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The Intangible Warrior Culture of Japan: Bodily Practices, Mental Attitudes, and Values of the Two-sworded men from the Fifteenth to the Twenty-first Centuries

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Publication Date:
2009

DOI:
https://doi.org/10.26190/unsworks/23088

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The Intangible Warrior Culture of Japan: Bodily Practices, Mental Attitudes, and Values of the Two-sworded Men from the Fifteenth to the Twenty-first Centuries.

Anatoliy Anshin

Ph.D. Dissertation

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2009

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have seen the light without the help of more people than I can name individually. I am particularly grateful to Professor Stewart Lone, UNSW@ADFA, and Professor Sandra Wilson, Murdoch University, for their guidance and support while supervising my Ph.D. project. All of their comments and remarks helped enormously in making this a better thesis.

A number of people in Japan contributed significantly to producing this work. I am indebted to Ōtake Risuke, master teacher of Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū, and Kondō Katsuyuki, director of the Main Line Daitō-ryū Aikijūjutsu, for granting interviews and sharing a wealth of valuable material during my research. I thank Professor Shima Yoshitaka, Waseda University, for his generous help and advice.

I would like to express my infinite thankfulness to my wife, Yoo Sun Young, for her devotion and patience during the years it took to complete this work. As for the contribution of my mother, Margarita Anshina, no words shall convey the depth of my gratitude to her.

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CONVENTIONS

- Dates prior to the adoption of the Gregorian calendar by the Meiji government on 1 January 1873 are lunar; after that they are Gregorian. All dates are expressed in year/month/day format. The letter *i* means an intercalary month. For stylistic reasons, English month names are sometimes used for the months of corresponding number in the calendar, "May" for the fifth month, "June" for the sixth month, and so on. The conversion of Japanese horary hours is approximately correct for the seasons under discussion; however, one or two hours of leeway must be taken into consideration. The tables in Nojima 1987 were used for converting dates and time.
- Japanese, Korean, and Chinese names are presented in traditional order, first name following surname. To avoid complication, I used the single most widely recognized form of a name to designate an individual at all phases of his or her life, even when this is historically inaccurate.
- Ages of Japanese are given according to the inclusive Japanese method (*kazoedoshi*).
- All measurements are converted into US units.
- All translations from Japanese in the text and notes are mine except when otherwise is specified.
- Titles of Japanese literary works appear in the original form. Their English translations are offered in parentheses immediately following the first mention of a title. The author's name and date of writing or publication, if known, follow the English translation of the title.
- Readings of Chinese titles, terms, and names are given in the Pīnyīn system. Dates are not given for titles of Chinese ancient classics.
- Indian equivalents of Japanese names of Buddhist deities are given in parentheses with diacritical marks omitted.
- Japanese historiography avoids using the term *samurai* when referring to Japanese warriors. This thesis follows the Japanese academic convention to use the term *bushi* instead.
- The thesis employs the contemporary term *tantō* for Japanese daggers, and *wakizashi* for the Japanese short sword.[1]
- The term "pre-Tokugawa" is used to refer to the *bushi* culture from 1192 to 1603.

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[1] See Kondō Yoshikazu 2000 and Friday 2004 for a discussion of pre-modern terms pertaining to these weapons.

- In regard to military arts, the English term “school” (*ryū*) is used to refer to formal organizations communicating martial skills to society. The term “training hall” (*dōjō*) is used to refer to their physical location.
- In the Bakumatsu period, the terms *rōshi* and *rōnin* were used in a broad sense to refer not only to warriors without a master but also armed commoners, rogues, gamblers, and other dangerous elements of society.[2] That is why to translate this term into English as “masterless warrior” is inappropriate. In this thesis, the term *rōshi* is used in the sense it was used in the Bakumatsu period, without English translation.

[2] For example, in the official correspondence from the warrior supervisors of the imperial court (*buke tensō*) to officials of the Aizu and Kuwana domains, the term *rōshi* was used to refer collectively to masterless warriors, townsmen, peasants, and other commoners who comprised the rebellious Tengutō which was heading toward Kyōto at the beginning of 1864/12 (Kikuchi Akira 2005, p. 60). Here, Tengutō is referred to as “*Jōshū dassō no rōshi*,” or “*rōshi* who have fled from the Hitachi province.”

LIST OF AUTHOR'S PUBLICATIONS

1. "Yamaoka Tesshū to meitō 'Musashi Masamune' " {Yamaoka Tesshū and the noted sword, "Musashi Masamune"}. *Nihon Rekishi* {Japanese History}, no. 722 (July 2008), pp. 90-98.

2. "Ushiyama Eiji ga hensan shita Yamaoka Tesshū no denki ni tsuite" {On Yamaoka Tesshū's biographies compiled by Ushiyama Eiji}. *Chiba Daigaku Nihon Bunka Ronsō* {Chiba University Japanese Culture Anthology}, no. 8 (July 2007), pp. 1-11.

3. "Yamaoka Tesshū ga kaita Edo muketsu kaijō no shimatsusho" {On Yamaoka Tesshū's records about the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle}. *Nihon Rekishi* {Japanese History}, no.708 (May 2007), pp. 80-87.

4. "Yamaoka Tesshū no kōseki o tataeta 'Masamune tantōki' no kōshō" {An investigation of *The record of tempering the Masamune sword* praising the feat of Yamaoka Tesshū}. *Nihon Kambungaku Kenkyū* {Japanese Kambun Studies}, no. 2 (March 2007), pp. 305-317.

5. "Yamaoka Tesshū no zuihitsu to kōwa kiroku ni tsuite" {On Yamaoka Tesshū's essays and discourse records}. *Chiba Daigaku Nihon Bunka Ronsō* {Chiba University Japanese Culture Anthology}, no. 7 (June 2006), pp. 104-92.

INTRODUCTION

Scholar of ethics Satō Masahide made an important observation in 1977 about contemporary studies of the Japanese warrior class (*bushi*):

> The [Japanese] warriors are alien to us. In no way are they familiar to us. Or easily comprehensible to us. It seems to be something which does not need to be repeatedly restated. However, we tend to forget it. And there is always a possibility that we rely on already existing hard stereotypes of the warriors, so much that we may easily get carried away with the idea that we fully comprehend them. Then we often attempt to make conclusions or comments about the warriors' thought. We need to be very careful not to fall into this vicious practice. For this reason, we do need to repeat the fact that the warriors are unknown to us.[1]

Writing these words late in the 1970s, Satō was no doubt concerned with various misconceptions over the *bushi* which were a result of historians' selective use of materials[2] or unconsciously drawn from the vehicles of popular culture such as storytelling, publishing, and cinema. However, even Satō continued to investigate warrior thought and values from a purely intellectual standpoint and missed a fundamental point – the warrior's body.

Three decades have passed since Satō made his observation. During this time, research on the *bushi* has produced a variety of insights into their history, breaking many generally accepted theories and opinions. Studies of the *bushi* class of the Tokugawa era have refuted the image of a rigid hierarchy that allowed no mobility between ranks and subclasses, or between it and the other stratums of Japanese society.[3] Their values have been revisited: The paramount concept of loyalty, for example, has been shown to be much more diverse than previously thought.[4] Another trend in the historiography that has been particularly conspicuous in Japan, but has also led to pioneering research in the West, is the shift from studies of the intellectual legacy of *bushi* thinkers to the scrupulous investigation of the various aspects of the *bushi* everyday life, such as their dietary habits, residences and castles, love and marital

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1 Satō Masahide 1977, p. 92.

2 Examples of scholars' selective usage of materials which only strengthens the stereotype of the "bellicose *samurai*" will be provided below.

3 Kumagae 1988; Tsukada 1997; Fujii Jōji 1999; Yoshida Nobuyuki 2003; Yokota 2005; Fukaya 2006.

4 Ansart 2007.

relationships, religious beliefs, education and travel.[5]

Extremely interesting and valuable in their own right, these works nonetheless continue to be characterized by a kind of unspoken assumption that the *bushi* thought and values were the result of mere intellectual and conceptual workings of mind. However, as Dipesh Chakrabarty noted, ideas acquire materiality only through the history of bodily practices. They work, not simply because they persuade through their logic, but because they are also capable, through a long history of cultural training of the senses, of making connections with our glands and muscles and neuronal networks. This is the work of memory, if we do not reduce the meaning of that word to the simple and conscious mental act of remembering. The past is embodied through a long process of training the senses.[6]

This thesis stands upon the belief that it is the *bushi* bodily practices and their indivisible link with the *bushi* moral universe that tend to remain unnoticed behind the lines of historical texts and documents, and which are a major factor in making the *bushi* class alien to us. The *bushi* bodily practices were a part of their "intangible culture," which also includes the mental attitudes and values of being a warrior, as well as practical knowledge applicable to virtually all aspects of a warrior's life during peace and war. Intangible culture is in indissoluble union with tangible culture as in the case of, for example, weapons and the knowledge of their structure and handling. The two constitute both sides of what is generally referred to as warrior culture (*buke bunka*). As this thesis will show, however, it was this intangible culture which was supposed, in the eyes of *bushi* who aspired to achieve what they perceived as an immutable standard of the "true warrior," to constitute the existential foundation of the professional warrior class of pre-modern Japan, and to guide their every thought and action.

In the 8th century, there were already hereditary warrior houses which specialized in military science, such as the Ōtomo, Saeki or Sakanoue.[7] Such a hereditary specialization required a long-term methodical training as well as a system of transmission of warrior skills and knowledge from generation to generation. This

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[5] Shimamura 1972; Haga 1974, 1996, 2003; Endō and Yamanaka 1981; Ishioka 1981; Hayashi 1982-1987; Bushi Seikatsu Kenkyūkai 1982; Ōguchi 1986; Ujiie 1988; Anzai 1989; Miura Tadashi 1990; Kitahara Itoko 1991; Sasama 1991; Edo Iseki Kenkyūkai 1992; Ōgiura 1992; Maruyama Yasunori 1993; Satō Mitsuhiro 1993; Fujikawa 1994; Miyazaki and Yoshida 1994; Mochizuki 1994; Nakai and Miyauchi 1994; Takahashi Hiroshi 1994; Vaporis 1994, 2007, 2008; Yokokura 1994; Andō Tamotsu 1997; Watanabe Kenji 1997; Yagi 1997; Ego 1998, 1999, 2000; Hotta 1998a, 1998b; Isoda 1998, 2003; Murakoshi 1998; Shibata 2000; Okazaki 2005; Taniguchi Shinko 2005; Fujikata 2006; Rath 2008.

[6] Chakrabarty 1998, p. 295.

[7] Farris 1992, p. 172. Friday 1997, p. 13.

intangible warrior culture left few traces in historical documents because its practice was limited to exclusive kinship groups of military men and its knowledge was transmitted mostly orally.[8] This is why the generic term "warrior training entity" is used in this thesis to refer to hereditary warrior houses which lacked the outward attributes of a formalized organization teaching military skills.

From the 15th century, another method of transmission of the intangible warrior culture appeared - what is known to historians as "schools" (referred to in Japanese most often as *ryū*, *ryūgi*, or *ryūha*), a mode of transmission seen not only in the field of the Japanese military of old, but also in painting, music, dance, theatre and other art-forms.[9] They possessed not only structured training curriculums and a system of cultural and technical inheritance through generations of headmasters but also school names, names of predetermined patterns of movement (*kata*), a formal system of disciple gradation, and other outward attributes which make them identifiable and appropriate objects for historical investigation. The 15th century is chosen as the starting point for analysis here because it is the time of birth of Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū which is the oldest warrior training entity to appear in Japan in the form of a military arts "school" and which still survives to the present.[10] Its longevity provides invaluable insights into the *bushi* intangible culture of the pre-Tokugawa ages.

In this thesis, particular attention is given to the training in military arts since other fundamental elements of the *bushi* intangible culture, such as the warrior etiquette, the state of constant alertness to a surprise attack or other kinds of danger, the cult of the blade, and practical knowledge could not function without it.[11] The term "military arts" means here highly sophisticated physical skills in use of all kinds of weapons for killing and self-protection, the acquisition of which required long-term hard training. This term is used to refer to skills of the *bushi* of the pre-Tokugawa ages and of the Tokugawa era, regardless of the removal of the latter from the realities of actual combat. The term *budō* is used to refer to modern sportive versions of Japanese military arts.[12]

Yet, this work does not consider the process of *bushi* training purely in terms of

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[8] A very rare example of a written document which mentions practices and know-how of a hereditary warrior house is *Yoshisada-ki* (*Records of [Nitta] Yoshisada*) of the first half of the 14th century (a detailed study of this document can be found in Tokuda 1991, 1992, 1993).

[9] Waterhouse 1996, p. 30. Friday 1997, pp. 14-15, 37.

[10] Details on Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū are provided in the section on sources of this Introduction and also in Chapter II.

[11] To be discussed in Chapter I.

[12] An analysis of the *bushi* military skills of the Tokugawa era is given in Chapter III. A thorough discussion of the usage of various Japanese and Western terms pertaining to the *bushi* martial skills can be found in Tominaga Kengo 1972, Friday 1997, and Hurst 1998.

military drill or the mechanical repetition of certain movements. Instead, the *bushi* military training is explored in the context of what is known in Japanese as *musha shugyō*, in which physical practice served as a means for the cultivation of spiritual values specific to the *bushi* class. This term is absolutely critical to this thesis and therefore requires explanation.[13]

Musha shugyō does not have any concise equivalent in English. Scholar Yuasa Yasuo noted the difficulty that Western translators encounter when they have to translate the term *shugyō* into English. He argued that the common English translation "cultivation" does not reflect the Japanese meaning in full.[14] It does not convey the nuance of practicing an art not only for the sake of its perfection but also as a form of austerity indispensable for ascending the path of perfection and purifying one's spirit. This was central to *bushi* who engaged in *musha shugyō* (it should be noted, however, that this austerity meant not torturing, but strengthening the body and, through this, perfecting one's physical capabilities and martial skills).

Another way to translate *shugyō* into English is "askesis," as for example in the work of scholar David Waterhouse who translated *musha shugyō* as "warrior askesis."[15] Here, we face another problem: Although this translation conveys the meaning of austerity, it may mislead those Western readers who are not familiar with East Asian culture. "Askesis" is a term rooted in Christian culture, which treats the human body as a source of "sin" and requires self-torment for the sake of liberating the spirit. It presumes a direct opposition of body and spirit. However, this has never been the case in East Asian cultures, including Japan. *Musha shugyō* presumed the oneness of body and spirit and neither could be sacrificed for the other.

To avoid the weaknesses of these two translations, this thesis will retain the phrase in its original form. However, what must be understood is that *musha shugyō* implies the <u>simultaneous</u> cultivation of body and spirit by a warrior through constant hard physical practice.

Finally, it should be noted that although the term *musha shugyō* could be used in pre-modern Japan in the meaning of short-term wandering of the country (from several months to several years) with the aim of tempering one's body and spirit,[16] it was not the only form of such practice: It also could mean seclusion on the grounds of Shintō

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[13] The interpretation of this term is based on multiple examples of warriors who will be discussed in this thesis.

[14] Yuasa Yasuo 1986, pp. 28-29.

[15] Waterhouse 1996.

[16] In times of unrest preceding the Tokugawa era, spy activities could sometimes be conducted by wandering the country under the pretext of *musha shugyō*.

shrines or Buddhist temples, or an austere training at one's place of residence.[17] Furthermore, even before the Tokugawa era it did not necessarily presume duelling as some specialists maintain.[18] In this thesis, *musha shugyō* is used not in the narrow sense of short-term intensive training or austerity, but to refer to a paradoxical, lifelong process of seeking spiritual perfection (understood differently by different individuals) through polishing skills in the art of killing.[19]

The fundamental purpose of this thesis is to identify elements that constituted the core of the Japanese warriors' intangible culture before the Tokugawa era, show how these elements were linked with each other, explain how they changed during the Great Tokugawa Peace, and explore the thoughts and actions of warriors who sought to restore the pre-Tokugawa model in the Bakumatsu period. The thesis is also concerned with the theme of how contemporary Japanese government, business, and popular culture exploit or misrepresent the images of *bushi* culture. In the course of my analysis, I will look at warrior training entities, military arts schools, and key individuals, especially in the Bakumatsu period such as Yamaoka Tesshū. Much of the thesis deals with the Tokugawa era. However, it is one of the principal arguments here, in contrast to existing scholarship, that the *bushi* of this era can not fully be understood without looking closely at the *bushi* of the preceding ages. The reason for this is that, without such a comparison, it is easy to be misled by what is described by many historians such as Watanabe Ichirō, Winston King, and Ikegami Eiko as the "flourishing" or "development" of military arts during the Tokugawa era, and to overlook what the evidence shows to be a major decline in standards of their practicability in actual combat.[20]

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[17] Emphasis on the importance of wandering of the country makes our understanding of *musha shugyō* quite narrow and limited. Such a viewpoint overlooks the fact that not many *bushi* engaged in this kind of practice. Needless to say, should all the *bushi* had practiced *musha shugyō* in the form of wandering the country, lords would have remained without retainers and Japan's society would have fallen into chaos.

[18] Tominaga Kengo 1972, Hurst 1998.

[19] There are no records indicating *musha shugyō* in the form of wandering the country by Iizasa Chōisai, the 15th century founder of Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū, the oldest military arts school in Japan. Instead, they point to his austere training in the grounds of Katori Jingū grand shrine (to be discussed in detail in Chapter II). This thesis also provides examples of *musha shugyō* of Yamaoka Seizan and Yamaoka Tesshū in the Bakumatsu period who never wandered the country.

[20] Admitting that there was rise and decline in military arts and their schools during the Tokugawa era, historian Watanabe Ichirō called the Tokugawa era "the Golden Age of Japanese military arts" (Watanabe Ichirō 1967b, p.1). Ikegami Eiko maintained that Japanese swordsmanship, although largely independent of the realities of the battlefield, was "developed" primarily from the 17th century onwards (Ikegami Eiko 1995, p. 381). The same notion of "development" is seen in Winston King's discussion of Tokugawa era swordsmanship schools (King 1993, p. 109). Sakai

At present, there seem to be only two works that comprehensively attempt to study the wider cultural context through Japanese military arts. Sakai Toshinobu of Tsukuba University, the centre of native military arts studies in Japan, recently claimed the first attempt to establish a link between the traditional physical movement culture (*shintai undō bunka*) and the broader area of Japanese culture (strangely indistinguishable in his terms from the *bushi* culture).[21] However, in reality, Sakai's work, partly dealing with swordsmanship schools from the Tokugawa era, is exclusively focused on Japanese mental attitudes to the sword (blade) and it touches neither on any specific bodily practice of the *bushi* nor on the historical development of such practices. Even more recently, Ogawa Naoko of Chūbu University attempted to explore the traditional physical culture of Japanese and show how this was lost in the process of Japan's Westernization.[22] However, Ogawa placed her study in the context of sword-fight scenes in the *chambara* genre of Japanese films. She does not give much attention to the realities of Japanese military arts in different historical periods and demonstrates no awareness of how *bushi* military skills declined during the Great Tokugawa Peace.

There are only a few academic works in English that deal with the topic of Japanese military arts and related spiritual aspects of the *bushi* culture within the time frame employed in this thesis. In general, they are more descriptive than analytical. They also tend to echo misconceptions from Japanese sources without being aware that, as the following discussion will show, in the majority of cases, Japanese authors themselves are misled by centuries-old cultural myths having their roots in the Great Tokugawa Peace.

One example, albeit more of a popular than academic nature, is *The Japanese art of war* (1991) by Thomas Cleary. In this work, Cleary presents a distorted picture of the Japanese warriors' ethos and their attitudes to fighting and methods of warfare, by over exaggerating the connection between this class and the Zen sect. One reason for this distortion is the author's reliance on early Tokugawa-era authors including monk Takuan and warrior-swordsmen Yagyū Munenori, Suzuki Shōsan, and Miyamoto Musashi. This approach mirrors a typical pitfall of the majority of Japanese authors.[23] While Suzuki Shōsan and Miyamoto Musashi are in no way representative of the *bushi*, monk Takuan and Yagyū Munenori (the latter was the teacher of swordsmanship to the

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Toshinobu begins his consideration of the Japanese mental concepts of the sword in swordsmanship schools from the Tokugawa era as if pre-Tokugawa schools never existed (Sakai Toshinobu 2005).

[21] Sakai Toshinobu 2005.

[22] Ogawa Naoko 2007.

[23] To be discussed in detail in Chapter III.

family of the Tokugawa *shōgun*s) are the first to be responsible for the mass-scale degradation of the combat utility of Japanese military arts in the Tokugawa era. Some scholars have mentioned briefly that the connection between the *bushi* as a class and Zen is over exaggerated in the literature.[24] This thesis will demonstrate clearly that it is no coincidence that the myth of an intimate connection between the *bushi* military skills and mental attitudes and the Zen sect appeared precisely in the period when Japanese military arts became largely divorced from the realities of actual combat.

Winston King's *Zen and the way of the sword* (1993) copies Cleary's choice of sources and repeats his exaggeration of the connection between Japanese swordsmanship and Zen. King also extensively cites Suzuki Daisetsu, who, after WWII, became the main promoter of Zen in the West even though he lacked any qualification to do so, at least in terms of his knowledge of the history of Japanese culture and art.[25] King's confusion over Zen and the *bushi* is revealed particularly in his statement that Zen was popular among the warrior class from the 13th century onward and that "to the *samurai*, in wartime or in peace, the arduous scriptualism and elaborate ritualism of the Tendai and Shingon traditions had little appeal."[26] This is an extreme generalization and, as this thesis will show, the reality was exactly the opposite, at least with the *bushi* of the pre-Tokugawa ages.

Catharina Blomberg's *The heart of the warrior* (1994) can only be characterized as a superficial historical sketch of the Japanese warrior class, which gives an image of the *bushi* unchanging through the ages. She writes about various customs and qualities of the *bushi* practically without any regard to the historical periods in which they lived. Sometimes her depiction of the *bushi* is based on popular folklore such as her assertion that, once drawn, the warrior's sword could not be returned to the sheath until it saw blood; this was (and sometimes still is) a popular saying and nothing more. Explaining at length that Japanese antique blades have many engravings related to esoteric Buddhism, she simultaneously states that, again, it was Zen which was most influential on the *bushi*. She apparently is not aware of this contradiction between esoteric and Zen forms of Buddhism. In her discussion of Japanese swordsmanship and its concomitant mental qualities, she also relies on typical Japanese misconceptions whose traces can be seen in Cleary's and King's works. Sometimes she makes statements about the *bushi* military skills that do not stand up to any criticism, such as her note that "the Japanese

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[24] Ōmori Nobumasa 1974, pp. 67, 70; 1976a, p. 110. David Hall 1990, p.1. Ikegami Eiko 1995, p. 393, note 26. Friday 1997, p. 201, note 9. Hurst 1998, p. 212, note 56.

[25] See Umehara Takeshi's criticism (1982a) of Suzuki Daisetsu.

[26] King 1993, p. 159.

sword was used primarily for cutting, seldom for stabbing, the opponent."[27]

There are two works which do provide a much more balanced and persuasive view of the *bushi* and their military skills and training. Karl Friday's *Legacies of the sword* (1997) is a rare example of a Western academic case study of a military arts school that seeks to shed light on Japanese warrior culture. As Friday notes, his work attempts "not to view the whole of the phenomenon [of Japanese military arts] directly but to grasp the substance and the spirit of the whole through one of its parts."[28] He provides a detailed discussion of the historical, technical, philosophical, and spiritual aspects of the military arts school, Kashima Shin-ryū. Although his work touches upon the general historical development of the *bushi* military skills and military arts schools, the overall discussion is outweighed by the focus on Kashima Shin-ryū, which provides little understanding of broader historical, sociological, and cultural trends in *bushi* society before the Tokugawa era and after its dawning. The author's choice of Kashima Shin-ryū, which is said to have appeared before the Tokugawa era, and his depiction of Kashima Jingū grand shrine and its deity Takemikazuchi no Ōkami, with which the school is said to have close ties, are valuable in the way they are used to explore the *bushi* martial skills. However, in Japan both the shrine and the deity have always been revered in tandem with another deity, Futsunushi no Ōkami, and with Katori Jingū grand shrine (in which it is worshipped) and they cannot be discussed separately. This, as well as Friday's virtual neglect of Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū, which was established in the middle of the 15th century and originated from Katori Jingū, means that the book leaves major gaps in our understanding.

Cameron Hurst's *Armed martial arts of Japan* (1998) is a comprehensive history of Japanese swordsmanship and archery with an emphasis on the transition from combat to sport. However, as the author himself admits, it is more narrative than analysis.[29] Following the general trend of Japanese academic works on the subject, which will be discussed below, it does not provide any concrete technical comparison and analysis of military skills of the *bushi* of the pre-Tokugawa ages and the Tokugawa era. Such a lack of long-term historical analysis led him to mistakenly conclude that the *bushi* training in swordsmanship based on free sparring with the use of the bamboo sword and body protectors, and which evolved from the middle of the Tokugawa era, was much more "realistic" than the practice of predetermined patterns of movement (*kata*).[30]

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[27] Blomberg 1994, p. 51. Some fundamental aspects of the usage of the Japanese sword are discussed in Chapter III.

[28] Friday 1997, pp. 9-10.

[29] Hurst 1998, p. 198.

[30] Hurst 1998, p. 85. Technical and psychological issues pertaining to sparring with the bamboo

Hurst provides a good account of the *bushi* military skills in the Tokugawa era. However, his position is to describe it more in terms of "transformation" or "change" of military skills whereas the evidence of decline in utility, in so far as "military" is taken in its literal sense, is obvious. Furthermore, he seems to overlook the fact that, while it is true that Japanese swordsmanship turned into a sport from the middle of the Tokugawa era, and a part of warrior society engaged in it exclusively for sportive purposes, others practiced it believing in all sincerity that it would indeed be practical in actual combat and that it would help them to cultivate a martial spirit.[31] Hurst also refers to Miyamoto Musashi, members of the Yagyū family, and some other individuals of early decades of the Tokugawa era as "great swordsmen." However, this description derives from a misunderstanding which has long been confusing both academic and non-academic writers in Japan and the West.[32] Hurst's statement that, "after the deaths of such intrepid fighters as Musashi and the others who founded the leading *ryūha* of the early Tokugawa period, swordsmanship declined,"[33] greatly exaggerates the influence of several famous swordsmen on Japanese swordsmanship of the early Tokugawa era. He seems to be unaware that the majority of *bushi* martial skills at the time did not exist in the form of "schools." He also seems to overlook the possibility that there were many other fighters, who could be even more skillful than Musashi and several other individuals mentioned in his book, but who were not as skillful in self-advertising or who just preferred to stay in the shadow.[34] Finally, Hurst's repeated insistence on the necessity to treat the practice of military arts and sports on equal grounds shows a lack of understanding about skills in the art of killing as they developed in East Asia.[35]

In contrast to English academic literature, Japanese scholarship presents an abundance of works on various aspects of the warrior's bodily culture of pre-Meiji Japan, more concretely on swordsmanship, spearmanship, unarmed combat, and other military arts. Although some of these works attempt to uncover the cultural meaning and ethical aspects of training in these arts, or the link between body and mind in the process of training, they do this from a very narrow perspective and are generally more

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sword will be discussed in Chapter III.

31 To be discussed in detail in Chapters III, IV, VI.

32 To be discussed in detail in Chapters II-III.

33 Hurst 1998, p. 64.

34 The principle of "staying in the shadow" will be discussed in Chapter II.

35 Some differences in attitudes that originate from the practice of military arts and sports will be discussed in Chapter III. Here, it is just worth to mention that if we are to employ Hurst's viewpoint, then training in killing and survival of special forces in modern armies should also be treated as a "competitive sport."

preoccupied with the realities of a certain art or school (*ryū*) in a given point of time and/or in a particular geographical area.[36] Others tend to develop an excessively theoretical and even abstract argument, often in the context of "Japanese traditional movement culture" or "Asian traditional movement culture." This leads them astray from such straightforward themes as military skills and their application in real combat.[37]

One of the major problems of Japanese scholarship is that it has tended to focus on military arts of the Tokugawa era in isolation.[38] The handful of works that do touch upon the pre-Tokugawa ages tend to be narrative and descriptive rather than analytical.[39] None of them investigates the topic at the level of the whole social class, and none of them conducts a thorough analysis and comparison of military skills of the pre-Tokugawa and Tokugawa-era warriors.

The reason for this preoccupation with military arts of the Tokugawa era, first of all, lies in the fact that historical materials related to the ages preceding it are scarce. Secondly, many scholars writing in this field are themselves practitioners of *budō*, a modern version of Japanese military arts, which mostly consists of competitive sports created from the remnants of traditions of the Great Tokugawa Peace.[40] Thus, they appear more interested in revealing what became the basis for their own practice, and this results in what may be called an unintentional bias completely overshadowing the military arts of the pre-Tokugawa ages.

Japanese literature is also rich with works written mostly by non-academics about general histories of particular schools[41] or general histories of military arts in particular geographical areas.[42] These descriptive works are helpful as sources of factual information but the claims of some of their authors must be treated with caution.

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36 Watanabe Ichirō 1967b; Ōmori Nobumasa 1974; Maebayashi and Watanabe 1988; Maebayashi 1992, 1997, 1999, 2006; Nakamura Tamio 1999.

37 Nakabayashi 1988b-c, 1988f; Yuasa Yasuo 1977, 1986; Maebayashi 1995.

38 Some examples include Oimatsu 1968; Ōmori Nobumasa 1974; Enomoto 1978, 1979; Maebayashi and Watanabe 1988; Nakabayashi 1988a; Maebayashi 1992, 1995; Nakamura Tamio 1996, 1999.

39 Imamura 1971; Ishioka et al. 1980; Kōdansha 1983; Murayama Terushi 1993; Watanabe Ichirō 1996.

40 Some examples include Nakabayashi Shinji, Ōtsuka Tadayoshi, Maebayashi Kiyokazu, Sakai Toshinobu, Abe Tesshi, Ōya Minoru, Sakudō Masao, Nagao Susumu, Ōmori Nobumasa, Okada Kazuo, Katō Hiroshi.

41 For example, Yagyū Toshinaga 1957; Fujiyoshi 1963; Morita Sakae 1975, 2001; Kojima 1988; Yagyū Nobuharu 1996.

42 Examples include Kumamoto Chireki Kenkyūkai and Kumamoto-ken Tai'iku Kyōkai 1940; Fukuda Akimasa 1965; Aizu Kendō-shi Hensan Iinkai 1967; Nakamura Kōshū 1975; Takeuchi Masato 1976; Ueda 1980, 1991; Yamamoto Kunio 1981; Aomori-ken Kendō-shi Hensan Iinkai 1984; Tominaga Yoshimatsu 1986.

A further problem with both academic and non-academic works in Japan, and which hinders a proper understanding of the *bushi* intangible culture, is what seems to be certain unspoken taboos when discussing Japanese military arts. This is especially notable regarding the practicability of those arts in actual combat. After intensive study of a vast corpus of scholarship,[43] it appears that there is a kind of a "mystical veil" cloaking various kinds of traditional skills of armed and unarmed combat. This is particularly the case with swordsmanship, the central military art.

Historically, these attitudes seem to originate in an ancient belief that Japanese martial skills descend from the Shintō gods of war, namely Futsunushi no Ōkami and Takemikazuchi no Ōkami. However, the aura of mystery and inviolability of teachings of many military arts schools is probably more a product of the Great Tokugawa Peace when the *bushi* martial skills largely lost their practicability in combat, were rigidly ritualized, and turned into what is known in the historical literature as *kahō*, or "flowery

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[43] Besides works mentioned above, Japanese historiography of pre-Meiji military arts is represented by the following authors:
On swordsmanship (*kenjutsu*, *kempō*, etc., including *iai*) see Watanabe Ichirō 1967a, 1967b; Ōmori Nobumasa 1974, 1976a, 1976b, 1977, 1979, 1986, 1991; Fukui 1976; Itō and Satō 1976; Itō Kuni et al. 1977; Katagiri 1977; Kaneko 1977; Yuasa Akira 1986, 1987, 1988; Enomoto 1988, 2000, 2008; Minamoto Ryōen 1982a; Murayama Kinji 1984; Matsumura Shirō 1984, 1987, 1990; Ōtsuka 1984, 1995; Yamagami and Wada 1987; Tomozoe et al. 1987; Takahashi Satoshi 1987; Sakai Toshinobu 1988, 1989a-b, 1990a-b, 1991, 1992a-b, 1995a-b, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2002a-b, 2003a-d, 2004, 2005, 2006a; Wada and Murata 1990; Wada and Yamagami 1991; Wada and Tomozoe 1993, 1994; Nagao 1993, 1996a-c, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2002; Nakamura Tamio 1999; Ōboki 1997, 2007; Hamada Shinji 1998; Kaneda 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002; Kaneda and Tatsugi 2000; Onuki 2001; Fuse 2001a, 2006; Takeda and Nagao 2003, 2004, 2005; Kobayashi Katsunori 2004; Mitsunaga et al. 2004; Pak and Uozumi 2004; Ōta Kei 2004; Toboshi 2004; Nakano 2006; Yoshida Tomoo 2007; Tsushima 2007; Tabata and Sakakibara 2008.
On spearmanship (*sōjutsu*) see Watanabe Ichirō 1981; Nagao 2001, 2008; Murabayashi 2007.
On unarmed combat (*jūjutsu*) see Hazama 1958; Oimatsu 1963, 1965; Yamamoto Kunio 1978, 1979, 1981; Yamamoto Yoshiyasu 1980, 1981, 1986; Hino and Toboshi 1980, 1981, 1982; Ōmori Nobumasa 1981; Hashimoto Hiroshi 1981; Murayama Terushi et al. 1983; Ōtani 1988; Asada 1995; Tezuka 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004; Negami 2000; Hara and Uozumi 2002; Arisawa 2002; Shinohara 2005.
On archery (*kyūjutsu*, *shagei*, etc.) see Ishioka 1960, 1964, 1966a-b, 1993; Higo 1963; Irie 1977; Kurosu 1984, 1988; Higuchi Seitarō 1988; Matsumura Shimmi 1996; Maebayashi 2000; Morita Yasunosuke 2000; Takeda Ryūichi et al. 2002; Satō Tamaki 2004, 2008; Sakai Toshinobu 2006b.
On gunnery (*hōjutsu*) see Yamamoto Takeshi 1966; Nakada 1972; Udagawa 1988, 1990, 2000b, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007; Sawada Taira 2000, 2001, 2002; Fuse 2001b; Sakai Jungo 2005; Asakawa 2008.
On military arts (*bujutsu*, *bugei*, etc.) in general see Higuchi Iwao 1966; Kondō Tsuneji 1973; Yoshida Yutaka 1975; Shirai 1976a, 1976b; Kozonoi 1980; Ōta Takamitsu 1984, 1985a-b, 1986a-b, 1987a-b, 1988a-b, 1989a-b, 1990a-b, 1991a-b, 1992, 2003; Yuasa Akira 2000a-b; Watanabe Ichirō Kyōju Taikan Kinenkai 1988; Ōboki 1991; Wada Tetsuya 1992; Kasai Akira 1994, 1997; Ōbayashi 1996, 1997; Kawai Yasushi 1999; Tanaka Mamoru 1999; Hamada Shinji 2000, 2001; Udagawa 2000a; Ippōshi 2001; Fuse 2002, 2006; Sagiyama 2002; Kasai Kazuhiro 2004; Tōdō and Murata 2004; Yokoyama Teruki 2005.

training." One very practical reason why the skills and methods of training from this time needed to remain unchallenged was because they supported the living of many generations of teachers as the number of schools flourished even as the number of wars declined to zero.

As scholar Maebayashi Kiyokazu notes, one of the ways to give inviolable authority to Tokugawa-era schools of military arts was by the adaptation of cosmological philosophies and terminology from Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism.[44] Another method of maintaining the status quo and self-protection against potential criticism was by exploiting the traditional way of training and study which presumed absolute and un-questioning obedience to the authority of headmasters and senior disciples.[45]

The influence of this rigid regime means that, largely lacking a critique of sources, Japanese swordsmanship histories fail to demonstrate any analysis or critical approach in terms of the actual combat practicability of skills taught by various schools.[46] Those scholars who are also practitioners of modern swordsmanship (*kendō*) are not critically distanced from their topic and tend to pass over in silence facts which are unfavorable for what is generally accepted as the "sacred tradition." One of the major examples of this lack of scholarly criticism is the complete analytical silence in regard to the fact, which is well-known amongst scholars and practitioners of *kendō*, that in the Bakumatsu period the majority of the *bushi* trained with a bamboo sword which was much longer than the real sword they wore in everyday life. In general, the length of the sword was vital to the fundamental principle of "distancing" (*maai*) in Japanese swordsmanship, and constant training with a sword substitute which was longer than the real sword automatically meant poor performance in actual combat.[47]

A rare example of someone who attempted to expose the realities of Japanese swordsmanship was Nanjō Norio. Nanjō was a professor of economics who also, as a kind of hobby, wrote a number of fictional works on Japanese swordsmen plus *Nihon kenshi den* (*Biographies of Japanese swordsmen*, 1967). In the latter work, he looks at actual swordsmen over an extended period of time, compares their techniques, and asks the question of who would win if swordsmen of different eras were to meet.

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44 Maebayashi 1995, p. 62. It is necessary to distinguish clearly between superficial and scholastic use of such philosophies and terminology among some Tokugawa-era schools and its practical use among schools which were established before the Tokugawa era.

45 To be discussed in detail in Chapters II-III.

46 Shimokawa 1925; Hori 1934; Yamada Jirōkichi 1960 (initially published in 1925); Tominaga Kengo 1972; Watatani and Yamada 1978; Taniguchi Motome 1997. Hori Shōhei (1934) demonstrates a rare critical approach to skills and abilities of famous representatives of swordsmanship schools but not the very technical content of these schools.

47 To be discussed in detail in Chapter III.

Challenging the popular myths surrounding great swordsmen of the Tokugawa era, he concluded that, in general, the pre-Tokugawa swordsmen were always likely to prevail. Yet, however provocative and intriguing this book may be, it is written in an amateur and essayist manner, lacks the rigor of academic historical analysis, and relies on intuition rather than on hard evidence.

Ethical Aspects Pertaining to Arms and Military Skills

This thesis also considers the ethical and moral aspects allied to acquisition of skills in the art of killing by the *bushi*, and attempts to show the diversity of their attitudes to the application of these skills in real life. This is in response to the stereotypes of the "bellicose *samurai*" which have been recycled in popular culture in Japan and the West for more than a century,[48] and which often have only been strengthened by contemporary scholarship. Perhaps due to the preconceived notion that aggression and violence are at the heart of the warrior's profession, scholars have generally overlooked the question of what peace meant for the Japanese warriors, what made them choose either to surrender, negotiate or fight to the bitter end, or how they valued human life. Too many academic interpretations of the thought of the Japanese warrior class have also tended to underemphasize its intellectual diversity, and attribute to it characteristics and motives which would be applicable only to particular groups or individuals at particular periods. For example, scholar Satō Masahide gives a very narrow definition of the *bushi* (without specifying any historical period) as those for whom "… fighting is the primary way of making a living, in other words, those who live by fighting… This definition includes two items: First, *bushi* is the one who strives to defeat his opponents by two extreme measures of either killing or subjugating them with force; secondly, *bushi* is the one who strives through defeating his opponents to protect his land ownership, and furthermore, expand it by depriving opponents of their lands."[49] Reinforcing the primary identification of *bushi* with violence, there are entire academic circles and popular industries which dwell at length on the spiritual perfectionism of Miyamoto Musashi, without hinting even at the possibility that, instead of being a model of the "true Japanese warrior," he could merely have been a kind of psychotic killer.[50]

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48 The formation of the image of the "bellicose *samurai*" is discussed in Chapter VI.
49 Satō Masahide 1977, p. 93.
50 To be discussed in detail in Chapter II.

The most recent examples of authors whose works are excessively preoccupied with violence among the *bushi* are Ikegami Eiko, Shibata Jun, Kasaya Kazuhiko, and Yamamoto Hirofumi, who maintain that fights (*kenka*), revenge killings (*katakiuchi*), and other forms of violence were indispensable for the *bushi* self-identification.[51] These works, however, depend on a highly selective use of materials. In depicting the *bushi* as men who constantly strove for violence and aggression to justify their "honorific individualism," Ikegami Eiko, for example, cites the deadly fight of two *bushi* whose sword sheaths bumped when they passed each other.[52] However, she does not address the question of how many other *bushi* in Japanese history restrained their emotions in a similar situation.

Thus, it may be argued that the majority of authors regularly miss one very important point. As trivial as this may sound, action is dramatic but inaction, or the refusal to act, seemingly not. Violence always attracts attention, and this is why it has been one of the central themes in popular culture and has taken considerable space in old records on which academic works are based. Thus, those who maintained their mental and physical discipline or, recognizing the utmost value of human life, preferred to find a peaceful solution to conflicts, have too often been marginalized or omitted entirely from the historical literature. However, finding a reconciliation could often be much more difficult and demanding than immediately resorting to violence. This thesis pays particular attention to what I regard as the highest achievement of the Japanese warrior culture: The paradoxical process of training in the art of killing not in order to use it, but in order to avoid using it. Although the number of warriors who adhered to this concept of values was not substantial throughout recorded history, the actions and deeds of some of them brought results of a nation-wide magnitude. One example of this is Bakumatsu swordsman Yamaoka Tesshū (1836-1888) who will feature prominently in later chapters and who, it is hoped, will challenge the popular fascination with "bellicose *samurai*" such as Miyamoto Musashi.

Thesis Structure

Chapter I addresses the physical and mental standards of being what was understood in the pre-Tokugawa ages as a "true warrior." It identifies five fundamental elements of the *bushi* intangible culture which were inseparably linked and, at the same time,

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[51] Ikegami Eiko 1995, Shibata 2000, Kasaya 2001, Yamamoto Hirofumi 2003.
[52] Ikegami Eiko 1995, pp. 210-211.

interwoven in the everyday process of preparation for death: The warrior etiquette, the state of constant alertness to a surprise attack or other kinds of danger, practical knowledge applicable to virtually all aspects of a warrior's life during peace and war, the cult of the blade, and training in military arts.

Chapter II enlarges upon one of the fundamental elements, that is training in military arts, because the rest of the elements could not function without it. Since the practical realization of virtually all the moral values of pre-Tokugawa *bushi* society demanded incessant exercise of self-discipline and will power, training in military arts was also indispensable to cultivate these qualities. Through the example of the oldest school of military arts in Japan, Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū, the chapter shows what skills a pre-Tokugawa warrior was supposed to master. The example of this school is also used to identify a system of warrior values that has been largely overlooked in academic literature: The pursuit and practical realization in life of one's humanity through a constant process of *musha shugyō*.

Chapter III investigates changes in military arts practiced by *bushi* of the Great Tokugawa Peace. Compared to the pre-Tokugawa ages of incessant wars and unrest, this period is characterized by two waves of decline in standards of military practicability. The first occurred in the beginning of the Tokugawa era and is commonly referred to as "flowery training" (*kahō*), meaning the ritualization and embellishment of movement during training in predetermined patterns of movement (*kata*). The second wave occurred in the middle of this era as a result of the proliferation of sparring with the bamboo sword and body protectors which, contrary to the generally accepted opinion, removed *bushi* training even further from the realities of actual combat. The chapter also addresses the theme of how such an estrangement from the direct experience of real fight gave birth to a large number of psychological theories of combat (*shimpō-ron*) in Tokugawa-era military arts schools; it pays special attention to how the myth of the "unity of the sword and Zen" (*ken-Zen ichinyo*, *ken-Zen itchi*, etc.) was created in this period.

Chapters IV-V enlarge upon the *bushi* intangible culture at the end of the Tokugawa era through a case study of Bakumatsu swordsman Yamaoka Tesshū, who played a prominent role in a critical period of Japanese history but whom scholars have largely overlooked. A detailed examination of lifelong changes in Yamaoka's attitudes to swordsmanship gives an invaluable insight into the realities of Japanese swordsmanship of the Bakumatsu period. At the time, Yamaoka was the only individual who, longing for what he saw as the "genuine warrior culture of old" (and which from his point of view had been distorted during the Great Tokugawa Peace), attempted to revive

Japanese swordsmanship in full accordance (as far as it was possible) with pre-Tokugawa standards. Yamaoka is also used as an example of a swordsman who put the "life-giving sword" philosophy into practice by playing a crucial role in the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle during the Boshin War (1868-69).

Chapter VI explores the theme of how images of the *bushi* have been distorted and exploited by Japanese popular culture, government, and business in the 20th-21st centuries. These images pertain to three major aspects of their intangible culture: Attitudes to violence, the Bushidō ethos, and bodily practices. The thesis argues that central to understanding the origin of this distortion is the co-existence of the two-sworded warriors and the two-sworded commoners late in the Tokugawa era, and the chapter compares *bushi* with several groups of commoners such as Rōshigumi which were sanctioned by the Bakufu to wear weapons and participate in armed conflicts. This co-existence was one of the major factors which contributed to the confusion of images of professional or what may justly be called authentic warriors from the hereditary warrior houses, and those from outside of their class (the commoners) who were admitted to their society for a variety of reasons or who just wore weapons, engaged in military arts training, and claimed an understanding of the warrior ethos. This distortion of the *bushi* image was further exacerbated by the spread of industrial technology such as modern mass publishing and the cinema at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries; these fostered what became the dominant stereotype of the "bellicose *samurai*." The chapter also considers how distorted memories of the *bushi* bodily culture are transmitted in modern popular culture and the practice of Japanese military arts, and shows that a deeper understanding of the *bushi* bodily culture can add significant insights into Japanese history.

Sources Used in This Thesis

Secrecy of pre-Meiji military arts

One of the main topics of the thesis is the *bushi* bodily practices and their link with the *bushi* moral universe from the middle of the 15th century to the middle of the 19th century, i.e., a time span of about 400 years. The term "bodily practices" pertains largely to the *bushi* martial skills and the training needed for acquiring these skills. The realities of such bodily practices are probably one of the most challenging tasks for a researcher of Japanese culture. In the warrior training entities, and from the 15th century in the

military arts "schools," training methodologies and military science could be handed down through generations of *bushi* for hundreds of years. The process of transmission was accompanied by an atmosphere of rigid traditionalism and secrecy aimed at the preservation of skills and knowledge which had been tested on numerous battlefields and survived in the long process of historical natural selection as the most effective means of waging war. Needless to say, the primary goal of keeping the warrior arts secret was to avoid giving an advantage to potential enemies. It was also aimed at maintaining the integrity and authenticity of the tradition, as well as preventing its misuse for wrong purposes.

The greater part of military teachings was transmitted only orally, in direct communication between teachers and disciples. This is why little primary material can be found in their regard. When it comes to the "schools," their traditional texts (*densho*), that still survive to our day, were deliberately written so that their contents would not be properly understood in case they fell into the hands of outsiders. As scholar Maebayashi Kiyokazu explains, one of the ways to achieve this was by using terms whose concrete meaning was unknown to anyone except the person who received direct oral instruction or who was shown a live example of a technique. In such cases, cosmological terms adapted from Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism could often be used in a sense which was completely different from their original meaning.[53] Only a person who received direct instruction from the living successor of the school could fully comprehend the meaning of traditional texts.

Thus, such primary materials do not reveal much about the *bushi* bodily practices and, furthermore, they can mislead those who are not aware of the circumstances mentioned above. For this reason, the thesis does not rely on traditional school texts and similar materials except when it is necessary for general reference to their technical curriculums or where passages from these materials shed light on the system of values of certain schools or individuals.

Warrior precepts

Among the main primary sources for the thesis are pre-Tokugawa warrior house rules and precepts (*kakun* etc.), in which references to common bodily practices of the

[53] Maebayashi Kiyokazu 1995, p. 62. Examples of "code words" in the texts of Shinkage-ryū and Ittō-ryū schools of swordsmanship can be found in Ōmori Nobumasa 1976a (p. 108) and 1976b (p. 45) respectively.

pre-Tokugawa *bushi* can be identified. These materials allow us to classify pre-Tokugawa *bushi* intangible culture into the five fundamental elements mentioned earlier. Presently, they are available in printed form in academic studies of *kakun* or collections containing informative commentaries on biographies of their authors, and the circumstances of their creation and preservation.[54] One of the most comprehensive collections extensively used in this thesis is *Bushidō zensho* (*A collection of writings on Bushidō*, 1942-44) edited by Saeki Ariyoshi and other scholars. The editors provide references to sources and the materials this collection contains are believed to be a faithful reproduction of the original documents.

Unlike warrior house rules and precepts of the pre-Tokugawa ages, which were written for distribution and reading within small kinship groups of the *bushi*, precepts of the Great Tokugawa Peace were designed for popular reading by broad circles of the warrior society. The latter are characterized by academic moralizing, an emphasis on theoretical study of military strategy, and virtually a complete neglect of physical training: Although the necessity to engage in the practice of military arts or to strive to achieve the "unity of literary and military arts" (*bumbu ryōdō*, etc.) is mentioned sometimes, it is done in a perfunctory manner.[55] This latter omission makes them

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[54] For example, Kakei 1967; Kondō Hitoshi 1978, 1983; Ozawa 2003. Among collections of pre-Tokugawa *kakun* with informative commentaries are Yoshida Yutaka 1972 and Kuwata 2003.

[55] Some of the examples are: *Gunsho daisetsu* (*Comments on military matters*, 1619) and *Sanryaku genkai* (*Comments on* San lue, 1626) by Hayashi Razan; *Shikan yōhō* (*The warrior models and their usage*, ca. 1636) and *Daisei-den kuketsu* (*Legends and orally transmitted secrets about the star of the sun*, creation date unknown) by Hōjō Ujinaga; *Ki Nanryū-kō kun'yu* (*Lord Ki Nanryū's precepts*, creation date unknown) by Tokugawa Yorinobu; *Hanitsu kakun shiki* (*Exemplary precepts of Matsudaira Masayuki*, 1699) by Tooyama Tameaki; *Bukun* (*Warrior precepts*, 1716) by Kaibara Ekken; *Bumbu mondō* (*Questions and answers about literary and military arts*, 1851) by Nakae Tōju; *Shūshin juyō shō* (*Excerpts on self-perfection*, 1651), *Bukyō honron* (*Fundamental discourse on teaching the warriors*, 1656), *Bukyō shōgaku* (*Small science for teaching the warriors*, 1656), *Yamaga gorui* (*Yamaga [Sokō]'s sayings*, 1665), *Takkyo zuihitsu* (*Essays in confinement*, ca. 1666-1675), *Haisho zampitsu* (*The last writings in exile*, 1675), and *Bushi ai-mamoru nichiyō* (*What a* bushi *must observe every day*, creation date unknown) by Yamaga Sokō; *Buji teiyō* (*Summary of military matters*, 1709) by Yamaga Kōkō; *Shika benron* (*Discourse on military matters*, 1730) by Sakuma Ken; *Buke shuchi* (*What the warrior must know*, 1736) by Kani Yōsai; *Bugaku mondō sho* (*Questions and answers about military science*, 1759) by Matsumiya Kanzan; *Gakusoku* (*Learning rules*, 1786) by Hayashi Shihei; *Shōbu-ron* (*On martial spirit*, first half of the 19th century) by Nakamura Mototsune; Gegaku rōdan (*Old man's talk on daily conduct*, 1809) by Toda Kagechika; *Kan'yō kufū roku* (*Writings on how to improve oneself*, 1812) by Udono Chōkai; *Budō bemmō roku* (*Records to educate about the basics of the Way of the Warrior*, 1834) by Sugai Naohide; *Shidō yōron* (*General discourse on Shidō*, 1837) by Saitō Setsudō; *Budō kokoroe-shu* (*Seeds of knowledge of the Way of the Warrior*, 1839) by Murai Masahiro; *Gonsai kanwa* (*Gonsai's chat*, 1841, 1851) by Asaka Gonsai; *Kyōsei ron* (*On how to improve warrior ways*, 1848) by Honda Tadakazu; *Rempei setsuryaku* (*General summary of military training*, 1851) by Yamaga Sosui; *Heiyō roku* (*General records of military strategy*, 1855) by Naganuma Tansai; *Buji teiyō* (*Summary of the warrior rule*, creation date unknown) by

largely unhelpful for our present purposes.

An important exception to the norm is Daidōji Yūzan's *Budō shoshinshū* (*A collection of precepts for young warriors*, early 18th century) which plays a crucial role in the discussion of this thesis.[56] Daidōji Yūzan (1639-1730) has been undervalued by earlier scholars.[57] Cameron Hurst, for example, insists that Daidōji's precepts represent "a very narrow stream of thought essentially out of touch with the broader spectrum of Confucian ideas to which most of the *samurai* class adhered."[58] However, as others have noted, the fact is that, albeit in their tampered versions, the precepts were widely read in Tokugawa warrior society, suggesting that they retained relevance at the time (as Yoshida Yutaka explains, they also exerted a heavy influence on the 1882 Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors (Gunjin Chokuyu)).[59]

One of the features of Daidōji's precepts is their longing for the pre-Tokugawa past, a longing supported by numerous examples of the deeds of pre-Tokugawa warriors.[60] Daidōji's aim was to extract the quintessence of the warrior ethos of the pre-Tokugawa ages and shape it so that it could fit the spirit of the times of the Great Tokugawa Peace. At the very core, they sought to retain the pre-Tokugawa warrior ethos inseparably linked with bodily practices. Daidōji's work repeatedly stresses that the *bushi* bodily practices, such as training in military arts and bodily etiquette, are the foundation of *bushi* culture (regardless of historical period) and are what distinguishes the "true warrior" from others who merely bear arms or make claims to be a warrior. In the Tokugawa era, his precepts may have seemed even heretical because he insisted on the importance of training in all kinds of military arts, whereas the *bushi* society of the Great Tokugawa Peace encouraged its members to acquire only those martial skills which related to social status, i.e., those which functioned as symbols of social distinction.[61] Whole paragraphs of Daidōji's precepts radically criticizing the Tokugawa-era warrior society from an idealized viewpoint of the pre-Tokugawa *bushi* were censored, for example, in the Matsushiro domain, as unsuitable reading for young

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Tsugaru Masakata; *Shidō kokoroe gaki* (*The knowledge of Shidō*, creation date unknown) by Hōjō Chikuhō.

[56] For Daidōji Yūzan's precepts, the thesis relies on the version which was edited by Yoshida Yutaka in 1971. This is deemed to be the fullest and closest to the original.

[57] Furukawa 1957. Yoshie 1981. Hurst 1990. King 1993. Kanno 2004. Saeki Shin'ichi 2004. Kasaya 2007.

[58] Hurst 1990, p. 515.

[59] Furukawa 1957, pp. 198-199. Yoshida Yutaka 1971, pp. 1-3, 5-7, 11.

[60] We shall see a similar kind of longing for the pre-Tokugawa past in the case of the Bakufu retainer Yamaoka Tesshū who aspired to the revival of Japanese swordsmanship according to pre-Tokugawa standards (Chapters IV-V).

[61] To be discussed in detail in Chapter III.

warriors born in the time of peace.[62]

Another feature of Daidōji's precepts is that, unlike the majority of Tokugawa-era warrior precepts, and contrary to Furukawa Tesshi's and Cameron Hurst's explanation,[63] he does not dwell specifically on concepts of loyalty and filial piety (*chūkō*) or duty. Daidōji mentions these concepts only when they relate to his own central themes. Nor does he speak much of any other Confucian virtue. This is because, for him, neither loyalty and filial piety nor other values made sense unless they were supported by bodily practices interwoven in what he described as the daily preparation for death. Daidōji himself seems to have attributed the greatest importance to this point. This is why his precepts open with a paragraph on the everyday preparation for death and continue with a paragraph about the need to maintain a state of constant alertness (*shōbu no kokorogamae*) in regard to a surprise attack or other kind of danger.[64] For him, the above mentioned fundamental elements of the *bushi* intangible culture, inseparably linked with the body, mattered more than all other cultural influences. That this essential link of values and bodily practices in Daidōji's precepts has been overlooked in the academic literature returns us to Satō Masahide's and Dipesh Chakrabarty's observations noted at the beginning of this Introduction.

Thus, the work of Daidōji Yūzan, a man who lived during the Great Tokugawa Peace, may be seen as a quintessence of the pre-Tokugawa *bushi* bodily culture. The majority of points he makes can be seen in pre-Tokugawa texts and sometimes he appears to cite them but without referring to the source.[65] However, it was his ability to bring together in a written (tangible) form various aspects of the *bushi* intangible culture, dispersed or mentioned unsystematically in pre-Tokugawa texts, to the extent necessary for the reader to grasp its foundations, that makes *Budō shoshinshū* an extremely valuable source for this thesis.

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62 Furukawa 1957, pp. 200-211. Yoshida Yutaka 1971, pp. 7-11.

63 Furukawa 1957. Hurst 1990.

64 The sequence of precepts in tampered versions of Daidōji's work is different from the original.

65 Some of the examples of such pre-Tokugawa texts are: *Rokuhara-dono go-kakun* (*The house rules of his Highness Rokuhara*, according to Kakei 1967 (pp. 6-9) and Ozawa 2003 (p. 457), written sometime between 1237 and 1247) and *Gokurakuji-dono go-shōsoku* (*A letter from his Highness Gokurakuji*, according to Kakei 1967 (pp. 9-10) and Ozawa 2003 (p. 460), written sometime between 1256 and 1261) by Hōjō Shigetoki, *Shibugaki* (*Sour persimmon*. Parts of the text are written in the end of the 13th century, the date of compilation and compiler's name are unknown), *Chikubashō* (*Selected precepts for young generations*, 1383) by Shiba Yoshimasa, *Imagawa hekisho* (*Imagawa's "wall precepts,"* 1412) by Imagawa Sadayo, *Yoshisada-ki* (*Records of [Nitta] Yoshisada*, first half of the 14th century, author's name unknown), *Shingen kahō* (*The house law of [Takeda] Shingen*, 1558), *Budō shinkan* (*Models of the warrior ways*, 1577) by Kōsaka Masanobu.

Living schools of military arts

Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū

As mentioned earlier, the process of transmission of martial skills in pre-Tokugawa military arts schools and warrior training entities was accompanied by an atmosphere of rigid traditionalism and secrecy. In the case of the schools, measures directed at maintaining secrecy included having all new disciples seal in blood a non-disclosure pledge upon entrance.[66] Esoteric arts and special sciences that pertained to the field of practical knowledge were taught only to those disciples who had reached a certain level of combat skill and, as a rule, were inaccessible to beginners. The training was held in venues hidden from the eyes of outsiders.[67] Moreover, it was structured so that, even if an outsider could peep in, he/she would not understand how the techniques could be applied in real combat. This measure was also taken against those who, under the pretext of training, entered military arts schools to "steal" their skills, as well as to prevent these skills from leaking outside through unfaithful disciples. This is why junior disciples also did not know the true essence of the skill they learnt.[68]

Thus, military secrecy was no less important in medieval Japan than it is now. However, it was also probably one of the main reasons why the majority of martial skills of the pre-Tokugawa *bushi* quickly became extinct after the dawning of the Great Tokugawa Peace. In this regard, Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū (hereafter, also referred to as Shintō-ryū) is a rare and valuable exception. Since the early 18th century, when the first general descriptive works on military arts appeared in Japan, the majority of secondary sources have referred to Shintō-ryū as the oldest warrior training entity existing in the form of a "school," and the root of the greater part of Japanese martial traditions that were formally established after its creation.[69]

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66 In actuality, the practice of sealing in blood a non-disclosure pledge upon entrance (*keppan*) was not limited to military arts schools; it was common in many other areas as well. This was often a simultaneous oath to gods-protectors of an art, such as Marishiten in the case of military arts.

67 It is unclear how it was achieved in the pre-Tokugawa ages, but it may be that they used techniques similar to training halls (*dōjō*) of the Tokugawa era which, for example, placed very narrow windows close to the ceiling (Tominaga Kengo 1972, p. 272).

68 Examples of such methods in Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū can be found in Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2005, pp. 14-16; 2008, pp. 11-33; Ōtake 2007, pp. 109, 155. In the Main Line Daitō-ryū Aikijūjutsu at http://www.daito-ryu.org/history4_eng.html (accessed on 5 February 2009).

69 The first general descriptive works on military arts to appear in Japan are *Honchō bugei shōden* (*Brief accounts of our country's military arts*, 1716) by Hinatsu Shigetaka and *Nihon chūkō bujutsu keifu ryaku* (*Brief lineages of Japan's root military arts*, 1767) by Shiga Yoshinobu (Ōmori Nobumasa 1991, p. 253, note 8. Yokose 2000, p. 156). The appearance of these two works

Shintō-ryū has never advertised or attempted to attract attention on its own. It was hidden in the shadow of rural life in the vicinity of Katori Jingū grand shrine, from which it traces its origins, and stayed out of public attention for about five centuries until its art was demonstrated to Emperor Taishō in 1916 when he visited the shrine. It started to receive more and more public attention both in Japan and abroad from 1960 when it became the first military arts school in Japanese history to be designated an "intangible cultural heritage" (*mukei bunkazai*) by the Japanese government.[70] At the time of designation, Japanese newspapers reported that, as the origin (*sokei*, or *genkei*) of Japanese old military arts, Shintō-ryū had managed to preserve its techniques unchanged since the Muromachi era due to its reclusiveness which prevented it from any kind of interchange with other schools.[71]

The grave of Iizasa Chōisai, the founder of the school, is an official historical site designated by Chiba prefecture and the school's training hall (*dōjō*), which is a part of the Iizasa family's house, is one of the oldest in Japan and is a "cultural heritage" (*bunkazai*) designated by Katori city.[72] Information about the school was made available to the general public from the mid-1970s by its master teacher (*shihan*), Ōtake Risuke, in a three volume book *The deity and the sword*, as well as a number of his and other authors' articles and interviews.[73]

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in the 18th century was probably caused by the fact that the Great Tokugawa Peace gave birth to a vast number of new military arts schools claiming, often illegitimately, all kinds of lineages, which made it necessary to clarify the original roots of Japanese military arts. Early in the Meiji era, a scholar, writer and resident of the Katori area of Chiba prefecture Seimiya Hidekata also commented that the majority of Japanese swordsmanship schools descended from Shintō-ryū (Seimiya 1877, the reverse side of page 15). Japanese secondary sources on the native military arts, and particularly swordsmanship, never fail to mention Shintō-ryū, and more often than not in the very beginning of their discussion. See Chapter II for details.

70 The government investigation took two years, from 1958 to 1960, before Shintō-ryū was designated an intangible cultural heritage. The government designation explicitly states that only Shintō-ryū, which is transmitted in the Katori area of Chiba Prefecture and which is taught under government-designated guardians, is an intangible cultural heritage. The list of authorized foreign instructors of the school can be found at http://www.tenshinsho-den-katori-shinto-ryu.org (accessed on 10 March 2009). Other organizations, which presently claim an affiliation with Shintō-ryū, are illegitimate. The name of Shintō-ryū became widely known, especially outside Japan, partly as a result of its exploitation by a certain Sugino Yoshio, who was never a legitimate instructor of the school and who offers a 20th century example of someone turning pre-Tokugawa warrior skills into "flowery training."

71 *Asahi Shimbun* (Chiba-han), 1960/3/19, "Ken bunkazai ni 12-ken shitei e." *Sankei Shimbun* (Chiba-han), 1960/3/19, "Ken bunkazai o tsuika shitei: Katori Shintō-ryū no kata nado kyū-ken." Also, see Ōmori Nobumasa 1991, p. 228. Other factors that contributed to the preservation of Shintō-ryū in its original form will be mentioned in Chapter II and III.

72 The grave of the founder became an official historical site in 1943, even before the school was designated an intangible cultural heritage.

73 Ōtake 1975, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1981, 1984, 1985a-b, 2001, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008a-c, 2009a-g.

It should be noted that Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū should not be confused with a variety of its later factions and branches as well as with a number of other schools which bore the name "Shintō-ryū" written with different or the same combination of characters.[74] The school has never encouraged separatism and its factions and branches are in no way representative of the parent organization. In particular, the school should not be confused with Tsukahara Bokuden's Shintō-ryū (or Kashima Shintō-ryū). Some scholars and historians of Japanese military arts mistakenly treat Tsukahara's Shintō-ryū as the main prolongation of its origin and a tradition which is representative of the whole Shintō-ryū lineage.[75] While it is true that Tsukahara studied Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū, he established his own tradition, which was different both technically and spiritually.

This thesis employs Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū as a living source for bodily practices of the pre-Tokugawa *bushi*. At present, there are four government-designated guardians of this school: Its headmaster (*sōke*) Iizasa Yasusada, Ōtake Risuke, Ōtake Nobutoshi, and Kyōsō Shigetoshi, who are the only authorized primary sources on the school. My discussion of Shintō-ryū is largely based on information disclosed to the general public by master teacher of the school Ōtake Risuke during the past three decades, and on several interviews I conducted with Ōtake Risuke in the early months of 2008.

The Main Line Daitō-ryū Aikijūjutsu

A part of the discussion of the *bushi* bodily practices in this thesis is based on interviews I conducted in February 2009 with Kondō Katsuyuki, the director of the Mainline Daitō-ryū Aikijūjutsu Headquarters (here after, Daitō-ryū), which is a school of techniques of unarmed self-defense specific to the high-ranking *bushi* occupants of a Japanese castle.[76] Kondō Katsuyuki is the only individual to have received the *menkyo*

Chiba Sōgo Ginkō 1981. Kendō Nihon 1981. Ryūso Iizasa Chōisai Ienao-Kō Seitan Roppyakunen Kinensai Jikkō Iinkai 1987. Yokose 1997. Takeuchi Kaishirō 1998. Iizasa 2000. Asakura Kōtarō (Kazuyoshi) 1991, 1993a-b, 2005. A revised version of *The deity and the sword* was published in 2007 under the title *Katori Shintō-ryū*. In 2005, the Japanese government rewarded Ōtake Risuke with the Imperial Order of the Rising Sun, Twin Rays, in recognition of his work directed at preservation and correct transmission of Shintō-ryū.

74 The confusion between Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū and its factions and branches is seen in such academic works as Ōmori Nobumasa 1991 and Bodiford 2005.

75 Imamura et al. 1966, volume 2, p. 242. Watatani and Yamada 1978, p. 433. Hurst 1998, p. 48.

76 "Daito-ryū," "Daito-ryū Aikijūjutsu," and "Daito-ryū Aikibudō" are registered proprietary names of the Main Line Daitō-ryū Aikijūjutsu protected by Japanese law.

kaiden (license of full transmission) from Takeda Tokimune, the last headmaster from the Takeda family.

The Takeda family of the Aizu domain was a branch of the powerful Minamoto clan and traced its origins to Minamoto no Yoshimitsu (1045-1127). Daitō-ryū, from which modern *aikidō* originates, is a unique example of a martial skill that appeared before the Tokugawa era and was transmitted for generations within a *bushi* family, eventually being disclosed to the public through its "re-establishing" as a formal school in the Meiji era. Until this time, the skill had no name and it was not known outside very narrow circles of the high-ranking *bushi* of the Aizu domain. This art presents a range of vestiges of the pre-Tokugawa past. One of the features of Daitō-ryū is an emphasis on opening the opponent's armpit, which was one of the few unprotected areas of the Japanese armor and at the same time a vital point of the human body often targeted on the battlefield. The school also transmits a sophisticated skill whose meaning and value was alien even to the *bushi* of the Tokugawa era which knew practically no wars: Bringing down an enemy on his stomach, sitting on his back, immobilizing him, and finally cutting off his head during the battle.[77]

Other Major Sources

A significant part of the thesis is devoted to an analysis of the *bushi* bodily practices of the Bakumatsu period through a case study of swordsman Yamaoka Tesshū. The study of Yamaoka helps us to observe what changes occurred in the intangible culture of the Japanese warrior class of the Tokugawa era compared with the warrior culture of previous ages. In this, I have extensively used Yamaoka's published and unpublished private writings, an invaluable (but purely descriptive) chronology of Yamaoka's life by Murakami Yasumasa, and a memoir of Ogura Tetsuju, who was one of Yamaoka's live-in disciples.[78] Some of this material has been used in my earlier articles for *Nihon*

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[77] Interview in Tōkyō, February 2009, with Kondō Katsuyuki, the director of the Main Line Daitō-ryū Aikijūjutsu headquarters. Information on the history of Daitō-ryū can be obtained from www.daito-ryu.org (accessed on 16 March 2009). Also, see Imamura et al. 1982, volume 6, pp. 539-547, 561-566. Nihon Kobudō Kyōkai 1997, p. 46; Kondō Katsuyuki 2000, pp. 15-41; Yokose 2000, pp. 241-254. Nippon Budōkan 2008, pp. 138-139. Examples of the techniques which include opening the opponent's armpit can be found in Kondō Katsuyuki 2000, pp. 48-49, 60-62, 60-68, 70-75, 116-118, 122-123, 138-141, 152-155, 164-165; Yokose 2000, p. 250. Examples of the beheading techniques can be found at http://jp.youtube.com/watch?v=-PgzD0hacLE (accessed on 16 March 2009) and in *Kondō Katsuyuki: Daitō-ryū Aikijūjutsu*, DVD by QUEST Co., Ltd. (2001).

[78] Murakami Yasumasa 1999. Ogura Tetsuju's memoirs can be found in such published sources as

Rekishi and other Japanese journals but, in this thesis, I naturally take the analysis of Yamaoka in the context of the history of Japanese swordsmanship much further.

In discussing the stereotype of the "bellicose *samurai*," I also enlarge upon various largely commoner groups formed by the Tokugawa Bakufu for specific military and police purposes in the 1860s. Foremost among these was the Rōshigumi and, for this, I have relied heavily on factual material which can be found in narrative works by Oyamatsu Katsuichirō, Maekawa Shūji, and Odaka Nobuyuki.[79] A mere textual discussion is insufficient to allow a clear understanding of the *bushi* bodily practices in pre-modern Japan, and for this purpose the thesis also employs visual materials, such as old woodblock prints, photographs and paintings of the Bakumatsu period and early Meiji era.

In closing, I should emphasize that I am not writing a comprehensive history of the *bushi* class or even of methods of training in the military arts. This is the first work to comprehensively consider the Japanese warriors in terms of their "intangible culture." Therefore my principal concern is, first of all, with the identification of the universal constituents of the *bushi* intangible culture before the Tokugawa era, in other words, to show what kind of physical qualities and mental attitudes the descendants of the hereditary warrior houses needed to possess in order to maintain all aspects of their existence as warriors during the times of incessant wars. The thesis aims to demonstrate that, regardless of the historical period, the phenomenon of the *bushi*, as long as they claimed to be military men by birth, is hardly comprehensible without paying close attention to their bodily practices. In this, it focuses on the connection between the warrior ethos and values, particularly those pertaining to violence, and the bodily practices seen (mainly in the pre-Tokugawa ages and, thereafter, by some *bushi* such as Yamaoka Tesshū) as necessary to maintain those values. One more objective is to show that both before and after the dawning of the Great Tokugawa Peace there were *bushi* who practiced rigorously in the art of killing in order to avoid violence. In that, I hope to undermine the dominant stereotype of the violent *bushi*. By providing knowledge of the pre-Tokugawa intangible warrior culture and contrasting it with both Tokugawa-era practices and the modern stereotypes and images of the Japanese warrior, I hope to force a reconsideration of what I see as the misinformed and exaggerated respect given to training methods and values of *bushi* during the Tokugawa era. This contrast will also allow an understanding of how Japanese government and businesses exploit the *bushi*

Ishizu 1933 and Ushiyama 1937.

[79] Oyamatsu 1974, 1976; Maekawa 1977; Odaka 2004a-c.

intangible culture nowadays to promote conservative and nationalistic socio-cultural agendas and utilize it as a major vehicle of Japanese “soft power.”

CHAPTER I

The Fundamental Elements of Pre-Tokugawa *Bushi* Intangible Culture

This chapter addresses standards required at the time for being a "true warrior" in terms of his physical and mental qualities. It identifies five fundamental elements of the *bushi* intangible culture, which were inseparably linked with each other and at the same time interwoven in the everyday process of preparation for death: The warrior etiquette, the state of constant alertness to a surprise attack or other kinds of danger, practical knowledge applicable to virtually all aspects of a warrior's life during peace and war, the cult of the blade, and training in military arts.

1.1 The Warrior Etiquette

Etiquette was an indispensable attribute of the *bushi* intangible culture. As in many other countries, the purpose of etiquette was to provide the Japanese ruling elite with a special dignity that distinguished it from the lower classes. However, the *bushi* etiquette was not simply about comporting oneself in society. One of its peculiarities was that it demanded the warriors to express constantly their attitudes and system of moral values, in other words, sustain their warrior identity, through the correct "form," that is the body. It is a crucial factor that distinguished warriors by birth from the commoners.

In spite of the fact that numerous mentions of how the body should be used for etiquette can be found in pre-Tokugawa warrior house rules and precepts (*kakun*),[1] their importance has apparently been overlooked in academic studies, which are preoccupied

[1] For example, *Rokuhara-dono go-kakun* (*The house rules of his Highness Rokuhara*, according to Kakei 1967 (pp. 6-9) and Ozawa 2003 (p. 457), written sometime between 1237 and 1247) and *Gokurakuji-dono go-shōsoku* (*A letter from his Highness Gokurakuji*, according to Kakei 1967 (pp. 9-10) and Ozawa 2003 (p. 460), written sometime between 1256 and 1261) by Hōjō Shigetoki, *Chikubashō* (*Selected precepts for young generations*, ca. 1383) supposedly by Shiba Yoshimasa, *Sōunji-dono nijū ikkajō* (*Twenty one rules of his Higness Sōunji*, end of the 15th – beginning of the 16th century) by Hōjō Sōun, *Tako Tokitaka kakun* (*Tako Tokitaka's house rules*, ca. 1544) by Tako Tokitaka, *Kikkawa Motoharu shisoku Hiro'ie e no kunkai shojō* (*Kikkawa Motoharu's letter with admonishments to his son Hiro'ie*, late 16th century) by Kikkawa Motoharu, *Honda Heihachirō Tadakatsu kakun* (*House rules of Honda Heihachirō Tadakatsu*, creation date unknown) by Honda Tadakatsu (1548-1610). According to scholar Kuwata Tadachika (2003, p. 11), *Rokuhara-dono go-kakun* and *Gokurakuji-dono go-shōsoku* are the oldest surviving warrior precepts in Japan.

exclusively with intellectual aspects of these texts.[2] The characteristic feature of pre-Tokugawa texts is that, although they touch on the *bushi* bodily etiquette, it is done briefly and unsystematically, and, as a rule, they do not dwell on the meaning and aims of the bodily etiquette which, as will be discussed below, was inseparably linked with the *bushi* military skills and mental attitudes. Instead, it was a matter of such common wisdom in pre-Tokugawa warrior society that it did not require verbose explanation on paper and was transmitted from seniors to juniors in the process of personal interaction. That is why, during the Great Tokugawa Peace when, simultaneously with the degradation of the *bushi* military skills, their bodily etiquette started to turn into a form without essence, such an author as Daidōji Yūzan felt compelled to produce a systematic and comprehensive written description.

Among Tokugawa-era authors,[3] it was probably Daidōji Yūzan of the early 18th century who, in his warrior precepts, gave the clearest definition of the concept of *bushi* bodily etiquette within his broader classification of the basics of *bushi* daily training. This training was hierarchically structured, when every lower training layer served as a foundation for the upper one. As he wrote, "In the realm of Bushidō there is nothing except mastering the Way in one's heart and maintaining the proper outward form." The "proper outward form" presumed two opposite "life modes," each consisting of two "methods" (*nihō yondan*). The modes were the "mode of peace time" (*jōhō*) and the "mode of war time" (*hempō*).[4] The former consisted of the warrior's etiquette and manners (*shihō*), as well as regular lifelong training in military arts (*hyōhō* or *heihō*). The latter consisted of the warfare procedures (*gumpō*) and military strategy and tactics (*sempō*).[5] Daidōji dwells on the details of the first layer, *shihō*, as follows.

> *Shihō* means washing one's hands and legs in the mornings and evenings, keeping the body clean by taking a bath regularly, fixing the hair every morning, shaving the *sakayaki*[6] from time to time, putting on formal wear according to the season, always having the fan at one's waist, even in the cold weather, along

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[2] Some profound studies of *kakun* are Kakei 1967; Kondō Hitoshi 1978, 1983; Kuwata 2003; Ozawa 2003.

[3] Rare examples of Tokugawa-era texts that briefly mention partial aspects of the *bushi* bodily etiquette are *Bushikun* (*Warrior precepts*, 1715) by Izawa Hanryōshi, *Buji shōgaku* (*Small science of war preparedness*, 1717) by Ina Sadaaki, *Buke shūyō* (*Excerpted important matters for warrior houses*, 1718) by Yamamoto Toryūken, *Bugaku keimō* (*Education in military science*, beginning of the 19th century) by Rikimaru Tōzan.

[4] The division between the "mode of peace time" and the "mode of war time" pertained only to *bushi* daily routine, not to their mental attitudes (to be discussed below).

[5] *BS*, pp. 44-45.

[6] *Sakayaki* – traditional hair style when the head is shaved completely from the brow to almost the top of the skull in the form of a crescent.

> with obviously wearing of the pair of the long and short swords; when meeting a guest, expressing oneself through the detailed etiquette according to the guest's social status, avoiding unnecessary talking, always ensuring that one's appearance is not ungraceful even when eating just a bowl of rice or drinking a cup of tea; if the warrior is in service, he should not spend his time in idleness when he is not at work; he should read books, practice calligraphy and strive to know as much as possible about the ancient customs and ways of the warrior houses; in all aspects of his daily life, he should conduct himself so that it would be seen from his manners and etiquette that he is a true warrior.[7]

"Maintaining the proper outward form," which is emphasized more than once in Daidōji's work, involved particular attention to the warrior's personal hygiene. Scholar Shibata Jun holds that emphasizing the importance of health is a characteristic feature of various Bushidō texts of the Tokugawa era.[8] However, it is a feature which was inherited from the warrior wisdom of the pre-Tokugawa ages. For example, mentions of washing of hands and mouth every single morning during warrior esoteric practices can be found in *Yoshisada-ki* (*Records of [Nitta] Yoshisada*) of the first half of the 14th century.[9]

In Japan, like in all other countries of the pre-modern world, there were often no effective medical means to cure or prevent diseases and the spread of epidemics, and the attention to one's hygiene was the first precondition for maintaining good health. Good health literally meant better financial rewards and promotion for a warrior, and its absence resulted in the opposite. Health was generally perceived as the first condition to realize the warrior's "life goal" (*kokorozashi*), which was usually presumed to be sacrificing the warrior's life for his lord.[10] Physical weakness and disability also led to dishonor and loss of face among one's peers because it pointed to the fact that the warrior could not be self-sufficient and had to rely on others' support, was not able to participate regularly in military training and, potentially was unable to fulfill his

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7 *BS*, p. 45.

8 Shibata 2000, p. 77.

9 From *Yoshisada-ki* appearing in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1942, volume 1, pp. 76-77, 309. Mentions of the necessity of early morning ablutions can also be found in *Gusoku no tame kyōkun issatsu* (*A letter with precepts for my son*, written sometime between 1457 and 1460) by Ise Sadachika, *Sōunji-dono nijū ikkajō* (*Twenty one rules of his Higness Sōunji*, end of the 15th – beginning of the 16th century) by Hōjō Sōun, *Tako Tokitaka kakun* (*Tako Tokitaka's house rules*, ca. 1544) by Tako Tokitaka (all appear in Ozawa 2003, pp. 80, 114, 157).

10 Daidōji Yūzan's precepts in *BS*, p. 207. An early mention that a *bushi*'s life does not belong to him and sacrificing it for his lord is his primary duty can be found in Minamoto Yoritomo's letter (1191) to Sasaki Sadatsuna (appears in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1942, volume 1, p. 227). Other examples include *Chikubashō* (*Selected precepts for young generations*, ca. 1383) supposedly by Shiba Yoshimasa (appears in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1942, volume 1, p. 235) and a letter (1600) of Tokugawa Ieyasu's retainer Torii Mototada to his son Tadamasa (appears in Ozawa 2003, pp. 181-184).

primary duty on the battlefield.

In Daidōji Yūzan's precepts, we can also find strong admonitions against excessive eating, drinking, and debauchery. Such misconduct was considered to be a direct threat to the warrior's health and a potential cause for shortening his life. It hinted to the fact that the warrior was not committed to the realization of Bushidō and had a weak will, verging on cowardice.[11] As my later discussion of a Bakumatsu spearmanship master, Yamaoka Seizan, will show, from the standpoint of *bushi* who aspired to achieve unparalleled mastery in the military arts, a life of pleasure was perceived as a hindrance to the perfection of their martial skills.

