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From the Editors' Desk
編纂者から

This issue of EMJ is devoted to papers that were presented at the American Historical Association’s annual meeting in Chicago, in January 2000. The session, “The Diverse Japanese: Local History's Challenge to National Narratives in the Nineteenth Century,” brought together four papers that focused on developments in nineteenth century Japan and employed local history materials and perspectives to critique our understanding of the transition to Meiji. In the process, they raise some significant questions about how we create our “national” narratives and deal with issues of local variations in telling the story or stories of Japanese history.

The Diverse Japanese: Local History's Challenge to National Narratives in the Nineteenth Century: An Introduction
Jonathan Dresner
Coe College

"But history is neither watchmaking nor cabinet construction. It is an endeavor toward better understanding and, consequently, a thing in movement. To limit oneself to describing a science just as it is will always be to betray it a little. It is still more important to tell how it expects to improve itself in the course of time. Now, such an undertaking inevitably involves a rather large dose of personal opinion. Indeed, every science is continually beset at each stage of its development by diverging tendencies, and it is scarcely possible to decide which is now dominant without prophesying the future. We shall not shirk this obligation. The dread of responsibility is as discreditable in intellectual matters as in any others. But it is only honest to give the reader fair warning." -- Marc Bloch, The Historian's Craft, pp. 12-13.

The nineteenth century is perhaps the most frequently studied period of Japanese history, but it remains poorly understood. It is complex, dynamic, contradictory, and clearly crucial to understanding what Japan is and was. It is a Ror-schach test for historians, because it tends to reflect and reveal what is sought. Scholarship on Japan in the United States has been searching for new approaches and directions for some time, and the substantial studies of Japan's local history produced recently in English suggest that local history may be the means by which our understanding of Japan is going to take its next steps forward.

Much scholarship on the 19th century is focused on the question of Japan's national history, and takes as a given the uniformity of Japan's development. Part of this is due to the deliberate obfuscation of regionality on the part of the Meiji government, and part of it is due to the unintentional difficulty of getting beyond the nation-state unit in our thinking. Tokugawa scholarship has begun to articulate a concept of "Japan" not as a unitary national society but as an interactive system of classes, regions and communities, but only recently has there been scholarship that gave real attention to diversity and regionality in the late 19th century. Recent scholarship is beginning to challenge the imposition of paradigmatic history with complex and diverse studies that are both local in focus but regional and national, sometimes even international, in implication.

Local history, by both professional and amateur historians, has been steadily popular in Japan since the end of World War II. The presentation of local history is not immune to the errors of dogmatism. Much of this scholarship was devoted to either promoting or denying the importance of the central state in the modernization of Japan in the 19th century, and was highly politicized; most of the rest were sentimental attempts to situate important national movements in largely neglected peripheries. Though it is important to deconstruct the concept of Japanese nationhood, local history should be more than just a challenge to the nation-state unit of historical writing. Nor can it simply glorify the "common people", though it certainly brings their stories to the fore and makes it possible to gain a sense of what life was like during this period of change. Rather than focusing on local history as "exemplar" or "challenger" to national narratives, we need to build up a substantial body of broad local histories, which can then become the foundation of a regionally diverse but interactive na-
The late nineteenth century has most frequently been studied for clues as to what came before and after it. The "legacy of the Tokugawa" scholarship looks at the way in which Meiji government, economics and culture are continuations of pre-Restoration society, both to challenge the "modernization transformation" motif of early 20th Century scholarship and to cast light on the less well-sourced Tokugawa society. The "key to the future" scholarship looks for clues to Japan's 20th century imperialistic nationalism and economic success. Both of these kinds of studies answer important questions, but they are difficult to integrate into a coherent picture: Japan is either lingeringly pre-modern or an incipient modern society. Local studies can complicate this dichotomy, perhaps even eliminate it, by examining systemic change in terms of the individuals and communities who participate, as both subject and actor. Most importantly, local historical studies give scholars a chance to sift through the raw data of history, looking for the typical and atypical, the striking details that lead to questions, and the questions that lead to greater understanding.

This is what I am trying to do in my own research on Meiji-era international emigration and its effects on local social and economic development in Yamaguchi Prefecture. This is an intensely regional phenomenon: most emigrants in the 19th century came from five prefectures, usually from a few counties within those prefectures; outside of the high emigration regions, international emigration was nearly non-existent until colonial migration. Nonetheless, histories of these regions rarely point to the flow of people and money as a significant factor in local growth. The reason, if I may anticipate my own research, seems to be threefold: scholars focused on the growth of capitalism have neglected the history of the labor-rich, capital-poor regions; local historians are loath to characterize their hometowns as poor labor-exporting migrant societies; finally, the effect of the income from international remittances and hand carried earnings seems to have been matched in many other regions, and therefore muted, by remittances and income from migration to cities or industrial areas. I hope this research will elucidate the complex and active movements of Japanese in a changing national economy and international environment. It will also provide the foundation for closer examination of the effects of "national" trends and phenomena — the Matsukata deflation, unequal treaties, growth of the banking system, etc. — on small communities.

