

# **Transforming Popular Consciousness through the Sacralisation of the Western School: The Meiji Schoolhouse and *Tennō* Worship**

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## **RESÜMEE**

Im Zentrum der ideenpolitischen Bemühungen, die die japanischen Eliten der Meiji-Ära (1868–1912) unternahmen, um das Land in modernem Gewand, doch auf traditionellen Grundlagen zur Nation zu formen, standen der Tennō-Kult und die allgemeine staatliche Pflichtschule. Zwischen der Verabschiedung der Verfassung des Kaiserlichen Japan im Jahr 1889 und dem Erlass des Kaiserlichen Erziehungs-Edikts im Jahr 1890 bestand insofern ein enger politisch-ideeller Zusammenhang. Der Artikel verfolgt die konflikthafter Auseinandersetzungen, die im letzten Drittel des 19. Jahrhunderts zwischen den Verteidigern altjapanischer Bildungstradition und den Anhängern westlicher Aufklärung, zwischen konfuzianischen Intellektuellen und westlich orientierten Demokraten, ausgetragen wurden. Er entwickelt vor diesem Hintergrund die weder selbstverständliche noch einlinige Genese der normativen Grundlagen des modernen Japan. Die Autoren beschreiben die wechselnden Inszenierungen, die in diesem Zusammenhang dem Tennō zuteil wurden: von seiner anfänglichen Rolle als öffentlich sichtbarem Symbol der Einheit der Nation (auf landesweiten Rundreisen oder Militärparaden) über den völligen Rückzug hinter die Palastmauern (in Konsequenz seiner Sakralisierung durch den erstarkenden Staats-Shintō) hin zu seiner indirekten Rückkehr in den öffentlichen Raum (in Form eines hochstilisierten und kultisch verehrten Konterfeis). Und sie schildern – unter Einbezug auch autobiographischer Reminiszenzen – sowohl die aus buddhistischer Tradition übernommene sakrale Überhöhung der modernen Schule wie die zeremoniellen Präsentationsformen des kultisch verehrten Tennō-Bildes und die von ihm ausgehenden sozialintegrativen und loyalitätsstiftenden Wirkungen.

## 1. Tracing the Visibility and Invisibility of the Meiji Emperor<sup>1</sup>

In the aftermath of *Meiji ishin* (1868) – the “revolution / restoration that combined social forces in such a way as to instill the contradictory impulse of both revolution and restoration”<sup>2</sup> – the political leaders of the day felt an urgent need for the people to acknowledge the new system of Japanese governance. Before 1868, the Tokugawa shogunate was able to display the rulers to the masses by way of the system of *sankin kōtai* (literally “duty of alternate attendance”) which prevailed in the period from 1638 to 1867 and entailed frequent travel by the feudal lords (the *daimyō*) to and from Edo, the seat of the shogunate, and thus their appearance in public. People watched or heard about the feudal lords’ processions, and though they seldom observed the shogun directly it was easy for them to imagine a network of political and administrative authority, with the shogun at the top and represented by the local feudal lords witnessed at the processions. However, it should be noted that each time the people encountered a feudal lord in public, they were required to sit down on the soil and prostrate themselves. They were not permitted to look at the feudal lord but heard the sounds and voices and sensed the atmosphere of these processions.

While political authority was not always strongly visible, the population was aware of the revolutionary strife over the legitimacy of power as well as the series of civil wars and confrontations with foreign powers before and after the revolution. When news of the restoration of imperial rule (*taisei hōkan*) reached the people, it was quickly understood that the new system would replace the Tokugawa family who had ruled Japan during the Edo period from 1603 to 1868. Most people – in all social strata – were familiar with the shogun as a symbolic figure and with the concept of the shogunate. But the new ruler, the emperor (the *tennō*), was not well-known since during the shogunate period almost all the emperors had been kept in seclusion in the imperial palace at Kyoto (the *gosho*) which was off limits for commoners. The people therefore began to idiosyncratically imagine the emperor in the light of their own political experience.

Printing developed during the Edo period and printed materials were widely circulated among the population, both urban dwellers (*chōnin*) and the peasantry. Of these printed materials, coloured woodblock prints – which originated in the eighteenth century – were the people’s preferred source of news and anecdotes. In the wake of the Meiji Revolution, the earliest depictions of the Meiji emperor (*Meiji Tennō*) appeared in woodblock prints in the very first years of the Meiji era, i.e. between 1868 and 1870, showing his first trip to Edo which had been renamed Tokyo – “eastern capital” – in late 1868. These prints carried a political message, telling the people of the transfer of the capital from Kyoto to

1 Japanese names in this article follow the Japanese practice of writing the surname first followed by the first name.

2 Such is the well-balanced characterisation provided by Harry D. Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity. History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan*, Princeton 2000, p. 301.

Tokyo and that the emperor now resided in the East, in the former shogun's castle at Edo which had now been renamed the "imperial palace".

Curiously enough, the woodblock print of the emperor published in 1868 was entitled Jimmu Tennō, in reference to the legendary first emperor of Japan who, according to Japanese myth, had founded the country in 660 B.C. Sasaki Suguru has analyzed fifty-one different woodblock prints depicting the emperor and found that all but one provide general views and scenes but show the emperor only indirectly.<sup>3</sup> Forty-seven of these fifty-one woodblock prints show him in military uniform. In reality, the emperor was invisible to all but a few political leaders and soldiers who had led the revolution. Such a political situation was seriously risky for the Meiji regime since it needed to build a modern Japan which was sufficiently strong and independent to withstand the challenge of the western powers. Its task was to firmly establish a central system of government. Accordingly, in the first period of its seizure of power it reintroduced rather conventional administrative arrangements within the cabinet office, thus restoring the old system. But already in 1869 the Meiji government established the core of a centralised armed force; ordered all local governmental authorities (which still enjoyed a fairly strong degree of autonomy) to create a representative agency in the capital; set up a court of justice; and introduced new codes for public service and personnel management. In the following year, the Meiji government created government ministries, thus replacing the old-fashioned arrangements which it had initially reintroduced. In 1871 a gold-standard currency system was introduced as the basis for a modern economy and the Ministry of Education (*monbushō*) was created. In 1872 the government issued its "School Ordinance", introducing a modern national education system consisting of three tiers – primary schools, secondary and vocational schools and various types of higher education institutions – which was patterned upon French, Dutch and American models. All Japanese children were encouraged to attend school. The lack of financial resources and the government pressure which local education authorities faced often led to unrest over compulsory schooling in the regions. And people not seldom resisted compulsory school attendance because it deprived them of their children's labour capacity, so that the Meiji government experienced frequent disturbances. In response, in 1879 the School Ordinance was replaced by a revised Law of Education.

Prior to completing its modernisation of central and local government, the Meiji government firmly intended to consolidate its power, politically as well as symbolically. One means to achieve this goal was to increase the emperor's visibility to commoners and foreigners alike, thus bolstering domestic rule and achieving international recognition of the sovereignty of the new Meiji polity. The key individual who promoted the establishment of the emperor as a national symbol was Ōkubo Toshimichi (1830–1878), a central figure in the new Meiji government. Ōkubo endeavoured to bring the emperor out of his palace into the public sphere. In 1868, he proposed that the emperor should move

3 Sasaki Suguru, *Tennō-zō no keisei katei* [The Process of Constructing the Emperor's Portrait], in: Asukai Masamichi (ed.), *Kokumin bunka no keisei* [The Creation of a National Culture], Tokyo 1984, p. 188.

from Kyoto to Osaka and then to Tokyo. These proposals were put into practice. Ōkubo was quick to realise the importance of making the new ruler visible to the masses. He recognised the shortcomings inherent in the old closed-off palace system and understood the significance for the regime of making use of aesthetic and performative techniques of representation.<sup>4</sup> Ōkubo and his colleagues had studied European political history and science. Moreover, they travelled abroad with the famous Iwakura Mission from 1871 to 1873 and had ample opportunity thus to learn how European absolutist monarchs had consolidated their rule by making themselves visible to their subjects.

The Meiji government's response to Ōkubo's suggestions was twofold: it enhanced the visibility of the emperor in his military function while also pursuing a political agenda. The emperor left his seclusion in the imperial palace on his first visit to Edo-Tokyo in 1868. In 1870, he inspected his army and navy and was visible to all of his troops. His soldiers saw the emperor as their supreme commander. In the period between 1868 and 1889, the emperor visited various military bases and institutions, see Table 1 which indicates the frequency of his inspections of the army, navy and other military institutions:<sup>5</sup>

Table 1: Frequency of the emperor's attendance at military events<sup>6</sup>

Year	Month	Frequency	Year	Month	Frequency
1868	3, 4, 8, 11	7	1880	1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 12	11
1869	5, 6, 10	3	1881	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12	14
1870	1, 2, 4, 9	5	1882	2, 3, 6, 7, 11, 12	12
1871	1, 9, 11, 12	5	1883	1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12	11
1872	1, 4, 9, 10	9	1884	4, 7, 9, 11, 12	9
1873	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12	19	1885	3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12	9
1874	1, 4, 6, 9, 11, 12	12	1886	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12	9
1875	1, 3, 5, 6, 12	6	1887	1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12	11
1876	11	1	1888	1, 2, 6, 7, 11,	9
1877	1, 8, 10, 11, 12	8	1889	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 11	9
1878	1, 3, 4, 7, 8	7			
1879	1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12	10			

In the period from 1867 to 1873, the emperor received a military education including riding exercises whose purpose was for the emperor – then still a young man – to develop a more imposing physique.<sup>7</sup> On 27 December 1867, the young Meiji left the imperial

4 Taki Kōji, *Tennō no shōzō* [The Portrait of the Emperor], Tokyo 2002 (Iwanami Gendai Bunko vol. 76; 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1988), p. 3.

5 Imperial Household Ministry (ed.), *Meiji Tennō-ki* [The Itinerary of Emperor Meiji], Tokyo, Yoshikawa Kōbun-kan, no. 3.

6 Sasaki Suguru, *Tennō-zō no keisei katei* (footnote 3), pp. 208-214.

7 Imperial Household Ministry (ed.), *Meiji Tennō-ki* (footnote 5), no. 2, p. 636.

palace to observe military drills performed by the troops of four former feudal domains (Kagoshima, Yamaguchi, Hiroshima and Kōchi). Within a period of six to seven years he had completed his military education and conducted manoeuvres such as those mentioned above. The emperor attended military events including New Year's inspections of the army and navy; military drills of his forces; inspections of troops and meetings of the office of general staff; and graduation ceremonies at military schools and colleges. In April 1872, the emperor personally directed manoeuvres of his guards at Owada in Chiba prefecture, preparing the manoeuvre plans in consultation with Saigō Takamori (1827–1877), the central figure in his military forces at that time.<sup>8</sup> In 1873, the emperor directed more than three thousand soldiers at Hasunuma in Musashi prefecture and once again led manoeuvres involving multiple divisions. This, however, was the last time that he would supervise manoeuvres personally.