However, attention to one's personal hygiene as well as avoiding a life of pleasure did not pertain simply to the warrior's care of his health. It was also a ritualistic purifying in the broader context of the warrior culture of death. Everyday life was intended to be but a constant preparation for one's death with the proper spirit expressed through the proper "form," the body. However, this preparation did not mean awaiting and fearing death. Constant awareness of the transience of the warrior's life, which Daidōji Yūzan likens to the "evening dew and morning frost," may produce an impression of a kind of psychology whose characteristic features were chronic pessimism and gloom, but such negative thinking was avoided by setting a clear goal (*kokorozashi*) in the warrior's life. However paradoxical it may seem, according to Daidōji's explanation, the everyday physical and spiritual preparation for death was the best way to cultivate the paramount virtue of loyalty and filial piety (*chūkō*) to one's parents and lord, avoid various dangers and misadventures, achieve health and longevity, and forge an excellent moral character.[12]

Such constant preparation for death did not mean readiness to die irresponsibly at any convenient chance. Contrary to Cameron Hurst's explanation, which unfairly treats Daidōji Yūzan's precepts on equal grounds with Yamamoto Tsunetomo's *Hagakure* (*Hidden in the leaves*, ca. 1716),[13] Daidōji did not approve of reckless dying. Aversion to reckless death is, again, a point which was merely inherited by some Tokugawa-era authors from the pre-Tokugawa warrior wisdom.[14] Admonishments against this haste to

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[11] *BS*, pp. 19-20, 161-162, 207-208. Admonishments against excessive eating, drinking, and debauchery can be found in such pre-Tokugawa text as *Ōtomo-ke seidō no koto* (*About the Way of Government of the Ōtomo family*, ca. 1542) by Ōtomo Yoshishige (appears in Ozawa 2003, p. 381).

[12] *BS*, pp. 19-21. Yoshida Yutaka 1971, pp. 10-13.

[13] Hurst 1990, p. 57.

[14] Besides Daidōji Yūzan's precepts, aversion to reckless death can also be seen in such Tokugawa-era warrior precepts as *Bushikun* (*Warrior precepts*, 1715) by Izawa Hanryōshi, and *Buji shōgaku* (*Small science of war preparedness*, 1717) by Ina Sadaaki. Both refer to it as "dying

die are seen, for example, in Minamoto Yoritomo's letter (1191) to Sasaki Sadatsuna,[15] *Yoshisada-ki* of the first half of the 14th century,[16] *Chikubashō* (*Selected precepts for young generations*, ca. 1383) supposedly written by a military governor (*shugo daimyō*) Shiba Yoshimasa,[17] and also in a collection of practical military advice left by an experienced military commander of the late 16th century, Hosokawa Yūsai. In the latter writing, it is noted that when warriors in the vanguard are ordered to attack a castle, they should avoid unnecessary loss of human life by attacking only after the enemy discharges its guns and starts to reload.[18] Even from a purely practical viewpoint of warrior rulers and commanders of the pre-Tokugawa ages, reckless striving to die on the part of their retainers, as seen in Yamamoto Tsunetomo's *Hagakure*, literally meant a quick depletion of manpower on the battlefield and made no military sense.[19]

Later in his work, Daidōji expands on *shihō*, the first basic layer in the hierarchy of the *bushi* daily routine, and its inseparable link with the warrior moral universe:

> Following the two Ways of loyalty and filial piety is not limited only to *bushi*; within the three classes of peasants, craftsmen and merchants, the relation between parents and children, masters and servants is established only by following the Way of loyalty and filial piety. However, for peasants, craftsmen and townsmen, proper manners and etiquette in their daily life are a secondary matter; for example, a child or a servant may sit together with his parent or master cross-legged[20] or keep their hands in the bosom under their clothes, when they say something they do not touch the floor with their hands, or they may address a sitting parent or master while they themselves are standing; there may be all other kinds of breach of etiquette and rudeness, but regardless of this, if the child or servant does not treat his parents or masters badly and sincerely cares for

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like a dog" (*inujini*).

15 Appears in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1942, volume 1, p. 227.

16 *Yoshisada-ki* appearing in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1942, volume 1, p. 316.

17 *Chikubashō* appearing in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1942, volume 1, p. 235.

18 From *Hosokawa Yūsai oboegaki* (*Records of Hosokawa Yūsai*, late 16th or early 17th century) appearing in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1943, volume 8, p. 217. At the time, harquebus (*hinawajū*) could shoot only a single bullet and required a long time for reloading. Encouragement from the top for courageous action on the battlefield should not be confused with encouragement for reckless death. Such are, for example, Katō Kiyomasa's (1562-1611) precepts addressed to his retainers (appear in Ozawa 2003, p. 196). He stated that the ideal warrior is the one who pursues the "Way of Death" with the sword in his hand without going into details of what it meant, obviously, because such things were common sense and did not require explanation. In actuality, he called on the retainers just to be ready to sacrifice their lives for him and, by this, reveal their utmost loyalty.

19 This grossly misleading text by Yamamoto Tsunetomo was not known outside the Nabeshima domain until 1906, long after the Meiji Restoration (Saeki Shin'ichi 2004, pp. 220-222). It is interesting that the text, having least in common with pre-Tokugawa warrior ethos and practical thought, was employed by the Japanese establishment of the Meiji era to promote "traditional warrior values" in Japanese society, which eventually culminated in the phenomenon of *kamikaze* at the end of WWII.

20 The traditional etiquette required one to sit in the *seiza* position in the presence of one's seniors.

> them, they will get away with it, and this is the Way of loyalty and filial piety among the folk of the three classes. In Bushidō, however earnestly one follows the Way of loyalty and filial piety in his heart, if he does not express himself through the [proper] form of etiquette, he cannot be said to have met fully the demands of the Way of loyalty and filial piety…The warrior's loyalty and filial piety is when, even in the absence of his lord or parents, he does not show a sloppy attitude in anything. [In other words], he must not have two faces.[21]

Daidōji continues with examples of the proper bodily etiquette. During travel with his lord, the warrior should not point his legs in the direction of his lord when sleeping, neither should he point the tip of his spear or sword in the direction of his lord when setting aside these weapons at rest.[22] When hearing someone talking, or when he talks himself about his lord, the warrior should get up if he is lying, or sit up straight in the *seiza* position if he is sitting cross-legged. If clothes bearing the family emblem of the lord wear out, the warrior should cut the emblem out and burn it so that female members of his own household would not use the clothes thoughtlessly as underwear or nightdress (such usage would be equal to defiling the lord's family emblem).[23]

As we can see from Daidōji's precepts, in the case of the *bushi* class, not only the "contents" (system of moral values) were important, but so was the "form" in which they were expressed. Whether one expresses his attitude through the appropriate form (body) or not made the crucial difference between the warrior and the commoner, as well as between the "true warrior" and he who does not merits this description. Besides this fundamental feature, the *bushi* bodily etiquette also possessed several other practical functions: Regulation of violence in daily life and self-defense.

1.2 Regulation of Violence Through Bodily Etiquette

As noted in the Introduction, the abundance of historical records on violent events in Japanese warrior society, and the virtual absence of records about those warriors who refrained from resorting to violence in critical situations, has produced a distorted

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21 *BS*, p. 56.

22 Although largely forgotten by the generations of post WWII Japanese, the custom of avoiding turning one's buttocks, extending legs, or pointing the tip or cutting edge of cold steel in the direction of sacred places (indoor and outdoor Shintō shrines etc.) as well as places where there are persons of high social standing, in other words, what in Japanese is generally referred to as *shōmen* or *kamiza*, is still taught in some military arts schools such as the Main Line Daitō-ryū Aikijūjutsu. Depending on a situation, this custom could also be applicable to one's peers (interview in Tōkyō, February 2009, with Kondō Katsuyuki, the director of the school headquarters).

23 *BS*, pp. 56-57, 180.

picture of monotonously bellicose *bushi*. Scholar Ikegami Eiko even argues that for *bushi*, violence and aggression was the only means to prove their "manliness" in the everlasting quest for honor.[24] In actuality, violence that took place among *bushi* in their daily life could often originate in the same kind of day-to-day accidents, misunderstandings, or insults that can be observed in the other stratums of Japanese society. The mundane incidents of warrior violence should not be exaggerated and used as evidence for deriving broader conclusions about the *bushi* culture. In the following chapters, the discussion of the philosophy of the oldest military arts school in Japan, Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū, as well as the study of Yamaoka Tesshū's life long *musha shugyō*, will identify a system of values in Japanese history which was opposite to the bellicose image suggested by such scholars as Satō Masahide, Ikegami Eiko, Shibata Jun, Kasaya Kazuhiko, and Yamamoto Hirofumi.[25] Here we will touch on a theme of how Japanese warriors used to regulate violence and aggression through bodily etiquette in their everyday life.

Both before and after the dawn of the Tokugawa era, the Japanese warrior society needed instruments to regulate violence among its members, and besides the law, etiquette was one of the most effective means to achieve this. This etiquette worked to restrain violence among those whose social status required constant wearing of swords and other weapons and the possession of considerable skill in handling them. It was also a sort of self-defense aimed at avoiding violence caused by inappropriate behavior. Let us consider several examples.

With the exception of his own house, when the warrior entered any building, he was supposed to put his long sword on a rest hanging on the wall of the entrance (*genkan*), and come inside only with the short sword at his waist. Even if for some reason the warrior had to proceed inside the building without leaving his long sword in the entrance, first he would take it off his waist, and come in holding the long sword only in his right hand. Holding the long sword in the left hand was an apparent indication of hostility since the long sword could be instantly drawn out by the right hand. For the same reason, after the warrior entered a room and sat on the *tatami* mats (usually in the *seiza* position) he could put his long sword only to his right side or behind his body, turning the edge to himself (Figure 1). Carelessly putting the long sword to one's left side could be taken as a sign of hostility, regardless of the true intentions, and even the slightest accidental touch to the long sword on the left could provoke the man before

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24 Ikegami Eiko 1995.

25 Satō Masahide 1977, Ikegami Eiko 1995, Shibata 2000, Kasaya 2001, Yamamoto Hirofumi 2003.

him into a preventive action of self-defense whose outcome could be lethal.[26]

When giving his sheathed sword to someone for appreciation, the warrior would hold it horizontally so that the pommel would face his left and the edge would be turned to himself, again, expressing that he has no hostile intentions (Figure 2). Holding the sword with its pommel facing the warrior's right and the edge turned to the man before him meant that the sword could be unsheathed instantly in close proximity to that man. When giving an unsheathed sword for appreciation, the warrior would hold it vertically, turning the edge to himself, and gripping only the part of the hilt closer to the pommel leaving the part near the sword guard, which is the most convenient to grip, to the admirer.[27]

Japanese warrior society forbade any kind of provocative rudeness or disrespect. For instance, it was considered extremely impolite to pass between two or more talking persons; one was supposed to pass round them from the back. Juniors could not pass in front of seniors sitting in a rank in the *seiza* sitting position; again, they were supposed to go behind their backs (see also Footnote 22). One of the most significant elements of the etiquette was the greeting (*aisatsu*), which had to be performed in a clear voice simultaneously with a distinct bow.[28]

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[26] Interview in Narita city, February 2008, with Ōtake Risuke, the master teacher of Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū. Also, see Ōkuma 1973, p. 138; Ogasawara 1995, p. 127; Kondō Katsuyuki 2000, p. 42. A quite distorted version of these customs is given by scholar Catharina Blomberg (1994, p. 62). She writes (without referring to the source): "When visiting a superior a *bushi* would usually leave his swords outside the room on the special wooden rack, *katanakake*… The short sword, *wakizashi*, could however be brought into the room by a *bushi* visiting another of equal rank. It was then always placed on the owner's right, with the hilt towards his host, to demonstrate that his intentions were friendly and to ensure that it could not be easily drawn." As discussed in the last section of this chapter, the *bushi* were not supposed to detach the short blade from their waist even for a moment. The short sword (*wakizashi*) or dagger (*tantō*) was always worn at one's waist regardless of the host's rank except when a *bushi* went to negotiate surrender to the enemy's camp (in this case a *bushi* was supposed to hand his long and short swords voluntarily to the enemy's attendants before entering the negotiation place. See the last section of Chapter VI of this thesis). A mention of the length of a dagger which "is immutable since ancient times" and should be worn before one's superior, can be found in *Gusoku no tame kyōkun issatsu* (*A letter with precepts for my son*, written sometime between 1457 and 1460) by Ise Sadachika (appears in Ozawa 2003, p. 83). That is why short blades were never left outside the room and were never put to one's right side when sitting on the *tatami* mats indoors. Positioning the hilt of the short blade in Blomberg's interpretation is irrelevant. In the case of the long blade, which could be put to the right side, the customary positioning of the hilt toward the host makes unsheathing only easier. As mentioned earlier, it was deemed extremely impolite to point the tip of cold steel in the direction of sacred places, persons of high social standing, or one's peers in the daily interaction.

[27] Interview in Narita city, February 2008, with Ōtake Risuke, the master teacher of Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū.

[28] Interview in Narita city, February 2008, with Ōtake Risuke, the master teacher of Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū. Interview in Tōkyō, February 2009, with Kondō Katsuyuki, the director of the

It is important to note that, although the etiquette was an indispensable element of warrior education, with the exception of special ceremonial rules and manners, rarely was it an item of the formal education curriculum; instead it was acquired naturally from early childhood in the everyday interaction with one's seniors.

1.3 The State of Constant Alertness

Maintaining the state of constant alertness in regard to a surprise attack or other kind of danger was another fundamental element of the *bushi* intangible culture. This is how such a mental attitude is expressed in *Yoshisada-ki* of the first half of the 14th century:

> Our house records admonish that when you walk along the road and see someone, pass by with an arrow fixed to your bow, or with your hand on the long sword's hilt. These are customs of the past. Our times are not that hard and these [specific] customs are outdated and ridiculous, but in your heart you should treat every person [you meet in the street] as your enemy. Even if you do not reveal this state of alertness in your outward appearance, people will certainly know it. This is the same, for example, as when you know about [distant] rain seeing the rise of the water level [in a river], or understand the size of a plant's root depending on how it flourishes. If you maintain the state of alertness, people will not attempt to harm you… Or even if they do, you will not be taken by surprise in any way because you are prepared… Even a person possessing unparalleled wisdom must never drop his guard deep in his heart.[29]

It is interesting that the unknown author of the above lines says that his times are not as hard as in the past, although he lived in the 14th century which was full of wars and unrest. In any case, this passage shows that the state of constant alertness was cultivated in the hereditary warrior houses well before the 14th century. Here the link between a specific mental attitude and class identity is not articulated yet, although it almost certainly was implied because, by the 10th and 11th centuries, hereditary lines of military elite were already firmly fixed, and the notion that martial skills and mental attitudes are the exclusive monopoly of the warrior houses probably existed since that time.[30] Showing a remarkable continuity with the pre-Tokugawa tradition, Daidōji Yūzan writes the following on how a *bushi* should maintain the state of constant alertness inside his house, as well as about a more general link between a *bushi*'s identity and this mental attitude:

Main Line Daitō-ryū Aikijūjutsu headquarters. Also, see Ōtake 2009g, p. 37.

[29] From *Yoshisada-ki* appearing in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1942, volume 1, p. 320.

[30] Farris 1992, pp. 172-173.

> *Bushi* must always be prepared for combat, whatever he does… *Bushi* with the proper attitude even takes a blunt-edged sword or a wooden sword (*bokutō*) every time he takes a bath, and this is because he is constantly maintaining the state of alertness.[31] It is the state of alertness which *bushi* exercises at home, not to mention when he leaves his house and goes somewhere; here he must be prepared for any eventuality that may occur on the way or in the place of destination where he may encounter a maniac, a drunk, or who knows what other fool. As an old saying has it, "Watch for an enemy as soon as you leave your gates."[32] Because he wears the swords at his waist, *bushi* must never forget to exercise alertness, even for a moment. If *bushi* never forgets the state of alertness, he naturally attains the state of preparedness for death. The *bushi* who wears the swords at his waist, but forgets the state of alertness, is no different from a townsman or a peasant in the guise of *bushi*.[33]

In this passage, Daidōji not only points to the need to maintain the state of constant alertness, but also emphasizes that it is precisely this mental attitude which distinguishes *bushi* from the commoners. Put simply, the one who does not stay on alert all the time is not the true warrior, even if he formally belongs to this class and displays all other concomitant attributes.

The state of constant alertness cultivated among the *bushi* can be divided into two types: One pertaining to the constant preparedness for danger in daily life as identified above, the other was constant preparedness for larger scale military operations in which armory is used. With regard to the former, some military arts schools, such as Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū and the Main Line Daitō-ryū Aikijūjutsu, which survived from the pre-Tokugawa ages, still transmit common embodied practices designed as simple measures of self-defense and which, at the same time, aim at maintaining the state of constant alertness in daily life.

One example of this is the order of the usage of both hands during mutual bowing in the *seiza* sitting position. This was predetermined. The warrior bowed only after first touching the *tatami* mat with his left hand, and next adding his right (dominant) hand. Touching *tatami* with the left hand while keeping the right hand close to one's body was a form of alertness and confirmation of the safety of one's dominant hand, which was one of the first targets for an attacker. The return from the bow was done in the opposite order – first returning one's right hand, and then the left hand. It should be noted that

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[31] With a wooden sword a skilled swordsman could fracture bones or kill by striking vital points (interview in Narita city, February 2008, with Ōtake Risuke, the master teacher of Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū). Also, see Reid and Croucher 1983, p. 123; Hurst 1998, p. 83; Ōtake 2009c, p. 49.

[32] Daidōji most likely cites here the words of *Wu Tzu*, the famous military treatise of ancient China.

[33] *BS*, pp. 25-26.

there were no left-handers in the *bushi* class: If someone was born left-handed, he/she was brought up to use the right hand as dominant.

Also, when sitting in *seiza*, the warrior was not supposed to cross his feet. In the pre-Tokugawa *bushi* society that valued only action at blinding speed, to cross one's feet in *seiza* impeded moving instantly from the *seiza* position in case of a surprise attack. This could bring fatal consequences.

Another common practice was constant protection of the fingers, especially thumbs. Damage to one's thumb was perceived as an automatic loss of ability to use weapons or tools, and consequently a threat to one's livelihood, and *bushi* used to protect the thumbs constantly in their everyday life. Figures 3 and 4 show how the thumbs were protected in the standing position. When sitting in the *seiza* position, it was customary to keep all fingers together and put one's hands where they were most difficult to grab for a potential enemy - the base of one's legs close to the groin (Figure 5. Also, see Figure 1). Folding one's thumb inside the palm could be an additional protective measure.

Pre-Meiji Japanese, regardless of social class, walked without swinging their arms, or even if they did, the same side arm and leg were moved simultaneously. This was a manner of walking which prevented the extensive swinging of arms and which is called *namba*.[34] Swinging arms while walking was perceived as impudent and there was even an expression, obsolete now, to vilify someone who walks in this way, which sounded like "That rat! Walking and swinging his arms wildly!" ("Ano yarō! Ōde o futte aruite iru!"). However, in the case of the *bushi* class, a man could not swing his left arm because the position of the short sword (*wakizashi*) prevented him from doing so since at least the Muromachi era (1392-1573) when the short swords started to be worn more often than daggers.[35] Furthermore, the practice of *jūjutsu*, the empty-hand combat, taught warriors that, for a potential attacker, it is easier to grab hands and twist arms when they are swung, and also that the armpit is a large vital point which always should be kept closed.[36]

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[34] Kōno Yoshinori 2004, p. 100. Ogawa Naoko 2007, pp. 128-129.

[35] *Gusoku no tame kyōkun issatsu* (*A letter with precepts for my son*, written sometime between 1457 and 1460) by Ise Sadachika gives a hint on the transition period (the middle of the 15th century) when the *bushi* started to wear *wakizashi* not only on the battlefield but also in daily life. In this writing, Ise, at one point a de facto ruler of Japan, scorns his contemporaries for introducing the custom of daily wearing of *wakizashi*, whose proper place, according to him, is only the battlefield, travel, and other special occasions (appears in Ozawa 2003, p. 83).

[36] The information about these customs was obtained in interviews with Ōtake Risuke, the master teacher of Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū (Narita city, March 2008) and Kondō Katsuyuki, the director of the Main Line Daitō-ryū Aikijūjutsu headquarters (Tōkyō, February 2009). Also, see Kondō Katsuyuki 2000, p. 42.

It may seem that such bodily practices demanded an enormous effort and strain to observe all their nuances. However, all were observed unconsciously and naturally since they were learned and remembered not through rational or logical thinking but imitation and faithful adherence to the teaching of one's seniors from early childhood. In other words, they were learned with the body (even now such an attitude is referred to in Japan as *karada de oboeru*, or "remember with one's body").

As far as one can see, no scholar working in the field of warrior studies has utilized the kind of bodily practices described above to address broader topics of the *bushi* cultural history. Those elements, which are visible on old woodblock prints or photographs of the Bakumatsu period, often seem casual and their deeper meaning is overlooked. Examples given above are only a tiny portion of a vast number of details that governed the warrior's life in pre-Tokugawa Japan (and, to a degree, Tokugawa Japan also). It is necessary to stress that the attitudes discussed above should not be confused with a constant readiness to commit unprovoked violence. Rather it was a quiet readiness to resort to self-defense in an adequate manner. All these measures were aimed at avoiding a situation when one's unpreparedness or carelessness could be exploited by a potential enemy in a surprise attack, in other words, opening oneself up in daily life.

The *bushi* state of constant alertness in daily life probably found its ultimate expression in the appearance of a variety of Japanese swordsmanship based on the technique of instantaneously drawing the sword and cutting down attackers (*iaijutsu* or *battōjutsu*), an art whose basic principle of simultaneous drawing and killing is similar to the American cowboys' "fast draw." Yamada Jirōkichi, a historian of Japanese swordsmanship, maintained that, although the exact time of the birth of *iaijutsu* is unknown, most probably it would have been the second half of the 16th century, the period in which a native of the northern part of Japan, Hayashizaki Jinsuke, turned this skill into a distinctive art in the form of a "school."[37]

Such an assertion is based on the idea that the *bushi* military skills existed mainly in the form of established "schools" (*ryū*); this is a common misconception, which is seen among both academic and non-academic circles and will be discussed in Chapter II. The earlier quote from 14th century *Yoshisada-ki*, "when you walk along the road and see someone, pass by with … your hand on the long sword's hilt," which is used to describe the warrior customs of a distant "past," hint that *iaijutsu* could have been as old as the hereditary warrior houses which existed since at least the 8th century.[38] This art was

[37] Yamada Jirōkichi 1960, p. 145.
[38] Farris 1992, p. 173.

reinforced further on a nation-wide scale in the 12th century with the appearance of the *uchigatana* type of sword, which was thrust through the belt with the cutting edge upward. This way of wearing the sword allowed for easier and faster drawing.[39] The art of *iaijutsu* and the way the Japanese sword started to be worn since the 12th century seem to have no equivalents in other world cultures and these two phenomena are surely worth a separate historical investigation.[40]

The second type of the state of constant alertness, which is constant preparedness for war, was expressed not only in the possession of all the necessary military equipment, such as armor, weapons, and symbols of one's own forces, but also keeping it in excellent condition. As Daidōji Yūzan notes, unlike other kinds of failures, the absence of parts of military equipment, or the poor condition of this equipment in a time of peace pertained to the very foundations of the Way of the Warrior (Budō). Such a blunder could result in a complete loss of face for the *bushi*, who would be despised by his lord and peers.[41]

However, the care about one's armory had a separate meaning which is related to another fundamental element of the *bushi* intangible culture, that is practical knowledge, or the "know-how" of the hereditary warrior houses. This know-how pertained to virtually all aspects of life during peace and war and underlay the rest of the elements of the *bushi* intangible culture.[42] Regular care of armory implied constant attention to the

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[39] Prior to the appearance of *uchigatana*, Japanese warriors slung their long swords from their waist using cords with the blade edge faced down. This type of the Japanese sword is referred to as *tachi*. Early *uchigatana* swords were longer than daggers but shorter than the *tachi* long swords and their hilt was designed for one-handed grip. Longer *uchigatana* designed for the two-handed grip appeared later (Hiroi 1971, p. 99. Ogasawara 1995, p. 56. Kondō Yoshikazu 2000, pp. 70-73. Friday 2004, p. 79).

[40] Swordsmanship historian Tominaga Kengo (1972, p. 82), citing a critical writer of the Meiji era, Komiyama Yasusuke, also assumed that the origins of *iaijutsu* long predated Hayashizaki Jinsuke. However, he did not go further with this speculation.

[41] *BS*, pp. 243-246. The admonishment to store all the necessary armory during the time of peace can be found, for example, in the pre-Tokugawa text *Ōtomo-ke seidō no koto* (*About the Way of Government of the Ōtomo family*, ca. 1542) by Ōtomo Yoshishige (appears in Ozawa 2003, p. 381). The importance of constant preparedness for war is emphasized in precepts of such military commanders of the late 16th and early 17th centuries as Kuroda Nyosui and Kuroda Nagamasa (Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1944, *bekkan*, pp. 353, 367).

[42] Detailed discussion of this particular element goes beyond the scope of this investigation since the thesis is focused on embodied practices. Here, I will limit my discussion to just identifying this element. Besides some aspects of the *bushi* practical knowledge discussed in this thesis, other examples can be found in *Gokurakuji-dono go-shōsoku* (*A letter from his Highness Gokurakuji*, written sometime between 1256 and 1261) by Hōjō Shigetoki, *Yoshisada-ki* (*Records of [Nitta] Yoshisada*, first half of the 14th century), *Sōunji-dono nijū ikkajō* (*Twenty one rules of his Highness Sōunji*, end of the 15th – beginning of the 16th century) by Hōjō Sōun, *Tako Tokitaka kakun* (*Tako Tokitaka's house rules*, ca. 1544) by Tako Tokitaka, *Asakura Sōteki waki* (*Records of Asakura Sōteki's discourse*, early 1550s) by Asakura Norikage, *Hosokawa Yūsai oboegaki* (*Records of*

structure of armor and weapons and this attention naturally reinforced the knowledge of their weak and strong points. This allowed them to be used in the most efficient way on the battlefield.

For instance, Japanese armor is very difficult to cut through. However, its designers sacrificed full protection of the body for the sake of greater mobility. As a result it had a number of openings and some vital points of the human body were unprotected such as veins on the inner side of arms and legs, waist, and armpits.[43] That is why knowledge of the armor structure was indispensable on the battlefield and, as the example of Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū shows, the pre-Tokugawa *bushi* skills included a large number of techniques designed specifically for targeting exposed areas of an armored opponent's body with various kinds of weapons.[44]

When it comes to weapons, their true capabilities could only be realized when a *bushi* fully understood their structure. For example, a good sword blade must be able to hold a keen edge, yet not break or bend out of shape under a heavy blow. The general rule is that the more intensely steel is hardened, the more brittle it becomes. On the other hand, soft iron, while hard to snap, deforms easily and loses its edge. As a way out, throughout history swordsmiths of various cultures used to mix hard and soft strips of steel and iron.[45] Japan was no exception to this practice, and the Japanese blade has a tempered cutting edge and at the same time its blunt back ridge (*mine*, or *mune*) is made of soft iron to absorb impact.[46] Such structure prevents the Japanese sword from breaking when striking with the cutting edge but it is also its weak point: No matter how famous the sword's maker is, it is highly likely to snap if the blunt back of the blade is used to strike against something rigid. The Japanese sword may also easily break if the side of the blade (*shinogi*) is used to receive an opponent's cut. Only the cutting edge of the blade can be used for this purpose.[47]

Hosokawa Yūsai, late 16th or early 17th century) by Hosokawa Yūsai. A late example (the beginning of the 19th century), whose content is close to pre-Tokugawa texts, is *Bugaku keimō* (*Education in military science*) by Rikimaru Tōzan.

43 Hori 1934, p. 44. Sasama 1985a, pp. 31-32. Farris 1992. Nihon Kobudō Kyōkai 2002, p. 38. Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2005, pp. 9, 12; 2008, pp. 11-12. Ōtake 2007, p. 46.

44 Ōtake 1977, p. 23; 1985b, pp. 40-41; 2007, pp. 46, 109; 2009d, pp. 51-52. Reid and Croucher 1983, pp. 131- 133, 141. Iizasa 2000, pp. 19-21. Yokose 2000, p. 15. BAB Japan 2003, p. 14. Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2008, p. 8. Nippon Budōkan 2008, pp. 170-171. The technical curriculum of Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū will be discussed in detail in Chapter II. An example of an old writing of an unknown warrior training entity explaining, both in text and graphically, techniques designed for targeting openings in the opponent's armor can be found in Hori 1934, pp. 51-54.

45 Ogasawara 1995, pp. 30, 45, 90. Takeuchi Kaishirō 1998, p. 61. Cohen 2002, pp. 105, 107.

46 Reid and Croucher 1983, p. 145.

47 Kendō Nihon 1981, p. 48. Tsumoto 1983, p. 207. Takeuchi Kaishirō 1998, p. 61. Ōtake 1985a, pp. 35-36; 2007, pp. 53-54; 2009f, p. 36; 2009g, pp. 36-37. Also, see the interview with one of the

Thus, military skills of the pre-Tokugawa *bushi* were based on profound knowledge of the structure of both offensive and defensive weapons. When not at war, the regular maintenance of one's armory helped to refresh this knowledge and the lack of such care meant inevitable decline in the combat capabilities of the *bushi*. The above discussion should correct misconceptions of such scholars as Fujita Tatsuo, who maintains that after the introduction of gunnery in Japan during the Warring States period, gunnery specialists became "engineers and scientists" as opposed to specialists in other military arts and that, during this period, the medieval tactics based on "magic and stargazing" changed rapidly to the war of attrition dominated by science.[48] Such a dismissive viewpoint seems to forget that mere superstitions were fatal on the battlefield of the times when Japan did not yet know fire arms, and that *bushi* were indeed hereditary specialists in the science of war.

It is necessary to add that a *bushi* was expected to maintain the state of constant alertness to care not only about his own safety, but also that of his lord. Whenever accompanying his lord in travel, a *bushi* was supposed to become familiar preliminarily with all possible geographical details of the route to avoid unexpected trouble. If staying at an inn at night, a *bushi* was supposed to orient himself, become familiar with the inn's surroundings, and think of a possible escape route and evacuation area in case of fire or any other unforeseen disaster or surprise attack.[49] A *bushi* was supposed to go behind his lord when climbing down a mountain road and go in front of him when climbing up in order to detect a danger sooner.[50]

The practices discussed above were not peculiar to a limited number of bodyguards or other kind of professionals. It was the inner attitude that superceded outward symbols of the warrior and that was demanded from all members of the warrior society, regardless of whether they were in service or not. It is essential to note that there was nothing artificial or unnaturally strained in the maintenance of such a state of constant alertness. It was based on the awareness that life on earth is a ceaseless struggle for survival and all other creatures in the world live in the same state of alertness. From some point in history, only the human species was afforded the luxury of distinguishing between peace and war. However, such a luxury was not permitted in the *bushi* class of pre-Tokugawa Japan. War was a natural state of life and the "true warrior" was not supposed to have the dual notions of "war" and "no-war." It is one of the connotations

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most famous modern swordsmiths of Japan, Yoshihara Yoshindo, in Ogasawara 1995, p. 83.

48 Fujita Tatsuo 2006b, p. 155.

49 Daidōji Yūzan's precepts in *BS*, pp. 239-242.

50 *Yoshisada-ki* (*Records of [Nitta] Yoshisada*, first half of 14h century) appearing in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1942, volume 1, p. 322. The same principle is seen in Daidōji Yūzan's precepts (*BS*, p. 242).

of the famous "always on the battlefield" (*senjō jōzai*) motto which was in favor with so many pre-Tokugawa *bushi* when they were not at war.[51]

The consistency of teachings regarding bodily etiquette and the maintenance of the state of constant alertness transmitted in Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū and the Main Line Daitō-ryū Aikijūjutsu, two schools of military arts which appeared before the Tokugawa era and developed independently in different geographical regions, shows that these elements of the *bushi* intangible culture were quite uniform. Furthermore, judging from the fact that many of the nuances of the *bushi* bodily culture discussed above can also be seen on old woodblock prints and Bakumatsu photographs, it appears that, unlike the efficiency of pre-Tokugawa military arts, the pre-Tokugawa etiquette and the external expressions of the state of constant alertness were formally retained well through the peaceful Tokugawa era. This is no doubt because, unlike sophisticated skills in the art of killing of the pre-Tokugawa *bushi*, these aspects did not require the many years of exhaustive training and the complex methodologies of transmission.

1.4 The Cult of the Blade

The cult of the blade was the mental attitude which comprised a significant part of the pre-Tokugawa *bushi* intangible culture. To understand the professional warrior of the time, therefore, we need also to understand the religious and cultural meanings which became attached to the sword.

The long sword, and especially the combination of the long and short swords, became the exclusive property of the *bushi* class beginning from Toyotomi Hideyoshi's "sword hunt" of 1588, which was aimed at the formal separation of warriors from the other strata of Japanese society. However, it acquired its special meaning as an outward symbol of the *bushi* only in the Tokugawa era.[52] Prior to this time, the Japanese warriors used to wear the short blade constantly at their waist as the manifestation of the state of constant alertness within the broader context of everyday preparation for death. Daidōji Yūzan describes this custom in *Budō shoshinshū* in the following way:

> Unlike foreign countries, in our country, a townsman, peasant, or craftsman even

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[51] Daidōji Yūzan gives an example of Baba Mino no Kami, a famous retainer of Takeda Shingen, who advocated this motto (*BS*, p. 70). Albeit in a different wording, the same principle can be found in precepts of such military commanders of the late 16th and early 17th centuries as Kuroda Nyosui and Kuroda Nagamasa (Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1944, *bekkan*, pp. 353-354, 362).

[52] Taniguchi Shinko 2005, pp. 90-93.

> of the lowest standing carries at least a rusty *wakizashi*. It is a custom of Japan, the Country of the Martial Spirit; it is an immutable way of the gods. However, war is not the vocation of the folks of these three lower classes. Warrior houses have the canon that obligates their servants to carry *wakizashi* at all times, even if they are of the lowest rank, such as *komono*, *chūgen* or *arashiko*, not to mention the folks over the *samurai* rank who must not detach the blade from their waist even for a moment.[53]

Here, besides emphasizing the utmost importance of wearing a blade at one's waist for the *bushi*, Daidōji also notes that this custom is actually relevant for the other strata of society too.

While the horse, bow, and arrows were the primary weapons of Japanese military men on the battlefield and the sword played only a secondary role in combat until the Kamakura era,[54] primordial Japanese mythology still contains as many mentions of the sword as of the bow. In fact, no country has been culturally more closely associated with the sword than Japan, and few swords can compare with Japanese blades in technical perfection, especially those of the swordsmiths of the Kamakura and Muromachi eras. The first European visitors to 16th century Japan – Saint Francis Xavier, Alessandro Valignano, and Bernardino de Avila Giron among them – all noted the Japanese veneration for the sword.[55] Regardless of its practical value in military action, the cultural awareness of the sharp durable blade with pure polished surfaces as a sacred item was shared by the broader masses of Japanese people, not only the *bushi*, long before the latter grasped full political power in the country.

The sword was revered in Japan as one of the three sacred imperial regalia (together with the mirror and grand jewels, the three referred to in Japanese as *sanshu no jingi*).[56] Deifying the sword is a characteristic feature of ancient Japanese mythology.[57] However, it is not unique to Japanese culture: Originally, Chinese and Korean sword-related legends were brought to Japan along with the iron culture at the end of

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53 *BS*, pp. 25-26.

54 Sasama 1985a, pp. 31-32. Farris 1992, pp. 12-18. Friday 2004, p. 68-72.

55 Hurst 1998, pp. 27-28. Still it should be noted that there are no perfect weapons, and the best features of the Japanese sword are exerted only when its usage is based on the solid knowledge of both its weak and strong points as discussed above.

56 Presently there is no established theory in regard to the symbolic meaning of the imperial regalia which changed depending on the period of history and political situation in Japan. Even the number of the regalia is a subject of long academic dispute. The recent discussion of the imperial regalia can be found in Sakai Toshinobu 2005, pp. 201-288. Sakai maintains that until the first half of the 10th century A.D. the sacred imperial regalia consisted only of two items, i.e., the mirror and the sword.

57 Maebayashi 1992, pp. 51-52. According to Sakai Toshinobu (2006a, p. 18), concepts related to deifying the sword can be found in the earliest written monuments of Japan: *Kojiki* (*A record of ancient matters*, 712 A.D.) and *Nihon shoki* (*Chronicles of Japan*, 720 A.D.).

the 3rd century B.C. In the process of their adoption, these legends were transformed, and the sword was linked and conceptually fused with beliefs in the gods in the context of primordial animism. While swords did not symbolize deities in China and Korea, from ancient times, swords in Japan served as symbols of various Shintō deities and many Shintō shrines historically have a close relation with the sword.[58]

In his discussion of the *bushi* mental attitudes to weapons, Cameron Hurst noted that, since great antiquity, the bow and arrows were considered in Japan to have magical powers, as in most early societies, and they were used for religious and magic practices to dispel evil, drive away defilement, or cure illness.[59] However, he did not mention the role of the sword which was also regarded as a powerful magical tool. The idea closely resembles the folk beliefs of Europe, as well as other parts of the world, that steel, and especially an implement with a sharp cutting edge such as knife, dagger, or sword, offers protection against evil, witchcraft, or sorcery.[60] The Japanese blade was associated with purity and the process of purification, and this is what made it suitable for symbolic usage in religious and magic practices for warding off evils in Shintō as well as the Shugendō religion.

Under the influence of Taoism, in ancient China and Korea the sword was accorded the same symbolism as the mirror because it was made of the same material.[61] The reflection of objects was regarded as a mystic phenomenon, and mirrors initially were used as religious, rather than cosmetic, utensils. Originally, mirrors were made of bronze, and later of iron, both having a distinctive feature to reflect objects but only after they are polished. In other words, a polished, pure surface reflects objects, and an unpolished, impure surface does not. This is where we can identify the notion of purity, or purification, through the process of polishing. The polished sword reflects objects in the same way as the mirror, and it was the common feature of the material that gave sacredness to both the mirror and the sword. Undoubtedly, the idea of purity associated with the sword was imported to Japan together with the iron culture. As Sakai Toshinobu notes, in ancient Shintō mythology and magic practices, the sword appears as a tool for expressing the innocence and purity of one's heart, as well as warding off evils.[62]

One other unique feature of the iron is that it penetrates objects easily after it is sharpened and unlike, for example, stone implements, is immensely durable. The iron

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58 Sakai Toshinobu 2005, pp. 6, 27-28, 96-97, 128, 130, 136-141, 194-195, 369.
59 Hurst 1998, pp. 105-109.
60 Blomberg 1994, p. 60.
61 Fukunaga Mitsuji 1987, p. 9. Sakai Toshinobu 2005, p. 67.
62 Sakai Toshinobu 2005, pp. 146-159, 193.

cutting edge gives simultaneously both destructive and constructive power to its possessor. It can be assumed that in primordial times a thin iron edge was perceived as a tool carrying supernatural force because it gave people capabilities they did not have by birth and because, with its help, they could create delicate works that did not exist in nature.

It is important to note that the double-edged sword has been given a great symbolic importance both in Japan and her continental neighbors, not the single-edged sword. Although the single-edged curved blade has been used in Japan for over a millennium,[63] the usage of the character with the Chinese reading *tō* (Japanese reading *katana*), the term that refers only to the single-edged blade, is much rarer in pre-modern Japanese terminology than usage of the character with the Chinese reading *ken*, meaning the double-edged sword (Japanese reading *tsurugi*). Thus, in pre-modern Japan, swordsmanship was more often referred to as *kenjutsu*, *kempō*, *kengi*, *gekken*, and other terms rather than *tōjutsu*, *tōhō*, etc. The same distinction in the usage of the characters referring to the double- and single-edged blades is made in China.[64]

The reason why the double-edged sword has been revered so much lies in its symbolism. According to Sakai Toshinobu, the form of the single-edged blade can be obtained conceptually by splitting the double-edged blade along the middle into two parts. It was probably regarded as the most suitable tool that, both in Japan and her continental neighbors, has fused transcendental ideas of native religions and Buddhism and was used for various esoteric practices. That is why, in ancient Chinese legends, the double-edged sword was perceived as a symbol of the simultaneous struggle and harmony of two complementary extremes of *yin* and *yang*.[65] Similar ideas can be found in ancient Japanese mythology: For, example, as part of the myth about the god Izanagi who killed the god of fire, Kagutsuchi, the double-edged sword (*totsuka no tsurugi*) simultaneously carries destructive and constructive power (killing and giving life) because the sword itself gave birth to other gods in the immediate aftermath of killing Kagutsuchi.[66] In Buddhist esoteric sects, the notion of the Sword of Wisdom (referred to in Japanese as Chie no Ken) is also expressed in the double-edged sword. The two edges of the Sword of Wisdom imply cutting in two opposite directions, i.e., outward enemies and “inward enemies” (the latter referring to *bonnō* or “worldly desires”).

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63 Farris 1992, pp. 18-19.

64 Suenaga 1971, p. 21. Hurst 1998, p. 33. Sakai Toshinobu 2005, pp. 4, 42-46. After the Meiji Restoration, the modernized variants of Japanese swordsmanship have been referred to exclusively with the character *ken*.

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Since the "inward enemy" could be fought only with inward effort, the Sword of Wisdom came to symbolize the human mind in esoteric Buddhism.[67] Thus, we can identify in total three dimensions of the double-edged sword symbolism: Two cutting edges of the blade and tip, two flat surfaces, and the unity of two equal longitudinal parts each having one cutting edge.

It should be noted that, in primordial Shintō, the sword symbolized deities and was also used as a tool for magical practices. However, these two functions were not organically connected. In the medieval period, which was characterized by the coexistence and mix of Buddhist and Shintō deities (*shimbutsu shūgō*), the Shugendō religion employed the blade for magical practices, and at the same time the Buddhist Sword of Wisdom that symbolized Fudōmyō-ō (Arya-acalanatha), was one of the main objects of Shugendō worship.[68] Although it played a significant role as a symbolic tool, the sword itself has never been an object of worship in esoteric Buddhist sects, such as Shingon, which was a primary source of esoteric practices for Shugendō.

Throughout Japanese history, the teachings and esoteric practices of Shintō, Buddhist esoteric sects and Shugendō were, as a rule, inaccessible to laymen. However, they were incorporated in the curriculum of some secret fields of knowledge of pre-modern Japan, including military arts, and this is how they came to be used by warriors. The process of integration of esoteric practices into the Japanese military of old is not clear. The existence of armed groups guarding temples and shrines is likely to provide some hint. For example, the Buddhist warrior monks (*sōhei*) are known to have appeared in the late Heian era. It is possible that monks who needed military skills to protect their temples in times of unrest exchanged the teaching of esoteric practices for the skills of handling arms, and this is how esoteric practices were incorporated in the military arts. Another possibility is the existence of the system of "lay adepts" (*koji*) that probably gave lay warriors at least a partial access to esoteric teachings and practices. The examples of warriors who became monks temporarily and then returned to the world should not be overlooked either.

Among esoteric practices employing the sword symbolism was, for example, the usage of the "nine magical lines" (*kuji*) and the "tenth magical sign" (*jūji*).[69] One of the

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[67] Sakai Toshinobu 2005, pp. 42-46, 61-62, 70, 72-75, 86-89, 93, 127-128. Also, see Ogasawara 1995, pp. 67-68.

[68] Sakai Toshinobu 2005, p. 196.

[69] In regard to *kuji* and *jūji* used by Japanese warriors, see Ōtake 1975; Ōtake 1978, pp. 14-19; 2007, pp. 246-255. The generally accepted opinion among scholars has been that the practice of *kuji* originates from ancient Chinese Taoism (Sawa 1975; Ōmori Nobumasa 1976a; David Hall 1990; Waterhouse 1996; Bodiford 2005; Sakai Toshinobu 2005). However, the origins of *kuji* should be sought in Shri Yantra which is one of the oldest Indian *yantra*s. Similarly to *mandala*, *yantra* is a

versions of this practice presumed the usage of *tōin*, the "sword sign," or the form of hands when the extended middle and index fingers of the right hand (symbolizing the sword) are clasped in the left palm (see Figure 6). In a similar manner, the *bushi* adopted the ideas of symbolism and sacredness of the sword from Shintō and Buddhism. Both before and during the Tokugawa era, in many military arts schools, the names of prearranged patterns of movement (*kata*) came directly from these religions. Also, *kata* names could be symbolically linked to their philosophies, cosmologies or sword-related terminology.[70]

The connection between the *bushi* class and especially esoteric Buddhism was so deep that Sanskrit characters symbolizing Buddhist deities (*shuji*), images of the double-edged sword, dragons and other esoteric symbols, became a constant theme of engravings on Japanese weaponry. Among the total number of engravings on Japanese antique swords about 95% are related to esoteric Buddhism, while the other 5% are mere decorations such as "pine, bamboo and plum" (*shō-chiku-bai*).[71] This fact (as well as the other aspects of the blade cult discussed in this section) is overlooked by Cameron Hurst who maintains that, not until the Tokugawa era, did *bushi* come to venerate the sword more than the bow.[72] Esoteric inscriptions would have been more likely to appear on the bow and arrows if they had been the primary objects of veneration during the time of incessant wars. This viewpoint also ignores the fact that the bow and arrows were less appropriate for veneration because, unlike cold steel, they were not durable and were, instead, disposable weapons.

Thus, the cult of the blade was the fourth fundamental element of the *bushi* intangible culture, besides the practical knowledge, the bodily etiquette, and the state of constant alertness. However, there was another extremely important practice without which these

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geometric figure symbolizing the cosmic order. Shri Yantra is composed of nine interlocking triangles with a small circle in the center. The small circle is called Bindu and in metaphysical terms it is held to be the point at which begins creation and the point at which the unity becomes the many. It is also described as the sacred symbol of the cosmos in its unmanifested state. The number of triangles in Shri Yantra and the number of lines used for the practice of *kuji* does not seem accidental. Furthermore, it appears that Bindu, the tenth sign of Shri Yantra, and the esoteric practice of "the tenth sign" (*jūji*) are not accidental either. It can be assumed that Shri Yantra was imported to China along with other aspects of Indian culture, where it was simplified to drawing just nine lines, each of which was designated a specific Chinese character. This practice was later imported to Japan.

[70] For the examples of *kata* names in Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū, see Ōtake 2007, pp. 60-61. In Shinkage-ryū and Ittō-ryū, see Ōmori Nobumasa 1974, 1976a, 1976b. Also, see Maebayashi 1995.

[71] Ōtake 1984, p. 12; 2007, pp. 284-287. Ogasawara 1995, pp. 30, 49. Also, Ōtake Risuke in Takeuchi Kaishirō 1998, p. 63.

[72] Hurst 1998, p. 103.

elements could not function. They could not work on their own and required cultivation and reinforcement. This could be done only through the process of regular training in military arts. The cause-and-effect link here should be emphasized: It is not even the bodily etiquette and the state of constant alertness, as Daidōji Yūzan explained, but, first of all, the training in military arts which, in combination with all the other fundamental elements, distinguished descendants of the hereditary warrior houses from the other stratums of the Japanese society, and served as a means for sustaining and reassuring their warrior identity.

CHAPTER II

Bushi Martial Skills Prior to the Tokugawa Era

This chapter enlarges upon the fifth fundamental element of the pre-Tokugawa *bushi* intangible culture - training in military arts. Since the practical realization of virtually all the moral values of pre-Tokugawa *bushi* society demanded the incessant exercise of self-discipline and will power, training in military arts was also indispensable to cultivate these qualities. Through the example of the oldest school of military arts in Japan, Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū, the chapter shows what skills a pre-Tokugawa warrior was supposed to master. The example of this school is also used to identify a system of warrior values that has been largely overlooked in the academic literature: The pursuit and practical realization in life of one's humanity through a constant process of *musha shugyō* in which the ultimate goal was to perfect oneself in the art of killing in order to avoid violence.

2.1 The Society of Will

From the Kamakura era to the early 17th century, various warrior documents emphasize the importance of regular training in military arts. The statement that the warrior (*yumitori*) must keep his shape both in terms of physical skills and mental attitudes through constant training in archery can be found in such an early source as the letter of Hōjō Yasutoki (1183-1242), the *shōgun*'s regent in the Kamakura Bakufu, to a military commander Hōjō Tokiuji.[1] Ise Sadachika (1417-1473), at one point the de facto ruler of Japan, admonished his son that the study of fields other than military arts is secondary to study of the two Ways of archery and horsemanship, in which he should train every morning and night without rest.[2] A military commander of the late 16th century, Kuroda Nyosui, called training in military arts such as spearmanship, swordsmanship, archery and horsemanship, "the most fundamental aspect of the

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[1] Appears in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1942, volume 1, p. 231.

[2] From *Gusoku no tame kyōkun issatsu* (*A letter with precepts for my son*, written between 1457 and 1460) by Ise Sadachika (appears in Ozawa 2003, p. 82). "The two Ways of archery and horsemanship" (*kyūba*) in this context might be used just as a euphemism for "military arts" in general.

warrior's life" (*taihon*).[3] It is essential to note that even *bushi* of the highest social standing of this period were expected not just to practice military arts but also to set an example with this practice for their retainers.[4]

In times of incessant wars and unrest, such emphasis on the practice of martial skills was natural. However, besides acquiring combat capabilities for fulfilling the warrior's primary duty on the battlefield, training in military arts fulfilled several other important functions. As mentioned earlier, it was the physical training that made the other fundamental elements of the *bushi* intangible culture work. Warrior training entities functioned as repositories of this culture, providing the means for sustaining and reassuring the warrior's identity through regular "revisiting" of centuries old traditions, i.e., maintaining the vital link with the warrior's past. It is not a coincidence that the warrior training was often referred to in pre-Tokugawa and early Tokugawa-era texts as *keiko*, the original meaning of which is "to think of the past."[5]

Furthermore, the practical realization of virtually all moral values of the *bushi*, be it the paramount concept of loyalty and filial piety or any other virtue, demanded the incessant exercise of self-discipline and will power. As shown earlier in the example of the bodily etiquette, or the proper "content" expressed in the proper "form," such demands were far stricter than in any other stratum of Japanese society. It was self-discipline and will power that determined the practical realization of values peculiar to the *bushi*. Putting aside exceptional cases of individuals who had strong will by birth, self-discipline and will power required intense cultivation. This was achieved through systematic training in military arts based on complex methodologies which had evolved

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[3] *Kuroda Nyosui kyōyu* (*Kuroda Nyosui's precepts*, early 1600s) by Kuroda Nyosui (appears in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1944, *bekkan*, p. 354).

[4] The idea is explicitly stated in, for example, the letter of Hōjō Yasutoki (1183-1242), the *shōgun*'s regent in the Kamakura Bakufu, to a military commander Hōjō Tokiuji (appears in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1942, volume 1, p. 232), *Kuroda Nyosui kyōyu* (*Kuroda Nyosui's precepts*, early 1600s) by Kuroda Nyosui and *Kuroda Nagamasa kahō* (*The house law of Kuroda Nagamasa*, 1622) by Kuroda Nagamasa (appear in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1944, *bekkan*, pp. 353-354, 361-362). A more general mention that a military commander must be an example for his retainers in all aspects of life can be found in *Yoshisada-ki* (*Records of [Nitta] Yoshisada*, first half of the 14th century) appearing in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1942, volume 1, p. 310. Also, see Uozumi 2008, p. 56.

[5] *Budō shinkan* (*Models of the warrior ways*, 1577) by Kōsaka Masanobu (appears in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1942, volume 1, p. 354), *Hosokawa Yūsai oboegaki* (*Records of Hosokawa Yūsai*, late 16th or early 17th century) by Hosokawa Yūsai (appears in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1943, volume 8, p. 225), *Katō Kiyomasa kachū e mōshidasaru nanakajō, dai-shō-shin ni yorazu samurai domo kakugo subeki jōjō* (*Seven items addressed by Katō Kiyomasa to his retainers: Items which all warriors must observe regardless of their rank*, creation date unknown) by Katō Kiyomasa (1562-1611) (appears in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1944, *bekkan*, p. 357), *Ōtomo Yoshimune jōjō kotogaki* (*Itemized rules of Ōtomo Yoshimune*, 1592) by ŌtomoYoshimune (appears in Ozawa 2003, p. 388), *Kuroda Nagamasa chakushi Tadayuki kunkai shojō* (*Kuroda Nagamasa's letter with admonishments to his son Tadayuki*, 1614) by Kuroda Nagamasa (appears in Ozawa 2003, p. 412).

over hundreds of years of history; mere text learning or any other kind of solely mental activity was insufficient.

In this regard, the pre-Tokugawa Japanese warrior class can be called the "society of will." Its members were not military men who exercised self-discipline and will power only when on duty, and made a distinction between "military" and "civil" where their life style was concerned. *Bushi* did not have dualistic notions of "civil" and "military," in the same way as they did not have dualistic notions of "war" and "no-war." A *bushi* was supposed to exercise incessant self-discipline and will power all his life, regardless of his physical or mental condition and as long as he was in possession of his senses. As Daidōji Yūzan explains in his precepts, there was a determined sequence of actions for the *bushi* even in the hour of his death, and the inability to perform this sequence calmly and properly in the time of peace was perceived as a sign that the warrior would be of little use on the battlefield.[6] Yet, this was not an unnatural strain imposed by society on an individual. It was an inner self-cultivation, where the warrior's ultimate responsibility was directed toward himself. It was the kind of values that added to the dignity and self-esteem peculiar to the *bushi* class.

2.2 Martial Skills of the Pre-Tokugawa *Bushi* and the First Formalized Schools of Military Arts

By the 10th-11th centuries, hereditary lines of martial specialists had become firmly fixed, and anyone who wielded a bow or sword without being from a warrior house was widely scorned. The reason for this appears to lie in a social ethos that denigrated the practice of military skills by those who could not comprehend a warrior's honor and customs.[7] Martial skills and the specific mental attitudes which accompanied them, as well as the process and methodologies of training necessary for their acquisition, became the exclusive monopoly of the hereditary warrior houses even before the *bushi* grasped political power in the country.[8] The hereditary character and the narrow martial specialization of these lines also appears to be the reason why warrior houses avoided

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[6] *BS*, pp. 95-97.

[7] Farris 1992, pp. 172-174.

[8] Participation in wars, accompanied by looting and human trafficking, was one of the widespread ways of making one's living among commoners until the dawning of the Great Tokugawa Peace. However, their training usually was not as consistent and methodical as that of the professional warriors and it was not linked with the cultivation of the warrior ethos and values. Furthermore, unlike the *bushi*, the commoners did not train systematically as an organized military force. See Chapter VI for details.

mutual interchange in the field of military skills.

Thus, until about the 14th century, historical mentions of the systematic dissemination of military skills by formally established organizations are scarce. Two of the most famous archers of the Heian era – Tomo no Wataketamarō and Ki no Okimichi – are said to have developed similar archery styles that were passed on to members of the *bushi* class. There were also several noted archers among the military commanders of the Sakanoue clan, especially Tamuramarō, who won fame in campaigns against the Emishi. In later times it was common to speak of the Tomo, Ki, and Sakanoue "schools" of archery, but most scholars do not consider them formalized schools; others regard them as a type of court ceremonial archery, not to be confused with combat skills.[9]

Japanese swordsmanship shows even earlier accounts of organizations which allegedly engaged in the dissemination of sword-related skills. Both academic and popular sources, as well as Japanese swordsmanship histories, often mention that from around the 8th century Shintō priests of Kashima Jingū grand shrine taught swordsmanship. This is sometimes referred to as Jōko-ryū or Chūko-ryū (The Ancient School) or Kashima no Tachi (The Sword of Kashima) which further gave birth to seven schools of swordsmanship called Kashima Shichi-ryū or Kantō Shichi-ryū (all seven may sometimes be generically referred to as Kashima-ryū).[10]

It is not clear whether these Shintō priests had any relation to the hereditary warrior houses. In any event, these accounts seem to be based on what is more a legendary tradition rather than on hard evidence, and Japanese scholars to date have avoided making clear-cut assertions in regard to this topic. Even if such warrior training entities existed, they taught the skills of using the straight sword until around the 10th century A.D., when curved blades were introduced in Japan.[11] It is also worth remembering that these claims are made in regard to the period of Japanese history when the sword was only an auxiliary weapon on the battlefield.

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[9] Friday 1997, p. 13. Hurst 1998, pp. 45, 112.

[10] Hinatsu 1716, p. 52. Shiga 1767, p. 121. Tamon 1841. Minamoto Norinaga 1843, p. 209. Yatagawa and Koike 1906, p. 70. Hori 1934, pp. 33-34, 38, 153-155. Yamada Jirōkichi 1960, p. 18. Imamura et al. 1966, volume 2, pp. 235-237; 1982, volume 3, p. 5. Imamura 1971, pp. 14-15, 18. Watatani and Yamada 1978, pp. 208, 437-438. Tominaga Kengo 1972, pp. 31-33. Ishioka et al. 1980, pp. 15, 26-27, 53-54. Tsumoto 1983, p. 204. Kensei Tsukahara Bokuden Seitan Gohyakunen-sai Kinen Jigyō Jikkō Iinkai 1989, pp. 16-17, 48. Maebayashi 1992, p. 52. Shinjimbutsu Ōraisha 1994, pp. 50, 53. Friday 1997, pp. 19-24. Hurst 1998, p. 47. Yokose 2000, pp. 12-13, 26-27. Asakura Kazuyoshi 2005, p. 128. Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2005, pp. 17-18; 2006, p. 21; 2008, p. 6. Nippon Budōkan 2008, p. 105. Hinatsu Shigetaka (1716, p. 11) and Shiga Yoshinobu (1767, p. 113) also mention "the divine warriors of Kashima and Katori [grand shrines]" in regard to the origins of Japanese military strategy (Shiga apparently cites Hinatsu's words related to the Kashima swordsmanship and strategy).

[11] Ōtake 2007, pp. 27, 30.

Apart from the Kantō region, we also encounter such terms as Kyō Hachi-ryū (Eight Swordsmanship Schools of Kyōto), Kyō-ryū (The Kyōto School), or Kurama Hachi-ryū (Eight Swordsmanship Schools of the Kurama area) which are said to have been transmitted by Buddhist monks and other individuals from Kyōto. These relate to much later ages, most probably around the 12th century, because they are often associated with the military commander Minamoto no Yoshitsune. However, there is no information about the founders of these schools and their lineages, and it has been suggested that these terms were merely exploited for fame and gain by later generations of swordsmen of the Kansai region.[12]

The earliest attempt to transmit martial skills (apparently with the emphasis on cold steel) through a formally established "school" (*ryū*), most commonly referred to as Nen-ryū, is attributed to a monk and ex-warrior of the 14th century called Jion, also known as Nen Ami (1350-?).[13] There are also accounts of Chūjō-ryū, which traces its lineage back to Chūjō Nagahide (?-1384). Nagahide allegedly studied both sword and spear with Jion and later formed Chūjō-ryū, a school combining techniques learned from Jion with his own family tradition of martial skills – the family was based in Kamakura and held important posts in the Bakufu. After several generations of the Chūjō family, the school was inherited by the Toda family and since then it may be referred to as both Chūjō-ryū and Toda-ryū.[14]

However, neither of the above schools survived to our times in their original form.

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[12] Hinatsu 1716, p. 52. Tamon 1841. Minamoto Norinaga 1843, pp. 192, 201-203. Shimokawa 1925, p. 157. Hori 1934, pp. 38, 55. Yamada Jirōkichi 1960, p. 16. Tominaga Kengo 1972, pp. 31-33, 41-43. Watatani and Yamada 1978, pp. 213, 228. Ishioka et al. 1980, pp. 15-16. Kensei Tsukahara Bokuden Seitan Gohyakunen-sai Kinen Jigyō Jikkō Iinkai 1989, p. 17. Shinjimbutsu Ōraisha 1994, p. 50. Yokose 2000, pp. 12-13. Asakura Kazuyoshi 2005, p. 128.

[13] Hinatsu 1716, p. 63. Shiga 1767, p. 123. Hori 1934, p. 54. Yamada Jirōkichi 1960, pp. 25-26. Watanabe Ichirō 1967b, p. 41. Imamura 1971, p. 138. Watatani 1971, pp. 16-17. Tominaga Kengo 1972, pp. 31, 35. Watatani and Yamada 1978, pp. 683-685. Ishioka et al. 1980, pp. 89-90. Kōdansha 1983, p. 162. Waterhouse 1996, pp. 28-30. Yokose 2000, pp. 38-39.

[14] Hinatsu 1716, pp. 63-66. Shiga 1767, p. 123. Hatori et al. 1843, pp. 159-160. Minamoto Norinaga 1843, pp. 212-213. Shimokawa 1925, pp. 158, 203-204. Hori 1934, pp. 38-39, 54, 177. Yamada Jirōkichi 1960, pp. 23, 25-27. Watatani 1971, p. 18. Tominaga Kengo 1972, pp. 31, 38-39. Watatani and Yamada 1978, p. 574. Ishioka et al. 1980, pp. 16, 46-47, 90. Kōdansha 1983, pp. 145, 161-162. Shinjimbutsu Ōraisha 1994, pp. 58-61. Waterhouse 1996, p. 30. Hurst 1998, p. 50. Yokose 2000, p. 69. It is also possible to see accounts of a certain Oda-ryū allegedly established by a military commander Oda Takatomo (1337-1414) who studied swordsmanship under either Chūjō Nagahide's grandfather Yorihira or Nagahide himself (Hatori et al. 1843, p. 161. Hori 1934, pp. 39, 177. Yamada Jirōkichi 1960, pp. 24-25. Watatani 1971, p. 18. Tominaga Kengo 1972, p. 38, Watatani and Yamada 1978, pp. 157-158. Ishioka et al. 1980, pp. 15-16). However, regardless of the source, Oda-ryū's description is always limited to just a few lines of vague information and it is unclear whether this school existed or it was just a kind of "style" which was claimed by the Oda family but which was not taught to outsiders.

Furthermore, there is a confusion and uncertainty over some of the most basic facts of the lives of both Jion and Chūjō Nagahide, and of their school lineages.[15] There are only legends and no historical materials on Jion, and as Japanese swordsmanship historian Tominaga Kengo noted, Jion's biography, appearing in various sources, more resembles a plot from the Kōdan popular storytelling.[16] Presently, scholars regard Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū, established by Iizasa Chōisai in the middle of the 15th century, as the oldest attested military arts school in Japan.[17]

The establishment of a formalized school lineage meant that it was supposed to teach techniques that would allow a smaller or weaker opponent to defeat a superior one, or how to use efficiently shorter weapons against longer ones; therein lay the value of such a technical system for someone seeking to learn martial skills.[18] The founder himself had to possess exceptional combat capabilities in order to maintain his school through all the challenges of a time of incessant wars. Such individuals were rare and this is the reason why there were few formalized schools of military arts in Japan before the peaceful Tokugawa era. For the founder, it also meant bearing grave responsibility for the lives of his disciples because they depended on his teaching, in the same way as the life of a swordsman depends in part on the skill of a blacksmith who made his sword.

Finally, as some scholars have already noted, the founder had to possess an

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15 Watatani 1971, pp. 16-18. Tominaga Kengo 1972, pp. 35-37. Watatani and Yamada 1978, pp. 573-574, 683-685. Kōdansha 1983, p. 145. Waterhouse 1996, p. 28.

16 Tominaga Kengo 1972, p. 36. See also Ishioka et al. 1980, p. 89.

17 Imamura 1982, p. 12. Hurst 1998, p. 46. The same recognition is made by the Association of Japanese Old Military Arts (Nihon Kobudō Kyōkai) and the Association for the Preservation of Japanese Old Military Arts (Nihon Kobudō Shinkōkai), the former operating under the auspices of the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (Mombu Kagakushō). These two organization hold regular demonstrations at Nippon Budōkan arena, Meiji Jingū shrine, Asakusa Riverside Sports Center, Itsukushima Jinja shrine and other places, during which Shintō-ryū is introduced as "the oldest military arts school in Japan" (*Nihon saiko no bujutsu*) and/or "the root of the Japanese old military traditions" (*Nihon bujutsu no genryū*). Japanese secondary sources on the native military arts, and particularly swordsmanship, never fail to mention Shintō-ryū. Some examples are: Hinatsu 1716; Shiga 1767; Tamon 1841. Hatori et al. 1843; Minamoto Norinaga 1843; Nakazato 1933; Imamura 1971; Ishioka et al. 1980; Kōdansha 1983; Tsumoto 1983; Akita Shoten 1987; Watanabe Ichirō 1996; Yokose 1997, 2000; Hurst 1998; BAB Japan 2003; Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2005, 2008; Nippon Budōkan 2008. Tamon Masahisa (1841) mentions that Iizasa Chōisai was "the first in the distant past" (*biso*) to transmit military arts in the form of a "school lineage" (*ryūgi*) using the "school name" (*ryūmei*). It should be noted that sometimes Ogasawara-ryū (archery, beginning of the 13th century) and Ōtsubo-ryū (horsemanship, end of the 14th – beginning of the 15th century) are mentioned as the first "schools" of military arts (Imamura 1982, p. 12, Nakabayashi 1988a, p. 16, note 2). However, there is no established theory in regard to the period of their birth and the above dates may well reflect the time when they were not formalized yet as "schools." What is more important, they were not military but ceremonial. See the discussion of their character in Nishiyama 1982, pp. 261-262.

18 Tominaga Kengo 1972, p. 31. Ishioka et al. 1980, p. 14. Hurst 1998, p. 51.

outstanding mind.[19] Besides the development of superb techniques in the art of killing, he also had to create a distinctive and extremely complex methodology of teaching, codify the techniques in predetermined patterns of movement (*kata*), lay the foundations for the continuity of his lineage through generations, and at the same time develop methods that would preserve the secrecy and integrity of his system. What scholars have overlooked, however, is the direct correlation between such an extraordinary mind and its claims that the system of martial skills came from Shintō or Buddhist deities. A link with deities was emphasized not just for the sake of enhancing the value of a school, as, for example, Cameron Hurst maintains,[20] although this kind of exploitation could have had its place, especially among school founders of the peaceful Tokugawa era. The workings of the mind of a genius could have been perceived by its possessor as a kind of divine revelation, hence the references to Shintō or Buddhist deities.

Iizasa Chōisai, founder of Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū, was born in 1387 into a family of rural warriors (*gōshi*) in Iizasa village in Shimōsa province. It is said that, from an early age, he excelled in the arts of sword and spear, and his renown spread far and wide. For a long time he served the Chiba clan. Some time after the downfall of the Chiba clan in 1455, Iizasa Chōisai released his retainers from service. Already advanced in years, he donated 1,000 *koku* to Katori Jingū grand shrine and secluded himself in an area of the shrine's grounds, praying to the god Futsunushi no Ōkami, purifying himself through fasting and ablutions, and engaging in austere training in military arts for 1,000 days and nights. The school tradition has it that Futsunushi no Ōkami, in the form of a small boy, appeared to Iizasa Chōisai atop an old Japanese plum tree and presented him with a divine scroll on the warrior arts.[21] According to the 6th headmaster of the school, Iizasa Ōi no Kami Morishige,[22] the date when Futsunushi no Ōkami bestowed his

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[19] Watanabe Ichirō 1972, p. 646. Imamura 1982, pp. 11, 43. Kōdansha 1983, p. 115. Nakabayashi 1988a, p. 5. Hurst 1998, pp. 51, 195. Tanaka Mamoru 1999, p. 221. Sakai Toshinobu 2005, p. 289.

[20] Hurst 1998, p. 51.

[21] Hinatsu 1716, p. 52. Hatori et al. 1843, p. 158. Minamoto Norinaga 1843, p. 204. Seimiya 1877, the reverse side of page 15. Shimokawa 1925, pp. 198-199. Hori 1934, pp. 167-168. Yamada Jirōkichi 1960, pp. 27-29. Imamura et al. 1966, volume 2, pp. 238-239. Tominaga Kengo 1972, pp. 33-34. Ōtake 1977, volume 1, p. 16; 1979, p. 26; 1981, p. 22; 2007, pp. 8-11. Ishioka et al. 1980, p. 28. Chiba Sōgo Ginkō 1981, p. 104. Kendō Nihon 1981, p. 49. Imamura et al. 1982, volume 3, pp. 8-9. Reid and Croucher 1983, pp. 120-121. Kōdansha 1983, p. 144. Tsumoto 1983, p. 204. Akita Shoten 1987, p. 159. Ōmori Nobumasa 1991, p. 227. Shinjimbutsu Ōraisha 1994, pp. 50-52. Nihon Kobudō Kyōkai 1997, p 83. Iizasa 2000, p. 19. Yokose 2000, p. 13. Asakura Kazuyoshi 2005, pp. 128-129. Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2005, pp. 8-9; 2008, pp. 6-7. Nippon Budōkan 2008, p. 170.

[22] The exact dates of birth and death of Iizasa Ōi no Kami Morishige are not known but his life coincided with the Keichō-Kan'ei periods (1596-1644).

teaching on Chōisai is 1468/5/2.[23]

An interesting point is that, although general descriptive works on Japanese military arts that appeared in the Tokugawa era give accounts of Nen-ryū and Chūjō-ryū (which if they actually existed were supposed to be older than Shintō-ryū), it is Chōisai, who is called a "revolutionary" (*chūkō*, or *chūkō no so*) of Japanese swordsmanship and spearmanship.[24] Moreover, neither representatives of Kashima nor the Kansai-related swordsmanship organizations discussed above, and none of the other founders of schools centered around cold steel, are referred to in this way.[25] This is also true of the 16th century founders of the other two among the three root lineages of Japanese swordsmanship, Itō Ittōsai (Ittō-ryū) and Kōizumi Ise no Kami (Shinkage-ryū).[26] The term "revolutionary" is also used to refer to Chōisai by some scholars, swordsmanship historians, and other authors of secondary sources.[27] Basing his opinion on an extensive

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[23] From *Shintō-ryū heihō sho* (*A writing on the military arts of Shintō-ryū*) written by Iizasa Ōi no Kami Morishige (preserved in the Iizasa family archives. Appears in Imamura et al. 1966, volume 2, p. 253; Imamura et al. 1982, volume 3, p. 15). The date in the document is *Ōan ninen* (1369) which is almost 20 years before Iizasa Chōisai's birth and is an apparent mistake. The only era name between the downfall of the Chiba clan in 1455 and Chōisai's death in 1488, which has one of the characters of the mistaken date, is *Ōnin*, and *Ōnin ninen* (the second year of the *Ōnin* era) corresponds to 1468. For an unexplained reason, William Bodiford (2005, p. 174) puts this document as "hand-copied" (*hissha*) by Iizasa Ōi no Kami Morishige. There is no indication that it was just a copy of some other document written earlier. It was hand-written by Morishige and has his signature.

[24] Hinatsu 1716, p. 52. Shiga 1767, p. 121. Tamon 1841. Hatori et al. 1843, p. 158. Minamoto Norinaga 1843, p. 204. Also, see *Nihon bujutsu shoryū shū* (*A collection of names of Japanese military arts schools*, 1856). The original meaning of *chūko* or *chūko no so* is "reviver" of something declining or on the brink of extinction. However, the translation "revolutionary" fits this particular case because Japanese military arts could not show decline in the period of incessant wars.

[25] The only exception appears to be Hayashizaki Jinsuke who is referred to as "the revolutionary of *battōjutsu*" of the second half of the 16th century as discussed in Chapter I (Hinatsu 1716, p. 89. Shiga 1767, p. 129. Hatori et al. 1843, p. 166). However, the proclamation of such a narrow skill as *battōjutsu* (or *iaijutsu*) as a "school" can not be compared to Chōisai's establishment of a comprehensive and universal system which included *battōjutsu* among many other items of the warrior skills. Hayashizaki is apparently referred to as the "revolutionary of *battōjutsu*" in appreciation of the fact that he was the first one to separate this extremely narrow skill from the others. The technical curriculum of Shintō-ryū will be discussed further in this chapter.

[26] Shintō-ryū, Ittō-ryū, and Shinkage-ryū are usually referred to as the three root lineages of Japanese swordsmanship, although Shintō-ryū has never specialized in swordsmanship only and the two other lineages probably also transmitted other arts before the Tokugawa era. Depending on the source, sometimes the lineages from which Ittō-ryū and Shinkage-ryū are said to have sprung are counted among the "three root lineages." Nen-ryū, Chūjō-ryū or Toda-ryū, discussed above, may appear instead of Ittō-ryū, and Kage-ryū may appear instead of Shinkage-ryū.

[27] Kitamura 1830, p. 105. Shimokawa 1925, p. 158. Hori 1934, pp. 54, 168. Yamada Jirōkichi 1960, pp. 27-28. Imamura 1971, p. 13. Tominaga Kengo 1972, p. 33. Watanabe Ichirō 1972, p. 645. Kendō Nihon 1981, p. 49. Kōdansha 1983, p. 115. Ōmori Nobumasa 1991, p. 227. Asakura Kazuyoshi 2005, p. 128. Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2005, p. 13.

investigation of secondary sources, a renowned scholar in the field of the history of Japanese military arts, Imamura Yoshio, noted that "it seems that there is no controversy over the fact that from the end of the medieval ages (*chūseimatsu*) to the early modern times (*kinsei*) [Iizasa Chōisai] Ienao was the revolutionary of the arts of sword and spear."[28] However, no clear explanation of why Chōisai is described in this way has yet been provided.

Shintō-ryū, a school transmitting a vast curriculum of skills of using the human body in close-quarters combat, appeared in the middle of the Muromachi era, the period when battlefield tactics in Japan shifted from mounted archery to ground combat requiring mainly the usage of swords, spears, glaives, and other bladed weapons.[29] This is not to say that the techniques of using these weapons were unknown to the *bushi* before the Muromachi era: Mention of the names of, for example, specific swordsmanship techniques can be found in literary sources of the Heian, Kamakura and Nambokuchō eras.[30] Chōisai, however, appears to have been the first one to create a comprehensive system which was a summarization of the best close-quarters combat skills of the *bushi*. These skills were further refined so that the sole emphasis was laid on the techniques that gave a less powerful warrior an ability to prevail against a stronger opponent.[31]

The technical system was not his only innovation. Chōisai formalized it by adopting the notion of "school "lineage" (*ryū*) which was becoming a common mode of artistic transmission in painting, music, theatre, and other fields at the time. Such formalization was most likely aimed at the preservation of Chōisai's spiritual and technical legacy through the ages by its "materialization" in the form of a "school" which existed independently and was separated from the influences of larger warrior clans.[32] It also meant that for the first time the *bushi* martial skills were made "visible" and available for study by the broader strata of society.[33]

However, as far as Shintō-ryū is concerned, the application of the notion of "school lineage" to *bushi* martial skills did not mean that these skills were given an abstract artistic meaning, removed from the reality of combat and practiced for their own sake as

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[28] Imamura et al. 1982, volume 3, p. 5.

[29] Hiroi 1971, p. 99. Friday 2005, pp. 75-76.

[30] Shimokawa 1925, pp. 148-150. Imamura 1971, p. 235. Imamura et al. 1982, volume 3, p. 5. Kōdansha 1983, p. 113. Tsumoto 1983, p. 203; Sasama 1985a p. 32. Hurst 1998, pp. 34-35.

[31] BAB Japan 2003, p. 14. Ōtake 2007, pp. 26-27.

[32] Unlike other schools, the Iizasa family did not use Shintō-ryū for financial gain. The school's headmasters were prohibited from the *daimyō* service and, from generation to generation, the family forged its livelihood as rural warriors (*gōshi*) by farming. See the discussion below.

[33] Since the time of its establishment, Shintō-ryū accepted disciples from all strata of the society. See the discussion below.

some authors maintain.[34] Chōisai also introduced a new methodology of training in the highly sophisticated prearranged practice of handling weapons in pairs (*kata*), where each move was designed to kill or mortally wound. Long sequences of movements had to be performed at lightning speed and with unfailing accuracy. Although wooden imitations of weapons were used, even such a prearranged training was extremely dangerous because they moved very fast at close proximity to the face and body which were not covered with protectors. A brief lapse in concentration that upset the precision and rhythm of movements meant, at the least, a painful blow. The movements of these *kata* covered nearly all imaginable actions that can be made with a weapon, while those not covered would almost certainly be worthless. The true value of such training lay not only in the way in which it attuned the disciple by sharpening his reactions, improving his balance, timing, speed and precision, but essentially in instilling a sense of self-control and discipline in him.[35]

Historical sources are devoid of mentions about the concrete methods of training in handling cold steel among the *bushi* prior to Iizasa Chōisai. Most likely paired and unpaired predetermined patterns of movement were unknown. Miura Jōshin (1565-1644), a former retainer of Hōjō Ujimasa, praised Chōisai in the following way (emphasis added):

> … From the time that a resident of Kashima[36] Iizasa Yamashiro no Kami Ienao[37] introduced his <u>method of training</u> in military arts (*heihō shugyō*), it spread everywhere. This man is the <u>founder [of military arts] which have been elevated to a new level</u> (*chūko no kaisan*).[38]

Thus, it can be said that there were at least three reasons why Chōisai was called a "revolutionary" of the Japanese military arts: The invention of skills of handling various types of weapons which were much more sophisticated in comparison with those of the preceding ages; their codification in predetermined patterns of movement; and the

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34 Hurst 1998, p. 45. Friday 2005.

35 From observations of training in Shintō-ryū by anthropologist Howard Reid and his colleague Michael Croucher appearing in Reid and Croucher 1983, pp. 119-120, 125-126, 129, 134. Also, see Akita Shoten 1987, p. 160; Takeuchi Kaishirō 1998, p. 62; Tsumoto 1983, p. 210; Yokose 2000, pp. 15-16; Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2005, pp. 9-10; Ōtake 2007, pp. 26-27.

36 Mistake of the original document. Should be Katori.

37 Iizasa Yamashiro no Kami Ienao – Ienao is Iizasa Chōisai's first name, and Yamashiro no Kami is his honorary court title.

38 Cited from Hinatsu 1716, p. 52. Also cited by scholars in such works as Imamura et al. 1966, volume 2, p. 238, and Imamura et al. 1982, volume 3, p. 5. Hinatsu Shigetaka refers to Miura's writing as *Sōun-ki*. However, the correct title is *Hōjō godai-ki* (*Records of five generations of the Hōjō family*, early 17th century).

pioneering of the application of the "school lineage" notion to combat skills, or, more precisely in the case of Shintō-ryū, to the comprehensive system of military skills and training transmitted in a hereditary warrior family.

It should be noted that some Japanese authors have come to stress the uniqueness of training in predetermined patterns of movement in Japanese military arts, apparently lacking a clear understanding of their development in time and space.[39] What they overlook is the fact that such methods of training were practiced in China at least from the 2nd century B.C., i.e., about 1,600 years before Iizasa Chōisai introduced the same methods in Japan.[40] The reason why, among so many borrowings from the continent in the field of military affairs, Japanese failed either to import or to adapt these methods of training early in their history is another topic worthy of a separate investigation.[41]

From the technical curriculum of Shintō-ryū we can make reasonable assumptions about military skills transmitted in pre-Tokugawa hereditary warrior houses. First of all, Shintō-ryū should not be referred to as a "swordsmanship school" as some authors suggest.[42] The school has never had the term "swordsmanship" in its name and it has never specialized in a single kind of martial skill. Swordsmanship alone was not enough to survive on the medieval battlefield. The curriculum of Shintō-ryū includes skills in handling not only the long sword, but also the short sword, simultaneous handling of the long and short swords, staff, glaive, spear, unarmed combat, spike throwing, and many others.[43]

Besides the wide range of combat skills, Shintō-ryū also taught, and continues to teach, knowledge applicable to all aspects of life during peace and war, such as astrology and topography, castle and field fortifications, military strategy and tactics, *ninjutsu*,[44] interpretation and divination using *yin* and *yang* of Chinese philosophy,

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39 Nakabayashi 1988a, 1988c. Maebayashi 2006.

40 Fujiwara 1990, p. 740.

41 An interesting subtopic of such an inquiry into the Japanese bodily culture would be why striking and kicking arts, and especially kicking techniques, were underdeveloped in Japan compared to those of China, Korea, and Okinawa.

42 Hurst 1998, Yokose 2000, Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2008, Nippon Budōkan 2008.

43 Ōtake 1977, vol. 1, p. 18; 1981, p. 22; 2007, pp. 22-23, 60. Chiba Sōgo Ginkō 1981, p. 104. Kendō Nihon 1983, p. 49. Reid and Croucher 1983, p. 118. Tsumoto 1983, p. 204. Shinjimbutsu Ōraisha 1994, p. 52. Nihon Kobudō Kyōkai 1997, p 83. Takeuchi Kaishirō 1998, p. 62. Iizasa 2000, p. 19. Yokose 2000, pp. 11, 13, 18. Asakura Kazuyoshi 2005, p. 129. Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2005, p. 9; 2008, p. 38. Nippon Budōkan 2008, pp. 106-107, 170. The school originally also had horsemanship, archery, and swimming.

44 In regard to *ninjutsu*, it should be noted that it is transmitted in Shintō-ryū not as a skill, but only as knowledge of how persons of this profession are trained and used and how to protect oneself against them. Contrary to the modern popular and romanticized image of *ninja* that has become so widespread after the proliferation of *ninja*-mania both in Japan and outside since about the second

magical arts incorporated from esoteric Buddhism and other fields, geomancy, medical knowledge, and many more.[45]

The list of military skills of pre-Tokugawa hereditary warrior houses rarely appears in the surviving historical materials and Shintō-ryū offers an invaluable example whose main characteristic is martial universality, in other words, a curriculum designed to develop the ability to handle all kinds of weapons and understand all kinds of military situations.[46] A rare case of a medieval *bushi* family record which only mentions a similar broad curriculum, including esoteric practices and practical knowledge, is *Yoshisada-ki* of the first half of the 14th century.[47] Here, the description of military skills and sciences is very brief and superficial. Instead, it contains numerous references to the existence of *kuden* (oral secret teachings) leaving the most important part of the warrior know-how to interpersonal transmission. It should be noted that the quantity of military skills did not mean shallowness in their mastery. The warrior was supposed to be equally skillful in all kinds of military arts. However, this does not mean that the warrior had to begin from scratch every time he learned a new type of skill. The underlying principles of the usage of the human body were the same.[48] This was true as long as they were transmitted and learned within the same warrior training entity.

