contributed to society in beneficial ways. However, as he wrote in his will, at 64 years of age he did not feel he had long to go, and did not think he could be of great use to society, so by giving himself up and committing *junshi* suicide, the result truly shook heaven and earth. This powerful influence was then transmitted to all of society. If one thinks of the grand aspects of this effect, this suicide can certainly not be rejected. ... Although it cannot be said that suicide is good, or that *junshi* is good, in the case of General Nogi it was truly a magnificent end. It was a glorious end to a *bushi*'s life that would have satisfied General Nogi. In fact, if one considers General Nogi's usual thought, it was an event worth celebrating. However, if one considers losing a great man such as this, one must be deeply saddened. Our thought has these two sides. In any case, the *junshi* suicide of General Nogi truly demonstrated the great strength of the *bushidō* of our Japan. I believe it will certainly still produce great effects from now on."²²

Inoue's eulogy was largely representative of conservative thought concerning Nogi's death, although his role as a guide to official educational and social ideology meant that he had to temper his enthusiasm with qualifications regarding the desirability of suicide. This was done to discourage imitators and reinforce the government's suicide-prevention efforts that had been in place since a perceived spate of self-inflicted deaths a decade earlier.²³ Many other conservative commentators without similar obligations to society deemed such qualifying

²¹ For a summary of this lecture in English, see: John Allen Tucker, "Tokugawa Intellectual History and Prewar Ideology," 46-8.

²² Inoue Tetsujirō, "Yamaga Sokō sensei to Nogi taishō," 827-829.

²³ There was a popular conception that a wave of suicides occurred between 1903 and 1908 that could be traced back to the anguish of disenchanting youth. However, it has also been argued that the increase in deaths was simply due to improved recordkeeping. See: Earl H. Kinmonth, *The Self-Made Man in Meiji Japanese Thought*, 209.

statements unnecessary. For example, Okada Ryōhei (岡田良平, 1864-1934), former head of Kyoto University, member of the House of Peers, and future education minister, lauded Nogi's action unequivocally as the "realization of *bushidō*." In an article appearing on October 7, 1912, Okada wrote of Nogi's admiration for the "*bushidō* of the Yamaga Sokō school," and drew comparisons with the leader of the Akō *rōnin*:

"Ōishi Yoshio was truly a person who embodied and realized the Yamaga school [of *bushidō*]. Towards his lord, he demonstrated the great spirit of *junshi* known as 'with death repaying the lord's favor.' However, the death of General Nogi must be seen as superior even to the death of Yoshio. With his death, Yoshio repaid the favor of his lord, but the General dedicated his death to the sacred son of heaven who had bestowed great blessings higher than the mountains and deeper than the sea. The times are different, so it is unavoidable that the General's death has been compared to Yoshio's and has taken its place."²⁴

Nitobe Inazō also lauded Nogi's act, calling it the "complete manifestation of our nation's *bushidō* spirit" and a "superb *bushi*-like end" that would hopefully lead to the further spread of *bushidō* not only in Japan, but throughout the world.²⁵ All in all, in addition to countless newspaper and magazine articles, twenty-eight volumes were published on Nogi by the end of 1912, and *naniwabushi* "rode to the peak of their popularity in 1912 and 1913 on the crest of an interest in the tale of General Nogi that knew no social distinctions," as Gluck describes the situation.²⁶ Publication titles from these two years included *A Record of Sayings by General Nogi*; *General Nogi: Songs of the Flower of Bushidō*; *The Flower of Bushidō: General Nogi*; *General Nogi's Bushidō Dialogues*; *The Epitome of Bushidō: General Nogi*, and many others in a similar vein.²⁷

²⁴ Okada Ryōhei, "Nogi taishō no bushidō jitsugen," 45.

²⁵ Yamamuro Kentoku, *Gunshin: kindai nihon ga unda "eiyū" tachi no kiseki*, 111-112.

²⁶ Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, 224-5.

²⁷ Ōbuchi Rō, *Nogi shōgun genkō roku*. Kyoto: Shinshindō Shoten, 1912.

Muramatsu Seiin, *Nogi taishō shōka bushidō no hana*. Tokyo: Sanmeisha Shoten, 1912.

Hitomi Tecchō, *Bushidō no hana Nogi taishō*. Tokyo: Hiyoshidō Shoten, 1912.

Takahashi Seiko, *Nogi taishō bushidō mondō*. Tokyo: Gunji Kyōiku Kai, 1913.

Kōno Masayoshi, *Bushidō no tenkei Nogi taishō*. Tokyo: Tōkyō Kokumin Shoin, 1913.

The responses to Nogi's suicide were not all positive, however, and there was also considerable criticism of his act. In general, patriotism and respect for the deceased prevented most writers from attacking Nogi directly, but the value and meaning of his action were widely questioned. Critical works were also generally couched in discussions of *bushidō*, which had become inextricably linked with Nogi immediately after his death. An article in the *Tōkyō asahi shinbun* on September 15 summed up the position of many critics:

“General Nogi's death marked the completion of Japan's bushidō of old. And while emotionally we express the greatest respect, rationally we regret we cannot approve. One can only hope that this act will not long blight the future of our national morality. We can appreciate the General's intention; we must not learn from his behavior.” (translation by Carol Gluck)²⁸

For progressives, Nogi's actions represented many of the problems with the old order and were seen as an international embarrassment that damaged continued efforts to have Japan recognized as a “civilized” society. Those Japanese who had despaired at their nation being defined in terms of militaristic *bushidō* around the time of the Russo-Japanese War were especially perturbed by these developments, which once again brought *bushidō* to the fore. Even among commentators on *bushidō*, the Nogi incident presented great difficulties which were more pronounced for those Christians and others who had argued against the “orthodox” interpretation.²⁹ If even Inoue Tetsujirō was pressed to qualify his praise for Nogi, how much more must Uemura, Ukita, and Uchimura have struggled with this event. According to an article on “Theatrical *Bushidō*” published by Uemura in the *Fukuin shinpō* on October 24, 1912, although Nogi was a great man, his interpretation of *bushidō* was in need of revision. Uemura argued that soldiers had always been disposed to the theatrical in any country, and this was especially true of *bushidō*. As a recommendation, Uemura wrote that “if someone arose to

²⁸ Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, 222.

²⁹ For an overview of the debates following Nogi's death, see: Yamamuro Kentoku, *Gunshin: kindai nihon ga unda “eiyū” tachi no kiseki*, 111-134; Sugawara Katsuya, “20 seiki no bushidō: Nogi Maresuke jijin no hamon,” 90-116.

create a Japanese Don Quixote, I believe that it would have many benefits towards the reform of *bushidō*, the teaching of our nation's people," for it would excite a much-needed debate on the subject.³⁰ For his part, Ukita Kazutami's assessments of the incident waffled between praising Nogi's resolve and lamenting his actions as a tragic anachronism.³¹ The Christian journalist and politician Shimada Saburō (島田三郎, 1852-1923) argued in an article in the *Tōhi* on September 17th that "if all people under heaven learn from General Nogi and commit *junshi*, there is no way the nation could exist." In the same vein, an article in the *Ōsaka mainichi shinbun* on the same day pointed out that "Through General Nogi, *junshi* became allowable for the first time. If another person had done this, it would be affectation, theatricalism, and a foolish and laughable incident."³²

The Meiji *bushidō* boom ended around 1914, after the commotion surrounding Nogi's suicide had died down. Anecdotes concerning Nogi's life became widely used in popular literature, school textbooks, and government campaigns, but the divisiveness of Nogi's act was clear in the responses that followed.³³ The incident and subsequent debates shocked *bushidō* discourse and were primary reasons for its temporary decline around this time. For at least a decade before his death, Nogi had demonstrated a strong interest in *bushidō*, especially Inoue Tetsujirō's ultra-nationalistic interpretation. His study of *bushidō* certainly influenced his decision to conclude his life in the manner he chose. Due to his interest in the subject and his military exploits, Nogi had been identified with the concept even before 1912, but his *junshi* made his person synonymous with *bushidō* in the popular consciousness. *Bushidō* had enjoyed

³⁰ Uemura Masahisa, *Uemura Masahisa chosakushū* (Volume 1), 426-427.

³¹ Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, 223.