The Meiji government hurried to establish a strong system of military governance over Japan to counter both external invasions and domestic rebellion. Symbolically, the emperor held the supreme position of power in the nation's armed forces. Despite the various draft constitutions proposed by civil-society activists – driven by a desire for democratic participation by the mass of the population – many of these figures such as Ueki Emori (1857–1892) nonetheless regarded the emperor as the *generalissimo* of the Japanese military forces.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, the emperor's travels throughout the islands of the Japanese archipelago increased his visibility for commoners. These travels began in 1872 and ended in 1885. Table 2 provides a list of these journeys:<sup>10</sup>

Table 2: The travels of the Meiji Emperor in Japan

Year	Duration	Regions visited	Vehicle
1872	51 days	Kinki-chihō, Chūgoku-chihō, Shikoku-chihō, Kyūshū-chihō	warship
1876	50 days	Tōhoku-chihō	carriage & warship
1878	71 days	Hokuriku-chihō, Tōkai-dō	carriage
1880	41 days	Chūō-dō	carriage
1881	103 days	Tōhoku-chihō, Hokkaidō	carriage & warship
1885	18 days	Sanyō-dō	carriage & warship

8 Saigō was the leader of the 1877 Satsuma rebellion who, after being defeated, committed suicide.

9 Ienaga Saburō, *Nihon Kindai kenpō shisō-shi kenkyū* [Historical Studies on Constitutional Thought in Modern Japan], Tokyo 1967, p. 70.

10 Nagahara Keiji et al. (eds), *Nihon-shi nenpyō* [Chronological Tables of Japanese History], Tokyo 2001, pp. 236–246. The reader should keep in mind that Shikoku, Kyūshū, Honshū and Hokkaidō are the Japanese main islands, whereas Kinki, Chūgoku, Tōhoku and Hokuriku are particular regions located on Honshū, i.e. the largest of Japan's main islands; -dō denotes the main road leading from Edo-Tokyo to local regions except Hokkaidō, and -chihō denotes local regions and districts.

Overall, the emperor devoted roughly a whole year to these travels. The reasons for his protracted journeys around Japan were complex and multifarious included, among other issues, local disturbances provoked by impoverished groups of the population; unemployed former samurai; new tax regulations; and the system of conscription introduced in 1872 which resulted in an acute shortage of labour for peasants and small shopkeepers. The emperor's leading officials saw these journeys as a useful way for the Meiji government to bring the emperor out of his palace: not only to assuage popular feeling and social unrest but also to impress the new regime's symbolic authority upon the public mind. These officials also envisaged that the problems both between the central and local government authorities and between these authorities and the population at large might be solved by establishing a sense of national unity through the masses' identification with the emperor.

The emperor's travels were indeed remarkably impressive. They encouraged popular awareness of the power at the heart of the new political regime. Many schoolchildren welcomed his visits with the national flag, the *Hinomaru*, in hand and stood in a row like members of the army or navy, in turn encouraging adults' respect for the emperor as the nation's supreme political authority. Such phenomena were observable everywhere he visited. Wherever a visit by the emperor was announced schoolteachers were asked to instruct their pupils to welcome him courteously, so as to demonstrate the loyalty of his subjects. These long journeys meant that the emperor became well-known as the supreme authority of Meiji Japan who had replaced the Tokugawa shogunate, while the places which the emperor visited were seen as sacred and set apart from ordinary life. More than this, a unique form of communication developed between the emperor and people in general, viz a reciprocal cycle of the "observer" and "observed". Not only was the emperor seen by the people, the emperor himself actively gazed at the people, demonstrating his power.<sup>11</sup> The emperor and his courtiers realised that this was the most effective means for them to encourage popular devotion to the nation's ruler.

However, the possibilities for bringing the emperor into play as a tangible symbol of national unity were limited. When the newly established Japan Mint proposed in 1872 for the first time to manufacture coins featuring the emperor's profile, the Imperial Household Ministry (*kunai-shō*) rejected this suggestion since it considered that coins were dirty and would thus render the profile of the emperor impure. The Imperial Household Ministry and the Meiji government opted instead to keep the emperor's image free from such disfigurement and to control his visibility. The Ministry tried to uphold the emperor's pureness and deity which was founded upon the historical background and unbroken lineage of the imperial family. This decision was closely associated with the emperor's image as a political symbol based on a worldview embracing as fact the mystical and mythical origins of the imperial system – which meant that political and religious matters were not open to rational discussion. This was the reason for the Impe-

11 Cf. Takashi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy. Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan*, Berkeley et al. 1996.

rial Household Ministry's rejection of any possible tainting of the empire's image, arguing that it should be kept pure and sacred, as it were. Accordingly, the Meiji Emperor suddenly retreated from initial visibility to a position of sustained invisibility within the modern Japanese empire

## 2. The Struggle to Establish the Japanese "Education State"

### 2.1. The Secular Background of the Struggle towards a System of National Education

Japan's more enlightened officials who had studied abroad realised the importance of western civilisation, including technical advances in industry and the military. They saw the development of a system of national education as a key priority for the emergence of a new nation in the aftermath of the Meiji Revolution, since any nation-state requires a clearly defined territory and populace. Education was seen as the most efficient means for the state to establish its citizens' sense of national unity.

In line with this thinking, the Tokugawa government had already sent selected individuals abroad to study western civilisation. In a similar vein, the post-1868 Meiji government also sent government representatives and interested students to America and Europe. In 1871, the first group of an important exploratory mission led by Iwakura Tomomi and comprising forty-six members set sail for America. Other groups followed. All in all, 126 persons were sent to America and Europe within the framework of this Iwakura mission, including five women, one of whom was Tsuda Ume (then seven years old) who was sent to America and later founded the Tsuda Women's College upon her return to Japan. The average age of the members of this mission was twenty-nine, with the oldest member being forty-seven and the youngest eighteen years old. Kido Kōin (Takayoshi), Ōkubo Toshimichi and Itō Hirobumi – all of whom were high-ranking ministers in the recently established government – were the central members of the first group. They visited twelve countries with which the Tokugawa shogunate had concluded treaties in the 1850s and 1860s. The Iwakura Mission's journey lasted one year and nine months. The countries it visited included the United States of America and the United Kingdom, France, Belgium and the Netherlands, Germany, Austria and Switzerland, Denmark and Sweden as well as Italy and, finally, Russia.<sup>12</sup> The members of the Mission learned many lessons from their study of western countries, which encouraged them to embark upon

12 The official report of the Mission compiled by Kume Kunitake dates from 1878; a modern reprint edition was published as: Kume Kunitake, *Tokumei Zenken-taishi bei-ō kairan jikki* [A True Account of the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary's Journey of Observation Through the United States of America and Europe], Tokyo 1975. This report is also available in English translation by Graham Healey/Chushichi Tsuzuki (eds.), *The Iwakura Embassy, 1871–1873: A True Account of the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary's Journey of Observation Through the United States of America and Europe*, compiled by Kume Kunitake, while a partial translation into German was published by Peter Pantzer, Matthias Eichhorn et al. (eds.), *Die Iwakura-Mission. Das Logbuch des Kume Kunitake über den Besuch der japanischen Sondergesandtschaft in Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz im Jahre 1873*, Munich 2002.

discussions of the future of Japan. One key point was the urgent imperative to establish Japan as a rich and strong country that might discuss and cooperate with the developed countries of the West on equal terms. A second issue was the need for a balanced assessment of the dual outcomes of western industrialisation, the positive and negative aspects of this developmental process. The members of the Mission had seen that the industrial revolution had led to a sharp gulf between rich and poor and were troubled, for instance, by the child poverty which they witnessed in some areas of London and Manchester.<sup>13</sup> The Mission also noted the significance of Christianity for western countries as a means of maintaining political unity among the populace.

Some of the students who had been sent to European countries under the Tokugawa regime returned home after the Meiji Revolution, bringing new knowledge, skills and technology to Japan. For example, Fukuzawa Yukichi (1834–1901) disseminated new ideas of civil society and citizenship; Toyama Masakazu (1848–1900), Nakamura Manasano (1832–91) and Kikuchi Dairoku (1855–1917) brought modern mathematics, political and legal science and social philosophy to Japan; while Nakae Chōmin (1847–1901) – who was sent abroad by the Meiji government – introduced Jean-Jacques Rousseau to the Japanese public. Owing to the rich insight gained by these scholars and intellectuals, European knowledge and technology became increasingly important. The School Ordinance issued in 1872 led to the publication of new schoolbooks, most of which were translations of American or European textbooks. Before 1868, *Selection of 1000 Chinese Characters* had been the most popular basic textbook for children and adolescents. Various versions of it were published, revising the original edition which had appeared in China many years previously,<sup>14</sup> but its antiquated contents were clearly incompatible with the modern system of knowledge inspired by western civilisation.

The conservative faction in the Imperial Household Ministry regarded accelerated westernisation policies with some anxiety and was keen to preserve traditional ideas on education. But the modernisers were in a dominant position in the Ministry of Education, particularly under the tenure of Mori Arinori (1847–1889) as Minister of Education. Mori had already published books on Japan and Japanese religions during the time which he had spent in America. In 1879 he had been appointed Japan's envoy to the United Kingdom, and in 1882 Mori discussed education with Itō at Paris and later sent him a memorandum.<sup>15</sup> On his return to Japan in 1884, Mori was appointed an inspector of schools and travelled widely in this capacity. After being made Minister of Education in 1885, he introduced the Law of School Education (*gakkō-rei*) in 1886. He also intro-

13 Matsumura Masaie, *Bakumatsu ishin shisetsudan no igirisu ōkan-ki* [Records of the Late Tokugawa Era Mission to United Kingdom; The Influence of the Victorian Empire], Tokyo 2008, pp. 174–6, 286–9.

14 Cf. Ogata Hiroyasu, *Kindai Nihon ni okeru senjimon-gata kyōkasho no kenkyū* [Studies of Textbooks of Thousand Square Letter Verse in Modern Japan], Tokyo 1978, pp. 30–57, 59–92, who classified all schoolbooks which were translations and also provided a detailed summary of the publishers of translated schoolbooks. See also Isabella L. Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*, London 1880, pp. 128–130, who noted the kinds of schoolbooks used in primary schools in the 1880s.