The example of Shintō-ryū should also clarify some misconceptions in regard to the pre-Tokugawa *bushi* martial skills and schools of military arts which are seen in the academic literature. For example, Cameron Hurst maintains that the formation of schools of swordsmanship (he includes Shintō-ryū in this classification) occurred

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half of the 20th century, *ninjutsu* was a kind of "dirty work" similar to the one performed by modern hired killers. Needless to say, *ninjutsu* was not practiced by the *bushi* who despised this profession and its representatives. Modern *ninja*-mania had its impact even on scholars such as, for example, Nishiyama Matsunosuke, who maintains that *ninjutsu* was practiced by the *bushi* of the Tokugawa (!) era as an additional special skill (Nishiyama Matsunosuke 1982, p. 259). Linda Spalding in her work on *jidaigeki* of the pre-WWII period (1992, p. 135-136) mentions films that feature "heroes who vanquish their opponents through *ninjutsu*, a magic art that enables them to assume the forms of supernatural beings or render themselves invisible." Albeit quite sophisticated, historically, such "dirty work" as *ninjutsu* was not associated with "heroes."

45 Ōtake 1977, volume 1, p. 18; 1981, p. 22; 2007, pp. 22-23, 232-275. Chiba Sōgo Ginkō 1981, p. 104. Kendō Nihon 1983, p. 49. Reid and Croucher, 1983, pp. 120, 140-141, 146-147. Tsumoto 1983, p. 204. Asakura Kōtarō 1993, p. 111. Shinjimbutsu Ōraisha 1994, pp. 52-53. Nihon Kobudō Kyōkai 1997, p 83. Takeuchi Kaishirō 1998, p. 62. Iizasa 2000, p. 19. Yokose 2000, pp. 11, 13, 15, 18. Asakura Kazuyoshi 2005, pp. 128-129. Nippon Budōkan 2008, pp. 106-107, 170.

46 Another rare example of a school that still transmits a very broad range of the *bushi* military skills is Takenouchi-ryū Jūjutsu established in 1532. See Yokose 2000, pp. 155-183.

47 *Yoshisada-ki* appearing in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1942, volume 1, pp. 309-310, 312-315, 322-323, 326-327. A rare example of a broad curriculum of military skills that survived into the late Tokugawa era is the 19th century *Bugaku keimō* (*Education in military science*) by Rikimaru Tōzan (appears in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1942, volume 5, pp. 234- 235, 258-261).

48 Yokose 2000, p. 18. In the case of Shintō-ryū, see Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2008, p. 12.

primarily under the influence of Zen Buddhist philosophy.[49] However, as the first "school" of military arts in Japanese history, Shintō-ryū has been intimately connected with the Shingon sect of Buddhism and in no way with Zen.[50] In some works one can find assertions that the development of skills of handling blades, particularly swordsmanship, was directly related to the introduction of gunnery to Japan because it facilitated the shift from mounted battle to ground combat.[51] However, such a viewpoint is untenable since Shintō-ryū, a school in which, among all kinds of medieval weapons, the handling of the long sword plays a central role, and in which training starts from mastering the armored mode of swordsmanship,[52] appeared almost a century before the first guns were brought by Portuguese to Japan in 1543.

Finally, some scholars have come to negate the practical value and contemporary relevance of the skills transmitted in pre-Tokugawa schools of military arts. For example, Karl Friday, pointing to the fact that tens of thousands of men were deployed for battles, noted that the practice of military skills within formalized schools before the Tokugawa era was a "special activity," an "anachronism" in which only a handful of warriors engaged.[53] It is true that the number of practitioners of skills of certain schools was small. But the first problem with such an assertion is that, leaving it as it is, Friday creates an impression that there was no other way for the *bushi* to acquire systematic martial skills except by entering a formalized school. This is a typical misconception among authors in this field. In reality, the formalized schools were only the tip of the iceberg of military skills and training methodologies transmitted in the hereditary warrior houses and, putting aside substantial numbers of commoners mobilized mostly

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[49] Hurst 1998, p. 45.

[50] William Bodiford (2005, pp. 159-160) suggests that Shintō-ryū was connected with the Sōtō Zen. He bases his assumption on the fact that the Iizasa family was a patron of Shimpukuji temple which belonged to this sect as well as on the fact that *Shintō-ryū heihō sho* (*A writing on the military arts of Shintō-ryū*) written by the 6th headmaster of the school, Iizasa Ōi no Kami Morishige, contains a few Zen terms. This is an extreme exaggeration. Bodiford seems to be unaware of the fact that, late in his life, the founder of Shintō-ryū, Iizasa Chōisai, established Jifukuji temple whose principal image is Jizō Bosatsu and which belongs to the esoteric sect of Shingon (presently, a stone monument commemorating the establisher, Chōisai, can be found on the precincts of this temple). The fact that members of the Iizasa family were one-time parishioners of Shimpukuji should not be used as evidence of the connection between Shintō-ryū and Zen. Bodiford does not mention that besides a few Zen terms in Morishige's writing, there are also terms coming from esoteric Buddhism, and that this writing includes a description of practices based on the usage of *A-Un* and other Sanskrit characters which is typical to esoteric Buddhism.

[51] Tominaga Kengo 1972, pp. 47-53. Watanabe Ichirō 1972, p. 645. Ōmori Nobumasa 1974, pp. 67, 72. Imamura 1982, pp. 8-10. Kōdansha 1983, p. 113. Hurst 1998, pp. 37-39.

[52] Reid and Croucher 1983, p. 126. Ōtake 2007, p. 22; 2009d, p. 46. Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2005, p. 9; 2008, p. 12.

[53] Friday 2005, pp. 74-75.

for war logistics, the professional warriors included in the above man-count received extensive and systematic instruction from their childhood.[54] Without systematic training, the hereditary warrior lineages as such simply could not survive for generations.

When it comes to labeling the formalized schools centered around cold steel as an "anachronism," Friday explains that they appeared in the time when battlefield tactics in Japan changed from individual to group combat, and individual martial skills taught by the formalized schools were irrelevant to what was expected from fighting men who had to act as an organized force. He emphasizes that this was particularly so with the sword which was never a key weapon on the battlefield. He went as far as to state that the pre-Tokugawa founders of schools of military arts, including Iizasa Chōisai, used anachronistic military tools, impracticable in war in their time, to pursue "something" removed from reality, in other words, to engage in abstract self-development. He compares them to a marine rifleman and an Olympic shooting sportsman, where the latter uses a specially designed (read, impractical in actual combat) weapon to engage in training aimed at achieving the utmost mastery of the skill under a particular set of artificial circumstances.[55] The overall conclusion is that such training was not a unique feature of military arts schools of the peaceful Tokugawa era but appeared already in the schools established earlier.

Friday is not the only one who makes such conclusions. The argument of Nakamura Toshio, Ōtsuka Tadayoshi, Yuasa Akira, and Suzuki Masaya is much the same.[56] In this, their primary evidence is battlefield wound statistics from various historical periods which show that wounds inflicted by the bladed weapons were few compared to those inflicted by projectile weapons. Some scholars also cite Ko'idegiri Ichiun's words appearing in *Sekiun-ryū kenjutsu sho* (*A writing on swordsmanship of Sekiun-ryū*, 1686) that *bushi* did not engage in military arts training before the dawning of the Great Tokugawa Peace simply because they were too busy at war.[57]

In the case of Ko'idegiri Ichiun, his swordsmanship school, Sekiun-ryū, presents an

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[54] The mention that the warrior must start training in military arts from early childhood can be found, for example, in *Ōtomo-ke seidō no koto* (*About the Way of Government of the Ōtomo family*, ca. 1542) by the powerful Kyūshū *daimyō* Ōtomo Yoshishige (appears in Ozawa 2003, p. 381). Takeuchi Tōjūrō, the present headmaster of Takenouchi-ryū Jūjutsu, which is a comprehensive military arts school established in 1532, started to train when he was four years old (Yokose 2000, p. 170).

[55] Friday 2005, pp. 56, 81.

[56] Nakamura Toshio 1981, pp. 167-169. Ōtsuka 1995, pp. 3-4. Suzuki Masaya 2000, pp. 75-86. Yuasa Akira 2000b, p. 27.

[57] Nishiyama Matsunosuke 1982, p. 268. Ōtsuka 1995, p. 3.

extreme example of the "flowery training" of the early Tokugawa era which is confirmed by the study of scholar Maebayashi Kiyokazu.[58] Ko'idegiri's writings are not reliable in regard to the training of pre-Tokugawa *bushi*. The fact is that pre-Tokugawa *bushi* did train and, contrary to Karl Friday's argument that it was only from the Tokugawa era that *bushi* devoted much more time to military arts training,[59] methodologies of the hereditary warrior houses presumed many years of exhaustive training which had to begin from early childhood so that, by the time *bushi* reached adulthood, they could become a full-fledged military force.[60]

When it comes to the battlefield wound statistics, one should be cautious about taking them at their face value without due attention to the peculiarities of *bushi* bodily practices, as well as such primary materials as warrior house rules and precepts of the time. Indeed, viewed simply, they inevitably lead one to conclude that group tactics were more important than individual combat skills, and that the *bushi* of the time were a kind of "cannon fodder" for projectile weapons.

The natural question then is why, for example, the 16th century military commanders and *daimyō*s wrote house rules and precepts which are consistent in calling upon their subordinates to train earnestly in all kinds of individual combat skills. As mentioned earlier, Kuroda Nyosui emphasized the importance of acquiring all kinds of skills such as spearmanship, swordsmanship, archery and horsemanship, calling these military arts "the most fundamental aspect of the warrior's life." Hosokawa Yūsai mentioned various kinds of training necessary for efficient handling of the spear on the battlefield.[61] Katō Kiyomasa urged his retainers, regardless of their rank, to wake up early in the morning (*tora no koku*, between 3 and 5 am), practice close-quarters combat skills (*heihō*), have breakfast and, only after that, train in archery, gunnery and horsemanship.[62] Ōtomo Yoshishige, a powerful Kyūshū *daimyō*, called the arts of archery, swordsmanship, and

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58 Maebayashi Koyokazu 1992, 1999.

59 Friday 2005, p. 82.

60 Earlier, I have already provided an example of the 16th century warrior house rules (*Ōtomo-ke seidō no koto*, ca. 1542, by Ōtomo Yoshishige) mentioning that the warrior must start training in military arts from early childhood. As will be mentioned in Chapter IV, even in the late Tokugawa era, some *bushi* began training in swordsmanship from the age of nine or ten. In special cases, it could even be the age of four.

61 *Hosokawa Yūsai oboegaki* (*Records of Hosokawa Yūsai*, late 16th or early 17th century) appearing in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1943, volume 8, p. 217.

62 *Katō Kiyomasa kachū e mōshidasaru nanakajō, dai-shō-shin ni yorazu samurai domo kakugo subeki jōjō* (*Seven items addressed by Katō Kiyomasa to his retainers: Items which all warriors must observe regardless of their rank*, creation date unknown) by Katō Kiyomasa (1562-1611) (appears in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1944, *bekkan*, p. 356).

spearmanship the "corner stone" of the warrior houses (*buke yōsū*).[63]

It is essential to stress that these were not the documents of formalized schools of military arts which might be blamed for pursuing their own agendas. They were written by the top individuals of warrior society for whom only the final result bore importance, and whose decisions influenced both the outcome of large-scale battles and the destiny of whole domains. If extensive training in close-quarters combat skills was irrelevant to the warfare of the time, one would expect them to encourage their retainers to concentrate on handling projectile weapons and participate exclusively in group military manoeuvres, and not waste time for impractical matters.

Given the remoteness of the historical periods in question, the battlefield wound statistics employed by some authors are unlikely to be precise and cover all types of medieval combat. Projectile weapons of the time in question could not be efficiently used, for example, after breaking through the castle defenses and fighting within the castle's interior. There could be many other situations requiring proficiency in close-quarters combat. Furthermore, the battlefield was not the only place where pre-Tokugawa *bushi* fought. For them, the life outside the battlefield, when they did not wear armor, was also full of dangers, and the examples of daily self-defense measures as well as *iaijutsu* discussed in the previous chapter, demonstrates this clearly. It is reasonable to assume that long and short swords were used most often in combat outside the battlefield.

Put simply, the problem is not which kind of weapon was used more often and required more training than the others. The first axiom of the pre-Tokugawa *bushi* was that he had to be proficient in all kinds of military arts and handle a wide range of distances associated with various kinds of weapons because the actual combat was unpredictable. Scholars who negate the value of *bushi* individual combat skills also miss the fundamental principle which underlay military systems of the hereditary warrior houses: All kinds of skills were inseparably linked and comprised the whole, whose parts could not be separated. That is, every single art reinforced all the others. One of the aspects of such training presumed that, simultaneous with mastering a weapon, a *bushi* also learned its weak points which allowed him to cope with attacks from the same type of weapon, regardless of what he had at hand.[64]

Finally, the importance of the hierarchical structure of such military systems should not be overlooked either. It implied that a *bushi* could learn strategy and tactics, i.e.,

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[63] *Ōtomo-ke seidō no koto* (*About the Way of Government of the Ōtomo family*, ca. 1542) by Ōtomo Yoshishige (appears in Ozawa 2003, p. 381).

[64] Reid and Croucher 1983, pp. 130-131. Iizasa 2000, p. 21. Ōtake 2009e, p. 55; 2009f, p. 40.

acquire knowledge necessary for commanding others in group military manoeuvres, only after extensive training in individual combat. Here, it would be helpful to remember Daidōji Yūzan's classification of the basics of the *bushi* daily routine discussed in the previous chapter. This routine presumed that military strategy, tactics, and logistics could be learned only after a *bushi* reached a level when he was irreproachable in terms of etiquette and training in all kinds of individual combat skills. In the middle of the 15th century, Iizasa Chōisai was no less aware of organizational issues on the battlefield, and his school, Shintō-ryū, taught these military sciences but only after its disciples reached the *menkyo*[65] level in individual combat skills.

2.3 Philosophical Doctrines of Shintō-ryū

The diversity of attitudes to the means and goals of military training among *bushi* has been concealed under the seemingly endless chain of descriptions of wars and other violent events in historical records, traditional storytelling and popular fiction. These produce a monotonous image of stern and violent warriors who resorted to arms whenever the chance arose. In this image, the essence of their attitudes to peace and the sanctity of human life seems often to be nothing but disdain. This would suggest that, for many *bushi*, training in military arts was a mere process of acquiring skills in the art of killing, and also that the more skillful a warrior was in handling arms, the more he strove to put his skill in practice. A superficial look at military arts practiced by the ruling elite of Japanese pre-modern society may lead one to think that military training was a natural part of military men's routine and that this aspect of *bushi* life deserves serious attention only up to a point.

The above may be true about a part of warrior society of pre-modern Japan. However, it is necessary to keep in mind that, already in the medieval ages, there were *bushi* who engaged in *musha shugyō*: A cultural phenomenon which is not unique to Japan but which, in the view of scholar David Waterhouse, acquired its own special characteristic there.[66] Waterhouse does not explain what he means by this but, probably, as discussed earlier in this thesis, the "special characteristic" of Japanese *musha shugyō* lies in the fact that cold steel was perceived as a sacred and symbolic object linked to Shintō and

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[65] One of the highest ranks in the schools of military arts which usually preceded the full transmission of techniques and knowledge to an individual from the school's headmaster (the latter was usually referred to as *menkyo kaiden* or other terms).

[66] Waterhouse 1996, p. 28.

Buddhist deities, as well as the fact that martial skills were regarded as having divine origins.

Musha shugyō gave birth to the term "saint swordsman" (*kensei*) which was used to refer to individuals who, in the eyes of others, combined unequalled mastery in swordsmanship with the wisdom and moral character of great sages (in reality, the martial proficiency of *kensei* was not necessarily limited to swordsmanship). Interpretations of the means and goals of *musha shugyō* varied considerably, and, as the following discussion will show, the term "saint swordsman" was applied to individuals whose qualities of moral character were not only different but even at opposite extremes to each other.

This term appears on a guide sign near the grave of the founder of Shintō-ryū, Iizasa Chōisai, who died in 1488, having apparently lived to the advanced age of 102, and also having left a legacy consisting not only of the results of his austere training but also of twenty generations of descendants.[67] Many founders of schools of military arts in Japanese history are said to have established their traditions after seclusion in shrines and temples.[68] However, scholars and swordsmanship historians have not addressed the fact that Chōisai's goal of seclusion in Katori Jingū grand shrine differs considerably from that of the founders of other school lineages, and that so does the meaning behind the initiation of his school.

If we take the examples of the legendary Jion or Hayashizaki Jinsuke, both sought to acquire advanced martial skills for a violent purpose. They are said to have claimed the establishment of a school after obtaining skills from the deities, and using these skills to accomplish a bloody revenge. However, after Iizasa Chōisai was allegedly granted divine teaching by Futsunushi no Ōkami, he never went on to take revenge for the subverted Chiba clan which he served, nor did he accomplish any other feat of arms. Instead, Chōisai combined his deadly art with the strictest demands towards the disciple's morality and ethics by introducing a central tenet which stated: "The art of war is the foundation of the Way of Humanity; that is why the art of peace is [unfathomably] deep… No man should remain ignorant of the art of peace. Prevailing over the enemy without drawing the sword is the fundamental principle of

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[67] Ōtake 1977, volume 1, p. 16; 1979, p. 26; 1981, p. 22; 2007, pp. 12-13. Chiba Sōgo Ginkō 1981, p. 104. Kendō Nihon 1981, p. 49. Tsumoto 1983, p. 204. Akita Shoten 1987, p. 159. Asakura Kazuyoshi 2005, p. 128.

[68] For example, Jion of Nen-ryū, Aisu Ikōsai of Kage-ryū, Tsukahara Bokuden of Shintō-ryū (different from Iizasa Chōisai's Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū), Itō Ittōsai of Ittō-ryū, Saitō Denkibō of Tendō-ryū (Ōmori Nobumasa 1974, pp. 67; 72, note 2).

Shintō-ryū."[69]

Thus, disciples of Shintō-ryū have been strictly forbidden to engage in altercations or misuse the art of the school against others, participate in any kind of gambling, or frequent disreputable places. Since the time of Iizasa Chōisai, Shintō-ryū's disciples have also been prohibited from engaging in duels. Such matches only led to death for one or both of the combatants, and were contrary to the central tenets of the school. In this regard, Shintō-ryū has a teaching known as *kumazasa no taiza* ("standoff from atop the bamboo grass"). It is said that, when faced with someone who wanted to cross swords in a match, Iizasa Chōisai would sit atop a patch of *kumazasa* (a variety of short bamboo grass with a thin, pliant stalk and very low weight-bearing capacity) without it bending and offer the challenger a seat beside him. Unable to duplicate this feat, the challenger would lose heart and withdraw. Here, it is not important for us whether Chōisai could really do this or not. Shintō-ryū does not use this story to impress its disciples with the deeds of its founder. It is the following admonishment of the school which matters: "One who prevails against his opponent is superior to one who strikes down his opponent." Through the example of *kumazasa no taiza*, Shintō-ryū teaches that the true victory does not lie in striking down enemies, but in achieving goals through peaceable means.[70]

The mindset prescribed by Shintō-ryū toward the pursuit of one's own humanity is similar to the preaching in the Buddhist *Middle-length discourses*: "Just as hostility begets more hostility, its absence brings peace. These are timeless truths." Training is undertaken to live one's whole life peacefully and humanely, not to use military skills in war, or to be drawn into war.[71] This philosophy affected the school's technical curriculum: Unlike some other Japanese schools of military arts, Shintō-ryū does not have assassination techniques or methods, and sees military arts as a means primarily to defend one's self and one's homeland. According to the school's tradition, extensive

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[69] These words by Chōisai appear in a copy (1899/7) of the original scroll of transmission preserved by the Iizasa family (appears in Imamura et al. 1982, pp. 35-48). According to a writer Arakawa Hōshō (1955, p. 72), in 1953, a document titled *Iizasa Chōisai oboegaki* (*A note on Iizasa Chōisai*, 1491) by Chōisai's disciple, Nagasawa Shirō, was discovered in the Kashima area. The document states that "prevailing over the enemy without using the sword is the ultimate way of the practitioner of military arts." Also see, Takeuchi Kaishirō 1998, p. 62. Asakura Kazuyoshi 2005, p. 129. Ōtake 2006, p. 6; 2007, p. 37. Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2008, p. 38.

[70] Ōtake 1977, volume 1, p. 19; 1978, p. 7; 1979, p. 27; 1981, p. 23; 2006, p. 6; 2007, pp. 14-15, 20-21, 36-39. Chiba Sōgo Ginkō 1981, p. 105. Kendō Nihon 1981, p. 49. Reid and Croucher 1983, pp. 123-124. Tsumoto 1983, pp. 204-205. Akita Shoten 1987, p. 159. Iizasa 2000, p. 20. Yokose 2000, p. 19. BAB Japan 2003, pp. 14, 16. Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2005, p. 14. Nippon Budōkan 2008, p. 108.

[71] Ōtake 1977, volume 1, p. 20; 2007, pp. XII, 16.

training in these arts naturally produces a balanced state of mind, and it is only after relentless years of training that one understands the true value of the art of peace.[72] The school teaches that victory through combat is no real victory. True victory is gained by achieving one's aim without reliance on weapons or recourse to violence. However, the key to successfully achieving victory without resorting to conflict is to have an unequalled advantage over the enemy in terms of physical and spiritual strength, combative techniques, weaponry, and psychology, and to be always one step ahead in terms of intelligence.[73]

Shintō-ryū not only taught but also put its central doctrines into practice. It is worth emphasizing that, over the five centuries of its history, the name of Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū, which was characterized in a BBC documentary of 1982 as "probably the best martial arts school in the world,"[74] has been virtually absent in traditional storytelling or popular fiction.[75] One reason for this is that the school avoided being entangled in bloodshed and intrigue, which made it unsuitable as a topic for adventurous tales[76] (this excludes those disciples who left the school and established their own martial traditions; Shintō-ryū has never encouraged such separatism). According to the school, it was achieved not only through adherence to its strictest standards of morality but also to the unwritten family code left by Iizasa Chōisai for his successors. The code forbade eldest sons of the Iizasa family, who at the same time were headmasters of Shintō-ryū, to enter the service of *daimyō*, regardless of the reward offered. It also prevented the moral values of the school from coming into collision with the paramount concept of loyalty to one's lord, such as in the situation when a *daimyō* might order a retainer to kill someone. At the same time, the ban on official service was aimed at guarding Shintō-ryū from interference in its affairs by persons in the position of power.[77]

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72 Ōtake 1977, volume 1, pp. 8, 19; 2007, pp. 36-37. Kendō Nihon 1981, p. 49. Reid and Croucher 1983, pp. 121, 123.

73 Ōtake 1977, p. 23; 2007, pp. 36-37, 39-41, 46-49; 2009d, p. 52. BAB Japan 2003, p. 16.

74 BBC documentary *The way of the warrior*, 1982.

75 I am aware of only three works of popular fiction that feature Iizasa Chōisai (Kanda 1903, Tatsukawa Bummeidō Hensan-bu 1914, Arakawa 1955), however, all of them were created in the 20th century and their contents seem to be mere figments of their authors' imagination. In particular, it is clear from the afterword of the first two works that they needed Iizasa Chōisai and his school as a preliminary stage for writing a series of the Kōdan-style narratives about other famous swordsmen, some of whom first studied Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū and later proclaimed the establishment of their own school lineages: Matsumoto Bizen no Kami, Tsukahara Bokuden, Kōizumi Ise no Kami, and Morooka Ippasai.

76 Kendō Nihon 1981, p. 49. Yokose 2000, pp. 19-20. BAB Japan 2003, p. 14. Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2005, p. 14. Ōtake 2006, p. 7; 2007, pp. 38-39.

77 Ōtake 1977, volume 1, p. 17; 1979, p. 26; 1981, p. 22; 2006, p. 7; 2007, pp. XII, 16. Yokose 2000,

The evidence suggests that Chōisai's goal of seclusion in Katori Jingū grand shrine and the spirit of the school initiation was opposite to those of the founders of other school lineages. It originated in his realization of the transience of life and human prosperity, and his keen sense of the futility of violent conflicts.[78] On the other hand, his adoption of the notion of a "school lineage" (*ryū*) did not mean that the warrior arts were brought into the artistic sphere detached from reality. The form of a school lineage allowed Chōisai to "visualize" his comprehensive military arts system in order to make the school's philosophy, backed by its bodily practices, available for the broader strata of society. In fact, since the time of Shintō-ryū's founding, it taught not only warriors but also peasants, townsmen, and other commoners.[79]

However, Shintō-ryū's headmasters were far from being religious idealists and fully realized what consequences the misuse of its deadly art could bring. That is why they never taught on a large scale and admonished their disciples to conceal what they learned. The 6th headmaster of the school, Iizasa Ōi no Kami Morishige, wrote to an unnamed disciple: "In no way should you reveal on the surface the secret arts of weapons. You must not be careless particularly in this."[80] Shintō-ryū's policy was so consistent over the centuries that, as scholar Ōmori Nobumasa notes, unlike other schools, its geographical spread in the country is virtually impossible to identify.[81]

It appears that such cases as Shintō-ryū have never been properly discussed in the academic literature, and *bushi* attitudes exalting peace and the sanctity of human life have often been largely overlooked. The school presents a set of values quite different from the image of the bellicose Japanese warrior with which the majority of scholarship and popular culture has apparently been preoccupied. It is worth emphasizing that it is a system of values that appeared, and was adhered to, in the times of Japan's worst wars and unrest prior to the Great Tokugawa Peace. It is reasonable to assume that there were other warriors who, similar to headmasters of Shintō-ryū, lived in accordance with the principles of humanity and peace but who rarely if ever appeared in historical records. As the case study of Yamaoka Tesshū's role in the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle

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p. 20. Asakura Kazuyoshi 2005, p. 129. Nippon Budōkan 2008, p. 108. Interview in Narita city, February 2008, with Ōtake Risuke, the master teacher of the school. Other examples of schools that avoided the *daimyō* service are Takenouchi-ryū Jūjutsu and Maniwa Nen-ryū (Yokose 2000, pp. 42, 158, 170; Nippon Budōkan 2008, p. 108). The outcomes of the ban on *daimyō* service in the Tokugawa era for Shintō-ryū and some other schools will be discussed in Chapter III.

78 Ōtake 1979, p. 26. Reid and Croucher 1983, p. 120.

79 Ōtake 1977, volume 1, p. 20; 2009g, p. 37. Kendō Nihon 1981, p. 48. Reid and Croucher 1983, p. 125.

80 From *Shintō-ryū heihō sho* (preserved in the Iizasa family. Appears in Imamura et al. 1966, volume 2, p. 253; Imamura et al. 1982, volume 3, p. 15).

81 Ōmori Nobumasa 1991, pp. 228-229.

(1868) will show, such individuals not only existed, but sometimes appeared on the scene of major historical events and prevented large-scale disasters in Japanese history.

2.4 The "True Warrior": Between Good and Evil

The combination of the art of killing with spiritual self-cultivation may seem contradictory. However, Shintō-ryū is not alone in practicing what may be called the "power backed virtue." This concept can be found in Chinese military treatises written 2,000 years ago, and it was expressed most explicitly in *Sun Tzu* which first states "one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the best tactic," and further:

> … It is impossible to rebuild a nation that was ruined and bring back to life those who perished in war. That is why a wise ruler refrains from waging wars, and a good commander looks not to plunge hastily his army in a battle.

At the same time *Sun Tzu* admonishes that "the principle of managing a military force is not to rely on the assumption that the enemy will not come, but to rely only on one's constant preparedness for the enemy's arrival."[82] When we look at the philosophy of Shintō-ryū, we see that the school's central tenet - "one who prevails against his opponent is superior to one who strikes down his opponent" - appears to be a slightly modified *kakikudashibun* of the same concept rendered in classical Chinese in *Sun Tzu*.[83] This hints to the fact that the school adapted the wording of the ancient military treatise that best fitted its doctrine.

For those *bushi* who pursued the path of humanity through martial training, the process of perfection in military arts demanded one to be constantly conscious of having ascended to a higher plane over others in terms of both combat capabilities and moral values. This path presumed not only an extreme physical load, but also a spiritual one, and it is what distinguished them from that part of warrior society that did not focus so heavily on moral and ethical issues pertaining to their professional skill. They explicitly recognized the value of peace and the sanctity of human life and, however paradoxical it may seem, engaged in training in military arts not in order to use them, but in order to avoid using them, turning the art of killing into a means to pursue one's humanity. This recognition was not necessarily based on strict rational definitions in written manuals. Instead it was an intuitive understanding in line with the paramount Asian notion that

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[82] Cited from the original text appearing in Asano Yūichi 1997, pp. 41, 145, 258.
[83] Collated with the original text appearing in Asano Yūichi 1997, p. 41.

one's talent and perfection in an art have no value unless they are backed by perfect moral character (a notion apparent in, for example, the analects of Confucius[84]). Thus, weapons and skills in their handling acquired a transcendental meaning, and it was the system of moral values directly associated with military arts that drew the borderline between "good" and "evil" in the warrior profession.

Yet, this is not supposed to mean that being raised to the level of spiritual self-cultivation the process of training in military arts became removed from reality, or that it implied a mental attitude close to a sort of peace-addiction, or even that perfection of one's character was practiced at the expense of training and efficiency in the art of killing. It is the deadly efficiency of the military arts and the readiness to use them (the state of constant alertness) which had to be always accompanied by the highest standards of morality. The two could not exist separately because skill in the art of killing without morality would result in mere undisguised violence, and virtue not backed by the skills necessary to defend it would be doomed to extinction.

Thus, already in the pre-Tokugawa warrior society, the cultural perception of training in military arts bore a dualistic character: It could be both constructive and destructive for the *bushi* and those around him. The two extremes of "good" and "evil" of the warrior profession are ultimately expressed in the paramount concepts of "the killing sword" (*setsunintō*, or *satsujinken*) and "the life-giving sword" (*katsujinken*) that can be found in the teachings of many military arts schools in Japan. As is often the case, these concepts and terms were adapted from Buddhism. However, the notion of the weapon (sword) that destroys evil and brings peace and order to people and the nation can also be found in ancient Shintō mythology. Most relevant here is the famous myth about relinquishing the Izumo Land (*Izumo no Kuni yuzuri*), which is related to the very roots of the supposedly divine creation of the Japanese state,[85] and the legend about the conquering of the East by Emperor Jimmu.[86]

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[84] See the original *Lun yu* text appearing in Kanaya 1999, pp. 271-272, 292.

[85] According to this myth, the attempts of the goddess Amaterasu Ōkami to rule the Izumo Land (Japan) were disrupted by violent gods of this land who obeyed the supreme god Ōkuninushi no Kami. After two unsuccessful attempts to persuade Ōkuninushi no Kami into relinquishing the Izumo Land, Amaterasu Ōkami held a council with other countless gods who recommended in chorus Futsunushi no Ōkami as the most appropriate god for subduing the Izumo Land. At the same time, the god Takemikazuchi no Ōkami volunteered to join this mission and both gods were sent to the Izumo Land. The god Ōkuninushi no Kami agreed to obey the order of Amaterasu Ōkami as soon as the gods Futsunushi and Takemikazuchi descended on the Izumo Land and demonstrated their martial might by sticking the hilts of their unsheathed swords into the ground (some variations of this myth maintain that the gods Futsunushi and Takemikazuchi not only stuck the hilts of their unsheathed swords into the ground, but also sat cross legged on their tips).

[86] The legend says that, in the land of Kumano, Emperor Jimmu and his subordinates were exposed to the poisonous breath of wild gods of the Kumanozan mountain and they lost their

Shintō-ryū emphasizes the importance of training in military arts as a means for character formation and, according to the school's teaching, training in military arts with a malevolent heart is perceived to be destructive, a mindset referred to as "the killing sword." Training with the proper attitude, aimed at quelling hostilities and finding peaceful solutions, is referred to as the "life-giving sword."[87] The process of *musha shugyō* is directed here at the practitioner's awakening to the concept of "the life-giving sword" and his fulfillment as a human being. The training is aimed at gaining unparalleled superiority and strength over the enemy. However, it is a kind of strength that must not be revealed on the surface.[88]

Similar interpretations of "the killing sword" and "the life-giving sword" can be found in the philosophies of later military arts schools. However, preaching the "life-giving sword" and putting it into practice are two different things. Shintō-ryū provides an example of a military arts school which not only taught but also uncompromisingly adhered to the principles of the "life-giving sword" for half a millennium. There may have been others but they did not endure and have been lost to history.[89]

On the other hand, schools preaching that the final goal of one's training in military arts lies in achieving a virtuous character (expressed in the "life-giving sword" and

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consciousness. A native of Kumano by the name of Takakuraji presented Emperor Jimmu with a sword whose divine power helped the emperor to recover his senses, and all wild gods were destroyed magically by the sword which was not even swung.

[87] Ōtake 2007, pp. 290-291. It appears that Shintō-ryū presents the earliest example of the usage of the terms the "killing sword" and the "life-giving sword" (*satsujin hōken*, the "killing 'square' sword," and *katsujin enken* , the "lifegiving 'round' sword," in the terminology of Shintō-ryū) in regard to Japanese military arts. As noted above, Shintō-ryū is deeply connected with esoteric Buddhism, and these terms are not used by the school in a Zen context which would be a characteristic of schools that developed shortly before and after the dawning of the Tokugawa era.

[88] Ōtake 1981, p. 23; 2007, pp. 14-15.

[89] For example, "the art of war is the art of peace" (*heihō wa heihō nari*), a principle identical to the central tenet of Shintō-ryū, can be found in *Kuroda Nagamasa yuigon'an* (*Draft testament of Kuroda Nagamasa*, 1623) by Kuroda Nagamasa (appears in Ozawa 2003, pp. 418-419). The principle is illustrated by concrete examples of how it should be put into practice in real life. Still, it is not clear whether Kuroda Nagamasa was affiliated with Shintō-ryū or not. Exaltation of peaceful solutions to conflicts, prevailing against the enemy without fighting, or the general principle of sanctity of any form of life can be found in *Gokurakuji-dono go-shōsoku* (*A letter from his Highness Gokurakuji*, according to Kakei 1967 (pp. 9-10) and Ozawa 2003 (p. 460), written sometime between 1256 and 1261) by Hōjō Shigetoki; a letter of Hōjō Yasutoki (1183-1242), the *shōgun*'s regent in the Kamakura Bakufu, to a military commander Hōjō Tokiuji (appears in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1942, volume 1, p. 232); *Yoshisada-ki* (*Records of [Nitta] Yoshisada*, first half of the 14th century); *Imagawa hekisho* (*Imagawa's "wall precepts,"* 1412) by Imagawa Sadayo; *Kuroda Nagamasa kahō* (*The house law of Kuroda Nagamasa*, 1622) by Kuroda Nagamasa. However, the topic of how consistent their authors were in putting their philosophy into practice requires a separate investigation.

other terms), such as the famous Yagyū Shinkage-ryū, Jigen-ryū, Maniwa Nen-ryū, or Ittō-ryū, have left behind an extensive track record of duels, participation in wars, and killings by the order of *daimyō*s (*jōiuchi*).[90] For example, Tōgō Shigekata (1561-1643), the founder of Jigen-ryū, is said to have killed over ten people by the order of the Satsuma *daimyō* while serving as the supreme teacher of swordsmanship in the Satsuma domain.[91] Numerous duels and other feats of arms of the Yagyū family, which taught swordsmanship to the Tokugawa *shōgun*s for many generations, provide abundant material for popular storytelling and fiction. It is also suspected that the family was involved in the assassination of Noda Hankei, the famous swordsmith of the early Tokugawa era.[92]

Moreover, we can find swordsmen of the pre- and early Tokugawa eras who, on the contrary, pursued only "the killing sword," casting aside any humaneness under the pretext of *musha shugyō*. Such was the famous founder of the Niten Ichi-ryū school (which also may be referred to as Nitō Ichi-ryū, Emmei-ryū, and other names), Miyamoto Musashi (1582-1645), who allegedly wrote that, by mastering "the virtue of the sword" one masters the peaceful and orderly governance of a nation,[93] and, at the same time, is said to have murdered all his opponents in over 60 duels in a quest for victory over others.[94]

To the critical eye, Musashi's reckless striving for duels may be seen as a form of almost psychotic addiction to violence. However, uncritical academic and non-academic writers have raised Musashi to the status of an icon of the *bushi*, revering him as a "great master of swordsmanship," or even "saint swordsman" (*kensei*) without attaching any importance to the fact that he did not choose means to engage in what he perceived as the process of self-perfection. Scholar David Waterhouse even maintains that the Japanese cultural phenomenon of *musha shugyō* reached its apogee in the life and career of Musashi.[95] Even though its authenticity is questioned, scholars and popular writers

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[90] Nanjō 1967, pp. 113-130. Imamura 1971, p. 219. Watatani 1971, p. 208. Tominaga Kengo 1972, pp. 354-355. Ishioka et al. 1980, p. 173. Kōdansha 1983, pp. 163-164, 194. Yokose 2000, pp. 37-42, 46, 70-73.

[91] Yokose 2000, p. 87. Examples of moral teachings in Jigen-ryū can be found in Tōdō and Murata 2004, pp. 3-4.

[92] Naruse Kanji 1941, pp. 30-31. Nanjō 1967, pp. 61-95. Yokose 2000, pp. 53-60. Accounts of feats of arms of Yagyū Shinkage-ryū headmasters can be found in Hurst 1998, p. 59. An example of modern popular fiction featuring the Yagyū family is *Yagyū bugei-chō* (*Memos of the Yagyū military arts*, first published in 1956) by Gomi Kōsuke. Moral teachings of Shinkage-ryū can be found in Ōmori Nobumasa 1974, p. 69; Maebayashi 1992, pp. 58-59.

[93] Cited from Sakai Toshinobu 2005, p. 306.

[94] Uozumi 2008, p. iii.

[95] Waterhouse 1996, p. 28.

have been preoccupied with Musashi's *Gorin no sho* (*The book of five rings*, ca. 1644) as well as with his personality, when considering *bushi* moral values, including Bushidō.[96] Scholar Uozumi Takashi argued that Musashi embodies the "Way of the Japanese people," while Suzuki Kunio goes as far as to maintain that *Gorin no sho*, which is actually a treatise on the art of killing human beings, contains an image of a man that should serve as a model for people of the 21st century.[97]

The impetus for the Musashi boom in Japan, and later overseas, was Yoshikawa Eiji's novel *Miyamoto Musashi* which was published as a newspaper serialization from 1935 to 1939. This serialization became a book in 1939, and it was also used for numerous theatre and radio plays, TV and cinema films. The fictionalized image of Musashi has, through the process of repetition, become a historical reality in its own right but as Yoshikawa himself admitted, "there are almost no records about Musashi that could be trusted as true historical facts. [If we are to summarize the truth about Musashi], it will take no more than 60-70 lines of printed text."[98] Apparently, few people know this and Musashi continues to be one of the most recognizable warrior figures in popular culture. His treatise on the art of killing has even become a manual for doing successful business among modern businessmen. Musashi has also been an object of reverence and commemoration in one of his supposed homelands in Mimasaka city, Okayama prefecture, where one can find a major training center bearing his name. In Japan, modern *kendō* tournaments are sometimes held in commemoration of Musashi.

A reassessment of Musashi's warrior status is long overdue. First, it is necessary to establish an objective historical fact: Musashi did not kill his opponents in the righteous cause of, for example, defending his land against foreign aggressors, or fighting for his lord's interests on the battlefield. His obsession with bloodshed was revealed through "polishing" his sword skills by challenging others for individual duels. Musashi's distorted notion of *musha shugyō*, or "self-perfection," brought nothing but misfortune to his victims and their families. During his life he received "guest swordsman" (*kyakubun*) treatment from several *daimyō*s. However, his stipend was always much

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96 Satō Kenji 1950; Shitō 1967; Murakami Ichirō 1975; Taniguchi Katsuomi 1988; Sakurai 1989; Maebayashi 1992; Tanaka Hiroshi 2001-2007; Jugen 2003; Kubo Michio 2003; Moriyasu 2003; Shimura 2003a-b; Tateno 2003; Terabayashi 2003; Uozumi 2002, 2005, 2008. No original of *Gorin no sho* has ever been found and only copies are available. There is no unity among scholars over the question of whether this work was actually written by Musashi or not. Some doubt its authenticity (Imamura 1994, Toboshi 2007, Satō Rentarō 2008). Uozumi Takashi (2002, 2008) maintains that it is authentic.

97 Uozumi 2002, Suzuki Kunio 2006.

98 Cited from Uozumi 2008, pp. i-ii. One line of printed text to which Yoshikawa refers had 42 characters (Uozumi 2008, p. ii.)

lower than that of other swordsmen in a similar position. He apparently sought to affiliate himself with the Bakufu central government but without success.[99] This can be viewed as a social rejection of Musashi's cruelty which was regarded as excessive even in the early Tokugawa-era.[100]

As we can see, in the pre- and early Tokugawa eras, members of the Japanese warrior class reveal contrasting attitudes to arms, military skills and their practical application, as well as to the value of peace and the sanctity of human life. Interpretations of means and goals of *musha shugyō* among them were no less diverse. The choice between "the killing sword" and "the life-giving sword" could be influenced by the particular circumstances of a warrior's upbringing and life, the thinking of his seniors, and the philosophies of warrior training entities.

By engaging in *musha shugyō* through the practice of military arts, *bushi* pursued the ideal of the "true warrior." This ideal was more intangible than a set of clear definitions. The "true warrior" is a constant theme in Daidōji Yūzan's *Budō shoshinshū* in which we find such assertions as, "from ancient times they say that among a hundred or a thousand warriors the true warrior (*jōbon no samurai*) is a rare exception."[101] This passage is used in regard to the warrior who combines all the three virtues of loyalty, sense of duty, and valor (*chū-gi-yū*). However, it does not mean that these were the only criteria of the ideal. Daidōji often refers indirectly to the standards of the "true warrior" throughout his work, as, for example, when he mentions that it is the state of constant alertness which was a crucial factor distinguishing the warrior from the commoner, as well as the true warrior from he who does not merits this description. In fact, there was a wide range of standards pertaining to the *bushi* physical and spiritual qualities that, in aggregate, comprised the ideal of the true warrior.

The list of moral standards no doubt varied depending on one's individual point of view, but for those *bushi* who pursued humanity through the practice of military arts, one of the unshakable items of this list was the character that was expressed through the notion of the "life-giving sword." Unfortunately, we will never know even the relative proportions of the number of warriors who realized this ideal in pre-modern Japan; such

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[99] Uozumi 2008, pp. 70, 84.

[100] Scholar Uozumi Takashi (2008, p. 84) mentions the fact that such low social appraisal is used by some authors to denigrate Musashi. At the same time, Uozumi attempts to embellish Musashi by recalculating his stipend to a higher figure according to different criteria. However, it is not convincing because Uozumi does not apply the same criteria to the other swordsmen's stipends. Uozumi also tries to explain Musashi's failure to receive any treatment from the Tokugawa Bakufu by the fact that his "thinking advanced beyond his times" (2008, p. 70) but its an uncritical idealization of Musashi.

[101] *BS*, p. 144.

data does not exist. Historical records, traditional storytelling and popular fiction have generally preserved only memories of "beautiful violence" that undoubtedly distorts historical reality.

Yet, there is another reason why we know so little about the cultivation of the "life-giving sword." This is due to the notion that virtue or mastery of a certain skill should be hidden in the shadows, a concept which appears widely in classical Asian philosophy. For example, it is put in the ancient Chinese military treatise, *Liu dao*, in the following way: "Do not parade your achievements. Heaven and Earth do not reveal themselves, and this is how they remain eternal. Sages do not reveal themselves, and this is how they become renowned."[102] A similar concept can be found in the philosophy of Dōgen, the founder of Sōtō Zen in Japan.[103] This principle was also realized by Shintō-ryū over five centuries. A case study of a Bakumatsu swordsman, Yamaoka Tesshū, in one of the following chapters will show another example of its practical realization.[104]

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[102] Cited from the original text appearing in Moriya 1999, pp. 77-78.

[103] Dōgen's precepts appearing in Watsuji 1929, pp. 72-73, 79, 108-109.

[104] It is necessary to mention that a great many mental attitudes and values of *bushi* were unspoken; they were never revealed in speech or behavior, and consequently never appeared in records. However, there is evidence to suggest that they were the main driving force behind some warriors' actions. In Daidōji Yūzan's precepts one can find numerous mentions of a sort of "unspoken determination," as, for example, the unspoken determination (*okui*) to refrain from engagement in verbal disputes and fights but to perform unequalled service for one's lord on the battlefield (*BS*, pp. 161-162). The unwritten code of the Iizasa family discussed above can serve as another example of this unspoken determination which influenced critical decisions affecting the well-being of this *bushi* family.

CHAPTER III

Bushi Martial Skills in the Tokugawa Era

This chapter investigates fundamental changes in the intangible culture of the Tokugawa-era *bushi*. Compared to the pre-Tokugawa ages of incessant wars and unrest, this period was characterized by two waves of what can be described as a decline in the standards of military practicability of warrior arts. The first occurred in the beginning of the Tokugawa era and is commonly referred to as "flowery training" (*kahō*), meaning the ritualization and embellishment of movement during training in predetermined patterns of movement (*kata*). The second wave occurred in the middle of this era as a result of the proliferation of sparring with the bamboo sword and body protectors which, contrary to the generally accepted scholarly and popular opinion, removed *bushi* training even further from the realities of actual combat. The chapter also addresses the theme of how such an estrangement from actual combat gave birth to many psychological theories of combat (*shimpō-ron*) in the Tokugawa-era military arts schools; it also pays special attention to how the myth of the "unity of the sword and Zen" was created in this period.[1]

3.1 Military Arts Schools: The Quantity and the Quality

From the standpoint of *bushi* military history, the first four decades of the Tokugawa era were an extension of the previous age of unrest[2] although, as the following discussion will show, the first "flowery training" appeared exactly at this time. After the suppression of the Shimabara Rebellion in 1638, Japan knew no large-scale wars over two centuries. The long lasting peace did not result in the abolishment of the warrior class. However, it brought inevitable changes to the foundations of its intangible culture, the culture which was initially centered around martial skills and mental attitudes. The first distinctive feature of this period is the rapid extinction of the military systems of

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[1] This chapter investigates the fundamental reasons for changes in *bushi* martial culture in the Tokugawa era. I did not find any evidence pointing to Confucian ideology as a primary reason for the decline in the actual combat utility of *bushi* martial skills which would make this ideology worthy of detailed discussion.

[2] Hurst 1998, p. 55.

the hereditary warrior houses combined with a sharp increase in the number of formalized military arts schools, a phenomenon which may be called a "*ryū*-ization" of the *bushi* military skills. By the end of the Tokugawa era, there were 718 swordsmanship schools, 52 archery (*kyūjutsu*) schools, 148 spearmanship (*sōjutsu*) schools, and 179 schools of unarmed combat (*jūjutsu*).[3] There were also numerous schools of other kinds of military arts, such as spike throwing (*shurikenjutsu*), glaive (*naginatajutsu*), staff (*bōjutsu*), swimming and water combat (*suijutsu*), gunnery (*hōjutsu*), and also military strategy.

Yet, as is often the case, quantity does not necessarily mean quality. In the 1690s, a Confucian scholar Kumazawa Banzan wrote that "out of one hundred schools of military strategy, one or two are good" and that, lacking any deep expertise, many of them advertised themselves under a kind of "brand" that included personal names of legendary Chinese and Japanese military commanders of the past.[4] A military scholar of the first half of the 18th century Matsushita Gunkō observed:

> Those who forge their living by teaching military arts, be it *rōnin* or warriors in official service, are sordid because they slander and despise others and have a high opinion only about themselves. When I look at skills they are so proud of, all of them are swimming on the *tatami* mats. Techniques they perform with their hands are just like the movements of a Nō theatre actor who has the wooden sword instead of the fan. Techniques they perform with their legs are like the movements of court nobles or monks kicking the *mari* ball, and what they do more resembles entertainment designed to use energy in order to build an appetite rather than military art… Recently, training in military arts has been done for the sake of looking like a *bushi*, and it has become like an amusement. This is why countless swordsmanship and spearmanship schools, whose founders are not certain, have appeared… When I look at how they train, all of them are a mere assemblage of technical elements of other schools with a few new twists added. All in all, among ten teachers of military arts of our time, nine are unskillful, but they buy disciples with eloquent speech and teach them military arts in which one is always [supposed to be] a step between life and death, as if it were a childish game, saying that it improves digestion…[5]

As Matsushita suggests, the majority of newly established schools differed greatly from those original lineages which appeared and survived in the earlier time of wars. These newer schools could be either older lineages taught under different names by former disciples, or their breakaway factions (*bunryū* or *bumpa*), schools established by epigones (*aryū*), or schools that, as Matsushita says, were "a mere assemblage of

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[3] Nihon Kobudō Kyōkai 2002, p. 11. Reliable data does not exist for the early Tokugawa era.

[4] *Shūgi gaisho* (*Additional collection of various meanings*, 1690s) appearing in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1942, volume 4, pp. 143, 147-148.

[5] Cited from Kōdansha 1983, p. 127. Examples of other contemporary criticisms of training in military arts can be found in Shimokawa 1925, pp. 224-226.

technical elements of other schools with a few new twists added."[6] The majority of these taught skills which were not practical in actual combat and which are referred to in historical literature as "flowery training" (*kahō*). Such training was based solely on prearranged patterns of movements (*kata*) using wooden imitations of weapons or blunt blades. However, it differed greatly from that of schools established prior to the Tokugawa era by the loss of speed of action, extreme formalization and ritualization, and movement embellishment. It was also much less physically demanding and exhausting. The main goal of establishing such organizations in the Tokugawa era was to make one's living. This phenomenon originated in the mass "*daimyō* purge" conducted by the first three Tokugawa *shōgun*s which produced tens of thousands of unemployed *bushi*, many of whom found a way to support themselves through the teaching of poorly developed martial traditions.[7]

At first glance, the situation presents a contradiction which does not seem to have been addressed by scholarship: In a time of peace, one would expect the demand for military skills to diminish considerably and there would seem to be no reason for the birth of so many military arts schools. As Matsushita Gunkō notes, however, training in military arts was done for the sake of looking like a *bushi*. This demand not only failed to show signs of declining, but increased and led to the creation of numerous new traditions which then endured for many generations. It was in the Tokugawa era when it first became possible to establish special facilities for indoor training, the training halls (*dōjō*), and engage exclusively in a lifelong teaching of military arts, thus receiving an income through private teaching or in the form of an annual stipend from those in power. As a Confucian scholar Ogyū Sorai (1666-1728) wrote, "In our time, all kinds of military arts are practiced in warrior houses but because the time of the Warring States is far in the past and peace has lasted so long, all teachers of military arts forgot that these arts [should be] used on the battlefield and they are preoccupied only with gaining measly stipends."[8] Such a situation was not possible in the time of medieval wars: Although the demand for practical military skills was far greater, it was impossible to gain a stable income by mere teaching since training and the teaching process could always be disrupted by unpredictable circumstances. Furthermore, the litmus test of

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[6] Another military scholar of the 18th century, Arisawa Munesada (1689-1752), wrote that the practice of military arts for the sake of outward appearance and entertainment should be strictly prohibited (*Shoshi kokoroe* (*What all warriors must know*, written late in the author's life) appearing in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1944, *bekkan*, p. 100).

[7] Kōdansha 1983, p. 132. In the time of the third Tokugawa *shōgun*, Iemitsu, the number of warriors who lost their lords after the "*daimyō* purge" reached 500,000 (Hirakawa 2006, p. 124). Also, see Vaporis 1994, p. 103.

[8] Cited from Ishioka et al. 1980, p. 21.

actual combat served to filter out any ineffective forms of teaching, leaving only the tried and tested in existence.

3.2 Warriors, Skills, Schools: Narrow Specialization and Social Discrimination

Some pre-Tokugawa military arts schools, such as Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū, and Takenouchi-ryū Jūjutsu, retained their wide curriculum of military skills and continued to teach it in the Tokugawa era. Adhering to the ban on *daimyō* service, they accepted disciples from all stratums of society, not limiting martial training to the warrior class.[9] On the other hand, the dominant trend among military arts schools established in the Tokugawa era was narrow specialization and discrimination of disciples according to their social status. Shibukawa Tokihide, the 4th headmaster of Shibukawa-ryū Jūjutsu school in the 17th century, observed this contrast:

> Men of old fought with what was close at hand: Sword, or spear, or glaive, or iron club, or staff. It was absolutely different from the present time when one who studies swordsmanship can not use the spear, one who studies spear skills does not know how to use the sword, and, at the extreme, one who studies straight spear (*sugu yari*) skills can not use the cross spear (*jūmonji yari*).[10]

Swordsmanship was the most widely practiced military art in the Tokugawa era[11] and Shibukawa's comment that "one who studies spear skills does not know how to use the sword" sounds exaggerated. However, with the exception of swordsmanship, his words generally reflect the realities of warrior society in the time of peace.[12]

There were several reasons for the narrow specialization of military arts schools. As mentioned above, beginning from the second half of the 17th century, training in military arts became more a formality indispensable for the demonstration of *bushi* social status. The universality and quality of martial skills was less important than simply attending

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[9] Yokose 2000, pp. 42, 158-159, 170-171; Ōtake 2007, pp. 40-41, 62. Nippon Budōkan 2008, p. 108.

[10] Cited from Nanjō 1967, p. 35. Unlike the straight spear, the cross spear had two horizontal branches in the base of the blade.

[11] Kōdansha 1983, pp. 139-140. Hurst 1998, p. 65. The Bakufu edict (*buke shohatto*) of 1615 exalted the "unity of literary and military arts" (*bumbu ryōdō*) as the corner stone of the *bushi* education. In the case of the latter, the practice of swordsmanship was particularly emphasized. The Tokugawa Bakufu's policy was later adopted by the majority of domains (Ōmori Nobumasa 1976a, p. 102).

[12] Narrow specialization of military arts in the Tokugawa era is noted in such academic works as Watanabe Ichirō 1967b, p. 1; Maebayashi 1992, p. 58; Nakamura Tamio 2001a.

the training, and this led to the appearance of many unqualified or narrowly specialized teachers of military arts who exploited this demand to make their living.

However, the social structure of warrior society in the Tokugawa era was decisive in creating this narrow specialization of both military arts schools and the *bushi* themselves. With the end of wars and large-scale unrest, warrior society turned into a rigid vertical system consisting of multiple subclasses between which various kinds of social discrimination was exercised. This vertical system was based on a military hierarchy that, in a time of peace, lost its original meaning. The structure of the system, as well as the way *bushi* subclasses were treated, depended on a particular domain but, in general, discrimination was exercised through such things as etiquette, speech, clothes, as well as social and financial privileges.[13]

In the same manner, discrimination towards *bushi* subclasses was revealed in subclass symbols and the kinds of military arts which the *bushi* were or were not encouraged to study. While the long and short swords distinguished the *bushi* class from the commoners, other kinds of weaponry served as symbols for distinguishing subclasses within the *bushi*. Symbols of various subclasses also had their roots in the earlier military hierarchy, and they too lost their original meaning, coming to function instead as means for governing these subclasses in daily life. The military system of domains was supported by the military arts schools where the connection between subclass symbols and this system bore a special meaning.[14]

A recent and rare academic study by Fuse Kenji provides useful insights into the concrete methods of such discrimination in the Kawagoe domain. For example, the most common symbols of higher subclasses in this domain were horse riding (*kiba*) and spear (*yari*). Only higher-ranking Kawagoe *bushi* were allowed to ride on horse and carry a spear at war or when going out in the street on official duty. Low-ranking *bushi* were allowed to carry only a glaive (*naginata*). They could study horsemanship and spearmanship, but they were prohibited from riding a horse or carrying a spear in their everyday life, and they could not participate in horse and spear training demonstrations (*keiko goran*) before the Kawagoe *daimyō*.[15]

Thus, in the Tokugawa era, with the exception of swordsmanship, the kinds of military arts that the *bushi* could study were directly linked to the subclass to which they belonged. As a rule, only top retainers of domains studied military strategy and tactics, only high-ranking *bushi* studied archery and horsemanship, gunnery was usually studied

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13 Isoda 2003, pp. 27-66; 363-372. Fuse 2006, pp. 37-38.
14 Hurst 1998, pp. 92-94. Fuse 2006, pp. 37-38.
15 Fuse 2006, pp. 48-50.

regardless of the subclass, while skills in arresting (*torite*, or *toride*), tying with ropes (*hojō*), spike throwing (*shurikenjutsu*), and staff (*bō*) were studied by *bushi* of the lowest ranks whose job was in the field of civil administration which included arresting criminals. Swordsmanship was studied by all *bushi*. However, a swordsmanship school that a *bushi* could attend depended on the subclass to which he belonged.[16]

The example of the Kawagoe domain also shows that schools teaching military skills to its retainers had conventions (*shikitari*, *ryūhō*, etc.) which reflected the domain's vertical system of *bushi* subclasses and which explicitly discriminated against low-ranking *bushi*. Among seven swordsmanship schools of the Kawagoe domain, four were officially "recognized" by the domain and were available only to middle- and high-ranking *bushi*. The other "unofficial" schools were available for study only by low-ranking *bushi*. The historical process of how particular schools became officially "recognized" is not clear, but the division between officially "recognized" and "non-recognized" was apparently based on social status. Even if in special cases a low-ranking *bushi* was admitted to a "recognized" school, he was treated as an irregular disciple. When the school submitted to the domain authorities the list of names of disciples who reached the *menkyo* level of skill, such "irregular disciples" were listed separately.[17]

The appointment and resignation of teachers (*shihan*) and teaching assistants (*sewayaku*) of the "recognized" schools in the Kawagoe domain required official permission of the domain authorities. The domain paid a stipend to teachers and teaching assistants of the "recognized" schools, as well as financial aid for their training halls (*dōjō*) and equipment maintenance and repair. Their most diligent disciples were subject to official reward shortly before the New Year, and they participated in training demonstrations before the Kawagoe *daimyō* and councilors. On the other hand, appointment, resignation and succession were a private matter of "non-recognized" schools. Their teachers and teaching assistants did not receive any benefits from the domain, and were, as a rule, ineligible to participate in the training demonstrations.[18]

Finally, low-ranking *bushi* were not allowed to study the most advanced skills and knowledge of many kinds of military arts, and discrimination was revealed even in the

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[16] Ishikawa Ken 1960; Watanabe Ichirō 1967b; Imamura 1989; Fuse 2006. The connection between subclasses and particular kinds of military arts formed a strong specialization within the same *bushi* subclass. Naturally, ranks of teachers of military arts schools were also in direct correlation with the social order. Low-ranking teachers of military arts could not teach *bushi* from higher subclasses of warrior society (Fuse 2006).

[17] Fuse 2006, pp. 28, 51-52, 56-57.

[18] Fuse 2006, pp. 53-56.

internal promotion of disciples to higher ranks within military arts schools. For example, sometime early in the 1850s, the Kawagoe domain decided to employ the swimming system of Shinden-ryū Suijutsu school transmitted in the Matsuyama domain, and sent a low-ranking *bushi*, Fujita Gosuke, to Matsuyama to study there. Fujita reached the stage where he could start learning the final and most advanced "full transmission" (*menkyo kaiden*) level of the school in 1859. However, the Matsuyama domain notified the Kawagoe domain that Fujita could not proceed at that time because his rank was too low. It asked for Fujita to be promoted and this was eventually done.[19]

3.3 The Dissonance Between Means and Goals: The Birth of a Cultural Phenomenon

The degradation of actual combat utility in the military arts in the early Tokugawa era was accompanied by conceptual speculation concerning the principles of these arts, an emphasis on practice for the sake of character perfection, and the development of so-called "psychological theories" of combat (*shimpō-ron*).[20] With regard to the latter, many academic works regard the proliferation of such theories as a "cultural development" unique to this period and as one of the sophisticated products of Tokugawa-era culture.[21] I view this as a misconception, probably originating in the absence of such theories in pre-Tokugawa records. Similarly to the bodily etiquette discussed earlier, the pre-Tokugawa *bushi* simply did not find it necessary to engage in abstract and verbose theorizing about matters pertaining to the common wisdom of their profession. Yet, a close look at pre-Tokugawa warrior documents does reveal some comment on the importance of the state of mind for the proper application of martial skills. A very early mention is seen in the letter of Hōjō Yasutoki (1183-1242), the *shōgun*'s regent in the Kamakura Bakufu, to a military commander, Hōjō Tokiuji:

> The only prerequisite for a [superior] archer (*yumitori*) is a skillful usage of his mind (*kokoro*). This is why, in sleep or awake, he must not forget [the proper] inner attitude. [When not at war or in the absence of active practice], drawing the bow without fixing the arrow (*subiki*) thrice a day is the minimum he must do. In his heart, he should not be sloppy even when performing such a simple act. And when

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19 Fuse 2006, p. 47.

20 Watanabe Ichirō 1967b, pp. 1, 3-4. Ōmori Nobumasa 1974, pp. 67, 69. Kōdansha 1983, pp. 121-122, 125, 127. Ishioka et al. 1980, p. 21. Maebayashi and Watanabe 1988, p. 178. Maebayashi 1992, pp. 51, 55. Hurst 1998, pp. 66, 69-70.

21 For example, Ōmori Nobumasa 1974, 1976a; Maebayashi and Watanabe 1988; Maebayashi 1992, 1995, 1999, 2006.

> he fixes a beautiful arrow in the bow and is going to shoot it, he must not forget the ritual and shoot slapdash. Regardless of whether the target is far or close, big or small, whether he is surrounded by spectators, all of whom are women, or he is in a place where there is not a single person to watch him, he must maintain the state of mind as if he was standing in an arena of a palace watched by ten million people. Every time he releases an arrow, he must think that this very arrow is the last one and that, if it misses the target, in the absence of the second arrow, he will be shot by his enemy or torn to pieces by a [wild] animal.[22]

In *Chikubashō* (*Selected precepts for young generations*, ca. 1383) supposedly written by a military governor (*shugo daimyō*), Shiba Yoshimasa, we find strong assertions that the most important art for a warrior is keeping his own heart quiet and simultaneously carefully watching the depths of the heart of others.[23] Shintō, Buddhist, and Shugendō esoteric practices, briefly discussed in Chapter I, dealt directly with the deliberate change of the state of mind and were employed by pre-Tokugawa *bushi* to achieve performance unattainable by ordinary people under critical circumstances.[24]

In the Tokugawa era, the quantity and sophisticated argument of psychological theories actually signified their divorcement from the realities of actual combat in the same manner that the quantity of newly established military arts schools signified the degradation of combat utility of *bushi* physical skills. A mainstream of such psychological theorizing was an invented cultural myth which is usually referred to as the "unity of sword and Zen" (*ken-Zen ichinyo*, *ken-Zen itchi*, etc.). The origins of this myth have not fully been addressed by academics. Scholar William Bodiford did show that there was practically no connection between Japanese swordsmanship and Zen before the Tokugawa era.[25] However, he places a disproportionate emphasis on Zen texts, practices, and monks, and does not mention the role of esoteric practices coming from Shintō, esoteric sects of Buddhism, and Shugendō. Furthermore, Bodiford considers the "unity of sword and Zen" rhetoric separately from the overall cultural context of the concrete historical period that is the Great Tokugawa Peace. He does not point to a crucial fact that the appearance of this rhetoric coincided with a time of decline in *bushi* military skills, and was part of the wider phenomenon of proliferation of the psychological theories of combat.

Perhaps the main reason why the origins of the mythical connection between Japanese military arts and Zen have not been fully addressed by scholars is that this

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22 The letter appears in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1942, volume 1, pp. 231-232.
23 Appears in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1942, volume 1, pp. 239, 241-242.
24 The description of such practices can be found in Ōtake 1975, 1978, 2007. Also see Maebayashi 1992, p. 52.
25 Bodiford 2005.

connection has not been perceived as a "myth." Instead, it became a kind of generally accepted "historical fact," or "common sense."[26] As Karl Friday notes, in the 20th century West, Suzuki Daisetsu[27] and Eugen Herrigel[28] are probably the two authors most responsible for creating the association of Japanese military arts with Zen. Most subsequent Western works seem to have accepted this association uncritically.[29] In Japan, however, this myth has walked on its own for about four centuries, misleading the majority of academic and popular authors, with Suzuki Daisetsu as just one of them. It is based on an over-reliance on well-known early Tokugawa-era authors, such as Zen monk Takuan and warrior-swordsmen Yagyū Munenori and Miyamoto Musashi. One of the major reasons for this has been an uncritical treatment of the Yagyū Shinkage-ryū school of swordsmanship which, as will be argued later, was the first military arts school in Japan to introduce "flowery training" early in the Tokugawa era, and also appears to be the first to create swordsmanship theories centered around Zen. The fame and authority of this school, which taught the Tokugawa *shōgun*s for many generations, have made it immune to questioning about the practicability of its skills, and the validity of its philosophical and psychological doctrines, in the context of pre-Tokugawa actual combat.

Shinkage-ryū, which is one of the "three root lineages" of Japanese swordsmanship, was established in the middle of the 16th century by Kōizumi[30] Ise no Kami (1508?-1577) who is said to have received the full transmission of Kage-ryū skills under a certain Aisu Ikōsai.[31] Kōizumi also studied Zen from his youth and his surviving writings contain many Zen terms.[32] However, as scholar Ōmori Nobumasa notes, these writings are not swordsmanship treatises; they contain mainly simple lists of techniques and are not evidence of the connection between Kōizumi's sword skills and Zen. Some technique names might have symbolized Kōizumi's Buddhist views but these pertained to those doctrines which are universal in all Buddhist sects, not only Zen.[33] As other scholars note, Buddhist terminology adapted for many swordsmanship writings was, as

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26 David Hall 1990, p. 1. Bodiford 2005, pp. 145-147.
27 Suzuki Daisetsu 1938, 1959.
28 Herrigel 1953.
29 Friday 1997, p. 201, note 9.
30 This last name is sometimes read as Kamiizumi.
31 Yagyū Toshinaga 1957, p. 14. Yamada Jirōkichi 1960, pp. 38-50. Imamura 1971, pp. 30-31, 38. Yokose 2000, p. 55. Kōizumi Ise no Kami is also said to have studied Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū and Nen-ryū (Yagyū Toshinaga 1957, p. 14. Yokose 2000, p. 55; Ōtake 2007, pp. 28, 30).
32 Yagyū Toshinaga 1957, p. 13. Imamura 1971, p. 34.
33 Ōmori Nobumasa 1974, pp. 68, 70, 72.

a rule, used in a different, non-Buddhist sense,[34] and we can not exclude the possibility that Kōizumi merely did the same.

Shinkage-ryū was inherited from Kōizumi by the Yagyū family, hence the school is more often referred to as Yagyū Shinkage-ryū. The second headmaster of the school from this family lineage, Yagyū Munenori (1571-1646), taught swordsmanship to the first, second and third Tokugawa *shōgun*s and was eventually promoted to the rank of *daimyō*.[35] The marriage between Japanese swordsmanship and Zen occurred as a result of what can be called a "joint work" of Munenori and his friend, Zen monk Takuan. Takuan, who was not himself a swordsman, wrote *Fudōchi shimmyōroku* (*The marvelous record of immovable wisdom*, ca. 1632) for Munenori and it became a basis for the latter's swordsmanship treatise *Heihō kadensho* (*The book on the family transmitted military arts*, 1632). Discussing swordsmanship from a Zen point of view, both writings contain abstract theorizing on the psychological state necessary to face an opponent and their philosophy is elevated above the realities of actual combat.[36] However, its appeal lay in the fact that it was most suitable for the "flowery swordsmanship" practiced by the Tokugawa *shōgun*s in the time of peace.

The ideas in both writings have had an impact on the theory of Japanese military arts ever since.[37] Nevertheless, it can not be said that the connection between Zen and military arts was uncritically accepted by all *bushi*. Nativist scholar (*kokugakusha*), Izawa Nagahide (1668-1730) wrote that "there are people who flaunt their sword skills. They say that such-and-such founder of their school… studied Zen and [by this] acquired proficiency in swordsmanship... All this is a great lie… [These people] merely hanker after money [through such self-promotion]. It is extremely disgusting."[38] A Bakufu retainer Hirayama Kōzō (1759-1829), who was known for striving to return Japanese military arts to their practical utility and meaning, wrote that "in the majority of cases, meditating in silence and theoretical study [of military arts] through book reading will result in one's demoralization in actual combat."[39] Nevertheless, the myth spread all over Japan because Yagyū Shinkage-ryū, enjoying the most privileged

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34 Ōmori Nobumasa 1974, p. 72. Maebayashi 1995, p. 62. Bodiford 2005, p. 156.

35 Ōmori Nobumasa 1976a, p. 110. Yokose 2000, pp. 54-55.

36 Ōmori Nobumasa 1976a, pp. 102, 107, 110; p. 112, notes 17, 18. Ishioka et al. 1980, p. 19. Kōdansha 1983, pp. 121-122. Yuasa Yasuo 1986, p. 56-57. Maebayashi and Watanabe 1988, pp. 176-177, 182-184. Maebayashi 1992, pp. 53-55; 1995, p. 51. Hurst 1998, p. 192-193. Monk Takuan was also a teacher of Zen to the third Tokugawa *shōgun* Iemitsu.

37 Hurst 1998, p. 192.

38 *Bushikun* (*Warrior precepts*, 1715) by Izawa Nagahide (appears in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1942, volume 4, pp. 291-292).

39 Cited from Nanjō 1967, p. 180.

position among all other schools in the country, became one of the most famous and widely practiced swordsmanship lineages in the Tokugawa era and this, inevitably, influenced many other schools of military arts.[40]

Here, a reservation should be made. The above discussion is not intended to negate the adherence of a part of the pre-Tokugawa *bushi* society to Zen teachings. In such warrior documents as *Tako Tokitaka kakun* (*Tako Tokitaka's house rules*, ca. 1544), *Shingen kahō* (*The house law of [Takeda] Shingen*, 1558), and *Kuroda Nagamasa chakushi Tadayuki kunkai shojō* (*Kuroda Nagamasa's letter with admonishments to his son Tadayuki*, 1614) we can find exhortations to study Zen as a means to comprehend the meaning of life and death, or reincarnation[41] (the same could be studied in other Buddhist sects through different means). However, these advocate Zen only as a philosophy of life, not mental training indispensable for the practical aspects of the military. It is a distinction which does not appear to have been appropriately recognized in the academic literature.

Thus, in the early Tokugawa era, we can observe a socio-cultural phenomenon in the warrior society: The appearance of a gap, or contradiction, between the spiritual side (self-perfection in the context of the Tokugawa-era warrior ethos and *shimpō-ron*) and physical practices which were supposed to support it. The gap between the ideal of character formation and competitive (i.e., removed from reality) technical content in modern *kendō* was noted by scholars Sugie Masatoshi, Enomoto Shōji, and Ōtsuka Tadayoshi. However, their discussion does not go beyond the narrow context of this sport. Enomoto only attempts to trace the origins of this gap to the introduction of swordsmanship sparring with the use of the bamboo sword and body protectors in the middle of the 18th century.[42] In actuality, this phenomenon pertained not to a single military art. It also appeared much earlier, in the beginning of 1600s, when the Yagyū family invented the first bamboo sword for the *shōgun*'s training. This phenomenon was characteristic of the Tokugawa-era *bushi* culture as a whole.

The problem with this gap was that the character *bu* ("martial") and other terms with a similar connotation, as well as claims of the actual martial value of "flowery training" never disappeared from the rhetoric about self-perfection and moral character building. It was a form of cultivating the spirit by those who claimed military status by birth, but through means which were impractical in actual combat, yet seemingly without any

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40 Ōmori Nobumasa 1974, p. 67. Maebayashi 1992, p. 63, note 17. Hurst 1998, pp. 92, 177-179.

41 *Tako Tokitaka kakun* appearing in Ozawa 2003, p. 164; *Shingen kahō* appearing in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1942, volume 1, p. 335; *Kuroda Nagamasa chakushi Tadayuki kunkai shojō* appearing in Ozawa 2003, p. 407.

42 Sugie 1974, 1984; Enomoto 1988; Ōtsuka 1995.

awareness of their ineffectiveness. This dissonance between means and goals persisted through the Tokugawa era and, as the following discussion will show, it has survived well into the present.

3.4 The Introduction of Safe Training Equipment and Free Sparring in Swordsmanship

"Flowery training" continued to be the prevailing trend in swordsmanship schools until the first half of the 18th century. At this time it was discovered that turning swordsmanship into a sport centered on free sparring with the use of safe training equipment could open new business opportunities and bring even more financial prosperity.

Sporadic usage of body protectors in swordsmanship and spearmanship began early in the Tokugawa era.[43] First usage of the bamboo sword is attributed to the Yagyū Shinkage-ryū school. According to various secondary sources and Yagyū Shinkage-ryū itself, it was the founder Kōizumi Ise no Kami who introduced the bamboo sword for training in swordsmanship. This round-shaped bamboo sword, called *hikihada shinai*, was a set of thinly cut straight bamboo strips inserted in a leather casing. It was soft and flexible and caused little pain at the point of impact. However, training in Yagyū Shinkage-ryū was not conducted through free sparring as yet. The bamboo sword was used only for training in predetermined patterns of movement and there were no body protectors.[44]

The following technical analysis will demonstrate that, ironically, training with uncurved round-shaped substitutes of the sword that gained particular popularity from the second half of the 18th century resulted in an even greater decline of the combat capabilities of the *bushi*. It is very unlikely that Kōizumi Ise no Kami, who himself had numerous military exploits and was praised as "the spearman number one of Kōzuke province,"[45] would have introduced such training equipment at a time when war was still an everyday matter in Japan.[46] It is more probable that it was the innovation of the

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43 Tominaga Kengo 1972, p. 277. Ōtsuka 1995, pp. 6. Nakamura Tamio 1999, p. 60; 2001a.

44 Yagyū Toshinaga 1957, p. 214. Imamura 1971, p. 152. Tominaga Kengo 1972, pp. 276, 448-449. Kōdansha 1983, p. 123. Sasama 1985a, p. 33. Friday 1997, p. 119. Hurst 1998, p. 84. Yokose 2000, p. 57. Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2005, pp. 28, 31.

45 Imamura 1971, p. 30. Yokose 2000, p. 55.

46 Some legendary stories state that Kōizumi used his bamboo sword for the first time in duels in order not to hurt his opponents (Watatani 1971, pp. 52-53. Tominaga Kengo 1972, p. 448. Hurst 1998, pp. 61-62). The technical analyses later in this chapter will show that it is a fiction unless

Yagyū family which added visual appeal to movements and introduced *hikihada shinai* to make training for the *shōgun* and other members of his family safe and amusing. It can be said that the Yagyū family pioneered the introduction of "flowery training" in Japanese swordsmanship, producing one of its finest forms.[47]

The first school to switch from training based on predetermined patterns of movement (*kata*) to free sparring with use of the bamboo sword and body protectors was Jikishinkage-ryū which introduced this method of training late in the 17th to early in the 18th centuries. Body protectors were used in this school since its 6th headmaster, Takahashi Danjōemon. They were improved in the time of the 7th headmaster, Yamada Heizaemon, who is said to have been disappointed with the low morale and lack of enthusiasm among *kata* practitioners. He made the switch to uninhibited free sparring with the use of equipment that prevented injuries.[48]

Still, up to this point, Jikishinkage-ryū does not seem to have used the new method of training as a means for active commercial self-promotion. It was the school's 8th headmaster, Naganuma Kunisato (1688-1767), who, as a pragmatic businessman, understood that the fresh sensation of the new safe sport could make Jikishinkage-ryū a trendsetter and bring lucrative commercial opportunities. So far, Japanese scholarship, perhaps striving to preserve the "sacredness" of the modern swordsmanship tradition, has not addressed the commercial character of its prototype, although Naganuma's reforms of Jikishinkage-ryū reveal this very clearly. Naganuma apparently realized that, instead of teaching a limited number of students for a long time for a higher tuition fee, profits and benefits in terms of cash flow, fame and geographical influence for his school could be greatly increased by multiplying the number of disciples paying lesser fees. Perfecting the training equipment further, Naganuma simplified the traditional multi-level disciple gradation system, leaving only three ranks. Also, whereas the

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we accept that Kōizumi was not as skillful as he is praised.

47 Strictly speaking, what has been communicated to the general public by the Yagyū family as "Shinkage-ryū" seems to have little in common with the original Shinkage-ryū established by Kōizumi Ise no Kami, and the name "Yagyū-ryū" is more appropriate to the school. Komagawa Kaishin-ryū, which traces its origins to Kōizumi's direct disciple Komagawa Tarōzaemon and is presently transmitted by Kuroda Tetsuzan, appears to have retained far more elements of the original Shinkage-ryū (see Kuroda 1992, pp. 19-20, 24, 26-27, 32, 77, 391; 1997, p. 112). Predetermined patterns of movement of Komagawa Kaishin-ryū are characterized by the use of the wooden sword at blinding speed appropriate to the school that traces its origins to the pre-Tokugawa ages. Still, there is a possibility that the Yagyū family divided the less practical skill taught to *shōgun*s and disciples from outside the family, and the "real" skill, which was transmitted in secrecy.

48 Hori 1934, p. 88. Watanabe Ichirō 1967b, p. 46. Imamura 1971, p. 152. Tominaga Kengo 1972, pp. 324-325. Watatani and Yamada 1978, pp. 328-329. Kōdansha 1983, p. 123. Nakamura Tamio 1999, pp. 59-60; 2001a.

teaching had been conducted only between the headmaster (the highest authority) of the school and the disciple, Naganuma now authorized those disciples who reached the *menkyo* rank not just to teach on behalf of the school but to carry out the "full transmission" of the school's skills.[49] The first of these measures promised to save disciples their money because, according to tradition, they were supposed to pay every time they were promoted to a higher rank. However, in actuality, it was aimed at attracting more disciples by reducing the costs. The second measure was aimed at the geographical expansion of the school through the creation of a horizontally structured organization with multiple intermediate chains of instruction.

Thus, it was the Hōryaku years (1751-1764) when safe swordsmanship sparring gained particular popularity and spread all over Japan. The innovations resulted in rapid geographical expansion and a large influx of new disciples to Jikishinkage-ryū which reached the peak of its prosperity during the time of Naganuma Kunisato. Simultaneously with Naganuma, swordsmanship sparring was employed and promoted even more widely for fame and gain by the second headmaster of Nakanishi-ha Ittō-ryū swordsmanship school, Nakanishi Tsugutake.[50] The rise of demand for cultural activities among commoners in this period also facilitated the spread of the new sport.[51]

Swordsmanship sparring became an object of harsh criticism practically from the time it was introduced by Jikishinkage-ryū. It was criticized not only by conservatives who adhered to the "flowery training"[52] but also by those *bushi* who still demonstrated a realistic approach to training in military arts. Nativist scholar Izawa Nagahide wrote in 1715 that "even if in sparring one hits a few inches of his opponent's body [with the bamboo sword], he is just concerned with how many times he has hit. [After such training] he will not even be able to scratch [with the real sword] the body of the opponent who wears armor over many layers of clothes. A person with good judgment should not practice such a useless art."[53]

One of the main promoters of swordsmanship sparring in Japan, Nakanishi-ha

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[49] Watanabe Ichirō 1967b, p. 46. Imamura 1971, pp. 152-155. Tominaga Kengo 1972, pp. 277, 324-326. Watatani and Yamada 1978, pp. 328-329. Kōdansha 1983, pp. 123-124. Hurst 1998, p. 84. Nakamura Tamio 1999, p. 60; 2001a.

[50] Hori 1934, p. 91. Watanabe Ichirō 1967b, pp. 6-7. Imamura 1971, p. 153. Tominaga Kengo 1972, pp. 277, 337. Watatani and Yamada 1978, p. 653. Kōdansha 1983, p. 124. Ōtsuka 1995, pp. 6-9. Hurst 1998, p. 84. Nakamura Tamio 1999, p. 70; 2001b. Nakanishi Tsugutake improved further training equipment for free sparring (Ōtsuka 1995, p. 6).

[51] Ōtsuka 1995, pp. 8-12.

[52] Imamura 1971, pp. 152-153. Tominaga Kengo 1972, p. 325. Watatani and Yamada 1978, p. 328. Hurst 1998, p. 83.

[53] *Bushikun* (*Warrior precepts*, 1715) by Izawa Nagahide (appears in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1942, volume 4, p. 292).