³² Yamamuro Kentoku, *Gunshin: kindai nihon ga unda "eiyū" tachi no kiseki*, 114-115.

³³ For example: Mori Ōgai's story "Okitsu Yagoemon" is widely viewed as a tribute to Nogi (Roy Starrs, "Writing the National Narrative," 210-211); Nogi's loyalty to the emperor was invoked by industrialists to instill loyalty in employees through the creation of "Nogi Societies" (Andrew Gordon, *The Evolution of Labor Relations in Japan: Heavy Industry, 1853-1955*, 226); Nogi also became one of the most prominent figures in elementary school texts in prewar Japan (Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, 225).

great popularity since the Russo-Japanese War, and discourse on the subject was diverse. Arguments between different interpreters of *bushidō* were not significant issues to most Japanese after 1905, and mutually contradicting theories were able to coexist in various discursive spheres. With Nogi's suicide, however, a template for *bushidō* was created that drew the attention of the entire nation and had to be addressed by commentators on *bushidō*, almost none of whom denied that Nogi's action was motivated by the ethic.

As Carol Gluck has argued, "despite the outburst of opinion, Nogi's importance for most Japanese should not be exaggerated. For all who expressed their views of the suicide, there were many more who remained silent. For them *junshi* was a cause for neither censure nor celebration, but an exotic act irrelevant to their lives."³⁴ *Bushidō*, as the driving force behind Nogi's death, experienced similar fortunes. Although there were few Japanese in early Taishō who were unaware of the subject, their specific understanding of *bushidō* was not uniform, reflecting the diversity of discourse. Most Japanese would have learned that *bushidō* was something similar to the similarly ambiguous Yamato spirit; i.e. a source of national identification and imperial loyalty, and therefore a source of the nation's military successes, but without great relevance to their everyday lives. Through Nogi's act, a very specific example of *bushidō* was cast into the limelight, and many Japanese were surprised at what they saw. The anachronistic sense of detachment from the modern age frightened many progressives, and it is questionable whether many people with only a passing knowledge of *bushidō* were attracted to the subject by this noble yet tragic act. When Nogi, "who became the embodiment of the Meiji period in popular culture,"³⁵ also became the embodiment of *bushidō* through his suicide, the two concepts were joined in the public consciousness. As a result, as Taishō progressed and the nation moved on from Meiji, it also moved on from *bushidō*, drawing the *bushidō* boom to a close.

³⁴ Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, 225.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 224.

Taishō *bushidō*

In addition to the notion that Japan was moving beyond Meiji, there were other factors that influenced *bushidō* discourse during Taishō. The death of the Meiji emperor was not as immediately significant to *bushidō* as that of General Nogi, but the imperial succession soon resulted in theoretical difficulties. The close identification of *bushidō* with the virtues of “loyalty to the emperor and loving the country” (*chūkun aikoku*) was founded on the strong figure of the Meiji emperor as embodiment of the nation. As Yoshida Yutaka has argued, the perceived weakness of the Taishō emperor resulted in a shift in emphasis from the person of the emperor to the abstract concept of *kokutai* in the military, but similar developments occurred in the popular realm.³⁶ This contributed to the decline of the warrior ethic during Taishō insofar as loyalty to the emperor was an important component of most modern *bushidō* interpretations.

The loss of a unifying emperor figure also exacerbated rifts in Japanese discourse on nationalism during Taishō. Following Thomas Havens, Kevin Doak has discussed the conflicts between “statists” (*kokkashugishai*) and “nationalists” (*kokuminshugisha*) in the 1910s and 20s, and one of the government’s great concerns through 1945 was the reunification of these factions as they had been in Meiji.³⁷ The anti-government sentiments of many popular nationalists had a detrimental effect on the popularity of government-sponsored ideologies such as *kokumin dōtoku* or *bushidō*. The growing split between nationalists and the state was also accompanied by a weakening of nationalism in general as popular dissatisfaction with the government and military spread during Taishō. As an ostensibly martial ethic, the fortunes of *bushidō* were especially closely tied to those of the Japanese military, and popular attitudes towards the two generally mirrored one another.

³⁶ Yoshida Yutaka, *Nihon no guntai: heishi tachi no kindai shi*, 161-162.

³⁷ Kevin Michael Doak, *A History of Nationalism in Modern Japan: Placing the People*, 201

The Taishō political crisis of 1912-13 dealt a major blow to the popularity of the military in Japan when the army refused to provide a war minister to the cabinet of Saionji Kinmochi, bringing down the government. The high-handed approach taken by the military was widely resented, provoking nationwide protests and anti-army feelings that remained strong for a decade. Incidents such as the 1914 Siemens Affair, which compromised the Yamamoto cabinet, exacerbated anti-military sentiment. The use of troops to quash the rice riots that occurred throughout Japan in 1918 marked the low point in the popularity of the military during Taishō, and resulted in the collapse of the Terauchi government, ushering in the brief era of party rule. After this, the quagmire of the Siberian Expedition of 1918-1922 prevented the reputation of the military in Japan from recovering during this period. Throughout the first decade of Taishō, European preoccupation with the prelude to and consequences of World War I greatly reduced the perceived military threat from the West, and this was reflected in proposed and realized reductions in military budgets in Japan throughout the period.³⁸

As Taishō progressed, dissatisfaction with the military and liberalizing trends in politics and the arts, often referred to as the period of “Taishō democracy,” contributed to *bushidō*’s fall from the public focus. As discussed in the previous chapter, interest in popular fiction relating to *bushidō* declined after 1914, with series such as the Tachikawa Bunko moving to different subjects or halting publication around this time. The treatment of *bushidō* by literary and intellectual figures also became rarer and more nuanced, with Akutagawa Ryūnosuke and others openly satirizing the subject. In 1920, for example, Akutagawa compared “*bushidō*-ists” to mischievous children in their conservative attempts to impede progress.³⁹ Figures influenced by Western political thought were especially critical, with the anarchist Ōsugi Sakae (大杉栄, 1885-1923) deriding *bushidō* and calling Nogi’s son a fool in his 1921 autobiography.⁴⁰ The

³⁸ Edward Drea, *Japan’s Imperial Army*, 130.

³⁹ Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, “Ryūzoku.”

⁴⁰ Ōsugi Sakae, “Jijoden.”

trajectory of *bushidō* in Taishō can be seen in a text from 1926, the last year of the period, in which the literary critic and Keiō University professor Togawa Shūkotsu (戸川秋骨, 1870-1939) updated his own “anti-*bushidō* theory” (*hi bushidō ron*) from fifteen years earlier, when the subject was still popular. In the present, continued Togawa, times had changed and no one spoke of *bushidō* in public. Togawa compared *bushidō* to the idea of “good wives, wise mothers,” (*ryōsai kenbo*) which had similarly lost all popularity and was “the stupidest concept in existence.” With regard to *bushidō*, Togawa accepted its historical pedigree, even if the ethic was irrelevant to the modern age, and he held out hope that a *bushidō* theory that was useful to society might emerge sometime in the future.⁴¹

As Roy Starrs has put it, later Taishō writers tried to liberate themselves from the legacy of the Meiji writers, which “included, above all, an intense concern with the state of the nation.”⁴² In Taishō, there was a general feeling that the nation had “arrived” on the world stage, and the feeling of competition with other nations that had defined much of Meiji thought began to dissipate. As *bushidō* discourse originated in and was driven by Japanese efforts to define and position their nation relative to foreign “others,” it lost momentum as the gap between Japan and the Powers became less pronounced and Japanese scholars were better able to relativize the West. World War I contributed to this process by distracting Western nations militarily while launching an economic boom in Japan as it supplied the warring parties and stepped into the Asian markets they had vacated. In spite of a post-war slump, Japan emerged from the conflict with its position in the world strengthened considerably.

Interest in Western thought and the importation of foreign ideas and trends continued to grow during Taishō, encouraged by the perception that Japan was able to introduce foreign concepts “freely” from a position of cultural power and autonomy. The influence of the confidence of Taishō could also be seen in changes in domestic scholarship on Japan, which

⁴¹ Togawa Shūkotsu, *Bonjin sūhai*, 170-177.