15 Mori Arinori, *Gakusei hengen* [Fragments on Education], letter to Itō Hirobumi, London Office, 1882, Waseda University Library, to 03 01796.

duced four other laws which constituted the foundations of Japan's modern educational system and whose basic outlines were retained until 1946, i.e. the law establishing the imperial universities; the law establishing a network of normal schools; the law regulating secondary schools; and the law establishing generalized primary schools. In this overall scheme, the main aims of university education were defined as academic inquiry and the education of civil servants, with the second of these objectives seen as particularly significant. Mori also specified the characteristics of the normal schools, of which there were two different types: higher normal schools and other normal schools. The latter type of normal school was established on the basis of the principle of one school per prefecture and was managed by the local authorities. Martial arts, military gymnastics and physical training were defined as key features of their curriculum. Higher normal schools for boys were established first at Tokyo and later at Hiroshima, while higher normal schools for girls were located at Tokyo and Nara. The law regulating secondary schools established two types of these schools – academic and vocational secondary schools – while creating three types of high schools for girls providing academic, vocational and home economics-based studies. The overall effect of this legislation was to establish a hierarchical system of national education with an essentially dualistic structure: elementary education for the mass of the population and higher education for the select few. The former was militaristic in outlook, the latter bureaucratic and technocratic.

The Law of School Education had been preceded by a series of debates on national education conducted by the leading officials of the Imperial Household Ministry. While some kind of schools – including small and private institutions – had existed in every era of Japanese history, during the Tokugawa shogunate for the first time a country-wide network of “school learning” had emerged which was geared to inculcating Confucian ideas in the younger generation of the *samurai* (or *bushi*) class. Some of the schools of the feudal domains (*han-kō*) are said to have been opened up even to young male commoners and were thus no longer restricted to the offspring of the aristocracy. Confucianism provided the ideological framework for these domain schools, though with some significant changes over time. Tsujimoto explains that initially, i.e. in the period before 1761, small private schools, the *juku*, served as the Chu-tzu teaching Confucian scholar's personal academy within his own home. *Juku* were small in number and size but subsequently, in the period from 1716–1789, became more widespread and were to provide an education which was based on the doctrines of Japanese Confucianism and was intended for domain officials, their children and also commoners. Finally, in the period from 1830–1872, *juku* provided elementary instruction for children of officials, whose attendance became compulsory. Increasingly, Western knowledge and military training were taught. Most *juku* accommodated commoners' children while nevertheless serving as a means of indoctrinating feudalistic values in residents of the domain.<sup>16</sup>

16 Tsujimoto Masato, *Han-kō* [Schools provided by the feudal local governments], in: Koyasu Nobukuni (ed.), *Dictionary of Japanese Thought History*, Tokyo 2002, pp. 447–448. Cf. also Unabara Tōru, *Gakkō* [Schools], in: *Nihon-shi shō-hyakka* [Mini Encyclopaedia], vol. 15, Tokyo 1979.

Thus, judging by the historical surveys of schools and patterns of schooling for children and adolescents, a comparatively wide network of domain schools and temple schools (*terako-ya*) existed prior to the School Ordinance of 1872. While this network provided the basis for the conventional education of children as encouraged by conservative officials, progressive officials sought to utilise it for the development of the new schooling system. This was the purpose of the 1872 School Ordinance. While it provided the outline of a hierarchical system of education patterned on the French model, the government's idea was to establish this system on the basis of the network of schools which already existed at a local level by 1868.

While all those concerned with the idea of education for the general population agreed on the urgent need to create a national education system, there were at least four groups of scholars who had their own particular ideas on the nature of mass education: a group of resolute modernisers, a group of Confucian scholars, a Buddhist group and a group of scholars heavily committed to the traditions of "National Learning" – essentially the textual and interpretive study of Japanese classical literature and writings – (*kokugaku*). The fundamental ideas underlying the conception of each of these groups should be understood as part of a basic dichotomy between progressivism and conservatism. The progressive group followed European traditions of learning, adhered to the concepts of rights and individual duty, affirmed Christianity, pursued a human-centred and centripetal approach and adopted an "Enlightenment" philosophy; whereas the conservative group preferred endogenous learning, stressed subordination and collective duty, affirmed Shinto and Buddhism, prioritised an authority-centred and centrifugal approach and preferred Confucian philosophy. The struggle to establish a state education system unfolded in the context of these conflicting anthropological, social and philosophical paradigms. It originated within the intellectual groups inside and outside the Meiji government and was closely related to the struggle for a constitution. For in the new Japanese society, a person's political identity went hand in hand with his education-based identity. As has already been noted, the groups dispatched to western countries found positive and negative aspects in the developed civilisations and rapidly understood that modernisation inevitably uprooted people from communities in which they had been deeply embedded and implied a radical reorganisation of political and administrative processes within these communities.

In the Japanese context, similar modernisation processes and their consequences would shake the foundations of governance, whether under the shogunate or the revolutionary government set up by *Meiji ishin*. In the light of discussions over the meaning of the Meiji Revolution, spontaneous popular movements emerged which favoured a constitution and a parliament, reflecting a sense of crisis which led some activists to call for a second revolution. The "Freedom and People's Rights Movement" (*jiyū minken undō*, see below) demanded a radical reorganisation of central government power which rested in the hands of a few revolutionary leaders who were now accused of being oligarchs and excluding others from power. At the same time, however, the educated elite urgently wished to industrialise Japan and enlighten the masses. Both the progressive and the

conservative group agreed on the exigency of this task. The key point of contention was how to deal with foreign threats and domestic instability, both of which jeopardised the development of national unity. There was an ever wider gulf between the views of the elite and the masses on the future of Japanese society. Again, there was a basic dichotomy here between progressive and conservative views. While the former were committed to the ideals of democratic sovereignty, a constitutional monarchy, industrialisation, a combination of Japanese and western culture and an individualistic ethic, the latter continued to adhere to the traditions of authoritarian sovereignty, an absolutist constitution, the pre-eminence of Japanese and Chinese culture and a collectivistic ethic.

In essence, then, the pertinent issues were constitutional government, industrialisation of the Japanese economy, renewal of communal norms in line with the changes in society and improvement of literacy. All these issues demonstrated the major differences and sharp contradictions between the two groups with regard to a system of constitutional government for Japan. Basically, three different views on a constitution for Meiji Japan co-existed in a period of tempestuous debates: the conception of a progressive constitutional democracy, of a constitutional monarchy and ideas favouring an absolutist imperial regime based upon Japan's indigenous Shinto religion. Movements favouring a democratic constitution resulted in a number of violent local rebellions, while at the same time Japanese intellectuals closely observed the rise of class conflict and radical controversy in the western countries.

The discussion of educational policy thus took place in the context of plans for a new constitution. The liberal groups differed in some cases in their views of constitutional doctrines. For example, Fukuzawa Yukichi proposed parallel social institutions – a public and private sector – while Mori Arinori argued that these should be unified. Both of these figures were members of an independent intellectual society which was known as the *Mei roku-sha* (“Sixth Year of Meiji Society”) since it was established in 1873, in the sixth year of the Meiji era. The *Mei roku-sha* had ten founding members, eight of whom were scholars who had studied European learning in the final years of the Tokugawa shogunate. Membership of the *Mei roku-sha* gradually grew and monthly discussions and magazines influenced people's opinions of constitutional affairs. For example, the “Freedom and People's Rights Movement” (*jiyū minken undō*) was much influenced by the *Mei roku-sha*: this was a movement which criticised the Meiji government bureaucracy and asserted the need for a modern system of local government based on a new constitution. The constitutional movement grew and peaked in 1880 with an “Alliance to Establish a Parliament” whose 114 representatives were drawn from fifty-nine associations in twenty-four local government authorities. They vociferously demanded the rapid introduction of a parliamentary system of government and collected more than 87,000 signatures from people in favour of this aim.<sup>17</sup> This movement also led to further

17 Imanishi Hajime, *Jiyū minken undō* [Freedom and People's Rights Movement], in: Koyasu Nobukuni (ed.), *Dictionary of Japanese Thought History* (footnote 16), pp. 245-247. Cf. also Imanishi Hajime, *Kindai Nihon seiritsu-ki no minshū undō* [Popular Movements in the Era Establishing Modern Japan], Tokyo 1991.

constitutional debates, and at the Osaka convention of local governors held in 1875 the Meiji government promised to create a constitution. Various draft constitutions subsequently appeared simultaneously. The councillors of the Meiji government faced with the various demands for a constitution again were divided into two different camps: a progressive group supporting the civic movement and a conservative group opposing the rapid introduction of a constitution. The government responded with an imperial decree on constitutional monarchy and the swift establishment of a Senate – or Council of Elder Statesmen – (1875) and enacted three new laws on local government concerning local prefecture organisations, local taxation and rules on prefecture councils (1879). In relation to a system of national education, some of the enlightened government councillors who had studied abroad or witnessed the emergence of universalised educational systems in the USA or European countries had negative views of the existing patterns of schooling in Japan while simultaneously criticising the idea of excessively westernising the Japanese school. The key point of discussion for the conservative groups was the so-called “issue of mind” (*kokoro*). Motoda Nagazane (also called Eifu, 1818–1891), the Confucian scholar who had taught and attended to the young Meiji emperor at the imperial palace and still remained a close member of the emperor’s household, remarked in this connection:

*No boy denies the importance of national education. They say that education should be well organised to embrace intelligence, aesthetical sentiment and volition. However, such assertions are solely based on western modes of thought. The doctrines of education for our country should be based on the doctrines of Confucius.*<sup>18</sup>

It is essential for an adequate understanding of the academic discourses seeking to define a system of national education in the Meiji era to clearly distinguish the groups of scholastic learning which influenced the political actors. Three such types of learning existed in the Tokugawa era: viz the “National Learning” (*kokugaku*) tradition, the adherents of the native Shinto religion, and Confucianism.

## 2.2. The Academic and Religious Context of the System of Learning prior to the Meiji Revolution

The National Learning (*kokugaku*) tradition encompassed several areas of traditional scholarship, among which philosophical thought – such as that of Motoori Norinaga (1730–1810) and Hattori Nakatsune (1757–1824) – and scholarship heavily committed to the interpretive study of Japanese classical literature, poems, myths and language featured prominently.<sup>19</sup> In addition, *kokugaku* scholars were deeply concerned with the

18 Motoda Nagazane, quoted by Taki Kōji, *Tennō no shōzō* (footnote 4), p. 58, (transl. by the author Suzuki). Cf. also Numata Satoshi, *Motoda Nagazane to Meiji kokka* [Motoda Nagazane and the Meiji State], Tokyo 2005.