Ittō-ryū, was a branch of Ittō-ryu – another of the three root lineages of Japanese swordsmanship transmitted in the Ono family.[54] Yamaga Hachirō, a retainer of the Tsugara domain, trained directly under the headmaster of Ittō-ryū and reached the *menkyo* level of skill. Perhaps dissatisfied with Nakanishi Tsugutake's promotion of training based on free sparring, he first asked the headmaster of Ittō-ryū about the difference in training with the wooden and bamboo swords, and then forwarded the headmaster's response to Nakanishi.[55] One of the passages in the response reads, "…Bamboo sword techniques are not serious. They can be likened to a childish game, and are probably nothing else than an aversion to thinking deeply about the realities of combat." This appears to have caused great dissatisfaction with Nakanishi who replied:

> In my opinion, it is difficult to attain the state of self-abandonment (*sutemi*) when training with the blunt blade or wooden sword, and this is why skillful men have more chances to win. In the case of the bamboo sword, people train wearing protective face masks (*men*) and body protectors (*gusoku*), and those who are weak or whose techniques are unaccomplished, attain the state of self-abandonment and do not have much fear, and it is difficult to predict the outcome of the match… When training only with the use of protective face masks and body protectors, the practitioner does not feel that he has lost when the opponent's bamboo sword hits his forearms or hands.[56] It will result in an unbalanced way of training in which one does not feel that he has lost unless he is hit hard by his opponent. This is why the most important thing is to train with the bamboo sword in the same manner as with the wooden sword or blunt blade: The opponent should always keep in mind that he has lost if he is hit even lightly, and one should strive to win by powerful strikes. Furthermore, because there is not much fear of the opponent's fighting spirit when training with the bamboo sword, one should always train as if he is facing a great rival regardless of the real abilities of his opponent, and, by this, his skill will become accomplished naturally.[57]

These words are often cited in academic works and swordsmanship histories and Nakanishi's passages about the practicability of safe sparring are taken at their face value.[58] However, no-one seems to have attempted to uncover the true motives behind his objection. A pre-Tokugawa *bushi* could only have concluded that Nakanishi was trying to find any pretext for disguising the fact that he was converting the most fundamental element of the intangible warrior culture into a profitable sport. When saying that it is difficult to predict the outcome of bamboo sword sparring between

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54 Ittō-ryū (or Ono-ha Ittō-ryū) was another swordsmanship school that taught the Tokugawa *shōgun*s.

55 Kōdansha 1983, p. 124. Nakamura Tamio 2001b.

56 Meaning that forearms and hands are protected by special gloves.

57 Cited from Kōdansha 1983, p. 124. Nakanishi Tsugutake's reply appears in Sasamori 1965.

58 For example, Tominaga Kengo 1972, p. 337. Kōdansha 1983, p. 124. Enomoto 1988, p. 348. Ōtsuka 1995, p. 7.

skillful and unskillful practitioners, in which the latter has attained the state of self-abandonment, he fails to mention that skillful men can also attain the same psychological state of mind, and that actually its combination with superior skills gives even more advantage. His references to imaginative practices during training with the bamboo sword also do not stand up to criticism. In actual combat, one can fight only with what one has come to use in training. Thus, to stress that one should train with the bamboo sword in the same manner as with the wooden sword or blunt blade, is almost the same as to assert that one should train with a water pistol as if it were a real gun.[59]

Nakanishi mentions twice that training with the use of the bamboo sword and body protectors allows the practitioner to forget about fear and, by this, achieve remarkable progress. However, he does not address the question of how the practitioner would feel when facing the real sword without protectors, and how it would affect the skills acquired in an excessively safe environment void of any real sense of tension. Finally, when it comes to the state of self-abandonment, which seems to have been so important to Nakanishi, it seems that, in the context of his writing, such a psychological state appears to mean nothing but a frenzied action that in actual engagement would endanger the practitioner as well as his comrades-in-arms.

Nakanishi Tsugutake went even further in his promotional activity and broke one of the fundamentals of the traditional system of teaching in military arts schools. According to *Ittō-ryū heihō tōhō kigen* (*The origins of training with the bamboo sword in Ittō-ryū swordsmanship*) written by the 4th headmaster of Nakanishi-ha Ittō-ryū swordsmanship school, Nakanishi Tsugumasa, and published in 1861, Nakanishi Tsugutake started to teach his disciples according to their individual preferences: If they wanted, they could study only predetermined patterns of movement (*kata)*, or engage only in free sparring with use of the bamboo sword and body protectors, or engage in training in both.[60] Scholar Enomoto Shōji maintains that this signified the collapse of the traditional teaching system but that this occurred contrary to the headmasters' policies under the pressure of disciples' wishes.[61] However, it may be argued that exactly the opposite happened. The very nature of training and study, not only in military arts, but also in other fields of traditional culture in Japan, presumes absolute obedience, and questioning the authority of headmasters and senior disciples was (and still is) impermissible; such conduct usually results in expulsion from the school. The

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[59] As noted earlier, even the wooden sword could become a lethal weapon in the hands of a skillful swordsman. After two and a half centuries of history, the imaginative practices mentioned by Nakanishi still remain intact in modern *kendō* (see Chapter VI).

[60] Tominaga Kengo 1972, p. 337. Enomoto 1978, p. 263. Kōdansha 1983, p. 124.

[61] Enomoto 1978, p. 265.

lifetime relationship between the teacher and the disciple is the most crucial factor in the process of study, and the teacher retains absolute authority over the disciple regardless of the latter's level of mastery. If we accept this, then it clearly was Nakanishi Tsugutake (the teaching side) that caused the collapse of the traditional teaching system by following his disciples' preferences for the sake of commercial interest.

Although some schools still continued to adhere to training in predetermined patterns of movement, Naganuma Kunisato's and Nakanishi Tsugutake's promotional activity and innovations had great success and training based on free sparring spread quickly all over Japan (still, as will be discussed further, it was not accepted easily in domain colleges (*hankō*)). The teaching system that was focused on disciples' preferences was adopted by many other swordsmanship schools and continued to exist until the Bakumatsu period. The two trends stimulated further factionalism within swordsmanship schools, giving birth to an even greater number of newly established schools, factions and branches.[62] Thus, the process of the degradation of *bushi* military skills in the Tokugawa era consisted of two stages, or waves: The first wave was represented by the "flowery training" of the early Tokugawa era; this was followed by the second wave of turning combat skills into a competitive sport from about the middle of the 18th century onwards. The following discussion will show, however, that one of the major problems with the safe swordsmanship sparring was that, similarly to the "flowery training," it was often perceived by its practitioners not as a sport but as a skill applicable in actual combat.

3.5 Proliferation of Inter-School Matches and Employment of the "New Schools" at Domain Colleges

From the second part of the 18th century, training in Japanese swordsmanship was divided into three currents: Predetermined patterns of movement with use of the wooden sword (in the majority of cases it was the "flowery training"); free sparring with the use of the bamboo sword and body protectors; and a mix of both. Over time, the first type of training declined considerably while the latter two became dominant. The process and timing of the introduction of training based on free sparring depended on the personal views of headmasters of swordsmanship schools, as well as on the specific circumstances in particular domains.

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[62] Enomoto 1978, pp. 265. Kōdansha 1983, p. 125. Ōtsuka 1995, p. 6.

There were essentially two different ways of studying swordsmanship in the Tokugawa era: A *bushi* could either train at a town training hall (*machi dōjō*) or at the domain college (*hankō*) as part of his broader educational curriculum.[63] In this period, free sparrings were, as a rule, limited only to practitioners of the same swordsmanship schools. Schools maintained the atmosphere of utmost secrecy and strictly prohibited their disciples from engaging in matches with practitioners of other traditions (*taryū jiai*). Besides the ban on information disclosure and participation in inter-school matches, schools also often prohibited simultaneous study of swordsmanship of other traditions (*kenryū*, or *kengaku*).[64]

It is important to note that the secrecy of military arts schools established in the Tokugawa era and the secrecy of those of the pre-Tokugawa ages were fundamentally different. Prior to the Tokugawa era, the preservation of secrecy was a matter of life and death. In the Tokugawa era, when the skills of the majority of military arts schools became impractical and commercialized, the reclusiveness of military arts schools was preserved for its own sake in order to maintain the profitability of a certain family lineage. Inter-school matches producing winners and losers were dangerous for the well-being of these families, and the ban on inter-school matches was also aimed at protecting their commercial and social status.

Furthermore, in the Tokugawa era, swordsmanship schools' secrecy was also reinforced by overlapping policies of the Bakufu and domains. From the Bakufu's standpoint, distance between the various domains, if not outright hostility and distrust, better served the *shōgun*'s hegemony, and training confined to the domain's borders was a better way to control the activities of the *bushi*. On the other hand, domains adhered to a policy of self-sufficient local units (*kakkyo*) and were reluctant to hold inter-school

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63 Hurst 1998, p. 87.

64 Hurst 1998, p. 92. Fuse 2006, pp. 28, 56-57. The same bans were also common in schools of other kinds of military arts. Karl Friday and Cameron Hurst note that *taryū jiai* never disappeared completely, as accounts of celebrated duels during the middle and late Tokugawa era attest (Friday 1997, p. 202, note 19. Hurst 1998, pp. 67-68). However, they fail to mention that these were not the mortal duels of the pre- and early Tokugawa era, and that they rarely resulted in a fatal outcome. They also do not mention the fact that mortal duels were practically impossible under Tokugawa law (see Taniguchi Shinko 2005 on the regulation of violence among the *bushi* by Tokugawa law). That is why, although *dōjō yaburi* ("destroying" a training hall of a military arts school through an inter-school match to build up one's fame) became common by the end of the Tokugawa era, it cost one his reputation and, usually, only a moderate injury. In regard to *kenryū* or *kengaku*, it is important to note that secrecy was not the only reason for maintaining the ban on simultaneous study of other traditions. Military arts schools had certain mannerisms, usually referred to as *kuse* in Japanese, which were a side effect of the specific physical training of each school and were revealed unconsciously in movement. Bringing a mannerism of one school into the practice of another was not allowed in order to prevent the mix of mannerisms, as well as the practitioner's becoming "Jack of all trades and master of none."

matches because it could lead to a leakage of information about the internal state of their affairs.[65]

The situation changed dramatically early in the first half of the 19th century, when the so-called "new schools" (*shinryū*, or *shinkō ryūha*), such as Shintō Munen-ryū, Shingyōtō-ryū, Kōgen Ittō-ryū, Kyōshin Meichi-ryū, Hokushin Ittō-ryū and others, were the first to begin engaging actively in matches with disciples of other schools.[66] Historians refer to them as "new schools" not because they were established anew (the majority of them appeared in the 18th century), but because they did not hesitate to break old traditions and customs and were the first to employ inter-school matches.

Some authors maintain that, in the Bakumatsu period, the Bakufu and domain authorities were gravely concerned over national defense in a time of intensifying visits of foreign ships, and that they encouraged swordsmanship schools towards more openness, interaction and conducting inter-school matches both to improve *bushi* military skills and to boost their morale.[67] However, this seems to confuse cause and effect: The Bakufu and domain top officials first had to ascertain with their own eyes that such training methods were effective before offering any kind of encouragement. Inter-school matches preceded the influence of top officials and was a phenomenon arising within the "new schools." This is especially true when taking into consideration the fact that practically all of the "new schools" initially appeared and functioned in rural areas.[68] In a situation of severe social discrimination, it was very unlikely that the Bakufu and domain officials would reach out to schools headed and practiced by peasants and rural warriors (*gōshi*) and encourage them to employ methods of training that had yet to be proven effective.

The motives for inter-school matches by the "new schools" are not difficult to understand: They were very similar to the case of Jikishinkage-ryū and Nakanishi-ha Ittō-ryū in spreading use of the bamboo sword and body protectors. The "new schools" were driven mostly by commercial considerations. Unlike pre-Tokugawa warriors who fought for their lords' interests in mortal combat on battlefields, representatives of swordsmanship schools of the early 19th century engaged in relatively safe inter-school matches in training halls to expand the popularity of their schools, and so gain financial prosperity.

In the Bakumatsu period, the international and domestic crises forced the Bakufu and

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65 Hurst 1998, pp. 67, 88, 178-179. Fuse 2006, pp. 195-196, 204-205.
66 Fuse 2006, p. 195.
67 Shimokawa 1925, Enomoto 1978, Kōdansha 1983.
68 Enomoto 1988, p. 348. Ōtsuka 1995, pp. 10-12. Fuse 2006, p. 196.

domain officials to implement military reforms directed at employing European weaponry and methods of army and navy warfare. However, swordsmanship and other native military arts continued to occupy an important place in the military training of the *bushi*.[69] This is when the Bakufu and domain officials turned their eyes to the "new schools" whose methods of training based on free sparring and active engagement in inter-school matches seemed more practical and promised to provide what conservative schools lacked most: Physical mobility, speed, stamina, higher morale of practitioners, and the possibility to test and polish one's swordsmanship skills in sparring with practitioners of other traditions.

The timing of the authorities' turn to the "new schools" depended on a particular domain, and, in a great many cases, its progress was not smooth. Many conservative schools which adhered to the "flowery training" strongly opposed any use of the "new schools" and their methods of training for domain retainers. The exclusive character and traditionalism of conservative schools was so strong that even domain authorities could not intervene easily in their activities. Considerations of secrecy of the domain inner affairs also hindered swordsmanship reforms. Another barrier was the social order and discrimination – as mentioned above, the "new schools" functioned in rural areas, and incorporation of a "new school" in the domain military training system meant that it was necessary to employ people from outside the *bushi* class as teachers; this was only possible by granting them the status of domain retainer with all concomitant privileges. It also meant that people from outside the *bushi* class, as well as low-ranking *bushi*, would be put in teaching positions over middle- and high-ranking *bushi*. As a result, they would engage in free sparring and might win over them. As Fuse Kenji suggests, the danger of loosening the rigid social class system was evident.[70]

However, national security issues prevailed over all other considerations. The Mito domain became one of the pioneers in the employment of "new schools." The main driving force behind the domain's decision was the formation of the idea of "practical swordsmanship" (*jitsuyō kenjutsu*). This idea was an outcome of the domain's policy of "national defense and war preparedness" (*kokubō bubi ron*) that made military readiness its first priority and necessitated the cultivation of a healthy and strong body and spirit among its retainers. Fujita Tōko (1806-1855) was one of the main advocates of this idea. He admired free sparring with use of the bamboo sword, saying that such vigorous training was extremely effective for strengthening the body and spirit of Mito *bushi* who were prone to be weak. As a result, such "new schools" as Hokushin Ittō-ryū and Shintō

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69 Enomoto 1978, pp. 266-267.

70 Fuse 2006, pp. 57, 195-196, 204-205, 211. Also, see Hurst 1998, pp. 92-93.

Munen-ryū were employed by the Mito domain in 1841 when its domain college Kōdōkan was tentatively opened.[71]

Eventually the "new schools" were employed at domain colleges (*hankō*) throughout the country. Domains started to gather both "new schools" and conservative schools committed to the "flowery training" under one roof at public training halls (*embujō*) or at the training facilities of domain colleges. Conservative schools were forced to remove the ban on studying swordsmanship of other traditions, as well as the ban on inter-school matches, and also had to start training in free sparring. Needless to say, representatives of the "new schools" were more proficient in this method and quickly proved their superiority over conservative schools (still, only in matches with use of the bamboo sword and body protectors), thus gaining great popularity among domain retainers.[72]

3.6 Proliferation of Extra-Long Bamboo Swords and Criticism of Bakumatsu Swordsmanship by Renowned Contemporary Swordsmen

The goal in free sparring with the use of safe equipment is to gain a superficial victory. The proliferation of inter-school matches in Japanese swordsmanship led to the invention of extra-long bamboo swords that allowed one to reach an opponent more easily from a longer distance. The first use of such a sword substitute is ascribed to Ōishi Susumu of the Yanagawa domain; he is said to have used a bamboo sword over five feet long and defeated swordsmen of almost all training halls in Edo during the Tempō years (1830-1844). It is accepted by historians that the proliferation of long bamboo swords began under Ōishi's influence.[73]

Extra-long bamboo swords were subject to harsh criticism by some renowned swordsmen of the time. In a private note on swordsmanship, a famous swordsman of the Bakumatsu – early Meiji period, Yamaoka Tesshū (1836-1888), wrote:

> Since great antiquity ten fists (*totsuka*) has been considered standard for the length of the sword.[74] Ten fists is a half of our body. This is why, if we combine the

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71 Watanabe Ichirō 1967b, pp. 2-3, 20-22. Enomoto 1978, pp. 265.

72 Enomoto 1978, pp. 265-266. Ōtsuka 1995, p. 14. Nakamura Tamio 2001b. Fuse 2006, p. 199.

73 Hori 1934, pp. 94-95. Imamura 1971, p. 213. Sasama 1985a, p. 33. Kōdansha 1983, p. 196. Enomoto 1988, p. 346. Nakamura Tamio 2001b. Bamboo swords longer than the standard length but shorter than Ōishi's (*san shaku hassun*, or 3.8 feet long) were used even before Ōishi (Enomoto 1988, p. 354).

74 According to the Japanese encyclopedia *Kōjien* (5th edition by Iwanami Shoten), "ten fists," or

> sword with the half of our body, it will become a part of us when facing an enemy… Since ancient times all those who acquired fame in the world with swordsmanship and transmitted their schools through their family lines, used the bamboo sword ten fists long or less. However, in the Tempō years, there was a man in the Yanagawa domain whose name was Ōishi Susumu. He was the first one to make the bamboo sword more than five *shaku* long[75] because he strove recklessly for victory in matches. He came to Edo, engaged in matches in all training halls and was extremely victorious… Since that time most practitioners of swordsmanship schools do not know the truth of the ancient ways anymore. Following the general trend around them, they think that the long bamboo sword gives an advantage. The shallowness of their practice and absence of knowledge should be lamented. Those who want to study swordsmanship at all should not seek meretricious victories… Nowadays the one who wants to revive the Way of the Sword should first of all make the bamboo sword according to the ancient method and use it to acquire the ability to handle the real sword in actual combat.[76]

Why was the length of the "ten fists" so important? As Yamaoka points out, the "ten fists" length of the Japanese long sword historically was deemed as best fitting the physique of Japanese people. The first mention of this ideal length can be found in *Kojiki* (*A record of ancient matters*, 712 A.D.) and *Nihon shoki* (*Chronicles of Japan*, 720 A.D.). Here the sword appears in various mythological scenes under the name of *totsuka no tsurugi*, or "ten fists long sword"[77] (this term is not a proper noun and refers to different swords in different myths[78]).

Yamaoka emphasized that the length of the long sword measured in "ten fists" allows a swordsman to feel it as an inseparable part of his body. This measurement was referred to as *jōsun*, the "standard length," and employed by most military arts schools all over Japan since the pre-Tokugawa ages. For example, this length is preserved in the

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totsuka, means the length of ten grips and, depending on the size of one's hands, is equal to approximately 2.6-3.3 feet. It is necessary to note that "ten fists" is the total length of a straight line drawn between the tip of the unsheathed blade and the pommel. If the Japanese long sword is gripped along its curvature, its length may exceed slightly the length of "ten fists."

75 Over five feet long.

76 This document appears in Maruyama Bokuden 1918a, pp. 118-119. The document was preserved at Zenshōan temple, Tōkyō, at the time of publishing. The version published in Maruyama Bokuden 1918a does not have a date but an identical writing appearing in Ōmori Sōgen 1970 (p. 241) has the date of 1883/9/14. Another writing by Yamaoka (dated 1883/3/30), which mentions the "ten fists" length, appears in Ōmori Sōgen 1970, pp. 238-241. One more writing, dated 1883/9, unreservedly states that all swordsmanship schools, including Shintō Munen-ryū, Shingyōtō-ryū, and factions and branches of Shinkage-ryū and Ittō-ryū, abandoned the legacy of their original founders and fell into using the extra-long bamboo swords which made them mere descendants of Ōishi Susumu (appears in Ōmori Sōgen 1970, p. 242).

77 The "nine fists long sword" (*kokonotsuka no tsurugi*) and the "eight fists long sword" (*yatsuka no tsurugi*) also appear in Japanese mythology but not as often as the "ten fists long sword." Yamaoka's quote above also mentions usage of the lesser length.

78 Sakai Toshinobu 2005, p. 127.

oldest military arts school in Japan, Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū, established in the middle of the 15th century. The school teaches that one has to consider the sword as an extension of the body and command it as if manipulating one's own fingers. The school also warns against using excessively long and heavy weapons because it leads to a loss of speed in actual combat.[79]

The length of the long sword also relates directly to one of the most fundamental principles in Japanese swordsmanship - "distancing" (*maai*). This principle refers to the constant awareness of the proper distance which a swordsman must maintain to be able to reach the opponent's body and protect his own. The majority of those who trained with long bamboo swords in the Bakumatsu period continued to wear real swords of the "ten fists" length in their daily life. Needless to say, it was hardly possible to switch between the sense of distance with the long bamboo sword developed during many years of training, and the sense of distance with a much shorter real sword when actual combat erupted. Furthermore, shorter distances require faster movement and shorter time for reaction which cannot be developed without the appropriate training.

Accounts of inefficient distancing on the battlefield can be found in historical records. Many Japanese who used the real sword during the second Sino-Japanese war testified

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[79] Kendō Nihon 1983, p. 49. Ōtake 1985a, p. 34; 1985b, pp. 37-38; 2007, pp. 50-59; 2009d, p. 46; 2009e, p. 53. Ogasawara 1995, pp. 55-56. Yokose 2000, p. 18. Military commander of the late 16th century Hosokawa Yūsai stressed the importance of the "standard length" (*nishaku ni sun*, *san sun* in his terms) and pointed to the fact that longer swords get easily stuck in the enemy's armor (*Hosokawa Yūsai oboegaki* (*Records of Hosokawa Yūsai*, late 16th or early 17th century) appearing in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1943, volume 8, p. 234). Some exceptions should be mentioned. Longer swords could sometimes be used for mounted combat. The short Nambokuchō era (only about 60 years long) is characterized by the appearance of giant swords of 5-7 feet long (*ōdachi* or *nodachi*) which were used in armored combat (Imamura 1971, p. 235; Hiroi 1971, pp. 93-94; Kōdansha 1983, pp. 111-112, 114; Sasama 1985a, p. 32). However, it was a temporary phenomenon and many of these giant swords were shortened (*suriage*) in the Muromachi era (Hiroi 1971, p. 94. Ogasawara 1995, p. 55). It goes without saying that the handling of such swords required enormous physical strength which not so many men possessed. Some scholars and swordsmanship historians correlate the enlargement of the long sword and the progress in swordsmanship skills from the late Heian to the Muromachi eras (Shimokawa 1925; Kōdansha 1983) or maintain that lighter and shorter swords were of little use during battles where heavy armor was used (Imamura 1971). This viewpoint is based on depictions of warriors in famous war tales such as *Hōgen monogatari* (*Tale of the disorder in Hōgen*, early 13th century), *Heike monogatari* (*The tale of the Heike*, early 13th century), *Heiji monogatari* (*Tale of Heiji rebellion*, second half of the 13th century), *Taiheiki* (*Chronicle of grand pacification*, second half of the 14th century) and many others. However, it ignores the tendencies towards drama and exaggeration in these heroic epics. Furthermore, this viewpoint also ignores completely the realities of actual combat. The standard Japanese sword can inflict a deep wound even with a slight touch of its cutting edge (Ōtsuka 1995, p. 7), i.e., it is possible to cut merely by pulling the blade without using much power. That is why, when it comes to pre-Tokugawa close-quarters engagement with the use of cold steel, victory was gained prior to contact with the opponent's body and speed of action was the decisive factor. As a general rule, heavy long weapons and speed are incompatible.

that, in the beginning, they could not reach their Chinese opponents' bodies even with the sword tip. This was because of their improper sense of distance and it took them time (i.e., repeat failures) to gain the proper sense.[80] These Japanese were fortunate because their enemy did not oppose them with the same swords. Otherwise, one such failure would have almost definitely cost them their life. In overlooking such matters, Japanese scholarship and swordsmanship historiography have consciously or unconsciously hushed up a simple fact: That all those who engaged in free sparring with the long bamboo sword since the Bakumatsu period were poorly qualified for using the real sword in actual combat.[81]

It appears that, in the Bakumatsu period, Yamaoka Tesshū was one of the few individuals who demonstrated a real concern about the length of the *bushi* traditional weapon and actually applied the traditional length to his sword training substitute.[82] However, there is no evidence that the majority of other swordsmanship practitioners of the time questioned the discrepancy between the length of the real sword and its training substitute. This suggests that the long lasting Great Tokugawa Peace resulted in a large-scale oblivion of both the realities of actual combat and the proper use of arms in warrior society from its lowest stratums to the highest. This is particularly evident from the Bakufu's decision to limit the length of the bamboo sword to *san shaku hassun* (3.8

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[80] Naruse Kanji 1940, pp. 55-57. Naruse participated in this war and was in charge of sword repair. His book contains valuable summarizations of the types of damage to the Japanese sword (the so-called *guntō*, which in many cases were pre-Meiji blades with new guard, sheath, and other accessories corresponding to the standards of post-Meiji Japanese army). Naruse also provides numerous testimonies of Japanese soldiers and officers in regard to usage of the Japanese sword in action. In this particular case, the summarized testimony sounds as "in the combat with real blades, the distance to the enemy seems much closer than in usual life." It is obvious that the distortion of the sense of distance was mistakenly perceived as a result of a changed psychological state in actual combat. At the time in question, the majority of Japanese men used to train in *kendō* with long bamboo swords and other testimonies in Naruse's book repeatedly state that *kendō* training was absolutely useless for actual combat (to be discussed later). The testimony about distancing shows clearly that most Japanese were not aware of the fundamental problem that comes from the discrepancy between the length of the real sword and its training substitute.

[81] One of the rare exceptions is Ōtsuka 1995. However, this academic work is not consistent in its criticism of the practicability of *kendō* in actual combat, and it takes at face value attempts to turn *kendō* into "practical swordsmanship" in the first half of the 20th century in order to make it usable on the battlefield. Although taken seriously by many, the very idea of turning *kendō* into a practical skill was absurd because Japanese practically never faced enemies with the same swords during their wars of expansion in the first half of the 20th century. Besides distancing, some other fundamental issues pertaining to swordsmanship training based on sparring with the bamboo sword will be illuminated below.

[82] Ittō Shōden Mutō-ryū, a swordsmanship school that Yamaoka Tesshū established early in the Meiji era, has been preserved to the present and it inherited the length of Yamaoka's bamboo sword measured as *san shaku ni sun*, which is equal to "ten fists" (Sasama 1985a, p. 33; Shiina 2008, p. 84). Still, it is not clear in which period of his life Yamaoka started to use this length.

feet) for the training of its retainers at the Military Institute (Kōbusho) which it established in 1856 in Edo.[83] The Bakufu was worried about the widespread use of extra-long bamboo swords. Nevertheless, *san shaku hassun* was still about seven inches longer than the average length of the real sword worn in daily life. The discrepancy remained far too great in Japanese swordsmanship where just one inch of improper distancing in real engagement could lead to fatal consequences.[84]

Yamaoka Tesshū was not alone in his criticism of the ways of swordsmanship training. Another prominent swordsman of the Bakumatsu period, Kubota Sugane (1791-1866) of Tamiya-ryū school, criticized all schools of swordsmanship for losing touch with the skills of handling the real sword.[85] However, it appears that Yamaoka went further than other contemporary critics by pointing specifically to the harm that engagement in inter-school matches was bringing to their practitioners. This is clear from the following document, written by Yamaoka early in the Meiji era, when he had already opened his Shumpūkan training hall.

> …When founders established their schools, they developed training methodologies based on their refinements in swordsmanship. At present there is no one who preserves these methods of training or truly practices them. In general, people merely pursue victory with the long bamboo sword. When I think of the reason for this, there is no one who knows the fundamental truths of swordsmanship, and everyone just follows fads and is preoccupied with outward embellishment of their movements. That is why, when it comes to using the real sword in actual combat, even if they win, it is by luck, and it is hard to say that they gained a real and self-evident victory. My point of view is different. I maintain that, regardless of outward appearance, one should achieve peace of mind through the true principles [of handling the sword] and the natural victory. If you want to master the truth of this Way, it is my rule that the beginner should enter and train in my school for three years and develop his body well [according to the principles of the school]. That is to say, when tempering your body, it should be done in the natural way… You will build the "swordsmanship body" and achieve the level when you do not deviate from the principles of my school, even when confronting a practitioner of some other school. If you really want to train in swordsmanship, [you should keep in mind that] for three years I prohibit those who join my school to go to other swordsmanship training halls, so popular nowadays, and recklessly engage in matches there. This is not because I do not want to send people who entered my school to other training halls. This is because I do not want them to negate their efforts to build the body according to the principles of my school. In

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[83] Hori 1934, p. 95. Enomoto 1978, pp. 266-267; 1979, pp. 260-262; 1988, p. 362. Kōdansha 1983, pp. 136-138. Nakamura Tamio 2001b.

[84] *San shaku hassun* length established by the Bakufu remains the official length of the bamboo sword in modern *kendō* (Hurst 1998, p. 152). Similar attempts to shorten the bamboo sword were made in the first half of the 20th century as part of the tendency to return *kendō* to its practical meaning in the time of Japan's wars of expansion (Ōtsuka 1995, p. 122). However, the length of the bamboo sword appears to have never decreased to the length of the real sword.

[85] Enomoto 1978, pp. 271-282.

> no way can I welcome in my training hall those who do not pursue the true training in swordsmanship. I do not like useless waste of effort. Since ancient times all schools prohibited inter-school matches. They did not allow this to their practitioners unless they were at the *menkyo* level of swordsmanship. This is how founders of all schools, who went through extreme hardship, contrived their Ways and developed their training methodologies. If you do not swear that you are The One who pursues the true training in swordsmanship, do not come to my training hall.[86]

These lines were written by a man who himself spent a great part of his life in inter-school matches and finally realized the futility of a training which was not based on the pre-Tokugawa methodologies developed exclusively for handling a real sword in actual combat.[87]

Thus, besides the length of the bamboo sword, Yamaoka Tesshū's criticism, unlike his fellow swordsmen, included what he regarded as senseless engagement in inter-school matches. However, even Yamaoka with his critical approach still exhibited certain forms of bias, especially in his belief that the bamboo sword and body protectors were indispensable for training. The same kind of belief was common to a handful of other more general contemporary critics of Japanese swordsmanship, such as the above mentioned Kubota Sugane.

A point in passing here is that, from the first of his quotes above, it is obvious that Yamaoka perceived the bamboo sword to be the invention of "ancient times," although only about two centuries and a half divided him from the time when the Yagyū family invented *hikihada shinai* for the Tokugawa *shōgun*s' training, and only about a century and a half divided him from Yamada Heizaemon's introduction of free sparring with use of the bamboo sword and body protectors in Jikishinkage-ryū. It is hard to say to what degree an accurate knowledge of Japanese swordsmanship's history was available to people in the Bakumatsu period, but Yamaoka's writing clearly demonstrates that he was not aware of its stages and time frames.[88]

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[86] The document is dated 1882/7. Preserved in Zenshōan temple, Tōkyō.

[87] Although not Yamaoka's contemporary, another renowned swordsman Shirai Tooru (1783-1843) also spent many years of his life in sparring based swordsmanship and eventually came to criticize not only inter-school matches but sparring itself (Kōdansha 1983, p. 191. Enomoto 1988, pp. 359; 369, note 8).

[88] As one of Yamaoka's writings (1884/11) indicates, however, he was aware that the proliferation of body protectors in swordsmanship began "over one hundred years" before his time (appears in Ōmori Sōgen 1970, pp. 250-251).

3.7 900 years of Sword Skills: A Comparative Perspective

The testimonies of participants of 19th-20th centuries armed incidents involving usage of the Japanese sword illustrate the degree to which sparring with the bamboo training substitute of the sword was meaningless in actual combat. Novelist Tsumoto Yō provides an account of the surviving assassins of the Bakufu senior councilor Ii Naosuke, all of whom maintained that, when assaulting Ii's procession (1860/3/3), they could not use anything from what they learned at swordsmanship training halls.[89] Tsumoto does not give a reference for this account but it does seem credible taking into consideration a similar testimony by Kumamoto Jitsudō, who fought as a member of the imperial army's swordsmen unit Battōtai during the suppression of Satsuma Rebellion in 1877.[90] As indicated above, Japanese soldiers and officers who took part in the second Sino-Japanese war also maintained that their *kendō* training was absolutely useless when they had to apply the real sword in action.[91]

Such testimonies indicate that the *bushi* completely lost the skills of handling cold steel, particularly with the introduction of free sparring in the middle of the 18th century. However, such a conclusion would be too general and ambiguous. The discrepancy between the length of the real sword and its training substitute was not the only problem of Japanese swordsmanship. A more detailed technical analysis, starting from the point in time when curved blades were introduced in Japan, is necessary to gain an insight into what actually happened to *bushi* martial skills in the Tokugawa era.

In Japan, prior to the middle of the Heian era, stabbing with the sword, not slashing, was the main way of inflicting a deep wound on the enemy's body. Swords were straight, usually single-edged, with a short hilt designed for single-hand gripping. Sword skills gradually progressed and finally it was discovered that curvature of the blade allowed to efficiently inflict deep wounds and mutilate limbs by slashing. This started to be used along with stabbing. It was not a simple striking movement but one which combined circular pulling/pushing movements. Thus, curved single-edged swords spread quickly in the 10th century A.D. However, during this period, mounted archery was still the main way of fighting on the battlefield, and the sword remained a secondary weapon. It was used for mounted combat only with the right hand; the hilt was still short and was curved even more than the blade. It was the Kamakura era when warfare was partially

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89 Tsumoto 1983, p. 203.

90 Ōtsuka 1995, p. 27. Kumamoto's criticism of contemporary methods of swordsmanship training can be found in Kumamoto Jitsudō 1893-1894.

91 Naruse Kanji 1940, pp. 51-52, 55-57, 71-74.

shifted to the ground and the Japanese sword started to be gripped with both hands and obtained its final form, i.e., its hilt was lengthened and both the blade and the hilt formed one curved line (the shape referred to in Japanese as *toriizori* or *tenjinzori*).[92]

Among various world cultures, the Japanese long sword in its final shape presents an extremely rare example of the long sword which combines curvature with a long hilt designed for gripping with both hands. The question of why this shape of the long sword was invented in Japan, and does not seem to have equivalents in other cultures, is worth a separate investigation but what is important here is that this combination had a tremendous impact on sword skills. The long hilt allowed for universal usage of the sword with one or both hands and, by this, increased dramatically the diversity of the blade's usage in actual combat.[93] Besides slashing and thrusting with one or both hands, the Japanese long sword could be used by gripping the hilt with the right hand and attaching the left palm to the back ridge of the blade (*mune*)[94] (see Figure 7). The three ways of handling the sword, and particularly the two-handed grip, made the number of sword techniques practically infinite and unpredictable. The two-handed grip was appreciated by the *bushi* to the degree that hand-held shields were practically unknown in Japan.[95]

When it comes to the curvature, besides strengthening the effect of slashing, it allows the shock of impact to be efficiently absorbed by the back ridge of the blade (*mune*) rather than the cutting edge, and the sheath to be less damaged when drawing and replacing the sword.[96] Other advantages were summed up by a famous swordsmith of the late Tokugawa era, Yamaura Saneo (1804-1875):

> …What I value is different from other people, and it is first of all the shape of the sword. The sword must be worn in such a way that it becomes one with the body in the same way as horns are natural parts of an animal, and that it doesn't fatigue the owner when traveling over rough terrains or long distances, and keeps his courage unrelenting. Swords with a shallower curve cause discomfort[97] when

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92 Sasama 1985a, pp. 31-32. Ōtake 1985a, p. 34. Farris 1992, pp. 18-19, 102-103. Friday 2004, pp. 77-84.

93 The Japanese sword can be used with one (right) hand for slashing and thrusting. However, it is unsuitable for the kind of single-hand usage which is seen in European rapier fencing.

94 For examples of such usage of the long sword in Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū, see Yokose 2000, pp. 20-21. Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2005, pp. 10-11, 15; 2008, pp. 14, 25, 31, 41-43. Ōtake 2007, pp. 66, 76, 82, 84-85, 110, 118, 123, 125-131.

95 There seem to be only two appearances of hand-held shields in early medieval sources, both in 13th century picture scrolls (Friday 2004, p. 90).

96 Ōtake 1985a, p. 34. Also, see the interview with one of the most famous modern swordsmiths of Japan, Yoshihara Yoshindo, in Ogasawara 1995, pp. 93-94.

97 When referring to "fatigue" and "discomfort," Yamaura's unspoken assumption is the custom of carrying the sword in one's waist belt with the blade edge turned upwards.

> worn and are inconvenient for swift unsheathing. They also cut poorly, and bend when hit against harder objects. In battle, straighter swords take greater damage when struck against the flat of the blade…[98]

Furthermore, as the example of Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū shows, pre-Tokugawa warriors used a large number of techniques that took advantage of the curvature.[99]

As mentioned earlier, martial training of the pre-Tokugawa *bushi* was conducted exclusively with the use of wooden imitations of weapons (sometimes also blunt blades) since there was no other way to acquire the necessary wealth of technical skill and make full use of it in actual combat. The invention of uncurved round-shaped substitutes of the sword (*shinai*) for training purposes in the Tokugawa era resulted in the loss of the skill and experience of close-quarters combat of the pre-Tokugawa ages. This, consequently, led to the deterioration of combat capabilities of the *bushi* in the Tokugawa era. Free sparring and inter-school matches with the use of such substitutes limited the use of the sword to what, in relative terms, was only primitive swinging and a few ways of thrusting, reducing the great number of sword techniques required by the unpredictability of actual combat to several tens at most (the majority of which were created for sparring in training halls and were impractical in action).

For example, pre-Tokugawa *bushi* used four positions of the cutting edge when thrusting: They could thrust with the cutting edge facing down, upwards, to the left, and to the right. It is a crucial difference compared to the round-shaped training substitute that does not allow one to distinguish between various positions of the cutting edge (and actually even the flats of the blade), and leaves only one way of thrusting for the practitioner. It should be noted that the direction in which the cutting edge of cold steel is turned matters greatly. A thrust is stronger if the cutting edge is turned to the left (assuming the standard right-handed attack).[100] In modern Japan, judicial trials often regard cold steel used in a crime with the cutting edge turned upwards as having more

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[98] The full text of Yamaura Saneo's essay *Oi no nezame* (*The insomnia of an old man*) appears in Nakajima 1974, p. 188. The translation is partially adapted from Ōtake 2007, p. 57. Nativist scholar Izawa Nagahide, who was also known for his realistic approach to the practice of military arts, wrote in *Bushikun* (*Warrior precepts*, 1715) that only well curved swords should be used for actual combat (appears in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1942, volume 4, p. 276).

[99] Takeuchi Kaishirō 1998, pp. 61-62. Yokose 2000, pp. 15, 18. Ōtake 2007, pp. 53-54; 2009e, p. 52. For an example of the application of the long sword's curvature in Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū, see Ōtake 1985b, p. 41; 2007, p. 105.

[100] Ōtake 2007, pp. 46, 49. Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2008, pp. 24. Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū provides examples of thrusting with the long sword whose cutting edge is turned to the left. See Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2005, p. 12; 2008, pp. 24, 36, 42, 44-45. Ōtake 1977, volume 1, p. 56; 1977, volume 2, pp. 72-73; 2007, p. 87-86, 148.

killing power, and they may impose a severer punishment for this form of assault.[101]

Likewise, pre-Tokugawa *bushi* knew that lower positions of the sword allow for stronger and faster attacks and counterattacks than upper ones.[102] They often resorted to bottom-up slashing with the cutting edge turned upwards because it was faster, less visible and more difficult to block.[103] Such usage of the sword made little sense in free sparring with round-shaped substitutes that did not allow one to distinguish between various positions of the cutting edge and between the flats of the blade, and left room only for swinging movements. Indeed, swinging movements were equal to opening oneself up and exposing one's vital points to an opponent trained in the proper usage of the sword.[104]

Prior to the Tokugawa era, Japanese swordsmanship distinguished clearly between armored and unarmored modes of combat. The spread of free sparring and inter-school matches in the Tokugawa era also resulted in a loss of knowledge about the fundamental difference between these modes, as well as the target areas of Japanese armor.[105] As noted earlier, designers of Japanese armor sacrificed full protection of the body for the sake of greater mobility. As a result, it had a number of openings and some vital points of the human body were unprotected. That is why pre-Tokugawa *bushi* were taught to target the open areas on an armored opponent's body. During free sparring and

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101 This point was confirmed with three lawyers in Japan. Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū provides examples of thrusting with the long sword whose cutting edge is turned upwards. See Yokose 2000, p. 21. Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2005, pp. 10-11; 2008, pp. 28-30, 41, 43. Ōtake 2007, pp. 68, 78, 85, 120-121.

102 From the interview with Ōtake Risuke, master teacher of Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū, appearing in BAB Japan 2003, pp. 14, 16. Also, see Ōtake 2009e, p. 53.

103 Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū provides examples of bottom-up slashing with the long sword whose cutting edge is turned upwards. See Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2005, pp. 15-16; 2008, pp. 13, 15, 18, 21, 22, 27, 30-31. Ōtake 2007, pp. 68, 98, 109-110, 112-113, 115, 116, 118, 121-122, 129-128, 137-136.

104 There were rare examples of warriors who still knew the weaknesses of upper sword positions in the Bakumatsu period. For example, according to the account of the Boshin war (1868-69) in the Nihommatsu domain by scholar Sasaki Suguru, shortly before the battle between the domain's troops and the imperial army, a 14-year-old Nihommatsu *bushi* Narita Manjirō was instructed by his father that he should not slash, but only thrust when encountering an enemy (Sasaki Suguru 1977, pp. 151-152).

105 Some scholars insist that the unarmored mode of sword fight was developed only in the Tokugawa era (Friday 1997, p. 15. Hurst 1998, p. 64). However, this is unconvincing since pre-Tokugawa *bushi* did not wear armor incessantly and, logically, would have possessed skills specifically for the occasion when not wearing armor. This is supported by the fact that Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū, established in the middle of the 15th century, transmits both modes of swordsmanship (Ōtake 1985b, p. 39; 2007, pp. 108-109, 124; 2009, pp. 50-51. Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2005, p. 9; 2008, p. 12). A mention of types of wounds that vary depending on the armored and unarmored type of sword fight can be found in *Kuroda Nagamasa yuigon'an* (*Draft testament of Kuroda Nagamasa*, 1623) by military commander Kuroda Nagamasa (appears in Ozawa 2003, p. 419).

inter-school matches of the Tokugawa era, a practitioner was supposed to hit with the bamboo sword only those predetermined areas of his opponent's body which were covered with body protectors[106] (usually, head, forearms, the front of the torso, shoulders, throat). These areas were the most protected by armor and hitting them made no sense from the practical point of view. Even for the unarmored mode of combat, such training was inappropriate as it was more important to hit or even touch the opponent, something completely different from chopping or cleaving with the sharp edge.

It may be argued that playful exchange of hits in free sparring results in bad habits such as "pulling" the strike, that is, halting it before it has reached full force and penetration.[107] It also results in the loss of any concern to block the opponent's attack powerfully and, as far as possible, from one's own body. The diary of Kawaguchi Takesada, an imperial army accountant who participated in the suppression of the Satsuma Rebellion in 1877, provides a rare account of the fatal consequences of such sword usage in actual combat. Jigen-ryū of the Satsuma domain was one of the few swordsmanship schools of the Bakumatsu period that did not employ bamboo swords and free sparring for training and preserved training methodologies of the pre-Tokugawa ages. Jigen-ryū swordsmen's strike was so powerful that some soldiers of the imperial army were found cut to death from their left shoulder down to the navel (an apparent application of the diagonal way of slashing in Japanese swordsmanship called *kesagiri*). One soldier was found dead with his sword guard pressed into his forehead. The most probable explanation for such a strange cause of death is that this soldier attempted to block a Satsuma swordsman's powerful strike in the same way he used to receive the bamboo sword in free sparring.[108] In other words, he received it without using much power and in close proximity to his head, a typical technique which can be seen in Bakumatsu woodblock prints and which is inherited by modern *kendō* (see Figure 8).

3.8 The "Practical Swordsmanship" of the Tokugawa Era

The fact that the pair of long and short swords (*daishō*) started to symbolize exclusively the *bushi* class only in the Tokugawa era is well known to scholars. This symbol was so important that the loss or theft of even one of the swords sometimes

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[106] Sasama 1985a, p. 33. Nakamura Tamio 1996, p. 29.
[107] Reid and Croucher 1983, pp. 133-134.
[108] Tobe 1998, pp. 80-81.

resulted in extinction of the whole family line (*ie danzetsu*) of the careless possessor.[109] However, what does not seem to be equally well understood is that the veneration of this symbol was in direct proportion to the decline in the skill necessary for its handling in actual combat. While some scholars acknowledge that Tokugawa-era swordsmanship based on free sparring turned into a sport and became divorced from the realities of actual combat,[110] it has nonetheless become generally agreed among wider circles of scholars and historians of Japanese swordsmanship that the country-wide employment of free sparring with the use of safe equipment in the 18th century, and especially the spread of inter-school matches from the first half of the 19th century, was nothing but the return of swordsmanship to the realities of actual combat, and that these trends improved military skills and boosted the morale of the *bushi* class.[111]

This misconception arose in part due to the lack of attention to pre-Tokugawa warrior skills. If one considers military arts only from the Tokugawa era onwards, clearly one has no room for comparison with the bodily practices of the *bushi* belonging to periods of constant war. However, there is an even more important reason. Such authors appear to be misled by a century and a half old notion of the "practicability" of swordsmanship training based on free sparring and inter-school matches. This notion appears frequently in the Bakufu and domain authorities' official documents of the Bakumatsu period regarding military and swordsmanship reforms. The term "practical" (*jitsuyō*) was used in these documents in regard to the new methods of training, and "practical swordsmanship" (*jitsuyō kenjutsu*) became a kind of a slogan of the Bakumatsu period. The idea of "practical swordsmanship" can be seen in Fujita Tōko's *Hitachiobi* (*Policies which will bring positive results*, ca. 1839), a writing that triggered employment of "new schools" in the Mito domain college.[112] The term "practical" referring to swordsmanship and other military arts is also seen in numerous Bakufu documents related to the establishment of its Military Institute in 1856.[113] Similar usage no doubt may be found in many other domains.

In accepting this notion, scholars do not question the ability of the Bakufu and

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109 Taniguchi Shinko 2005, pp. 90-93.

110 Nanjō 1967, Ōtsuka 1995, Nakamura Tamio 1996, 1999.

111 For example, Shimokawa 1925; Nishiyama 1959; Watanabe Ichirō 1967b; Oimatsu 1968; Imamura 1971, 1989; Tominaga Kengo 1972; Enomoto 1978, 1979, 1988; Watatani and Yamada 1978; Ishioka et al. 1980; Kōdansha 1983; Nakabayashi 1988d; Hurst 1998; Sakai Toshinobu 2003d; Fuse 2006.

112 Watanabe Ichirō 1967b, pp. 2-3; Enomoto 1978, p. 266.

113 Enomoto 1978, pp. 266-267; 1979. Bakufu documents in which there are numerous examples of the usage of the term "practical" (*jitsuyō*) in regard to swordsmanship and spearmanship training appear in Andō Naokata 1930.

domain decision-makers to judge what was practical and what was not in actual combat. They do not take into account the probability that, if the training in free sparring with the use of the bamboo sword and body protectors had been practical and led to outstanding performance in actual combat, it would have been invented in times of constant war long before the Tokugawa era.

Logically, the warfare methods invented during the Great Tokugawa Peace in the safe environment of training halls could not be more effective than those invented in times of incessant bloodshed. The Bakufu and domain decision-makers, however, failed to address this question. By the Bakumatsu period, they had already been at peace for so long that they no longer had any proper understanding of how Japanese traditional weapons should be used in actual combat. Their enthusiasm about the new methods of training was based primarily on the impression of higher mobility, speed, and freedom of movement of the practitioners of the "new schools," as well as their seemingly higher morale compared to conservative schools that adhered to the "flowery training."

This superficial impression resulted in virtually a total neglect of the training based on predetermined patterns of movement (*kata*) which was contemptuously regarded as "flowery training." However, it was not the training in *kata* itself that posed the problem. Rather, it was the oblivion of the pre-Tokugawa training methodologies which underlay them. It was this oblivion which resulted in ritualization, movement embellishment, and loss of speed during the training in *kata*.[114]

3.9 Some Exceptions Among Military Arts Schools

Academic works have been in full agreement on the existence of the phenomenon of "flowery training" in the warrior society of the Tokugawa era and, as discussed above, in a lesser unity over the actual combat utility of swordsmanship training based on free sparring with use of the bamboo sword. However, no-one apparently has identified important exceptions to the prevailing trends and the reasons for their existence. While

[114] The *kata* training has been given much attention in the scholarly literature. However, it is considered mainly in the context of "cultural transmission" and other theoretical frameworks which are removed from such straightforward themes as military skills and their application in action. At present, knowledge of how training in *kata* of the Japanese military arts is applied in actual combat seems to be limited to a few individuals transmitting schools of military arts which were established prior to the Tokugawa era (some examples are Ōtake Risuke of Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū (Ōtake 2007, 2009g) and Kuroda Tetsuzan of Komagawa Kaishin-ryū (1992, 1997)). A rare example of a scholar who demonstrates a deeper comprehension of the meaning of *kata* training is Ogawa Naoko (2007).

such prominent swordsmen as Yamaoka Tesshū and Kubota Sugane (both were Bakufu retainers) criticized the general trends in Japanese swordsmanship of the Bakumatsu period, they obviously did not see all the schools of military arts or informal warrior training entities, including those that had survived from pre-Tokugawa ages in the countryside or distant domains. Some of these continued to preserve traditions transmitted from their founders for hundreds of years. Such were Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū, Takenouchi-ryū Jūjutsu, and a handful of others. They never employed free sparring and safe equipment for training purposes, maintained the ban on inter-school matches, and, at the same time, protected their skills from turning into "flowery training."

Among them, Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū and Takenouchi-ryū Jūjutsu also maintained the ban on *daimyō* service for centuries which allowed them to realize the primary intention of their founders to preserve both the schools' integrity and the well-being of the families in which they were transmitted. It is no coincidence that military arts schools that managed to preserve their broad curriculum and knowledge through the Tokugawa era practically unchanged, are characterized by three distinctive features: The ban on *daimyō* service, permanent location in the same rural area (autochthonism), and transmission within the same family lineage. The integrity of these schools could not have been preserved if their headmasters had entered *daimyō* service for financial rewards and taught *daimyō* retainers military skills. Eventually they would have been forced to abandon the teaching of the major part of their curriculum, since teaching all kinds of military arts and sciences in one place without discriminating against social classes and subclasses would contradict the very foundations of Tokugawa society. Centuries long residence in the same rural areas allowed them to distance themselves from the complex discriminating relationships of urban communities.

Only a few records survive that allow us to know the actual use of those pre-Tokugawa sword skills which survived into, and beyond, the Bakumatsu period. The application of Jigen-ryū sword skills by Satsuma retainers during the Rebellion of 1877 has already been mentioned. Although the name of the swordsmanship school is unknown (or may be a school as such did not exist at all if the skill was transmitted informally since the pre-Tokugawa ages), another example would be two young swordsmen of the northeastern Nihommatsu domain who, during the Boshin war, ambushed a unit of the imperial army and, using only their swords, killed nine opponents before being killed themselves. This ambush delayed the imperial unit's

offensive on the domain's castle.[115] A determination to die was not enough for such an action. The technical preconditions for its success was a mastery of handling the real sword at lightening speed and a thorough knowledge of vital points of the human body. In this particular situation, when even fractions of a second mattered in assaulting multiple opponents in close-quarters combat, the assailants no doubt relied on slashing at blinding speed since thrusting would have resulted in loss of the time consumed by pulling the blade out of the enemy's body. They would also have targeted only those vital points which caused instant death in order not to allow a counterattack. Such performance on the battlefield could not have been achieved through the practice of sportive swordsmanship that Yamaoka Tesshū and Kubota Sugane criticized so harshly.

3.10 The *Bushi* Intangible Culture and the New Methods of Training

As discussed in the previous two chapters, the intangible culture of the pre-Tokugawa *bushi* consisted of the five fundamental elements: Practical knowledge, training in military arts, the state of constant alertness, bodily etiquette, and the cult of the blade, all of them interwoven in the everyday process of purification and preparation for death. However, it was training in military arts that made the rest of the elements effective and was necessary for the cultivation of self-discipline and will power. Without this, the practical realization of the values peculiar to the *bushi* class was hardly possible.

It is necessary to stress again that it was the cult of death that underlay the very foundations of the *bushi* spiritual culture. As Daidōji Yūzan put it in the very beginning of his *Budō shoshinshū*: "The most important thing for the true warrior is that his soul should be prepared for death every day and every night, from the morning of the first day of the New Year when he takes chopsticks to eat rice cakes in celebration, until the night of the last day of the year."[116] Such attitudes required not intellectual comprehension or logical reasoning, but <u>practical realization</u> through the training in military arts which, prior to the dawning of the Great Tokugawa Peace, was accompanied by extreme exhaustion and danger over the span of many years. The example of Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū shows that the hereditary warrior houses possessed training methodologies that used knowledge of the natural workings of human physiology, and allowed their descendants to acquire the necessary skills without

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[115] Kikuchi and Itō 1998, ge, pp. 48-49. Stone monuments commemorating the two young swordsmen are located in Nihommatsu city of Fukushima prefecture.

[116] *BS*, p. 19.

sparring or competitive matches as these were regarded as far too removed from the realities of actual combat and, thus, served only to lower the warrior's physical and mental capacities.

In the Tokugawa era, the earlier training methodologies were largely forgotten. The phenomenon of "flowery training," in which the formal repetition of movements removed from the realities of actual combat was accompanied by excessive emphasis on psychological and technical theories, signified the collapse of the former warrior culture. From the second half of the 18th century, swordsmanship training halls with their free sparring and inter-school matches created the illusion of practicability and at the same time accelerated this decline.

First, an element of competition in free sparring works to replace the cooperation necessary for acquiring proper techniques, and the vital responsibility and danger of handling a real weapon, by the mental approach of the game-player with a toy weapon.[117] Secondly, any kind of sparring or competitive match presumes the existence of rules created for the safety of the parties. Such "rules consciousness" automatically deprives the practitioner of the mental attitude necessary for actual combat which recognizes no rules and uses all means to achieve the goal. Thirdly, sparring and competitive matches produce the psychology of "winners" and "losers," giving their practitioners the notion of "tomorrow" or a "second chance." From the point of view of pre-Tokugawa warrior culture, this kind of psychology was an extreme deviation from the ancient canons, placing warriors on the same grounds with other commoners. Finally, the psychology of "tomorrow" can lead to an unwillingness to train as if the present moment were one's last chance, tempting one to save both spiritual and physical energy for the future. This resulted in what may have seemed to earlier warriors as a slipshod way of training among many Tokugawa-era *bushi*.[118]

A point of major relevance for this thesis is that the numerous general writings on Bushidō, intended for a broad audience of *bushi*, and which were so characteristic of the Tokugawa era, made little sense precisely because their values and ideas could no longer be supported by the corresponding bodily practices and mental attitudes. The meaning of training in military arts, which was supposed to constitute the foundation of the *bushi* intangible culture, was distorted to the degree that the "military art," or "military training" in its original sense ceased to exist. This demise took with it the rest

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[117] Reid and Croucher 1983, p. 134.

[118] Concrete examples of such attitudes to military training can be found in the discussion of Yamaoka Tesshū's petition to the authorities of the Bakufu Military Institute (Kōbusho) (see Chapter IV).

of the fundamental elements of this warrior culture. Likewise, the cult of death became largely extinct, and from the middle of the Tokugawa era, *seppuku*, which was unique to the *bushi* as a class and underlay this cult, lost its substance. In many cases, it turned into a mere execution through decapitation during which *bushi* were beheaded by the "assistant" (*kaishakunin*) at the very moment they were receiving a dagger for cutting their belly. Sometimes, they were given wooden daggers or fans just to imitate the belly cut.[119]

Thus, in the Tokugawa era, what was supposed to be the warrior's "military training" in reality lowered the warrior's physical and mental capacities, and resulted in the lack of self-discipline and will power necessary to realize the *bushi* values in daily life. Training based on free sparring with the use of safe equipment not only failed to revive the combat capabilities of the *bushi*, it actually removed them from the realities of actual combat even further, accelerating the erosion of the foundations of the warrior spiritual culture which began with the appearance of "flowery training." The warning quoted earlier of one Ittō-ryū headmaster to Nakanishi Tsugutake, the active promoter of swordsmanship sparring in the 18th century, was ultimately justified: "…Bamboo sword techniques are not serious. They can be likened to a childish game, and are probably nothing else than an aversion to thinking deeply about the realities of combat."

The only positive effect among some practitioners of free sparring (at least those who trained intensely) was supposedly improved stamina due to strenuous long sparring and the revival of a kind of martial spirit. It was this which gave the impression of "practicability" to the Bakufu and domain authorities. As for stamina, the pre-Tokugawa *bushi* knew how to acquire it without sparring: If we take the example of predetermined patterns of movement of Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū, we can see that they were organized as long practice sequences performed at high speed and designed to increase stamina and breath capacity, and thus train for the tremendous endurance required on the battlefield.[120] However, putting the stamina issue aside, the training of ardent practitioners of free sparring with the use of the bamboo sword and body protectors was the practice of inefficient military skills for the sake of cultivating a kind of martial spirit and warrior ethos without awareness of what harm the former could bring in actual engagement. The character *bu* ("martial") continued to be used unreservedly in regard to swordsmanship sparring, and claims about the latter's martial value persisted.

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119 Ōkuma 1973, pp. 129, 131-132.

120 Ōtake 1977, p. 24; 2007, pp. 46, 49; 2009d, p. 51. Reid and Croucher 1983, pp. 129-130. Akita Shoten 1987, p. 160. Asakura Kōtarō 1993, p. 111. Nihon Kobudō Kyōkai 1997, p. 83. Iizasa 2000, p. 19. Yokose 2000, p. 16. Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2005, pp. 9-10, 14; 2008, pp. 8-9, 12.

It was an extension of the dissonance between means and goals originating in "flowery training." This dissonance was inherited by Japanese of the Meiji era, who embarked on the reinvention of Bushidō as a "new tradition,"[121] which was completely separated from the "body" and, as discussed in Chapter VI, remains intact in the Bushidō rhetoric of 21st century Japan.

[121] On the reinvention of Bushidō from the Meiji era onwards, see Saeki Shin'ichi 2004 and Kanno 2004.

CHAPTER IV

Reviving the pre-Tokugawa Warrior Culture in Bakumatsu Japan: *Musha Shugyō* of Yamaoka Tesshū

After a general review of studies related to the Bakumatsu swordsman Yamaoka Tesshū, this chapter explains the events of his life that induced him to start the quest for what he believed to be the genuine warrior culture of the pre-Tokugawa ages. From Yamaoka's point of view, this culture was supposed to combine sword skills practicable in actual combat with the level of spirituality and morality expressed in the notion of the "life-giving sword." The chapter further explores how in the Meiji era, characterized by Japan's rapid Westernization and industrialization as well as the introduction of a modern mass army, Yamaoka exerted himself to preserve this form of *bushi* culture. As part of this, he was to embark on an unprecedented attempt to reconstruct the original Ittō-ryū swordsmanship school founded in the 16th century.

4.1 Existing Studies of Yamaoka Tesshū

In the Tokugawa era, *musha shugyō* lost its meaning in the context of the "flowery training" and free sparring. Swordsmanship schools of both currents could still advocate development of the virtuous character and the "life-giving sword." However, the new context rendered these concepts empty since, as we have seen, they were not backed by the physical and spiritual practices comparable to those of the pre-Tokugawa ages. The sportive environment of training halls that produced "winners" and "losers," and inflated egos with considerations of fame and gain, was in direct conflict with the pre-Tokugawa spirit of *musha shugyō*. Traveling around the country and engaging in sparring with practitioners of other training halls became quite popular after the proliferation of inter-school matches in the first half of the 19th century. Yet, although this kind of training was still referred to as "*musha shugyō*," it differed radically from the pre-Tokugawa form of wandering that could cost a warrior his life. This traveling in the Tokugawa era included elements of tourism, and training and matches were far from being intensive. Instead, they were held in a relaxed atmosphere, and were accompanied

by “after-hours” wining and dining.[1]

Still, there were important exceptions. In this chapter, we focus on one of them, Yamaoka Tesshū (1836-1888), who was a leading figure among Bakumatsu - early Meiji swordsmen and a key player in major historical events.[2] A study of his personality helps us understand how, in the Bakumatsu period, a few *bushi* inherited and strove to preserve memories of *musha shugyō* of the pre-Tokugawa ages. It will also provide a concrete example of how what I call the “power backed virtue,” nourished through intense practice of the art of killing, guided a *bushi* in moments of crisis toward a non-violent resolution of conflict.

Yamaoka’s *musha shugyō*[3] also involved a lifelong quest for a military arts school transmitting the warrior skills and the system of values of the pre-Tokugawa ages. In a broader sense, it was a quest for what he perceived as the authentic warrior culture, which from his point of view had been irretrievably lost by his time. When he failed to find such a school, he made an attempt to return Ittō-ryū (one of the “three root lineages” of Japanese swordsmanship) to the pre-Tokugawa standards, an undertaking which was unheard of both before and after him. Investing an enormous amount of time and effort in the practice of swordsmanship, he finally established his own swordsmanship school, Ittō Shōden Mutō-ryū, early in the Meiji era. As its name indicates, this was supposed to embody the “correct transmission of Ittō-ryū” (Ittō Shōden). All his life Yamaoka’s self-perception was that of “swordsman” (*kenkyaku*, or *kenkaku*) and this is how he identified himself to others. As he used to say, swordsmanship was his proper sphere (*hombun*).[4]

Yet, Yamaoka’s accomplishments during his lifetime were not limited to swordsmanship. He left a vast number of calligraphy works that are still highly valued today. He is known for his pursuits of *satori* through the practices of the Rinzai Zen sect, and contributed to the reconstruction of Buddhist temples early in the Meiji era, in the “age of Buddhism persecution” (*haibutsu jidai*), to the degree that he has been called a “great benefactor of Japanese Buddhism.”[5] Yamaoka held important posts in the

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1 Oimatsu 1968, pp. 3-4.

2 Yamaoka is one of the famous trio – the so-called “Three Bakumatsu Boats” (*bakumatsu no sanshū*). The other two “boats” are Takahashi Deishū and Katsu Kaishū. They have been called so because the pseudonym of each ends with the character *shū*, or “boat.” Tesshū means “Iron Boat,” Deishū “Muddy Boat,” and Kaishū “Sea Boat.”

3 It should be noted that the phrase *musha shugyō* does not appear in Yamaoka’s surviving records. However, in so far as his entire life is consistent with the meaning of this term as thoroughly described in the Introduction, I consider it legitimate to use this phrase when analyzing his conduct.

4 Maruyama Bokuden 1918b, p. 51.

5 Ushiyama 1937, pp. 67-84; 1967, pp. 81-96; 1976, pp. 221-241. Ōmori Sōgen 1970, pp. 160-162.

prefectural governments of Shizuoka, Ibaraki and Saga (Imari at the time), as well as in the Imperial Household Ministry (Kunaishō) after the Meiji Restoration, and served as a chamberlain of Emperor Meiji. Finally, he exerted considerable spiritual influence on many prominent figures in the politics, economy and culture of Meiji Japan including the 3rd mayor of Kyōto, Kitagaki Kunimichi, the famous master of *rakugo* San'yūtei Enchō, the establisher of the first oil company in Japan, Ishizaka Shūzō, and Emperor Meiji himself.

Either due to his somewhat monastic personality, religious pursuits in Zen Buddhism, or the combination of both, Yamaoka never strove for fame.[6] However, Meiji society did not let his accomplishments go unnoticed and, largely against his own will, Yamaoka became famous during his lifetime and after his death. For over a century, his name has appeared in newspapers and books. He has been popularized as a hero of novels and *kabuki* plays.[7] Nowadays he continues to be presented by his admirers as an "exemplary Japanese" (*nihonjin no tenkei*) and an incarnation of the Bushidō spirit in certain periodicals.[8]

Furthermore, Yamaoka is listed among 350[9] Japanese that influenced the formation of modern Japan and whose pictures and short biographies are presented at the online exhibition "Portraits of Modern Japanese Historical Figures" on the website of the National Diet Library of Japan.[10] Yamaoka has remained popular among many prominent figures in Japan's politics and economics: For example, the former prime minister of Japan, Nakasone Yasuhiro, is his ardent admirer and is known for having practiced *zazen* regularly at Zenshōan temple in Tōkyō which was built by Yamaoka in 1883.

Despite such a faithful following among some politicians and businessmen as well as popular writers, there has been virtually no academic research on Yamaoka both in Japan and overseas. Several factors have contributed to this neglect. First, many

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Satō Hiroshi 2002, pp. 229-233.

6 Yamaoka's indifference to money, social status and fame is also noted by scholar Iechika Yoshiki (Iechika 2005, p. 125). Also, see Ōmori Sōgen 1970, p. 115.

7 Recent newspaper examples include *Yomiuri Shimbun* (2008/5/15; 2009/1/6), *Mainichi Shimbun* (2007/12/9; 2008/8/3; 2008/9/6; 2008/10/24), *Sankei Shimbun* (2008/10/17). Novels include multi-volume novel *Yamaoka Tesshū* by Iwasaki Sakae (Iwasaki Sakae 1945a-b, 1968) and a novel under the same title by Nanjō Norio (Nanjō 1978). Yamaoka appears in a Kabuki play *Keiki inochigoi* written by Mayama Seika (Mayama 1940-1942).

8 See *Daisekai* no. 9(2) (1954/2); *Shin Bummei* no. 5(12) (1955/12); *Jitsugyō No Nihon* no. 59(12) (1956/5); *Shūkan Asahi* no. 103(13) (1998/3/27), 103(35) (1998/8/10); *Sapio* no. 12(18) (2000/10/25); *Nihon Oyobi Nihonjin* no. 1650 (2004); *Verdad* no. 122-168 (2005/6-2009/4). Also, Ōmori Sōgen 1970, p. 212; Harazono 1990; Satō Hiroshi 2002, pp. 235-238.

9 As of May 2009.

10 http://www.ndl.go.jp/portrait/e/datas/207.html?c=0 (accessed on 1 May 2009).

Japanese and Western scholars, with the notable exception of William Steele, have not overcome what Conrad Totman terms the "Meiji bias," which impels them to focus on those who successfully overthrew the Tokugawa Bakufu.[11] Individuals from the "defeated" side have been generally overlooked, Yamaoka Tesshū as the *shōgun*'s retainer (*bakushin*), being one of them.

Another reason lies in Yamaoka's personality. He never showed or talked about his deeds and feats, and always preferred to stay in the shadows.[12] Unlike, for instance, Saigō Takamori or Katsu Kaishū, Yamaoka did not leave much primary material such as autobiography, diaries or literary works, that could shed light on his thinking or the facts of his life. His numerous calligraphy pieces, as well as *waka* and *haiku* poems, can serve only as a hint about his thought.[13] What Yamaoka did leave in abundance is his private notes on swordsmanship and these will be used extensively in the following pages.

To make the situation even more complicated, there are not many contemporary secondary sources and, except for Murakami Yasumasa's *Ittō Shōden Mutō-ryū kaiso Yamaoka Tetsutarō-sensei nempu* (*Chronological record of daily life of Yamaoka Tetsutarō-sensei, the founder of Ittō Shōden Mutō-ryū*, 1999),[14] there has been no attempt to discover such sources. Nor is there any critical biography written by Yamaoka's contemporaries or later generations. Since the late Meiji era, his admirers

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[11] On the "Meiji bias," see Totman 1980, pp. 558-565. See William Steele's works on figures from the "defeated" side, especially Katsu Kaishū (Steele 1976, 1978, 1981a-b, 1982, 1991, 2002, 2007).

[12] Several years after Yamaoka's death, his disciples wrote in *Shumpūkan eizoku shu'isho* (*Prospectus relating to the preservation of Shumpūkan training hall*, 1890) that he consistently avoided fame and gain during his life, and they had to abandon the idea of erecting a big monument commemorating his name because that would be equal to profaning Yamaoka's philosophy (cited from Ōmori Sōgen 1970, p. 254). Ogura Tetsuju, who was a live-in disciple (*uchideshi*) in Yamaoka's swordsmanship training hall, Shumpūkan, was one of the very few contemporaries of Yamaoka who left memoirs about him. He recalled: "Yamaoka is great. He used to say: 'My name will go up in the world in five hundred years.' …Because my teacher sought recognition in five hundred years, all those odds and sods pottering about for the sake of their worldly goals must have seemed to him farcical and pitiful" (Ishizu 1933, pp. 94-95). And on another occasion: "…I believed it would be really a pity if such a hero's feats were to fall into oblivion. Fortunately a friend of mine, Sakura Magozō … was a skillful writer, and I thought of having him write my teacher's autobiography before it was too late. But when I proposed the idea to my teacher, he said, 'There is no need to do this. If an unwritten thing remains, it will remain for future generations. What is not supposed to remain will disappear however much in detail you write about it…'" (Ushiyama 1937, pp. 1-2).

[13] Although only from the artistic viewpoint, Yamaoka's calligraphy is thoroughly studied by a Japanese scholar Terayama Katsujō. See Terayama 1977, 1982, 1997, 2003b.

[14] The 6th headmaster of Ittō Shōden Mutō-ryū school, Murakami Yasumasa, privately published only a few dozen copies of this chronological record of Yamaoka's life. One copy of this hand written and photocopied work can be found in the National Diet Library of Japan (Tōkyō).

have published numerous biographies, books and novels that all, without exception, lack any critique of sources and, instead, are full of anecdotes, legends, and products of the author's imagination. More often than not, they do not even allow us to date clearly events in Yamaoka's life.

The few Japanese academic works and swordsmanship histories that touch on Yamaoka are descriptive and, largely relying on the above popular sources, do not provide any new information.[15] The only English book about Yamaoka is *The sword of no-sword: Life of the master warrior Tesshū* (1984) by scholar (although, not a historian), John Stevens. It merely copies the Japanese admirers' tradition of adoring Yamaoka and treating him virtually as a superhuman figure. Other Western scholars' discussion of Yamaoka, such as those of Winston King and Cameron Hurst, is based entirely on Steven's book.[16] None of the works so far mentioned demonstrates any analytical approach to Yamaoka's activities in the field of swordsmanship. A principle argument in this thesis, however, is that their meaning can be properly comprehended only within the framework of the history of "*bushi* intangible culture" as outlined in the previous three chapters.

At present, articles of scholar Shima Yoshitaka on Yamaoka's calligraphy and religious pursuits in Zen are the only works that at least partially allow us to grasp the real image of Yamaoka.[17] For example, Shima showed that there was little possibility that Yamaoka reached the final stage of *satori* in Zen.[18] This is contrary to the popular image of Yamaoka as a *bushi* whose superior sword skills were backed by Zen-Buddhist mental training, an idea which has long been uncritically accepted not only by Yamaoka's admirers but also by scholars.[19]

In my earlier articles, including two published in *Nihon Rekishi*, I attempted to create a basis for the study of Yamaoka's role in the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle (the key moment of the Boshin war of 1868-69) by addressing several of his hand-written documents as well as *Masamune tantōki* (*The record of tempering the Masamune sword*, 1883) narrated by Iwakura Tomomi. I also attempted to overcome the confusion with secondary sources produced by later generations of his admirers. From this, as well as intense scrutiny of the most misleading secondary sources, it became clear that

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[15] Furuta 1971. Imamura 1971, pp. 228-232. Watatani 1971, pp. 255-258. Tominaga Kengo 1972, pp. 374-377. Watatani and Yamada 1978, pp. 69-70. Ishioka et al. 1980, pp. 183-188. Kōdansha 1983, pp. 205-207. Terayama 1997. Kodama and Ōtsubo 2001. Takemura 2002, 2005a. Maebayashi 2006, pp. 171- 173.

[16] King 1993, Hurst 1998.

[17] Shima 2000, 2007a-b, 2008a-b.

[18] Shima 2007a.

[19] To be discussed further in this chapter.

Yamaoka's life had been grossly misinterpreted.[20] In the last decade of the Meiji era, a certain Abe Masato, whose background is absolutely unknown, published numerous books on the "Three Bakumatsu Boats." He claimed that one of the books, *Bushidō* (1902), was a compilation of records of Yamaoka's several lectures on Bushidō and that another one, *Tesshū zuihitsu* (*Essays of Tesshū*, 1903) was a reprint of Yamaoka's original writings. I have demonstrated that these and other books of Abe Masato that were allegedly ascribed to Yamaoka's authorship are mostly counterfeits and have no relation to Yamaoka.[21] Unfortunately, the publishing activity of Abe Masato has not been scrutinized for a century, and his books are still reprinted by such well-known publishers as Kadokawa Shoten, Kokusho Kankōkai and Daitō Shuppansha. These books distorted greatly Yamaoka's image, and many authors who wrote about Yamaoka drew heavily on Abe's works without any awareness of their fraudulent nature.[22]

Likewise, in an article from 2007, I managed to identify a problematic with Yamaoka's most famous biography, *Yamaoka Tesshū-sensei seiden: ore no shishō* (*The true biography of Yamaoka Tesshū-sensei: My teacher*, 1937) compiled by Ushiyama Eiji.[23] The biography includes the narrative of Yamaoka's live-in disciple Ogura Tetsuju. It is the only memoir of Yamaoka's contemporary from which we can gain some valuable information.[24] However, when editing this biography, Ushiyama included parts from other previously published Yamaoka's biographies and materials, including Abe Masato's counterfeits. To make things worse, Ushiyama almost never provides references to his sources and, as a result, everything looks as if it comes from Ogura's memoirs. This biography also contains many inaccuracies and mistakes in regard to historical facts, age count and personal names. Nevertheless, in the majority of cases it is possible for an informed and careful scholar of the field to discern Ogura's memoirs from the other content.

Finally, it should be noted that in the virtual absence of primary material which could shed light on the facts of Yamaoka's biography, one is forced to rely on the available secondary sources. However, these materials are used in the thesis mostly as a source of

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20 Anshin 2006, 2007a-c, 2008 (can be viewed online at www.tesshu.info).

21 Anshin 2006. Shima Yoshitaka also questioned the content of Abe Masato's works but he only suggested the possibility that it did not correspond to the reality (Shima 2000, pp. 201-202).

22 *Tesshū zuihitsu* is reprinted nowadays under several different titles, such as *Tesshū genkō roku* (*Records of words and deeds of Tesshū*) and *Tesshū zuikan roku* (*Records of Tesshū's thoughts and feelings*).

23 Anshin 2007c (can be viewed online at http://www.tesshu.info/ushiyama.html).

24 Besides Ogura Tetsuju, Yamaoka's disciples Yanagida Genjirō and Kagawa Zenjirō also left some memoirs, but they are fragmentary, deal mostly with the training at Yamaoka's swordsmanship training hall, Shumpūkan, and offer very little information about Yamaoka (see Asano Satako 1970, Morikawa 1983).

data, such as dates, places, and general development of events, and only after the accuracy of these facts has been cross-checked as far as possible. It is my assertion that the interpretation of Yamaoka's life which follows is entirely different from all existing biographical accounts which, lacking academic analysis and rigor, provide only a picture full of unexplained contradictions. This thesis considers Yamaoka's life in the broader context of lifelong change in his attitudes to swordsmanship, and his quest for pre-Tokugawa warrior culture which, in his view, was the only genuine and immutable form.

4.2 Yamaoka Tesshū's Development: Military Training

Tesshū[25] was born the fourth son in the Ono family on 1836/6/10 in Edo. The Ono family, which descended from the ancient powerful clan of Tachibana, originated in Mikawa province and, since the times of Tokugawa Ieyasu, its members from generation to generation were direct retainers of the *shōgun* (*hatamoto*). One of its ancestors, Ono Takahiro, was rewarded and promoted several times for his outstanding service to the second Tokugawa *shōgun*, Hidetada. He particularly distinguished himself during the Ōsaka Summer Campaign in 1615, being one of the first warriors to storm Ōsaka Castle and take an enemy's head. Tesshū's father, Ono Takatomi,[26] was a high-ranking official with an annual stipend of 600 *koku*.[27] At the time of Tesshū's birth he held the post of magistrate of the rice storehouse in Asakusa (*okura bugyō*), from which the Bakufu paid rice stipends to its retainers, and received an additional salary of 200 *koku* per year for his service.[28]

Besides the stipend, the Ono family also held a fief in Hitachi province. The fief was managed by a Shintō priest, Tsukahara Iwami, who served in one of the most famous shrines in Japan, Kashima Jingū.[29] Ono Takatomi, after his first wife died of a disease,

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[25] Tesshū was Yamaoka's main pseudonym. Murakami Yasumasa (1999, p. 140) identified its earliest usage in a swordsmanship treatise hand-copied by Yamaoka on 1866/9/23. Yamaoka used two proper names during his life – Tetsutarō and Takayuki. To avoid confusion with Yamaoka Seizan, Yamaoka Tesshū will be referred to as Tesshū until the moment when he was adopted into Seizan's family to become its heir.

[26] In many sources the forename of Tesshū's father is read as Takayoshi. I use the reading given in Ushiyama 1967 (p. 9) and Murakami Yasumasa 1999 (p. 14).

[27] 1 *koku* is equal to 4.96 bushels of rice.

[28] Ushiyama 1976, p. 9. Kōdansha 1983, p. 205. Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 1-7, 14, 17, 19. The salary that Ono Takatomi received for his service was expressed in *hyō* units (200 *hyō*), but since these units were exempted from taxation they were equal to 200 *koku*.

[29] At the time in question only three Shintō shrines in Japan had the highest rank of "grand shrine"

married Tsukahara's daughter Iso in 1835. Iso gave birth to six boys, the first of which was Tesshū. Tesshū also had three elder brothers and several sisters born by Ono Takatomi's first wife.

As the first son born from Iso, Tesshū was constantly given special treatment in the Ono family. In spite of the fact that Ono Takatomi had already decided to make the eldest, although adopted, son, Takaaki, his successor, Tesshū received the childhood name Tetsutarō which was traditionally given in the family only to the heirs.[30] He was educated appropriately to his noble descent and completely in line with the ideal of the "unity of literary and military arts" (*bumbu ryōdō*). When Tesshū was nine, he began training in Shinkage-ryū swordsmanship under a man called Kusumi Kantekisai.[31] In the historical period in question, it was usual for the *bushi* to begin training in swordsmanship at such a young age.[32] There are no records indicating what branch or faction of Shinkage-ryū Tesshū practiced.[33]

In less than a year, Tesshū's father was promoted and appointed to be the twenty-first intendant (*gundai*) of Hida province (modern Gifu prefecture), a territory held directly by the *shōgun*. In 1845/8, almost the whole Ono family, leaving only Tesshū's two elder brothers in Edo, moved to Takayama, where the administrative office of the province (*jin'ya*) was located.[34] In Takayama, Tesshū continued his training in Shinkage-ryū swordsmanship, as well as spearmanship under a student of Kusumi Kantekisai. He also studied archery and horsemanship. At the age of fifteen Tesshu started to participate in local military exercises that his father organized.[35]

(*jingū*) – Ise Jingū, Katori Jingū, and Kashima Jingū.

30 Ushiyama 1976, p. 11. Murakami Yasumasa 1999, p. 19.

31 Imamura 1971, p. 229. Watatani 1971, p. 255. Tominaga Kengo 1972, p. 374. Ishioka et al. 1980, p. 183. Murakami Yasumasa 1999, p. 23.

32 Ōishi Susumu, who was the first one to use the extra-long bamboo sword for inter-school matches in the Bakumatsu period, is said to have begun training in spearmanship and swordsmanship at the age of four or five (Watatani 1971, p. 226). A 10-year old son of Chiba Shūsaku, the founder of Hokushin Ittō-ryū, is said to have participated in an inter-school match before the *daimyō* of the Mito domain, Tokugawa Nariaki (Hoshi Kōji 1993, p. 31). Studies of the Hikone domain show that sons of *daimyō* of this domain began their training in military arts (swordsmanship, spearmanship, archery) at the age of 10-11 (Mori Yoshikazu 2005, pp. 60-61). In the Bakumatsu period, training small children in warrior arts was a remnant of the pre-Tokugawa training methodologies.

33 Sometimes the name of the school that Yamaoka studied under Kusumi Kantekisai may appear as Jikishinkage-ryū.

34 Ushiyama 1976, pp. 12-13. Ishioka et al. 1980, p. 183. Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 23-26, 31. The fact that the former intendant of Hida province was Kusumi Kantekisai's younger brother hints to some relationship between the Ono and Kusumi families, and Tesshū's entrance of Kusumi Kantekisai's swordsmanship school, as well as his father's new appointment do not seem to have been accidental.

35 Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 29-30, 35, 40, 42-43, 54-57.

Tesshū appears to have been particularly gifted in swordsmanship. In 1851/1, at the age of sixteen, he received a document (*kirigami*) certifying his proficiency in Shinkage-ryū.[36] However, a year later he switched to one of the most famous "new schools" in the Bakumatsu period, Hokushin Ittō-ryū. The teacher of this school, Inoue Hachirō, came to Takayama on the invitation of one of Tesshū's elder brothers and other practitioners of swordsmanship in the area. Thirty-six year old Inoue Hachirō was one of the best disciples of the founder of Hokushin Ittō-ryū, the renowned Chiba Shūsaku.[37]

As mentioned earlier, military arts schools had certain mannerisms which were a side effect of the specific physical training of each school and were revealed unconsciously in movement. Bringing a mannerism of one school into the practice of another was not allowed, and the switch demanded an enormous effort by the disciple to shed the mannerisms of the previous school and adopt those of the new school. In other words, one had to become a beginner again and start training from scratch. This is why there had to be a very serious reason for the switch, a reason that justified the negation of Tesshū's seven years of training with all of the unconscious mannerisms he had accumulated as one of the highest ranks in Shinkage-ryū. However, records do not provide us with an explanation of why the swordsmanship practitioners in Takayama made this switch. The only apparent fact is that it was a group switch, not Tesshū's personal decision. Still, it brought him into contact with Ittō-ryū, one of the three root lineages of Japanese swordsmanship, albeit through its faction at this time. He would continue to practice swordsmanship of the Ittō-ryū lineage all his life.