⁴² Roy Starrs, “Writing the National Narrative,” 215.

went from defining the nation as a whole using concepts such as *bushidō* (Nitobe, Inoue), “teaism” (Okakura Tenshin), or climate (Shiga Shigetaka), to examining regional differences (Yanagita Kunio) or taking a more international perspective (Okakura). As Funabiki Takeo has argued, the most important figures in Meiji *Nihonjin ron* moved beyond the framework of Japan in Taishō, with issues of national identity at least temporarily resolved to a satisfactory degree.⁴³ Funabiki defines *Nihonjin ron* as explaining the insecurities of readers and writers in the context of comparisons with foreign countries, a description that applies to many early writings on *bushidō* in Meiji. For this reason, Funabiki writes that the period between 1910 and 1930 was one that “did not really require *Nihonjin ron*,” due to the relative lack of insecurities regarding Japanese identity during this period.⁴⁴ The popularity of internationalist, democratic, and anti-militarist currents during Taishō was especially detrimental to the fundamentally martial and loyalistic ethic of *bushidō*, as a 1919 essay by Nitobe Inazō showed. In this brief text, Nitobe extolled the virtues of “the way of the common people (*heimindō*),” deeming this to be a superior translation for the English term “democracy” in an attempt to show that democracy was not incompatible with the Japanese system of government. Nitobe stated that *heimindō* (democracy) could be seen as an expansion and continuation of the warrior ethic, and was more relevant than *bushidō* in the current age.⁴⁵ In mid-Taishō, even Nitobe, who maintained great affection for the *bushidō* ethic he believed to be his own creation, felt that it had been superseded by democracy and internationalism.

In contrast to the decline in popular interest in *bushidō* in Taishō, institutional emphasis on the subject remained constant or even increased during this period. The slow pace of change inherent in bureaucracies meant that the introduction of new concepts into schools lagged

⁴³ Funabiki Takeo, *Nihonjin ron saikō*, 79-80.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 84-85.

⁴⁵ Nitobe Inazō, “Heimindō”

considerably behind public discourse. As discussed in the previous chapter, the content of public education was not significantly reformed until 1910, and *bushidō* entered the civilian classroom from this period onward. Conversely, the resistance of the educational system to rapid change meant that once established, a concept such as *bushidō* was not easily removed from the curriculum. As a result, *bushidō* remained a part of civilian education even in the anti-military mood of “Taishō democracy.” As an example of this doctrinal consistency, Yamamuro Kentoku has pointed out that for thirty years from 1911 on, military content in music-related school textbooks was directly related to the Russo-Japanese War, a characteristic that can be extrapolated to other subjects, as well.⁴⁶ The role of *bushidō* in the Taishō education system should not be exaggerated, however, and the concept was primarily used as an auxiliary to other, more central topics, such as music, history, and the role of imperial subjects. In this sense, the most significant effect of *bushidō* in civilian education before 1925 was to familiarize new generations with the concept and to keep it present even when it faded from popular discourse. This established a receptiveness to *bushidō* that helped it spread upon the introduction of military officers into schools in 1925. It also conditioned students to *bushidō* when they encountered it in other contexts, such as the materials used by the Imperial Military Reserve Association and various popular education initiatives.⁴⁷

Bushidō remained a more important theme in military than civilian education throughout Taishō, and increased in importance at the end of the period as spiritual education programs began to intensify. Yoshida Yutaka has argued that the concept of *kokutai* gained prominence during the reign of the weaker Taishō emperor, but also states that there was no fundamental change in *tennōsei* ideology in military education during Taishō.⁴⁸ In 1916, for example, military textbooks on spiritual education discussed *bushidō*, *chūkun aikoku*, as well as

⁴⁶ Yamamuro Kentoku, *Gunshin*, vii.

⁴⁷ For an example of the texts used, see: Matsukawa Jirō's 1919 *Seishin kyōiku teikoku gunjin sōsho 1: Akō gishi*.

⁴⁸ Yoshida Yutaka, *Nihon no guntai: heishi tachi no kindai shi*, 169.

parallels between samurai and modern soldiers.⁴⁹ The politically embattled military forces of the 1910s were preoccupied with shrinking budgets and fiscal retrenchment, while the troops themselves were still in the process of reaching an average educational level that made comprehensive spiritual education beyond the officer class appear to be an effective investment of resources.

During most of Taishō, the military faced a greater threat from domestic critics than from foreign armies, and the successful overseas intervention against German possessions in China did not reveal any urgent need for institutional reform. Changes in the military during the 1910s were essentially reductions, and doctrine was not modified. It was not until well after the First World War that information from this conflict began to have a major impact on military policy. Japanese military leaders continued to be under great financial pressure, although many realized that the militaries of the West had made great technological progress between 1914 and 1918. Russia and China were not deemed immediate threats due their own internal turmoil, making it difficult for the army to justify postponing further cuts, while the Washington Naval Treaty limited potential growth in that department.⁵⁰ The arms reductions that occurred during 1923-24 cut the army by almost 60,000 men and, while minor technological advances were introduced relating to machine guns, artillery units, and aircraft, the relief efforts for the Kantō Earthquake swallowed many of the funds that could have enabled significant reforms. At the end of Taishō, the role of *bushidō* in military education had not changed significantly since the beginning of the period, but its dissemination was more thorough due to the increased literacy of the troops and their previous exposure to *bushidō* in public schools.

⁴⁹ For example, see: Gunju Shōkai ed. *Gunjin seishin kyōiku to kōgeki seishin to no rensa*, 2, 3, 7, 8, 11, 17, 28, 37,

⁵⁰ Leonard A. Humphreys, *The Way of the Heavenly Sword: The Japanese Army in the 1920s*, 45-46.

The resurgence of *bushidō* in Shōwa

Beginning in the late 1920s, *bushidō* began to be revived in public discourse due to a combination of factors. The first of these was the rise in nationalism that accompanied Japanese activities in China and the increasing diplomatic conflicts with Western nations. Dissatisfaction over the results of the Washington Naval Treaty and the dissolution of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance placed Japan on a confrontational course with the Western Powers as they increasingly asserted their interests in East Asia. The Immigration Act of 1924 outraged Japanese of all classes, and Nitobe Inazō vowed not to set foot in the U.S. again until it was repealed. The second major factor that had a positive effect on *bushidō* was an amelioration of popular views of the military. These only began to improve after the army's handling of the aftermath of the Great Kantō Earthquake in 1923 drew praise from the populace. These factors contributed to the reconvergence of popular ideas and military aims in the name of nationalism in early Shōwa, which would lead to another *bushidō* boom in the 1930s and early 1940s.

Bushidō remained a part of military and civilian education throughout the Taishō period and when major changes in the army in the mid-1920s brought spiritual education to the fore, *bushidō* became a central theme. The “military reductions” (*gunshuku*) that took place during the 1920s reduced the size of the active forces, and were accompanied by increased investment in technology such as machine guns, artillery, tanks, and aircraft, although it must be noted that the implementation of this technology remained far below European levels. Probably the most influential *gunshuku* occurred under the direction of General Ugaki Kazushige (宇垣一成, 1868-1956) in 1925, and Ugaki realized the necessity of Japan's military to modernize in order to keep pace with the great advances in military technology that had been made in Europe during the Great War.⁵¹ Ugaki's efforts were frustrated by reactionary elements in the army, however, as well as by a lack of funds, and the military instead turned increasingly to relatively

⁵¹ Leonard A. Humphreys, *The Way of the Heavenly Sword: The Japanese Army in the 1920s*, 90.

cost-effective spiritual education programs of the sort that had been initiated by Tanaka Giichi after the Russo-Japanese War. This approach defined imperial army policy through 1945, and officers who expressed the need for improved weaponry rather than spiritual conditioning were harshly rebuked.⁵² Military doctrine was marked by what Alvin Coox has described as an “abhorrence of the defensive,” with few or no provisions made for surrender or retreat.⁵³

In addition to the shift of emphasis from materiel to *seishin*, the ties between the military and the local communities were strengthened through expansion of the Imperial Military Reservist Association and the establishment of organizations such as the network of Youth Training Centers (*seinen kunren jo*) created in 1926 to provide general and military education for youths between 16-20 years of age.⁵⁴ The perceived necessity for increased military influence in civilian life and education was bolstered by the commonly-held belief that Germany’s recent defeat had been caused not by strategic failings, but by a collapse in the fighting power of the German people, the so-called *Dolchstoßlegende* which is most often mentioned in connection with Erich Ludendorff (1865-1937).⁵⁵ At the same time, popular opinion shifted towards support for the military, with the deteriorating international situation and U.S. immigration policies considered to be major factors in this development.⁵⁶ By the end of the 1920s, Japan’s increasing international isolation due to military activities in China was accompanied by a rise in nationalistic sentiments that provided the conditions for a resurgence of popular interest in *bushidō*, which was in turn disseminated effectively among the populace by the military in cooperation with civilian educational authorities.