19 Omote Tomoyuki, *Sandaikō ronsō* [Discussions on the Three Dimensions of the Universe], in: Koyasu Nobukuni (ed.), *Dictionary of Japanese Thought History* (footnote 16), pp. 218–219; cf. also Omote Tomoyuki, *Katarareru*

Japanese polity, and with the history of the imperial system (*tennō-sei*) in particular. They reviewed the Japanese classics, concentrating on politics but also referring to the ancient *Nihongi* and *Kojiki* myths which had been compiled in the early eighth century as the official annals of the imperial family. According to these myths, the imperial family had reigned over Japan without interruption from the foundation of Yamato – the oldest name for Japan – and the imperial dynasty in 660 B.C., when Jimmu was enthroned as the first emperor. Discourses on *kokutai* – Japan's "national polity", "national body" or "national essence" – were thus a common theme of these scholars, who were eager to distinguish the endogenous Japanese polity from concepts deriving from Korean and Chinese political history. Somewhat ironically, the term *kokutai* – literally "country-body", from *koku*, meaning "country", and *tai*, meaning "body" – is originally a Chinese word which can be found in the classical literature of China. But from the mid-eighteenth century up to the Meiji Revolution this concept, which asserted the uniqueness of the Japanese polity, was redefined in Japan. Aizawa Yasushi (1782–1863), an ideologue of the Mito school which formed part of the *kokugaku* movement, discussed *kokutai* through a reinterpretation of classical Japanese literature using Confucian terminology. In his collection of essays known as "New Theses" (*Shinron*, 1825),<sup>20</sup> Aizawa constructed a grand plan for national reform in response to western influence on Japanese identity and the country's independence. In the first part, his "New Theses" – on *kokutai* – deal extensively with the Japanese polity, with political concepts, belief systems and national unity as well as with Shinto. These essays also explore the history of the Japanese military and agriculture and economic institutions. Subsequent parts examine broader world trends, the international environment and the threat of Russia. They evoke the necessity of morality and the threat of Christianity to Japanese unity. Finally, Aizawa also expounded on defence plans for the protection of Japan against foreign countries. The book's overarching goal was to establish a grand hierarchy of State Shinto led by the imperial family, with a basic standpoint of "withstanding internal unrest and external threats". Aizawa's book was widely read among learned people and had a lasting influence upon the officials of the Meiji government.

Closely linked with the ideas of National Learning (*kokugaku*) and the National Polity (*kokutai*) was the instrumentalisation of Japan's Shinto religion. While Shinto lacked a founder who systematised a collective faith and belief-system before and after the Kofun period (from the late third to the seventh century A.D.), its creeds were systematically arranged in a body of myths which appeared under the title of *Kojiki* in 712 and as *Nihon Shoki* or *Nihongi* in 720.<sup>21</sup> These mythological accounts are the earliest histories of Japanese rulers. The latter volume in particular attempted to define the imperial system's

"kamiyo" to "gen" – Sandaikō ni okeru "katari" no kōzō tenkan [Kamiyo and the Present in Utterances – Structural Shifts in Narratives on the Three Dimensions of the Universe], *Studia Japonica*, 12, 1993, Osaka.

20 Wakabayashi Bob Tadashi: *Anti-Foreignism and Western Learning in Early Modern Japan: the New Theses of 1825*, Cambridge, Mass. 1986.

21 Cf. the translations into English and German by Donald L. Philippi (trans.), *Kojiki*, Tokyo 1968, and Iwao Kinoshita (Übers.), *Kojiki: aelteste japanische Reichsgeschichte*, Fukuoka 1976, respectively. As for the *Nihongi* myth, see W.

self-understanding as an authentic polity in the East Asian context, with Shinto providing the underlying political myth. In Shinto, something supernatural which causes and controls natural phenomena is called *chi*, *mi*, *tama* or *nushi*. With the advent of Chinese letters, the Chinese *kami* – usually translated as “gods” – spread throughout the population and gradually came to be used to describe natural phenomena as well as personal situations. Japanese *kami* did not convey a sense of substantive entity by way of an explanation of natural and human phenomena, however, and were historically and geographically specific. They became guardians of individual families in the sense that the *kami* accepted by a given family were considered primordial to this family. For example, the imperial family made the sun goddess *Amaterasu-Ōmikami* its progenitor and the influential Fujiwara noble family enshrined its *kami* at the Kasuga shrine. By the end of the sixteenth century most *kami* were those of local villages and *ujigami* those of these communities’ inhabitants. The other aspect of *kami* – the element which may cast an evil spell on people – remained unchanged and appeared in various forms in people’s everyday life.

Over the centuries Shinto had evolved in various syncretistic amalgamations with Buddhism and Confucianism,<sup>22</sup> but the situation changed during the Edo period when the Tokugawa shogunate began to repress Buddhist temples and to advocate Confucianism as a state doctrine, thus calling into question the syncretistic relationship between Shinto and Buddhism. A school known as *jūka shintō* emerged, which explained Shinto from the perspective of Confucian doctrines of *Chu-tzu*. For example, Yamazaki Ansai (1618–1682), an outstanding scholar of both Confucianism and Buddhism, provided a quite different view of Shinto’s potential meaning. Referring to Ise Shinto, he recognised a metaphysical structure of “living being”. Prayer would prove the existence of “something invisible but mighty” whose meaning was to be established for people. Believers should thus disclose their “own being” to this “invisible but mighty” entity in dimensions permitting the survival of *kami* and *hotoke* – with *kami* being accepted as embodiments of Buddha – within the reciprocal chains of “living being”. In contrast, the Confucian scholar Hayashi Razan (1583–1657), one of the pillars of scholarship during the early Tokugawa shoguns, rejected any syncretistic relationship between Buddhism and Shinto and asserted that Shinto was to remain consistent with Confucianism. Both Yamazaki and Hayashi interpreted Shinto from a perspective of Confucianism as the official doctrine of the shogunate. Confucianism was definitely established in Japan as a social theory during the Edo period. The Tokugawa shogunate banned Christianity and placed Buddhists under strict control. Confucianism then recovered its standing among the ruling samurai class (*bushi*), who accepted it as the leading doctrine of moral education and conduct. Increasingly, however, during the Edo period (1603–1868) it became

G. Aston (trans.), *Nihongi: chronicles of Japan from the earliest times to A.D. 697*, London 1956, and Karl Florenz (Übers), *Nihong oder Japanische Annalen*, Tokyo 1892–1897.

22 Satō Masato, *Shinbutsu shūgō* [The Amalgamation of Kami and Buddha], in: Koyasu Nobukuni (ed.), *Dictionary of Japanese Thought History* (footnote 16), pp. 287–288. See also Sugawara Shinkai, *Shinbutsu shūgō shisō no kenkyū* [Studies in Ideas of the Amalgamation of Buddha and Kami], Tokyo 2005.

open to most classes – including merchants, peasants and others – and was encouraged by the shogunate for the control of popular morals and ethics. Thus, in the course of the nineteenth century, Confucianism gained in popularity through an internal renewal of its scholastic framework as well as through the application of diverse strands of thought to the clarification of its terminology and doctrines. Amateur scholars from peasant and merchant families promoted its progress and Confucian narratives and discourses on social philosophy became widespread concurrently with the growth of temple schools (*terako-ya*) and private schools (*juku*). Confucianism also paved the way for the incorporation of popular knowledge in the system of national education which was subsequently institutionalised by the Meiji government.

### 2.3. The Imperial Rescript on Education or *Kyōiku chokugo*

All histories of Japanese education note that the Imperial Rescript on Education – the *Kyōiku chokugo* or, more precisely, *Kyōiku ni kan-suru chokugo* – was issued on 30 October 1890. This occurred amid incessant disputes on popular education between the progressive and conservative groups even at the highest levels of government. In a context of increasing agitation for a constitution by groups such as the “Freedom and People’s Rights Movement”, the local governors, on the occasion of their Conference of February 1890, asked the government to issue an ordinance on the principles of moral education. In response to this demand, the government decided to issue such an ordinance. The Prime Minister Yamagata Aritomo (1838–1922) had Yoshikawa Akimasa, the then Minister of Education, prepare an Imperial Rescript on Education. The first draft was written by Nakamura Masanao (1832–1891) but was rejected by Inoue Kowashi (1844–1895), the director of the cabinet’s legal office. Inoue for his part authored a further draft and presented it to Motoda Nagazane, the highly regarded Confucian scholar who served as an adviser to the emperor and as a member of the House of Peers. After much debate the draft was completed and the emperor granted his approval.<sup>23</sup>

Obviously, the differing views on education policy held by the leading officials of the Meiji government reflected their own educational backgrounds. A comparison of the intellectual frames of reference of Nakamura Masanao and Inoue Kowashi reveals the possible political motives underlying their respective draft versions for the ordinance on social and moral education. Nakamura was born in Edo, received a basic education focused on the Chinese classics and pursued advanced studies both in the Confucian classics and in British learning, since he studied in the United Kingdom from 1866–1868. He became a professor at Tokyo University from 1881 and was appointed to the House of Peers in 1890. Inoue, in contrast, was born in Kumamoto and studied the Chinese classics and, afterwards, Confucian learning at a domain school and French learning at Nagasaki and Edo, followed by legal studies in France and Germany in 1872. He

23 Yoshikawa Akimasa, Tokukyō ni kansuru chokuyū no gi [On the Emperor’s Rescript for Moral Education], an official letter to the Prime Minister Yamagata Aritomo, on 20 September, 1890, in: Satō Hideo (ed.), Kyōiku [Education], no. 1, Zoku gendai-shi shiryō [Second Series of Modern History Resources], vol. 8, Tokyo 1994, p. 37.

served as Minister of Education from 1893, submitting “Notes on education” to the then Prime Minister Itō Hirobumi in which he emphasised *kokutai* and sought to replace the English model of scholarly learning with the German one in the universities. Thus, Nakamura, owing to his education in London, where he had studied, among others, John Stuart Mill and the Scottish writer and reformer Samuel Smiles, was inclined to follow the models of British industry and democracy and the British system of constitutional monarchy. Inoue, on the other hand, compared France and Germany under the chancellorship of Otto von Bismarck; he saw the German constitution as a possible model for Japan and criticised the British and American parliamentary systems and their underlying political philosophy.