4.3 The Scholarship, Thought, and Religion of a Bakumatsu Swordsman

In Takayama, Tesshū's education revolved around writing and the customary *sodoku*, or reading loudly Chinese texts without understanding their meaning under the guidance of Tomita Sessai. In addition Tesshū attended public lectures on Chinese classics. By nature, Tesshū was quite bad at scholarship but there was one exception: Calligraphy.

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[36] Kōdansha 1983, p. 206. Murakami Yasumasa 1999, p. 42. According to the Japanese encyclopedia *Kōjien* (5th edition by Iwanami Shoten), *kirigami* (also *kirigami menkyo*) was given to those who reached one of the highest ranks in Japanese traditional arts, which usually preceded the final level of "full transmission" (*menkyo kaiden*, etc.). It was a piece of paper containing a description of what the disciple had learned.

[37] Imamura 1971, p. 229. Watatani 1971, p. 255. Tominaga Kengo 1972, p. 374. Watatani and Yamada 1978, p. 69. Kōdansha 1983, p. 206. Iwasa 1987, p. 178. Ishioka et al. 1980, p. 183. Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 48-53.

Taught by the headmaster of the Jubokudō style, Iwasa Ittei (1779-1858), Tesshū revealed an extraordinary talent and learnt very quickly. Within months, Iwasa made Tesshū his successor and the 52nd headmaster of the Jubokudō style, granting him the license of full transmission of the tradition.[38]

National Learning (Kokugaku) flourished in Hida province due to the teaching activity of its native, Tanaka Ōhide (1777-1847), a disciple of Motoori Norinaga. Tesshū was probably exposed to this ideology because his main teachers in Takayama, Tomita Sessai and Iwasa Ittei, had close ties with Tanaka: Tomita was Tanaka's disciple, and Iwasa was his close friend.[39]

During his pilgrimage to the Ise Jingū grand shrine in 1850/3, his only travel while staying in Takayama, Tesshū is said to have accidentally met a zealot of the Sonnō Jōi ("revere the Emperor, expel the barbarians") movement, Fujimoto Tesseki, who is said to have opened Tesshū's eyes to Japan's international environment.[40] After that, during a short stay at Ise Jingū, Tesshū met a renowned nativist scholar (*kokugakusha*) Ajiro Hironori, who was the shrine's priest. It is said that Ajiro taught Tesshū Japan's history in the light of National Learning.[41]

Rather than politics, however, Tesshū's world view was most influenced by Buddhism. As early as the age of eight, Tesshū developed a deep worship of bodhisattva Kannon (Avalokitesvara), the Buddhist deity of mercy.[42] He retained this worship through his life and finally established Zenshōan temple in Tōkyō in 1883 with the principle image of Kannon. Tesshū's teacher of calligraphy Iwasa Ittei was also an ardent follower of Buddhism to the degree that he was even called "Buddha Ichiemon" (Ichiemon was Iwasa's common name).[43] From Tesshū's letters to Iwasa we know that

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38 Ema 1935a, pp. 16-18. Imamura 1971, p. 229. Watatani 1971, pp. 255-256. Watatani and Yamada 1978, p. 69. Ishioka et al. 1980, p. 183. Kōdansha 1983, p. 205. Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 28-29, 31, 33-35, 38, 41. The document certifying the grant of the pseudonym appears in Iwasa 1987, p. 77. During his life Iwasa taught the Jubokudō calligraphy to about twenty-four disciples. Tesshū was the last one, and it appears that no other disciple received from Iwasa any rank or license (Iwasa 1987, pp. 162-163). Tesshū probably revealed a remarkable talent and diligence in calligraphy, to the extent that Iwasa Ittei, who was already seventy-two years old and did not have any successors yet, set his hopes on Tesshū's future and decided to make him the fifty-second headmaster of the Jubokudō school in spite of his young age and quite short time of study (Ushiyama 1976, p. 23).

39 Iwasa 1987, p. 108.

40 Ushiyama 1976, pp. 27-28. Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 39-40.

41 Sakura 1893, pp. 7-8. Ushiyama 1976, p. 28. On travel and pilgrimage in Tokugawa Japan, see Vaporis 1994 and Yagi 1997.

42 Sakura 1893, pp. 7, 10-11. Maruyama Bokuden 1918b, p. 4. Imamura 1971, p. 229. Watatani 1971, p. 255.

43 Iwasa 1987, p. 18.

they exchanged Buddhist sutras,[44] and it is highly probable that Tesshū's interest in Buddhism was inflated by Iwasa, as well as by Jubokudō which traces its origins to Kōbō-daishi, the founder of the Buddhist esoteric sect Shingon in Japan.

4.4 Foreign Pressure and Swordsmanship Training in Edo

In 1852/7, Tesshū returned to Edo from Takayama together with his five brothers after his mother and father died of disease, in 1851/9 and 1852/i2 respectively.[45] They settled in Koishikawa ward in the house of Ono Takakata, who had already been recognized by the Bakufu as the heir of the Ono family. Tesshū and his five younger brothers became dependants of Ono Takakata.[46]

From 1853/1, Tesshū resumed training in Hokushin Ittō-ryū under Inoue Hachirō in the Gembukan training hall of Chiba Shūsaku.[47] This training was interrupted within months by the appearance of Commodore Matthew Perry's black ships in 1853/6. The Bakufu declared measures to guard the coastal districts, and although Perry stayed only long enough to leave his letter with a promise to return the following year, the defense preparations continued frantically after his departure. In 1854/3, the Bakufu signed the Treaty of Peace and Amity with Perry and disbanded the emergency forces. Despite this, the general impression was that war was imminent.[48]

This was the period when the consciousness of danger from foreign countries stimulated a new interest among *bushi* in the traditional weapons. Nearly all young warriors practiced swordsmanship, and inter-school matches in various training halls provided opportunities to establish contacts with like-minded men. In preparing the

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44 These letters appear in Iwasa 1987, pp. 86, 90.

45 Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 44, 59, 85.

46 Watatani 1971, p. 256. Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 85-86.

47 While teaching swordsmanship in Takayama, Inoue gained the trust of Tesshū's father who, shortly before his death, entrusted Inoue some family assets and asked him to take care of his children. Tesshū and his younger brothers were told to regard Inoue as their own father (Murakami Yasumasa 1999, p. 58). Inoue Hachirō returned to Edo several months after Tesshū, in 1852/11 (according to Tesshū's letter addressed to Iwasa Ittei appearing in Iwasa 1987, p. 91). All this time he was busy winding up the Ono family's pending affairs in Takayama. In Edo, he became an instructor in the school of Chiba Shūsaku, and continued to take care of Tesshū and his brothers (Iwasa 1987, p. 178). In the beginning of 1853, Inoue Hachirō already understood that there was no hope to obtain even the minimum help from the heir of the Ono family, Takakata, and, seeing the deplorable condition of Tesshū and his five younger brothers, he decided to arrange for their adoption in other families (Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 89-90). Also, see Watatani 1971, pp. 256-257; Ishioka et al. 1980, p. 184.

48 Jansen 1961, pp. 82-83. Inoue Mitsusada et al. 1996, volume 12, pp. 4-8. Nakamura Tamio 2001b.

country for possible war with foreign powers, Tesshū realized that the first thing to begin with was himself, and he immersed himself even harder in swordsmanship training.[49] Still, it would be a mistake to think that Tesshū's training was aimed exclusively at preparation for a possible war with foreigners. As his writings show, swordsmanship for him was much more than the art of killing. It was a tool for developing his character and spirit through the exhausting bodily practice that regularly turned him face to face with what he perceived as the centuries-old martial tradition, and that served as a means for the maintenance and reassurance of his warrior (swordsman) identity. Later in his life, he explained the cultural meaning of his *musha shugyō* in a certificate that he used to issue to his disciples when they reached the first level of swordsmanship skill in the Ittō Shōden Mutō-ryū school which he founded early in the Meiji era. The document is titled *Ittō-ryū heihō jūni kajō mokuroku*, (*The 12 item list of Ittō-ryū military art*). Explaining why the term *heihō* ("military art"), and not *kenjutsu* ("swordsmanship") appears in the title of the certificate, he wrote:

> "Military art" (*heihō*) in the title of the scroll means the Way of the Warrior (Budō). *Heihō* is the universal term for [all kinds of] military skills (*bugei*). *Heihō* is used instead of *kenjutsu* in order to convey the broader meaning. It means to apply the [fundamental] principle of one art to a myriad of things.[50]

Here Yamaoka points to his belief that the practice of military arts was supposed to constitute the very foundation of *bushi* existence and identity. In all aspects of his life, the warrior was supposed to base his judgements, words and deeds on what he had acquired in the process of training in military arts.

Yet, already at this time, there was something in Tesshū's training that constantly disturbed him. Specifically, he could not find a strong spiritual background in Hokushin Ittō-ryū. Its founder, Chiba Shūsaku (1794-1855), has been treated by scholars and swordsmanship historians as a "great swordsman" who made Japanese swordsmanship "practical" through its "modernization" and "rationalization."[51] However, a more

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[49] The fact that the sense of crisis in the country stimulated Tesshū for harder training in swordsmanship is obvious from his petition which he submitted to the Bakufu authorities in 1857 when he worked at the Bakufu Military Institute as an assistant instructor of swordsmanship (the draft of this writing appears in Maruyama Bokuden 1918b, pp. 8-9). Urging the authorities to make retainers of the *shōgun* train more diligently in military arts, Tesshū wrote: "The state of the country should be renewed and the military should be strengthened. We should wait [for emergency] counting day by day. If those, who lack in resolution and are satisfied with the present state of things, vainly waste their time and do not make their decision now, the time will definitely come when they will be eating their heart out."

[50] The text of the scroll appears in Ushiyama 1937, pp. 281-288.

[51] Yamada Jirōkichi 1960, p. 339. Imamura 1971, pp. 218-219. Tominaga Kengo 1972, pp. 353-356.

critical inspection of the evidence shows that the reality was different. Chiba was not originally a *bushi* but a peasant with the mind of a pragmatic businessman. Similar to Naganuma Kunisato (Jikishinkage-ryū) of the first half of the 18th century, he understood that profits and benefits through the teaching of military arts could be increased by multiplying the number of disciples paying lesser fees. Mirroring the Naganuma pattern, Chiba simplified the traditional eight rank system of the original Ittō-ryū lineage, and left only three ranks.[52] This was done in order to attract more disciples by cheapness. Chiba also authorized those disciples who reached the middle rank to teach on behalf of the school. Furthermore, he simplified the sword skills and, thereby, created an illusion of easy practice and fast progress. He also made the terms of study shorter. Thus, a rank achieved in other schools requiring at least three years of practice, in Hokushin Ittō-ryū could be achieved within one or one and a half years. To make swordsmanship look even simpler, Chiba conducted its "rationalization," i.e., in effect, he removed this art from all of its spiritual, philosophical and esoteric aspects.[53]

Yet, what differed Chiba's business initiative from the Naganuma pattern was its scale. No scholar or author has seemingly dared to make this comparison but Chiba's "reforms" in swordsmanship were similar to the business model of modern hypermarkets that focus on high-volume, low-margin sales. He managed the largest training hall (Gembukan) in Japan which, in the peak of its heyday, took the space of almost four square miles in the Otamagaike district of Kanda ward. Chiba is said to have had five or six thousand disciples, the record number in the history of Japanese swordsmanship.[54]

Tesshū was still far from questioning the practicability of Hokushin Ittō-ryū skills in actual combat; like the majority of other young men, he uncritically followed the prevailing trend in Bakumatsu swordsmanship. It would take him years to realize

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Enomoto 1979, pp. 258-259. Ishioka et al. 1980, pp. 173, 175-176. Kōdansha 1983, p. 193. Nakabayashi 1988a, p. 16, note 13. Hurst 1998, pp. 88-90. Ōtsuka 1995, p. 14. Maebayashi 2006, pp. 316-319. Also, see Miyachi et al. 2009, pp. 6-7.

52 Shimokawa 1925, p. 287. Yamada Jirōkichi 1960, p. 340. Watanabe Ichirō 1967b, pp. 34-35. Tominaga Kengo 1972, pp. 355. Watatani and Yamada 1978, p. 760.

53 Fujishima 1957, p. 103. Yamada Jirōkichi 1960, p. 342. Oyamatsu 1974, pp. 62, 65, 93-94. Ishioka et al. 1980, p. 175. Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2005, p. 118. For spiritual, philosophical and esoteric aspects of Ittō-ryū, see Sasamori 1965, Ōmori Nobumasa 1976b.

54 Fujishima 1957, p. 103. Yamada Jirōkichi 1960, p. 343. Watanabe Ichirō 1967b, p. 35. Imamura 1971, pp. 220-221. Watatani 1971, p. 209. Tominaga Kengo 1972, pp. 353, 355. Ishioka et al. 1980, pp. 173-174. Kōdansha 1983, pp. 194-195. Hurst 1998, p. 89. Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2005, p. 118. "Gembukan" is a generic name for a number of training facilities located in such a wide area. Together with other similar training halls such as Rempeikan (Gekkenkan) of Shintō Munen-ryū, Shigakkan of Kyōshin Meichi-ryū, and the training hall of Shingyōtō-ryū, Gembukan was also counted as one of the "four largest swordsmanship training halls in Edo" of the Bakumatsu period.

that training aimed at achieving practical results in actual combat should be done in a way different from sparring with the bamboo sword. At this point, Tesshū was dissatisfied only with the absence of deep spirituality in Hokushin Ittō-ryū. For him, mere fighting skills not backed by high ethical standards did not make sense. What Tesshū sought was probably close to the doctrine of Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū, and he had nothing else but to start looking for it somewhere else. This is when he encountered Yamaoka Seizan.

4.5 The "Virtuous Spear" of Yamaoka Seizan

As far as free sparring with the use of the bamboo sword and body protectors was concerned, already at the age of nineteen (1854) Tesshū's skill was such that he was sure of victory over any opponent.[55] He even received a nickname "Devilish Iron" (Oni Tetsu, a slightly changed pronunciation of his abbreviated name Ono Tetsu). Focusing on constant training rather than his appearance, he dressed in rags and looked like other street teenagers of Edo despite his noble descent. For this, he received another nickname: Boro Tetsu, or "Ragged Iron.[56]

In 1854 Tesshū moved to the Dōshin-chō district of Koishikawa ward in Edo and entered a nearby spearmanship school of the Yamaoka family.[57] The family served the Bakufu for generations: Its head, Yamaoka Seizan, who was also the headmaster of the spearmanship school, is said to have been one of the greatest spearmen of his time. However, it was Seizan's personality that attracted Tesshū most.[58]

The only document shedding light on the personality of Yamaoka Seizan is his short biography which was written by the future drafter of the Imperial Rescript on Education

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[55] From an untitled original document written by Yamaoka on 1882/1/8. Preserved in Shumpūkan Bunko, Tamagawa Library, Kanazawa City (item number 30-1-107 *Yamaoka Tetsutarō jikihitsu kendō sho, dai issatsu*). Yamaoka writes about his abilities at the age of "about 20." However, Murakami Yasumasa points to the exact age of 19 (Murakami Yasumasa 1999, p. 92).

[56] Sakura 1893, pp. 10-12. Imamura 1971, pp. 229-230. Tominaga Kengo 1972, p. 374. Ishioka et al. 1980, p. 184. Kōdansha 1983, p. 206. Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 92, 127-128. As far as Yamaoka was concerned, unkempt appearance contrasted with the moral character appropriate of a noble *bushi*. He is said to have demonstrated indifference to rivalry, fame and gain. He was taciturn, and had a reputation of a young man who always keeps his word (Sakura 1893, pp. 10-12. Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 92, 127-128).

[57] The name of the spearmanship school transmitted in the Yamaoka family is not clear.

[58] The biography of Yamaoka Seizan by Nakamura Masanao in Fukuda Uchū 1879, p. 27. Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 90-91, 93-94. Ushiyama 1937, p. 20. Watatani 1971, p. 256. Tominaga Kengo 1972, p. 374. Watatani and Yamada 1978, p. 69. Murakami Yasumasa 1999, p. 93.

(Kyōiku Chokugo, 1890) Nakamura Masanao.[59] The biography gives an example of a Bakumatsu *bushi* who preserved the memories of *musha shugyō* of the pre-Tokugawa ages, and who taught military arts that had not lost either their practicability in actual combat or their spiritual teachings characteristic of some pre-Tokugawa schools of military arts.

According to the biography, Seizan was exasperated at how the long lasting peace of the Tokugawa era had weakened the morale of the *bushi* class, and he made up his mind to become like the warrior of antiquity and prepare himself for a time of crisis. To this end, he made it a rule that every year, on cold midwinter nights, he would tighten the bottom of his abdomen with a rope, throw over his whole body cold water mixed with pieces of ice, bow to the East in the direction of Tōshōgū shrine,[60] and pray in silence with his forehead pressed to the floor. Around 2 o'clock in the morning, he would begin practicing 1000 thrusts with a heavy 20-pound training spear. He would continue to do this for 30 nights on end. During the year, he taught his disciples in the day time, and at nights practiced spear thrusts thousands of times. Sometimes, he could spend the whole night while practicing 30,000 thrusts[61] (obviously with a spear of the usual, lesser weight).

The numbers above are no doubt exaggerated. As the following citation shows, however, the author of this biography, Nakamura Masanao, was aware of the difference between the "flowery training" and practical pre-Tokugawa skill, and perhaps he deliberately exaggerated them in an attempt to convey the rigor and energy of Seizan's training. Already at the age of 22, Seizan's fame as a spearman had spread far and wide due to the practical value in combat of his methods. As Nakamura states:

> Spearmanship of our age is [practiced in the form of] "schools" (*ryū*). [These "schools"] have lost the vigor and the ability to move actively, and have forgotten the realities of bloody battles; if those who uselessly engage in "flowery training" and seek only embellishment of movements, are compared to Sensei,[62] what they do is truly no better than a childish game.[63]

In his lectures on military arts, Seizan stressed that the goal of training in military arts should be the tempering and perfection of one's character. He stated:

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59 This document is not dated but it was published already in Fukuda Uchū 1879.
60 The shrine dedicated to the worship of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the founder of the Tokugawa Bakufu.
61 The biography of Yamaoka Seizan by Nakamura Masanao in Fukuda Uchū 1879, pp. 28-30.
62 Referring to Yamaoka Seizan.
63 The biography of Yamaoka Seizan by Nakamura Masanao in Fukuda Uchū 1879, p. 28.

> If you want to be superior to others, first of all, you must master virtue in yourself. The enemy will submit if you excel him in virtue. This will be the true victory. Trying to gain victory by technique or fighting is a great mistake. If you want to excel in your technical skill, first, you must prohibit drinking and debauchery to yourself. One should always put his spirit into the techniques, and all his deeds should come from a sincere heart – this is the ultimate mindset one must strive for.[64]

If we accept that the contents of the biography are broadly accurate, Seizan was the inheritor of a spear skill which was preserved from the pre-Tokugawa age and which, unlike the majority of Tokugawa-era schools, avoided the dissonance between means and goals. Seizan's philosophy of building the virtuous character was backed by a deadly skill, and, in this, it resembled the system of values of Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū discussed in Chapter II.

Tesshū esteemed Seizan as his teacher, even though Seizan was only six years older than Tesshū at the time of their encounter. It appears that Seizan and the Yamaoka family also gave Tesshū special treatment, recognizing in him an extraordinary talent and a spirit similar to Seizan's. However, their relationship was not destined to last long. Approximately eight months later, on 1855/6/30, the twenty-seven year old Yamaoka Seizan died of disease.[65] His untimely death left the Yamaoka family without an heir. Seizan was the eldest of the three Yamaoka brothers. The middle brother Shinkichi was also very skillful in spearmanship but he could not become the heir because he was dumb from birth. The youngest brother Kenzaburō had already been the heir of his mother's family line, taking the surname of Takahashi. Later he would also gain a reputation as one of the most skillful spearmen in Japan, take the pseudonym Deishū, and become another of the famous "Three Bakumatsu Boats."[66]

In the absence of an heir, the Yamaoka family decided to take a successor from outside who would marry the eldest daughter of the family, the sixteen-year-old Fusako.[67] Tesshū was regarded as an ideal candidate, and in about half a year he married Fusako, despite his social status in the Bakufu hierarchy which was much higher than that of the Yamaoka family. From this time Tesshū began to use the surname

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64 The biography of Yamaoka Seizan by Nakamura Masanao in Fukuda Uchū 1879, p. 29.

65 The story is that Seizan was suffering from beriberi and was lying at home when somebody brought news that his teacher of swimming was going to be assassinated by jealous mates. In spite of the heavy disease Seizan is said to have rushed to rescue his teacher and died of heart failure in Sumidagawa river while swimming. To avoid the Bakufu investigation, the official version of the circumstances of Seizan's death maintained by the Yamaoka family for a long time was that Seizan died of the disease at home (Ushiyama 1937, p. 21; 1976, p. 47. Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 94-95).

66 Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 93-95.

67 Murakami Yasumasa 1999, p. 95.

Yamaoka.[68]

4.6 The Bakufu Military Institute

While Yamaoka Tesshū was immersing himself primarily in swordsmanship training, the Bakufu top officials began to take measures in response to the foreign threat. Besides triggering the inner political turmoil that finally led to the overthrow of the Tokugawa family, the arrival of Commodore Perry shook off the Bakufu's last illusions that foreign powers would bypass Japan. The Bakufu embarked on strengthening its national defense and in 1856 it established in the Tsukiji district of Edo the Military Institute (Kōbusho), an institution that became the base for the later Meiji army.[69] The Military Institute was not the first attempt of the Bakufu to provide its retainers with a systematic military training. Such attempts had been made since the end of the 18th century: In 1792 the first gunnery drill of the Bakufu retainers was organized in the Tokumaru plain of Musashi province and was held regularly there since that time. The Bakufu attached importance to fire arms, and in 1843, 1844 and 1852 it opened three gunnery training sites in Edo. However, all these attempts were directed at training retainers in narrow fields of military science, mainly Western gunnery. The Military Institute became the first educational institute of the Bakufu where retainers could learn all kinds of military skills.[70]

Planning and building of the Military Institute began in 1854. The major figures behind its establishment were the Bakufu senior councilor Abe Masahiro and several senior inspectors as well as the *daimyō* of the Mito domain, Tokugawa Nariaki.[71] The Military Institute was opened with Abe Masahiro's announcement: "According to the recent generous intention of the *shōgun*, it was ordered to build the Military Institute for training in gunnery, swordsmanship, spearmanship, swimming and other arts. The building of the Military Institute's facilities in Tsukiji is finished, and all officials,

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68 Ushiyama 1942b, pp. 26-30, 33. Imamura 1971, p. 229. Watatani 1971, p. 256. Tominaga Kengo 1972, p. 374. Watatani and Yamada 1978, p. 69. Ishioka et al. 1980, p. 184. Kōdansha 1983, p. 206. Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 96-97.

69 Inoue Mitsusada et al. 1996, volume 12, pp. 57-58. Nakamura Tamio 2001b. The Military Institute of the Bakufu has seemingly not been investigated so far and presents one of the "blank spots" in Japanese history. The only work on the institute is Enomoto 1979. However, it considers this institution only from the point of view of the history of Japanese swordsmanship and does not provide any broad political or military analysis.

70 Andō Naokata 1930. Enomoto 1978, p. 266. Inoue Mitsusada et al. 1996, volume 12, p. 57.

71 Enomoto 1979, p. 244.

shōgun retainers, lesser liege vassals, their sons and dependants should train there earnestly…"[72]

The main goal in the establishment of the Military Institute was to teach Bakufu retainers modern methods of combat as well as revitalize their martial spirit. However, the Bakufu officials still had a vague idea of what these methods should be, and the sole "modern" curriculum item at the time of its establishment was Western gunnery. All other curriculum items were Japanese, including swordsmanship, spearmanship, swimming, unarmed combat, horsemanship, the military strategy of Yamaga-ryū school founded by Yamaga Sokō in the 17th century, and even ancient Chinese strategy.[73]

The creation of the Military Institute had one more purpose. The Bakufu was facing a serious youth problem: Mass unemployment among young retainers of the Bakufu (especially younger sons of direct retainers, *hatamoto*, and lesser liege vassals, *gokenin*, who could not become heirs of their families) produced many delinquents. The Military Institute was supposed to provide a good military training to young men regardless of their rank, prevent them from becoming delinquent, and allow them to develop their talents. Still, this does not mean that admission to the Military Institute was limited only to Bakufu retainers. Anyone who wished to study was accepted, including rear vassals (*baishin*) of the Bakufu retainers and even masterless warriors (*rōnin*). Neither there was any upper age limit, and men over fifty years old were allowed to enter.[74]

To attract more people and encourage their serious study at the Military Institute, the Bakufu offered many privileges. Training at the institute was free of charge, free dinners were served in the afternoon, and the full range of training equipment was available for borrowing. Those who achieved outstanding results were granted financial rewards, employment and promotion within the Bakufu hierarchy. The Bakufu also offered students an opportunity to demonstrate their skill before the *shōgun* during the annual military arts demonstrations (*bujutsu jōran*) which were held for the *shōgun* several times a year at the Military Institute.[75]

Young men were not required to master all the kinds of military arts taught at the

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[72] Cited from Enomoto 1979, p. 244. Also, see Inoue Mitsusada et al. 1996, volume 12, pp. 57-58. Much later, in 1864/5, the Bakufu also established the Literary and Military Arts Training Hall (Bumbu Keikojō) in Kyōto for its retainers who resided in the old capital. In 1866/2, it was reopened as a more advanced institution which received the name Bumbujō, or the Literary and Military Arts Hall, and was a small equivalent of the Bakufu Military Institute in Edo. The Bumbujō curriculum included training in swordsmanship, spearmanship, and general scholarship. Only Bakufu retainers were allowed to attend the Bumbujō (Kikuchi Akira 2005, pp. 83-85).

[73] Andō Naokata 1930. Enomoto 1978, pp. 266, 281. Izumi 1988, pp. 6-9. Inoue Mitsusada et al. 1996, volume 12, p. 58.

[74] Andō Naokata 1930.

[75] Andō Naokata 1930.

Military Institute. Instead, they were encouraged to achieve proficiency in at least one art. They were also free in the choice of their teacher. In line with the general trend of the Bakumatsu period, the Military Institute gathered several "new schools" of swordsmanship under one roof, established the same standard for their training equipment, and encouraged training mostly in free sparring. Senior teachers and instructors were allowed to bring their students to the Military Institute both for training and for assistance. Among instructors who were officially appointed in 1856/3, were people close to Yamaoka Tesshū: Takahashi Deishū (spearmanship) and Inoue Hachirō (swordsmanship).[76]

The same year, the twenty-one year old Yamaoka Tesshū became an assistant of swordsmanship (*sewa kokoroe*) at the Military Institute through the recommendation of Inoue Hachirō.[77] By this time, Yamaoka had been granted the middle level rank (*chūmokuroku menkyo*) in Hokushin Ittō-ryū by Inoue.[78] From this point, Yamaoka's training became even harder; he practiced both at the Military Institute and the Gembukan training hall at the same time.[79] His effort was noticed, and he was chosen to participate in the military arts demonstration held in 1856/11 before the *shōgun* Tokugawa Iesada at the Institute. The *shōgun* rewarded and promoted participants on this occasion, and those of the assistant rank, including Yamaoka, received a piece of valuable material.[80]

In spite of all the favorable conditions offered by the Bakufu to trainees at the Military Institute, its education did not influence young retainers as the Bakufu expected. Furthermore, because the Bakufu did not limit admission to the Institute only to its retainers, it gathered people with various backgrounds which resulted in serious organizational disorder. According to the records, trainees lacked discipline, tended to

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76 Andō Naokata 1930. Enomoto 1978, pp. 245, 266-267; 1979, p. 262. Nakamura Tamio 2001b.

77 Watatani 1971, p. 256. Tominaga Kengo 1972, p. 374. Watatani and Yamada 1978, p. 69. Ishioka et al. 1980, p. 184. Murakami Yasumasa 1999, p. 105. Also, Enomoto 1979, p. 253.

78 Yamaoka received the *chūmokuroku menkyo* rank in 1855/3 (Murakami Yasumasa 1999, p. 94).

79 Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 105-106. In the *General list of Gembukan attendees* (*Gembukan shusseki daigai*), listing people who trained at the Gembukan training hall in 1857-1858, Tesshū's name (Ono Tetsutarō) appears along with his title of the assistant of the Military Institute. Although by that time Tesshū had already become the heir of the Yamaoka family, for some reason he appears in the list as Ono Tetsutarō and a dependant of his elder brother Takakata. Presently there are no historical materials that could shed light on the reason for this discrepancy. It is also worth to mention that besides Tesshū, at least five other young men in this list also worked as assistants of swordsmanship instruction at the Military Institute (Oyamatsu 1974, pp. 224-225).

80 Andō Naokata 1930, pp. 55-57. Here, again, Yamaoka appears in the list of participants as "Ono Tetsutarō" and a dependant of his elder brother Takakata. Tesshū's name is seen in the list of swordsmanship assistants who were recommended for demonstration before the *shōgun* Tokugawa Iesada in 1858/5 (Andō Naokata 1930, pp. 62, 68).

forget their personal belongings and sometimes even mistakenly took others' swords home. Incidents, including theft, were not rare.[81] In a petition that Yamaoka Tesshū submitted to the Bakufu officials in 1857,[82] he expressed his frustration (emphasis added):

> From Autumn, the curriculum of training in spearmanship and swordsmanship has been set, and [efforts are made] to make warriors… polish their skills and not neglect [their military duties]. I truly cannot express my gratitude for your thoughtful and kindhearted teaching of these warriors. However they themselves do not realize the preciousness of their seniors' teaching. They addict themselves to dissipation and licentiousness, and hanker after fame and gain. There are no more than two or three people in one unit who break their necks to polish their military skills. What will the rest do if an emergency arises? All this is very frustrating. Still, there is a way to encourage them for the proper action. What is it? … Let us assume that we have a [contemporary] brave warrior and a cowardly warrior who are led to the edge of a deep cleft. They are told that they will be rewarded with one hundred gold coins if they jump to the opposite side of the cleft. The brave warrior goes ahead and jumps to the opposite side to obtain one hundred gold coins. The cowardly warrior hesitates but suddenly he sees a fierce tiger behind him, forgets all his fears and jumps over the cleft regardless of the reward. Is there any difference between bravery and cowardice in the latter case? [The true] brave warriors are warriors of the ancient times.[83] Cowardly warriors are warriors of the present. One hundred gold coins is a reward. The fierce tiger is a punishment. Therefore the reward for the [contemporary] brave warriors and the punishment for cowardly warriors is enough to make them all jump together to the opposite side of the cleft. Thus, persons of pleasure will become diligent and hard-working, the cowardly and weak will become brave.[84]

The statement "[the true] brave warriors are warriors of the ancient times. Cowardly warriors are warriors of the present" shows that Yamaoka Tesshū's standards were those of the "true warrior," who belonged only to the pre-Tokugawa ages. It is hard to say from whom Yamaoka Tesshū inherited his sense of these standards. The influence of his spearmanship teacher Yamaoka Seizan certainly was strong. Still, some earlier

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81 Andō Naokata 1930.

82 Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 107-108. In 1857, Yamaoka submitted two petitions (Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 107-108). However, the contents of only one have survived.

83 Here, Yamaoka refers to *bushi* of the pre-Tokugawa age who, in his view, were motivated by virtue, not rewards.

84 Here, Yamaoka meant that punishment and reward are the measures to improve Bakufu retainers' morale. The draft of this writing appears in Maruyama Bokuden 1918b, pp. 8-9. Also, see Imamura 1971, pp. 230-231. Yamaoka's observations of the Bakufu Military Institute can be confirmed by the report of one of the inspectors (*kakari metsuke*) of this organization who noted that most people at the Institute trained in a perfunctory manner, that the overall number of trainees and the number of skillful warriors was declining, and that the perfunctory attitude was seen even among the teaching staff for many of whom attendance at the Institute on the prescribed number of days was a mere formality necessary to obtain promotion to an official rank or other benefits (Andō Naokata 1930).

influences also undoubtedly existed, since his quest for a military arts school with spiritual teachings corresponding to the pre-Tokugawa standards began even before his encounter with Seizan. Yamaoka Tesshū's writings discussed in this thesis demonstrate that all his life he longed for the ideal of the "true warrior" and, in his own *musha shugyō*, he did his best to approximate himself to this ideal.

From his writings, it is also obvious that Yamaoka was aware that the very basis underlying the standards of the "true warrior" was the culture of death, and his petition implicitly criticizes its absence among young retainers of the Bakufu. Olivier Ansart argues that a kind of contractual relationship between lords and warrior retainers appeared in the Tokugawa era, a relationship that presumed an exchange of service for pay.[85] Late in 1850s, Yamaoka appears to have come to realize that this kind of relationship was more a product of the time of peace and, furthermore, that it emerged as a result of the extinction of the cult of death. He took the same view as Daidōji Yūzan who wrote that all *bushi* who received a stipend from their lords must not think that their body and life belonged to them. Daidōji noted that, although servants of the warrior houses (*komono*, *chūgen*, and other ranks below *ashigaru*) worked without rest by engaging in physical labor for a small stipend, they were not obliged to do the most important thing: Sacrifice their life for their lord. This is why no one could censure them about running off or behaving in a cowardly manner on the battlefield, the place perceived as the most important "worksite" of the warrior class. Rather, they were just servants who lived by selling their labor. In contrast, the *bushi* were those whose most important commitment to their lords was sacrificing their lives. They might not necessarily engage in everyday physical labor as servants, however, they were supposed to die readily for their lords whenever the need arose. This was the reason why their stipends were much higher than those of the servants.[86] Yet, it is necessary to emphasize that, for such as Yamaoka, the non-contractual bond between the lord and retainer was different from the excessively emotional tie depicted in Yamamoto Tsunetomo's *Hagakure*. It was rather a deliberate realization of values pertaining to the skill of handling arms in the broader process of *musha shugyō*.

Yamaoka was not an intellectual but he perceived flaws at the core of the Bakufu military, and in a broader sense, contemporary warrior culture. Eleven years later, the Bakufu would lose the Boshin war to the imperial army exactly because of the reasons foreshadowed in Yamaoka's writing: Low morale and lack of organization.[87] At this

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85 Ansart 2007.

86 Daidōji Yūzan's precepts in *BS*, pp. 159-163.

87 The detailed analysis of the developments of the Boshin war can be found in Ōyama 1988,

point, the Bakufu did not heed Yamaoka's petition and take adequate measures to improve the morale of the *shōgun*'s retainers at the Military Institute. Furthermore, the retainers were misled in their military training by personal preferences and the mistaken judgment of a few top officials. In 1860/2 the Military Institute moved to the Ogawa-chō district and some changes occurred in the training curriculum. The most surprising change was the introduction of Japanese archery which, already at that time, was a complete anachronism in Japan. However, there were political reasons for such a seemingly irrational move. After the death of the Military Institute's founder and advocate of Western gunnery, Abe Masahiro, in 1857/6, the conservative Ii Naosuke became the new senior councilor and his policy was the opposite of his predecessor: Ii was against Westernization and emphasized the revitalization of the "pure Japanese spirit" at the cost of defensive capabilities. As a result, when the Military Institute moved to its new building in Ogawa-chō, archery, which had been one of the symbols of the Japanese warrior class since ancient times, became the most important item of the curriculum, and at the same time some gunnery instruction was abolished.[88] The introduction of archery in the Bakufu Military Institute was another indication of the tendency among top warrior rulers to spread inefficient military skills for the sake of cultivating the spiritual side of the *bushi*.

4.7 The Beginning of the Quest for Pre-Tokugawa Swordsmanship

Yamaoka's stance toward the turmoil in Bakumatsu inner politics may be characterized as aloofness, and the only evidence of his involvement in political events of the time was his minor affiliation with the Society of Tiger's Tail (1860-1861) and his short-term participation in the Rōshigumi affair (1862/12-1863/4), both of which are treated in greater detail in the Appendix. Instead, in the late 1850s and 1860s, he devoted as much time as possible to his own *musha shugyō*, as well as to teaching swordsmanship at the Military Institute where, by the middle of 1860, he already held one of the highest teaching positions – acting senior teacher (*shihan yaku nami*) of swordsmanship.[89] Yamaoka's aloofness in regard to politics may be explained by his

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Kikuchi and Itō 1998, Hōya 2007.

[88] Izumi 1988, pp. 6-9. Part of the reason lies with the behind-the-scenes activity of the Ogasawara-ryū school of archery which aimed at including its instructors in the personnel of the Military Institute. Nevertheless the main reasons for the introduction of archery were political (Izumi 1988, pp. 6-9).

[89] Andō Naokata 1930, pp. 110. Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 108-110. Odaka 2004a, p. 13.

belief that participation in political struggle and intrigues would inevitably put him at risk of misusing his swordsmanship skills with the consequent unnecessary loss of human life. This was against his moral principles (and religious conscience), and contradicted the very foundations of his *musha shugyō* that strove for the ideal of the "life-giving sword." Yamaoka does not appear to have ever explicitly used the term "life-giving sword" (*katsujinken*, etc.) but, in one of his late writings on swordsmanship (1884/11), he stated that "a swordsman who pursues the [ultimate] truth of swordsmanship" must avoid bloodshed.[90] Furthermore, the fact that there is no evidence that, as a senior swordsman, he was entangled in any kind of bloodshed in the Bakumatsu turmoil may be regarded as the direct realization of the concept of the "life-giving sword."

As noted earlier, Yamaoka held the *chūmokuroku menkyo* rank of Hokushin Ittō-ryū swordsmanship. This gave him the right to establish his own branch training hall and have disciples. However, he chose to reject this. By this time, he had already started to question the practicability of Hokushin Ittō-ryū sword skills in actual combat. From Yamaoka's point of view, Chiba Shūsaku's "modernization" and "rationalization" now seemed nothing but a distortion of the original Ittō-ryū tradition. In his writing on swordsmanship, Yamaoka even criticized Chiba's famous match with Ōishi Susumu in the early 1830s. Implicitly pointing to the fact that Chiba's whole technical system was removed from the realities of combat, he wrote:

> … A match between Ōishi Susumu and Chiba Shūsaku was held. They say that Ōishi used the bamboo sword of more than five *shaku* long, and to oppose him Chiba used as a guard of his bamboo sword a lid of a large barrel.[91] Their match was a mere lark, and was not what I call "swordsmanship."[92]

Written criticism of the founder of a contemporary swordsmanship school, especially a school that was one of the most famous in the Bakumatsu period and early Meiji era, was extremely rare. This shows the degree to which Yamaoka was upset with what he saw as the deviation of Hokushin Ittō-ryū from his standards of the genuine warrior culture.

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[90] Appears in Ōmori Sōgen 1970, p. 250.

[91] Meaning that Chiba used a big barrel lid as an impromptu shield against Ōishi's long bamboo sword. Yamaoka's original writing mentions the volume of the barrel as four *to* which is equal to approximately 19 gallons.

[92] This document appears in Maruyama Bokuden 1918a, pp. 118-119. The document was preserved at Zenshōan temple, Tōkyō, at the time of publishing. The version published in Maruyama Bokuden 1918a does not have a date but an identical writing appearing in Ōmori Sōgen 1970 (p. 241) has the date of 1883/9/14. Scholar Enomoto Shōji argues that Chiba Shūsaku's use of the barrel lid is not a fake story (Enomoto 1988, pp. 360-361).

Neither was Yamaoka satisfied with what he saw at other private swordsmanship training halls or the Bakufu Military Institute, and his criticism was directed not only toward Hokushin Ittō-ryū, but also toward the way Japanese swordsmanship in general was taught and learned by his contemporaries. As Yamaoka's writings indicate, he believed that swordsmanship of his time had lost any connection with the realities of combat and had been turned into a kind of competitive sport or entertainment with excessively long bamboo swords. In a broader sense, he lamented the loss of the *bushi* intangible culture which he considered to be based on a set of sacred immutable standards belonging to the pre-Tokugawa ages, standards that were molded in life and death situations.[93]

Thus, Yamaoka Tesshū presents an exceptional case of a *bushi* who, in the end of the Tokugawa era, was convinced that Japanese swordsmanship deviated considerably, both technically and spiritually, from its original roots in the pre-Tokugawa ages. His own gift in swordsmanship and his intuition, combined with his awareness of the crisis in the country, undoubtedly played a major role in the way he perceived contemporary warrior culture. From Yamaoka's point of view, only the "ancient ways" (*kohō*) contained the truth. It is remarkable how often Yamaoka used such terms as "the ancient ways," "the truth of the ancient ways" (*kohō no shinri*), "antiquity" (*jōko*) or "since ancient times" (*korai*) in his writings. Yamaoka retained this longing for the past all his life and later, when he was a prominent figure in the Meiji government, it distinguished him from the rest of the Meiji statesmen who were far more prone to copy "Western" and "modern" ways.

Yamaoka did not confine himself to conceptual criticism. By trial and selection he strove to acquire sword skills that would correspond to the standards of the pre-Tokugawa ages as he perceived them. In 1859, at the age of 24, he had already contrived his own method of training in free sparring that was aimed at making the training as close to the physical and mental realities of actual combat as possible. He called it "all day long withstanding sparrings" or "all day long multiple sparrings" (*shūjitsu tachikiri shiai* or *shūjitsu kazu shiai*). The idea was to train for the endurance required on the battlefield by engaging in 200 free sparrings from early morning till late at night for seven successive days; this would total 1,400 incessant sparrings in just one week. He described his approach:

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[93] The same idea of the immutability of standards of the *bushi* culture can be found in *Bugaku keimō* (*Education in military science*, beginning of the 19th century) by Rikimaru Tōzan (appears in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1942, volume 5, p. 238).

> Swordsmanship is the art which determines whether you stay alive or die on the battlefield. These days, people think that swordsmanship is a sport and they are preoccupied only with competition; I have not seen anyone who would exert one's powers [during the training] as if he really was on the battlefield… If you train [in many successive sparrings], in the beginning, you may think that it is like the usual sparring but, after you have gone through sparrings with several hundred opponents, you will feel as if you are really on the battlefield. This is when the [true] spirit is born… This is the real swordsmanship. If you do not train with this attitude, [your skills] will be useless on the battlefield, even though you may train for tens of years.[94]

Although this training was aimed at acquiring enormous physical stamina, it had a much more important goal: Tempering one's spirit through training beyond the normal limits of the body's tolerance. This was achieved through reaching the point where it was impossible to continue by mere physical effort, and one could persevere only through the power of the spirit making the body work as if it was fresh and full of energy. In one of his private writings on swordsmanship, Yamaoka, who was known not to brag about his accomplishments, claimed that, in his youth, he used his spiritual power so well that he did not feel tiredness or weakness by the end of the seventh day.[95]

Still, Yamaoka remained concerned that his innovations in methodologies of swordsmanship training might not allow him to resurrect the "ancient ways" and, in failing, might actually lead him in a false direction. It appears that, up to this point, he had completely dismissed training in predetermined patterns of movement (*kata*) with use of the wooden sword, which he contemptuously called the "dead method" (*shihō*).[96] From this time, he started to feel that the handling of the sword in actual combat of the pre-Tokugawa ages must have been much more sophisticated than was taught in the majority of Bakumatsu swordsmanship schools through free sparring with use of the bamboo sword.

In 1860, Yamaoka started to look for a new swordsmanship teacher.[97] At this stage of his development, he was unaware of a fact which he would come to realize much later in his life: That what he was looking for was transmitted not in factions and branches of Ittō-ryū but only in its main line represented by the Ono family. He did not know that, already in the first half of the Tokugawa era, a Confucian scholar Ogyū Sorai, referring to factions and branches of Shinkage-ryū and Ittō-ryū, had written that "the fact that

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94 From Yamaoka's writing which he wrote as admonishment to his disciples after he opened his Shumpūkan training hall (appears in Maruyama Bokuden 1918b, pp. 35-36).

95 Appears in Maruyama Bokuden 1918b, pp. 35-36. Also, see Kuzuu 1929, pp. 54-55; Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 109-110.

96 Maruyama Bokuden 1918b, p. 10. Kuzuu 1929, p. 53. Here, the term *shiai* in *bokken jiai* is used in the sense of "training," not "match."

97 Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 111-112.

now they are exceedingly preoccupied with the beauty of their theatrical fighting techniques is [a sign of] the spirit of the peaceful time."[98] Lacking detailed knowledge of the history of Japanese swordsmanship, Yamaoka ironically chose Nakanishi-ha Ittō-ryū, the faction of Ittō-ryū which spread the kind of sportive swordsmanship he was desperately trying to escape. After a four year search, during which he visited numerous training halls, in the spring of 1864 he encountered Asari Yoshiaki, the headmaster in the 5th generation of this school.[99] Yet, Asari appears to have differed greatly from his predecessors and possessed, to a degree, sword skills practicable in real combat. In line with the secrecy of pre-Tokugawa schools of military arts, he preferred to stay in the shadows all his life. His small training hall of almost 10 yards long and a little over 3 yards wide was located on the premises of the Katsuyama domain *daimyō*'s residence in Edo and was concealed from the eyes of outsiders.[100] This is how Yamaoka described his first impression of Asari:

> I made every effort to find a man with the true understanding of swordsmanship. I searched everywhere but could not find such a man at all. It so happened that I heard about Asari Matashichirō[101] of Ittō-ryū. People said that he was … a master who had inherited the tradition of Itō Ittōsai. I felt delight upon hearing this, went to [Asari's place] and asked for a match. Indeed, his skill was much different from swordsmanship so fashionable in the world: Behind his seeming softness was concealed inner strength, his spirit and breath were one, and he saw chances to win before the engagement... He really was a master with the true understanding of swordsmanship. Since then, every time I practiced with Asari, I had to admit to myself that my level was far from his.[102]

Actually, there is an eyewitness account of the first match between Yamaoka and Asari.[103] This suggests the level of skill of the two in free sparring with the bamboo sword did not differ so much. However, according to the same eyewitness account, Yamaoka could not match Asari in a special kind of training in handling the wooden sword in low positions (*gedan jiai*). It was not free sparring, nor was it a predetermined pattern of movement (*kata*), but a special kind of training that avoided reckless competition and, at the same time, allowed for some freedom of action. The requirement was to constantly keep the hilt of the wooden sword at the center of one's body, near the

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98 Cited from Ishioka et al. 1980, p. 21.

99 Imamura 1971, p. 231. Watatani 1971, p. 257. Tominaga Kengo 1972, p. 374. Watatani and Yamada 1978, p. 69. Ishioka et al. 1980, p. 184. Kōdansha 1983, p. 206. Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 115, 125-126.

100 Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 125, 164-166.

101 Another forename of Asari Yoshiaki.

102 From Yamaoka's writing appearing in Ushiyama 1937, pp. 90-91.

103 Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 127-133.

abdomen. This prevented the swinging movements so characteristic of sparring with the bamboo sword as mentioned earlier. For Yamaoka, it was a new kind of training, and it made him reevaluate *kata* based methods of training which he had dismissed as a "dead method." He was forced to recognize that not all such methods ended so disappointingly. It appears that the patterns transmitted by Asari were closer to the original Ittō-ryū tradition, i.e., they had been better preserved against the "flowery training" and contained principles of handling the sword in actual combat. As the following discussion will show, however, even Asari's style did not avoid a degree of deviation from the original roots.

Shortly after Yamaoka met Asari, he concluded that there was no sense in the hasty and chaotic exchange of hits with the bamboo sword, and that swordsmanship techniques should be precisely applied in a state of mental imperturbability. He also wrote that he obtained the ability to judge instantly the technical level of his opponent just by observing his stance before the engagement began.[104] However, Yamaoka's quest for what he perceived as the authentic swordsmanship was not limited to the technical aspects of this art. Simultaneously, he was looking for the spiritual content which was supposed to play the role of "spokes" to the "wheel" of swordsmanship. Yamaoka did not find a spirit guide in Asari, and it was probably from this time that he started to practice *zazen* of Rinzai Zen sect under his first Zen teacher, priest Gan'ō.[105] The choice of Rinzai Zen was not accidental: Back in Takayama, Yamaoka's family had close ties with Sōyūji temple belonging to this sect, and both Yamaoka's parents were buried there.[106] Henceforth, Yamaoka's daily routine consisted of training in swordsmanship during the day and *zazen* practice at night. In this period, he is said to have never gone to bed earlier than two o'clock in the morning.[107]

It should be stressed, however, that Yamaoka's absorption in Zen Buddhism was first of all rooted in his religious aspirations, not primarily in his quest for perfection in swordsmanship as all his biographers state.[108] For Yamaoka, Zen Buddhism filled the

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104 From an untitled original document written by Yamaoka on 1882/1/8. Preserved in Shumpūkan Bunko, Tamagawa Library, Kanazawa City (item number 30-1-107 *Yamaoka Tetsutarō jikihitsu kendō sho, dai issatsu*). Also, see Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 137, 139.

105 Ogino and Obata 1890a, p. 115. Watatani 1971, p. 257. Murakami Yasumasa 1999, p. 137.

106 Ema 1935a.

107 From the recollections of Ogura Tetsuju in Ushiyama 1937, p. 36.

108 This is supported by the recollections of Ogura Tetsuju. Yamaoka once told him that Zen Buddhism interested him for the first time when he read the precept (*yuikai*) left by the famous monk of Rinzai Zen sect of the Kamakura era, Daitō-kokushi (this memoir by Ogura appears in Ushiyama 1937, p. 35). The precept teaches the transience of time and the necessity of shaking off all worldly anxieties about food and clothes for the sake of realizing one's true nature (see the precept of Daitō-kokushi in Umezu 1991, pp. 97-99). Having a strong inclination to religion by

spiritual vacuum of swordsmanship schools of the Bakumatsu period, which he felt were either completely stripped of deeper moral and esoteric teachings, as in the case of Hokushin Ittō-ryū, or advocated empty theories of character perfection, as in the case of "flowery training." At the same time, like many of his contemporaries, Yamaoka also held on to the belief that the practice of Zen might elevate him to new heights of swordsmanship skill.[109] In his pursuit of what he believed to be the genuine warrior culture of the pre-Tokugawa ages, Yamaoka failed throughout his life to comprehend that it was esoteric Buddhism, not Zen, that had most to do with the training and practical application of military skills among the *bushi* of the distant past.

4.8 The Innermost Secret of "No-Opponent" and the Establishment of Mutō-ryū

Early in 1868, Yamaoka's training was temporarily interrupted by the Boshin war. He played a key role in the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle (1868/3-4) and his contribution to saving both the Tokugawa family and Edo population was recognized; in 1868/i4, Yamaoka, hitherto known virtually to no one in the public, suddenly found himself in one of the highest posts in the Bakufu hierarchy. After the Meiji Restoration, he served as one of the highest authorities in Shizuoka prefecture, which was allotted to the Tokugawa family, and later as a high-ranking official in the Meiji government.[110]

As a top official, Yamaoka never neglected his *musha shugyō*. However, it continued to be affected by unpredictable circumstances. In 1870, Asari Yoshiaki suddenly stopped to teach. The reasons are unclear and the only thing which is known is that he "quit the art [of swordsmanship] and never took the sword again."[111] Lifelong training and teaching was customary among swordsmen of Asari's level and the transmission of sword skills to the next generation was a matter of utmost importance for them. There was no way they could transmit their skill other than by taking the sword and showing with their own example so that disciples could learn by imitation. That is why there had to be a grave reason for Asari's sudden withdrawal. The most probable explanation is that Asari had a serious health problem that prevented him from training and teaching and that this was concealed from the general public.

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birth, Yamaoka was putting this principle in practice all his life, both before and after he began to study Zen seriously.

[109] The same mistaken belief can be found, for example, in the memoirs of another of the Three Bakumatsu Boats, Katsu Kaishū (Katsu 1892-1896, pp. 292-295, 297).

[110] To be discussed in detail in Chapter V.

[111] Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 167-168.

At this point Asari appears to have been the only person whose skills Yamaoka recognized as superior to his own and closer to the original Ittō-ryū tradition. That is why Yamaoka revered him as his teacher and also considered him as one of the few partners worth training with. The following recollection by Yamaoka is probably related to the time when Asari stopped to teach:

> Once I resolved in my heart to master this Way,[112] I swore that even if swordsmanship is abolished in this world and there is not a single partner to train with, I would not stop until I comprehend fully the innermost secrets (*kyokusho*) of this art…[113]

It seems that Yamaoka's frustration was heightened by the forthcoming abolishment of the warrior class, the ban on wearing the two swords, and the beginning of the age of rapid Westernization and industrialization, when many aspects of Japanese culture, including military arts, were regarded as anachronisms.

Yet, the unfavorable circumstances of the 1870s only reinforced Yamaoka's resolve to preserve the traditional warrior culture and continue the quest for mastery in swordsmanship. From that time, Yamaoka started to practice sword techniques alone, imagining Asari in front of him.[114] This is how he described his experience:

> …Every day I took the sword and, after the practice with other people, I used [to train] alone imagining myself standing face to face with Asari. Asari would appear instantly before my sword and I felt like facing a mountain. Early in the morning of 1880/3/30, as usual I was [practicing sword techniques] against an imaginary Asari in the bedroom. However, I could not see his image. This is when I came to comprehend the innermost secret of "no-opponent" (*muteki no kyokusho*). After that I invited Asari and had him examine my art. Asari said: "You have comprehended the subtle principle very well." At this point, I established my own school and called it Mutō-ryū.[115]

Writing these lines only for himself, Yamaoka omitted many details and the practice described by him above may produce an impression of a sort of "shadow sparring" against an imaginary opponent. However, such a practice was unlikely to be productive because Yamaoka would have been limited by the confines of his own imagination. In reality, what Yamaoka most likely did was similar to *musha shugyō* of the

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112 Referring to swordsmanship.

113 From an untitled original document written by Yamaoka on 1882/1/8. Preserved in Shumpūkan Bunko, Tamagawa Library, Kanazawa City (item number 30-1-107 *Yamaoka Tetsutarō jikihitsu kendō sho, dai issatsu*).

114 Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 168-171.

115 From Yamaoka's writing dated 1880/6 (appears in Ōmori Sōgen 1970, p. 233).

pre-Tokugawa ages when *bushi* secluded themselves on the grounds of Shintō shrines and Buddhist temples to concentrate on polishing their fighting skills. Yamaoka's practice was different only in that, serving in government, he trained at home over a much longer span of time.[116] What Yamaoka refers to as imagining Asari's outline was merely his effort to keep in mind Asari's level of mastery which, in terms of the use of the wooden sword, was much higher than his. By constantly keeping a high technical standard in his mind, Yamaoka felt he could prevent himself from going astray during his solitary training. In this, he set up a goal which he strove to achieve and surpass.[117]

It took Yamaoka about 10 years of solitary training against what he described as the imaginary Asari Yoshiaki to comprehend the "innermost secret of 'no-opponent.'" An important point to note here is that Yamaoka did not develop a new swordsmanship technique. It was a mental attitude which he interpreted in his writings to be in line with Buddhist metaphysical principles. He later described his experience:

> After that,[118] when I thought of my ability to see the technical level of the opponent before the engagement, I realized that it had absolutely nothing to do with the opponent's skillfulness or unskillfulness, and that it was "I" which was creating "skillfulness" or "unskillfulness" in the opponent. If there is "I," there is the "opponent," and if there is no "I," there is no "opponent." If one truly comprehends this principle, there will be not even the slightest discrimination between "skillful" and "unskillful," "strong" and "weak," "big" and "small."[119]

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116 As noted earlier, Yamaoka's teacher of spearmanship, Yamaoka Seizan, also engaged in austere training regularly on the grounds of his residence.

117 It should be noted that Yamaoka did not imagine opposing Asari while practicing *zazen*. Zen Buddhism negates imaginary techniques during this kind of practice (Maebayashi 2006, p. 159). It is one of the proofs that a document titled *Kempō to zenri* (*Swordsmanship and the principles of Zen*) which is attributed to Yamaoka's authorship (dated 1880/4) and appears, for example, in Ōmori Sōgen 1970 (pp. 229-232), is a counterfeit. In this document, Yamaoka describes his imaginary training with Asari while practicing *zazen*. This counterfeit is apparently based on a much shorter writing by Yamaoka, dated 1883/6 (also appears in Ōmori Sōgen 1970, p. 233). Other reasons why *Kempō to zenri* is a counterfeit are as follows: The document is excessively verbose which is unusual for Yamaoka's writings; it contains literary expressions which can not be found in any other authentic writing by Yamaoka; the style is ornate and is different from Yamaoka's style which is plain and straightforward; the document contains a description of how Yamaoka's disciple and Asari Yoshiaki were filled with admiration on seeing the unusual powers which Yamaoka gained after comprehension of the "innermost secret" – Yamaoka, as a person who all his life avoided fame and preferred to stay in the shadow, never wrote about himself in this way; the description of how Asari examined Yamaoka's revelation is unrealistic because it depicts a kind of sparring in which the wooden sword and body protectors, including the helmet, are used simultaneously – only a person lacking the very basic understanding of Japanese swordsmanship could write in this way. See my articles on counterfeits of Yamaoka's writings and the features of his literary style (Anshin 2006, 2007b).

118 After Yamaoka's comprehension of the "innermost secret."

119 From an untitled original document written by Yamaoka on 1882/1/8. Preserved in Shumpūkan Bunko, Tamagawa Library, Kanazawa City (item number 30-1-107 *Yamaoka Tetsutarō jikihitsu*

The problem with this private writing (and actually several others) is that Yamaoka used the term *muteki* which appears to have misled his admirers and biographers. The first semantic association this term brings up is "invincible" or "unbeatable" and this is why Yamaoka has come to be revered as an invincible "sword saint" (*kensei*) who, although he may not necessarily win, never loses.[120] However, this claim would have been rejected as arrogance by Yamaoka, who could not have failed to learn through his realistic approach to swordsmanship that no-one is guaranteed of staying unharmed in actual combat. Yamaoka's quote above demonstrates that he actually used this term in the literal sense of the characters which comprise it, i.e., "no-opponent." He used it in the same way as he used the term *mutō* ("no-sword") in the name of his school Mutō-ryū (the School of No-Sword).

Yamaoka was not the first one who operated with the term *mutō*. A very early usage (the first half of the 16th century) can be found in a document written by the 3rd headmaster of Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū, Iizasa Wakasa no Kami Morinobu. However, it is not clear in what sense this term was used.[121] In Yamaoka's notes on swordsmanship, we can find the meaning which he attributed to this term. He explained:

> The ultimate level in swordsmanship is when one reaches the [mental] state of "no-opponent." If one distinguishes between "skillful" and "unskillful," it is not "no-opponent." Such notions are the result of the workings of mind: When one faces an opponent who is more skillful, his mind "halts," he feels unconfident and strained and his swordsmanship performance does not go well; by creating the "opponent" in his mind he "halts" it… If one faces an opponent who is less skillful, he feels confident and unconstrained and he uses the sword with perfect freedom. This is because he thinks in his mind that [he can act] with perfect freedom. This is the evidence that there is not a single thing outside one's mind… In the name "Mutō-ryū," which I apply to what I have contrived, I use *mutō*, that is "there is no sword outside one's mind." "No-sword" is the same as "no-mind" (*mushin*). "No-mind" means not to "halt" one's mind. If one "halts" his mind, there is the "opponent;" if one does not "halt" his mind, there is no "opponent."[122]

In another writing, Yamaoka states that "the swordsmanship of Mutō-ryū is not concerned with victory or defeat. Its aim is gaining a natural victory through purifying

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kendō sho, dai issatsu).

120 Murakami Yasumasa 1999.

121 Appears in Imamura et al. 1966, volume 2, p. 260; Imamura et al. 1982, volume 3, p. 22.

122 From Yamaoka's writing dated 1884/4/10 (appears in Ōmori Sōgen 1970, p. 248). There are at least two other writings in which Yamaoka explains in similar terms the meaning of his school's name (appear in Ōmori Sōgen 1970, pp. 251-252).

one's heart and cultivating one's courage."[123] These passages may sound as if they derive from a Zen based psychological theory of combat (*shimpō-ron*) removed from the realities of the battlefield and characteristic of the Tokugawa-era "flowery training" such as, for example, the one upheld by the Sekiun-ryū school of swordsmanship.[124] However, if we accept that Yamaoka really comprehended something that brought him to an advanced level of swordsmanship skill, as he states in his writings, that would be a superficial impression. Some events in the aftermath of Yamaoka's revelation will show that he indeed comprehended something that gave him at least a deeper insight into how to handle the real sword in actual combat.

In terms of Yamaoka's interpretation of the highest level of mastery in swordsmanship, we need to consider what triggered Yamaoka's comprehension of the "innermost secret." So far, all of his biographies, without exception, have treated his breakthrough in swordsmanship as the natural extension of his reaching the final stage of *satori* in Zen Buddhism. This version has also been uncritically accepted by scholars and swordsmanship historians.[125] They base their assertions on the fact that a famous Zen monk of the time, Tekisui, is said to have granted Yamaoka the certificate of achieving the final *satori* (*inka*) approximately at the same time as Yamaoka comprehended the "innermost secret." It is true that Yamaoka's Zen study intensified considerably after Asari Yoshiaki stopped to teach swordsmanship.[126] However, he never stated explicitly himself that he reached the final *satori* in Zen. Furthermore, as scholar Shima Yoshitaka has demonstrated, according to the practice common in Zen circles, Tekisui granted Yamaoka a certificate that confirmed the latter's solving of only one of the numerous Rinzai Zen puzzles (*kōan*), and Yamaoka was very unlikely to receive a certificate proving his achievement of the final *satori*[127] (neither an original nor a copy of such a certificate is to be found).

As suggested earlier, Zen, was irrelevant to the practical aspects of *bushi* martial skills, as long as they remained martial. It appears that Yamaoka confused the suddenly elevated workings of his mind, which brought him to an advanced level of understanding of swordsmanship principles, with a kind of Zen-style religious revelation and, thus, came to describe his experience in his writings in Zen-Buddhist

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[123] From an undated writing (appears in Ōmori Sōgen 1970, p. 252).
[124] Maebayashi 1992, 1999.
[125] Yamada Jirōkichi 1960, pp. 362-366. Imamura 1971, p. 231. Tominaga Kengo 1972, p. 374. Ishioka et al. 1980, pp. 183-186. Kōdansha 1983, pp. 206-207. Hurst 1998, pp. 74-75. Maebayashi 2006, pp. 171-173.
[126] Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 168-170, 192, 217-218.
[127] Shima 2007a.

metaphysical terms. As far as swordsmanship is concerned, it can not be denied that Yamaoka possessed an unusual mind whose workings were close to those of founders of pre-Tokugawa military arts schools.[128] This mind allowed him to see fundamental problems in Japanese swordsmanship which few of his contemporaries observed, and made him the only one in the Bakumatsu period and early Meiji era to embark on the quest for and, finally, revival of the pre-Tokugawa root lineage of Japanese swordsmanship. In the process of decades-long training, this mind continued to struggle with the problem of how to get rid of mannerisms and biases of contemporary swordsmanship and how to make the body work better in actual combat. This body also had some unusual features. Yamaoka's physique was much bigger than that of the average Japanese of the time. He was a man of massive stature, standing over six feet tall and weighing in at 231 pounds.[129] Contemporaries insisted that this physique was driven by an extraordinary stamina and will power.[130] Being a gifted swordsman by reputation, he also certainly possessed excellent reflexes and, of course, intuition. It was the reciprocal work of such an unusual mind and body that finally appears to have triggered Yamaoka's sudden comprehension of the "innermost secret" which he came to describe in Zen Buddhist terms. However, this arguably was a unique experience limited to the equally unique workings of his mind and body. None of Yamaoka's disciples are known to have achieved a similar realization, even though he had a number of intensely devoted followers such as Kagawa Zenjirō who inherited his school.

In his *musha shugyō*, Yamaoka undoubtedly pursued a philosophical and ethical ideal of absolute and neutral truth which, in its neutrality, is raised over considerations of victory and defeat. At the same time, in his quest for the pre-Tokugawa warrior culture he appears to have discovered that, as hereditary specialists, the pre-Tokugawa *bushi*

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128 Yamaoka's reconstruction of the Ittō-ryū predetermined patters of movement, which will be discussed below, will demonstrate this even more clearly.

129 Tominaga Kengo 1972, p. 374. Kōdansha 1983, p. 206. Murakami Yasumasa 1999, p. 128. Zenshōan 2009, p. 135. The largeness of Yamaoka's stature is also clear from the size of his training wear which is still preserved in Zenshōan temple, Tōkyō.

130 The stamina and strength of Yamaoka's will power can be judged by his practice of the "all day long withstanding sparrings" or "all day long multiple sparrings" (*shūjitsu tachikiri shiai* or *shūjitsu kazu shiai*) discussed earlier. Several years after Yamaoka's death, his disciples wrote a document *Shumpūkan eizoku shu'isho* (*Prospectus relating to the preservation of Shumpūkan training hall*, 1890) which states that, until about a month before Yamaoka's death, when his health deteriorated due to the last stage of stomach cancer, he is said to have trained often with his disciples in his training hall and his performance did not differ even slightly from the time when he was healthy (appears in Ōmori Sōgen 1970, p. 254). Yamaoka's teacher of spearmanship, Seizan, also trained on his own and taught his disciples when he had serious health problems, and his performance is said to have not been influenced even slightly (the biography of Yamaoka Seizan by Nakamura Masanao in Fukuda Uchū 1879, p. 28).

developed mental attitudes which, as discussed earlier, allowed them to avoid duality in very practical matters. From Yamaoka's quotes above, it is clear that what he comprehended was transcendency over the duality of two opposites. The practical realization of the same notion was a natural part of the pre-Tokugawa *bushi* profession. This was not necessarily articulated as a "philosophy" adopted from Zen Buddhism or any other thought. If we take an example from Japanese archery, the emphasis upon posture, ritual, mental concentration and character development was initially adopted by Japanese from Chinese nobility and this adoption long predated any influence of Zen.[131] In this context, it is appropriate to repeat the words of the *shōgun*'s regent in the Kamakura Bakufu, Hōjō Yasutoki, to a military commander, Hōjō Tokiuji:

> The only prerequisite for a [superior] archer (*yumitori*) is a skillful usage of his mind (*kokoro*). This is why, in sleep or awake, he must not forget [the proper] inner attitude…Regardless of whether the target is far or close, big or small, whether he is surrounded by spectators, all of whom are women, or he is in a place where there is not a single person to watch him, he must maintain the state of mind as if he was standing in an arena of a palace watched by ten million people. Every time he releases an arrow, he must think that this very arrow is the last one and that, if it misses the target, in the absence of the second arrow, he will be shot by his enemy or torn to pieces by a [wild] animal.[132]

In this document, written seven centuries before Yamaoka, we see the same emphasis on transcendency over the duality of two opposites as well as mention of the importance to rid oneself of the "second chance" psychology. It is worth noting that Hōjō Yasutoki's writing is void of metaphysical terms, any reference to Buddhism or other philosophy. This was nothing but warrior wisdom based on the simple, even crude, realism which underlay the daily life of the pre-Tokugawa *bushi* and which elevated them over such dual notions as "war" and "no-war," "military" and "civil." These mental attitudes were cultivated through realistic training methodologies of the hereditary warrior houses, not metaphysical philosophies. One may suggest that this is what Yamaoka finally arrived at after years of his quest, although a skillful pre-Tokugawa *bushi* would find little remarkable about it. A point in passing here is that Yamaoka's mind and biology allowed him to achieve such a mental attitude without undergoing training according to the methodologies of the pre-Tokugawa *bushi*, which continued to look to him like pieces of a disassembled mosaic.

There is no evidence that Yamaoka ever tested his new achievement against anyone. It seems that he preferred to harbor it in himself. This may have been because he strove

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[131] Hurst 1998, p. 109.

[132] Hōjō Yasutoki's letter appearing in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1942, volume 1, pp. 231-232.

to master a skill which was practical in mortal combat and its testing could result only in the death of one or both of the combatants. In the Bakumatsu period and Meiji era, most swordsmen seemed to him to be experienced and skillful only in sparring with the bamboo sword. Any attempt to test a skill developed for actual combat against what he viewed as game-players, accustomed to use only a toy weapon, would be unfair toward the latter. It would also have misled him in regard to whether the outcome of the match was due to his achievement or merely the incompetence of his opponent. Finally, it would have undermined some of the basic ethical principles of his *musha shugyō*.

4.9 Back to the Past: Between Ittō-ryū and Mutō-ryū

What followed Yamaoka's comprehension of the "innermost secret" is full of contradictions. On the one hand, although he established his own school with the new name, he did not attempt to create a new technical system. As some of his writings will show, his intent was to preserve the heritage of Ittō-ryū in the form created by the 16th century founder, Itō Ittōsai, without changing anything even slightly or adding anything new. On the other hand, he started to call himself "the reviver of the Way of the Sword" (*kendō chūkō*).[133] It appears that he perceived himself as the reviver of not only the Ittō-ryū tradition, but also Japanese swordsmanship as a whole, or more exactly, its quintessence.

One problem for our understanding of these events is that, probably far from the initial intention of the author, Yamaoka's writing on his solitary training and sudden revelation can give the impression that he achieved the highest level in Ittō-ryū (at least of the Nakanishi-ha lineage). However, this conflicts with the fact that, after Yamaoka comprehended the "innermost secret," he started to doubt the authenticity of the predetermined patterns of movement (*kata*) of Nakanishi-ha Ittō-ryū taught to him by Asari Yoshiaki. He felt that even these patterns had been distorted into a form of "flowery training"[134] (though, perhaps not as much as in other branches of Ittō-ryū). Yamaoka would say later to his disciples that even Asari "was not the real thing yet."[135] Naturally, the training of the pre-Tokugawa schools of military arts was structured so that their higher levels of skill, and especially the innermost secrets, could not be

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[133] This title is seen in Yamaoka's writing dated 1882/7 (appears in Ōmori Sōgen 1970, p. 237). Also, see Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 171-172, 232.

[134] Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 233.

[135] From the recollections of Yamaoka's live-in disciple Ogura Tetsuju appearing in Ushiyama 1937, p. 19.

mastered and comprehended without first correctly mastering the lower levels of the art, all of which were based on the practice of predetermined patterns of movement. In short, without undergoing the practice of correct predetermined patterns of movement, one could not comprehend the innermost secrets. However, Yamaoka's writing suggests that he comprehended the "innermost secret" only to realize that what he was practicing under Asari's guidance was actually incorrect. This makes us wonder about what Yamaoka really comprehended. Besides the transcendency of duality, he appears to have achieved a unique vision which allowed him to sense the fundamental principles of handling the real sword in actual combat and use it better than others. However, this could not formally be described as the "innermost secret" of Ittō-ryū because, at this point, Yamaoka had not gone through the correct training of this school.

As we can see, up to this point, Yamaoka's lifelong quest for a swordsmanship school transmitting pre-Tokugawa skills had been unsuccessful. There is no evidence that he ever encountered the rare exceptions among military arts schools such as Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū or Jigen-ryū discussed in the previous chapters. This is not surprising because, for whatever reason, he adhered to the Ittō-ryū lineage and this limited his quest. Yamaoka was undoubtedly deeply frustrated upon realizing that even what he learned from Asari showed signs of deviation from the original Ittō-ryū. His feeling of despair was probably heightened by the recognition that he was well into his 40s and, after twenty five years of restless search, he was still far from his goal. In response, he chose the only remaining option. He embarked on an unprecedented attempt to revive one of the pre-Tokugawa swordsmanship lineages: He attempted to reconstruct predetermined patterns of movement of Ittō-ryū and teach them to his disciples.[136]

Obviously Yamaoka was not absolutely sure of the correctness of his reconstructions, which were partly based on his experience as a swordsman, partly on his reading and analysis of the historical scrolls of Ittō-ryū and other schools,[137] but also partly on his

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[136] Murakami Yasumasa 1999, p. 233. The popular story holds that Yamaoka entered the service of Emperor Meiji on condition that he would resign exactly in ten years (Maruyama Bokuden 1918b, p. 28. Ushiyama 1937, pp. 183-184; 1942a, pp. 121, 136-137; 1974, pp. 232-233. Satō Hiroshi 2002, pp. 192-196). Indeed, the dates of Yamaoka's entering and resigning imperial service (1872/6 and 1882/6 respectively) suggest deliberate calculation. However, Yamaoka was not the kind of a person who would quit while Emperor Meiji or the Tokugawa family still needed his service. He was not a careerist, and when he saw that both sides could do without him, he preferred to quit and concentrate on the further reconstruction and teaching of what he believed to be the genuine Ittō-ryū swordsmanship. Still, even after his resignation, Yamaoka remained emperor Meiji's chargè d'affaires (*goyōgakari*) receiving the remuneration of the government official of the second grade (*nitōkan atsukai*)

[137] Pursuing the "ancient truth" in this period of his life, Yamaoka copied a large number of

intuitive understanding. This is probably one of the reasons why he used the new school name, and did not claim to represent the genuine Ittō-ryū. His lack of confidence induced him to begin searching for the successor of the main line Ittō-ryū from the Ono family, which he believed had transmitted the tradition for centuries directly and unchanged from Itō Ittōsai, and who, he hoped, could confirm the correctness of his assumptions.[138]

Sometime in 1884, Yamaoka finally managed to find the headmaster of the main line Ittō-ryū in the 9th generation, Ono Nario (66 years old at the time) who lived in retirement in a village in Chiba prefecture. The only source that provides details on the encounter between Yamaoka and Nario is *Shumpūkan eizoku shu'isho* (*Prospectus relating to the preservation of Shumpūkan training hall*), collectively written by Yamaoka's disciples after his death, in 1890. This writing is not free from hagiographical traits; however, the fact that Yamaoka eventually became Nario's successor allows the assumption that its contents are generally correct and can be used for the purpose of this thesis, albeit with caution.

According to this document, on Yamaoka's invitation, in August of 1884, Nario, with a disciple, visited his Shumpūkan training hall and gave a demonstration of the Ittō-ryū predetermined patterns of movement as transmitted within the Ono family. Yamaoka is said to have been filled with admiration when he saw that there was no embellishment in techniques which seemed natural and practical in actual combat and, to him, to be truly the ones contrived by the founder of the school. Furthermore, it turned out that, in cardinal points, his reconstructions fully coincided with what he saw during the demonstration.[139] As scholar Yoshida Tomoo notes, generations of headmasters of the Ono family consistently prohibited their disciples from sparring with the bamboo sword,[140] and we can assume that predetermined patterns of movement transmitted in the family had characteristics similar to Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū, i.e. speed, power, and precision.

The assertion that Yamaoka's reconstructions coincided with the techniques demonstrated by Ono Nario appears remarkable. It is difficult to say how Yamaoka could reconstruct an intangible culture, which had been born three hundred years before him, and was unknown in its original form outside the Ono family. Assuming that

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swordsmanship texts of Ittō-ryū and other schools (Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 240, 242-245, 253-254, 263-265, 269-271, 279-280, 283-285).

138 Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 233-234.

139 *Shumpūkan eizoku shu'isho* appearing in Ōmori Sōgen 1970, p. 254. Also, see Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 186-187, 275-277.

140 Yoshida Tomoo 2007, p. 130.

Yamaoka's reconstructions were so accurate, it may simply have been the extraordinary byproduct of his exceptional natural gifts as a swordsman combined with his unique mental capacities, elevated and refined even more due to his ten-year solitary practice against the imagined figure of Asari Yoshiaki.

Ono Nario accepted Yamaoka's request to teach predetermined patterns of movement to the latter's disciples and, in 1884/9, together with his family, he moved to a house in Tokyo provided by Yamaoka.[141] Soon it turned out that Yamaoka and Ono Nario were distant relatives and, because Ono Nario did not have heirs, the same month he made Yamaoka the legitimate 10th headmaster of Ittō-ryū by granting him the heirloom sword Kamewaritō (the Barrel Splitting Sword) and all secret traditional texts of the school transmitted in the Ono family.[142] In 1885/3, Ono Nario further granted Yamaoka the license of full transmission[143] and since that time Yamaoka started to add Ittō Shōden (The Correct Transmission of Ittō[-ryū]) to the name of his school, so that the new version read Ittō Shōden Mutō-ryū.[144]

Here, it may be helpful to clarify what Yamaoka understood by the term "correct transmission" (*shōden*). He explains it in a document *Ittō Shōden Mutō-ryū heihō jūni kajō mokuroku kōyakusho* (*The Commentaries to the 12 item list of Ittō Shōden Mutō-ryū military art*).

> *SHŌDEN* is the "correct transmission" of what the founder Ittōsai Kagehisa transmitted to Ono Tadaaki and what has been transmitted to date through generations [of the Ono family] as it was, in its complete integrity, without adding anything alien.[145]

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141 Tominaga Kengo 1972, p. 376. Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 277, 280.

142 Imamura 1971, p. 232. Watatani 1971, p. 257. Tominaga Kengo 1972, p. 376. Watatani and Yamada 1978, p. 69. Ishioka et al. 1980, p. 185. Kōdansha 1983, p. 206. Murakami Yasumasa 1999, p. 278. Yoshida Tomoo 2007, p. 160.

143 The license is preserved in Zenshōan temple, Tōkyō. Because Nario made Yamaoka his successor earlier, the grant of this license was probably intended not for Yamaoka himself but rather to make society aware of the fact that Yamaoka became a legitimate successor.

144 Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 285-286. Also, see Ōmori Sōgen 1970, pp. 113-114.

145 Cited from Ōmori Sōgen 1970, p. 114. Ōmori Sōgen suggests that this document was written in 1885. Yamaoka repeatedly stressed the need for full compliance with the teaching of the founder, Itō Ittōsai. In 1883/9, he wrote: "I have studied [swordsmanship] for almost forty years and one day I suddenly came to comprehend [its innermost secret]. I established a new school, Mutō-ryū. However, it was possible only because I [strove] to find the standards of Ittōsai's tradition and not deviate from them even slightly; I felt the kindness and sympathy in the transmission of the innermost secrets (*gokui*) [of swordsmanship] which Ittōsai developed by going through numerous mortal combats and extreme hardships in a span of many years. The old saying says: 'The Way is born when the basis is firm.' Regardless of your own understanding of what is good or not in combat, if you deviate from the ancient transmission of a school's founder, even if you practice swordsmanship all your life, you will not comprehend its innermost secrets" (appears in Ōmori Sōgen 1970, p. 242). In another document, dated 1885/6, Yamaoka wrote again that "the school like my Mutō-ryū has not lost the teaching principles of the founder" (appears in Ōmori Sōgen

Another document, written by Yamaoka on 1885/1/27, shows that, at this stage, he was already confident that "the correct transmission" could not be found anywhere except in the root lineages of Japanese swordsmanship belonging to certain families. He states that people mistakenly think that Ittō-ryū is transmitted in its factions and branches. However, the true main line of this school is the one which is transmitted only within the Ono family, through fifty predetermined patterns of movement accompanied by the main symbol of the school – the heirloom sword.[146] It remains unclear how Yamaoka could be so certain that Ittō-ryū was transmitted within the Ono family unchanged and fully in its original form. Yet, a recent study by scholar Yoshida Tomoo confirms Yamaoka's belief.[147]

Furthermore, Yamaoka pursued not only the predetermined patterns of movement that transmitted the technical skill of Ittō-ryū, but also what he believed were the characteristic mannerisms (*kuse*) of its 16th century founder, Itō Ittōsai. In one of his writings, Yamaoka noted that the mannerisms of founders of some pre-Tokugawa swordsmanship schools, including Ittō-ryū, were lost through generations of their disciples who went on to establish factions and branches. He pointed to the vital importance of an indissoluble continuity of teaching in military arts schools, and stressed that there was a break, or a gap, in the process of transmission in most contemporary swordsmanship schools which was equal to the loss of a connection with the pre-Tokugawa tradition, i.e., the loss of practicability in actual combat.[148]

Yet, a question inevitably arises from the name of Yamaoka's school. On the one hand, he strove to do his best for the revival and preservation of the original Ittō-ryū; on the other hand, he did add something of his own and had no scruples in showing this

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1970, p. 253).

146 Appears in Ōmori Sōgen 1970, pp. 114-115.

147 Yoshida Tomoo 2007, pp. 160-157. According to the recent study by Yoshida Tomoo (2007, p. 137), out of the fifty predetermined patterns of movement of the main line Ittō-ryū, only twenty five were transmitted from the founder Itō Ittōsai. The other twenty five were created by the second headmaster of the Ono family, Tadatsune. Of course, Yamaoka did not know this at the time. However, it does not contradict his quest for what he perceived as the genuine Ittō-ryū tradition as long as the other twenty five forms were based on the same technical principles and mannerisms and remained practical. Judging from Yamaoka's reaction to Ono Nario's demonstration, he did not feel that even one form deviated from the Ittō-ryū tradition.