The process of change in the army continued into early Shōwa, with changes in training regulations in 1927 further emphasizing spiritual training, and orders by General Araki Sadao in

⁵² Edward J. Drea, *In the Service of the Emperor: Essays on the Imperial Japanese Army*, 13.

⁵³ Alvin D. Coox, *Nomonhan: Japan Against Russia, 1939*, 1084.

⁵⁴ For more information, see: Ishizu Masao, “Seinen kunrenjo ni kansuru taiiku shiteki kenkyū.”

⁵⁵ Leonard A. Humphreys, *The Way of the Heavenly Sword: The Japanese Army in the 1920s*, 80. Also see Schivelbusch, Wolfgang. *Die Kultur der Niederlage*, 227-249.

⁵⁶ Leonard A. Humphreys, *The Way of the Heavenly Sword: The Japanese Army in the 1920s*, 88.

1928 removed “negative” terms such as “surrender,” “retreat,” and “defense” from the *General Principles of Strategic Command* (*Tōsui kōryō*).⁵⁷ As early as 1922, the decorated army officer Satō Kōjiro (佐藤鋼次郎, 1862-1923) wrote that “The military education of many foreign countries makes much use of battlefield movements, but I could not recognize any sign of extreme efforts to cultivate the soldier’s spirit and martial lore to a similar extent that our nation does.”⁵⁸ As Hirota Teruyuki has argued, the traditional Meiji military order of importance of physical training over imperial loyalty had completely reversed by 1931.⁵⁹ Even by 1929, Nitobe Inazō, who still believed himself to be the inventor of *bushidō*, could write with considerable pride that

“Currently, *bushidō* is being commonly taught in schools. In addition, virtually all sections of the military, including the army education and training organizations, can be described as ‘higher schools of *bushidō*.’ Irrespective of rank, whenever a group of officers gather, the subject of their conversations is 90% *bushidō*.”⁶⁰

While Nitobe’s statement may well have been an exaggeration, there is no doubt that a second *bushidō* boom began in early Shōwa, fuelled by the military. For example, the first of two volumes of the 1930 military education text *Bujin no tokusō* (*Morality of Military Men*), which was representative of the drive for spiritual education, was devoted to a discussion of *bushidō*. *Bujin no tokusō* was one of the first and best-known of the spiritual education texts produced by both civilians and the government that “flooded the country” in the 1930s.⁶¹

The authors of the *Bujin no tokusō* conveyed the sense that they were “relaunching” *bushidō* in Shōwa, and the text included a bibliography and overview of modern *bushidō*. According to this, all Japanese had become soldiers after the Meiji Restoration, and took the

⁵⁷ Ibid., 106.

⁵⁸ Katō Yōko, *Chōheisei to kindai nihon*, 5.

⁵⁹ Hirota, Teruyuki, *Rikugun shōkō no kyōiku shakaishi: risshin shusse to tennōsei*, 176-177.

⁶⁰ Ōta Yūzō, *Taiheiyō no hashi toshite no Nitobe Inazō*, 77.

⁶¹ Leonard Humphreys, *The Way of the Heavenly Sword: The Japanese Army in the 1920s*, 107.

soldier's spirit of *bushidō* back to their villages where it became the "national morality."⁶² However, during the first decades of Meiji, people were drunk on Western things and ideas, and it was only after the Sino-Japanese War that the world noticed Japan and that Japanese began to consider their own country, with the Russo-Japanese War acting as the greatest stimulant of *bushidō*-related activity.⁶³ The bibliography of modern *bushidō* works in the *Bujin no tokusō* ran to four pages, but only included texts from Nitobe's *Bushidō: The Soul of Japan* onward.⁶⁴ The view of modern *bushidō* in the *Bujin no tokusō* correctly emphasized the role of the West on the development *bushidō*, but failed to mention any of the *bushidō* texts from the Meiji 20s, which were the most heavily influenced by awareness of Japan's position in the world. Thirty years into the twentieth century, the *Bujin no tokusō* perpetuated the belief that modern *bushidō* discourse began with Nitobe Inazō, although this assertion was more likely to have been made less out of ignorance of the existence of earlier works than discomfort with their anachronistic content.

The institutional promotion of *bushidō* in Taishō and early Shōwa had a strong influence on the development of the concept, especially after the introduction of military officers into public schools. Non-governmental institutions also appealed to *bushidō* in the 1920s, although the efficacy of their efforts is debatable. One example of this was large industrial operations such as shipyards and factories, which struggled greatly with high worker turnover during the first half of the twentieth century. The formation of "Nogi societies" (*Nogi kai*) in factories in the 1920s was designed to inculcate company loyalty in the workers, while at the same time advancing nationalistic agendas such as *kokutai* ideology.⁶⁵ These societies were named after the "flower of *bushidō*" Nogi Maresuke in an attempt to counter socialist thought

⁶² Kyōiku sōkan bu ed., *Bujin no tokusō* (Vol. 1), 25.

⁶³ Ibid., 26.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 27-30.

⁶⁵ Andrew Gordon, *The Evolution of Labor Relations in Japan: Heavy Industry, 1853-1955*, 226.

among factory workers with appeals to militaristic loyalty to the nation and emperor, in addition to the allegiance to the company in question.

Receptiveness to *bushidō* outside of the classroom, military, and workplace was increased by geopolitical developments that increasingly isolated Japan and raised nationalistic sentiments relative to China and the West. Japanese activities in China, beginning with the two Shandong Expeditions of 1927 and 1928, the assassination of the warlord Zhang Zuolin in the latter year, and the Manchurian Incident of 1931 all contributed to this process.⁶⁶ Heavy-handed tactics in mainland China by Japan, the UK, and America stirred anti-imperialist activities from 1925 onward, but after the recognition of the Chinese Nationalist government by the Western powers in 1928-29, Japan became the sole focus of Chinese resentment. Tensions with the West were further exacerbated by the London Naval Conference of 1930, which left Japan seriously disadvantaged relative to the US and UK.⁶⁷ This increasingly nationalistic and, more importantly, militaristic climate provided the conditions for a resurgence of *bushidō*. The revival of *bushidō* was further aided by the presence of a stronger new emperor who could better serve as the object of *chūkun aikoku* ideology in a similar way to the Meiji sovereign.

With regard to the volume of popular publications on the subject, the *bushidō* of early Shōwa gathered significant momentum around 1932, with Hiraizumi Kiyoshi's influential *Revival of Bushidō* (*Bushidō no fukkatsu*) published the following year.⁶⁸ Signs of *bushidō* resurgence could already be seen in the late 1920s, in this case, conversely in the writings of intellectuals who resisted this trend and associated militarism. One thinker who criticized *bushidō* was the poet and literary critic Hagiwara Sakutarō (萩原朔太郎, 1886-1942). In his 1928 *Principles of Poetry*, Hagiwara rejected the notion of Japan as being inherently militaristic.

⁶⁶ As Sandra Wilson has argued, the growth of Japanese nationalism and militarism in early Shōwa was not a smooth process, nor was there a single event that can be described as the point of no return in this regard. These sentiments spread at different rates in different social and political spheres, although there was never any significant opposition to this process. See: Sandra Wilson, *The Manchurian crisis and Japanese society, 1931-33*, 217.

⁶⁷ Minami Hiroshi, *Shōwa bunka 1925-1945*, 9-23.

⁶⁸ For a discussion of this text and Hiraizumi's role, see John S. Brownlee, *Japanese Historians and the National Myths, 1600-1945*, 168-179.