The educational policy trends of the 1870s and 1880s had all been inspired by European Enlightenment philosophy. Fukuzawa, Nakamura and Mori were all founders of the above-mentioned “Sixth Year of Meiji Society” (*Mei roku-sha*). Their basic perspective was individualistic in the sense that a person was to be educated not only in order to achieve the level of wealth necessary to sustain his family but also to be sufficiently independent as a citizen. Through such independent and well-educated citizens the country would develop and become wealthy and strong enough to cope with any external threat. The study of European learning was encouraged and the plans for a national education system and a constitutional political system were to be based on this individualistic “canvas”. Fukuzawa discussed the relationship between men and women whereas Nishimura Shigeki (1828–1902) examined in particular detail the role of women in society (see below for details). The School Ordinance of 1872 was based on this vision of individual growth and improvement. In contrast to the *Mei roku-sha*’s designs for civil society, however, the plans of the conservative groups were motivated more by the impetus towards a system of national education and national unity and the associated collectivistic school of thought. These groups maintained that the arguments of the progressive philosophers and educationalists failed to clearly identify the core values for the education of children and young people who were to provide the necessary support for the Meiji imperial state in the future. In essence, the conservatives had severe doubts as to whether the Japanese people could achieve collective progress through individual awakening in the Enlightenment sense.

Finally, divergent interpretations of *kokutai* – the core concept assuming an uninterrupted lineage of the imperial family as the authentic rulers of the polity known as Yamato or Nippon or, later, Japan – played a decisive role. While all scholars and intellectuals in principle agreed on *kokutai* as a basis for the debates over a constitution, the progressives and conservatives nevertheless differed on how *kokutai* was to be preserved and developed. The progressive group thought that westernisation could provide a shortcut towards a new *kokutai* for the nation, while the conservative group preferred a more traditional view of *kokutai*. After much debate on the appropriate system of moral education for future generations, the Imperial Rescript on Education was issued one year after the publication of the Constitution of Imperial Japan in 1889. The first chapter of the constitution defined *kokutai*, stating that Japan was governed by the emperor in an

unbroken line of sovereignty (article 1), the emperor was sacred and his authority not to be defied (article 3) and the emperor was to command his army and navy (article 13). In terms of its key elements the Imperial Rescript on Education precisely matches the constitution, the first paragraphs of the former reading just like the first article of the latter.<sup>24</sup>

The Imperial Rescript on Education was sent to all prefecture governors, and copies were made for it to be distributed to all the nation's schools. While the struggle towards a state education system in Japan eventually resulted in a compromise between the progressive and the conservative socio-political schools of thought, the Imperial Rescript was nevertheless enormously influential in establishing an emperor-centred national education system. Founded on Confucian morality, it required the people's loyalty to the emperor and service to the nation. It also reflected the ideas shared by the leading members of the Meiji government: While western countries' systems of national values were based on Christianity, Japan lacked an equivalent religion. Moreover, many great countries in history had endured through a concentration of political and religious power in the king. For all these reasons, Japan should also adhere to a system of religio-cultural values, one that was based on an unbroken imperial lineage. Accordingly, the English translation of the *Kyōiku Chokugo* authorised by the Ministry of Education in 1890 reads as follows:

*Know ye, Our subjects:*

*Our Imperial Ancestors have founded Our Empire on a basis broad and everlasting and have deeply and firmly implanted virtue.*

*Our subjects ever united in loyalty and filial piety have from generation to generation illustrated the beauty thereof. This is the glory of the fundamental character of Our Empire, and herein also lies the source of Our education.*

*Ye, Our subjects, be filial to your parents, affectionate to your brothers and sisters: as husbands and wives be harmonious, as friends true; bear yourselves in modesty and moderation; extend your benevolence to all; pursue learning and cultivate arts, and thereby develop intellectual faculties and perfect moral powers; furthermore advance public good and promote common interests; always respect the Constitution and observe the laws; should emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth. So shall ye not only be Our good and faithful subjects, but render illustrious the best traditions of your forefathers.*

*The Way here set forth is indeed the teaching bequeathed by Our Imperial Ancestors, to be observed alike by Their Descendants and the subjects, infallible for all ages and true in all places.*

24 Inoue Kowashi, *kenpō gige* [Introduction to the Principles of a Constitution], in: Itō Hirobumi (ed.), *kenpō shiryō* [Drafts and Notes on Constitutions], vol. 2 (of 3), compiled by Kaneko Kentarō and Hitsutsu Atsushi, Tokyo 1934, pp.1-2.

*It is Our wish to lay it to heart in all reverence, in common with you, Our subjects, that we may all thus attain to the same virtue.*

*The 30th day of the 10th month of the 23rd year of Meiji (1890)*  
*(Imperial Sign Manual. Imperial Seal)*

### 3. Media-Based Visualisation of the Meiji Emperor and its Significance for School Education

#### 3.1. Re-constructing the Portrait of the Emperor

By the late nineteenth century it had become an international custom for dignitaries to exchange photographs and portraits with their counterparts, whether an emperor, a king or a military commander. Portraits were exchanged in the same way as we nowadays exchange visiting cards. Exchanging the photograph of a sovereign was seen internationally as a way of strengthening claims of sovereignty. By the time of the Meiji Revolution photographs were seen a powerful means for people to have knowledge of their rulers, while also enabling them to see the world in which they lived and witness national and international political events.

Photography had been invented thirty years prior to the Meiji Revolution and photographs rapidly spread worldwide, reaching Japan just three years after their invention. Before anyone had noticed, photographs had changed the ways people observed and understood their surroundings.<sup>25</sup> Accordingly, the Meiji government required a photograph of Japan's emperor. It is reported that the first photograph of Meiji Tennō was taken in 1873.<sup>26</sup> Surviving pictures show him as a young person, wearing conventional Kyoto palace dress. Photographs taken later in 1873, which show him in European-style military uniform, were circulated among the higher officials of the government and sent to foreign countries. The gift of a photograph to an officer indicated a close relationship between this officer and the emperor. The Meiji government strictly prohibited public display of photographs of the emperor and their duplication or sale was a crime. Photographs of the emperor were not made available to the general public until 1888.

In 1888 the emperor was once again captured, this time in military uniform, but in a photograph of a western-style painting by the Italian painter and copperplate engraver Eduardo Chiossone (1833–1898). Chiossone had been invited to Japan as early as 1874 to serve in the Japan Mint at Ōsaka, since the Meiji government needed the support of foreign experts to protect the country's currency against counterfeit. He was subsequently employed at the government's printing bureau (*insatsu-kyoku*) which was part of the Ministry of Finance and where the introduction of modern machinery and technology was envisaged. Chiossone was entrusted with the practical execution of these plans and

25 On early photography in Japan, see Japan Photographers Association, *A Century of Japanese Photography*, New York 1980.

26 Taki Kōji, *Tennō no shōzō* [The Portrait of the Emperor] (footnote 4), pp. 102–107.

he trained the Japanese employees regarding printing techniques, designed official paper currencies and stamps, taught the art of making printing ink and paper with watermarks and demonstrated how to make multiple copies from a single plate. Chiossone also became known for his portraits of a number of high government officials. His portraits, for instance, of Sanjō Sanetomi, Kido Kōin and Iwakura Tomomi can still be seen today.<sup>27</sup> When he was asked to create a portrait of the emperor, Chiossone first prepared a series of model portraits: one of a figure standing in military uniform, another of a figure seated on a chair in military uniform, a third one of a figure standing in civilian clothes and a fourth in profile. These served as models for Chiossone's portrait of the emperor himself. In January 1888, he was ordered to make a portrait and a copperplate engraving of the emperor in military uniform. It is said that he sketched the emperor without even being noticed by him. In August of that year, the photographer Maruki photographed Chiossone's paintings of Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken in *conté-crayon*. These photographs, which were later reproduced in large numbers, were to become known as *Go-Shin'ei* – literally the “honourable real picture” – i.e. the official portrait of Meiji Tennō and his wife.<sup>28</sup> Chiossone also made portraits of the legendary Empress Jingū which would appear on Japan's currency. It is said that Chiossone sketched some beautiful girls who worked at the bureau.<sup>29</sup> But the portrait of Empress Jingū shown on the currency resembled a European woman, suggesting that leading government officials preferred something akin to a European skin tone and physique in seeking to establish the public visibility of the emperor and the members of his court.

Thus, after making his appearance as the supreme commander of the military and the highest political authority in 1868 and subsequently returning to a position of invisibility vis-à-vis the general population in the 1880s, the emperor reappeared in the political sphere in a highly symbolic form. The Meiji government needed to demonstrate to the masses the emperor's grandeur and nobility and sought to utilise his symbolic photograph to convey to foreign countries the processes of modernisation which were unfolding in Japan. Since the emperor himself would no longer appear to a national or international audience in person, it was his socially invented – and, in a sense, artificially constructed – image which was to symbolise the supreme sovereignty of the Meiji state.<sup>30</sup>

Moreover, there were other – no less political – reasons for proceeding in this way. The Meiji government urgently needed to provide young men with physical training. Young Japanese appeared to be of a more slender and weaker build than westerners. Apart from the *samurai*, few Japanese underwent physical training in the period prior to the

27 Meiji Bijutsu Gakkai (ed.), *Oyatoi gaikokujin Kiyosone kenkyū* [Studies on Chiossone during his Employment by the Japanese Government], Tokyo 1999; cf. also Ellen P. Conant, *Chiossone: his Professional and Cultural Milieus*, Meiji Bijutsu Gakkai, 1999, pp. 19–60.

28 Lia Beretta, “Chiossone e la Banca Nazionale nel Regno”, in: Meiji Bijutsu Gakkai (ed.), *Oyatoi gaikokujin Kiyosone kenkyū* (footnote 27), pp. 1–17.

29 Uemura Takashi, *Okura-shō Insatsu-kyoku ni okeru Kiyosone no gyōseki* [Chiossone's Contributions to the Printing Bureau of the Ministry of Finance], in: Meiji Bijutsu Gakkai (ed.), *Oyatoi gaikokujin Kiyosone kenkyū* (footnote 27), pp. 56–8.

30 Taki Kōji, *Tennō no shōzō* [The Portrait of the Emperor] (footnote 4), pp. 148–150.

Meiji Revolution. Enlightened officials who had studied abroad saw Japanese people as physically weak, which was a disadvantage both for military purposes and for day-to-day encounters with foreigners. Improving young men's physiques was a necessary condition for the process of modernising Japan which began with an improvement of people's bodies. The emperor, as depicted in the photograph of his painted portrait, conveyed an impression of physical strength, as an ideal model of manhood which might be emulated in the new era. Another point worth noting is that of clothing. Western-style clothing and uniforms replaced traditional kimono and the conventional imperial palace dress often known as *I-kan-soku-tai* – i.e., the gown worn by Shinto priests or old-style full court dress – so that the process of modernisation in Japan was associated with a concomitant “clothing revolution”. Japanese people were to be radically new in both their physique and appearance. In this sense, Western-style military uniform played a unique social, educational and political role by cultivating the resolve of adult men, i.e. their utmost commitment to the emperor and the state.