148 From a scroll that Yamaoka issued to his disciples when they reached the first level of swordsmanship skill in his school (*Ittō-ryū heihō jūni kajō mokuroku*, (*The 12 item list of Ittō-ryū military art*)). The text of the scroll appears in Ushiyama 1937, pp. 281-288. There is no date in the published version of this scroll but presumably it was written after Yamaoka's encounter with the 9th headmaster of the main line Ittō-ryū, Ono Nario. Otherwise, it was impossible for him to know what the mannerisms of Itō Ittōsai were.

through his school name (the term “Mutō”). In addressing this contradiction, first, it is important not to confuse Yamaoka’s stance with other branches of root lineages of Japanese swordsmanship. More often than not the creators of a branch of a root lineage placed their surnames before the name of a school for better public recognition; this was the case of Nakanishi-ha Ittō-ryū, Mizoguchi-ha Ittō-ryū, and so forth. These men deliberately tried to emphasize in the school name their difference from the root lineage, not their unity with it. Had Yamaoka done the same, his school name would have read as something like Yamaoka-ha Ittō-ryū.

An interesting fact giving a hint to the explanation of the contradiction is that, in the majority of secondary sources, Yamaoka’s name follows the name of Asari Yoshiaki and concludes the genealogical tree of Nakanishi-ha Ittō-ryū, which was just a faction of Ittō-ryū.[149] Not only that: Yamaoka himself put his name after Asari’s in his own swordsmanship scrolls which he issued to his disciples. In Yamaoka’s writings, his name does not seem to have ever appeared after Ono Nario’s, and it never concluded the genealogical tree of the original Ittō-ryū lineage, although this would have been a logical outcome of his encounter with Nario.

There appear to be several reasons for this. First, Yamaoka did not go as far as to get rid of training based on free sparring with use of the bamboo sword and body protectors. As noted in Chapter III, his knowledge of the history of Japanese swordsmanship was not always accurate and he continued to believe that the bamboo sword had been used for training purposes since “ancient times.” However, in reality, there was no such training in the time of Itō Ittōsai. Furthermore, Yamaoka’s emphasis on the psychological aspects of combat that he felt he acquired with the help of Zen Buddhism were not in line with the teaching of Ittō-ryū, which originally had no strong connection with Buddhism.[150]

There is no record of the kind of discussion between Yamaoka and Ono Nario in regard to these points, or whether there was such a discussion at all. The Ono family maintained the ban on sparring with the bamboo sword and the only thing that can be said is that, admitting that Yamaoka managed to reconstruct predetermined patterns of movement of Ittō-ryū, Nario probably discovered in Yamaoka an extraordinarily gifted swordsman. Being quite old and having no worthy successors at the time, he preferred to recognize Yamaoka as his legitimate successor and ignore some points in his practice

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149 Sometimes Yamaoka’s name can be simultaneously linked to the names of both Asari Yoshiaki and Ono Nario (see, for example, Shimokawa 1925, p. 287. Watatani 1971, p. 258; Ishioka et al. 1980, p. 188. Yoshida Tomoo 2007, p. 159). However, it is evident that Yamaoka completely switched to the main line Ittō-ryū transmitted in the Ono family.

150 Ōmori Nobumasa 1976b, pp. 46, 52.

which were not in accord with the main line Ittō-ryū. When it comes to Yamaoka, he appears to have found a compromise to the two mutually exclusive methods of training in swordsmanship. One possibility is that he needed sparring with the bamboo sword merely to train breath and stamina among his disciples.[151] Whatever the case, Yamaoka understood clearly that his Zen-style psychological interpretations and training based on sparring with the bamboo sword were foreign to the original Ittō-ryū. Honest admission of his own deviation was the most probable reason why he put his name after Asari's in his swordsmanship scrolls.

Thus, it can be said that, although he longed for the *bushi* intangible culture of the pre-Tokugawa ages all his life, Yamaoka never achieved a complete understanding of this culture historically, as discussed in the first three chapters of this thesis. This is particularly evident from the fact that, with the exception of his boyhood in Takayama and a short-term study of spearmanship under Yamaoka Seizan, there is no evidence that Yamaoka ever attempted to acquire skills in handling multiple kinds of weapons. The narrow specialization of a "swordsman" was unknown in the pre-Tokugawa ages when one of the main factors dividing life from death in actual combat was the ability to understand and handle all manner of arms.

[151] In the Bakumatsu period, we can find another example of such a compromise. Kubota Sugane of Tamiya-ryū who, similarly to Yamaoka, criticized all contemporary swordsmen for losing touch with the realities of actual combat, and introduced an eclectic mix of training methodologies, that is training in predetermined patterns of movement with the bamboo sword (Enomoto 1978, pp. 276-280, 282-283; 1979, p. 262). However, Yamaoka would undoubtedly have been very skeptical toward such eclectism.

CHAPTER V

The "Life-Giving Sword" of Yamaoka Tesshū and the Bloodless Surrender of Edo Castle

This chapter reconsiders the negotiation process that preceded the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle, arguably the most important event in the Meiji Restoration, and especially Yamaoka Tesshū's role in it. It suggests that it was Yamaoka who played the key role during the most important stages of the negotiation. The major theme of this chapter in the broad context of the thesis is the contention that the actions of a single swordsman in preventing a nation-wide disaster were guided by his spiritual and physical training obtained during his quest for the pre-Tokugawa warrior culture and the ideal of the "life-giving sword."

5.1 The Historiography of the Bloodless Surrender of Edo Castle

According to a prominent historian, Haraguchi Kiyoshi, the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle (1868/3-4) was the most important event in the Meiji Restoration.[1] It was the result of negotiations between Yamaoka Tesshū and Saigō Takamori in Sumpu city, Suruga province (3/9), as well as later negotiations held by Yamaoka, Saigō and Katsu Kaishū in Edo (3/14-15). The surrender is also among the most often mentioned events in the Japanese-language historiography of the Meiji Restoration, if less so in English-language works.[2] However, the tendency in Japanese studies is to emphasize the role of senior individuals such as Katsu Kaishū, Princess Kazunomiya, or the British envoy to Japan, Harry Parkes,[3] and to marginalize Yamaoka Tesshū.

The only academic work that deals exclusively with the bloodless surrender of Edo

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[1] Haraguchi 1971, p. 90.

[2] The event is mentioned only briefly in Akamatsu 1972, Totman 1980, Yates 1995, Ravina 2004.

[3] Some scholars place a disproportionate weight on the role of Katsu Kaishū (Matsuura 1968), the British envoy to Japan, Harry Parkes (Ishii Takashi 1966, 1973), and Princess Kazunomiya (Iechika 2005). There also has been a kind of a century-long debate among admirers of Yamaoka Tesshū and Katsu Kaishū over who contributed most to the realization of the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle. Examples of such admirers of Yamaoka are Ushiyama 1937, 1942a-b, 1965, 1967; Yamaguchi Yoshinobu 1973, 1985; Yamanaka 1993b. Examples of Katsu's admirers are Tonegawa 1980, Esaka 1998, Kaku 2000, Akasegawa 2001.

Castle was written by Haraguchi Kiyoshi.[4] This obviously is the most comprehensive study of the event and it appears to give a balanced view of the developments of 1868/3-4. At the same time, it disproves some theories, such as the one that maintains that it was Harry Parkes whose behind-the-scenes influence made the bloodless surrender possible.[5] The following discussion of Yamaoka's role will employ Haraguchi's work for the dates of events and other background information but it will show that even he seriously underestimated Yamaoka's role. It will be argued that Yamaoka was the key player during the most important stages of the negotiations and that, to underestimate his role, distorts our entire understanding of this seminal event.

The historiographical discussion below may deviate to a degree from the themes of the previous chapters. However, this kind of logical analysis of historical events has not been attempted in the academic literature and is thus indispensable for the study of Yamaoka's pursuit of the ideal of the "life-giving sword," which pertains to one of the main topics of this thesis.

5.2 Finding the Right Messenger: The Bakufu's Attempts to Approach the Imperial government

1868/1/3 witnessed the outbreak of the Boshin war. The battles of Toba and Fushimi, in the vicinity of Kyōto, ended with the Bakufu's crushing defeat and *shōgun* Tokugawa Yoshinobu's flight to Edo (1/12). For several weeks Yoshinobu vacillated between further war and surrender. Finally, he began to incline to surrender: On 1/15 he dismissed the main advocate of continuing war, Oguri Tadamasa, who was the Bakufu financial affairs administrator (*kanjō bugyō*) and army vice-commander (*rikugun bugyō nami*). On 1/19 he rejected the suggestion of Matsudaira Katamori and Matsudaira Sadaaki, *daimyō* of the Aizu and Kuwana domains respectively, to attempt to retake his lost territory and restore his authority. At the same time, advocates of peaceful reconciliation were put in charge of the most important affairs of the Bakufu, such as Katsu Kaishū who, on 1/17, became the commandant of the Bakufu army (*rikugun sōsai*), and Ōkubo Ichiō, who, on 1/23, was appointed the Bakufu finance minister (*kaikei sōsai*).[6]

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[4] Haraguchi 1971, 1972.

[5] This view is upheld by Ishii Takashi 1966, 1973.

[6] Haraguchi 1971, pp. 91-92, 103, 106. Details on the split of opinions among the Bakufu top officials and retainer corps over the question of whether to surrender or fight can be found in Haraguchi 1971.

In order to break through the crisis, Yoshinobu and the Bakufu top officials made desperate efforts in two directions. One was the attempt to convey Yoshinobu's allegiance to the imperial government through sympathetic *daimyō* and connections in the imperial court; another was the restructuring of the Bakufu apparatus which led to a large-scale change of personnel and promotion of a new system of government through public discussion (*kōgi seiji*).[7] These efforts, however, did not produce substantial results. By the end of 1868/1, all *daimyō* of the Kansai region had sworn allegiance to the new imperial government. On 2/3, an imperial edict about the emperor's punitive expedition against the Bakufu (*tennō shinsei*) was issued. On 2/9, Arisugawanomiya, imperial prince Taruhito, was appointed to be commander-in-chief of the punitive expedition to the East (*tōsei daisōtoku*),[8] and a unified military chain of command that led the imperial army to Edo along Tōkaidō, Tōsandō and Hokurikudō roads, was established. Under these circumstances, Yoshinobu officially announced his intention to surrender and secluded himself in Kan'eiji temple in the Ueno district of Edo on 1868/2/12.[9]

After Yoshinobu's seclusion, the Bakufu sent repeated messengers in order to convey his obedience and allegiance to the imperial government but all were delayed or rejected.[10] Moreover, the imperial government never attempted to establish contact with

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[7] Haraguchi 1971, pp. 104-105.

[8] The real power was in the hands of staffs from the Satsuma and Chōshū domains, particularly Saigō Takamori.

[9] Haraguchi 1971, p. 113.

[10] Attempts to convey Yoshinobu's allegiance and wish to surrender through the most prominent political figures of the Bakufu to the General Headquarters of the Imperial Army (Daisōtokufu) and the Headquarters for Quelling Tōkaidō Region (Tōkaidō Sōtokufu) were also practically fruitless. The *daimyō* of the Oshi domain, Matsudaira Tadazane, was chosen to deliver Yoshinobu's letter of appeal. However, he failed due to illness (the letter was delivered through other channels). The *daimyō* of the Maebashi domain, Matsudaira Naokatsu, the *daimyō* of the Yodo domain, Inaba Masakuni, the 10th head of the Hitotsubashi family, Mochiharu, who was accompanied by the Bakufu junior councilor (*wakadoshiyori*), Hattori Chikuzen no Kami, and inspector (*metsuke*), Hori Sadanosuke - all were stopped halfway by the imperial government outposts, lost time in scrutiny, and managed to reach Kyōto only in the last decade of March. The Bakufu great inspector (*ōmetsuke*), Umezawa Magotarō, appealed to the Headquarters for Quelling Tōkaidō Region to stop the imperial government army and spare Yoshinobu's life but without any effect. Prince Rinnōjinomiya (the monk name of Kitashirakawanomiya, imperial prince Yoshihisa) left Edo by the request of Yoshinobu on 2/22 and reached Kyōto on 3/7. He appealed to the commander-in-chief of the imperial army, Arisugawanomiya, and his staff to spare Yoshinobu's life and not let the imperial army move to the east from Hakone. However, not only was this fruitless, he was intimidated by the staff and had to return to Edo. The situation was no better with members of the imperial government who sympathized with the Tokugawa family and appealed to stop the offensive on Edo. Such was the former great councilor of the Bakufu, Matsudaira Shungaku. The imperial government either ignored their appeals or ordered them to contact the General Headquarters of the Imperial Army. The latter was equal to flat refusal

the Bakufu to negotiate a peaceful surrender. This meant that preparations for the offensive on Edo proceeded as planned and the imperial government was firm in its determination to exterminate Yoshinobu and the whole Tokugawa family. Tokugawa Yoshinobu pinned his hopes most on Princess Kazunomiya, the widow of the 14th *shōgun* Iemochi. In the beginning of the second decade of 1868/2, Princess Kazunomiya's messenger, Fuji, managed to obtain a reply from the imperial government that, if it had evidence of the sincerity of Yoshinobu's wish to surrender, it would consider the possibility of letting the Tokugawa family survive. This was the first response of the imperial government that clearly stated its position. However, it was unofficial and conveyed secretly. Moreover, the basic policy of the imperial government remained unchanged.[11] It also should be mentioned that Princess Kazunomiya was not friendly to Yoshinobu and her letter to the imperial government was more concerned with her own well-being in case Edo was attacked. She explicitly stated that she did not care about Yoshinobu's fate.[12]

On 1868/3/5, the commander-in-chief of the imperial army, Arisugawanomiya, arrived in Sumpu city, Suruga province. The following day, the General Headquarters of the Imperial Army (Daisōtokufu, hereafter referred to as General Headquarters) held a military meeting during which the date of the all-out attack on Edo was scheduled for 3/15.[13]

5.3 Swordsman Yamaoka Tesshū as the *Shōgun*'s Messenger

Yamaoka Tesshū was suddenly vaulted into the centre of events when the situation seemed absolutely hopeless for the Bakufu. As noted earlier, Yamaoka preferred to take a low profile all his life and his role in the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle was no

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because the General Headquarters of the Imperial Army was moving the army to Edo and rejected all appeals and petitions. (Haraguchi 1971, pp. 119-121, 125. Iechika 2005, pp. 18-20).

[11] Haraguchi 1971, pp. 103, 105-106, 119. Later on 3/8, Tokugawa Yoshinobu was informed by Princess Kazunomiya's messenger Fuji that, depending on how the Bakufu fulfilled the surrender conditions, the imperial government would consider offering lenient treatment to the Tokugawa family. However, the surrender conditions were not specified, and there was no one yet to mediate negotiations between Yoshinobu and the imperial government (Haraguchi 1972, p. 56).

[12] Iechika 2005, pp. 18-19.

[13] One of the main reasons for scheduling the exact day of the all-out attack was a military provocation against the imperial army organized on 3/6 in the Katsunuma area of Kai province by the leader of the Shinsengumi group, Kondō Isami (the group was utterly defeated in this battle). (Haraguchi 1971, pp. 126-127. Kikuchi and Itō 1998, jō, pp. 65, 82). At the time, Shinsengumi was temporarily renamed into Kōyō Chimbutai (Kai Province Suppression Unit).

exception. Yet, he left one writing on this event: *Keiō Boshin sangatsu Sumpu Daisōtokufu ni oite Saigō Takamori-shi to dampan hikki* (*The writing about the negotiation with Saigō Takamori-shi in the General Headquarters of the Imperial Army in Sumpu in March of the Boshin year of the Keiō era*, 1882). This is usually abbreviated as *Boshin dampan hikki*; hereafter, it will be referred to as *BDH*.[14]

Yamaoka wrote *BDH* 15 years after the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle. It was not intended for the public. The only thing which is known is that *BDH* started to circulate in print after Yamaoka's disciples published it without his permission.[15] Copies of this document can be found under slightly different titles in archives of governmental institutions, such as the Imperial Household Archives (Kunaichō Shoryōbu). Its credibility is accepted by scholars[16] and can be confirmed by the report of a retainer of the Kumamoto domain, diaries of Katsu Kaishū and Ernest Satow, and a letter by Iwakura Tomosada.[17] As the following discussion will show, however, *BDH* has not received the attention it deserves, and some very important points of the text have been overlooked.

First, it is necessary to address the question of how such a low-ranking retainer of the *shōgun* as Yamaoka came to be chosen to go to Sumpu to convey Tokugawa Yoshinobu's allegiance to the imperial government. By this time, Yamaoka had already quit the Bakufu Military Institute.[18] In 1868/1, he became an acting commander of Sei'eitai, a troop consisting of over 300 Bakufu retainers who volunteered to guard Tokugawa Yoshinobu, and from 2/12, the day when Tokugawa Yoshinobu secluded himself in Kan'eiji temple in Ueno, guarded the outward perimeter of the *shōgun*'s new residence. The inner perimeter and interior was guarded by the Yūgekitai whose commander was Takahashi Deishū, the brother of Yamaoka's wife.[19]

According to the chronological record of Yamaoka's life compiled by Murakami Yasumasa, it was Takahashi Deishū who recommended Yamaoka to the *shōgun*.[20] Both Yoshinobu and his closest entourage understood that the imperial government had

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14 Original preserved in Zenshōan Temple, Tōkyō.

15 See my article for a detailed discussion of the circumstances behind the creation of this writing by Yamaoka in Anshin 2007b (can be viewed online at http://www.tesshu.info/shimatsusho.html).

16 Haraguchi Kiyoshi uses it in Haraguchi 1971, 1972. Iechika Yoshiki (2005, p. 25) cites from the version of *BDH* appearing in one of Tokugawa Yoshinobu's biographies.

17 These sources will be cited below.

18 Neither the date nor the reason for Yamaoka's resignation is known. As a result of the Rōshigumi affair, Yamaoka spent eight months under house arrest (see Appendix). With the exception of Yamaoka's joining Asari Yoshiaki's school in 1864, the four-year period that followed his release from house arrest is a blank spot in his biography.

19 Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 145, 147-148. Iechika 2005, p. 20.

20 Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 149-150. Also, see Haraguchi 1971, p. 129, note 69.

refused to recognize the authority of all previous emissaries to represent the Tokugawa family, despite their high social standing.[21] Furthermore, this elite status made them excessively visible and often resulted in their detention en route by the imperial outposts. No doubt, that is why it was decided to send a retainer whose low rank would make him less visible and more difficult to intercept. However, taking into consideration the difficulty of the task, and the high risk of failure, the requirements for any such emissary were fearlessness, unstinting devotion to the *shōgun*, and a readiness to sacrifice his life for him. Takahashi knew that Yamaoka possessed all these qualities and it was quite natural that he recommended Yamaoka to the *shōgun*.

Tokugawa Yoshinobu gave an audience to Yamaoka on 3/5.[22] As one committed to *musha shugyō*, Yamaoka absolutely insisted on sincerity and, despite his rank, he only agreed to undertake this mission after receiving Yoshinobu's personal commitment that he did not intend to play a double game, and that his intention to surrender was sincere. This is how Yamaoka recollected their dialogue in *BDH*:

> …I asked my former lord, "Today, in this time of crisis, what is your intent behind the surrender?"
>
> My former lord replied in tears: "Although I revealed the utmost sincerity of my good will toward the Imperial Court by secluding myself, it seems there is no way I can live out my days since I have been labeled 'the enemy of the imperial court' by the imperial order. How sad that everyone hates me so much."
>
> I told my former lord: "Why are you whining and saying trifling things? You say you secluded yourself, but isn't there any deceit behind your seclusion? Aren't you plotting something else?"
>
> My former lord said, "I have no other intention. Whatever happens, I am absolutely sincere [in my resolution] not to oppose the Imperial Orders."
>
> I said: "If you have secluded yourself from true sincerity, your intent will reach the Imperial Court and your anxiety will definitely be alleviated. I, Tetsutarō,[23] give my word, and I will exert myself to make sure that your sincerity is conveyed, at any cost."

In terms of the mental attitudes he demanded of a warrior, Yamaoka was ready to accept an order from the *shōgun* and sacrifice himself only if that order was sincere. Yamaoka understood very well that, when the country was on the brink of a large-scale civil war, any attempt on the part of the Bakufu to conceal hostile intentions behind a false

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21 Haraguchi 1971, p. 133.
22 Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 149-150.
23 Yamaoka referring to himself by his formal forename.

surrender would make war inevitable, and he did not want to promote an agenda that would guarantee large-scale loss of human life.

Haraguchi Kiyoshi and Iechika Yoshiki mention in their works Yamaoka's conversation with the *shōgun*[24] but attach no importance to it. However, the dialogue between Yamaoka and Yoshinobu described in *BDH* demands our attention: A low-ranking retainer of the Bakufu not only dared to challenge the *shōgun*'s true intentions before accepting an order, but even used language that treated Yoshinobu almost on equal terms. The usual assumption is that the warrior society of pre-modern Japan, as with any military structure, had a strict discipline that left no room for objections to seniors' orders. Nevertheless, the dialogue between Yamaoka and Yoshinobu suggests this was not always the case. Such attitudes did not mean a lack of discipline. They were similar to the pre-Tokugawa warrior concept which Daidōji Yūzan expressed as "armor knows no etiquette."[25] This meant that, at war, the daily etiquette of peace should be replaced with a different kind of straightforward relationship that measured everything in terms of effective and timely achievement of the final result. Although not on a daily basis, this allowed *bushi* to resort to a new level of self-assertiveness in extraordinary situations, even if it was at the risk of *seppuku*.[26]

Thus, there was another quality which was required from a low-ranking retainer whose mission was supposed to be breaking through the enemy positions and conveying the *shōgun*'s wish to surrender to the imperial government: An independence of mind that could engage in negotiations and win its point regardless of the social standing of the opposing party. Yamaoka possessed this quality, even to the degree that, according to his own recollections in *BDH*, he had the "reputation of a rude man."[27] From personal experience, Takahashi Deishū no doubt knew of this and it was probably another reason why he recommended Yamaoka to the *shōgun*. This was an extremely important quality which is overlooked by scholars but, as we will see, it was to prove

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24 Haraguchi 1971, p. 129. Iechika 2005, p. 20.

25 *BS*, p. 45. The wording in Japanese sounds as "*katchū rei nashi*."

26 The same kind of straightforwardness can be found in Takahashi Deishū's argument with the Bakufu supreme councilor, Matsudaira Shungaku, and senior councilor, Itakura Katsukiyo, over Rōshigumi (appears in *The Stenographic Interviews of the Society for Historical Recollections* (*Shidankai sokkiroku*), 100th collection, and in Maekawa 1977, pp. 70, 82-83).

27 Yamaoka's straightforwardness, which recognized no social conventionalities, is also revealed in a famous anecdote about the time, long after the Boshin war, when he served as chamberlain to young Emperor Meiji. It is said that once Emperor Meiji got drunk and challenged Yamaoka for a Sumō match. Yamaoka refused flatly, but Emperor Meiji forcefully drew him into grappling. Yamaoka is said to have thrown the Emperor, shouting "foolish prince!" The Emperor was lightly injured but he never punished or even reproached Yamaoka (Ishii Sōkichi 1951. Ushiyama 1937, pp. 185-188; 1967, pp. 197-200; 1974, pp. 238-241; 1976, pp. 179-180. Satō Hiroshi 2002, pp. 198-200).

decisive in the events of 1868/3.

In *BDH*, Yamaoka described his state of mind after the audience with the *shōgun*:

> …I swore to Heaven and Earth that, determined to die and traveling alone, I would go to the general headquarters of the imperial army, appeal to its commander-in-chief (*daisōtoku no miya*)[28] about [the *shōgun*'s] sincerity, and ensure the safety of the country. I thought: "…Throwing my life away to save millions of human lives in the country is what I have been willing to do for a long time. " My soul was clear as a cloudless blue sky with shining sun…

These words reveal Yamaoka's pursuit of the "life-giving sword," which was but the extension of the broader Buddhist principles of self-sacrifice. Similar to the "power-backed virtue" discussed earlier, it was the kind of *musha shugyō* that aimed at achieving unparalleled mastery in the art of killing over decades, attached importance to the ethical aspects of the application of the warrior's professional skill, and at the same time presumed a readiness to throw one's life away instantly for the sake of saving others.

5.4 Yamaoka-Saigō Meeting in Sumpu

After the audience with Yoshinobu, Yamaoka was left to his own devices. He did not, however, rush into what was potentially a suicidal mission. According to *BDH*, the same day, he went to discuss his plan with several high-ranking officials of the Bakufu. However, none of them approved of the plan because they deemed it absolutely unrealizable.[29] Finally, Yamaoka decided to go to the commandant of the Bakufu army, Katsu Kaishū. He had heard that Katsu was a man of "courage and ingenuity."[30] Katsu was suspicious: After several assassination attempts, Katsu was afraid that Yamaoka

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[28] Arisugawanomiya, imperial prince Taruhito.

[29] Here, we encounter several problems which have not been illuminated in any work on Yamaoka, and even in Haraguchi Kiyoshi's study of the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle. First, why did not Yoshinobu send Yamaoka directly to the general headquarters of the imperial army with his letter? Also, why did Yamaoka waste time seeking support for his mission from someone else? The most probable answer is that Yoshinobu realized well that the imperial government would reject his direct appeals, and a third party in the Bakufu, a sort of mediator, was necessary. It had to be a party that would be well known to the imperial government and in whose good will it could be confident. Then, how could it happen that Yoshinobu not only failed to advise Yamaoka about who he should contact, but also did not give Yamaoka a document with his signature or seal that would allow the latter to obtain immediate approval from senior officials of the Bakufu? Unfortunately, at present, there is no answer to this question. What is clear from *BDH* is that, after the audience with the *shōgun*, Yamaoka had to act on his own.

[30] *BDH*.

intended to kill him because, similar to some other radical Bakufu retainers, he might perceive Katsu's policy of allegiance to the imperial government as betrayal of the Tokugawa family.[31] Seeing that Katsu's wariness and reluctance to give a definite answer made him lose precious minutes, Yamaoka resorted to the same straightforwardness as in the conversation with Yoshinobu: "Now is not the time to cling to such trifling things as the imperial court or the Bakufu. We need to cope with the national crisis by national unity! Why are you hesitating?!"[32] Katsu then asked Yamaoka about his plan and, in reply, Yamaoka explained:

> There are only two options for me after I reach the general headquarters of the imperial army: Either I will be slashed to death or arrested. I will hand my long and short swords to them and, if they arrest me, I will obey; if they decide to slash me to death, I will try to convey [Yoshinobu's obedience and allegiance] in a few words to the commander-in-chief of the imperial army. If what I say does not suit them, they will cut off my head on the spot. If what I say suits them, I will only tell them that I will take care of the matter myself.[33] It can not be that they indiscriminately and vainly kill people. What's so difficult about this [mission]?[34]

As Katsu wrote in his diary, he was impressed by Yamaoka's character during this meeting.[35] He finally agreed and gave Yamaoka a letter addressed to Saigō Takamori, staff officer to the imperial army's commander-in-chief.[36]

Yamaoka left for Sumpu on 3/5, the same day he met with Katsu.[37] He was accompanied by his old acquaintance from a group known as the Society of Tiger's Tail, Masumitsu Kyūnosuke.[38] Masumitsu was one of the leaders of the *rōshi* who, by the order of Saigō Takamori, engaged in provocations against the Bakufu in the Kantō region. He had been detained by the Bakufu, under Katsu Kaishū's supervision, since

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31 *BDH*. *KKZ*, volume 1, pp. 32, 322. Matsuura 1968, p. 157. In his memoirs, Katsu recollected this episode: "I heard only the name of Yamaoka before and it was the first time we met. And what I heard from Ōkubo Ichiō and others is that I should be wary of Yamaoka because he is going to kill me, so I never met him…" (Katsu 1892-1896, p. 374). Haraguchi Kiyoshi notes that the atmosphere in Edo on the eve of the all-out attack was extremely explosive, and high-ranking Bakufu retainers, who advocated peaceful surrender, could be targeted by radical retainers of the Bakufu opposing the surrender (Haraguchi 1972, pp. 56-57). However, it seems that the rumor about Yamaoka was exaggerated.

32 From the memoir of Ogura Tetsuju to whom Yamaoka retold the content of his conversation with Katsu many years later (appears in Ushiyama 1937, pp. 135-137).

33 Meaning the further negotiation process.

34 *BDH*.

35 *KKZ*, volume 1, p. 31. *KKZ2*, volume 19, p. 27.

36 Haraguchi 1971, p. 129. *KKZ*, volume 1, p. 31. *KKZ2*, volume 19, pp. 27-28. *KN*, volume 3, p. 69.

37 *KKZ2*, volume 19, pp. 27-28. *KN*, volume 3, p. 69.

38 See Appendix.

the burning of the Satsuma residence in the Mita district of Edo (this was the base of the *rōshi*) on 1867/12/25.[39] Yamaoka knew that Masumitsu's Satsuma dialect would make the task of breaking through the enemy outposts easier and had asked Katsu to release Masumitsu into his care.

Yamaoka undoubtedly rode a horse[40] but it took him several days to cover the distance which usually took only a day or a day and a half.[41] The main reason for his slow pace most likely lay in the fact that the first outposts he had to pass through were occupied by Satsuma troops among whom there might be Masumitsu's acquaintances. Here, Yamaoka had to part with Masumitsu for a while and move alone. He probably moved mostly at nights but, when he could not avoid moving in the daytime, he resorted to the kind of tactic which he may well have developed while pursuing his ideal of pre-Tokugawa warrior culture: Acting spontaneously and defiantly according to the circumstances. When Yamaoka encountered a Satsuma outpost, he loudly proclaimed his true identity, by saying: "Yamaoka Tetsutarō, the retainer of the enemy of the imperial court, Tokugawa Yoshinobu, is going to the headquarters of the imperial

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[39] Haraguchi 1971, p. 129. On 1867/10/15, *shōgun* Tokugawa Yoshinobu formally returned political power to the imperial court (*taisei hōkan*). It was a step directed at depriving the Satsuma and Chōshū domains of the pretext for overthrowing the Bakufu with military force. Saigō Takamori, however, did not give up the idea of provoking the Bakufu into war which was supposed to end with razing the Bakufu and its supporters and physical extermination of the whole Tokugawa family. He sought a suitable pretext even after the coup d'etat of 1868/12/9 that proclaimed the "restoration of the imperial power" (*ōsei fukko*). In the end of 1867/10, Saigō Takamori sent Masumitsu Kyūnosuke and Imuta Shōhei of Satsuma, who were former members of the Society of Tiger's Tail and close associates of Kiyokawa Hachirō, to Edo where, cooperating with Kojima Shirō (later named himself as Sagara Sōzō), they gathered about five hundred *rōshi*. Their base was located in the Satsuma residence in Mita district of Edo, and the main activity of these men was in disturbing the peace in the capital, Sagami and Shimotsuke provinces, throwing their population into confusion and terror, distracting the Bakufu's attention from Kyōto, and provoking it into a military action against Satsuma. In December, the *rōshi* committed a series of robberies and fires in Edo. Finally, on 12/25, the Satsuma residence in Mita was burned down by the Bakufu, the majority of the *rōshi* were arrested or killed (Kikuchi and Itō 1998, jō, p. 23. Sasaki Suguru 1977, p. 21).

[40] The majority of popular sources maintain that Yamaoka started on foot which is unrealistic in the situation when the *shōgun*'s life and the destiny of Japan were at stake. The most probable reason for such misconception can be found in the end of *BDH*. A certain Murata Shimpachi of the imperial army tried to catch and kill Yamaoka on the way to Sumpu but failed because Yamaoka moved faster. Long after the Sumpu negotiations, Murata called Yamaoka and half in jest told him that he wanted to kill him but failed. Yamaoka, also joking, replied: "I am an *edokko*. [*Edokko*'s] legs are the fastest." It goes without saying that Yamaoka used "legs" figuratively in this case.

[41] After Yamaoka-Saigō meeting in Sumpu, the General Headquarters ordered Saigō Takamori to leave for Edo early in the morning of 3/11. Saigō arrived in the Satsuma residence in Takanawa area of Edo on 3/13 (Haraguchi 1972, p. 56). Taking into consideration the fact that Saigō negotiated with Yamaoka and Katsu Kaishū the same day, it took him about a day and a half to reach Edo without excessive haste. As we shall see further, it took Yamaoka one day to get from Sumpu to Edo using the General Headquarters pass that Saigō gave him after their meeting.

army!" No one dared to stop him.[42] This can be confirmed by the report of a retainer of the Kumamoto domain which states that, when Yamaoka was halted by Satsuma troops, he told them: "The direct retainer of the Tokugawa family, Yamaoka, is going to meet with the staff of the imperial army headquarters Saigō on the business of his lord. He has no intention to fight. If you want to cut off his head, cut it off!"[43] This may be seen as part of the cult of death expressed through the state of self-abandonment (*sutemi*) in action.[44]

According to *BDH*, after passing through the Satsuma outposts, Masumitsu rejoined Yamaoka and they proceeded easily to Sumpu through outposts held by other domains. On this leg of the journey, Yamaoka traveled behind Masumitsu who identified both of them as Satsuma retainers, and the latter's Satsuma dialect seems to have worked better than any official pass.[45]

Yamaoka reached Sumpu on 3/9.[46] Katsu Kaishū's letter addressed to Saigō Takamori, as well as Masumitsu's company, seem to have played their role: According to *BDH*, contrary to Yamaoka's expectations, he was immediately allowed to meet with Saigō. Their meeting in Sumpu became the basis for the realization of the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle and, consequently, brought about the ultimate outcome of the Meiji Restoration as we know it. Despite its importance, outside of *BDH* and the report of the aforementioned Kumamoto retainer appearing in Ishii Takashi's study of the Boshin war,[47] there are no sources of the conversation. However, the two are generally in agreement on the content and the mood of the meeting. Furthermore, some entries in Katsu Kashū's and Ernest Satow's diaries regarding results and consequences of this meeting serve as the direct evidence supporting the credibility of Yamaoka's account. As even the most recent works on Saigō Takamori by Charles Yates and Mark Ravina completely ignore this critical encounter,[48] it is worth quoting at length from *BDH*.

Yamaoka: Is the purpose of your punitive expedition against the "enemy of the imperial court" an offensive that takes no consideration of the intentions of the opponent? Our

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42 *BDH*.

43 Cited from Ishii Takashi 1968, p. 68.

44 Already during the conversation with Katsu Kaishū, Yamaoka showed his readiness to act spontaneously according to the circumstances. From his viewpoint, adhering to a predetermined plan would have spoiled everything. This is evident from the memoir of Ogura Tetsuju (appears in Ushiyama 1937, pp. 135-137).

45 This version of the second half of Yamaoka's and Masumitsu's journey to Sumpu is also employed in Haraguchi 1971.

46 Haraguchi 1971, p. 129.

47 Ishii Takashi 1968.

48 Yates 1995, Ravina 2004.

Tokugawa family has many warriors too. Our lord Tokugawa Yoshinobu has secluded himself in Tōeizan Bodaiji temple[49] [to express his wish] to surrender, and he did his best to persuade his retainers to do the same but, after all, he can not control all of them. There are many Bakufu retainers who are going to resist the Will of the Imperial Court, or escape and plot a rebellion. This is the reason why you continue the offensive that ignores the intentions of the opponent. That is why, although our lord Tokugawa Yoshinobu respects the utmost sincerity of the good will and proper relationship between lord and retainer, his true intent has not reached the imperial court. I am deeply concerned with this state of affairs, and [that is why] I came to appeal to the commander-in-chief of the imperial army and to convey to you Yoshinobu's sincerity.

In the beginning, Saigō seemed to be unpersuaded by Yamaoka's appeal.

Saigō: We have already received a report about the beginning of [enemy] military operations in Kai province. It is different from what you say.

Yamaoka: This was done by runaway Bakufu retainers...

Saigō appeared to accept this but remained suspicious. Yamaoka also challenged Saigō, asking him:

Yamaoka: Do you want to fight to the end of the world and engage exclusively in killing people? If so, [your army] can hardly be called the "army of the Emperor" (*ōshi*). The emperor is the parent of his people. It is said that it is the "army of the Emperor" that distinguishes between right and wrong.

Saigō's reply was conciliatory:

Saigō: It is not that I am fond of continuing the offensive. It is necessary merely to satisfy the conditions of surrender, and we will offer lenient treatment.

Yamaoka: What are the conditions? Of course, Yoshinobu will not oppose the imperial order.

Saigō apparently began to show respect for Yamaoka, making a distinction between him and the *shōgun*'s previous envoys:

Saigō: The other day, the *shōgun*'s messengers from Seikan'in no Miya[50] and Tenshōin-dono[51] came. They spoke about his wish to surrender and seclusion, but they were so nervous that we could not understand anything. They had to go back without any result. Thanks

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49 Kan'eiji temple in Ueno.

50 The nun name of Princess Kazunomiya, the widow of the 14th *shōgun* Tokugawa Iemochi.

51 The nun name of Atsuhime, the widow of the 13th *shōgun* Tokugawa Iesada.

> to you who came to our place, I have understood the situation in Edo. It suits us very well. I will convey the contents of our talk to the commander-in-chief…[52]

After a while Saigō brought the following seven conditions.[53]

- In line with Yoshinobu's courageous decision to seclude himself and surrender, he should be deported to the Bizen domain[54]
- Surrender [Edo] Castle
- Surrender all warships
- Surrender all weapons
- Move all *shōgun* retainers residing inside [Edo] Castle to Mukōjima and place them on their good behavior
- Supporters of Yoshinobu's thoughtless action[55] will be carefully scrutinized, and they assuredly will be given a chance for apology [and rehabilitation]
- The Emperor has no intention to persecute either the guilty or the innocent. [His justness] paves the way for stabilization [in the country]. [However], anyone who will resort to uncontrollable violence will be suppressed by the imperial army

These conditions had been created in advance of Yamaoka's arrival as the imperial government did assume the possibility of Yoshinobu's surrender.[56] However, it seemingly needed someone with the character of Yamaoka to convince Saigō that the *shōgun* was genuinely ready to surrender.

As Haraguchi Kiyoshi notes, in spite of the high social standing of all previous envoys from the Bakufu side, the imperial government did not recognize them as representing the Tokugawa family. At this crucial moment in history, only such people as Katsu Kaishū or Ōkubo Ichiō were capable of representing the Bakufu, and it was Katsu and Ōkubo who were regarded as worthy opponents by Saigō. The Yamaoka-Saigō meeting in Sumpu was not a formal negotiation between representatives of the Bakufu and the imperial government and, similar to previous messengers, Yamaoka's main task was to convince Saigō of the sincerity of Yoshinobu's intentions. Nevertheless, the meeting was of the utmost importance because it allowed the leaders of the two opposing sides to establish their first contact through Yamaoka,

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52 Arisugawanomiya, imperial prince Taruhito.

53 Haraguchi 1971, pp. 131-132. *KKZ*, volume 1, pp. 32-33, 307-308. *KKZ2*, volume 19, pp. 29-30. Saigō Takamori Zenshū Henshū Iinkai, volume 2, p. 430. Only five conditions are mentioned in *BDH* but this was one place where Yamaoka's memory failed him.

54 Okayama domain. The imperial government intended to detain Yoshinobu on the half of Japan's territory which was under its full control and which was close to the southern domains that stood behind the Meiji Restoration. At the same time, the Bizen *daimyō*, Ikeda Mochimasa, was Yoshinobu's brother and the imperial government probably expected that this fact would alleviate the anxiety of Bakufu retainers about the safety of their lord. As we will see further, the imperial government seriously miscalculated the reaction of the Bakufu retainers.

55 "Yoshinobu's thoughtless action": The Toba and Fushimi battles in the vicinity of Kyōto.

56 Haraguchi 1971, pp. 120-128, 132.

and the Bakufu side was for the first time informed of the surrender conditions.[57]

Contrary to the memoirs of Katsu Kaishū, there is no evidence that Katsu's letter which Yamaoka brought to Sumpu influenced Saigō in any way beyond allowing Yamaoka to see him.[58] On the other hand, as Saigō clearly stated during the meeting, and as Haraguchi admits, Yamaoka convinced Saigō for the first time of the sincerity of Yoshinobu's wish to surrender.[59] While virtually every scholar has overlooked this conversation, and even Haraguchi has underestimated it, it can be argued that this is the decisive moment in the entire surrender process. More generally for our purposes, Yamaoka's success in persuading Saigō arguably emerged from his spiritual and physical training and, what is most important, from the determination to die (self-abandonment) cultivated through his *musha shugyō*. As Saigō had said about the previous envoys, their nervousness and incoherence had made their cause simply unconvincing.

Another major point that even Haraguchi ignores is that, at a certain stage during the meeting, Yamaoka deviated from his initial role and arbitrarily entered into negotiations, dismissing social conventions between himself and Saigō, and even the imperial court. In other words, he began performing another mission which was prepared for him by Yoshinobu and his entourage. In *BDH*, Yamaoka describes the part of the meeting after Saigō brought the surrender conditions:

Saigō: We will offer lenient treatment to the Tokugawa family if these [seven] conditions are fulfilled.

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[57] Haraguchi 1971, p. 133.

[58] In the late period of his life, Katsu bragged that he easily made Saigō come to Edo just with one letter. He also said that Saigō "trusted just one word of mine and came to Edo all alone." (*KKZ*, volume 1, p. 350. Katsu 1892-1896, pp. 70, 72). In this, Katsu does not mention the Yamaoka-Saigō meeting at all and refers only to a short notice which he sent to the imperial army after this meeting to determine the time and place for the following formalization process (Katsu also brags in his memoirs about his "single-handed" success in the negotiations over the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle (*KKZ*, volume 1, pp. 310-312, 349, 362-364, 384-385)). Thus, he gives the impression that it was his "one word" or "one letter" which made Saigō trust him and come to Edo. Haraguchi Kiyoshi supposed that, although there is no supporting evidence, Saigō should have taken into consideration the assertions in Katsu's letter which Yamaoka delivered to Saigō (the letter can be found in *KKZ*, volume 1, pp. 31-32; volume 2, pp. 297-298. *KKZ2*, volume 19, pp. 27-28). However, Katsu's earlier letters to the imperial government (1868/1/18, 2/5, 2/15) show that his petitions alone had little value (appear in *KKZ*, volume 2, pp. 290-291, 294-296; Tōkyō-to Edo Tōkyō Hakubutsukan Toshi Rekishi Kenkyūshitsu 2001, pp. 77-82). From the fact that the imperial army moved decisively toward Edo, we can conclude that Katsu's earlier letters were ignored in the same way as petitions of all previous messengers of the Bakufu, and Katsu's letter to Saigō was no exception.

[59] Haraguchi 1971, p. 133.

Yamaoka: I receive them humbly. However, there is one condition that I can not accept under any circumstances.

Saigō: Which one?

Yamaoka: To deport my lord Yoshinobu alone to Bizen. This is absolutely impossible. Whatever happens, as a retainer indebted to the Tokugawa family, under no circumstances can I accept this. It will result in the start of war and senseless destruction of tens of thousands of lives. It is not something that the "army of the Emperor" (*ōshi*) should do. In this case, you will be just a murderer. That is why, under no circumstances can I accept this condition.

Saigō: It is the imperial order.

Yamaoka: Even if it is the imperial order, under no circumstances can I accept it.

Saigō: It is the imperial order!

Yamaoka: If so, let's trade places and talk for a while. Assume that your lord Shimazu[60] made a mistake and was stigmatized as the "enemy of the imperial court," and in the time when the punitive expedition of the imperial army has been launched and he decided to surrender and secluded himself, you are in my position. To render the best service to your lord, you humbly accept the Imperial Order similar to the one issued to my lord Yoshinobu, immediately give up your lord, and remain an indifferent and passive observer. What do you think about the bond between the lord and the retainer? Under no circumstances can I bear this!!

It is essential to remember that Yamaoka and Saigō were, first of all, enemies and, during their conversation, Yamaoka was constantly between life and death. Saigō could give the order to execute Yamaoka at any moment just for the manner in which Yamaoka talked with him. Both were mutually aware of each other's position, and Yamaoka's flat refusal to accept the first surrender condition was all the more convincing because Saigō, as a Satsuma warrior himself, could not fail to recognize Yamaoka's determination to die "here and now," i.e., the warrior's self-abandonment (*sutemi*) as its major driving force.

Here, Yamaoka repeatedly refers to the importance of saving human lives, and he demonstrates a readiness to throw his own life away for the sake of saving others. However, Yamaoka's insistence on the sanctity of human life apparently did not move Saigō. For Saigō, the fact that the order was issued by the Emperor seems to have overridden all other considerations. Still, there was one thing which even Saigō, as a "man of exceptional fidelity,"[61] could not ignore – the paramount value of loyalty. Yamaoka, after all, placed Saigō in his shoes and, insisting on the value of loyalty

[60] Shimazu Tadayoshi, the last *daimyō* of the Satsuma domain.
[61] Ravina 2004.

between a *bushi* and his lord, convinced him to reconsider the imperial order. As Saigō replied,

Saigō: You are absolutely right. As to Tokugawa Yoshinobu, I give my word and will arrange everything. You do not have to worry at all.

The report of a Kumamoto retainer mentions not only the fact that Yamaoka petitioned to stop the offensive on Edo, but also that Yamaoka warned about the difficulty to surrender warships and weapons.[62] Still, it appears that the latter was not a point he insisted on. Instead, Yamaoka's principal concern was avoiding indefensible bloodshed which was in line with his lifelong pursuit of the "life-giving sword." Further to understand this, it may be useful to delve deeper into two important points: The meaning of the Yamaoka-Saigō meeting for the whole process of the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle, and Yamaoka's overall role in that process.

5.5 The Historical Meaning of the Yamaoka-Saigō Meeting in Sumpu

So far, among the vast number of academic and non-academic works on the Meiji Restoration and the Boshin war, as well as Japanese history textbooks, plus encyclopedias of Japanese history and historical figures, there has been no established theory in regard to Yamaoka's role in the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle. The most common references to his role are merely along the lines of "he realized it" (but together with Katsu Kaishū and others), "opened the path to its realization," "laid the groundwork for it," or was merely "Katsu Kaishū's messenger."

When it comes to historical sites and monuments that commemorate the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle, Yamaoka's role is usually omitted. Instead, one can see only the two participants of the second stage of the negotiations (3/13-14), Katsu Kaishū and Saigō Takamori, as, for example, on a big mosaic picture on the west exit wall of JR Tamachi Station in Tokyo. Another example is Yūki Somei's (1875-1957) famous painting *Edo kaijō dampan* (*Edo Castle surrender negotiations*) which is exhibited permanently at the Seitoku Kinen Kaigakan Museum in Tōkyō and reprinted in numerous history school textbooks and other widely published sources (Figure 9).

Japanese scholars have also been dismissive of Yamaoka. Ishii Takashi and Iechika

[62] Ishii Takashi 1968, p. 68.

Yoshiki mention that Yamaoka returned to Edo after merely "protesting" against the deportation of Tokugawa Yoshinobu to Bizen.[63] Another scholar, Matsuura Rei, wrote that Yamaoka did not have any authority to negotiate with the imperial army, suggesting that whatever Yamaoka said during the Sumpu meeting had no effect at all.[64] In the most comprehensive study of the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle, Haraguchi Kiyoshi wrote that the results of the Yamaoka-Saigō meeting only strengthened the possibility of a peaceful surrender of Edo Castle. Haraguchi emphasizes Yamaoka's role in conveying Yoshinobu's sincere wish to surrender to the imperial government. However, he does not even comment on Yamaoka's refusal to accept the first condition, which he calls just an "objection."[65] Haraguchi's unspoken assumptions seem to be that:

(1) The public stances of participants in the overall negotiation process of 1868/3-4 should be taken as an honest expression of their position

(2) <u>ALL</u> surrender conditions were of the same weight

(3) <u>ALL</u> surrender conditions were equally important for <u>both</u> sides

In regard to the first assumption, indeed, representatives of both the Bakufu and the General Headquarters were in no hurry to relieve pressure on each other because they were unsure of the imperial government's decision concerning the final form of the seven surrender conditions. The superficial impression from the formal negotiation process that followed the Yamaoka-Saigō meeting is that both sides were ready to wage war against each other should these negotiations produce no result. Furthermore, even though the 3/13-14 formal negotiations ended with the suspension of the all-out attack on Edo, on 3/14 Saigō Takamori issued a provisional order which formally meant only a postponement of the attack (the final order came from the General Headquarters on 3/17). At the same time, Katsu Kaishū made preparations to burn down Edo in case the imperial government attempted to seize it.[66] However, that was only one side of the problem. Scholars have seriously underestimated the significance of Yamaoka's refusal to accept the very first of the surrender conditions, as well as overlooked several important facts appearing in *BDH* and other contemporary records.

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63 Ishii Takashi 1968, p. 68. Iechika 2005, p. 21.
64 Matsuura 1968, pp. 170-171.
65 Haraguchi 1972, p. 79.
66 Haraguchi 1972, pp. 64-65, 104. *KKZ*, volume 1, pp. 33, 312-313, 362, 385. *KKZ2*, volume 19, p. 30. *KN*, volume 3, pp. 69-70.

At the end of the meeting in Sumpu, Saigō gave Yamaoka the General Headquarters pass that allowed him to return to Edo quickly.[67] Yamaoka arrived in Edo the next day, on 3/10,[68] and immediately reported the surrender conditions and Saigō's commitment to Tokugawa Yoshinobu, Katsu Kaishū, Ōkubo Ichiō, and other top officials.[69] According to *BDH*, all top officials were delighted at hearing that the imperial army was properly informed of the situation in Edo, and Yoshinobu's joy "could not be expressed with words."[70] Katsu Kaishū praised Yamaoka greatly in his diary:

> Yamaoka… met and talked with Saigō in Sumpu. He conveyed the will of our lord and brought back the letter and surrender conditions from the general headquarters of the imperial army. Oh! Yamaoka is imperturbable and brave, he is very intelligent, he represented the great will of our lord so well, he did absolutely everything [and there is nothing else to desire]. Indeed, he is worth admiration and respect.[71]

It seems likely that, if the Yamaoka-Saigō meeting had given only a slight hope for a peaceful reconciliation between the Bakufu and the imperial government, or merely have become the first point of their contact, such prudent and cautious politicians as Tokugawa Yoshinobu, Katsu Kaishū and others would not have been in such a hurry to express their delight and praise Yamaoka so effusively.

Furthermore, the following passage from *BDH* implies that the Sumpu meeting had a much more important meaning than has been thought hitherto. After Yamaoka reported to the Bakufu (emphasis added):

> [The Bakufu] immediately made an announcement throughout the city of Edo. Its summary is as follows. "The negotiations with the staff of the general headquarters of the imperial army Saigō Kichinosuke <u>are finished</u>; because [the imperial government] will offer lenient treatment [to the Tokugawa family] after the surrender conditions are satisfied, citizens should refrain from panic and engage in their family business." It was written on public notice boards (*kōsatsu*) erected throughout the city. This is when the citizens got some sense of security. After that, Saigō arrived in Edo, Katsu Awa[72] and I met with him in the Satsuma residence in Takanawa and pledged to fulfill the [six] surrender conditions[73] which we

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67 *BDH*.

68 According to the record in Katsu Kaishū's diary (*KKZ*, volume 1, p. 32. *KKZ2*, volume 19, p. 29).

69 *BDH*.

70 This can be confirmed by Katsu's diary in which he wrote that all of the high-ranking envoys from the Bakufu were rejected and that "only Yamaoka [managed] to reach the General Headquarters and obtain these formal written orders from the staff. When he returned to Edo, all Bakufu officials were aghast and had nothing to say" (*KKZ*, volume 1, p. 33).

71 *KKZ*, volume 1, p. 32. *KKZ2*, volume 19, p. 29. Also, see Katsu's memoir in *KKZ*, volume 1, pp. 307-308.

72 Awa no Kami was Katsu Kaishū's title at the time.

negotiated the other day. Saigō agreed and suspended the offensive.

This demonstrates that the Bakufu was confident in the successful completion of the surrender right after the Sumpu meeting, i.e., even before holding formal negotiations with the imperial government. Otherwise it could not have resorted to such administrative act as calming a million population of Edo through the public notices about the result of the negotiations which, according to Yamaoka, were "finished" (*ai-sumi*). The credibility of Yamaoka's words cited above can be confirmed through the diaries of Ernest Satow, the interpreter for the British envoy to Japan, Harry Parkes. This is what Satow wrote about the atmosphere in Edo two days after Yamaoka's return: "On the 12th I went up again for a three days' stay, and found the city much quieter, owing to a feeling that the terms offered to Keiki[74] would be such as he could accept."[75]

What was the result of the Yamaoka-Saigō meeting? The most burning question for the Bakufu was the treatment of the Tokugawa family as a whole, and Tokugawa Yoshinobu in particular. The first surrender condition on deporting Yoshinobu to Bizen was directly related to this question and it outweighed the other six conditions. These six conditions were minor, i.e., quite natural demands on the surrendering side which undoubtedly were expected by the Bakufu. Yamaoka secured a solution of the first and principal condition which, otherwise, would have become the sticking point in the overall process of surrender. In other words, in Sumpu, he made Saigō guarantee lenient treatment of the Tokugawa family and Yoshinobu. That was the reason for the delight of the Bakufu officials upon Yamaoka's return which allowed them to calm the population of Edo. Judging from the Bakufu officials' reaction, what Yamaoka did went far beyond their expectations.

It is clear from the citation above that the Bakufu, from the very beginning, was ready to fulfill the remaining six surrender conditions as initially presented. One of the unspoken assumptions of Haraguchi Kiyoshi takes at face value Bakufu attempts to amend the minor surrender conditions to its advantage. These attempts were mostly unsuccessful as the imperial government decisively carried through its initial demands.[76] The Bakufu authorities realized very well that none of the six conditions

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[73] Yamaoka writes "four." However, this is the kind of detail where his memory lapses again.

[74] The Chinese reading of the characters of Tokugawa Yoshinobu's first name.

[75] Satow 1921, p. 365.

[76] Haraguchi 1972, p. 78. Haraguchi writes that the imperial government did make concessions at the stage of the realization of the surrender conditions, especially in the question of surrender of warships (Haraguchi 1972, p. 81). However, these were not concessions: The imperial government merely had to put up with the disorder in the Bakufu which lost control over its radical retainers who sabotaged the realization of the surrender conditions.

were worth sacrificing the lives of the Tokugawa family, and made no move to start hostilities.

As we can see, contrary to Haraguchi Kiyoshi's assumptions, not all surrender conditions were of the same weight for the two confronting parties. Furthermore, they had different priorities over them. The imperial government spared Yoshinobu's life and guaranteed the continuation of the Tokugawa family. As Haraguchi correctly notes, such lenient treatment was not a concession but the imperial government's policy since the beginning of 1868/3. Rather the question of Yoshinobu's life or death was of little concern for the imperial government.[77] However, Haraguchi's focus on what this question meant for the imperial government overlooks the *shōgun*'s symbolic importance for Bakufu retainers and pro-Bakufu domains, and this offers only a one-sided interpretation. As we can see from Yamaoka's debate with Saigō in Sumpu, loyalty was still the major value that would have taken the Bakufu retainers to war against the imperial government. Physical extermination of the *shōgun* and his family, or attempts to confine him on enemy territory, would have outraged the Bakufu retainer corps and pro-Bakufu domains, and provoked a large-scale civil war with consequent foreign intervention.

The imperial government did make a major concession by abandoning any thought of deportation, and instead allowing Yoshinobu to seclude himself in his native Mito domain. As Ōkubo Toshimichi wrote in his letter of 1868/i4/23, Yoshinobu's seclusion in Mito was "the most lenient treatment of all."[78] It was very advantageous for the Bakufu side because Mito bordered the north-eastern domains which, at this point, had not stated clearly their positions toward the imperial government.[79] Haraguchi states that, because seclusion in Mito was in line with the imperial government's demands of unconditional surrender, there was no difference between confining Yoshinobu in Mito or Bizen. To support his argument, he notes that the imperial government could move Yoshinobu at its discretion to other places which it deemed safer for itself, and refers to the imperial government's decision to move Yoshinobu from Mito to Sumpu after it found out about a scheme of the north-eastern domains to seize possession of him.[80]

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77 Haraguchi 1971, pp. 125-126; 1972, pp. 69-73, 79.

78 The letter appears in Nihon Shiseki Kyōkai 1927, volume 2, p. 300.

79 Haraguchi 1972, pp. 62-63.

80 Haraguchi 1972, p. 81. Haraguchi recognizes the importance of the fact that the imperial government allowed Yoshinobu to seclude himself in Mito. Nevertheless, he emphasizes only that it was Mito, and ignores the fact that the imperial government abandoned completely the idea of confining Yoshinobu in a place where he could be cut off from contact with his supporters (Haraguchi 1972, p. 79). It is also worth mentioning that, according to Katsu Kaishū's diary, Yoshinobu's relocation to Sumpu became possible due to Yamaoka's efforts (*KKZ*, volume 1, p.

However, the imperial government did not move Yoshinobu to Bizen, or any other place close to the southern domains. It had to be very careful in the choice of Yoshinobu's residence because it was necessary to take into consideration all the time the reaction of the Bakufu retainers. From this, it can be said that the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle was conditional and it was Yamaoka Tesshū who made it possible.

Similar to all other scholars, Haraguchi stresses more than anything the importance of the Yamaoka-Katsu-Saigō negotiations held on 3/13-14 in Edo. He maintains that these negotiations were of the utmost importance because they were directly related to the destiny of the Tokugawa family, and even a slight mistake could have reduced Edo to ashes and caused large-scale civil war in Japan. However, on 3/13, Yamaoka and Katsu merely gave Saigō a list of questions aimed at clarifying each of the surrender conditions brought by Yamaoka on 3/10.[81] On 3/14, Yamaoka and Katsu gave Saigō a petition in which the Bakufu formally requested permission for Yoshinobu to seclude himself in Mito domain, and made a counterproposal aimed at amending the minor surrender conditions to its advantage. Saigō did not comment on the contents of the petition; he promised to pass it on to the General Headquarters, saying that he did not have enough authority to determine every item of the surrender conditions on his own. He did, however, issue a provisional order to postpone the all-out attack on Edo for an indefinite time.[82]

In contrast to such generally accepted interpretations of the 3/13-14 negotiations, even Katsu in his unusually self-serving memoirs described them as just a "street-corner chat."[83] There is probably a great deal of exaggeration in such an account. Nonetheless, as Haraguchi admits, there is no evidence of violent discussion during these negotiations.[84] Undoubtedly, this was because the violent stage of the negotiations had been successfully navigated in the Bakufu's favor by Yamaoka in Sumpu. In other words, the 3/13-14 meetings in Edo were just a formalization of what had already been agreed in the most important part of the negotiation process handled by Yamaoka alone in Sumpu.[85]

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240. *KN*, volume 3, p. 123). Unfortunately, Katsu does not specify what Yamaoka did.

[81] Haraguchi 1972, pp. 56-59.

[82] Haraguchi 1972, pp. 61-64. *KN*, volume 3, pp. 69-70.

[83] Katsu recollected: "The surrender of Edo Castle was completed during that street-corner chat" and also "… Saigō trusted point by point everything I said and did not show disbelief even once" (Katsu 1892-1896, pp. 70, 73). He does not mention Yamaoka's name in this context at all.

[84] Haraguchi 1972, pp. 56-57.

[85] Other factors which Saigō had to take into consideration when suspending the all-out attack on Edo were peasant uprisings that were occurring in the Kantō region since the end of 1868/2, as well as the protest of the British envoy to Japan Harry Parkes which is believed to have

Finally, we need to pay attention to the passage from *BDH* mentioned above: "Saigō arrived in Edo, Katsu Awa and I met with him in the Satsuma residence in Takanawa and pledged to fulfill the [six] surrender conditions which we negotiated the other day. Saigō agreed and suspended the offensive." The credibility of this privately written account can be confirmed by the events of the time: Put simply, had Yamaoka and Katsu not committed to fulfill the six surrender conditions the day before the scheduled attack, Saigō would not have postponed it. Thus, Yamaoka and Katsu pledged to fulfill the minor conditions even before seeing their final version and this is further evidence that the Bakufu was ready to fulfill them from the very start and in any version. When it comes to Saigō, he suspended the offensive after acknowledging that the Bakufu would not fulfill the first surrender condition, i.e., the deporting of Yoshinobu to Bizen.

5.6 Revisiting Yamaoka Tesshū's Role in the Bloodless Surrender of Edo Castle

In regard to the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle, Yamaoka has been perceived in the academic literature simply as Katsu Kaishū's messenger, or, at the very most, as the one who laid the groundwork for Katsu's "single-handed success" during the 3/13-14 negotiations in Edo. The significance of Yamaoka's negotiation with Saigō in Sumpu has been largely overlooked. However, first, it is obvious that the swordsman Yamaoka Tesshū was not Katsu Kaishū's messenger. After he received the directive of Tokugawa Yoshinobu, he acted fully on his own both before visiting Katsu on 3/5 and after that. Yamaoka had Katsu's letter on him when heading to Sumpu but Katsu neither guided Yamaoka beforehand nor later, and Yamaoka's actions and statements in the meeting with Saigō were, I would suggest, rooted in his *musha shugyō*.[86]

Yamaoka not only handled the negotiations with Saigō in Sumpu, he also participated on equal terms in the formal meetings between the representatives of the Bakufu and the imperial government on 3/13-14 in Edo. In *BDH*, Yamaoka clearly stated his

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exerted some limited influence on Saigō on the eve of the 3/14 negotiations (Haraguchi 1972, pp. 66-70). He also was likely to give some consideration to the promise of Princess Kazunomya, the widow of the 14th *shōgun* Iemochi, to commit suicide in case the imperial army launched an attack on Edo and extinguished the Tokugawa family (Iechika 2005, p. 19).

[86] Katsu appears to have never stated explicitly that he sent Yamaoka to Sumpu as his messenger. Besides his diary mentioned above, Katsu also recollected in his later oral memoirs that Yamaoka came to his place himself and suggested he go to Sumpu (Katsu 1892-1896, p. 374). It seems that the fact that Yamaoka had Katsu's letter on him when going to Sumpu made him look like Katsu's messenger in the eyes of later generations.

participation,[87] and it can be confirmed by a letter of Iwakura Tomosada, who was the governor-general of the imperial army responsible for controlling the Tōsandō region. In this letter, dated 1868/3/15, Iwakura listed the names of three Bakufu negotiators: Katsu Kaishū, Ōkubo Ichiō and Yamaoka Tetsutarō.[88] This is further evidence that Yamaoka negotiated with Saigō on equal terms together with Katsu on 3/13-14, and that he was perceived as an equal by the imperial government.[89]

On the eve of the all-out attack on Edo, the atmosphere in the country was explosive.[90] Had Yamaoka accepted the first surrender condition when less than a week remained until the scheduled all-out attack on Edo, Japan would have been doomed to a catastrophic civil war. However, Yamaoka was not guided by narrow political considerations or even primarily by internal and external conditions of the moment. Instead, it may be argued that, more than anything, his motivation was drawn from the "life-giving sword" philosophy which aimed to avoid unnecessary loss of human life. In a very real sense, the destiny of the Tokugawa family and of Japan was in Yamaoka's hands, and the Bakufu (and later, the Meiji government) recognized this. Shortly after the 3/13-14 meetings in Edo, Yamaoka experienced a sudden and extraordinary promotion within the Bakufu.

In line with the custom in warrior society, according to which a lord granted a blade

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87 In *BDH*, Yamaoka also mentions that, besides the negotiation of the surrender conditions on 3/13-14, he was also in charge of protecting Saigō from radical Bakufu retainers on the latter's route to and from the negotiation.

88 The letter appears in Tada 1927, chū, p. 374.

89 Scholar Iechika Yoshiki also states that Yamaoka participated in the 3/13-14 negotiations (Iechika 2005, pp. 21-22). Haraguchi Kiyoshi noted that besides Katsu Kaishū there was another representative of the Bakufu who negotiated with Saigō Takamori on both days, most likely Yamaoka (Haraguchi 1972, pp. 57-61). In the list of questions given to Saigō during the 3/13 meeting in Edo, Yamaoka appears as "one more person" (*hoka hitori*) after the names of the other two negotiators (*ōsetsugakari*), Katsu Kaishū and Saigō Takamori. Haraguchi argues that Yamaoka's presence during the 3/13 negotiation was necessary merely to confirm Saigō's oral commitments which he made in Sumpu (Haraguchi 1972, p. 61). However, such viewpoint underestimates Yamaoka's role greatly. Haraguchi also assumes that "one more person" could be not a negotiator but a witness (*tachiainin*) and in this case it was not Yamaoka, but most likely inspector (*metsuke*) Sakurai Shōbee (Haraguchi 1972, pp. 58-60). This view is mistaken because if the two sides had needed witnesses, there should have been witnesses from both sides, not only the Bakufu. Secondly, the name and title of the witnesses should have been recorded accurately and not appear as "one more person," otherwise there was no sense in having witnesses present during the negotiations. Yamaoka was put as "one more person" in the list of the three negotiators because of his low rank. Katsu Kaishū probably deemed it inappropriate to record the name of a participant of the low rank in documents related to an event of the utmost gravity for the country.

90 This atmosphere is well depicted in Yamaoka's *BDH* and Katsu Kaishū's diary and memoirs (*KKZ*, volume 1, pp. 32, 305, 311-312, 359, 383-384. *KKZ2*, volume 19, p. 29). Also, see Haraguchi 1972, pp. 56-57.

to a retainer who performed a great exploit for him, on 1868/4/10, the day before the formal surrender of Edo Castle, Tokugawa Yoshinobu rewarded Yamaoka with a treasured dagger made by Rai Kunitoshi, a famous swordsmith of the Kamakura era.[91] In 1868/i4, only a month after Edo Castle was surrendered to the imperial army, Yamaoka was appointed to be simultaneously the Bakufu great inspector (*ōmetsuke*) and superintendent of finance (*kanjō bugyō*).[92] In 1868/5, Yamaoka became the Bakufu political leader (*seiji no kanjiyaku*) together with Katsu Kaishū and Oda Izumi no Kami.[93] The member of the imperial government's Tōsandō Vanguard Headquarters (Tōsandō Sempō Sōtokufu), Tani Kanjō, wrote about this period: "Among officials of the former Bakufu, those who attend to the most urgent affairs of state are Katsu Awa, Ōkubo Ichiō and Yamaoka Tetsutarō."[94] As Yamaoka's later admirer, Satō Hiroshi, put it, if the Tokugawa Bakufu were to be likened to a big corporation, Yamaoka's promotion was, without exaggeration, similar to a mere clerk suddenly becoming one of the managing directors.[95]

Yamaoka was a warrior openly concerned about the moral and ethical issues of his profession. As we can see, his lifelong pursuit of the "life-giving sword" eventually led him to play a central role in preventing a national disaster through the realization of the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle. To date, the enormity of his action in the events of 1868/3 has been known only among his admirers who have eulogized him as a "saint swordsman" (*kensei*)[96] or "great saint" (*taisei*).[97] However, they have not been able to provide a convincing argument in favor of Yamaoka's feat. For scholars, he has been

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91 This fact is mentioned by Yamaoka in a curriculum vitae which he wrote in 1887/6, a year before his death. This curriculum vitae is preserved in Zenshōan temple, Tōkyō. It has been unknown to the general public, and that is why the fact that Yamaoka received the dagger by Rai Kunitoshi from Tokugawa Yoshinobu does not appear in any published source. It is necessary to mention that the same day Tokugawa Yoshinobu also rewarded Katsu Kaishū with a sword (*KKZ*, volume 1, p. 41. *KKZ2*, volume 19, pp. 43-44).

92 *Kōshi Zappō*, 1868/i4/7, column title "Yamaoka Tetsutarō-ra no nimmen."

93 *Kōko Shimbun*, 1868/5/22, column title "Katsu, Yamaoka-ra kanjiyaku to naru."

94 Shimauchi 1912, jō, pp. 90-91.

95 Satō Hiroshi 2002, p. 159. The Bakufu retainer Shirato Ishisuke provides another example of unusual promotion similar to Yamaoka's. On 1868/2/27, Shirato was promoted from a troop commander (*hohei kashira*) to the acting deputy commandant of the Bakufu army (*rikugun fukusōsai nami*). On 3/18, he became the commandant of the Bakufu army (*rikugun sōsai*), and, on 4/28, he finally became the great inspector (*ōmetsuke*). As Haraguchi Kiyoshi notes, even for a time of unrest in the country, it was an extraordinary career progress (Haraguchi 1972, p. 83). It is strange that Haraguchi as well as other scholars did not pay attention to the same extraordinary rise in the life of Yamaoka Tesshū shortly after the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle, otherwise, it would have told them a lot about the Yamaoka-Saigō meeting in Sumpu and Yamaoka's overall role in the negotiation process.

96 Ushiyama 1942a; 1976. Murakami Yasumasa 1999. Satō Hiroshi 2002.

97 Akiyama 1991a, 1991b; Nabekura 1991. Also, see Kamikawa 1997.

reduced to the status of a bit-player.

Of course, it is important not to overstate the role of a single individual in a complex historical event.[98] However, if we do not fully recognize Yamaoka's role in the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle, we will be incapable of finding any logical explanation for the Bakufu's action in the wake of Yamaoka's meeting with Saigō, not least in promoting him so spectacularly. Finally, we will not be able to explain the development of his career from 1868 onwards, both in the former Bakufu and in the Meiji government.[99]

5.7 Yamaoka Tesshū's Career After the Bloodless Surrender of Edo Castle

The bloodless surrender of Edo Castle made it possible to avoid a nationwide civil war, and prevent large loss of civilian life in Edo. However, there were still thousands of radical and uncontrollable retainers of the Bakufu who fled to the north-east of Japan, and who continued to fight against the imperial army together with the north-eastern domains. These events prolonged what is known as the Boshin war until 1869/5.

During this time, together with Katsu Kaishū and several other Bakufu officials Yamaoka Tesshū was engaged in pacifying and preventing radical Bakufu retainers from sabotaging the realization of the surrender conditions. On 1868/i4/18, as a messenger from Tokugawa Yoshiyori, Yamaoka negotiated the disbandment of a mixed group of Bakufu deserters and Jōsai domain retainers led by Iba Hachirō, Hitomi

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98 Some individuals did play a crucial part in history: The generally accepted key role of Sakamoto Ryōma in the formation of the Satsuma-Chōshū alliance, which eventually resulted in the overthrow of the Bakufu, is just one example (for the discussion of Sakamoto Ryōma, see, for example, Jansen 1961).

99 It is helpful also to consider Tokugawa Yoshinobu's assessment of the three main participants from the Bakufu side in the political events of 1868/3-4: Yamaoka Tessū, Katsu Kaishū, and Ōkubo Ichiō. Yoshinobu's assessment was candid because he conveyed it to his biographer, Shibusawa Eiichi, years after the death of the three. While not a single word of criticism is said about Yamaoka, the other two are quietly chastised for their attitudes and actions in the 1860s (Iechika 2005, pp. 126-127). About Katsu's role after Yoshinobu's flight to Edo in 1868/1, Yoshinobu said that "Katsu's attitude [and deeds] in this period were somewhat different from what is widely known in the world. What is known in the world is fully based on Katsu's narrative and it is not free from some exaggeration" (memoirs of Tokugawa Yoshinobu appearing in Shibusawa Eiichi 1966). What Yoshinobu refers to as "Katsu's narrative" is Katsu's self-serving memoirs of the 1890s which remained largely unchallenged by his contemporaries just because Katsu was practically the only one who at that time outlived the other participants of the events of 1868/3-4. The discrepancy between what Katsu wrote in his diaries about Yamaoka and his exaggerated memoirs is not difficult to understand. There is no doubt that the former was more candid because Katsu did not intend it to be published.

Katsutarō and Hayashi Tadataka.[100] In 1868/i4-5, Yamaoka cooperated with Saigō Takamori and other members of the imperial government in an attempt to disband the Shōgitai in Ueno and, for this purpose, he several times engaged in negotiations with monk Kakuōin, the de facto leader of the Shōgitai.[101]

In 1868/8, the imperial government allotted a 700,000 *koku* Fuchū domain (later renamed Shizuoka domain) to the Tokugawa family. From this point, Yamaoka, together with several other Bakufu top officials, was busy trying to find a way to support retainers of the Tokugawa family who moved to the new location and, in so doing, lost any means of living. One of these ways was to make land available for farming and an interesting outcome of this is that, under Yamaoka's leadership, ex-retainers of the Bakufu started what became the famous green tea cultivation of Shizuoka.[102] In 1871, domains were replaced with prefectural governments (*haihan chiken*), and Yamaoka held the position of deputy governor (*gon daisanji*) of Shizuoka prefecture for some time.[103] His feat in the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle was not forgotten by the Meiji government and it consequently appointed him governor (*kenrei*) of Ibaraki and later Imari (present Saga) prefectures. Finally, in 1872, he was appointed to be a chamberlain of Emperor Meiji.

Thus, Yamaoka became one of the several top officials of the former Bakufu who were employed in high posts in the Meiji government.[104] Still, Yamaoka's appointment as the chamberlain of Emperor Meiji can only be described as remarkable. First of all, a person from the enemy camp was chosen to be a member of the emperor's closest entourage. The popular story holds that the imperial government wanted to reform the education of Japanese emperors who, before the Meiji era, were traditionally surrounded by women; Emperor Meiji was surrounded by military men and Yamaoka was recommended by Saigō Takamori.[105] However, the real situation appears to have been much more complicated. The Meiji government was still afraid of rebellion on the part of malcontent retainers of the former Bakufu and used Yamaoka to ease their frustration.[106] In other words, the goal of Yamaoka's appointment was in showing

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100 Kikuchi and Itō 1998, jō, p. 51. Also, see an entry (1868/i4/16) in Katsu Kaishū's diary (*KKZ*, volume 1, p. 240).

101 *KRK*.

102 Ushiyama 1937, pp. 179-182; 1942a, pp. 115-119; 1967, pp. 191-195; 1976, pp. 158-163. Satō Hiroshi 2002, pp. 161-174.

103 Murakami Yasumasa 1999, p. 189.

104 Among others were Katsu Kaishū, Ōkubo Ichiō, Enomoto Takeaki, Ōtori Keisuke.

105 Ushiyama 1937, p. 183; 1942a, p. 121; 1967, pp. 196-197; 1974, pp. 232-233; 1976. pp. 169-171. Satō Hiroshi 2002, pp. 192-196.

106 I am indebted to Professor Shima Yoshitaka of Waseda University for calling my attention to this

retainers of the former Bakufu that a prominent figure from their side was also among the close confidants of the emperor.

Indeed, retainers of the Bakufu had already expressed their wish to see someone from their side close to the emperor during the last stage of the Boshin war, when the acting commander of the Bakufu navy (*kaigun bugyō nami*), Enomoto Takeaki, attempted to establish a kind of autonomous republic in Hokkaidō in the end of 1868 – beginning of 1869. In a secret letter that Enomoto sent in 1868/12 to the French envoy to Japan, Max Outrey, he says that one of the conditions for the peaceful reconciliation between his force and the imperial government should be placing someone from the Tokugawa family in the inner circle of the emperor. He suggested Tokugawa Yoshinobu as a candidate.[107] Of course, neither Yoshinobu nor anyone else from the Tokugawa family was acceptable to the Meiji government. However, several years later, the main mediator of the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle, Yamaoka Tesshū, who had become one of the top figures on the side of the former Bakufu, fitted this role perfectly. This fact illustrates the degree of Yamaoka's fame and influence among retainers of the former Bakufu at the time.[108] Thus, in actuality, his service to Emperor Meiji also meant a simultaneous unofficial service to the Tokugawa family. Still, despite this elevation in status, Yamaoka's personal commitment remained, as later events demonstrated, to the restoration of pre-Tokugawa forms of swordsmanship training.

5.8 The Legacy of Yamaoka Tesshū

Yamaoka Tesshū taught Ittō Shōden Mutō-ryū until his death in 1888/7. His death was widely covered in the Meiji press: For ten days, newspapers published articles praising his feat in the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle and other accomplishments. His writings related to the events of 1868/3-5, such as *BDH*, were also reprinted in a

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fact.

107 Ishii Takashi 1973, volume 3, p. 957.

108 Ōmori Hōkō, the publisher of what appears to be the first published version of Yamaoka's *BDH*, wrote in its afterword that "of course, everybody knows how great was the service which [Yamaoka] rendered for the Realm but its details [as depicted in Yamaoka's writing] are still unknown to the public" (Yamaoka 1882). In 1889, a year after Yamaoka's death, Ichihara Rokubee, a resident of Takayama of Hida province where Yamaoka spent his childhood, wrote a prospectus relating to building a monument in commemoration of Yamaoka. Ichihara states: "I will omit here [the description of Yamaoka's] utmost loyalty and duty revealed by him during the Restoration as all people know it." (Ema 1935a, p. 45). It appears that during his life and shortly after his death, Yamaoka's role in the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle was a common knowledge among many Japanese.

series of newspaper articles.[109] Several thousand people attended his funeral, and it is said that Emperor Meiji watched the procession from a tower of the imperial palace.[110]

Yamaoka's name is associated with the creation of an unparalleled number of calligraphy works,[111] reconstruction of Buddhist temples in the "age of Buddhism persecution," laying the foundations for the production of the famous green tea in Shizuoka prefecture, devoted service to the Tokugawa family and Emperor Meiji, and many other accomplishments. However, the field where he invested his energy most was *musha shugyō* through the practice of swordsmanship and the quest for the intangible culture of the *bushi* of the "distant past." Yamaoka was the one who, to date, made the last attempt in Japanese history to establish a swordsmanship school deeply rooted in the pre-Tokugawa tradition.[112] In the era of Japan's Westernization and industrialization, when the Meiji government was building a mass conscript army, he attempted to revive Japanese swordsmanship, both technically and spiritually, according to the standards of the pre-Tokugawa ages. In the broader sense, it was an uncompromising striving for the preservation of what he believed was the genuine warrior culture, inseparably linked with the warrior's body.

As scholar Sugie Masatoshi notes, Yamaoka's school of swordsmanship, Ittō Shōden Mutō-ryū, did not spread in the Meiji era because it urged its practitioners to return to the ancient form of practice of swordsmanship (i.e., as the art of handling the real sword in actual combat) which was unsuitable for the sportive *kendō* swordsmanship of the time. Still, the school's emphasis on the "ideal of character formation through the practice of swordsmanship" did influence greatly educational aspects of Japanese swordsmanship of the time.[113] However, Sugie appears to have overlooked the idea that Yamaoka himself was not interested in changing what he perceived as the ancient and immutable canons of swordsmanship for the sake of easy practice by his

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109 *Chōya Shimbun*, 1888/7/20, "Shikyo: Katsu Kaishū no chōshi." *Tōkyō Nichinichi Shimbun*, 1888/07/21-22, 24-28, "Kōseki idan (1-7)." *Tōkyō Nichinichi Shimbun*, 1888/07/29, "Tokugawa-ke zōyo no Musashi no katana o Iwakura Tomomi ni kenjō."

110 Ushiyama 1937, pp. 466-470; 1942a, pp. 310-316; 1967, pp. 217-219, 441-445; 1974, pp. 257-258; 1976, pp. 270-272. Maruyama Bokuden 1918b, pp. 82-83.

111 Yamaoka is estimated to have created about one million calligraphy works during his life (Terayama 1977, p. 63. Ōmori Sōgen 1970, pp. 61-62, 68)

112 The post-1868 era witnessed the establishment of *iaijutsu* schools, such as Shintō-ryū by Hibino Raifū and Musō Shinden-ryū by Nakayama Hakudō. However, these inherited distinctive features of the "flowery training" of the Tokugawa era such as extremely slow movement, performing techniques from the *seiza* position, and incorrect positioning of the long sword (see Chapter VI for details).

113 Sugie 1974, 1984.

contemporaries.[114] The fact that only the educational aspect of Yamaoka's school was positively received by contemporary *kendō* points once again to the dissonance between means and goals in contemporary versions of Japanese military arts.

Yamaoka's school has survived to our days through six generations of informal successors. He never made anyone his formal successor by issuing a license of full transmission (*menkyo kaiden*) and granting the heirloom Kamewaritō sword of Ittō-ryū.[115] It is probable that Yamaoka could not find a worthy candidate among his disciples because they lacked the innate physical and mental qualities comparable to his own. Because there were no formal successors, Yamaoka's death actually meant the extinction of the main line Ittō-ryū, one of the three root lineages of Japanese swordsmanship, since Ono Nario also died seven months before Yamaoka.[116]

Yamaoka's emphasis on the importance of being consistent in achieving one's goal in any undertaking at whatever cost did sometimes overshadow his philosophy of the "life-giving sword."[117] It is likely to be the reason why this philosophy does not seem to have been inherited by his disciples. Kusaka Ryūnosuke, one of the main architects of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor and later battles in the Pacific Ocean, trained in Ittō Shōden Mutō-ryū. He is said to have applied the most advanced theoretical teachings of this swordsmanship school to naval warfare of that time[118] (eventually he became the 4th headmaster of the school). Such an application of the school's heritage contrasted sharply with the "life-giving sword" philosophy of its founder, who according to the available sources, is known not to have killed a single person in his life and who was

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114 This is clear from Yamaoka's writings discussed in this thesis.