He felt that the Japanese were unjustly viewed by Westerners as a warlike people that loved war and were the model of militarism and *bushidō*. Instead, Hagiwara argued, the fraternal nature of pre-modern Japanese wars made them more tragic than in other nations, giving the Japanese a deep-rooted dislike of conflict. According to Hagiwara, Japan was “very much an exception in the world” in its lack of a *bushidō* spirit.⁶⁹

Another public figure who sought to overcome *bushidō* in early Shōwa was the publicist and legal scholar Hiroike Chikurō (廣池千九郎, 1866-1938), who had been familiar with *bushidō* since his *Shigaku fukyū zasshi* published Shigeno Yasutsugu’s article on the subject in 1893. In his 1928 *Treatise on Moral Science (Dōtoku kagaku no ronbun)*, Hiroike attempted to lay out a new basis for moral conduct through the “scientific analysis” of moral behavior and accounts of Confucius, Socrates, Jesus Christ, the Buddha, and the Japanese imperial ancestors. The ultimate goal of Hiroike’s project was to encourage individuals to practice “supreme morality” in the same way as these figures, and his writings were relatively pacifistic for his time. Hiroike’s friend Nitobe Inazō wrote the preface to the *Treatise*, and Hiroike commended Nitobe’s efforts to promote intercultural understanding. On the subject of *bushidō*, however, Hiroike strongly criticized Nitobe’s approach, especially those aspects that had also been adopted by more militaristic interpreters. Hiroike’s first criticism of Nitobe’s *bushidō*, which could also be applied to the *bushidō* theories of Inoue Tetsujirō, was the equivocation of *bushidō* with the *yamato damashii*. According to Hiroike, the Yamato spirit was the root of *bushidō*, which was the reason that *bushidō* not only valued bravery and military skills, but also emphasized having a proper character.⁷⁰ Hiroike saw the Yamato spirit as primary to *bushidō*, however, and argued that it in turn had its roots in the “supreme morality of the heavenly

⁶⁹ Hagiwara Sakutarō. *Shi no genri*, 259-60.

⁷⁰ Hiroike Chikurō, *Dōtoku kagaku no ronbun (A Treatise on Moral Science)* Volume 6, 230.

ancestors.”⁷¹ For Hiroike, *bushidō* was a class-specific ethic that was a much lower form of morality than the Yamato spirit with its divine origins.

Hiroike’s views on the relationship of *bushidō* to the concept of loyalty to the imperial house and nation combined conservative elements with a rejection of *bushidō*. While *bushidō* was the root of loyalty to the sovereign for Nitobe, Hiroike argued that the motivation for loyalty in *bushidō* had to be clearly distinguished from loyalty based on the Yamato spirit. For Hiroike, loyalty to the emperor was founded upon supreme morality, and could be seen in “the spirit of absolute submission with which the Japanese people strive for the imperial house and country.”⁷² In contrast, Hiroike saw *bushidō*-based loyalty as resulting primarily from self-interest on the part of the samurai. Although the Yamato spirit was the realization of Japan’s unique spirit of supreme morality, in the medieval period that ruling class declined into selfish attitudes and ceased to be sufficiently concerned about the imperial house and nation, ultimately forming individual groups in order to pursue their own interests. *Bushidō*, therefore, was a “normal morality” that resulted from this period of time when the “supreme morality of the imperial ancestors was forgotten.”⁷³ As Hiroike’s essential focus was on what he considered to be the “supreme morality” passed down from the “heavenly ancestors,” he considered *bushidō* to be at best a rudimentary tool for arriving at an understanding of the Yamato spirit, and at worst an impediment to the unification of the Japanese nation.

Hagiwara and Hiroike’s views of *bushidō* were significant responses to the increasing dissemination of the concept in the late 1920s as both of these writers were deeply interested in Japanese tradition; i.e. classical poetry and Shinto, respectively. The works of both argued for a sense of Japanese uniqueness that at times approached cultural nationalism, making their rejection of one of the major tenets of this discourse in the twentieth century stand out. During

⁷¹ Hiroike Chikurō, *Dōtoku kagaku no ronbun (A Treatise on Moral Science)* Volume 7, 283.

⁷² Ibid., 283.

⁷³ Ibid., 285.

most of Taishō and early Shōwa, progressive thinkers generally ignored *bushidō* and imperial loyalty in favor of themes such as democracy, equality, and internationalism, and much of their thought was based on Western ideals.⁷⁴ That more culturally conservative and nationalistic thinkers such as Hagiwara and Hiroike also rejected *bushidō* due to its association with militarism reflects the lingering anti-military sentiment of Taishō that had contributed to the decline of the warrior ethic during that period. In the totalitarian climate of the 1930s, however, criticism of *bushidō* disappeared as the concept was closely tied with the *kokutai* and emperor system, disparagement of which was punishable by death under the 1928 revision of the 1925 Peace Preservation Law.

By 1936, *bushidō* had become sufficiently established to be used as a basis for military tribunals, with the young officers who staged the failed “Shōwa restoration” charged with “failing to uphold the standards of *bushidō*.”⁷⁵ In the decade before 1945, *bushidō* found its way into almost all works on the Japanese spirit and ethics, and publications on the subject reached unprecedented levels. For example, the notorious *Kokutai no hongi* (*Principles of the National Polity*) included a discussion of *bushidō*, as did the 1941 *Senjinkun* (*Instructions for Warfare*), and it was also frequently mentioned in the *Chūō kōron* discussions on “overcoming modernity” (*kindai no chōkoku*).⁷⁶ In 1942, a group of scholars close to Inoue Tetsujirō completed the 13-volume *Bushidō zensho*, which is still an important resource on the subject and continues to be reprinted today. Supposed “samurai” virtues such as frugality and perseverance in the face of hardship were ideally suited to a nation at war on several fronts, and the ideal of absolute loyalty was intimately linked with the figure of the emperor. In addition, government radio broadcasts on *bushidō* were intended to further disseminate the concept among the

⁷⁴ Andrew Barshay’s arguments concerning public men in the 1930s could be equally applied to 1920s progressives in the context of their neglect of their own traditions in favor of imported theories. See Andrew Barshay, *State and Intellectual in Imperial Japan: The Public Man in Crisis*, 28-29.

⁷⁵ Kōno Tsukasa ed., *Ni ni roku jiken*, 448.

⁷⁶ John Owen Gauntlett trans., *Kokutai No Hongi: Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan*, 144-145; John Allen Tucker, “Tokugawa Intellectual History and Prewar Ideology: The Case of Inoue Tetsujirō, Yamaga Sokō, and the Forty-Seven Rōnin,” 49.

populace.⁷⁷ The promotion of *bushidō* in official propaganda raised the profile of the concept, leading to an increase in popular writings on the subject similar to that which took place in late Meiji, although legal prescriptions and social conditions in early Shōwa resulted in greater adherence to the “orthodox” interpretation of the subject.

A detailed examination of the second *bushidō* that took place in Shōwa is beyond the scope of this study, as *bushidō* became a prominent and integral part of the emperor-centered ideological structure of the period. The interplay of *bushidō* theories for civilian and military propaganda was a similarly complex process to that which took place in late Meiji, and the prospect of total war gave *bushidō* great urgency and directed much of its focus onto themes of death and self-sacrifice. In this context, the *Budō shoshinshū* and *Hagakure* became more prominent in prewar *bushidō* discourse than ever before or since, with the full text of the latter being published for the first time in the 1930s.⁷⁸ Both of these texts were distributed by the military as educational materials, with Watsuji Tetsurō compiling a pocket version of the *Hagakure* for soldiers to take off to war in 1940.⁷⁹ Propagandists such as Hashimoto Minoru designated the first line of *Hagakure* as “true *bushidō*,” and countless texts discussed the “spirit of the *Hagakure* warrior.”⁸⁰ Japan’s German allies also took an interest in samurai ethics, with Heinrich Himmler personally penning the foreword to Heinz Corazza’s 1937 *Die Samurai – Ritter des Reiches in Ehre und Treue*, published by the central publishing organ of the Nazi party.⁸¹ The pervasiveness of *bushidō* in the “dark valley” before 1945 is reflected in the harsh condemnation of the subject immediately after the war. The most prominent example of this is Sakaguchi Angō’s (坂口安吾, 1906-1955) 1946 “Decadence,” a devastating critique of

⁷⁷ Gregory J. Kasza, *The State and the Mass Media in Japan, 1918-1945*, 257-263.