Figure 1: The Go-Shin'ei: "Meiji Tennō and Kōgo".

Source: Sato Hideo (ed.), *Kyōiku, Go-Shin'ei to Kyōiku-Chokugo I* [Education, Go-Shin'ei and Kyōiku-Chokugo I], *Zoku-Gendai-Shi Shiryō 8* [Second Series of Modern History Resources, vol. 8], Tokyo, Misuzu-Shobō, 1994. With kind permission by the publisher and by the Imperial Household Ministry.

### 3.2. Go-Shin'Ei – The Official Portraits of the Emperor and Empress

The term for the official portraits of the emperor and empress – *Go-Shin'Ei* – originally referred to depictions of the founders of new Buddhist schools. It was customary for adherents of Buddhism to create images of the schools' founders after their deaths. Temples would frequently select something that was sacred or special for Buddhist disciples and then hide this away, and these portraits were often kept hidden away deep within the temples. The Meiji government initially offered the official portraits of the emperor and empress to the schools which it founded and managed, at first only granting them to selected institutions which had close links with the imperial family or leading government officials. Around 1882, it became customary for the Meiji government to send these portraits to public authorities and educational institutions, and from 1889 onwards they were delivered to primary schools throughout the country. It is important to note, however, that every school, whether public or private, initially had to apply to be granted the portraits. Despite the Meiji government's intention to distribute the portraits throughout the country, it required all educational institutions to apply to the Minister of Education, who examined these applications and then advised the Imperial Household Ministry (*kunaishō*) to either grant the portraits to the selected institutions or reject the petitioners' requests.

The volume of applications from primary schools failed to live up to expectations, however. The 1890 annual report of the Ministry of Education lists 28 universities and higher colleges, 49 normal schools, 59 secondary schools for boys and girls, 1,471 higher-grade primary schools and 23,811 common primary schools. The number of common primary schools is approximately fifteen times the total number of all other schools and higher education institutions, which is a significant factor behind the portraits' slow distribution. As a consequence, in 1914 the central government permitted local authorities to duplicate the photographs and make them available to all primary schools under their administrative control without the need for a recommendation from the Minister of Education. From 1916 onwards, it was decided that the photographs would be sent to primary schools and kindergartens managed by the local authorities at the lowest rung in the administrative hierarchy.<sup>31</sup> The Meiji government also intended to send the portraits to private schools including mission schools, though most of these schools were reluctant to apply to the Minister of Education to receive the portraits. It was natural for such schools – whether Christian or Buddhist – to decline the governmental proposal of displaying the portraits of the emperor and the empress within their precincts since they saw this as apostasy. In the 1930s, however, most private schools accepted this practice. Regarding the photograph of Empress Shōken, the Meiji government pursued a different set of objectives than those for the emperor. In the early Meiji period, the ideal adult woman was to be a good wife and wise mother, and those who met the empress

31 Satō Hideo, *Kaisetsu* [Explanatory Notes on the Volume], *Kyōiku* [Education], no. 1, Second Series of Modern History Resources, vol. 8, 1994, pp. 12-15.

reported that she was both beautiful and wise. In 1878, the empress personally ordered the publication of books on morals and ethical values for adult women. Thus, Kondō Yoshiki edited four volumes entitled “Records of Ideal Moral Life in the Meiji Era” (*Meiji Kosetsu-roku*) in consultation with a scholar of Shinto. Motoda Nagazane, the Confucian scholar and personal adviser to the emperor who has already been mentioned several times above, wrote a preface to each of these books. The values espoused in these volumes were those of a traditional morality for women that had long been cherished by men and women and passed on from one generation to the next in the pre-Meiji Revolution period. The women described in these books were brave enough to withstand the hardest challenges. They worked hard, protected the weak through self-sacrifice and were faithful to their husbands. Summarising these traditional views, Wakakuwa Midori asserts that such values were expected of women in relation to men within the family unit, whereas independent personality and individuality were not seen as being of significance for women.<sup>32</sup> In 1887, the empress had Nishimura Shigeki (1828–1902) edit another set of books on female morality. The six volumes entitled “Examples of Refined Women” (*Fujo-Kagami*) were first made available to the School for Noble Girls and went on sale only in 1888. In the following years, most girls’ schools adopted the books as textbooks on moral education. The illustrations of refined women were selected from national and international depictions. Of the 120 illustrations provided in the six volumes, thirty-six were Japanese and fifty European. These books once again emphasise a femininity based on Confucianism but also encompass other areas of women’s education such as book-keeping, housekeeping, child-rearing and the passing-on of cultural values. These female abilities are in keeping with the personal characteristics of bourgeois European women, and it is clear that the books were intended as a source of education for Meiji Japan’s growing female middle class.

In this sense, Empress Shōken’s photograph symbolises maturity and morality for women whose femininity was closely associated with the conventional family system based on Confucian values and embedded in local communities. In relation to the overall process of Japanese modernisation, the goal was to promote an awareness of traditional morality alongside the nascent sense of national unity. The official portraits of Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken – the *Go-Shin’Ei* – were to serve as models for Japanese men and women who were to cultivate their minds, train their bodies and wear European clothes. Likewise, select sectors of the population, such as members of the military forces, civil servants, employees in trade and industry or the banking sector as well as teachers were those who were in this sense modern and exemplified the ideals of a modern Japan. Their mode of living gradually became prevalent among urban dwellers but it took longer for the inhabitants of rural areas to become accustomed to it. In sum, the photographs of Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken were effective in promoting the new way of life and its norms and were a strong symbolic expression of an ethical and religious model for

people to adhere to. The role which the *Go-Shin'ei* was supposed to play was all the more important as even in the Meiji era (1868–1912) people continued to adhere to their old habits which were deeply rooted in conventional rituals and defied general or objective description because they were the products of natural environments and hidden personal sensitivities.

The photographs of the emperor and empress captured such popular sentiment by means of an artificial political-*cum*-cultural construct along a space-time continuum whose basic axes were at least three-dimensional. This continuum organised popular sentiment along dimensions comprising “power-subordination”, “knowledge-experience” and “profanation-sacredness”. Accordingly, the visibility of the emperor and empress brought in its train a redefinition of the notion of *kokusui*, which involved an indescribable, indivisible combination of ordinary people’s sensory physical behaviour and day-to-day activities in their natural and cultural environments while also entailing an abstract political concept. *Kokusui* referred to the idea of a primordial national character, but its vagueness as a concept helped people to maintain organic institutions in local communities which could provide support for the new imperial system.

#### 4. The Meiji Schoolhouse – A Sacred Place

Given the political-*cum*-ideological significance of education in Meiji Japan, it will be readily understood that the new primary-school buildings erected by the Meiji government were deliberately assigned a sacred character and were constructed as “sacred places” (*shinden*). A typical example of this transference of sacrality onto the state primary school is a schoolhouse built in Yamanashi prefecture in the early Meiji period. The Yamanashi region was a territory which had been under the direct control of the Tokugawa shogunate throughout the Edo period. Accordingly, in 1873 when Fujimura Shirō was appointed governor of the newly established prefecture – i.e. the regional administrative body which the revolutionary government founded on the French model – he was ordered to implement the Meiji government’s policies as strictly as possible. In the field of educational policy Fujimura was thus strongly committed to putting into practice the ideal expressed by the government’s declaration: “in future, there shall be no community which includes an illiterate family, nor any family which includes an illiterate person”. Fujimura clearly advocated western-style buildings for primary schools and succeeded in constructing more than thirty schoolhouses of this style at various locations in his prefecture. In most cases, the buildings’ roofs featured towers and their overall design was extremely innovative for their time. Undoubtedly, therefore, such unusual buildings must have made an overwhelming impression on the people living in the villages scattered in the Yamanashi mountains. Even today in the Yamanashi area they are known as “Fujimura schools” and meet with general affection. Figure 2 shows a characteristic example of the Fujimura-style school buildings, viz Tsugane Primary School which was completed in 1875. The building was restored to its original condition in recent years

and is now used as a local museum. As Figure 2 shows, the school is located on a sloping hill with the villagers' houses spread out at the foot of this hill. Even today, Tsugane remains an isolated village which is lost in the mountains; bearing in mind the fact that this isolation was much more pronounced in the late nineteenth century, one can easily imagine how overwhelming it was for the villagers to see such a western-style school building at the time of its construction, over a hundred years ago.

But the Meiji schoolhouse was overwhelmingly impressive for another reason too. Given the drastic lack of financial resources in the 1870s and 1880s – both at the level of the central government and that of the prefectural administration – each inhabitant of the village had to contribute according to his family's means towards the construction of the school. Accordingly, the local population covered most of the expenses for school-building projects.<sup>33</sup> The villagers must therefore have taken great pride and pleasure in the fact that they had funded the new school building, whose western-style modernity was so different from their own houses. This must have played an important role in promoting the public's rapid acceptance of the Meiji government's new educational policies.



Figure 2: Fujimura-Style Schoolhouse (Author's own photograph)

Yet Fujimura's emphasis on the western style of primary-school buildings reflected more than just his personal preferences, it also involved more substantial reasons linked to the overall goal of unifying the nation by reshaping popular consciousness. In the early

33 In Yamanashi prefecture many documents survive of villages which show that village dwellers were willing to contribute to the building of their schools in various ways, including money, labour and products such as straw sandals and straw ropes. This shows the intensity of support for the Meiji Revolution among the common people at this time.

Meiji period, a considerable number of privately-run traditional educational institutions still existed, such as the above-mentioned temple schools (*terako-ya*) and private schools (*juku*). The Meiji Revolution and the collapse of the shogunate system strengthened popular enthusiasm for the establishment of further schools, and immediately after the revolution many feudal domains created another type of school which was known as the *gogaku*. However, the curriculum taught in both the traditional institutions and the *gogaku* was restricted to reading, writing, the abacus and a modest amount of study of Chinese classical literature and thus did not differ from what was taught in the Edo period. In its “School Ordinance” the government thus deliberately sought to differentiate the new state education institutions from traditional schools by naming the former “state schools” (*gakkō*). Yet it proved quite difficult to increase rates of enrolment in the state schools – even though this was now compulsory – since these schools imposed greater obligations on parents than the traditional system of private education had done. The new system required children – both boys and girls – to attend school for at least four years from the age of six. Villagers, who were mostly peasants, thus lost a significant source of labour, whereas the traditional system left it up to parents’ discretion at what age and for how long their children would attend school. Governor Fujimura was thus obliged to repeatedly prohibit attendance of the private educational institutions.