115 Yamaoka did issue the license of full transmission to his disciple Hasegawa Umpachirō shortly before the death of the latter. However, it was a kind of solace in Hasegawa's last moments rather than formal recognition of the school's transmission (Ushiyama 1937, pp. 239-240). As a famous figure of the early Meiji era, by the end of his life, Yamaoka had to attend to too many matters simultaneously, and this probably distracted him from nurturing the next generation of Mutō-ryū swordsmen. Remaining chargè d'affaires of Emperor Meiji, he exerted himself to helping the poor and the reconstruction of Buddhist temples in the "age of Buddhism persecution." To gather money for various social projects, Yamaoka, being the 52nd headmaster of the Jubokudō style of calligraphy, wrote and sold tens of thousands of calligraphy pieces. Of course not all of them were masterpieces but it was his famous name (signature) which was bought. Being an ardent follower of Buddhism, Yamaoka also spent much time for copying Buddhist sutras (Ushiyama 1937, pp. 385-387, 390-392; 1967, pp. 105-112; 1976, pp. 253-256, 258, 265. Ōmori Sōgen 1970, pp. 61-62, 68, 75-80, 160-162. Satō Hiroshi 2002, pp. 229-235).

116 Ono Nario died in 1887/12 (Murakami Yasumasa 1999, p. 304).

117 Yamaoka is known for having adhered strictly to this principle since his childhood (Maruyama Bokuden 1918b, pp. 3, 7-8. Kuzuu 1929, pp. 18-20. Ushiyama 1937, pp. 85-89). He taught this principle to Usui Rokurō who committed the "last revenge killing (*katakiuchi*) of the Meiji era" (Ushiyama 1937, pp. 257-262. Also, see a series of articles dedicated to this incident in *Tōkyō Nichinichi Shimbun*, 1881/9/24, 26-27).

118 Tobe 1992, pp. 203-204.

central to the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle.

CHAPTER VI

Distorted Modern Images of the *Bushi*: Origins and Contemporary Exploitation

The chapter explores the theme of how distorted images of the *bushi* have emerged and circulated in Japanese society since the Bakumatsu period and into the 21st century. These images pertain to three major aspects of the *bushi* intangible culture: Attitudes to violence, the Bushidō ethos, and bodily practices. Central to understanding this distortion is the co-existence of the two-sworded warriors and the two-sworded commoners late in the Tokugawa era. This co-existence was one of the major factors which gave birth to the dominant modern stereotype of the "bellicose *samurai*." This resulted in a confusion in academic works and popular culture of the daily conduct and attitudes to violence of descendants of the hereditary warrior houses with those from outside of their class (the commoners). The chapter also shows how the warrior ethos, which is often referred to as Bushidō, has been exploited by Japanese government and business since the Meiji restoration to build new cultural myths that, in reality, have little in common with the warrior class of pre-modern Japan.[1] Finally, it touches upon the theme of how distorted memories of the *bushi* bodily culture are transmitted both in modern popular culture and in the practice of Japanese military arts, and also shows how a deeper understanding of the *bushi* bodily culture can add significant insights into Japanese history.

6.1 The Warriors and the Commoners: The Origins of Confusion Regarding the Violent Image of the Two-Sworded Man

The Japanese warrior class was officially abolished by government decrees of 1871 and 1876.[2] One might expect that the inevitable outcome of the extinction of a social

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[1] On the invention of new cultural myths since Meiji, see Gluck 1985 and Vlastos 1998.

[2] In 1871 the Japanese warrior class was officially abolished by government decree (Sampatsu Dattō Rei). Yet, the decree left the questions of retaining the *bushi* hairstyle and wearing the two swords in daily life at the warriors' decision. It can be said that this class was abolished once and for all in 1876 by another decree (Haitō Rei) that prohibited the wearing of blades to anyone except persons in military and police service, as well as government officials who were required to wear special

class is the ultimate oblivion of its culture. However, this was not the case with the *bushi*: Their images have been reinvented and recycled on a mass scale in Japanese society since then. Japanese popular print and film culture became a major force that, since the beginning of the 20th century, has contributed to the creation and dissemination of strong warrior stereotypes by exploiting and exaggerating the violent past of the *bushi*.[3] However, this was not only what might be called the "violentization" of the Japanese warrior; it was also the fusion of images of the *bushi* and armed commoners in the virtual space of popular culture. Therefore, an imperative upon us is, first, to trace the roots of this phenomenon in history.

Of course, dramatic violence in which *bushi* act as central characters was one of the main topics for centuries in Japanese fiction such as the war tales (*gunki monogatari*), popular storytelling (Kōdan), *ukiyozōshi* novels, and Nō, Kabuki, and Jōruri theater plays. Kōdan, for example, evolved during the 14th and 15th centuries and was a vocal narrative form with its own distinct repertoire of often-told tales focused on sword-carrying characters.[4] However, the warrior violence depicted in such popular culture is usually the product of critical situations such as wars. Therefore, it is essential to distinguish between the warriors' recourse to force under critical circumstances (a sort of "directed violence"), which pertained to the core of their profession and for which they were trained, and violence and other forms of misconduct which erupted in everyday life and which were supposed to be regulated by the warrior etiquette (and also the law) as discussed in Chapter I.

It is also necessary to keep in mind that the *bushi* attitudes to violence and the sanctity of human life were diverse. This thesis has brought to light mindsets which are completely different from the violent images of the *bushi* so widely spread in Japanese popular culture: The philosophy of the oldest school of military arts in Japan, Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū; the self-imposed ban on service to *daimyō* by headmasters of Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū, Takenouchi-ryū Jūjutsu, and Maniwa Nen-ryū; as well as Yamaoka Tesshū's *musha shugyō* based on the concept of the "life-giving sword."[5]

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attire on the occasion of important official events.

[3] This discussion is concerned only with the theme of how warrior stereotypes were created. The theme of the social demand for violence in popular culture is beyond the scope of this thesis.

[4] Anderson 1992, p. 281.

[5] It is necessary to keep in mind that the demand for the image of brute force, which is easily visible, almost tangible, and "beautiful," has been persistent among the broad masses of people who were alien to the *bushi* class. When it comes to the *bushi* culture, it did not necessarily approve of the outward demonstration of one's strength and, on the contrary, could admonish against it. Here, it is appropriate to remember the concept of hidden virtue or mastery of a skill that was discussed in

The distant origins of the modern dominant stereotype of the "bellicose *samurai*" appear to lie in blurred distinctions between the commoners and the *bushi* in the Bakumatsu period. This phenomenon was not new to Japanese history: In ages of warfare and outlawry preceding the Great Tokugawa Peace, everyone wore swords and peasants, artisans, and merchants could look like *bushi*.[6] The outward similarity resulted in the popular perception of armed commoners as members of the *bushi* class regardless of the fact that the latter's cultural conditioning and norms of conduct were different. As noted by Shiba Gorō, son of an Aizu *bushi* born in 1860 (and later a prominent commander of the Japanese imperial army):

> These days, the image of the *bushi* is of the one who raises his voice on every occasion, drinks *sake* and commits violence, and exercises the right to cut down commoners (*kirisute gomen*) [whenever he can], but all this is a great mistake. Such people are akin to *yakuza* or those who stooped to becoming *rōnin*; they can not characterize the *bushi* in general.[7]

Shiba's remark reminds us of the fact that one of the remnants of the pre-Tokugawa warrior culture which was inherited by Tokugawa-era *bushi* was a sophisticated etiquette which forbade provocative rudeness toward anyone. Etiquette continued to be the means of avoiding violence through inappropriate behavior.

In the Tokugawa era, a clear distinction in outward appearance between warriors and other social classes was achieved by, first of all, a series of orders forbidding commoners to carry swords: Toyotomi Hideyoshi's Sword Hunt edict of 1588 was followed by Tokugawa Hidetada's edict of 1618, and Tokugawa Ietsuna's similar edict of 1685.[8] Despite the rigidness of the social structure, a certain level of mobility between classes did take place and commoners sometimes could acquire *bushi* status with the concomitant outward attributes. However, especially in the Bakumatsu period, in the time of great unrest in the country, there was the emergence of a part of Japanese society, having its roots in the lower stratums, which, in appearance, looked like the *bushi*: They wore the swords and claimed to share the warrior ethos, albeit without any formal right.

Chapter II. The admonishment against outward demonstration of one's superiority can also be found, for example, in such an old warrior saying as "Foul are the soybean paste smelling of soybean and the warrior 'smelling' of warrior arts" (appears in Daidōji Yūzan's precepts in *BS*, p. 256).

[6] Shimokawa 1925. Hurst 1998, p. 41.

[7] From the recollections of Shiba Gorō appearing in Ishimitsu 1979, p. 13.

[8] Hurst 1998, p. 41.

6.2 Social Limitations on the Commoners' Possession and Wearing of Weapons and Training in Military Arts

With the exception of times of war, Japan's aristocracy, be it the court nobles or the *bushi* class after it grasped political power, rarely approved explicitly of the commoners' possession of arms and training in military arts. As mentioned earlier, this was due to the social ethos which denigrated the practice of martial skills by those who could not comprehend honor and customs of the hereditary warrior houses. However, before the Tokugawa era, the *bushi* class was in need of the commoners' help in war, especially when it came to logistics. Formally, only the top layer of the *bushi* servants, generally referred to as *samurai*, was allowed to actually participate in battles but their main role was confined to guarding their masters' flanks and the rear.[9] Yet, according to scholar Fujiki Hisashi, in reality, participation in wars, accompanied by looting and human trafficking, was one of the widespread ways of making one's living among commoners until the dawning of the Great Tokugawa Peace. The warrior rulers either overlooked this breach of the regulations concerning participation in war, regarding it as a sort of necessary evil, or deliberately used the commoners as mercenaries.[10]

After Japan was unified by Toyotomi Hideyoshi and the first signs of stability in the country appeared, the commoners continued to be discouraged both from possession of weapons and the practice of martial skills to prevent their armed opposition to the *bushi* ruling elite. Toyotomi Hideyoshi's "sword hunt" of 1588 is a clear example of this. The same intent was behind the Tokugawa Bakufu's orders of the Kambun and Tenna years (1661-1684) that limited or prohibited sword wearing by peasants and townsmen, as well as orders of 1804/9, 1805/5, 1839/5, and 1843/6 that forbade them to train in military arts.[11] Domains also issued local orders along the same lines, and sometimes they prohibited teachers of military arts schools from giving instruction to commoners.[12]

Nevertheless, as Fujiki and Taniguchi Shinko explain, in the Tokugawa era, many commoners continued to possess guns, swords, bows, spears, and other weapons.[13] According to another scholar, Tsukamoto Manabu, the number of firearms possessed under the pretext of fighting wild animals in the rural areas of the Kii domain even exceeded the number of firearms possessed by the *bushi* retainers of Kii, and the same

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[9] Takagi Shōsaku 1984, pp. 133-136, 139-140.
[10] Fujiki 1995.
[11] Yokose 2000, p. 46. Taniguchi Shinko 2005, p. 15. Fuse 2006, p. 241 note 13.
[12] Fuse 2006, pp. 203, 241 note 13.
[13] Fujiki 1995. Taniguchi Shinko 2005.

tendency can be seen in other domains.[14]

One aspect ignored by Fujiki, Tsukamoto, and Taniguchi, however, is the acquisition by commoners of martial skills through physical training. This is an extremely important oversight and may result from an uncritical analysis of the policies of the Tokugawa-era rulers: In fact, the Tokugawa Bakufu and local domains distinguished between the commoners' possession of weapons and training in their handling, allowing the former and prohibiting the latter.

Permission to possess weapons was based on the fact that there was no formal, institutional police system and public order was weak. Everyday maintenance of security was the responsibility of local residents who were allowed to exercise the right of legitimate self-defense and not only to arrest criminals but sometimes to kill them on the spot.[15] The ban on regular physical training, however, was designed to prevent commoners from becoming specialists in military arts and posing a threat to the existing social order.

Yet, historical evidence shows that the bans on training in military arts among commoners in reality had little effect. Such military arts schools as Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū, Takenouchi-ryū Jūjutsu, or Maniwa Nen-ryū, that were established well before the Tokugawa era, taught all classes of Japan's pre-modern society until these classes were abolished in the aftermath of the Meiji Restoration.[16] Moreover, there were schools of military arts, such as Muhi Muteki-ryū Jōjutsu, that were active for generations only in rural and fishing villages.[17] Indeed, among famous swordsmen of non-*bushi* origin in the second half of the Tokugawa era (including founders of the "new schools") were Chiba Shūsaku and Chiba Sadakichi of Hokushin Ittō-ryū, Togasaki Kumatarō, Okada Jūmatsu, Saitō Yakyūrō, Ōkawa Hyōe, and Akiyama Yōsuke of Shintō Munen-ryū, and Hemmi Yoshitoshi, Hiruma Yohachi, and Hiruma Toshimitsu of Kōgen Ittō-ryū just to name a few.[18]

Moreover, 80% of swordsmanship training halls (*dōjō*) in Musashi province alone, opened after 1830, were managed by peasants or village headmen (*nanushi*).[19] Such scholars as Watanabe Ichirō, Fujiki Hisashi, Cameron Hurst, Miyachi Masato, Ōishi Manabu, and Hirakawa Arata maintain that the reason for the increasingly active practice of swordsmanship and other martial skills among commoners in the Bakumatsu

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14 Tsukamoto Manabu 1983.
15 Taniguchi Shinko 2005, pp. 15-16, 69-75.
16 Yokose 2000, pp. 42, 46-47, 158-159, 170-171; Ōtake 2007, pp. 40-41, 62.
17 Yokose 2000, pp. 337-344.
18 Kōdansha 1983, p. 126.
19 Hirakawa 2006, pp. 143-144. Also, see Fuse 2006, p. 27.

period was due to the internal unrest in the country.[20] This is surely true. However, just to state the fact that the commoners engaged in the practice of martial skills for the purpose of self-defense and maintaining security is misleading and creates an impression that what they learned was practical. This overlooks the fact that commoners were even less aware than the *bushi* of the battlefield impracticability of what they learnt in an era when military arts, especially swordsmanship, had become so divorced from the realities of actual combat.

6.3 The Outward Likeness of Commoners and *Bushi* in the Bakumatsu Period

While commoners in the Tokugawa era stored weapons at home and widely ignored bans on training in military arts,[21] they could not easily ignore bans on the wearing of swords in daily life. Yet, even here all kinds of exceptions can be identified. As academic studies of the past two decades show, the Tokugawa-era society allowed for some mobility between social classes and the *bushi* class of this era is characterized by the inflow of peasants, townsmen and other commoners.[22] Thus, Tokugawa Japan had a layer of individuals who formally belonged to the warrior class and who looked like the *bushi* but whose behavior should have differed considerably because they lacked the cultural conditioning of the hereditary warrior houses.

When it comes to regulations concerning the wearing of swords by persons of the lower social classes, they could vary from domain to domain but, as a general rule, townsmen were allowed to wear the short *wakizashi* sword in daily life, while peasants could do so on special occasions such as celebrations, funerals, and travel.[23] Commoners could also be granted the right to have a surname and wear the long and short swords for various reasons: If they came from a long and highly respected family; for their skill in military arts; or for outstanding contribution to the social good. For instance, a peasant called Nakamura Masayuki, a member of the Rōshigumi group formed by the Bakufu early in 1863, was allowed to have a surname and wear the two swords for his skill in swordsmanship.[24] Such were also the cases of Odaka Taisuke

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[20] Watanabe Ichirō 1967b. Fujiki 1995. Hurst 1998. Miyachi 2004. Ōishi 2004a. Hirakawa 2006.

[21] Still, it is necessary to keep in mind that, unlike the *bushi*, the commoners did not train systematically in acting as an organized military force (see Taniguchi Shinko 2005, pp. 15-16).

[22] Kumagae 1988; Tsukada 1997; Fujii Jōji 1999; Shibata 2000; Yoshida Nobuyuki 2003; Mori Yoshikazu 2005; Fukaya 2006.

[23] Ishii Ryōsuke 1979, jō, p. 68.

[24] From the epitaph on the monument to Nakamura Masayuki written by Yamaoka Tesshū in 1888 (appears in Odaka 2004a).

from Musashi Province, who provided great service during the construction of a bund for Arakawa river in 1860, and Kōno Gombee who supported the poor during the famine of the Temmei years (1782-1787).[25]

An interesting example is Yamaguchi Ichirō, son of a *tōfu* seller, who became a servant of Maita Hirotaka, the *daimyō* of the Asao domain. Yamaguchi was fond of military arts and did not want to become a merchant. When, early in the 1860s, the Bakufu ordered the Asao domain to guard the Haneda area, he appealed to the domain authorities and they allowed him to join the guards. In 1864, he was also allowed to join the Asao *daimyō*'s assignment in Kyōto. During the Forbidden Gate Incident (1864/7) in the old capital, Yamaguchi is said to have killed many of the Chōshū enemy and achieved great fame for his military exploits. The domain authorities even wanted to make him a member of Shinsengumi, the group of assassins used by the Bakufu in Kyōto (many of whom were commoners).[26]

The recognition by contemporaries that not all those who wore swords were *bushi* is apparent in the Japanese language of the period. For example, *taitōnin* was used to refer to "a person wearing the sword(s)" from an unidentified background. Thus, in *The Aizu Domain office records* (*Aizu hanchō kiroku*), it is stated that, in the hunt for suspicious persons in the streets of Kyōto after the Forbidden Gate Incident, "persons wearing the sword(s)" were stopped and asked their name, address and destination.[27]

With the growing unrest in the country in the Bakumatsu period, the commoners began to participate actively in armed incidents together with people of *bushi* origin. The scale of the "exceptions" mentioned above increased considerably but, in the majority of cases, without the authorities' sanction. According to Hirakawa Arata, 1/3 of perpetrators in the assassination of the Bakufu senior councilor Ii Naosuke in 1860/3 were commoners; a half of perpetrators of an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate the Bakufu senior councilor Andō Nobumasa in 1862/1 were not of *bushi* origin; less than 40% of participants of the Ikuno Incident in 1863/3 were former *bushi*.[28] Having said

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[25] Odaka 2004a, pp. 125, 189.

[26] Kikuchi Akira 2005, p. 33.

[27] Cited from Kikuchi Akira 2005, p. 42.

[28] Hirakawa 2006, pp. 132-133. Following are the examples of groups of armed commoners sanctioned by the authorities: The number of commoners in the *rōshi* groups, Rōshigumi and Shinsengumi, hired by the Bakufu for police and military purposes early in 1863, was about 60% and 30% respectively, including the latter's leaders Kondō Isami and Hijikata Toshizō; only 27% of about 500 *rōshi* who were gathered in the Satsuma residence in Edo in 1867/12 to provoke the Bakufu for a military action were former *bushi*; former *bushi* constituted only 30% of members of Sekihōtai, a group that became the vanguard of the imperial army after the Toba and Fushimi battles in the Boshin war of 1868-69 (Hirakawa 2006, pp. 132-133). Still, it should be noted that these figures are only roughly accurate and it is necessary to take into consideration the point in

this, it is necessary to note that, although masterless warriors retained the right to have a surname and wear the two swords, they were deprived of *bushi* status and were considered as persons of lower social standing. Thus, their conduct was not bound by the norms of the hereditary warrior houses.

6.4 *Bushi* and the "Bellicose *Samurai*": Violence and Misconduct in the Cases of Rōshigumi, Shinchōgumi, Shinsengumi, and Mimawarigumi

In order better to understand the origins of the "bellicose *samurai*" image, heavily influenced by the groups and individuals of commoner swordsmen engaged in the events of the Bakumatsu period, it is necessary to conduct an investigation which has not been done yet by scholars. We need to take an example from these men and compare them with descendants of the hereditary warrior houses, especially their attitudes to violence and discipline. We will consider several groups of commoners which were sanctioned by the Bakufu to wear weapons and participate in armed conflicts: We will focus on Rōshigumi, but also comment on the groups it spawned, Shinsengumi and Shinchōgumi. As will be discussed further, the glamorization of famous outlaws and other armed commoners became a common trend in the popular culture of the Bakumatsu period and early Meiji era. However, instead of choosing randomly individuals for the purposes of this investigation, these larger groups are a far better means to expose their conduct under similar circumstances. The three groups are also suitable for this investigation because some of their members have been glamorized in Japan since about the time of their creation.[29] The clarification of the Bakufu's true intentions in employing these commoner swordsmen will be crucial for our task.

Of the three groups, Shinsengumi, has received the most attention in the academic literature due to its infamous police and guerilla activities in the midst of Kyōto violence in the 1860s.[30] Its parent body, Rōshigumi, however, has been almost entirely

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time when the member count is made because the complement of the groups changed frequently.

[29] A casual search in the catalogue of Japan's National Diet Library reveals 266 books and articles on Shinsengumi published since 1898. A Bakumatsu example of glamorization of members of these groups as well as examples of modern visual popular culture featuring them will be given below. It is important to note that Shinsengumi is representative of the other two groups in terms of the type of people who comprised them because, initially, they were gathered by the Bakufu as one group named Rōshigumi.

[30] Works which use Shinsengumi to deal with other historical topics are Kitagawa 1983, Nakajima 1996, Ishikawa Michiko 1999, Wu 2006, Nakamura Keiichi 2007, Itō Katsushi 2009. Academic works which focus on Shinsengumi are Kimura 2004; Ōishi 2003, 2004a, 2004b; Kobayashi Takehiro 2009; Miyachi 2004, 2009; Miyakawa Teiichi 2009; Tada Toshikatsu 2009. Among these,

sidelined. This is probably because its existence did not greatly influence the course of historical events, and the topic of the outward likeness and confusion of armed commoners and *bushi* in the Bakumatsu period has seemingly failed to interest scholars. Indeed, the only scholar who deals at all with Rōshigumi appears to be Arakawa Arata.[31] However, he uses Rōshigumi almost entirely for statistical purposes within his broader study of the "intermediate layers" (*chūkansō*) of Japanese society. Popular non-academic works of such authors as Oyamatsu Katsuichirō, Maekawa Shūji, and Odaka Nobuyuki, provide a mass of day-to-day surface detail on Rōshigumi, but offer nothing in the way of interpretation and analysis.[32] They make no attempt to uncover the true motives of Bakufu officials in their decision to hire the two-sworded commoners and, instead, show a tendency only to romanticize them.

Just one example of this is Oyamatsu's depiction of the encounter of Rōshigumi and *daimyō* processions early in 1863. On such an occasion, according to Oyamatsu, Rōshigumi never bothered to give way and forced *daimyō* processions to step aside. In Oyamatsu's reading, this is depicted as evidence of a courage that disregarded social conventions and looked down on even the upper class *bushi*.[33] Typical of such works, Oyamatsu does not specify the source of his account. It is, however, apparently an exaggerated recollection of one or several members of Rōshigumi. Taking into consideration the social order of the time, such an insult to a *daimyō*'s procession was unthinkable. The two-sworded commoners of this group could not have failed to know the consequences of failing to give way (*burei uchi*, or "disrespect killing," was a common measure applied to commoners in such cases). Rōshigumi could only proceed in the center of the road because it was accompanied by the Bakufu supervisors; their presence identified it as a group in the service of the highest political authority in the country, the Bakufu, and this is why the *daimyō* processions had to step aside.

Rōshigumi was organized by the Bakufu on the eve of *shōgun* Tokugawa Iemochi's visit to the imperial court in Kyōto, which was going to be the first in 230 years since *shōgun* Tokugawa Iemitsu's visit in 1634. This was intended to be the final step toward the realization of the unity of the imperial court and the Bakufu (*kōbu gattai*). Besides

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Ōishi Manabu is partially responsible for the recent glorification of Shinsengumi because he was a historical consultant for NHK's multi-series drama *Shinsengumi!* (2003). This TV series resulted in a popular "boom" for this group of Bakumatsu assassins that has continued to the present. It is also one of the major examples of the distortion of "memory" concerning the *bushi*: Members of Shinsengumi are presented as noble warriors and patriots embodying the Bushidō ethos.

[31] Arakawa 2006.

[32] Oyamatsu 1974, 1976. Maekawa 1977. Odaka 2004a, 2004b, 2004c. Also, see Aikawa and Kikuchi 1996; Kikuchi Akira 1998, 2004.

[33] Oyamatsu 1974, pp. 201-202, 209.

the *shōgun*, all top officials of the Bakufu had to be in Kyōto, which presented an extremely hostile environment for them: The terrorist activity of Sonnō Jōi radicals, or *shishi*, in the old capital reached its peak at the time and was accompanied by the so-called Tenchū assassinations of Bakufu supporters.[34] In such a situation, the regular troops were not sufficient to prevent terrorist activity of the *shishi*. A special force was needed to deal with them in the same guerilla manner the *shishi* dealt with Bakufu supporters.

The Bakufu understood all the difficulties that would inevitably occur if it decided to send its retainers to Kyōto to wage a semi-guerilla war against the *shishi*.[35] The first major obstacle was their low morale. Moreover, staffing and deployment of a special unit consisting of several hundred retainers was not feasible within a short period of time.[36] Thus, at the beginning of 1863, it was technically easier for the Bakufu to recruit *rōshi* and send them to Kyōto. However, there was a far more important reason that inclined the Bakufu top officials to think that the recruitment of *rōshi*, and not the use of its retainers, was a better option.

Bakufu retainers were expected to exemplify, at least superficially, high moral values in line with Shidō, or the way of the warrior-ruler in the time of peace. Moreover, in terms of morality and ethics, they were to stand as a model for the *bushi* of all other domains, and, of course, the other classes of commoners.[37] To dispatch its retainers to Kyōto in the midst of violence, where they would have to breach Shidō and resort to cruelty and deception to deal with the *shishi* effectively, meant that the Bakufu would

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[34] Inoue Mitsusada et al. 1996, volume 12, pp. 140-141, 144-145.

[35] The fact that the Bakufu was going to organize a guerilla unit can be confirmed by the written opinion addressed to the Bakufu senior officials by one of the main recruiters of the *rōshi*, Ikeda Tokutarō. He explicitly uses the term "guerilla force" (*yūgun*) which was supposed to consist of commoners from the Kantō region and accompany the *shōgun* on the way to Kyōto (the document appears in Odaka 2004a, pp. 97-98).

[36] When in 1864 the Bakufu did make a decision to organize the Mimawarigumi group consisting of 400 Bakufu retainers and send it to Kyōto to patrol the streets, it could hardly find volunteers. This is in spite of the fact that the Bakufu offered an increase in their annual stipends. Understaffing was so serious that Bakufu officials even discussed the possibility of incorporating its group of *rōshi* assassins, Shinsengumi, that had already been active in Kyōto for some time, into Mimawarigumi, giving them a non-transferable status of *gokenin*, or Bakufu lesser liege vassals (Shinsengumi actually sprang from Rōshigumi just a month and a half after the creation of the latter). When finally the Bakufu managed to staff the Mimawarigumi with its retainers (still far from the fixed number), it took time to send all of them to Kyōto because many of them had jobs in the Bakufu and it was not easy to find substitutes. The process was also slowed down by the fact that the Bakufu retainers were ordered to move to Kyōto together with their families which required additional preparations and expenses (Kikuchi Akira 2005, pp. 13, 19-20, 24, 37, 44-46, 49).

[37] This is clear, for example, from Yamaoka Tesshū's petitions to Bakufu authorities appearing in Kuzuu 1929, pp. pp. 218, 222-224.

not only damage its reputation, it could also discredit the very foundations of its political and legislative system. This was the least desirable outcome at a time when the Bakufu was experiencing a sharp decline in its political authority.

In other words, the Bakufu top officials understood that in order to guarantee security in Kyōto and put the old city under its control during the *shōgun*'s visit, what may be called "large-scale dirty work" was unavoidable and had to be delegated, not to its retainers, but to the two-sworded men from the lower social stratums. Perhaps it is a rough comparison, but having *rōshi* hunt down and exterminate the *shishi* in Kyōto was like delegating animal killing to the lowest social caste of *eta*.[38]

The Bakufu used simple criteria when choosing members for Rōshigumi: The *rōshi* were accepted regardless of their social origin or age if they demonstrated "loyalty and patriotism" to their country, had an "unparalleled sense of justice," were physically strong and healthy, and had firm will.[39] The first two conditions are examples of the rhetoric characteristic of official documents of the time. In reality, the Bakufu needed men who would meet only the last two conditions, and it readily closed its eyes to their moral qualities or criminal background. In a sense, perhaps, such a background was even desirable given the nature of service that the Bakufu expected from the *rōshi* in Kyōto. Readiness to accept any kind of man is evident in the following official order by the Bakufu senior councilor Itakura Katsukiyo:

> … It has been decided to gather highly motivated persons among *rōshi* who will be ordered to concentrate on maintaining security. Even if they have been wanted, committed a crime sometime, or lived in idleness, those who will mend their ways and demonstrate that they have a strong loyalty and patriotism toward their country will be shown forgiveness and given an opportunity to be promoted regardless of their deeds in the past…[40]

According to Hirakawa Arata, only 37% of *rōshi* at the point of their recruitment and departure to Kyōto were of *bushi* origin; the rest came from the lower stratums of society and mostly were people in executive positions of village government or other upper layer villagers.[41] In many cases, participation in Rōshigumi was not by an

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[38] The fact that, from the very beginning, *rōshi* were gathered by the Bakufu to carry out a large-scale "dirty work" does not seem to have been fully acknowledged by scholars. Miyachi Masato uses a neutral term, "activities of an armed group standing above the law" (*chōhōki-teki busō shūdan katsudō*). However, he uses it to refer only to Shinsengumi's duties in Kyōto and only to the period when over a year had passed after the creation of this group (Miyachi 2004, pp. 59-60; 2009, p. 1).

[39] These guidelines appear in Odaka 2004a, p. 49.

[40] This order by Itakura Katsukiyo appears in Odaka 2004a, p. 40.

[41] Hirakawa 2006, pp. 129-131, 141.

individual but by a group, when groups under a single leader, be it a village executive or head of a local military arts training hall (*dōjō*), responded to the recruitment call by bringing his subordinates to Edo. There were even *yakuza* gamblers (*bakuto*) among those who joined.[42]

The Bakufu saw in the group of several hundred two-sworded men from outside the *bushi* class a means to destroy the *shishi*. However, it miscalculated the scale of their misconduct which would result and, thus, affect both the reputation of the Bakufu at the time, and the reputation of the *bushi* for the next century and more. First, it is useful to explain the physical appearance of the Rōshigumi on the day of its departure from Edo to Kyōto on 1863/2/8. As an eyewitness explains:

> …From six o'clock in the morning over three hundred men gradually gathered … Some having *sōhatsu* and others *yarō bōzu* hair styles,[43] old and young intermingling. Everyone looked very different: One could see plain cotton *waribaori*, *kobakama*, *igabakama*, *nobakama*, *hanten*, *momohiki*,[44] light armor under *waribaori*, there were people who put on *hachimaki* headbands made of white cotton and iron stripes, swords with accessories made of pure gold… Some of them wore two long swords instead of the usual pair of the short and long swords, they also had such weapons as short spears, short bows, *tachi* and *jintō* swords…[45] Two men humped big containers: I heard they prepared *shōchū* alcohol in them…[46]

As one *bushi* observer put it, Rōshigumi looked like "a mix of fish and fowl."[47] However, it was not only in their appearance but also in their daily behavior that the

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42 Maekawa 1977, p. 71. Odaka 2004a, p. 233.

43 *Sōhatsu* – a hair style in which long hair was tied in a knot or tied and let down on the back of the head. *Yarō bōzu* – hair cut close to the skin.

44 *Waribaori* – a sort of Japanese jacket whose spine line was cut in the very bottom to wear the sword easily. *Kobakama* – a sort of short pleated culotte-like Japanese trousers that were tied up right under the knee. Usually they were used as armor underwear and on other occasions when freedom of movement was necessary. *Igabakama* – a sort of long pleated culotte-like Japanese trousers that were tied up right under the knee. In the Edo period *igabakama* was usually used by carpenters or servants in draper's shops etc. *Nobakama* – a sort of long pleated culotte-like Japanese trousers that were tied up with a broad velvet stripe around the ankle. *Hanten* – a warm jacket used by commoners in the Edo period. It looked like *haori*, but was shorter and lighter, and the sleeves were narrower. *Momohiki* – narrow tube-like Japanese trousers used for outdoor activities.

45 *Tachi* / *jintō* – a long sword that was usually attached to the armor or ceremonial dress. Unlike the *uchigatana* sword, it was worn so that the cutting edge of the blade was turned down.

46 The account is ascribed to a certain Suzuki Hampei and appears in Kodera 1917, volume 2, pp. 175-177. The number of *rōshi* "over three hundred" is exaggerated.

47 According to the memoirs of an Aizu *bushi* Shiba Ta'ichirō appearing in *Shidankai sokkiroku* (*The Stenographic Interviews of the Society for Historical Recollections*), 105th collection. What Shiba actually said was *ugō no rōnin*, or "*rōnin* who looked like a flock of crows," but an appropriate translation in English is "a mix of fish and fowl."

two-sworded commoners showed themselves to be a disorganized force (and one which openly merged weapons with alcohol). Unlike the *bushi*, who usually did not have to be reminded about the rules of conduct for their class, *rōshi*, in view of their backgrounds, were seen as potential troublemakers, and this is why, shortly before leaving Edo for Kyōto, the *rōshi* superintendent (*rōshi toriatsukai*) Udono Kyūō, prepared strict rules of conduct for Rōshigumi. These rules forbade them to treat arrogantly anyone in the places where they rested; disobey orders of the Bakufu supervising staff; swerve from their way for personal reasons; get in the way of other travelers; absent themselves from their lodgings without preliminary notice; and, of course, to drink.[48]

However, as just a couple of examples show, these rules had little effect. On 1863/2/10, on the way to Kyōto, one of the *rōshi*, Serizawa Kamo, is said to have been so outraged at his colleague who was in charge of lodgings for Rōshigumi and, by mistake, dropped Serizawa's name from the list of lodgers, that he ordered his subordinates to set up camp for the night in the open air and, for this purpose, to make huge torches to light up the surroundings. As a result, the whole area around the camp was on the brink of being set ablaze.[49] In addition, two members of Rōshigumi were expelled after arrival in Kyōto for breaching the drinking ban, as well as disobedience to the orders of their seniors during their stay.[50]

The Bakufu supervisors were gravely concerned with the Rōshigumi members' discipline and, the day before Rōshigumi entered Kyōto, they issued additional instructions on the proper conduct in the old capital. These instructions demonstrate how little the Bakufu trusted its commoner mercenaries:

> You must refrain from drinking bouts in inns. In any event, those who cavil at small points and quarrel about this and that, forgetting major and clinging to minor matters, cannot be called true patriots, and this is what persons of high purpose must be ashamed of. Peace or war in the Realm, indeed its survival, is directly related to the present business of the Bakufu in Kyōto, and everything will depend on how the negotiations with retainers of other domains will go; it is a matter of the utmost gravity, and clinging to minor things is not permissible in such a situation; you should realize this very very well… The present negotiations of the Bakufu in Kyōto are crucial. You should think carefully even before going out in the street…[51]

However, as an Aizu *bushi* and witness of events in the old capital, Shiba Ta'ichirō, recollected: "…Several hundred *rōnin* who had been newly recruited by the Bakufu…

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48 The rules prepared by Udono Kyūō appear in Odaka 2004a, pp. 236-237.
49 Oyamatsu 1974, p. 201. Maekawa 1977, pp. 73-74. Ōishi 2004b, p. 68.
50 Oyamatsu 1974, p. 238.
51 The instructions appear in Odaka 2004a, pp. 267-268.

barged into Kyōto. They strolled the streets of the city in groups, their hair and dress styles all different. Not infrequently their behavior was rough…"[52] Similar conduct, that also included extortion of money from rich townsmen, was observed after the informal leader of Rōshigumi, Kiyokawa Hachirō, returned together with the group to Edo in the aftermath of his secret obtaining of the imperial edict, which virtually freed both Kiyokawa and the group from Bakufu control[53] (these events are explained further in the Appendix).

Shortly after the assassination of Kiyokawa Hachirō in 1863/4, the Bakufu put Rōshigumi under the jurisdiction of the Shōnai domain. The group was renamed Shinchōgumi and put in charge of assisting the Shōnai *bushi* in patrolling the streets of Edo.[54] Such a move seems very contradictory, especially taking into consideration the fact that misconduct issues, including extortion of money from citizens, fights, and desertion, persisted.[55] However, it appears that the Bakufu officials decided to choose the lesser of two evils: They preferred to tolerate sporadic breaches of order by certain members of Shinchōgumi in order to prevent a large-scale riot resulting from the immediate disbandment of several hundred frustrated *rōshi*.

Besides Shinchōgumi, Rōshigumi also gave birth to another group, Shinsengumi, which is the most famous among the three. It appeared after thirteen members of Rōshigumi refused to follow Kiyokawa Hachirō to Edo and remained in Kyōto to serve the Bakufu cause. Shinsengumi gradually grew in number and was highly active in the Bakufu guerilla war against *shishi* in Kyōto under the leadership of the protector of Kyōto, Matsudaira Katamori, the *daimyō* of Aizu domain.[56]

Shinsengumi was also in charge of patrolling the streets of Kyōto and, to compare it with Mimawarigumi, which later was put in charge of the same task in the summer of 1864 but consisted of Bakufu retainers, shows the contrast over discipline and the approach to violence among the two-sworded warriors versus the two-sworded commoners of the Bakumatsu period. It is said that, from the very beginning, members of Shinsengumi and Mimawarigumi despised each other and had a fierce rivalry that originated from the difference in their social status.[57] This difference predetermined the kind of additional duties with which each group was charged besides patrolling: While

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52 According to the memoirs of Shiba Ta'ichirō appearing in *The Stenographic Interviews of the Society for Historical Recollections* (*Shidankai sokkiroku*), 105th collection.

53 Maekawa 1977, pp. 89-91, 94.

54 Oyamatsu 1974, p. 221; 1976, pp. 49-50. Maekawa 1977, p. 107.

55 Oyamatsu 1976, pp. 55-56, 58-59, 61-68, 71-79, 84-87, 94.

56 Oyamatsu 1974, p. 208. Maekawa 1977, p. 81-82.

57 Kikuchi Akira 2005, pp. 38-40.

Shinsengumi had to do the "dirty work" discussed above, Mimawarigumi kept its hands clean guarding both the imperial palace and court nobles' residences.[58]

Tellingly, there are virtually no records indicating misconduct or violent behavior by Mimawarigumi. This is in contrast to Shinsengumi, whose leaders had to introduce *seppuku* as the punishment for its members found guilty of violating the severe rules of conduct. The Bakufu retainers of Mimawarigumi did not require any additional control since they were *bushi* from the hereditary warrior houses who were far more culturally conditioned to adhere to proper norms of conduct, at least when performing their duties. Furthermore, *bushi* in service had much more to lose in case they breached the law: They were not necessarily sentenced to death but their family well-being and reputation was at stake (another factor which is likely to have restrained the conduct of Mimawarigumi members was the physical presence of their families in Kyōto).

The above discussion indicates that, during the Bakumatsu unrest, more daily violence and undisciplined behavior came generally from the two-sworded commoners rather than the *bushi*. However, because they wore arms, and especially the two swords, members of these two different stratums of Japanese society often looked similar, and they could confuse an outside observer in the same way as during the earlier times of wars and unrest preceding the Tokugawa era. It also should be noted that, with the exception of revenge killings (*kataki uchi*), the Tokugawa Bakufu did not encourage the *bushi* to exercise their legitimate right to kill, such as in the case of disrespect killings (*burei uchi*), and the examples of such a resort to violence in historical records are few.[59] Furthermore, taking into consideration the recent study of Taniguchi Shinko that shows how recourse to force by the *bushi* was strictly regulated by Tokugawa law,[60] there can be little doubt that the *bushi*-like commoners were more prone to trespass the law in daily life through acts of violence rather than the *bushi* themselves.

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[58] Kikuchi Akira 2005, pp. 108-110. In 1866, the Bakufu officials received an anonymous petition asking them to make patrolling of Kyōto streets the duty solely of Mimawarigumi because guarding the imperial palace and court nobles' residences distracted necessary resources and made the patrolling inefficient. However, they decided to leave Mimawarigumi's duties as they were. The Bakufu officials thought that making the patrolling of the streets the sole duty of Mimawarigumi would put the Bakufu retainers at the same level with Shinsengumi, which was impermissible (Kikuchi Akira 2005). This shows again that Bakufu officials tended to sacrifice efficiency for appearance's sake.

[59] Hiramatsu 1960, p. 597. Hurst 1990, p. 522.

[60] Taniguchi Shinko 2005.

6.5 The Cultivation of the Warrior Ethos Among the Commoners

Another factor that contributed to a confusion of the images of the two-sworded warriors and the two-sworded commoners was the latter's cultivation of the warrior ethos, which is often referred to as Bushidō. As discussed earlier, the *bushi* values were inseparably associated with arms and bodily practices or training aimed at acquiring martial skills. In the Tokugawa era, the rhetoric about the warrior ethos continued to accompany the practice of military arts even though these arts had largely lost their practicability in actual combat. By engaging in the practice of military arts or by serving a *bushi* family, some commoners were also exposed to the warrior ethos and strove to cultivate the values of the *bushi* ruling elite. This is the point where the line between warriors and commoners became most blurred, sometimes even for contemporaries. This is apparent in the following written opinion submitted to the Bakufu by Ikeda Tokutarō, one of the main recruiters of Rōshigumi:

> From ancient times warriors of the eight Kantō provinces[61] have been known as invincible warriors of the realm. It has been a long time since I noticed that the nature and folkways of Musashi, Kai, Kōzuke and Shimotsuke provinces are particularly stern, and sons of righteousness who grow up there are fond of the everyday practice of literary and military arts, and stock up on weapons and horses. Many among them are firm in their loyalty and patriotism to their country. I believe that if you take into consideration the example of warrior-peasantry of ancient times, and this time recruit these sons of righteousness, giving them an opportunity for promotion, they will definitely serve your present purposes.[62]

By referring to the "sons of righteousness" of the Kantō region as "warriors" (*tsuwamono*), Ikeda encompassed both the *bushi* and people of the lower social status who possessed weapons and trained in military arts. For him, the fact that a man was strong, armed, and regularly practiced martial skills smoothed over the differences in social status.

The fact of possessing and wearing weapons, training in military arts, or just the sense of belonging to a hereditary warrior house, could give commoners a pretext explicitly to associate themselves with the warrior ethos. The following example is of a servant of the Shiba family of Aizu domain named Heizō. During the Boshin war, he

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[61] Eight Kantō provinces (Kan Hasshū or Kantō Hasshū): Usually Sagami, Musashi, Awa, Kazusa, Shimōsa, Hitachi, Kōzuke, and Shimotsuke provinces. However, in the cited text, Ikeda mentions Kai Province, and it seems there were slight differences in the way people used the term in the Bakumatsu period.

[62] This written opinion by Ikeda Tokutarō appears in Odaka 2004a, pp. 97-98.

heard the news (brought by another servant named Tomekichi) that a rumor about the surrender of the domain castle was actually true:

> Heizō suddenly roared and jumped in the garden, grabbed Tomekichi by the collar and pushed him down on the ground, reproaching him: "What are you saying?! There shouldn't be any surrender! Even me, a servant of the lowest descent, comprehends the Way of the Warrior (*bushi no michi*)! Don't disgrace your lord!"[63]

On the other hand, *bushi* could also on occasion demand that the two-sworded commoners cultivate the warrior spirit, as was the case of Shinchōgumi that operated in Edo under the supervision of the *bushi* of Shōnai domain. The supervisors called on them to "bolster more and more your patriotic aspiration (*kokorozashi*), watch out for yourself, make your official duties your first priority, and engage solely in the perfection of the Way of the Warrior (Bushidō)…" In return, the *rōshi* expected to be treated as members of the *bushi* class (*shibun*) which was already a sticking point in their relationship with the *bushi* at the start of the Bakufu's recruitment of Rōshigumi. After the group was renamed Shinchōgumi and put under the Shōnai domain's control, the *rōshi* were frustrated that the Shōnai domain continued to treat them as outsiders to the *bushi* class.[64]

It is not explained how in real terms members of the Shinchōgumi were supposed to "perfect the Way of the Warrior," and it seems that, for the *bushi*, such matters did not even require explanation. Naturally, the commoners' comprehension of the warrior ethos was considerably different from that of the *bushi*. This could often result in a situation where acts contradicting *bushi* values were committed by commoners who genuinely believed they were upholding those same values.

6.6 Glamorized Violence: The Creation of the "Bellicose *Samurai*" in 20th Century Japanese Popular Culture

The above examples of misconduct of the *rōshi*, as well as the lists of prohibited conduct addressed to them by the Bakufu supervisors, resemble closely the image of the *bushi* mentioned by Shiba Gorō as "the one who raises his voice on every occasion, drinks *sake* and commits violence."

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63 From the recollections of Shiba Gorō appearing in Ishimitsu 1979, pp. 36-37. By "lord," Heizō refers to Matsudaira Katamori, the *daimyō* of the Aizu domain.

64 Cited from the Shōnai domain's document appearing in Oyamatsu 1976, pp. 84-87. Also, see Wu 2006, pp. 71-72.

Yet, it was exactly this type of the violent two-sworded man which was glamorized in the popular culture of the Bakumatsu period. This is, for example, how Shinchōgumi (former Rōshigumi) was glorified by the ordinary townspeople:

> Members of Shinchōgumi are grouchy swordsmen or those who are more than domain [authorities] can manage. They go to any length either [to return the favor of] one rice bowl or [to take revenge for] a single glare. When they are sure of their righteousness, they are ready to go through water and fire. They are tiny, but strong men; once they free the sword from the mouth of their sheath, they will not be satisfied until they see blood. Sword scars [on their bodies] are redolent of bygone military exploits. Their terrifying piercing gaze follows you all the time, not giving you a slightest chance to escape. They do their hair in an unusually large topknot. They carry *ikamonozukuri*[65] swords like toys; rough fists, tough shoulders, they swagger proudly and everyone … gives way and gazes after them saying loudly: "That is the famous Shinchōgumi!"[66]

The myth of the noble gangster with the strict code of honor, vaguely based on Bushidō, also grew in the Bakumatsu period and early Meiji era, when Japanese society became increasingly unstable. The fantastic exploits of such local heroes of the period as Kunisada Chūji and Shimizu no Jirōchō became subjects for numerous plays, story-tellers and later the cinema. In reality, these romanticized outlaws were leaders of *bakuto* gamblers and *yakuza*, whose bands constantly waged small-scale bloody wars in the process of property redivision.[67]

The process of glamorization of violence in popular culture after the Meiji Restoration, and especially the "violentization" of the *bushi*, which initially originated in a confusion of the two-sworded warriors and two-sworded commoners, was exacerbated with the advent of Western culture and new technology, particularly mass publishing and the cinematograph. The shift from Kōdan, a popular storytelling tradition, to the publication boom of the early 1900s of mass-market novels derived from the Kōdan tradition, gave birth to such renowned novelists as Nakazato Kaizan, Osaragi Jirō, Hayashi Fubō and Hasegawa Shin, whose works depicted violent swordsmen of both *bushi* and *non-bushi* origin, and have been repeatedly made into films spanning both pre- and postwar periods.[68]

When the *shinkokugeki*, or "new national drama," appeared in 1917 and featured a

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[65] *Ikamonozukuri* – a style of sword accessories that consist mainly of metal pieces (chains, etc.) to produce a frightening impression.

[66] Cited from Oyamatsu 1976, p. 102.

[67] Buruma 1984, p. 168. Iwai McDonald 1992, pp. 167-170, 173. Spalding 1992, p. 136. Aketa 1993, p. 289.

[68] Spalding 1992, pp. 133, 136-137. Standish 2005, pp. 83-84, 282.

more literal violence in substitute for the dance-like duels of the old drama, this, in turn, created a kind of new realism in *jidaigeki* (the period-film). One of the first of these new *jidaigeki*, based on a popular *shinkokugeki* play, was *Murasaki zukin: Ukiyoe-shi* (*The purple hood: Woodblock artist*, 1923). This was important in determining the future of the genre. The film was directed by Makino Shōzō and was written by Suzukita Rokuhei, a young director and playwright whose subsequent scripts would come to define *jidaigeki* of the 1920s. Suzukita's major contribution to the genre was the application of what he called "realist" principles to *jidaigeki*. As he explained: "I gave Makino a script filled with real violence, real combat scenes, thoroughly realistic. He said it would have to be done with real weapons… what happiness I felt. Several of the actors were actually hurt by the flailing swords." Equally inspired by American action films and by such swashbuckling local novelists as Nakazato Kaizan and Hasegawa Shin, the films of both the Makinos – Shōzō and his son, Masahiro – were very popular.[69] However, in their emphasis on realistic violence, they actually obscured the reality of the *bushi*.

Thus, the so-called "*samurai* film" came to dominate the pre-WWII cinema: Nearly six thousand *jidaigeki* films featuring *tachimawari* (sword-fighting) were made between 1908 and 1945.[70] The publishing industry produced, on a mass scale, novels depicting violent swordsmen who became models for the new *jidaigeki*. It is estimated that some seventy percent of these films drew their ideas from serializations in newspapers and magazines.[71]

Violence in traditional genres of popular culture was terminated by Allied Occupation censorship from 1945 to 1952, but was restored quickly after the occupation was over and, by 1961-62, the "*samurai* film" practically dominated Japanese film production, with around forty new titles being released each year, or more than three every month. By 1970, however, this figure fell to about a dozen each year and, by 1980, the figure was down to two or three.[72] Relative to the sixties and seventies, presently "*samurai* film" has declined as a popular medium, although significant directors such as Yamada Yōji continue to produce major works in this genre. It can still be seen on Japanese TV. The publishing industry has retained more of the genre, and popular novels about

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69 Anderson 1992, p. 281. Nolletti and Desser 1992, pp. 129-130. Spalding 1992, p. 132-133, 137, 139. Richie, 2005, p. 64.

70 Buruma 1984, p. 168. Desser 1992, p. 145. Nolletti and Desser 1992, p. xiv. Spalding 1992, pp. 131, 136-139. Richie, 2005, p. 24.

71 Spalding 1992, p. 137. Richie, 2005, p. 65.

72 Desser 1992, p. 145. Galloway 2005, pp. 5-6, 22, 27-30, 34-35, 40-41. Standish 2005, pp. 155-158, 272-279. Richie 2005, pp. 107, 110-111, 129-133.

swordsmen have never disappeared from the shelves of bookstores.[73]

The popularity of *jidaigeki* was such that the hero's role grew to encompass not only *bushi*, but also itinerant gamblers and the various hoodlums who loitered outside of mainstream society. The image of the Japanese sword pervaded the genre as it was used to both precipitate and resolve narrative conflicts.[74] Thus, the process of fusing the images of warriors and armed commoners that began in the Bakumatsu period was continued by popular culture of the 20th century. It resulted in the creation of a stereotype of the "bellicose *samurai*," which has largely obscured the historical realities of pre-Meiji Japan.

As David Desser noted, the *samurai* film has nothing whatsoever to do with history and everything to do with myth.[75] However, this myth acquired wings, and the distinction between swordsmen from the hereditary warrior houses and those of commoner origin often is seemingly unquestioned by writers and audience alike in modern Japan and abroad. The two became indiscernible to the degree that, whenever someone carrying or swinging the Japanese sword appears on the screen, it immediately evokes associations with the *bushi* (or what is commonly referred to as *samurai*), although the hero may be just an outlaw. A recent and typical example of this lack of awareness of any distinction can be found in a late 2008 Japan Airlines' in-flight TV guide. Its English summary of *Jirōchō sangokushi* (*Adventures of Jirōchō*, 2008), a film about the Bakumatsu outlaw Shimizu no Jirōchō, reads as follows (emphasis added):

> A gambler who is forced to leave his wife for three years finds when he returns that he has acquired several rivals. The classic *samurai* novel on which the film is based has already inspired 13 previous movies.[76]

The English translation of the film title, *Samurai gangsters*, appearing in the guide also speaks for itself. Another example is a casual translation of the term *rōnin* into English as "masterless *samurai*," such as in the title of the series *Rōningai* (1928-29), which is translated as *Jobless samurai* or *Street of masterless samurai* and is still commonly used by researchers of Japanese cinema. This kind of translation is misleading because, as indicated in the Conventions of this thesis, the term *rōnin* (as well as *rōshi*) was used in

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[73] A search in the catalogue of Japan's National Diet Library reveals over 600 popular book titles which are published after 1945 and include the word *kenkyaku* (swordsman) or *kengō* (master-swordsman) in the title. In reality, this number should be at least twice as large since there is also a vast number of books and comics that feature swordsmen but do not use such words in their titles.

[74] Spalding 1992, p. 136, 139-142. Richie, 2005, p. 66.

[75] Desser 1992, p. 163.

[76] JAL Entertainment Network Guide, 2008, no. 12, p. 16.

Bakumatsu Japan to refer not only to former *bushi* without a master, but to all armed people of lower social standing (generally, modern Japanese are not aware of this distinction either and also use this term to refer only to a *bushi* without a master). It also appears that well staged sword-fighting scenes sometimes mislead even scholars in regard to who in reality is wielding the sword. This is the case with, for example, Isolde Standish who uses the term "*samurai*" when referring to gambler/masseuse Zatōichi from the famous *Zatōichi* series (1960s-70s).[77]

In 20-21st century Japan, the fusion of images of warriors and armed commoners has culminated in the glamorization of individuals and groups whose activities in the Bakumatsu period, in reality, were completely divorced from the values and practices of Bushidō nobility ascribed to them by modern Japanese. Among the three groups of *rōshi* discussed above, Shinsengumi is the one that committed the most bloodshed in Kyōto and, to accomplish its "dirty work" in the old capital, it resorted to the method most despised in *bushi* society – the so-called round-the-corner assassination. Yet, Shinsengumi has gained the most popularity in novels, *manga* comics, and movies. The TV drama *Shinsengumi!* and the movie *Mibu gishi den* (*The story of sons of righteousness in Mibu*), both produced in 2003, are only the latest examples that have refueled a boom in Japan for a reinvented Bushidō and the kind of "past" which in Japan has been commonly referred to by producers of popular culture as a paradise where "men were men and women were women," and where "values were clear and simple."[78]

There is little evidence of awareness among scholars about issues emerging from the co-existence of *bushi* and *bushi*-like commoners in the late Tokugawa era, as well as the fusion of their images in later popular culture. This has contributed to a level of confusion in academic works and popular culture regarding the daily conduct and the role of violence in what might be called authentic warriors from the hereditary warrior houses, and those from outside of their class (commoners) who were admitted to *bushi* society for a variety of reasons or who just wore weapons, engaged in military arts training, and advocated the warrior ethos. In pursuit of the truth, however, it is incumbent upon us to recognize that the stereotype of the "bellicose *samurai*" that has been inherited by Japanese living after the Meiji Restoration, and that has spread so widely in the popular culture of the 20th-21st centuries, is largely based on the behavior of people of non-*bushi* origin.

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77 Standish 2000, p. 160.
78 Buruma 1984, p. 169.

6.7 Bushidō in the Service of Japanese Government and Business

A major role in perpetuating and expanding the distorted "memories" of *bushi* intangible culture has been played by the Japanese government and business. They use them to promote conservative socio-cultural agendas both inside and outside the country. The reinvention of Bushidō and its nation-wide dissemination in the process of the Meiji government's building of a new nation-state (which was characterized by Basil Chamberlain as one of the conspicuous traits within the framework of "the invention of a new religion" by Japan's ruling class[79]) added considerably to the durability of warrior stereotypes. At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, when the country won successive wars of expansion over China and Russia, the government urged the entire nation to identify with traditional native "warrior" values, even though the vast majority of Japan's population never belonged to the *bushi* class. The building of a new national identity was based on a belief that, as Chamberlain put it, "Japan is as far superior to the common ruck of nations as the Mikado is divinely superior to the common ruck of kings and emperors…" and that "true valour belongs to the Japanese knight alone."[80] The image of the bellicose Japanese warrior, with a set of values that were unique and superior to those of peoples of other nations, was extremely valuable to a government intent on rousing a militaristic patriotism among the people.

Surprisingly, this use of a bellicose warrior figure for nationalistic purposes did not end with Japan's capitulation in World War II and its subsequent declaration of itself as a demilitarized nation. The term Bushidō has never disappeared from the pages of popular magazines, newspapers, and journals, in which politicians, businessmen, educators, and ordinary white-collar workers restlessly lament the loss, and call for the revival, of the "genuine Japanese spirit." This spirit is inseparably associated with the *bushi*, or to be more precise, with the reinvented and distorted image of the Japanese warrior. Such a trend became particularly conspicuous from the mid-1990s, when the number of articles on Bushidō in popular media exploded, and it continues to grow to the present.[81]

It is no accident that this trait appeared in the period when the Japanese economy fell into stagnation. At the same time, the modern Bushidō boom also coincides with certain developments in the Japanese educational and political establishment. Japan's recent

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79 Chamberlain 1912, pp. 531-544.

80 Chamberlain 1912, p. 537.

81 A search in the catalogue of Japan's National Diet Library reveals a vast number of articles since this time.

educational reforms have been directed at the revival of patriotism in the country: Singing of the national anthem in a standing position has been made compulsory for both school teachers and students, and the refusal to comply is punished severely.[82] Moreover, the Ministry of Education has introduced courses in *budō*, the modern version of Japanese military arts, for junior high school students, and work is under way to make attendance in these courses compulsory by 2011. Since the majority of teachers of physical education in Japan lack any experience in the training and teaching of *budō* (which mostly consists of competitive sports created from the remnants of traditions of the Great Tokugawa Peace) the Ministry of Education has required them to attend special training seminars and has allocated a 50 million yen budget for the realization of this project.[83]

In their policy to impart "traditional" physical skills to young people, Japan's bureaucrats and educators seem to have in mind a general image of ancient warriors who constantly trained in military arts. However, they apparently do not comprehend the difference between the *bushi* skills of the pre-Tokugawa ages and their Tokugawa-era versions, or indeed the phenomenon of *budō*, much of which was derived from the latter.

Furthermore, those who advocate compulsory attendance at *budō* classes in junior high schools constantly emphasize that the practice of, for example, *kendō* swordsmanship, which is one of the versions of *budō*, will lead to the correct inheritance of "Japanese traditional culture" and develop a strong and virtuous character in young people.[84] This overlooks the fact that *budō* is largely an invention of the 20th century which, in reality, has little in common with "Japanese traditional culture,"[85] and that the practice of competitive sports within the framework of *budō* is equally likely to result in a culture of "winners" and "losers" rather than in the formation of virtue and self-discipline. It also leads to contradictory positions among advocates of modern *budō*. One Japanese scholar, Nakamura Tamio, goes as far as to stress the cultural and traditional aspects of *kendō* and, simultaneously, question the necessity of retaining its traditional squat greeting (*sonkyo*) performed before and after matches. In other words, he rejects one of the fundamental elements of *bushi* culture, that is etiquette, and

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82 See, for example, *Asahi Shimbun*, 2008/2/29, "Kimigayo kiritsu: yureru kyōin" (accessed on 9 January 2009 at http://mytown.asahi.com/tokyo/news.php?k_id=13000180802290001; *Mainichi Shimbun*, 2008/3/26, "Kisha no me: Kimigayo. Fukiritsu de shobun sareru kyōshi."

83 *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 2007/11/24, "Tai'iku kyōshi ni budō kenshū: chūgaku hisshū ni muke shidōryoku kyōka e kankyō seibi."

84 See, for example, Karukome 2008.

85 In regard to the invention of *budō*, see Ōtsuka 1995; Inoue Shun 1998, 2004.

suggests that, in its place, there should be so-called "victory poses" with the victor asserting his triumph by punching his fists in the air (*gattsu pōzu*).[86]

Even setting this kind of selective "traditionalism" aside, what the present-day propagandists for a revived "Bushidō" are actually doing is to urge the population to practice inefficient military skills for the sake of cultivating a patriotic and martial spirit; this is the same kind of dissonance between means and goals inherited from the Tokugawa era. A continuous and unreserved usage of the character *bu* ("martial") in regard to competitive sports, as, for example, in the term *budō*, signifies an explicit claim to their martial value. Such claims would seem ridiculous in the case of, for instance, Western fencing, whose practitioners apparently understand that it is a sport and no more than that, but they are taken for granted in the case of *kendō*. This organized and centrally-sponsored form of mass self-deception, however, is different from the Tokugawa era in that it is imposed not only on Japanese but also on foreigners through the propaganda of Japanese "soft power."

The new fascination with Bushidō must also be understood in the light of recent developments concerning Japan's review of its "peace constitution" and rising tensions with its neighbors. These inspire conservatives to work for a more active and even aggressive society within Japan, and the Japanese establishment plays a more and more active role in the Bushidō propaganda, just as it did about a century ago. Among the most recent examples is the creation of The Bushidō Association (NPO Bushidō Kyōkai) in 2007. Its executive head is a former minister of finance and present president of Tōyō University, Shiokawa Masajūrō. The director is a leading specialist in *bushi* history and professor of the International Research Center for Japanese Studies, Kasaya Kazuhiko.[87] Another example is the establishment in 2008 of the Bushidō school Nitobe Juku (named after the early twentieth century propagandist of Bushidō in the West, Nitobe Inazō) at the International House of Japan (Kokusai Bunka Kaikan, Tōkyō). Akashi Yasushi, a former UN Undersecretary General, is its director, and among its lecturers are Chief of Agency for Cultural Affairs Aoki Tamotsu, and renowned philosopher Tsurumi Shunsuke.[88]

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86 Nakamura Tamio 2001b.

87 *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 2008/2/22, "Bushidō NPO hossoku;" *Sangyō Keizai Shimbun*, 2008/6/28, "Bushidō Kyōkai ga hossoku: asu dai-ikkai kōenkai, Tōkyō." See the association's website at http://www.bushido.or.jp (accessed on 16 January 2009).

88 *Mainichi Shimbun*, 2008/7/24, "Nitobe Juku: wakate jitsumusha taishō ni kaikō, Kokusai Bunka Kaikan;" *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 2008/7/28, "Kokusai kōken dekiru jinzai ikusei 'Nitobe Juku' o kaisetsu, Kokusai Bunka Kaikan." See the school's website at http://www.i-house.or.jp/jp/ProgramActivities/nitobejuku/index.htm (accessed on 16 January 2009).

An extreme form of the Bushidō boom in contemporary Japan is the plan of The Bushidō Association to introduce an official Bushidō certification (Bushidō *kentei*) in Japanese society.[89] The meaning of this certification waits to be explained but it is most likely a certification of one's conceptual comprehension of newly invented values which are labeled "Bushidō." Another example is the appearance of a new business that specializes in human resource development according to what it describes as the principles of "Bushidō." Companies in this sector organize regular training seminars for corporate workers who are taught Bushidō values and their on-the-job application. The online mission statement of one such company, LineAge Corporation, reads: "LineAge's mission is to revive and continue to transmit Bushidō, which is the traditional way of living of Japanese and the soul of Japan (Yamato *gokoro*), in line with the current of the times and in order to harness properly the bloodline of the Japanese state."[90] The company claims to teach "ancient Japanese manners" (based on Bushidō) that are customized for the modern age, and that are supposed to help company workers in acquiring business etiquette and promoting sales.[91]

LineAge's mission statement is quite ambiguous, especially the last part about harnessing "properly the bloodline of the Japanese state." It gives the impression that the company's leaders have only a vague understanding of the historical background of the linguistic terms with which they operate, the history of their own country in general, and the development of Bushidō rhetoric since the Meiji era in particular. Of course, this lack of understanding may not greatly concern them or their clients. However, the situation is more disturbing in the case of academics who preside in The Bushidō Association and, possessing a detailed knowledge of how the Bushidō myth was created, engage in what one is forced to describe as a pure fabrication of history aimed at breeding a new generation of "warriors."

While concepts that LineAge teaches appear to be merely extracted from Confucian morality, the company's repeated emphasis on Bushidō, which is used as a kind of brand label, nonetheless must alarm informed observers. What they appear to be striving for is the cultivation of a strong warrior personality. More precisely, they seem to be aiming for a personality modeled on the recently invented stereotype of the Japanese warrior. From this, it appears that the managers and the clients of LineAge identify "Japaneseness" with an image which historically has been employed in bellicose nationalism.

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89 *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 2008/2/22, "Bushidō NPO hossoku."
90 http://www.line-age.jp/corpinfo.html (accessed on 3 December 2008).
91 http://www.line-age.jp/003.html (accessed on 3 December 2008).

The activities of LineAge and similar companies have provoked criticism from some scholars who engage in studies of ethics and Bushidō. One of these is Katō Kazuya, associate professor of the University of the Sacred Heart, Tōkyō. Speaking to the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, he referred to the Bushido training seminars organized by LineAge as a simplistic kind of "morality by numbers." Another scholar, Kannō Kakumyō of the University of Tōkyō, speaking to the same newspaper, commented: "If we look at the underpinnings [of the Bushidō boom], it reveals the absence of independent thinking among modern Japanese. Behaving like a lot of sheep and glorifying Bushidō at the same time is contrary to the spirit of the *bushi* who built up Bushidō by faithfully following their individual paths, full of the spirit of independence and self-respect."[92]

The two scholars may be correct in regard to the trends in contemporary Japanese society. However, their criticism omits an extremely important point which has been at the center of discussion in this thesis: The warrior ethos required the backing of the corresponding bodily practices and mental attitudes which were a vital part of the cultural conditioning of the hereditary warrior houses in pre-modern Japan. Furthermore, the bodily practices and mental attitudes which were most effective in defending "the spirit of independence and self-respect" were not those of the Great Tokugawa Peace but of the pre-Tokugawa ages.

6.8 Japanese Military Arts After the Meiji Restoration

Since approximately the middle of the 20th century, the cultural legacy of the *bushi* class, and in particular its military skills, has become an object of mass consumption in Japan and abroad. The reason for this public demand is probably that there are many people who are attempting to escape from what they regard as modern and superficial, and look for deeper satisfaction and meaning in life through the practices and values of the *bushi*. Ironically the form of the *bushi* culture they are using to this end is exactly the kind of culture which was dismissed as superficial and unsatisfactory by swordsmen like Yamaoka Tesshū.

Furthermore, Japanese military arts sometimes appear to have been turned into a commercialized game, completely removed from the historical realities of their development as well as the realities of actual combat transcending historical periods. Surprisingly, the 20th century is full of examples of new schools of "traditional" military

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[92] *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 2007/5/8, "Nihon, hyōryū suru rinri (4): 'Bushidō,' 'hinkaku' ōhayari."

arts that use the popular word *ryū* or *dō* ("The Way") in their names, or claim the "revival" of schools that have ceased to exist. In the latter case, individuals who claim a "revival" of an old military arts school usually maintain that they have done so by scrupulous investigation of the school's traditional texts. Such claims are surely groundless because, as mentioned earlier, the texts of military arts schools were written in a way that only a person who received direct instruction from the living successor of the school could comprehend their meaning.

Thus, the number of contemporary military arts schools that emerged in the 20th century is probably at about the same high level as in the Tokugawa era. The only difference is that they have been created not only by Japanese but by foreign individuals too. Also, as in the Tokugawa era, fame, profit, and self-assertion appear to be the primary motivation, although it can be disguised under the rhetoric of the necessity to acquire self-defense skills or about the perfection of moral character and/or the preservation of "genuine traditions."[93]

In line with the policy of using "soft power" to expand the sphere of Japan's cultural influence, the Japanese government has contributed heavily to the development of this process abroad, which is invariably accompanied by Bushidō propaganda and emphasis on "traditional Japanese values." Overseas seminars in military arts, during which foreigners learn "traditional" Japanese physical culture from Japanese representatives, sometimes even resemble the instilling of a cult as they are often accompanied by Shintō rituals.[94] What is exported outside Japan under the brand of "traditional culture" in reality is a distortion of history by the Japanese establishment. In this, the fact that no sophisticated physical skill can be learned deeply and correctly through short-term seminars, and can be acquired only under the constant guidance of an experienced instructor over a span of many years, seems not to bother the participants of seminars as well as the government bureaucrats who organize them.[95]

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[93] Sometimes commercialization of military arts reaches the point when it turns into scam. Examples of such a scam in Australia can be found at http://www.maia.com.au/martialartsscams.htm (accessed on 10 January 2009). I will not elaborate on major problems in attitudes among modern practitioners of Japanese military arts since they are already given due attention elsewhere (Friday 1997, 2005; Hurst 1998; Skoss 2005).

[94] See, for example, photos of overseas seminars posted on the website of Shiseikan, the training hall belonging to the Meiji Jingū shrine, at http://www.meijijingu.or.jp/shiseikan/inter/index.html and http://www.meijijingu.or.jp/shiseikan/inter/01.html (accessed on 8 December 2008).

[95] The idea of studying, for example, ballet seriously by merely attending seminars would sound ridiculous to probably anyone. The same can be said about military training in modern armies. However, strangely, it is not the case with Japanese military arts, in which, as the critic of the early Tokugawa "flowery training," Matsushita Gunkō, put it, "one is always [supposed to be] a step between life and death" (cited from Kōdansha 1983, p. 127).

This mass production and consumption of "Bushidō" and the entire warrior legacy has exacerbated the confusion over military arts. As a result, it is difficult to obtain a genuine understanding of the *bushi* culture and its historical development even in academic circles. A major point of confusion is over the nature of the so-called "traditional" or "old" military arts (*koryū*), and the difference between them and their modern versions (*gendai budō*). The two are often mixed, or the latter is treated as the natural extension of the former.[96]

In reality, the two are very different both in terms of cultural and historical background and technical content. All modern versions, most of which can only be properly described as sports, have been created in the 20th century and, unlike the military skills of pre-Tokugawa *bushi* which developed naturally in response to the needs of a warring age, have never been tested on numerous battlefields in the long process of historical natural selection.

Yet, when it comes to the military arts of old, another confusion takes place. This is a lack of understanding of the kind of military skills possessed by the *bushi* before the Tokugawa era, as described in Chapter II, and how they declined during the Great Tokugawa Peace, as we saw in Chapter III. As a result, once again, the two are often mixed, or the latter is treated as the natural extension of the former.[97]

The majority of training entities that nowadays transmit old military skills in the form of "schools" (*ryū*) in Japan were established in the Tokugawa era. In a BBC documentary about Japanese old military arts, it was commented that the techniques of most of them are "so ritualized that it is hard to see them being used in a real fight."[98] Indeed, the performance of many of the *koryū* schools that one can see at regular military arts demonstrations at Nippon Budōkan arena, Meiji Jingū shrine, and other places in Japan, may be said to take on some of the more exaggerated elements of the Kabuki theatre rather than any form of combat. However, if one is not aware that this phenomenon of ritualization appeared only during the Tokugawa era, then it is impossible fully to evaluate and understand what is being presented to the audience as

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96 A typical mix of *koryū* and *gendai budō* among scholars can be seen, for example, in Tōdō and Murata 2004, who refer to both as *budō* in their investigation of the history of the *dan* and *kyū* grading system.

97 This kind of confusion is obvious, for example, in Karl Friday's introduction to his *Legacies of the Sword: The Kashima-Shinryū and samurai martial culture* (1997) and Winston King's *Zen and the way of the sword* (1993). Although not an academic work, another example is Roald Knutsen's *Rediscovering budō: From a swordsman's perspective* (2004). A rare example of a Western author who demonstrates a clear understanding of the borderline in the quality of military skills and training of the *bushi* of the pre-Tokugawa ages and the Tokugawa era is Cameron Hurst (1998).

98 BBC documentary *The way of the warrior*, 1982.

the "Japanese warrior tradition."

6.9 Modern Distorted Memories of the *Bushi* Bodily Practices

Distorted memories of the *bushi* intangible culture can be observed not only in the sphere of their values and ethos but also in their bodily practices. For example, modern Japanese fiction (*manga* and novels), TV drama, and movies regularly feature acrobat "master-swordsmen," in which all kinds of extraordinary stunts can be seen.[99] This type of entertainment has been especially popular since the 1960s, the period in which Japanese television took off. Needless to say, the bodily practices of such mass media are figments of their producers' imagination and are utterly unrealistic.[100]

The *samurai* film and TV drama are set in Japan's feudal past, which at its broadest can be considered from the twelfth to the nineteenth centuries. Yet, like the "Western," the majority of *samurai* films typically are situated in only a part of this spectrum, i.e. mainly in the Tokugawa era. David Desser argued that this is a part of the great paradox of the *samurai* film: The focus of attention on warriors in a time of relative peace.[101] This paradox can be explained, first, by the fact that, compared to the other ages, the Tokugawa era left the largest number of materials that allow producers to recreate relatively authentically the historical background. Secondly, it is probably a budget consideration of film producers: Featuring sword-fights of individual swordsmen or even several tens of people of the peaceful Tokugawa era is much cheaper than featuring the same fights in times of war, which would require using numerous extras and investing heavily in scenery and costumes such as armory.[102]

In any event, the situation would probably seem to Desser even more paradoxical if he knew the decline in Japanese swordsmanship in the Tokugawa era as discussed in this thesis. The focus on "master-swordsmen" of the Tokugawa era shows that the Japanese film industry is generally ignorant of this decline as well as of the strict

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[99] For example, the famous movie series *Zatōichi* (*The blind swordsman*, 1960s-1970s) and *Kozure ōkami* (*The lone wolf with cub*, 1972-74, 1985-86, 1993).

[100] One extreme example of unrealistic stunts is stopping the enemy's sword by catching it between one's palms just a few inches from the head (hands are, of course, not cut). This type of stunt can be seen, for example, in several series of *Kozure ōkami*. On stunt making and sword-fight arrangement in Japanese *chambara* films, see Nagata 1993; Hayashi Kunishirō 2001, 2004. A rare academic study of *chambara*, pertaining to Japanese cultural history, can be found in Ogawa Naoko 2007.

[101] Desser 1992, p. 146.

[102] The major exception here, of course, is Kurosawa Akira's *Kagemusha* (*The shadow warrior*, 1980).

regulation of violence by Tokugawa law in this period. Both in Japan and abroad, the popular culture industry has created a stereotype of skillful swordsmen of the Tokugawa era who use every pretext to draw their sword. In the virtual space of popular culture, these images became "historical facts" which are accepted uncritically by a broad audience.

Besides popular culture, real life also provides numerous examples of distortions of the *bushi* bodily practices. These include the instruction to imagine oneself holding a real sword while training with its bamboo substitute which is common in modern *kendō*. It appears that this is treated seriously even among those *kendō* practitioners who engage in academic studies of Japanese swordsmanship and sword culture[103] (the futility of these imaginative practices, and their potential for psychological and physical harm in actual combat, were discussed in Chapter III of this thesis).

Another distortion presently is the widespread practice of test-cutting (*tameshigiri*) with a real sword of rolled up straw mats (*makiwara*). This test-cutting is often performed at demonstrations of military arts, and impresses spectators when one or several mats are cut through simultaneously with a single strike. However, spectators are usually not aware that the rolled up straw mats have been soaked in water for several days and, thus, can be cut even by a person without any preliminary training in this kind of test-cutting. It should be noted that, without this soaking, it is extremely difficult to cut through even one dry straw mat with a single blow.[104]

The origins of the modern test-cutting of straw mats go back as far as the ages preceding the Tokugawa era, when, according to accounts of the first European visitors to 16th century Japan, people used to test the "firmness and sharpness" of their swords through test-cutting of cadavers and sometimes the live bodies of prisoners.[105] One of the most famous of the early Western observers of Japan, the Portuguese Jesuit priest João Rodrigues (1561-1633), wrote that "the delight and pleasure which they feel in cutting up human bodies is astonishing…"[106] Unfortunately, Rodrigues does not specify who "they" are who engaged in such an activity as if it was an entertainment. He probably meant "Japanese" but such an account is exaggerated, i.e., it is an observation

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[103] Sakai Toshinobu 2005, p. 401. Maebayashi 2006, pp. 317-318. As we have seen in the case of Nakanishi Tsugutake of Nakanishi-ha Ittō-ryū in Chapter III, these imaginative practices have two and a half centuries of history. They were reinforced by Dai Nihon Butokukai which was established in 1895. For a long time, Dai Nihon Butokukai was the main body which promoted reinvented (fictitious) Japanese military arts (mainly swordsmanship) to cultivate the "traditional Bushidō" (Ōtsuka 1995, pp. 34-109).

[104] Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2006, pp. 140, 143. Ōtake 2009g, pp. 39-40.

[105] Blomberg 1994, pp. 56-57. Hurst 1998, p. 28.

[106] Cited from Blomberg 1994, pp. 56-57.

of a particular case which was not characteristic either of all Japanese who lived at the time or of the *bushi*. This is because from the point of view of a *bushi* knowledgeable about the weapon's structure and the skill necessary to use them in actual combat, this was unnecessary and almost tantamount to playing games. Kumazawa Banzan (1619-1691) was a *bushi* and famous Confucian scholar of the early Tokugawa era, who was also known for his devoted practice of military arts. He wrote:

> Whether the sword can cut or not can be judged by merely looking at its steel. It is said that, unlike the present, in ancient times, people rarely did test cutting (*tameshimono*) and strove to buy a sword made of good steel, which they [could] identify just with their eyes.[107]

As a seventeenth century man, Kumazawa undoubtedly refers to the pre-Tokugawa age when mentioning "ancient times." His comment suggests that the custom of test-cutting (in the majority of cases, obviously of objects other than cadavers and live bodies) became widespread in the time of the Great Tokugawa Peace, when the *bushi* had also lost that deep understanding of the structure of armor and weapons which would allow them to judge at a glance about their qualities. Furthermore, in actuality, there was no way that the cutting of cadavers and live bodies could prove the firmness and sharpness of the sword. It could not guarantee the same performance of steel against an armored and constantly moving opponent. Apparently, Rodrigues observed what, indeed, was a strange "entertainment" in the literal sense of this term in which most probably non-*bushi* classes engaged.

One more example, which also probably has its origins in the loss of knowledge of a weapon's structure in the Tokugawa era, and can still be observed among modern practitioners of Japanese swordsmanship, is receiving one's opponent's sword with the flat of the blade (*shinogi*). According to Ōtake Risuke, who also served as an inspector of antique Japanese arms for nearly thirty years, a Japanese sword will break if the flat of the blade is used to receive the opponent's cut. None of thousands of antique blades that he examined possessed cuts from other swords on the flat of their blades. In actuality, it is the cutting edge of the Japanese sword that must be used for receiving.[108]

Nowadays, many thousands of people in Japan and abroad engage in the practice of

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[107] From *Japanese writing on various things* (*Shūgi washo*, ca. late 1680s) appearing in Saeki Ariyoshi et al. 1942, volume 4, p. 124.

[108] Ōtake 1985a, pp. 35-36; 1985b, p. 40; 2007, pp. 53-54. Also, see the interview with one of the most famous modern swordsmiths of Japan, Yoshihara Yoshindo, in Ogasawara 1995, p. 83. Detailed observations about various types of damage to the Japanese sword resulting from its usage during the second Sino-Japanese war can be found in Naruse Kanji 1940.

the Japanese art of *iai* (the *koryū* version may be referred to as *iaijutsu* or *battōjutsu*, and the modern version as *iaidō*). *Iai* involves instantaneously drawing the sword and cutting down attackers. Generally, this is performed from the *seiza* sitting position, with the long sword worn with its guard along the practitioner's centerline so that the pommel is directed about 45 degrees to his/her right (Figure 10. See also Figure 11 for the position of the long sword in the standing posture).

As has been shown earlier, the traditional *bushi* culture of pre-modern Japan generally forbade warriors to wear their long swords indoors, and, on those occasions when the long sword was brought inside the host's building, to put them on the left side when sitting on the *tatami* mats in the *seiza* position. The *seiza* sitting position with the long sword at one's waist, so often seen among modern *iai* practitioners, was unthinkable for the *bushi* of pre-modern Japan. Moreover, the long sword was never worn with its guard along the centerline; to do so would leave no place for the short sword to be worn, and positioning the long sword in such a way prevents an effective cut from the draw (see Figure 12 for the usual way of wearing the long and short swords in pre-Meiji Japan). In order to effectively draw and cut from the sitting posture (for example, when, in the dark, cutting soft tissue together with inner organs under the standing opponent's right ribs), *bushi* needed to drop to their left knee, assuming an upright posture with the right foot forward, pull the sword guard all the way to the back of the left hip, and rotate the sword toward the left until the edge faced downward.[109]

The modern practice of *iai* presumes that sitting postures can be used in the light. However, in reality, the *bushi* used low postures only in the dark at the outbreak of close-quarters engagements and mostly indoors. Such positions for drawing the long sword were used according to the principle familiar in modern reconnaissance: The one who keeps low to the ground in the dark is hardly visible to an enemy at an elevated position, and the latter presents a visible target to the former.[110] Low postures in the light under the circumstances described above are, in military or combat terms, extremely disadvantageous.

In the present day, very rare examples of *iai* sitting postures that presume dropping to one's left knee with the long sword can be seen in Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū

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[109] Ōtake 2007, pp. 51-53. Also, see Takaoka 2006, p. 153. Although not necessarily from the low posture, a famous swordsmith of the early Tokugawa era, Noda Hankei, is said to have been assassinated with this type of cut (Naruse Kanji 1941, pp. 5-6).

[110] Kendō Nihon 1981, p. 47. Reid and Croucher 1983, p. 134. Tsumoto 1983, p. 206. Nihon Kobudō Kyōkai 1997, p 83. Iizasa 2000, p. 19. Yokose 2000, p. 20. BAB Japan 2003, pp. 12-13. Gakushū Kenkyūsha 2005, p. 10; 2006, p. 153; 2008, pp. 10, 40. Ōtake 1985b, p. 37; 2007, pp. 50-51, 63.