⁷⁸ Koike Yoshiaki, *Hagakure: bushi to 'hōkō'*, 42-43.

⁷⁹ Kōsaka Jirō, *Genroku Bushigaku: 'Budō Shoshinshū' wo Yomu*, 18; Unoda Shōya, “Bushidō ron no seiritsu: sei-yō to tō-yō no aida,” 43; Hashimoto Minoru, *Bushidō no shiteki kenkyū*, 16.

⁸⁰ Hashimoto Minoru, *Bushidō shiyō*, 331; Yamagami Sōgen, *Hagakure bushi no seishin*.

⁸¹ Christian W. Spang and Rolf-Harald Wippich, “Introduction—from ‘German Measles’ to ‘Honorary Aryans’: An overview of Japanese-German relations until 1945,” 16.

bushidō.⁸² Later, in his 1949 “Sentiments of the Intelligentsia,” Sakaguchi referred to followers of *bushidō* as “mental patients suffering from the most misguided prejudices.”⁸³ In the same year, Tanaka Hidemitsu’s (田中英光, 1913-1949) “Sayōnara” specifically attacked the *Hagakure*-focused veneration of *bushidō* that had been forced upon Japanese before the war.⁸⁴

Considering the end of the Meiji *bushidō* boom

The *bushidō* boom reached a late climax with the suicide of Nogi Maresuke, who had become closely identified with the subject in the popular mind. Nogi’s *junshi* was widely viewed as a pure manifestation of *bushidō*, an interpretation that had significant consequences for the subsequent popularity of the latter concept. In the wake of Nogi’s death, there would have been no one who was not aware of the concept of *bushidō*, but many Japanese were shocked and disturbed by what was generally seen as a noble, yet tragic and anachronistic act. The identification of Nogi with *bushidō*, and the simultaneous identification of Nogi with Meiji, led to *bushidō* also being linked with the Meiji past in the eyes of a large number of people in early Taishō. After the initial furor over Nogi’s death had passed, the nation looked forward and moved away from Meiji, setting aside *bushidō* and other trappings of the earlier period. In this context, through his death, Nogi tied himself to *bushidō*, and the popularity of the concept declined accordingly.

During Taishō and early Shōwa, *bushidō* was not a significant theme in popular culture, and no works on the subject of lasting importance appeared during this time. The close association between *bushidō* and the military that had been established around the time of the Russo-Japanese War proved detrimental during the period from 1913 to 1925, when the popularity of the military declined to its lowest levels before 1945. Within civilian and military

⁸² Sakaguchi Angō, “Daraku ron.”

⁸³ Sakaguchi Angō, “Interi no kanshō.”

⁸⁴ Tanaka Hidemitsu, “Sayōnara.”

educational institutions, however, *bushidō* continued to be promoted as a component of the imperial state structure. The cumulative exposure to *bushidō* in the schools and army kept the subject in the minds of Japanese and made possible its Shōwa resurgence. As the military began to regain credibility in the wake of the Great Kantō Earthquake, and nationalistic and militaristic feelings increased due to rising tensions with China and Western nations, *bushidō* again came to the forefront. This process was supported by the enthronement of a stronger emperor who could better act as an object of loyalty, as well as a pronounced shift of military strategy from technology to a system of spiritual education reliant on *bushidō*.

While popular discourse in Taishō generally ignored *bushidō*, there were also critics of the subject, such as Hagiwara Sakutarō and Hiroike Chikurō, who opposed its revival due primarily to its association with militarism. Ultimately, however, in an increasingly hostile geopolitical situation, factors such as the identification of *bushidō* with Japan's last significant victory in 1905 were considered more important, and the flexibility and resilience of the subject allowed *bushidō* to survive almost two decades of popular neglect to be revived and reinterpreted for Shōwa realities.

CONCLUSIONS

A decade into the twenty-first century, *bushidō* continues to enjoy a high profile in Japan, continuing a wave of renewed interest in the subject that began to gather force with the “new nationalism” of the early 1980s.¹ Bookstores are filled with works on *bushidō* written by cultural theorists, politicians, and business people, while Japan’s participation in major international sporting events, including the World Cup and World Baseball Classic, is accompanied by references to the national representatives as “samurai” and being driven by the “*bushidō* spirit.” Evidence for the recent resurgence of *bushidō* at all levels of Japanese society can be analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Quantitatively, the tremendous increase in the number of publications on the subject of *bushidō* over the past decade presents one possible avenue of approach for measuring the impact of *bushidō* on Japanese popular culture, with the National Diet Library alone adding an average of ten new books per year to its collections from 2004 to 2009.

At the political level, the frequency with which *bushidō* is a subject of discussion in the official sessions of the National Diet provides a glimpse at the cachet this ideology has managed to garner in the legislative chambers. According to the records held by the National Diet Library, there were 185 separate meetings between November 13, 1947 and November 11, 2009 in which *bushidō* is mentioned in the minutes. This would not be a remarkable figure as a general average, but a breakdown of the dates of these discussions reveals that only 69 of these instances occurred in the first half-century of the Diet records, and almost two-thirds (116) of the total took place in the fourteen-year span after 1996. When this period is broken down further,

¹ Peter Nosco discusses several representative events from this period in his *Remembering Paradise: Nativism and Nostalgia in Eighteenth-Century Japan*, xi-x.

the trend is an increasing one, with over half (61) of the instances occurring between 2004 and 2007.²

A qualitative analysis of the more recent discussions reveals that the spikes in political interest initially coincided with an increased focus on national defense, constitutional changes, and the deployment of troops to assist the U.S. operation in Iraq. As Imazu Hiroshi, Assistant Director General of the Defense Agency and Liberal Democratic member of the National Diet, stated on November 30, 2006 in the plenary session of the Diet, “as samurai of Japan, the nation of *bushidō*, the efforts of the (Japanese Self-Defense Force) troops are highly esteemed not only by the Iraqi people, but also by the international community.” A year later, on November 27, 2007, in a meeting of the Diplomacy and Defense Committee regarding the use of the Japan Air Self-Defense Force in Iraq, member of the House of Councillors and former JSDF officer Satō Masahisa argued that use of the military for humanitarian support was “...a human duty and a duty of the nation of *bushidō*, Japan.” Later, *bushidō* increasingly entered discussions on other issues, such as Japanese negotiations with North Korea regarding abductees, and seemingly unrelated issues such as the national budget and transportation. In the fall of 2006, *bushidō* found frequent mention in the debates regarding fundamental reforms to Japan’s education legislation, including calls for *bushidō* to be reintroduced into schools for purposes of moral education, and lamentations that the current perceived educational malaise is caused by a lack of “*bushidō* spirit” among the nation’s youth. The extent to which *bushidō* had become a part of deliberations in the Diet is evidenced by an *Asahi Shimbun* article from December 7th, 2006, which comments on the incredible popularity of Nitobe Inazō’s 1899 work *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* among Diet members occupied with the project of education reform.³

In addition to politics, *bushidō* has also been resurgent in the field of competitive sport. As in Meiji, *bushidō* and related concepts have recently been frequently applied not only to

² Search of Diet records conducted on February 17, 2010.

³ “Nitobe Inazō *Bushidō* ninki: kyōiku kihon hō kaisei/hantai ryōha no ronkyo.”