Figure 3: Location of the Fujimura-Style Schoolhouse Close to a Temple  
(Author's own photograph)

Under such circumstances, then, the overwhelming impression which western-style schoolhouses made on rural populations must have been instrumental in convincing both parents and children that the curriculum taught in these schools – though different from the traditional one – was appropriate and necessary for the future of their society.

Attending the *gakkō* with its impressive building must have been all the more attractive to school-age children as classes in traditional *terako-ya*, *juku* and other private schools of the era were usually held in rooms in temple buildings or private houses whose facilities were obviously inferior to those of the new state school buildings. Moreover, and perhaps even more importantly, not only did the western-style state school buildings feature innovative architecture, they were also granted the privilege of displaying the *Go-Shin'EI* within their walls. This privilege meant that the state school began to assume a strongly sacred quality. The portraits of the Emperor and the Empress were not granted to all of the new primary schools unconditionally: schools unable to provide for the portrait's safekeeping were refused it. Citizens thus sought to improve the material and structural condition of their district's primary school in order to receive the portrait, which was considered a great honour. Records from all over the county show that when a school received the portrait a ceremony was held in which the entire village participated. The almost sacred quality of the public primary school was strengthened even further by its location. As Figure 3 clearly shows, the schoolhouse was quite often located close to a local shrine on top of a hill. Villagers would thus "look up" at their school, in the same way as they were accustomed to "looking up" at the shrine or temple. Many other cases testify to the practice, current in Meiji Japan, of a certain degree of sacralisation of the state school through the transformation of former shrine and temple buildings into schoolhouses or the construction of schoolhouses close to shrines or temples. One possible reason for the preferential use of such sites is that they were deemed public land and therefore not subject to purchase costs. Besides this pragmatic consideration, however, the state school's participation in the aura of sacrality attached to these places was also a significant factor.

There is another characteristic feature of the western-style Meiji school that requires explanation. The new type of schoolhouse was designed to play the role of a "time instructor", for which purpose a traditional bass drum was placed in the tower constructed on the roof of the building (as shown in Figures 2 and 3). The bass drum indicated the time according to the western twenty-four hour time system which was introduced on New Year's Day in 1873 when Japan changed over to the solar calendar.<sup>34</sup> Consequently, not only schoolchildren but also their parents working in the fields or in the village would hear the sound of the drum and become accustomed to the new time system. Physically and acoustically, the contrast between the Edo era – when the ringing of bells in Buddhist temples had normally announced the time – and the period of the Meiji reforms – when the drum which had traditionally been used in Shinto shrines assumed this task – could not have been more conspicuous.<sup>35</sup> This aesthetic contrast – "aesthetic" in its

34 A famous English traveller, Isabella L. Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*, London 1880, p. 129, reported on her own experience of a school drum in Nikko, Tochigi prefecture, in 1878: "At 7 a.m. a drum beats to summon the children to a school whose buildings would not discredit any school board at home. Too much Europeanised I thought it, and the children looked very uncomfortable sitting on high benches in front of desks, instead of squatting, native fashion. The school apparatus is very good, and there are fine maps on the walls".

35 Since the last days of the shogunate a widespread movement directed against Buddhism had emerged whose

original meaning of “relating to perception by the senses” – reflected not only the contrast between Japan’s traditional way of structuring time by the lunar calendar and the Gregorian calendar imported from the West, but also the far more fundamental contrast between traditional Buddhism and a Shintoism which was undergoing redefinition as a religio-cultural doctrine suited to granting virtually sacred legitimisation both to the nation and to the emperor at its apex. At the same time, however, the revolutionary government in faraway Tokyo manifested itself as the lord and master not only of the new schools, their rules and curricula, but also of the new system of defining time.

Logically enough, careful cleaning of the school building every day by the students was mandatory to guarantee its purity at all times. This involved both sweeping and scrubbing the floor of the entire building, akin to the temple training which Zen monks receive even today. As a result of all these improvements to the primary schools’ outward appearance and the symbolic measures that accompanied implementation of the revolutionary government’s policies, Japanese schools took on a virtually sacred quality. Some of the terms typically used with regard to schooling reflect this sacralisation of state schools. A salient example is the fact that, in Japanese, going to school to study is known as *tōkō*, a term which literally means “going to school as a higher place” but also has an implicit meaning of “going to a place of higher value”. The opposite term – returning home after attending school – is *gekō* which literally means “going down from a higher place to a lower place” but also implies “returning from school as a place of higher value to one’s home as a place of lower value”. This reading is clearly supported by the traditional Japanese understanding of the antonyms *tō* and *ge* as used, for example, in the words *tōzan* and *gesan*. The former means “joining a temple for training or schooling” whereas the latter refers to “returning home after spending a certain period of time in the temple for training”. These antonyms must have been convenient in providing the meaning which the Meiji government was trying to attach to the *gakkō* system of schooling. Scholars of historical semantics assume that the words *tōkō* and *gekō* were created from these antonyms. And it is highly instructive to note that both terms have remained in common use in the Japanese language up to the present day.

Another no less prominent example is an expression which people use when referring to a “teacher”, particularly in terms of the occupation of teaching, viz *seishokusha*, i.e. “a person engaged in the sacred profession of teaching and guiding people”. Historically, this word referred to monks and Shinto priests but since the Meiji period schoolteachers have also been referred to as “sacred professionals”. The headmaster who managed a group of sacred professionals played a role similar to that of the chief priest of a temple known as a *gakkō*. This role of the headmaster was vividly demonstrated, especially on the occasion of special ceremonies such as “Empire Day”, *kigensetsu*, which referred to the mythological foundation of Japan by Emperor Jimmu, was abolished after World War II and reintroduced in 1966 as “National Foundation Day”, or the emperor’s birth-

day. The “Empire Day” ceremony was attended by all the pupils of a school and individuals selected from the general public, including school personnel but also senior administrative officials and police officers. Every participant had to wear full dress. The headmaster opened a scroll of the Imperial Rescript on Education wearing white gloves and read it aloud solemnly, and the participants bowed their heads while listening to him. Following the reading of the Imperial Rescript, the headmaster and some eminent guests attending the ceremony gave speeches that heavily emphasised traditional Confucian morality. At the end of the ceremony the participants together sang an Empire Day song and on leaving the event each participant received a set of red and white *manjū*, i.e. Japanese-style buns.<sup>36</sup>

Thus, in the early Meiji period, not only did Japanese state primary schools fulfil their normal role just as in other countries, they were also granted an additional meaning resulting from the transference of sacred symbols and values onto the modern school-house and its western-style building. This virtual sacralisation enabled Meiji state schools (*gakkō*) to become places for effective performance of ceremonial pedagogy with a view to inculcating the national ideology of the Meiji Revolution not only in students but also in their parents and other adults. To a certain degree, this continued up to the end of World War II.

## 5. The Social Impact of Tennō Worship as Reflected by Personal Experience

Analyzing with some degree of precision the long-term social impact of specific institutional arrangements or political reforms has always been a difficult task for historical research. This is particularly true of “ceremonial pedagogy”, whose impact can be reconstructed with regard to the political-*cum*-ideological goals which corresponding activities were meant to promote, but less so with respect to the actual effects of corresponding forms of symbolic visualisation, public staging or aesthetic representation.

The vivid memory of one of the two authors of this essay is most instructive in this regard, however. This author, Suzuki, was born in 1933 at Changchun, an old city in north-east China which had been renamed Hsingking – in Japanese “Shinkyō” which means “new capital” – in 1932. In that same year, the Japanese-controlled pseudo-independent state of Manchukuo was established. It is well-known that the major international powers did not recognise Manchukuo as a state because Japan treated it as a virtual colony. The Manchukuo government controlled educational policy when the young Suzuki entered the Asahi-Jinjo Primary School at Chilin (Jilin) in 1938 and enacted various education laws, making schooling compulsory for children of every ethnicity from the age of six and up to the age of eleven. Throughout Manchukuo, the government established new

36 A combination of the colours red and white is a traditional symbol of celebration in Japan. Incidentally, the similarity between the ritual of this ceremony and some aspects of the Christian mass is noteworthy.

schools and reorganised existing ones in line with the new Manchurian education system.

The Asahi-Jinjo Primary School was a new school built for children of Japanese employees working at the Chilin office of the South Manchuria Railway Company (SMRC), the Chilin railway station and other organisations. Most of the teachers were recent graduates of Japanese normal schools. When the young Suzuki enrolled at the school it had just sent its first graduates to secondary schools or to enter the world of work. The school was located close to the blocks of flats set aside for the employees of the above-mentioned institutions and was built by the Manchurian local government and the South Manchuria Railway Company. There were two primary schools for the Japanese and separate schools for Chinese, Koreans and Mongolian pupils.

The school day began with a morning session which was normally held in the playground except in the winter. Pupils assembled in the playground, hoisted the Japanese flag (*Hinomaru*), sang the Japanese national anthem (*Kimigayo*) in unison and bowed in the direction of the imperial palace in Tokyo (the *Kyūjō*). After this ceremony the pupils listened to the headmaster's address. Before the morning session, all the children recited the Imperial Rescript on Education in their classrooms. The young Suzuki recited entire sentences composed of classical terms and phrases, most of which were beyond his power of understanding.<sup>37</sup> It is important to note that the more difficult the passages, the more effective they were in dominating pupils' hearts and minds. The abstract concepts and the sound of the author's own voice heightened the effect of inculcating in him the ideas of the Imperial Rescript on Education.

Following the enactment of the Law of National Schools (*kokumin-gakkō*) in 1941, a copy of the official portraits of Emperor Shōwa (who reigned 1926–1989) and the Empress was brought into his classroom and hung up high on the wall above the blackboard. The eyes of the emperor and empress continually monitored the author and his classmates during their lessons, and the author felt as if he was being observed by them and found their gaze unavoidable whenever he was sitting in the classroom.<sup>38</sup> In the past, Meiji Tennō had communicated strong political and religious messages to the commoners whom he met on his journeys, and the “honourable real picture” (*Go-Shin'Ei*) of the Meiji Emperor and Empress Shōken continued to convey these messages even after their travels had come to an end. While twenty-nine years had elapsed since the death of Emperor Meiji when the young Suzuki saw the portraits of Emperor Shōwa and the Empress, these portraits conveyed to him and his classmates the very same messages that had been imparted to those who had seen Emperor Meiji several decades previously.

37 Cf. the full-length text quoted at the end of section 2.3 above.

38 It is said that in some British pubs an eye was hung from the ceiling or on the wall. This eye was God's eye which warned the guests not to drink too much.



Figure 4: The Go-Shin'Ei granted to schools: "Shōwa Tennō and Kōgi".