(Figure 13), Tamiya-ryū (the one transmitted presently by Kuroda Tetsuzan), and Shin Musō Hayashizaki-ryū schools of military arts. Reminders of such postures, as well as of the long sword drawn from one's left hip, are well preserved in traditional Japanese art, such as color woodblock prints and even Kabuki theatre (Figures 14-18). Scholar Ogawa Naoko also points to the fact that reminders of pre-Meiji physical culture of Japanese, such as the correct wearing of the long and short swords, are still preserved in Kabuki as "forms" (*kata*), which are used for actors' training.[111] It is an interesting historical irony that actors are more "authentic" or faithful to *bushi* tradition than contemporary practitioners of swordsmanship. In fact, among ancient artistic images of drawing or wearing the long sword, it is hardly possible to find any that depict men sitting in the *seiza* position with the long sword, or wearing it along their centerline as shown in Figures 10 and 11.

The reason for, and historical development of, the distortion in *iai* is beyond the scope of this thesis. It is highly probable that it has its roots in the "flowery training" of the Great Tokugawa Peace. What can be said is that most modern *iai* practitioners are confident in the belief that they train in the authentic warrior tradition, although their practice actually contradicts the historical realities of Japanese pre-modern warrior society.

There is no particular harm in such practices except for their ignorance, or distortion, of history. However, it is necessary to correct scholars who not only fail to notice elementary discrepancies between the historical realities of the warrior bodily culture and their distorted modern variants, but claim to analyze the traditional "artistic aspects" of the distorted *iai*, or its "beauty" and "true spirit" within the framework of the mechanics and dynamics of predetermined patterns of movement (*kata*).[112]

One of the most notable examples of scholarly and popular ignorance of the *bushi* bodily culture concerns the painting by Yūki Somei (1875-1957), which depicts the 1868/3 negotiations between the Tokugawa army commander Katsu Kaishū and the imperial army de facto commander Saigō Takamori on the eve of the surrender of Edo Castle during the Boshin war. Katsu is depicted sitting in the *seiza* position with his short sword at his waist, and the long sword on his left side (Figure 9). As has been

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111 Ogawa Naoko 2007, p. 127.

112 Fukui 1976; Itō and Satō 1976; Itō Kuni et al. 1977; Kaneda 1999. It should be noted that analyzing what is supposed to be the art of killing people in the light of "Japanese traditional artistry" or "beauty" does sound strange. None of the following academic works question the distortions discussed in this section: Hino and Toboshi 1980; Matsumura 1984, 1987, 1990; Yamagami and Wada 1987; King 1993; Kaneda 2000, 2001, 2002; Kaneda and Tatsugi 2000; Kobayashi Katsunori 2004.

shown, putting one's long sword to the left side was a severe breach of the warrior etiquette, which would be unforgivable during such negotiations. However, even this matter seems insignificant when compared to the broader distortion of Yūki's painting - the fact that Katsu is depicted with weapons. In reality, Katsu, who represented the losing side (the Tokugawa Bakufu) and went to negotiate a surrender at the Satsuma residence in Edo, would have either handed his long and short swords voluntarily to someone from Saigō's retinue, or he would have been ordered to do so. Otherwise, Katsu would not have been allowed to enter the enemy premises and negotiate with Saigō.[113] In spite of these distortions, this painting appears in history school textbooks approved by Japanese learned societies, and in many other widely published works.

To avoid confusion, some practices that apparently deviate from those discussed in this thesis and are seen in old pictures and photos need to be mentioned. First of all, it should always be borne in mind that the very circumstances of old picture drawing or early photography are very often removed from the realities of daily life. For example, some prominent Japanese individuals are captured in old formal portraits sitting on the floor with the long sword at their left waist. Such a position of the long sword was chosen to add loftiness to the figure in the picture. On other occasions, the long sword could be positioned so that its guard came to the centerline and almost touched the guard of the short sword; this was in order to show off the long sword in the photo (Figure 19).

A particularly interesting case is a picture preserved at the Historiographical Institute of the University of Tōkyō. It depicts the reception of a Russian mission, which came to Japan in 1853 to conclude the treaty of peace and amity (Figure 20). Here, six Japanese, representing the Bakufu, are depicted sitting in *seiza* with the long swords on their left, which is an apparent breach of the warrior etiquette. However, if we look attentively at the picture, we will notice that the Russians were sitting on chairs with their sabers at their left waist. In Europe, there were no particular rules regulating the position of sabers in everyday interaction with other people,[114] and the Russians did not bother to

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[113] Here, it is appropriate to remember what Yamaoka Tesshū told Katsu Kaishū when the latter asked him how he was going to break through the enemy positions on the way to Sumpu to convey Tokugawa Yoshinobu's allegiance to the new government (emphasis added): "There are only two options for me after I reach the general headquarters of the imperial army: Either I will be slashed to death or arrested. I will hand my long and short swords to them and, if they arrest me, I will obey…" (*BDH*).

[114] The following contemporary European customs are reminders of times when blades were worn in daily life: Shaking hands is done to show that the two parties are not reaching for their swords; a gentleman offers a lady his right arm because his sword was at his left hip; a man's coat buttons left over right, so that a duelist may unbutton it with his left, unarmed hand (Cohen 2002, p. xxii).

take off their blades and put them to their right. There is no doubt that the Japanese, who were very sensitive to questions of the sword position, were perplexed by the sight of the Russians with sabers at their left waist, and they decided to put the long swords to their left, just to be on the safe side.

This picture depicts vividly an encounter of cultures which had little knowledge of each other's customs and traditions. The picture itself cannot convey to us the emotions of the Japanese participants in this historical episode, which was supposedly held in a friendly, or at least neutral, atmosphere since the meeting was aimed at the conclusion of the treaty of peace and amity. However, a correct knowledge of the bodily culture of the Japanese warrior class can expose the underlying reality: The long swords on the left signify the Bakufu representatives' tension, alertness and readiness to cut down their Russian counterparts at any moment.

CONCLUSION

The fundamental purpose of this thesis was, in the early chapters, to show what kind of physical practices and mental attitudes the descendants of the hereditary warrior houses in Japan needed in order to maintain all aspects of their existence as warriors during times of incessant war and unrest. To achieve this purpose, it was necessary to identify the universal elements of the intangible warrior culture during the pre-Tokugawa ages. The thesis further explained how these elements changed during the Great Tokugawa Peace, and how some individuals in the Bakumatsu period, dissatisfied with the decline in standards of actual combat utility and the spiritual emptiness of military arts schools in their times, attempted through intense training and self-cultivation to restore practices and values of the pre-Tokugawa *bushi*. A principal argument here is that, regardless of the historical period, the phenomenon of the *bushi*, as long as they claimed to be military men by birth, is hardly comprehensible without paying close attention to their bodily practices and related mental attitudes which constituted the major part of their intangible culture.

In asserting this, I also argued that scholars have failed to pay adequate attention to the connection between the warrior ethos and values, and the bodily practices seen as necessary to maintain those values. In particular, I attempted to emphasize the link between intense, lifelong training in the art of using weapons and the equally intense ethical commitment to the values of peace and the sanctity of human life among some warriors. I demonstrated that both before and after the dawning of the Great Tokugawa Peace, there were *bushi* who were deeply concerned with ethical issues pertaining to the application of martial skills and who, paradoxically, practiced rigorously in the art of killing in order to avoid using this art.

The thesis further addressed the origins of the image of the "bellicose *samurai*" which has proved so powerful in popular culture in Japan and in the West, and also has figured to an unusual degree in scholarly discussions of the Japanese warrior. By providing knowledge of the pre-Tokugawa intangible warrior culture, and contrasting it with the modern stereotypes and images of the Japanese warrior, it aimed to show how Japanese government and businesses exploit the *bushi* intangible culture nowadays to promote conservative and nationalistic socio-cultural agendas. In addition, it attempted to demonstrate how distorted memories of the *bushi* bodily culture are transmitted in modern popular culture and the practice of Japanese military arts, and also how a deeper

understanding of the *bushi* bodily culture can add significant insights into Japanese history.

Chapter I identified five fundamental elements of the *bushi* intangible culture, which were inseparably linked with each other and at the same time interwoven in the everyday process of preparation for death: Bodily etiquette, the state of constant alertness, practical knowledge, the cult of the blade, and training in military arts. This was done by addressing such primary materials as warrior house rules and precepts, as well as paying close attention to the teachings of several schools of military arts which survived from the pre-Tokugawa ages into the present. It was shown that etiquette demanded that the warriors constantly express their attitudes and system of moral values, in other words, sustain their warrior identity, through the correct "form," the body. Thus, in the case of the *bushi* class, not only the "contents" (the system of moral values such as loyalty and filial piety) were important, but so was the "form" through which these were expressed and cultivated. Whether one expressed his attitude through the appropriate form (body) or not made the crucial difference between the warrior and the commoner, as well as between what was regarded as the "true warrior" and he who did not merit this description. The bodily etiquette also worked to restrain violence among those whose social status required constant wearing of swords and other weapons, and the possession of considerable skill in handling them. One of its functions was a sort of self-defense aimed at avoiding violence caused by inappropriate behavior.

As we saw, one of the imperatives for maintaining the proper "form" was attention to the warrior's personal hygiene. However, attention to one's personal hygiene as well as avoiding a life of pleasure did not pertain simply to the warrior's care of his health. It was also a ritualistic purifying in the broader context of the warrior culture of death. Everyday life was intended to be but a constant preparation for one's death with the proper spirit expressed, once again, through the proper "form," the body. I noted, however, that this preparation for death was not conducted in a morbid manner but, rather, was accompanied by a positive attitude which was achieved by setting a meaningful goal (*kokorozashi*) in a warrior's life. This meant neither awaiting nor fearing death, nor readiness to die irresponsibly at any convenient chance.

Maintaining the state of constant alertness in regard to a surprise attack or other kind of danger was identified as the second fundamental element of the *bushi* intangible culture. This was another feature that distinguished *bushi* from commoners. A *bushi* was expected to maintain the state of constant alertness to care not only about his own safety, but also that of his lord. As I explained, the state of constant alertness cultivated among

the *bushi* can be divided into two types: One pertaining to the constant preparedness for danger in daily life; the other was constant preparedness for larger scale military operations in which armory was used. The former was a quiet readiness to resort to self-defense in an appropriate manner. It was aimed at avoiding a situation when one's unpreparedness or carelessness could be exploited by a potential enemy in a surprise attack, in other words, opening oneself up in daily life. The latter was expressed not only in the possession of all the necessary military equipment but also in keeping it in excellent condition.

We also saw that the care about one's armory had a further meaning which is related to the third fundamental element of *bushi* intangible culture: Practical knowledge, or the "know-how" of the hereditary warrior houses. This know-how pertained to virtually all aspects of life during peace and war and underlay the rest of the elements of the *bushi* intangible culture. Regular care of armory implied constant attention to the structure of armor and weapons, and this attention naturally reinforced the knowledge of their weak and strong points. This allowed the warrior to use them in the most efficient way on the battlefield.

The state of constant alertness was the inner attitude that superceded outward symbols of the warrior and that was demanded of all members of warrior society, regardless of whether they were in service or not. I suggested, however, that there was nothing artificial or unnaturally strained in the maintenance of such a mental attitude. Instead, it was based on the awareness that life on earth is a ceaseless struggle for survival and that all other creatures in the world live in the same state of alertness. War was deemed to be a natural state of life and the "true warrior" was not even to consider the dual notions of "war" and "no-war."

The cult of the blade was identified as the fourth element of the *bushi* intangible culture. I noted that the Japanese warriors constantly wore the short blade at their waist; this was the manifestation of the state of constant alertness within the broader context of everyday preparation for death. It was seen, however, that a cultural awareness of the sharp durable blade with pure polished surfaces as a sacred item was shared by the wider masses of Japanese people, not only the *bushi*, long before the latter grasped political power in the country. As evidence of this, I referred to primordial Japanese mythology which is full of mentions of the sword, and the fact that, from ancient times, swords in Japan have served as symbols of various Shintō deities.

As we saw, the Japanese blade was associated with purity and the process of purification, and this is what made it suitable for symbolic usage in religious and magic practices for warding off evils in Shintō as well as the Shugendō religion. In this, the

double-edged sword has been given a great symbolic importance both in Japan and her continental neighbors, not the single-edged sword. I argued that the reason why the double-edged sword has been revered so much lies in its tri-dimensional symbolism: Two cutting edges of the blade and tip, two flat surfaces, and the unity of two equal longitudinal parts each having one cutting edge. I also noted that the teachings and esoteric practices of Shintō, Buddhist esoteric sects and Shugendō, especially those that utilized the symbolism of the sword, were incorporated in the curriculum of military arts and, thus, came to be used by warriors.

After discussing the four fundamental elements of the *bushi* intangible culture, I highlighted an important point: That these elements could not work on their own. They required cultivation and reinforcement, and this could be done only through the process of regular training in military arts. Throughout the thesis, this cause-and-effect link was emphasized: As was also argued, it was not the bodily etiquette nor the state of constant alertness but, more than anything, the training in military arts which, in combination with all the other fundamental elements, distinguished descendants of the hereditary warrior houses from the other stratums of Japanese society, and which served as a means for sustaining and reassuring their warrior identity.

The crucial role of training in military arts in terms of the intangible warrior culture was explored further in Chapter II. We saw that, besides acquiring combat capabilities for fulfilling the warrior's primary duty on the battlefield and making the other fundamental elements of the *bushi* intangible culture work, training in military arts served several other important functions for the *bushi*. Warrior training entities functioned as repositories of this culture, providing the means for sustaining and reassuring the warrior's identity through regular "revisiting" of centuries old traditions, i.e., maintaining the vital link with the warrior's past. I noted further that self-discipline and will power determined the practical realization of values peculiar to the *bushi*. Self-discipline and will power also required cultivation, and this was achieved through systematic training in military arts based on complex methodologies which evolved over hundreds of years. In this regard, I described the pre-Tokugawa Japanese warrior class as a "society of will." Its members were not military men who exercised self-discipline and will power only when on duty, and made a distinction between "military" and "civil" where their life style was concerned. In my contention, *bushi* generally were not supposed to have dualistic notions of "civil" and "military," in the same way as they did not have dualistic notions of "war" and "no-war." A *bushi* had to exercise incessant self-discipline and will power all his life, regardless of his physical or

mental condition.

To illustrate the training curriculum of pre-Tokugawa warrior training entities, I examined the oldest school of military arts in Japan, Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū. One of the key points in the discussion was that the warrior had to be proficient in all kinds of military arts and handle a wide range of distances associated with various kinds of weapons because actual combat was unpredictable. It was shown, however, that the vast curriculum of such skills did not mean shallowness of their mastery. The warrior was supposed to be equally skillful in all kinds of military arts. Yet, this does not mean that the warrior had to begin from scratch every time he learned a new type of skill: The underlying principles of using the human body were the same. This was true as long as they were transmitted and learned within the same warrior training entity. One more aspect of this was that all kinds of martial skills were inseparably linked and comprised the whole whose parts could not be separated, i.e., every single art reinforced all the others. Such military systems were hierarchically structured when military strategy, tactics, and logistics could be learned only after a *bushi* reached a level when he was irreproachable in terms of training in all kinds of individual combat skills.

In this part of the discussion, I took issue with the recent tendency in academic works to negate the practical value and historical relevance of the skills transmitted in pre-Tokugawa schools of military arts. It was argued that the formalized schools of military arts were only the tip of the iceberg of military skills and training methodologies transmitted in the hereditary warrior houses. I emphasized the fact that professional warriors received an extensive and systematic instruction from their childhood because, without such a systematic training, the hereditary warrior lineages as such simply could not survive for generations.

The example of Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū was also used to identify a system of warrior values that, it was argued, has been largely overlooked in academic literature: The pursuit and practical realization in life of one's humanity through a constant process of *musha shugyō*. As I explained, this was a system of values that appeared in the times of Japan's worst wars and unrest prior to the dawning of the Great Tokugawa Peace. Already in pre-Tokugawa warrior society, weapons, and skills in their handling, acquired a transcendental meaning and, in this case, the cultural perception of training in military arts did bear a dualistic character: It could be both constructive and destructive for the *bushi* and those around him. It was also shown that the combination of the art of killing with intense spiritual self-cultivation, something which the thesis referred to as the "power backed virtue," is actually a concept which can be found in Chinese military treatises written 2,000 years ago.

Through concrete historical examples of pre-Tokugawa and early Tokugawa-era warriors, it was demonstrated that interpretations of the means and goals of *musha shugyō* varied considerably, and that the term "saint swordsman" (*kensei*) was applied to individuals whose qualities of moral character were not only different but even contradicted the core values of *musha shugyō*. In particular, it was argued that Miyamoto Musashi, who has been raised to an icon of the *bushi* by uncritical academic and non-academic writers, recklessly strove for mortal duels in what may more justly be seen as a form of homicidal psychosis. I also suggested a reason why we know so little about the cultivation of the virtuous character among the *bushi*. This is due to the notion of virtue or mastery of a certain skill which is intentionally hidden in the shadows, a concept which appears widely in classical Asian philosophy.

Having explored something of the pre-Tokugawa bodily practices and mental attitudes of the *bushi*, I proceeded to investigate changes in military arts practiced by *bushi* of the Great Tokugawa Peace. In Chapter III, it was shown that, compared to the pre-Tokugawa ages of incessant war and unrest, this period was characterized by two waves of decline in the standards of military practicability: The initial wave was represented by the "flowery training" of the early Tokugawa era; this was followed by the second wave in which combat skills were turned into competitive sports from about the middle of the 18th century onwards. It was argued that one of the distinctive features of the Tokugawa era is a rapid disappearance of the military systems of hereditary warrior houses, and a sharp increase in the number of formalized military arts schools, a phenomenon which may be called a "*ryū*-ization" of *bushi* military skills. The majority of these schools taught skills which were not practical in actual combat and which are referred to in the historical literature as "flowery training" (*kahō*). Such training was based solely on prearranged patterns of movements (*kata*) using wooden imitations of weapons or blunt blades. These patterns were characterized by the loss of speed of action, extreme formalization and ritualization, and embellishment of movement. They were also much less physically demanding and exhausting than pre-Tokugawa systems of training.

Another major trend among military arts schools established in the Tokugawa era which I identified was a narrow specialization in training and discrimination of disciples according to their social status. The social structure of warrior society of the Tokugawa era was the decisive factor for this narrow specialization of both military arts schools and the *bushi* themselves. With the end of wars and large-scale unrest, warrior society turned into a rigid vertical system consisting of multiple subclasses between which

various kinds of discrimination were exercised. Discrimination of *bushi* subclasses was revealed in subclass symbols and kinds of military arts which the *bushi* were or were not encouraged to study.

The decline in the practicability of military arts in the early Tokugawa era was accompanied by conceptual speculations on the principles of these arts, along with an emphasis on practice for the sake of character perfection, and the development of so-called "psychological theories" of combat (*shimpō-ron*). It was argued that the mainstream of psychological theorizing was actually an invented cultural myth which is usually referred to as the "unity of sword and Zen" (*ken-Zen ichinyo*, *ken-Zen itchi*, etc.). One contention of the thesis is that the marriage between Japanese swordsmanship and Zen was a result of what can be called the "joint work" of Yagyū Munenori of the Yagyū Shinkage-ryū school of swordsmanship and his friend, Zen monk Takuan.

Thus, already in the early Tokugawa era, the beginning of a broad socio-cultural phenomenon in warrior society was identified: Cultivation of the warrior's spiritual side through impractical military means, seemingly without any awareness of the ineffectiveness of the latter in actual combat. It was argued that this dissonance between means and goals persisted through the Tokugawa era and survived well into the present.

The "flowery training" continued to be the prevailing trend in swordsmanship schools until the first half of the 18th century, when it was discovered that turning swordsmanship into a sport centered on free sparring with the use of safe training equipment could open new business opportunities. It was the Hōryaku years (1751-1764) when safe swordsmanship sparring gained particular popularity and spread all over Japan. The rising demand for cultural activities among the commoners in this period was one reason for the spread of the new sport. The teaching system that was focused on disciples' preferences was adopted by many swordsmanship schools and continued to exist until the Bakumatsu period. The two trends stimulated further factionalism within swordsmanship schools, giving birth to an even greater number of newly established schools, factions and branches.

The thesis described how, in the beginning, free sparrings were, as a rule, limited only to practitioners of the same swordsmanship schools. Striving to preserve their status and the teachers' well-being, schools maintained an atmosphere of utmost secrecy and strictly prohibited their disciples from engaging in matches with practitioners of other traditions (*taryū jiai*). The situation changed dramatically early in the first half of the 19th century, when the so-called "new schools" began to engage actively in matches with disciples of other schools. In this, it was suggested that the "new schools" were driven mostly by commercial considerations. Unlike pre-Tokugawa warriors who fought

for their lords' interests in mortal combat on battlefields, representatives of swordsmanship schools of the early 19th century engaged in relatively safe inter-school matches in training halls primarily to expand their fame and the number of fee-paying disciples.

In the Bakumatsu period, the international and domestic crises forced the Bakufu and domain officials to implement military reforms directed at employing European weaponry and methods of army and navy warfare. However, swordsmanship and other native military arts continued to occupy an important place in the military training of the *bushi*. This is when the Bakufu and domain officials looked to the "new schools" whose methods of training based on free sparring and active engagement in inter-school matches seemed to be more practical and promised to provide what conservative schools lacked most: Physical mobility, speed, stamina, higher morale of practitioners, and the possibility to test and polish one's swordsmanship skills in sparring with practitioners of other traditions. As was noted, the "new schools" were eventually employed at domain colleges (*hankō*) throughout the country. Domains started to gather both "new schools" and conservative schools, which adhered to "flowery training," under one roof at public training halls (*embujō*) or training facilities of domain colleges. Conservative schools were forced to remove the ban on studying swordsmanship of other traditions, as well as the ban on inter-school matches, and also had to start training in free sparring.

One result of the proliferation of inter-school matches in Japanese swordsmanship which I noted was the invention of extra-long bamboo swords that allowed one to reach an opponent more easily and from a longer distance. Extra-long bamboo swords became subject to harsh criticism by some renowned contemporary swordsmen. Besides deviating from the traditional length of the "ten fists," which was considered since ancient times best to fit the physique of Japanese, I emphasized the point that the length of the long sword relates directly to one of the most fundamental principles in Japanese swordsmanship - "distancing" (*maai*). A contradiction which I noted was that the majority of those who trained with long bamboo swords in the Bakumatsu period continued to wear real swords of the "ten fists" length in their daily life. Thus, the long lasting peace led to a large-scale oblivion of both the realities of actual combat and the proper use of arms in Japanese warrior society from its lowest stratums to the highest. Yet, there is no evidence that the majority of warriors questioned in any way the discrepancy between the length of the real sword and its training substitute.

I suggested that the switch between the sense of distance developed during many years of training with the long bamboo sword, and the sense of distance with a much

shorter real sword, was hardly possible within a few seconds of real combat. Furthermore, shorter distances require faster movement and shorter time for reaction which cannot be developed without appropriate training. One of the more controversial claims of the thesis, perhaps, is that Japanese scholarship and swordsmanship historiography have deliberately avoided addressing this topic and, striving to maintain the "sacredness" of swordsmanship traditions and the reputation of its practitioners, have deliberately remained silent over the simple fact that all those who engaged in free sparring with the long bamboo sword since the Bakumatsu period were poorly qualified for using the real sword in actual combat.

However, the discrepancy between the length of the real sword and its training substitute was not the only problem which I identified in Japanese swordsmanship. Further technical analysis showed that the invention of uncurved round-shaped substitutes of the sword (*shinai*) for training purposes in the Tokugawa era resulted in a loss of the skill and experience of close-quarters combat from the pre-Tokugawa ages. This, consequently, led to the deterioration of combat capabilities of the *bushi* of the Tokugawa era. I also explained how the spread of free sparring and inter-school matches in the Tokugawa era resulted in a loss of knowledge about the fundamental difference between armored and unarmored modes of swordsmanship, as well as the key target areas of Japanese armor, among the *bushi*.

One of the fundamental arguments throughout this thesis is that a major reason for misconceptions about the "practical swordsmanship of the Tokugawa era," evident among scholars and swordsmanship historians, lies in the lack of attention given to pre-Tokugawa warrior skills. As I noted, the idea of the "practicability" of swordsmanship training based on free sparring and inter-school matches appears frequently in the Bakufu and domain authorities' official documents of the 19th century regarding military and swordsmanship reforms. I suggested that many scholars fail critically to question the ability of the Bakufu and domain decision-makers to judge what actually was practical and was not in real-life combat. It is my contention that, by the Bakumatsu period, the Bakufu and domain decision-makers had already been at peace for so long that they no longer had any proper understanding of how Japanese traditional weapons could be used efficiently on the battlefield. To put this simply, one cannot properly evaluate the military skills, practices and values of the Tokugawa-era warrior class without first understanding those of the pre-Tokugawa warrior.

A further argument of the thesis was that the phenomenon of "flowery training," in which the formal repetition of movements removed from the realities of actual combat was accompanied by excessive emphasis on psychological and technical theories,

actually signifies the collapse of the pre-Tokugawa warrior culture. From the second half of the 18th century, swordsmanship training halls with their free sparring and inter-school matches may have created the illusion of military practicability but, at the same time, they accelerated this collapse. In this era, numerous general writings on Bushidō, intended for a broad audience of *bushi*, appeared. However, in contrast to many other scholars discussing these theories, I contend that such writings made little real sense. The reason for this is that their values and ideas could no longer be supported by the corresponding bodily practices and mental attitudes. The meaning of training in military arts, which was supposed to constitute the foundation of the *bushi* intangible culture, was distorted to the degree that the "military art," or "military training" in its original sense ceased to exist, and its demise took with it the rest of the fundamental elements of this culture. Likewise, the cult of death became largely extinct, and from the middle of the Tokugawa era, *seppuku*, which was unique to the *bushi* as a class and underlay this cult, lost its substance. In many cases, as was argued, it turned into a mere execution through decapitation during which the cutting of one's belly was performed only symbolically. Thus, in the Tokugawa era, what was supposed to be the warrior's "military training" in reality lowered the warrior's physical and mental capacities, and resulted in the lack of self-discipline and will power necessary to realize the core *bushi* values in daily life. Despite this, the reinvention of Bushidō as a "new tradition," which was completely separated from the "body," began in the Meiji era and it remains intact in the Bushidō rhetoric of 21st century Japan.

While academic works are in full agreement on the existence of the phenomenon of "flowery training" in warrior society of the Tokugawa era, and are less unified over the actual combat utility of swordsmanship training based on free sparring with use of the bamboo sword, this thesis insisted that all of them have failed to recognize important exceptions to the dominant trends, and the reasons for their existence. In my view, such schools as Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū and Takenouchi-ryū Jūjutsu, which were established before the Tokugawa era, managed to preserve their broad curriculum and knowledge through the Tokugawa era practically unchanged because they were characterized by three distinctive features: The ban on *daimyō* service, permanent location in the same rural area (autochthonism), and transmission within the same family lineage.

In Chapters IV-V, I investigated the life of the Bakumatsu swordsman Yamaoka Tesshū and paid particular attention to his critical role in preventing large-scale loss of human life through the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle in 1868. The example of

Yamaoka was used extensively to show that, although *musha shugyō* largely lost its meaning in the Tokugawa era, there were important exceptions among *bushi* who strove to preserve what they believed to be the original forms and values of pre-Tokugawa warrior culture. From Yamaoka's point of view, this culture was supposed to combine sword skills practicable in actual combat with spirituality and morality expressed in the notion of the "life-giving sword." The details of Yamaoka's life allowed us to explore how in the Meiji era he embarked on an unprecedented attempt to reconstruct the original Ittō-ryū swordsmanship school founded in the 16th century.

In Chapter VI, I discussed how distorted images of the *bushi* have emerged and circulated in Japanese society since the Bakumatsu period and into the 21st century. As was stated, these images pertain to three major aspects of the *bushi* intangible culture: Attitudes to violence, the Bushidō ethos, and bodily practices. It was suggested that, central to understanding this distortion is the co-existence of the two-sworded warriors and the two-sworded commoners late in the Tokugawa era. Evidence from the records indicates that the *bushi*-like commoners were more prone to trespass the law in daily life through acts of violence rather than the *bushi* themselves, especially during the unrest of the Bakumatsu period. I suggested that a reason for the distorted historical understanding of the *bushi* and one not generally noted by scholars, is the simple fact that members of these two different stratums of Japanese society could often look similar and even espouse the same warrior ethos. Inevitably, the commoners' comprehension of the warrior ethos was considerably different from that of the *bushi*. This, I noted, could result in a situation where acts contradicting *bushi* values were committed by commoners who genuinely believed they were upholding those same values. One consequence of this confusion, however, especially following the growth of mass visual media in the 20th century, was the dominant stereotype of the "bellicose *samurai*."

One of the final themes in the thesis was how distorted images of the pre-Meiji warrior have been used both in building a modern nation-state and for profit in a capitalist consumer society. A major role in perpetuating and expanding these distorted "memories" of the *bushi* intangible culture has been, and continues to be, played by the Japanese government and business which use them to promote conservative socio-cultural agendas both inside and outside the country.

In the 21st century, the Japanese establishment has played an even more active role in sponsoring a distorted Bushidō. Japan's recent educational reforms have been directed

at the revival of patriotism, or what may more properly be described as bellicose nationalism in the country. The Ministry of Education has introduced compulsory courses in *budō*, the modern version of Japanese military arts, for junior high school students. However, in my view, what the present-day propagandists for a revived "Bushidō" are actually doing is to urge the population to practice inefficient military skills for the sake of cultivating a patriotic and martial spirit, a dissonance between means and goals, which we observed also in the Tokugawa era.

Overall, this thesis has argued that the *bushi* who best understood war, weapons, and ethical aspects of their profession were those from the pre-Tokugawa ages, plus a few remarkable individuals of the Tokugawa era like Yamaoka Tesshū who critically assessed the intangible warrior culture of their ages and found it empty and unsatisfying. These men, their bodily practices and mental attitudes, have been marginalized in scholarly and popular works which tend, instead, to focus on theatrical or sporting swordsmen of the Great Tokugawa Peace. However, despite the general insistence by the "true warriors" on remaining in the shadows, the quality of their training and the profoundness of their values deserve to be recognized in any analysis of the traditional warrior culture of Japan.

APPENDIX

Yamaoka Tesshū, the Society of Tiger's Tail and the Rōshigumi Affair

The thesis was not intended to be dominated by discussion of the Bakumatsu *bushi* or by the individual personality of Yamaoka Tesshū, and it was felt that the following material would overload the thesis if it were employed in one of the chapters. However, in view of the lack of critical scholarly analysis of Yamaoka, this material is undeniably of value to our general understanding of some events in his life in the 1860s. It is also valuable in reinforcing the contrast between Yamaoka as a *bushi* committed to the principle of the "life-giving sword," and other contemporary swordsmen for whom even indiscriminate violence seemed to be justified by the ends they sought.

Yamaoka Tesshū and the Society of Tiger's Tail

In the Bakumatsu period, private swordsmanship training halls provided good opportunities for establishing personal contacts and networking among people from different parts of the country. Many of them turned into centers of fraternization of the advocates of the Sonnō Jōi ("revere the Emperor, expel the barbarians") movement whose friendships later deepened into political brotherhoods and secret societies.[1] In 1857, the same year when Yamaoka submitted his petitions to authorities of the Bakufu Military Institute, he met for the first time the twenty-eight year old Kiyokawa Hachirō in the Gembukan training hall.[2] Kiyokawa was a rural warrior (*gōshi*) from Shōnai, one of the northernmost domains of Japan, and was six years older than Yamaoka.

Yamaoka is said to have recognized in Kiyokawa at first sight an unusual man with aspirations similar to his own.[3] Indeed, later Kiyokawa would turn out to be an exceptional *shishi* ("man of high purpose"), who, having no official rank or title, greatly influenced important decisions of both the Bakufu and the imperial court. Kiyokawa

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[1] Jansen 1961, pp. 81, 85-86, 105. Still, it is necessary to bear in mind that the teaching or general atmosphere of private swordsmanship training halls did not necessarily have to be nationalistic, nor that their heads publicly called for the "reverence of the emperor and expulsion of the barbarians," although they could advocate this ideology personally.

[2] Oyamatsu 1974, p. 93. Murakami Yasumasa 1999, p. 108.

[3] Oyamatsu 1974, p. 93.

was highly educated and was exceptionally talented at writing.[4] In his youth, he traveled to Edo many times where he studied Confucianism and other Chinese scholarship, as well as Hokushin Ittō-ryū swordsmanship at the Gembukan training hall. After a period of intensive study and training, and two attempts to open his own private academy in Edo (both were thwarted by accidental fires), he opened a private academy in 1859/7 in O-Tamagaike area of Kanda ward, where he taught Chinese scholarship, calligraphy and swordsmanship.[5] However, the latter, unlike Yamaoka, did not consume his entire interest.

Kiyokawa and Yamaoka represent two types of *bushi* in Bakumatsu Japan. There were aspects common to both of them but also major differences. Some of these differences were complementary. Kiyokawa had what Yamaoka lacked most: An excellent scholarly training, breadth of intellectual knowledge and networking ability. For Kiyokawa, Yamaoka was a retainer of the Bakufu who could go to any extreme to accomplish his commitment, who was ready to sacrifice himself for a just cause, and who could always be relied upon. The crucial difference which separated them, however, is that, although Kiyokawa also trained at the Gembukan training hall and even taught Hokushin Ittō-ryū swordsmanship for a short time, he was not devoted to *musha shugyō* through the practice of military arts to the same degree as Yamaoka, and what is most important, unlike Yamaoka he was not concerned about ethical questions of the application of martial skills.

For Kiyokawa, all ethical questions took second place to the radical Sonnō Jōi ideology which, in his mind, was inseparably linked with the forceful overthrow of the Bakufu. At the age of seventeen Kiyokawa is said to have been influenced greatly by a prominent *shishi* of the Bakumatsu period, Fujimoto Tesseki, who strengthened Kiyokawa's resolve to leave his home to travel and study. Kiyokawa felt indignation over the Bakufu position in negotiations with foreign powers, especially when the former arbitrarily entered into a treaty of amity and commerce with the United States (1858) without obtaining the imperial court's permission and repressed political opposition with brutal force. About half a year before the assassination of the Bakufu senior councilor Ii Naosuke (1860/3), Kiyokawa had already predicted that the Bakufu would collapse from within in five or six years. He believed that in a time of severe political repression there was no other way but to go underground and wait for change. However, Ii's assassination altered his attitude dramatically. After that, he understood that the Bakufu's days were numbered and the time had come for "heroes" to rise and

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5 Oyamatsu 1974, pp. 26-30, 33, 35-40, 60, 62, 70-74, 83-85, 92-96, 105, 241.

resort to a decisive action.[6]

The Sonnō Jōi movement began during the rule of Andō Nobumasa and Kuze Hirochika, who headed the Bakufu after the assassination of Ii Naosuke, and turned into one of the main currents of thought of the time. The reasons underlying the movement were not only nationalistic, the trade with the foreigners caused a great discontent among many people: Export of raw silk and other goods threw into disorder markets in the Kantō region and caused inflation of prices.[7] However Kiyokawa did not recklessly object to the trade with foreign countries. He just did not want to see them treating Japan in the same arrogant manner as they did in India and China. Kiyokawa could not tolerate the Bakufu stance, which from his point of view did everything to please the foreigners and at the same time was incapable of helping its own people who were suffering from inflated prices and other adversities brought by the trade with the "ugly barbarians."[8] The opening of Japan was acceptable to Kiyokawa if foreign powers negotiated with her on equal terms and her people were content.[9]

Kiyokawa opened his academy in the period when Japan faced a turning point in its inner and foreign politics. This period was marked by the sharp decline of Bakufu power and a wave of killing and wounding of foreigners in the streets of Edo and Yokohama that followed the opening of Yokohama Port in 1859.[10] Kiyokawa's charismatic personality attracted many persons of like mind, and soon his private academy in Edo turned into a Sonnō Jōi society named Kobi no Kai, or The Society of Tiger's Tail.[11] The name originated in the traditional belief that a tiger's tail symbolized danger.[12] The Japanese expression "to step on tiger's tail" is close to the English "ride a tiger" with the connotation of revealing one's courage by resorting to dangerous action. The society was also referred to by its members as The Society of Heroes (Eiyūkai).[13]

Discussion during the Society's meetings was extremely heated and emotional, and

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6 Oyamatsu 1974.

7 Inoue Mitsusada et al. 1996, volume 12, p. 106.

8 The *shishi* frequently used the term "ugly barbarians" (*shūi*) when referring to foreigners in their correspondence.

9 Oyamatsu 1974, p. 125.

10 Inoue Mitsusada et al. 1996, volume 12, pp. 105.

11 Oyamatsu 1974, pp. 101-102.

12 Oyamatsu 1974, p. 124. Takano Kiyoshi 2004, p. 145. The Japanese language also has a figurative expression in regard to doing something dangerous: "as if to step on a tiger's tail, or to walk on spring ice" (Maekawa 1977, p. 42).

13 Maekawa 1977, p. 112. At the point of its establishment, there were no more than fourteen-fifteen regular members of the Society of Tiger's Tail. If sympathizers are added the number would be about forty men. The society was financed by Kiyokawa who received money from his family in the Shōnai domain (Oyamatsu 1974, p. 102. Maekawa 1977, p. 114.).

none of the members knew when the collision of opinions would burst into a fight.[14] Furthermore, Sonnō Jōi was a radical reaction toward the Bakufu policy of opening Japan's ports and trade with the foreigners, which gradually turned into opposition to the Bakufu itself. The main goal of The Society of Tiger's Tail was the overthrow of the Bakufu at all costs, and indeed it was "a very risky gathering" since it functioned in Edo, right before the Bakufu eyes.

It may seem strange that such a loyal retainer of the *shōgun* as Yamaoka joined the Society of Tiger's Tail as all his biographers write. By the time the Society was established in the middle of 1860,[15] Yamaoka had already been in one of the highest teaching positions at the Bakufu Military Institute – he was an acting senior teacher (*shihan yaku nami*) of swordsmanship. In view of his senior position within this organization, his anti-Bakufu activity could not go unnoticed, especially taking into account the fact that the Bakufu had a developed system of secret informers.

Furthermore, practically all biographical sources about Yamaoka and Kiyokawa state that Yamaoka was busy day and night with "national affairs" as *shishi* together with Kiyokawa (some of them even maintain that Yamaoka founded the Society of Tiger's Tail together with Kiyokawa[16]). However, all of them consistently fail to specify exactly what kind of activity he performed. The most disturbing fact about Yamaoka is that we do not know what he did because no concrete information has survived. Even from the abundant historical and biographical data on Kiyokawa Hachirō, including the most detailed studies of Suda Koryū and Oyamatsu Katsuichirō, we can know a lot about the thought and action of Kiyokawa's associates in the Society of Tiger Tail, such as Imuta Shōhei, Azumi Gorō, Murakami Shungorō, Masumitsu Kyūnosuke, Ishizaka Shūzō and others, but nothing specific is known about Yamaoka Tesshū.

The only conclusion that can be derived from the available information (or, more precisely, from its absence) is that Yamaoka was not an active member of the Society. It

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14 Oyamatsu 1974, pp 110, 123-124.

15 Maekawa 1977, p. 114.

16 For example, Maruyama Bokuden 1918b, pp. 11-14. Maruyama Bokuden, the third priest of Zenshōan temple built by Yamaoka in 1883, was responsible for creating the myth of the existence of the Party for Revering the Emperor and Expelling the Barbarians (Sonnō Jōi Tō) and that its main establisher was Yamaoka Tesshū. The myth has been particularly popular among Yamaoka's admirers. In actuality, Maruyama was misled by a document titled *Sonnō Jōi hokki* (*The establishment of the [movement] for revering the Emperor and expelling the barbarians*) which is preserved in the temple. A part of this document is a list of the members of Kiyokawa Hachirō's Society of Tiger's Tail hand-written by Yamaoka. Historically, the party never existed, and, as Maekawa Shūji demonstrated, the document was written by Yamaoka late in his life on the occasion of a large-scale commemoration of all those who fell in the turbulent 1860s. It merely lists the names of those members of the Society who were killed at that time (Maekawa 1977, pp. 116-121).

seems that the only thing which compelled him to occasionally participate in its gatherings was hatred of foreigners. On the questions of how to treat the Bakufu, however, Yamaoka maintained a distance with Kiyokawa and other members. Kiyokawa acknowledged this in one of his writings related to the period of 1861/10 (i.e., after the Society of Tiger's Tail was disbanded, most of its members were put in jail, and Kiyokawa was hunted by the Bakufu) referring to Yamaoka as a man who could be "likened to our like-minded brethren."[17] Kiyokawa clearly was aware that Yamaoka was far from full solidarity with the Society.

For a *bushi* like Yamaoka, his relationship with Kiyokawa posed an ethical dilemma. A loyal retainer of the *shōgun* on the one hand, yet he did not betray his friends on the other. In spite of the fact that their activity was directed at overthrowing the Bakufu, he assisted them in the most difficult moments, even when the Bakufu was after them. For a century and a half such an ambiguous and seemingly contradictory stance has puzzled Yamaoka's contemporaries, biographers and admirers. However, Yamaoka understood as well as the Society's members that the Bakufu's days were numbered, and his stance can be explained if we assume that Yamaoka distinguished between vassal loyalty to the Tokugawa family, and loyalty to the political apparatus expressed in the abstract notion of the "Bakufu."

Both Yamaoka Tesshū and Kiyokawa Hachirō first of all were *bushi*, who invested considerable time and effort in becoming skillful in what they perceived as the art of killing people (although, as discussed in Chapter III, what they learnt at the Gembukan training hall of Chiba Shūsaku was largely removed from the realities of actual combat). However, the motives that guided the two in the question of whether to resort to violence or not, were very different. In the case of Yamaoka, he was opposed to the terrorist activity of Sonnō Jōi zealots that actively sought to participate in inner politics and resorted to reckless violence. His stance toward the developments in the country can only be explained as a form of semi-underground military preparation for a possible large-scale war with foreign powers. In this, he remained a *bushi* who was absolutely loyal to the Tokugawa family.[18] None of Yamaoka's biographers has made such a distinction. Unlike Kiyokawa, Yamaoka chose means to achieve his goals. He faithfully adhered to his ideal of the "true warrior," one of the prerequisites for which was a clear distinction between "good" and "evil." Whatever the goal was, Yamaoka avoided

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[17] The writing appears in Yamaji 1913, p. 130. The wording in Japanese is (emphasis added): "…*Ware-ra no dōshi ni hi-shitaru Yamaoka Tetsutarō*…"

[18] This is evident from Yamaoka's role in the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle, discussed in this thesis, as well as the development of his career after 1868.

resorting to means that would not fit this ideal and would go against his conscience.[19]

By contrast, Kiyokawa and the young members of the Society of Tiger's Tail were not obviously concerned with the value of human life and apparently did not care if innocent people were caught up in their terrorist actions. They believed that their countrymen would welcome the merciless killing of foreigners, who treated Japanese as barbarians, did not observe Japanese customs, and threatened Japan with superior technologies and military might.[20]

The first foreigner to die at the hands of the Society was Henry Heusken, a Dutch interpreter for the US envoy in Japan, Townsend Harris. He was slashed to death on 1860/12/5 in Akabane area of Edo. It was Imuta Shōhei of the Satsuma domain who wounded Heusken fatally. The action was well planned and the Bakufu failed to find the perpetrators.[21] Kiyokawa was convinced that assassination was a legitimate political weapon but he quickly realized that the murder of one foreigner or Bakufu high-ranking official would not bring him closer to his ultimate goal. In 1861/1 Kiyokawa came up with a new scheme fundamentally to change the balance of power between Japan and foreigners. At the initial stage this involved a complete extermination of the resident foreigners by burning down their settlements in Yokohama.[22]

As Marius Jansen explains, the Sonnō Jōi radicals, such as those of the Society of Tiger's Tail, sought to exclude foreigners from the country, and for the later generations their exclusionist position might look like an emotional and irrational fantasy but, until 1863, loyalism and exclusionism, combined in the slogan Sonnō Jōi, were taken seriously by many young men. They were motivated by hatred of foreigners which in their minds was inseparably linked with veneration for the emperor and the imperial court. Lacking responsibility for negotiation and government, full of enthusiasm for the

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[19] As noted earlier, there is no evidence that Yamaoka was involved in any form of bloodshed in the Bakumatsu turmoil.

[20] Oyamatsu 1974, pp. 110-111, 123-124.

[21] Heusken's assassination, the fifth in a series of incidents with foreigners that followed the opening of Yokohama, brought some results. Since the opening of Yokohama in 1859, legations of foreign powers were quartered in temples in Shinagawa area of Edo, however, the assassination of Heusken forced them all, except the American envoy Townsend Harris, to move to Yokohama (Inoue Mitsusada et al. 1996, volume 12, pp. 105-106).

[22] Oyamatsu 1974, pp. 124-125. Yamaoka Tesshū knew about Kiyokawa's plan and he attempted to prevent the members of the Society of Tiger's Tail from its implementation by pointing to the fact that their reckless violence would harm innocent people, however, his persuasion was vain (Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 113-114). Yamaoka took a much more sober and balanced view of the developments in the country and understood well that any attempt to "expel the barbarians" would bring catastrophic consequences for both the Bakufu and the country. See, for example, his dialogue with the magistrate of maintenance and repair of imperial tombs (*sanryō bugyō*) Toda Tadayuki appearing in the recollections of Ogura Tetsuju (Ushiyama 1937, pp. 109-110).

martial values of their own culture, and not having much knowledge about the might of the West, these men were willing to trust in the strength of their traditional weapon and spirit to repel the Westerners.[23] Kiyokawa's use of violence, however, was more deliberate. For him, the terrorist activity against the foreigners was a means to provoke a major conflict between the Bakufu and foreign powers that would accelerate the Bakufu's early collapse.[24] The evidence suggests that Kiyokawa did not have any real concern about the catastrophic consequences that would follow large-scale war between the Bakufu and foreign powers, and in this he was a typical *shishi*, who tended to think only of immediate goals. It was the special ability of *shishi* to create disorder in which others might come to the fore, but they themselves were often little prepared with alternatives.[25]

Details of Kiyokawa's scheme to murder all foreigners in Yokohama were discussed in winter and spring of 1861 at the regular meetings of the Society. During the final meeting, held sometime in the middle of 1861/5, the following plan was worked out: After the extermination of all foreigners in Yokohama in August or September of the same year, they would issue a call to action and gather men of like mind from all over Japan. Those who would stand in their way would be killed, be it the *shōgun* or a *daimyō*. Next, they would appeal to the emperor, stand under the Brocaded Banner (*nishiki no mihata*) symbolizing the emperor's punitive expedition against "the enemies of the imperial court," dictate terms to the whole country and, as Kiyokawa always liked to say, "turn the Realm upside down," i.e. restore the imperial rule. If they failed, they would go on a violent rampage around the whole Kantō region, gather more like-minded men and pursue their goal until their death. After the scheme was finally approved, Imuta Shōhei is said to have jumped out in the street and cut at a big camellia tree screaming "What a pleasure! What a pleasure! Cutting the 'Big Tree' like this!" (the "Big Tree" (*daiju*) was a euphemism for the *shōgun*).[26]

It was decided that from now on they should direct their efforts at rallying more like-minded men and at the same time dissolve the Society of Tiger's Tail for a while because its further regular meetings could attract unnecessary attention.[27] Unfortunately for the Society, and fortunately for Japan and the Bakufu, their decision to disband was a little late: There was a buckwheat-noodle shop near Kiyokawa's private academy

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23 Jansen 1961, pp. 94, 106.
24 Oyamatsu 1974, pp. 110-111, 123-124.
25 Jansen 1961, pp. 99-100.
26 Oyamatsu 1974, pp. 123-125. Maekawa 1977, pp. 46-47.
27 Oyamatsu 1974, p. 126.

whose owner was a Bakufu informer.[28] This man saw the gatherings of strange-looking men who spoke different dialects. He sent his adopted son to secretly overhear what was going on in Kiyokawa's academy and reported everything to the Bakufu authorities.[29]

Seeing that the activity of Kiyokawa and his fellows started to assume serious dimensions, to the degree that it threatened national security, the Bakufu authorities made a decision to take urgent measures to prevent the group from realizing its scheme. Since the information overheard by the son of the informer was insufficient to arrest the whole group at one stroke, they made up a plan to provoke them for a violation of law. However, on 1861/5/20, everything ended with the disrespect-killing (*burei uchi*) of another Bakufu informer who, under the disguise of a drunk craftsman, was sent to provoke Kiyokawa when he, with his six associates, was returning from a meeting with Mito *shishi*. Kiyokawa cut off the commoner's head right in the street, but managed to escape arrest. Within several days after the incident, several members of the Society of Tiger's Tail fled to other domains, but most of them, as well as Kiyokawa's mistress, O-Hasu, were put in jail. On 5/21, Kiyokawa left Edo and from that time for a year and a half he was hiding from the Bakufu and Shōnai domain authorities, traveling incognito all over the country and continuing his *shishi* activities.[30] At this point, the Society of Tiger's Tail ceased to exist.

Besides Yamaoka Tesshū, there were two other retainers of the *shōgun* (*bakushin*) who attended the meetings of the Society of Tiger's Tail. One of them was Matsuoka Yorozu (Shōichirō), the name of the other is unknown. It is interesting that after the disrespect-killing incident none of them went into hiding, was arrested or even scrutinized.[31] Two petitions submitted by Yamaoka and Matsuoka to Bakufu authorities shortly after the disrespect-killing incident show that not only Yamaoka and Matsuoka kept their distance from the other members of the Society but, to a degree, they also secretly cooperated with the Bakufu authorities, conducting surveillance of the activity of the Society, although the latter was probably done largely against their own will.[32] According to the second petition, the Bakufu was going to make Yamaoka and Matsuoka testify face to face against the arrested members of the society at its Supreme Court using an insignificant note of the two as evidence. However, their persuasion (the

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28 Such informers were called *meakashi*, *okappiki*, or *tesaki* and were used not only for information gathering, but also for catching thieves, arsonists and other criminals.

29 Oyamatsu 1974, pp. 124-125. Maekawa 1977, pp. 47-48.

30 Oyamatsu 1974, pp. 125-129, 130-131, 133. Maekawa 1977, pp. 49-51.

31 Oyamatsu 1974, p. 123. Maekawa 1977, p. 58.

32 Copies of these documents were preserved by the Yamaoka family and published for the first time in Kuzuu 1929 (pp. 218, 222-224).

two petitions) appears to have brought results: There was no trial or testifying against the members of the Society at the Bakufu Supreme Court. Furthermore, neither Kiyokawa nor any other member of the Society ever found out that Yamaoka and Matsuoka spied against them, and they remained on good terms.

As noted earlier, Yamaoka Tesshū distinguished between loyalty to the "Bakufu" and loyalty to the *shōgun* and the Tokugawa family, and these two petitions prove this once again clearly. The distinction between the two loyalties explains why Yamaoka conducted surveillance against the members of the Society of Tiger's Tail, and at the same time supported them before and after the disrespect-killing incident. He saw the root of evil in the country in the bureaucratic apparatus of the Bakufu and realized that its end was close, but as the direct retainer of the *shōgun* he strove to do his best to preserve the well-being of the Tokugawa family. Yamaoka was not alone in such thinking: As Marius Jansen further explains, many *bushi* of other domains also preferred to believe that their lord, who might temporarily be the victim of bad advice or wicked councilors, was really on their side.[33]

Yamaoka Tesshū and the Rōshigumi Affair

As mentioned earlier, Yamaoka's aloofness toward the turmoil in Bakumatsu inner politics was based on the understanding that his involvement in political struggle and intrigues would inevitably put him at risk of misusing his swordsmanship skills with consequent unnecessary loss of human life. However, there was one minor exception. For a short period of time, from 1862/12 to 1863/4, Yamaoka served as one of the Bakufu supervisors of the Rōshigumi group (*rōshi torishimariyaku*).[34] Rōshigumi was gathered by the Bakufu on the eve of the *shōgun* Tokugawa Iemochi's visit to Kyōto to deal with *shishi* in the old capital in the same inhumane manner *shishi* dealt with supporters of the Bakufu.[35]

To gather the *rōshi*, the Bakufu cooperated with Kiyokawa Hachirō who was amnestied in 1863/1 after a year and a half of hiding that followed the disrespect-killing incident. It was Kiyokawa who suggested to the Bakufu that dangerous elements of the society (the *rōshi*) could be used for the Bakufu's benefit if properly manipulated. It appears that, at this point, Kiyokawa had abandoned the idea of the forceful overthrow

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33 Jansen 1961, p. 96.
34 Murakami Yasumasa 1999, pp. 117- 123.
35 The background of the formation of Rōshigumi is discussed in Chapter VI.

of the Bakufu temporarily and started to believe sincerely in the Bakufu's promise to "expel the barbarians" (drive out all foreigners from Japan) which it gave to the imperial court in 1861/10.[36] After a period of hesitation (the employment of *rōshi* by the Bakufu was an unprecedented matter), the top Bakufu officials decided to follow Kiyokawa's advice and recruited for Rōshigumi, advertising the higher goals of serving the national cause in time of crisis and "expulsion of the barbarians," which broadly corresponded to Kiyokawa's long-cherished idea of the large-scale extermination of foreigners.

However, quite soon Kiyokawa realized that the Bakufu's true intention was oppression of his allies in Kyōto with the help of Rōshigumi. Kiyokawa felt this gave him no option but to resort to acting independently of the Bakufu and in defiance of its policy. On 1863/2/29, when Rōshigumi had already been in the old capital, he managed

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[36] Odaka 2004a, p. 34. In the beginning of 1862/9, the Bakufu resolved to take a crucial step to achieve the final realization of the unity with the imperial court: It was decided that *shōgun* Tokugawa Iemochi should pay a visit to the imperial court in Kyōto, an event that had not happened for the past 230 years since the third *shōgun* Tokugawa Iemitsu's visit in 1634. However, Bakufu still owed a debt to the imperial court which, unless paid off, was a great obstacle to this unity: Back in 1861/10, as a step toward the unity with the Bakufu the imperial court approved the marriage between *shōgun* Tokugawa Iemochi and princess Kazunomiya and moving of the latter to Edo in exchange for the Bakufu's promise to "expel the barbarians." The top officials of the Bakufu knew that during their visit to Kyōto they themselves and the *shōgun* would have to demonstrate clearly whether they were going to keep their promise or arbitrarily open the country to the foreign powers (Inoue Mitsusada et al. 1996, volume 12, pp. 107, 143-144). In spite of the fact that the Bakufu had not determined or stated clearly its position yet in regard to the "expulsion of the barbarians," for many radical *shishi*, including Kiyokawa Hachirō, the *shōgun*'s visit to Kyōto appeared as a sign that the Bakufu conceded more and more to the pressure of the imperial court and inclined to the implementation of the "expulsion of the barbarians" (Odaka 2004c, pp. 163-164). As Kiyokawa wrote in the letter to his father, dated 1862/9/21, after the unsuccessful attempt to raise a rebellion in Kyōto, he returned to the Kantō region in 1862/8 (Oyamatsu 1974, p. 180) with an initial aim to try again burning down foreign settlements in Yokohama together with Mito *shishi*, and he even prepared a big sum of money and obtained consent of the *shishi* for the realization of his plan. However, Kiyokawa saw that the Bakufu started to "move in the right direction" (i.e. take a subordinate position to the imperial court and incline to the decisive "expulsion of the barbarians"). Kiyokawa's friends, such as, for example, Masaki Tetsuma from Tosa, whom Kiyokawa called "the most prominent retainer of the Tosa lord" (Kiyokawa Hachirō's letter to his father dated 1862/10/28. Appears in Yamaji 1913, p. 453), also advised him that he should avoid any radical action for the time being and do his best to support the Bakufu which seemed to be inclined to the "expulsion of the barbarians," that the whole country should act as one through the unity of the imperial court and the Bakufu to protect itself against the barbarians' defilement, and that the most urgent task for Kiyokawa was amnesty (Masaki Tetsuma's letter to Kiyokawa Hachirō, dated 1862/9/4. Appears in Odaka 2004a, pp. 12-13). Kiyokawa realized that the situation in the country was becoming favorable and the timing was ripe for rehabilitating himself and those associates who were still alive and imprisoned in Edo, and his terrorist activity would only spoil everything. He decided to abandon his scheme temporarily, watch further the Bakufu's policy and make efforts to seek amnesty for himself and his associates (Odaka 2004a, p. 11; 2004c, pp. 163-164). This is how Kiyokawa Hachirō came to cooperate with the Bakufu and became the behind-the-scenes architect of the Rōshigumi recruitment (Oyamatsu 1974, p. 196. Maekawa 1977, p. 70. Odaka 2004a, p. 50).

to receive from the imperial court an edict exhorting Rōshigumi to "expel the barbarians." The case was unprecedented: The imperial court gave its edict to the men employed by the Bakufu without consulting with the Bakufu first.[37] Both Rōshigumi and its informal leader Kiyokawa Hachirō[38] became untouchable by the Bakufu because they were protected by the imperial edict. Kiyokawa could openly proceed to the realization of his scheme to exterminate foreigners in Yokohama and the Bakufu was powerless to restrain him.

Upon Rōshigumi's return to Edo,[39] Kiyokawa immediately proceeded to the realization of his plan to massacre the foreigners in Yokohama, the date for which was scheduled for 1863/4/15. His plan presumed a massive assault by several hundred members of Rōshigumi on Yokohama after which they were supposed to attack the Bakufu army headquarters in Kanagawa and take money, provisions and ammunition, go to Kai province and capture Kōfu Castle, making it their base. From there they were going to issue a call to the whole country under the coverage of the will of the imperial court and recruit more people of like mind. The retaliation of the foreign powers would force the Bakufu into war, and all *shishi* of Japan were supposed to become the "demons" guarding the sacred traditions of Japan."[40]

Despite the imperial edict, Kiyokawa's activity ended with his assassination on 1863/4/13 by order of the Bakufu.[41] Political assassination was not an unusual practice in Mitō, Satsuma and Chōshū domains. However, it was an unusual measure in the case of the Bakufu. In a sense, Kiyokawa did not leave the Bakufu any other choice: He was under the cover of the imperial court and at the same time his reckless terrorist activity presented danger not only to the Bakufu, but to the whole country and, from the point of view of the Bakufu officials, there was no other way but to eliminate him physically.

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37 Maekawa 1977, p. 78.

38 Kiyokawa declined the Bakufu's offer to become the official leader of Rōshigumi (*rōshi tōdori*). This is why Kiyokawa's name does not appear on any of the Rōshigumi members lists. Still, he continued to exert a great influence and control from behind the scenes the majority of the *rōshi*, and the Bakufu treated Kiyokawa as an adviser who was allowed to accompany *rōshi* on the way to Kyōto (Maekawa 1977, pp. 83-86. Odaka 2004a, pp. 229-230).

39 Kiyokawa's wish to return to Edo suited the Bakufu: The latter sought to withdraw the group of troublesome *rōshi* from Kyōto on the threshold of the *shōgun*'s visit to the old capital, and any excuse for this could do, such as the possibility of war with Great Britain which at the time sent warships to Yokohama to demand retribution for the Namamugi Incident (1862/8/21). One of the *rōshi* superintendents, Takahashi Deishū, and an Aizu *bushi* Shibata Ta'ichirō recollected that the possibility of war with Great Britain was merely an excuse for returning the *rōshi* to Edo (Maekawa 1977, pp. 81-82).

40 Maekawa 1977, p. 95.

41 Oyamatsu 1974, pp. 112, 212-218, 221. Maekawa 1977, pp. 100-101. Kikuchi Akira 2005, pp. 139-144.

Further actions of the Bakufu were quick and resolute. On 4/15, all Kiyokawa's closest associates were arrested. Rōshigumi was turned over to the Shōnai domain, renamed Shinchōgumi and put in charge of helping Shōnai troops patrol the streets of Edo.[42] The same day, the Rōshigumi supervisor Yamaoka Tesshū and the Rōshigumi superintendent (*rōshi toriatsukai*, the highest post in Rōshigumi) Takahashi Deishū, were relieved from their duties and put under house arrest.[43]

Yamaoka did not leave any materials that could shed light on his involvement in the Rōshigumi affair. There is no doubt that he was aware of the Bakufu's reason for sending Rōshigumi to Kyōto. However, in this case, it appears that his loyalty to the Tokugawa family overrode all other priorities, even those that pertained to his moral principles. Yet, some insight into his motives in the affair can be gained from the recollections of his wife's brother, Takahashi Deishū, whose way of thinking seems to have been very close to Yamaoka's. Takahashi became the Rōshigumi superintendent on the eve of the group's return from Kyōto to Edo. At the time he was an acting senior teacher of spearmanship at the Bakufu Military Institute and he opposed the idea of the creation of Rōshigumi from the very beginning.[44] After Kiyokawa Hachirō obtained the imperial edict, the Bakufu from its part took measures to strengthen its control of Rōshigumi on the way back to Edo. Ironically, on 1863/3/7, Takahashi, who objected to the creation of Rōshigumi, was appointed to be another *rōshi* superintendent, largely against his will. Takahashi saw clearly what consequences the whole Rōshigumi affair as well as Kiyokawa's affiliation with it would bring, and his prediction that "I will not serve even for a month by any possible contingency… Because I will either incur suspicion from the Bakufu senior councilors, or the *rōshi* will take off my head…"[45] was very precise: Just a little more than a month after his appointment Takahashi was dismissed and put under house arrest together with Yamaoka.

It is natural to suppose that, similar to Takahashi, Yamaoka also knew well that his supervisory role in Rōshigumi would not bring him any good. However, he accepted it either against his own will as Takahashi did, or it could be a kind of self-sacrifice on his part for the sake of the Tokugawa family's cause. In contrast to the interpretation by all Yamaoka's biographers in regard to these events, his involvement in fact stopped short of cooperation with Kiyokawa in exploiting violence to achieve his ultimate aim.

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42 Oyamatsu 1974, p. 221. Maekawa 1977, p. 107.

43 Murakami Yasumasa 1999, p. 123.

44 See Takahashi' argument with the Bakufu supreme councilor (*seiji sōsai*) Matsudaira Shungaku about the formation of Rōshigumi in Maekawa 1977, p. 70.

45 From *The Stenographic interviews of the Society for Historical Recollections* (*Shidankai sokkiroku*), 100th collection.

Yamaoka's aversion to indiscriminate violence led him to play a decisive role in Rōshigumi's undoing. He did this by taking away the most valuable thing for Kiyokawa – the original of the imperial edict. Kiyokawa took all possible measures for the edict's safe-keeping, and he was always accompanied by bodyguards. Yamaoka knew that Kiyokawa would show the document to him because he was his closest friend, and one day, while they were still in Kyōto, Yamaoka asked Kiyokawa if he could read its contents. Kiyokawa gave the edict to Yamaoka readily, and never saw it again. Yamaoka passed it to the *rōshi* superintendent Udono Kyūō who refused to return the edict to Kiyokawa under the pretext that it was addressed not to a particular individual but to Rōshigumi as a whole. It is said that Udono gave the edict to the Bakufu senior councilor Itakura Katsukiyo in Kyōto. Thus, the imperial edict to Rōshigumi was hushed up, its contents were lost, and did not survive to our time.[46]

As a result of the Rōshigumi affair, Yamaoka spent eight months under house arrest. In the evening of 1863/11/15, a fire occurred in Edo Castle. Yamaoka and Takahashi left their houses without permission, gathered other Bakufu retainers living in the neighborhood and rushed to guard the castle outside its gates. They risked their lives because the breach of house arrest could be punished by *seppuku*. However, the Bakufu officials recognized the revelation of utmost loyalty in their conduct and in 1863/12 the two were released.[47]

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[46] Maekawa 1977, pp. 79-80. Maekawa Shūji maintains that the imperial edict addressed to the Bakufu and exhorting the "expulsion of the barbarians" is confused in many Kiyokawa Hachirō related sources with the imperial edict which Kiyokawa received from the imperial court through the Peers School (Gakushūin) in Kyōto. Maekawa also doubts that a separate notice on the "expulsion of the barbarians" issued by the imperial regent and attached to the edict to Rōshigumi ever existed (Maekawa 1977, pp. 78-79).

[47] Murakami Yasumasa 1999, p. 124.

Figure 1

The position of the long sword when sitting in *seiza*

Photo of two Bakumatsu *bushi*.

Preserved in the Historiographical Institute, The University of Tōkyō.

Figure 2

An artistic reminder of the correct way of handing the long sword

A legendary military commander Nitta Yoshisada (1301-1338) offering up his sword and praying to the gods to make the tide ebb.

A color woodblock print from the series *Tsuki hyakushi* (*One hundred aspects of the moon*) by Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839-1892).

Adapted from the Rare Books Image Database, the National Diet Library of Japan.

Figure 3

Protecting the right thumb in the standing position

Photo of a Bakumatsu *bushi*.

Preserved in the Historiographical Institute, The University of Tōkyō.

Figure 4

Protecting the thumbs in the standing position

Takeda Tokimune (1916-1993), the last headmaster of
the Main Line Daitō-ryū Aikijūjutsu from the Takeda family.

Courtesy of Kondō Katsuyuki, the director of the Main Line Daitō-ryū Aikijūjutsu headquarters.

Figure 5

Protecting the thumbs and the hands in the *seiza* sitting position

Yamaoka Tesshū (1836-1888)
A famous swordsman of the Bakumatsu period and early Meiji era

Adapted from Ushiyama 1937

Figure 6

An artistic reminder of *tōin*

A notorious robber of the mid-Heian era Fujiwara no Yasusuke (Hakamadare) performing magic with the use of *tōin*, the form of hands when the extended middle and index fingers of the right hand symbolizing the sword are clasped in the left palm. This form was often used during esoteric practices of the *bushi* as well as Shugendō adepts and monks of esoteric Buddhist sects.

A color woodblock print by Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839-1892).

Adapted from the Rare Books Image Database, the National Diet Library of Japan.

Figure 7

Artistic reminder of handling the long sword by gripping the hilt with the right hand and attaching the left palm to the back ridge of the blade

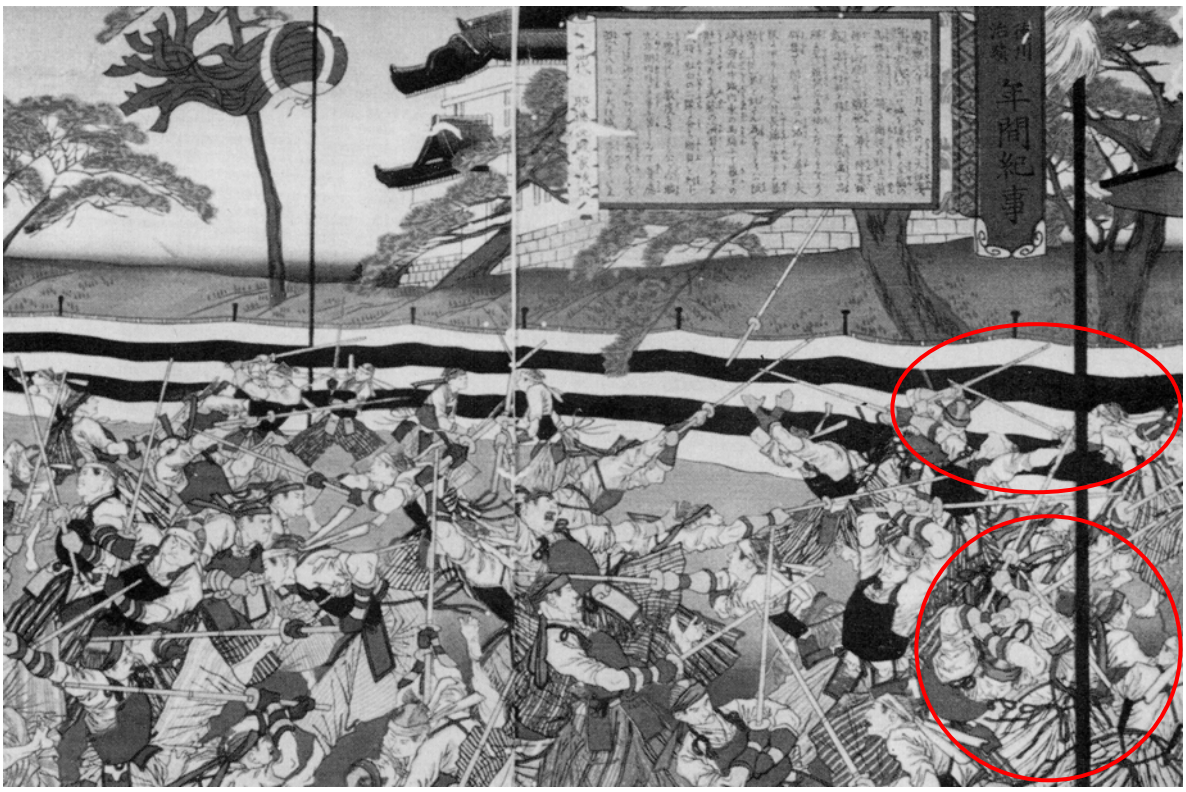
A military commander of the mid-Heian era Minamoto-no Yorimitsu slaying a monster of Ōeyama mountain.

A fragment of a color woodblock print triptych from the series *Azuma nishiki e* (*Eastern brocade pictures*) by Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839-1892).

Adapted from the Rare Books Image Database, the National Diet Library of Japan.

Figure 8

The most probable way of receiving the bamboo sword that led to the fatal consequences for the soldier of the imperial army in the sword engagement with Satsuma swordsmen during the Satsuma Rebellion of 1877



A fragment of a woodblock print that depicts swordsmanship field match on the precincts of Ōsaka Castle during *shōgun* Tokugawa Iemochi's stay in this castle in 1865. The size of the bamboo sword, which is much longer than the real sword, is also faithfully captured.

Adapted from Kōdansha 1983, p. 120.

A similar way of receiving the bamboo sword in close proximity to one's head in modern *kendō*.

Adapted from *Kendō Nihon* no. 287 (January 2000), p. 95.

Figure 9

1868/3 negotiations between Katsu Kaishū and Saigō Takamori regarding the surrender of Edo Castle.

Edo kaijō dampan (*Edo Castle surrender negotiations*)
by Yūki Somei (1875-1957).

Exhibited permanently at the Seitoku Kinen Kaigakan Museum, Tōkyō.

Figure 10

The sitting posture for drawing the long sword of modern *iai* practitioners

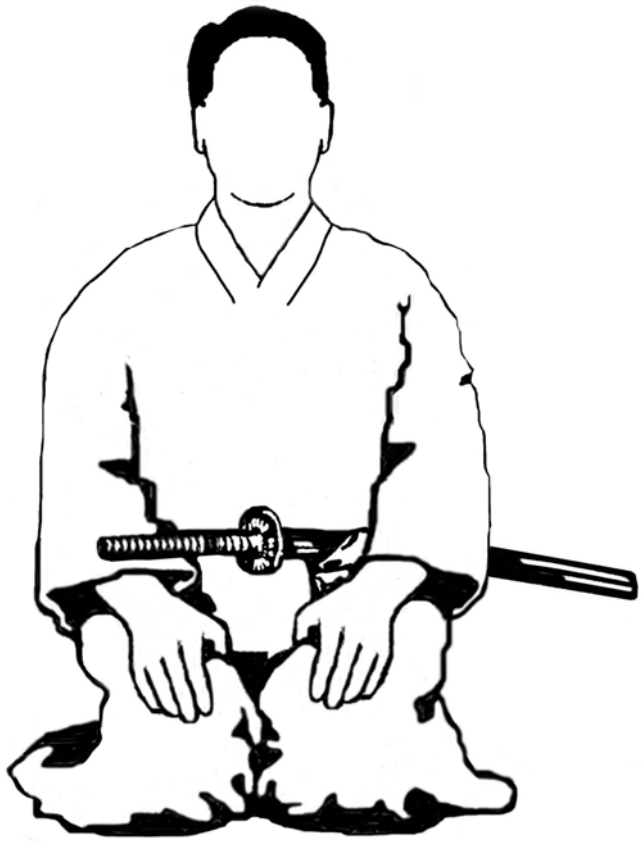


Figure 11

The standing posture for drawing the long sword of modern *iai* practitioners

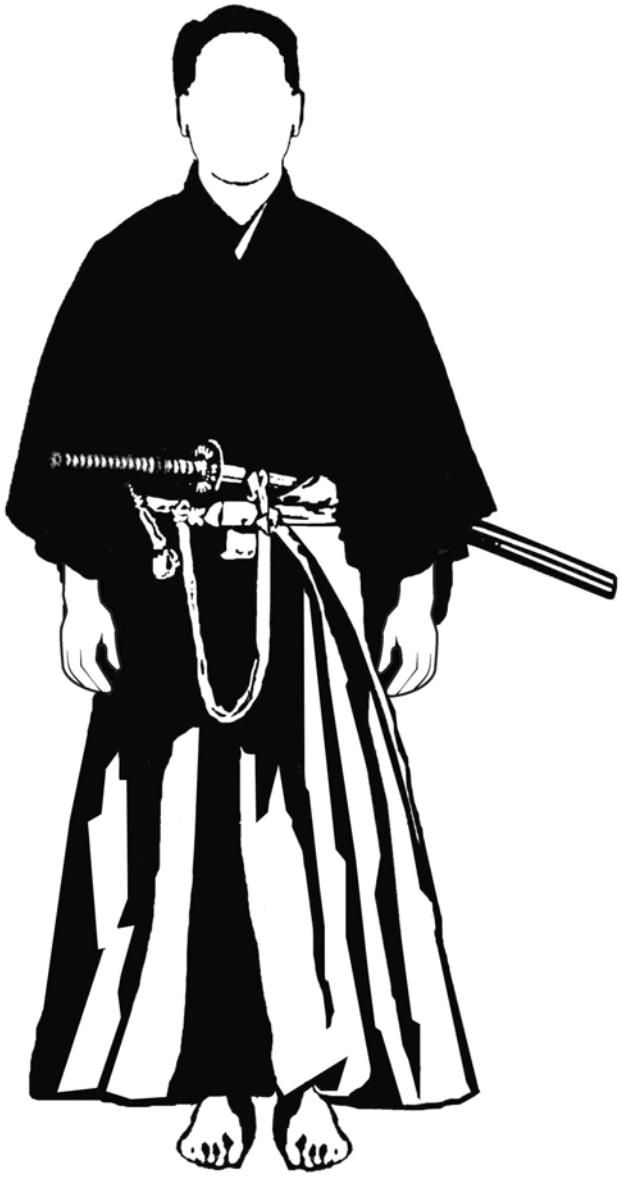


Figure 12

The usual way of wearing the long and short swords in pre-Meiji Japan

A famous Bakufu executioner Yamada Asaemon at the age of 50.

The long and short swords were worn in the street almost perpendicularly to each other.*

The photo is adapted from Fukunaga 1993a, vol. 5.

Courtesy of Yūzankaku Inc.

* Interview in Narita city, February 2008, with Ōtake Risuke, the master teacher of Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū.

Figure 13

The *iaijutsu* at-the-ready sitting posture (*iaigoshi*) preserved in Tenshinshō-den Katori Shintō-ryū. Demonstrated by Ōtake Risuke, the master teacher of the school.

Courtesy of Ōtake Risuke

Figure 14

An artistic reminder of drawing the long sword (1)

A notorious robber Fujiwara no Yasusuke (Hakamadare) attempting to kill a court noble Fujiwara no Yasumasa, an episode from the mid-Heian era. The story appears in *Stories of the past and present* (*Konjaku monogatari shū*, late Heian period). A color woodblock print triptych copied by Tsukioka Yoshitoshi in 1877 (the name of the original author is unknown).

Adapted from the Rare Books Image Database, the National Diet Library of Japan.

Figure 15

An artistic reminder of drawing the long sword (2)

A military commander of the mid-Heian era Minamoto-no Yorimitsu cutting a giant spider-ghost Tsuchigumo.

From a color woodblock print series *Shingata sanjūroku kaisen* (*New forms of thirty-six ghosts*) by Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839-1892).

Adapted from the Rare Books Image Database, the National Diet Library of Japan.

Figure 16

An artistic reminder of drawing the long sword (3)

A military commander of the late Heian era Taira no Tadamori frightened by a ghost near Yasaka Jinja shrine.

A fragment of a color woodblock print from the series *Yoshitoshi ryakuga* (*Yoshitoshi sketches*) by Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839-1892).

Adapted from the Rare Books Image Database, the National Diet Library of Japan.

Figure 17

An artistic reminder of drawing the long sword (4)

Ancient sword drawing posture in a Kabuki scene on a color woodblock print made by Tsuru Hisajo in 1862.

Adapted from the Rare Books Image Database, the National Diet Library of Japan.

Figure 18

Artistic reminders of drawing the long sword (5)

By Utagawa Toyokuni (1769-1825)

By Katsukawa Shunshō (1726-1792)

The long sword drawing postures in Kabuki scenes in color woodblock prints of the Tokugawa era.

Adapted from Serdyuk 1990.

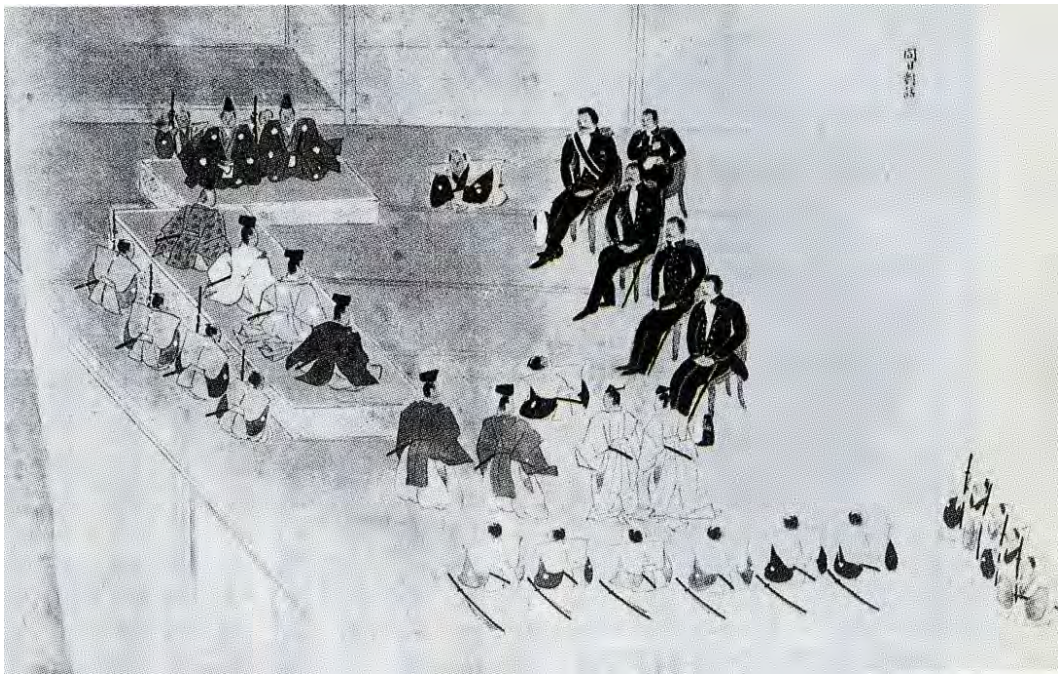
Figure 19

A Bakumatsu photo of Kawazu Izu no Kami showing off his long sword

Preserved in the Historiographical Institute, The University of Tōkyō.

Figure 20

Nagasaki Bugyōsho Rokoku shisetsu ōsetsu no ezu
(*The reception of Russian missionary at the Nagasaki administrative office*)



Preserved in the Historiographical Institute, The University of Tōkyō.

The men holding long swords in the vertical position are sword-bearers of high-ranking Bakufu officials.

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Abbreviations

BDH Yamaoka Tesshū (Tetsutarō). 1882. *Keiō Boshin sangatsu Sumpu Daisōtokufu ni oite Saigō Takamori-shi to dampan hikki* (usually abbreviated as *Boshin dampan hikki*). Original preserved in Zenshōan temple, Tōkyō.

BS Daidōji Yūzan. [Early XVIII c.] 1971. *Budō shoshinshū*. Edited by Yoshida Yutaka. Tōkyō: Tokuma Shoten.

KKZ Katsu Kaishū Zenshū Kankōkai, ed. 1972-1973. *Katsu Kaishū zenshū* (23 volumes). Tōkyō: Kōdansha.

KKZ2 Katsube Mitake et al., eds. 1972-1973. *Katsu Kaishū zenshū* (23 volumes). Tōkyō: Keisō Shobō.

KN Tōkyō-to Edo Tōkyō Hakubutsukan Toshi Rekishi Kenkyūshitsu, ed. 2002-2006. *Katsu Kaishū kankei shiryō: Kaishū nikki* (4 volumes). Tōkyō: Tōkyō-to and other publishers.

KRK Yamaoka Tesshū (Tetsutarō). 1883. *Keiō Boshin shigatsu Tōeizan ni tonshū suru Shōgitai oyobi shotai o kaisan seshimubeki jōshi toshite Yamaoka Tetsutarō kore ni omomuki, Kakuōin to rongi no ki* (usually abbreviated as *Kakuōin rongi ki*). Draft preserved in Zenshōan temple, Tōkyō.

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