Japanese athletes competing in the martial arts, but also to national teams in “foreign” sports such as baseball and soccer. The Japanese national baseball team has been known by the nickname “Samurai Japan” since Hara Tatsunori took over as general manager in 2008, stating upon his appointment that “the way of baseball is understood through *bushidō*.”⁴ A more recent phenomenon is the popularity of soccer, and its promoters have also taken to *bushidō* to appeal to fans of the national teams. For example, since the leadup to the 2006 World Cup in Germany, the official nickname of the Japanese national men’s soccer team has been “Samurai Blue,” referring to the color of their uniforms. In a press conference held on December 17, 2009, national team head coach Okada Takeshi reasoned that Japan would reach the semifinal at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, in spite of their poor results before the tournament and FIFA world ranking of 45th, because Japan “has a strength called *bushidō*. It is just that our fighting instinct has not yet been switched on.”⁵

The recently resurgent versions of *bushidō* have been stripped of their associations with the *kokutai* (national polity) and imperial family, which were inseparable from the concept in the four decades before 1945. Of the multitude of ideologies that developed in Imperial Japan and, as Carol Gluck writes, “coexisted, overlapped, or interacted with one another,” the resilience of *bushidō* is exceptional. *Bushidō* was rejected or ignored after 1945, as were most similar militaristic and nationalistic concepts from the prewar period. Unlike these other ideologies, however, *bushidō* was reintroduced into popular discourse only two decades after the end of the war. Today, no great notice is taken when Japanese politicians mention *bushidō* in parliamentary debate, and it is still widely discussed as a defining cultural characteristic of Japan.

⁴ *Sponichi annex*, March 25, 2009.

⁵ *Sponichi annex*, December 18, 2009. The team lost to Paraguay on penalty kicks two games short of Okada’s stated goal.

The strength of *bushidō* lies in the diverse process of its development in late Meiji, which endowed the concept with great flexibility and resiliency. As this study has shown, the roots of *bushidō* are to be sought not in the historical samurai class, but rather in responses to modernizing trends in modern Japan. *Bakumatsu* activists such as Yoshida Shōin and Yokoi Shōnan used the term *bushidō* nostalgically in their calls for remilitarization of the warrior class, but while these writings were picked up by some *bushidō* theorists the twentieth century, the first discussions of *bushidō* in Meiji did not cite or otherwise rely on the thought of Edo-period commentators. Instead, *bushidō* developed as a nativist response to Westernization and the changing East Asian order in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Discounting the controversial lecture notes attributed to Yamaoka Tesshū, the first arguments concerning *bushidō* put forth by Ozaki Yukio, Fukuzawa Yukichi, Suzuki Chikara, and Uemura Masahisa sought to distance Japan from China while at the same time providing a native alternative to Western ideals.

The theories of the first generation of Meiji *bushidō* theorists were strongly influenced by their respective foreign experiences, which were in turn colored by Japanese views of their own nation and culture relative to a foreign “other.” The decade before the Sino-Japanese War was marked by both a shift in Japanese attitudes from a sense of inferiority relative to the West to a cautious confidence in their nation, as well as increasing desire to disassociate themselves from Chinese cultural influences. This pattern is especially clear in the *bushidō* writings of Ozaki Yukio, and can also be observed in a number of contemporaneous newspaper articles and other works, as well as in the later writings of Nitobe Inazō. In light of later developments, another significant characteristic of these early *bushidō* theories was the absence or marginalization of martial elements. The first generation of *bushidō* theorists had many commonalities, but their works also highlighted different themes, such as mercantilism, Christianity, and stoicism, while criticizing one another’s works. The *bushidō* that emerged from this process of organic

development was both diverse in its specific content and uniform in its reflection of the *Weltanschauung* of the early Meiji 20s, factors that gave the concept flexibility and strength while limiting the potential for future acceptance of these specific writings.

The relatively cautious nature of the early steps away from the pure importation of Western ideas to the development of a samurai-based ethic was largely forgotten after the success of the Sino-Japanese War boosted national confidence, especially vis-à-vis China. In this triumphant climate, a *bushidō* boom centering on very different types of thinkers began around 1898. Works such as the 1898 *Bushidō zasshi* published by the Great Japan Martial Arts Lecture Society, Mikami Reiji's 1899 *Nihon bushidō*, and especially Inoue Tetsujirō's 1901 *Bushidō* were more nationalistically assertive than works from the previous decade, and Uemura Masahisa lamented the hijacking of the concept by chauvinistic writers. This trend accelerated further in the buildup to the Russo-Japanese War, when an "orthodox" interpretation of *bushidō* was used by Inoue and others to condemn critics of the war and others deemed to be insufficiently patriotic. The increased use of *bushidō* in print media and its introduction into military education programs gave the concept greater exposure, and almost all Japanese were familiar with it by the time peace with Russia was concluded in 1905.

After 1906, the official promotion of "orthodox" *bushidō* continued in the form of spiritual education programs in the military, and the new challenges of constructing ideologies for peacetime use, especially to combat communism and anarchism, meant that *bushidō* was also integrated into other ideological structures. Inoue Tetsujirō's National Morality teachings were the most prominent example of new ethical systems arising at the end of Meiji, and *bushidō* became one of its most important components. At the same time, *bushidō*'s high profile and unquestionable nativist credentials meant that it was increasingly disseminated by popular media and was frequently borrowed by individuals and groups to promote their own political agendas, sports, religions, or other causes. *Bushidō* further became a favorite subject of writers of fiction

in late Meiji and early Taishō, as part of a surge in interest in Japan's feudal past that took place during that time. Many Japanese accepted *bushidō* as a unique defining characteristic of their nation, an assumption that was shared by a large number of foreigners astounded at Japan's recent military successes and influenced by writings such as Nitobe's *Bushidō: The Soul of Japan*.

The *bushidō* that developed in Meiji was not a continuation of any earlier martial ethic, but it contained factual elements that were carefully selected and reinterpreted by its promoters. These elements included the Akō incident, historical texts such as Yoshida Shōin and Yamaga Sokō's writings, and concepts such as loyalty, self-sacrifice, duty, and honor, all of which existed in considerably different forms and contexts to those in which they were incorporated into modern *bushidō* theories. On the one hand, these appeals to historical ties legitimized *bushidō* in the eyes of many, while on the other hand, the lack of hard historical evidence or a commonly-accepted definition of *bushidō* gave its interpreters considerable flexibility and allowed the concept to be adapted for various purposes. For this reason, *bushidō* has been able to change and survive well over a century of political, social, technological, and military transitions that saw many other ideological constructs arise and disappear again. Instead, by selecting different epistemic foundations, businessmen, religious activists, educators, soldiers, and others were able to promote their own *bushidō* theories and see them accepted by a significant number of people. In recent years, as well, *bushidō* has been used in many different contexts, from sport to education to militarization to disarmament, all of which are made possible by the lack of a solid historical basis that would, conversely, make it easier to refute questionable claims.

As the few Meiji critics of *bushidō* also pointed out, the concept was not widely known before 1900, and the majority of Japanese alive during the first *bushidō* boom were not exposed to *bushidō* in their youth. Nevertheless, *bushidō* came to be accepted by those social groups,

such as soldiers and the growing industrial proletariat, whose best interests were not served by to core tenets of the orthodox interpretation of the concept, such as loyalty and self-sacrifice. Later generations who were exposed to *bushidō* from their earliest school experiences would have less reason to question its legitimacy, but this was not yet the case in Meiji. The idea that an ideology could be suddenly and effectively imposed from the top down is simplistic, and Hirota Teruyuki has criticised Maruyama Masao's "elitist" view of ideology as affecting only the "foolish people" in the lower classes (*gūmin*) and not the intelligentsia.⁶ While some people in every society uncritically accept what they are told by those in positions of authority, this is an insufficient explanation for the rapid dissemination of *bushidō*. In the case of the (typically ruling) social groups who benefit from an ideology, their "ironic" or "cynical" acceptance of the same has been widely studied. Richard Rorty, for example, discusses the "ironic" adoption of interpretive systems by intellectual elites, and argues that the less-educated masses subscribe to them unquestioningly.⁷ This argument may apply to some of those who accepted and even promoted *bushidō* during late Meiji and beyond, but does not satisfactorily explain the adoption of *bushidō* by such a broad cross-section of society.

Instead, the most important factor in the relatively rapid dissemination of *bushidō* was the growth of nationalistic sentiments around the time of the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars. While certainly encouraged by the media and government, especially during the conflicts, the nationalistic fervor during this period was also a product of natural processes arising from the direct threats to the nation and the successful resolution of the same. In this sense, national pride reached across all social and religious boundaries and *bushidō*, as a native and secular alternative to previously-dominant Western and Chinese thought systems, rode the nationalistic currents to great popularity. This process has continued up to the present day, as popular interest in *bushidō* has generally fluctuated in accordance with the ebb and flow of nationalistic

⁶ Hirota Teruyuki, *Rikugun shōkō no kyōiku shakaishi: risshin shusse to tennōsei*, 8-13.