Source: Sato Hideo (ed.), *Kyōiku, Go-Shin'Ei to Kyōiku-Chokugo I* [Education, Go-Shin'Ei and Kyōiku-Chokugo I], *Zoku-Gen-dai-Shi Shiryō* 8 [Second Series of Modern History Resources, vol. 8], Tokyo, Misuzu-Shobō, 1994. With the kind permission of the publisher and the Imperial Household Ministry.

The school curriculum was revised in line with the new doctrine embodied in the Law of National Schools which was termed "training and discipline" (*rensei*). Besides general school subjects, military training and traditional martial arts were made compulsory for boys and girls above grade four. Ceremonies were held at the beginning and end of every term (there were three terms in each school year). At the ceremonies held at the end of term some of the highest achievers in each class, in all six grades, were praised for their achievements, while pupils sang the national anthem and listened to the headmaster's recital of the Imperial Rescript on Education. The ceremony closed with an address by the headmaster and pupils' singing of the school song. On national holidays, school ceremonies were even more solemn, normally consisting of the singing of the national anthem; recital of the Imperial Rescript on Education; bowing in the direction of the imperial palace in Tokyo; singing contemporary songs; addresses by invited guests and the headmaster; and singing of the school song. Such ceremonies were held in the school's assembly hall and the official portraits of the emperor and empress were mandatorily hung on its wall.

In 1942, the author moved to an old town, Lin Jiang Xian, following his father's appointment as the station master there. The town lay by the river Yalu and was surrounded by high mountains on either side. The south bank of the river was Chosen – as Korea

was known while it formed part of the Japanese Empire (1910–1945) – while the town was situated on the north bank and surrounded by rich nature. The author enrolled at a school in the old district of the town. The school was an old building with a square garden and two wings on either side of the garden. The right wing was for Chinese and Korean pupils and the left for Japanese children. At that time it was quite rare for a school to accommodate children of different ethnicities. There were not many Japanese children and the author remembers just two rooms which were set aside for Japanese children from a wide range of age groups. The class was therefore a mixed one for pupils of various ages. The school building was an old, single-storey house and may be assumed to have been an old type of school which had once served as a traditional institution of learning for gifted young men in China. Here again, the pupils assembled in the garden in the morning session. There were poles for two national flags, the Japanese flag and the flag of Manchukuo. Manchukuo also had its own national anthem. The schoolchildren sang the two national anthems, with the Japanese children singing the Manchurian anthem in Chinese and vice versa. All the children bowed in the direction of the imperial palace in Tokyo, irrespective of ethnic differences. This ceremony was introduced in the schools for Chinese and Manchurian children after 1937, following the introduction of a new school system based on the laws enacted by the Manchurian government that was led by Japanese officers.

When he was a fifth-grade pupil, the Japan Club decided to establish a Shinto shrine on the low hill at the foot of Mount Mao Er. At that time Japan intended to convert Chinese, Korean and Manchurian people to the idea of “One World Under One Roof” (*Hakkō Ichiu*), an ideal of universal brotherhood which was to be realised through the Japanese language and the Shinto religion. Japanese was made one of the official languages in Manchukuo and Shinto shrines were built throughout the Japanese Empire. By 1945 nearly 300 Shinto shrines had been built in Manchuria and the regions occupied by Japan. People ruled by Japan were forced to learn Japanese and convert to Shinto – the same policy which Japan pursued following its colonisation of Taiwan after the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895).

In 1944, Japan's imminent defeat was clear to most Japanese people living in Manchuria. As a reflection of this social climate, school education focused on providing pupils with an account of the origins of the war and promoting enthusiasm for it. All the children born in 1930s were known as the “child nation” (*Shō-Kokumin*) and many of them became highly loyal and patriotic with regard to the Japanese *kokutai*. Following Russia's invasion of Manchuria in August 1945, Suzuki's father was asked to move to the province of Tong Hua in order to set up a base from which to resist the Russian troops. The entire Suzuki family along with the families of high officers of the South Manchuria Railway Company left Changchun – the place where the young Suzuki had entered secondary school just a couple of months previously – by bus. On the third day of their bus journey to Tong Hua, 15 August 1945, they heard the emperor announce on the radio that the war was over. Emperor Shōwa could be seen in newspapers and monthly magazines, always on horseback and in military uniform. This was the very first time that Japanese

people had ever heard the emperor speak. In unusual language, the emperor stated that he intended to bring to a close the war which he had started. Many adults cried over the defeat but Suzuki felt a sense of liberation from the threat of the war which he had come to know during the few months he had attended a secondary school.

In the aftermath of Japan's surrender and the collapse of Manchukuo there was no formal system of education for Japanese or any other pupils. Mr. Ōta, the former headmaster of a secondary school for girls in a city far to the north of Changchun, had come to Changchun to escape the regional unrest and invited Japanese secondary students, both boys and girls, to attend classes in a hall belonging to the South Manchuria Railway Company. Suzuki attended Mr. Ōta's mathematics class where mathematical reasoning helped him to develop his powers of rational thought and encouraged him to reflect upon the beliefs which had been inculcated in him at his primary schools. This was a kind of liberation for him from various forms of indoctrination, providing him with a new framework for his educational development. He spent only a short period of time at Ōta's seminar, however, as from July 1946 onwards many Japanese people in Changchun were collectively repatriated to Japan, including Mr. Ōta.

Suzuki and his family stayed on in Manchuria for another period of one year and three months following the end of the war. His father's company was closed down but Suzuki's father remained behind to complete its liquidation. It was not until the end of October 1946 that Suzuki's family was ordered to return to Japan. After spending a week at Sasebo in Kyūshū they moved to a village in Fukushima prefecture. On his way from Sasebo to Fukushima, the adolescent Suzuki witnessed the completely destroyed city of Hiroshima and saw the national flag (*Hinomaru*) at most railway stations since the new constitution had been promulgated on this day, i.e. 3 November 1946. Suzuki inevitably felt somewhat conflicting sentiments on his train journey to Fukushima whenever he passed through railway stations, seeing both destroyed cities and the hoisted national flag. On arriving at his destination, he enrolled at the local Hobara Secondary School, a state secondary school administered by Fukushima prefecture. Unlike in his previous schools he found no official portraits of the emperor and empress in his new classroom, but there was an altar (*hoan-den*) on the left-hand side of the garden in front of the main entrance to the school. This altar was subsequently destroyed and a small monument erected there which was dedicated to the school's alumni who had died on the battlefield. The school's initiation and graduation ceremonies no longer featured the Imperial Rescript on Education.

## 6. Concluding Remarks

The political leaders of the period following the 1868 *Meiji Ishin* skilfully and carefully staged the visibility of Emperor Meiji and Empress Shōken. At the same time, they developed national systems for the inculcation of values chosen in accordance with State Shinto ideology. The Imperial Rescript on Education was a typical example of this. Sys-

tems of knowledge such as *kokugaku*, Confucianism and Buddhism were used to fuse the imperial family's Shinto with popular systems of values which had been cherished, cultivated and formalised over centuries. Western learning and technology were amalgamated with traditional beliefs and norms. The Meiji government introduced a system of national education with reference to foreign procedures, methods and curricula while also drawing on Japanese educational traditions. Despite local variations in the establishment of an education system inculcating a sense of national unity and unequal educational opportunities for children from the poorest areas of society and the most deprived regions, most schools succeeded in indoctrinating state values in children, parents and other members of the community. At the centre and at the periphery, schools and schoolteachers performed the roles which the political authorities required of them.<sup>39</sup> State schools' role as minor State Shinto shrines meant that the central government had an increasingly clear overview of the field of education, and few people criticised the educational goals of developing a strong physique, military strength, loyalty and fidelity towards one's parents and ancestors, the virtues of being a good wife and wise mother, and a patriot devoted to the emperor and his state. This education policy naturally gave rise to an enthusiasm throughout the country for military totalitarianism.

The visibility and, at the same time, invisibility of the emperor and the empress – during the Meiji and Shōwa periods – helped the Japanese people to adjust to a new culture founded upon the principles of an imperial system which had been reinvigorated by the Meiji Revolution. The Meiji government borrowed foreign policies and adapted these to its own requirements. Likewise, by means of an approach linking society and politics with religion, it merged traditional rituals with new ones that were invented and controlled by the state. The concept of *kokutai*, for instance, largely predated 1868, but was revived and re-interpreted in the wake of the Meiji Revolution.

A number of socio-psychological instruments promoted structural changes such as, for instance, the establishment of the national education system. The Imperial Rescript on Education transported children, adolescents and adults to a separate acoustic realm whenever it was recited either by themselves or by other people, such as the headmaster, with permanent cycles of utterance and listening. The assembled pupils formed a collective acoustic sphere which was at once personal and ceremonial and where the Imperial Rescript on Education symbolised traditional values derived from both Confucianism and *kokugaku*. *Kokugaku* was inculcated in people's minds through a vocalisation of symbolic meanings, supplemented by school songs approved by the Ministry of Education and verses written for ceremonial recital on national holidays. Through this combination of acoustic and visual approaches, the internal organisation of schools perfectly complemented the inculcation of the political symbols of Meiji Japan. The school ceremony was a sacred event, and the official portraits of the emperor and empress represented an alternative version of the symbolic *kokutai* entity of Japan. Self-sacrifice was required of

39 Yamamoto Nobuyoshi & Konnō Toshihiko, *Kindai kyōiku no Tennō-sei ideorogī* [Tennō-sei or Emperor System Ideology in Modern Education], Tokyo 1987, p. 88.

all those concerned to keep these portraits safe from deterioration or loss. If a fire were to break out, for example, the headmaster would frequently sacrifice himself to protect the portraits from destruction. In other words, with the portraits of the emperor came responsibility for people to protect them and this responsibility extended to every corner of society. The emperor and his political representatives were able to develop this network throughout the country on account of the transparency of the relationship between themselves and the population as a whole, which was a relationship of the “watchers” and the “watched”.

In political and moral terms, schools, communities and society in general were reorganised so as to make up a hierarchy consisting of multiple levels of responsibility. A person belonging to a particular level in this hierarchy was a “mini-emperor” to those at lower levels in the hierarchy. Schoolteachers were “mini-emperors” in relation to their pupils, while in the family context the father or adult man was a “mini-emperor” and the mother or adult woman a “mini-empress” to the children. However, responsibilities seemed to be less onerous at higher levels in the hierarchy, with the emperor having no responsibilities at all since he was at the top of the hierarchy. Together with the Imperial Rescript on Education the *Go-Shin’Ei* of the successive emperors and empresses promoted the consolidation of a religio-socio-political system the underlying axiology of which has sounded as a *basso continuo* throughout Japanese political and cultural history.