⁷ Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 73-95.

feeling, and can be attributed to the close identification of *bushidō* with the Japanese nation, combined with the inclusiveness that results from the concept's openness for interpretation.

A second factor that applied to specific groups such as soldiers and students, and later the general populace, was the pronounced effect of cumulative exposure on the acceptance of ideologies. Lance Bennett's description of political myths as "assimilated through multiple inputs that blend fact with fantasy and confuse history with legend" applies to modern *bushidō*. According to Bennett, individuals encounter fragments of political myths throughout their everyday life, in the media and in public, private, and religious organizations. Through this cumulative exposure and "pervasive reference to life experience, myths become imbedded deeply in consciousness as associative mechanisms that link private experience, ongoing reality, and public history into powerful frameworks of understanding."⁸ In this sense, the organic character of *bushidō*'s development in Meiji resulted in broad cumulative exposure in many different social environments, and was important to both its initial growth and later resilience.

Another significant factor in the latter half of the *bushidō* boom was the attractiveness of *bushidō* narratives. As Christopher Flood points out, the teller of a political narrative "controls the description of natural and human environments; the identification and description of historical actors, human or otherwise; and the reporting of what people said or did not say, what they thought or did not think, and what they did or did not do."⁹ In the case of *bushidō*, writers created highly compelling narratives with apparent historical legitimacy that appealed to large numbers of people and became a significant current in popular culture. These narratives were diverse, including accounts of the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars, new versions of the *Chūshingura*, and tales of both real and mythical figures from Japanese history. The dramatic conflict between character's situation and his *bushidō* obligations provided compelling plot lines, and this formula remains popular in the twenty-first century. *Bushidō* narratives

⁸ Lance Bennett, "Myth, Ritual, and Political Control," 168-169.

⁹ Christopher G. Flood, *Political Myth*, 119.

contributed significantly to the cumulative exposure of ideology in late Meiji and early Taishō, helping to further popularize the concept while taking advantage of its established popularity in a reciprocal process.

The diversity of *bushidō* discourse in late Meiji showed the flexibility of the concept, as thinkers and activists were able to select elements from mythology, history, sociology, or other fields to assemble *bushidō* theories that suited their goals. From the beginning of modern discourse on *bushidō*, it has acted as a pliable vessel for myriad philosophies, and this function has given it the great resilience that is evident in its continued prominence. Conversely, *bushidō* lost much of its importance, or was even rejected, on those occasions in which it became too closely identified with a single ideology or period. The first of these slumps occurred after 1914, when *bushidō* was viewed as a defining spirit of pre-Taishō Japan, especially as it was manifested in the person of General Nogi. As popular culture and the national consciousness moved further towards modernity, internationalism, and self-determination, most Japanese came to see *bushidō* as an anachronism with limited relevance to the new age. *Bushidō* survived, however, in educational institutions and the military, and rapidly became a defining ideology of early Shōwa when emperor-centered militaristic nationalism came to dominate the national agenda.

After 1932, *bushidō* became more tightly associated with the state than it had been in late Meiji, and criticism of the subject was potentially in breach of the Peace Preservation Law due to the connection of *bushidō* with the emperor and *kokutai*. The identification of *bushidō* with the militaristic state meant that the backlash against *bushidō* was far more severe after 1945 than it had been in Taishō. *Bushidō* was removed from the postwar education system and military, and was widely ignored or even attacked, as in Tanaka Hidemitsu's 1949 critique of

nationalistic ideology.¹⁰ It was not until the late 1960s that *bushidō* again began to attract interest from scholars, writers, and the public, as national confidence grew along with the economy as the nation rebuilt. Mishima Yukio was one of the most prominent promoters of *bushidō* in the postwar period, and his calls for strengthening the nation were given force by his literary abilities and dramatic suicide.¹¹ At the same time, the martial character of Mishima's *Hagakure*-centered *bushidō* theories generated considerable unease only two decades after the end of the war, and did not lead directly to another *bushidō* boom.

The greatest postwar resurgence in *bushidō* began in the 1980s, as both Japanese and foreign commentators sought cultural or historical reasons for the nation's staggering economic growth. A new *bushidō* boom began at the end of Shōwa and has continued into Heisei with few signs of slowing. Discomfort with the content and uses of many prewar "orthodox" *bushidō* theories led to the rejection of many of the works from this period, and the roles of pivotal figures such as Inoue Tetsujirō or Nogi Maresuke have been largely forgotten. The prominent exception to this trend has been the great interest in the works of Nitobe Inazō, whose relatively pacifistic interpretation of *bushidō* found favor in Japan from the early 1980s onward, aided considerably by Nitobe's appearance on the 5000 Yen note between 1984 and 2004. Nitobe's *bushidō* is often held up as an acceptable alternative to the militaristic *bushidō* of early Shōwa. Postwar *bushidō* theorists have tended to ignore the development of the subject in the imperial period with the exception of Nitobe's work. This emphasis is misplaced, however, for, as this study has shown, Nitobe was a marginal figure relative to mainstream *bushidō* in the early twentieth century.

With the exception of Nitobe's *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, postwar *bushidō* discourse has tended to ignore most developments from the prewar period, and instead sought the roots of *bushidō* in earlier Japanese history. Beginning in the 1960s, writers began to select certain

¹⁰ Tanaka Hidemitsu, "Sayōnara."

¹¹ See, for example, Mishima's 1967 *Hagakure nyūmon* (*A Primer on The Hagakure*).

historical events or samurai writings to make various assertions regarding the nature of *bushidō*, thereby arguing for precedents for nuclear disarmament (Perrin) or the origins of a meritocratic tradition in Japan (Kasaya), or otherwise seeking the basis of *bushi* social order in jealousy (Yamamoto) or homosexual relationships (Ujie).¹² The postwar *bushidō* boom is similar to that of late Meiji in its diversity, as the concept regained the flexibility it lost during the last years of the imperial period. Significantly, *bushidō* has not been tied to any specific ideology in the popular mind, and the collapse of the bubble economy did not greatly affect the popularity of the subject. Instead, *bushidō* has featured in debates on social morality, educational reforms, and the role of the Japanese military.

In recent years, in spite of the popularity of *bushidō* in popular culture and among certain sections of academia, especially in Japan, scholars working in various fields have been implicitly calling into question the existence of a historical samurai ethic before the Meiji period. Specialists in pre-Meiji Japanese history have largely discarded the concept as an exegetical tool. Case studies of *bushi* behavior in certain domains at specific periods do not generally claim universality, and arguments for the existence of a uniform and widely-accepted martial code have become rare. By ignoring *bushidō* and leaving it to popular historians, politicians, and the media, however, fundamental problems remain unaddressed. On the other hand, it is too simplistic to condemn *bushidō* as a militaristic (and even fascistic) product of prewar Japanese government ideologists, or as a creation of Nitobe Inazō's that was later distorted by propagandists. These approaches neglect many important works on *bushidō* written before 1900, and do not reflect the diversity of ideological development in modern Japan.

¹² Noel Perrin, *Giving Up the Gun*; Kasaya Kazuhiko, *Bushidō to nihon kei nōryoku shugi*; Yamamoto Hirofumi, *Otoko no shitto: bushidō no ronri to shinri*; Ujie Mikito, *Bushidō to erosu*.

As a result of these processes and attitudes, searches for the origins and meaning of *bushidō* tend to make a temporal leap backwards over the Taishō and Meiji periods to premodern Japan, generally without awareness that the twenty-first-century observer is examining the samurai through the distortion of *bushidō* lenses that are largely products of the twentieth century. It is only through the examination and reconsideration of the origins of the dominant *bushidō* paradigm that one can eliminate an awareness of anachronistic bias when analyzing Japanese history and culture relating to *bushidō*. In addition, the “*bushidō* booms” of early Shōwa and late Shōwa/Heisei are important areas for future research that must consider the influence of Meiji and Taishō developments examined in this study. Ultimately, a comprehensive history of *bushidō* discourse from Meiji to the present will result in a broadly relevant history of modern Japan’s social and cultural development, especially in the context of issues such as nationalism, identity, modernity, and historical memory.

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