When I put out a call for scholars to join me presenting a panel on Japanese local history at the American Historical Association (AHA) 2000 Annual Convention, I expected a few responses, and had some candidates in mind for gentle persuasion if recruitment failed. The response was so strong that I decided to forego presenting a paper myself in order to have the chance to hear as many of the other papers as possible. Of the presenters, only one was previously known to me (Edward Pratt), which suggested to me that there are a lot more people working in the area of local history than I had realized. So the panel, "The Diverse Japanese: Local History's Challenge to National Narratives," represents just a small portion of this new wave of scholarship, but covers a wide range of topics within a relatively focused time period. Taken together, these papers suggest the potential of local history to both answer questions raised at the national level and to question answers accepted as national truisms.

Ed Pratt challenges conventional ideas of village structure by looking at both cooperative and competitive behavior together rather than seeing the two in Manichean opposition. His essay exemplifies the wonder of discovery in local historical study, how the most important discoveries begin, as Isaac Asimov said, with "That's odd" rather than with "Eureka!" The diary of Ichikawa Shōemon provides a vivid and detailed account of both family and hamlet affairs in the late 19th century. The village is indeed a cooperative unit and one that values harmony highly, but neither of these things operate automatically: rather they are the result of constant effort, often in the face of social and economic turmoil. Disputes arise frequently in this account, but they are more the result of violations of social norms than of economic class clashes. More common, were communal activities, celebrations, mutual assistance, local administration, but these required coordination and negotiation.
John Van Sant highlights the dissension that remained after the Meiji Restoration within the samurai class, and the need for Tokugawa loyalists to absent themselves from the modernizing state. The Meiji Restoration is frequently touted as "nearly bloodless" and the unity that followed is considered remarkable, but this paper highlights the destruction seen in Aizu-Wakamatsu, as well as the punitive treatment it received afterwards, which led to both internal and international migration. Though we usually do not think of the Japanese as refugees, the Meiji Restoration did produce substantial political and economic disorder that produced large numbers of them.

Brian Platt's study of Nagano education reform complicates the conventional narrative of modernization by balancing central and local initiatives, and suggests a dynamic and multilateral process. Perhaps most striking, for a discussion of education in Japan, his narrative is neither triumphant nor tragic. Nagano, though lacking the sort of public protest that makes it an obvious resister to centralization, nonetheless articulated distinctly local needs and advocated for substantial modifications to the education system. The central government, without compromising its goal of using the education system as an element in national unification, responded positively to local requests. He argues that the development of education in Nagano fails to fit any of the powerful paradigms of Japanese historiography -- Marxist determinism, Populist resistance, or Modernization theory developmentalism -- as well as complicating the traditional national uniformity with which education development is usually portrayed.

Sarah Thal's study of shrines and pilgrimages adds a regional depth to our understanding of the crucial intersection of religion and nationalism in Modern Japan. The tension between new identities -- the religious and "traditional" rural versus the secular, "modern" urbanite -- and local actors' deliberate use of central government policy to advance regional development suggest a much subtler negotiation and development than any previous narrative of Meiji religious history. Though the "State Shinto" structure might have been imposed, the religious and social power of sites like Kompira depended on active and apparently earnest participation by local individuals.

The success and popularity of pilgrimage shrines affected (and was shaped by) regional and local governments' economic policies, not to mention regional identification. The success of the shrine also draws attention to a tension in national priorities: the elites, educated in Western scientific ideas, criticized and denigrated the traditional religious faith which was such an important part of the structure of Japanese nationalism.

Philip Brown, our panel commentator, has provided a much more extensive and detailed discussion of the ebb and flow of local historical study in English-language scholarship on Japan. Though it was not at all intentional in the panel formation, he identifies a thread of confrontation running through these studies, sometimes in the form of violence, which suggests a much more dynamic and active response to change than has traditionally been attributed to Japanese commoners. He has very thoroughly outlined the challenges and the potentials of local historical studies, and the place that local history can and should -- and will, if the papers presented here are any indication -- play in the dialectic synthesis of Japanese history.

How do these studies of local history advance our understanding of Japanese history? First, they challenge scholarly assumptions, not because of ideological schism, but because the documents and data do not fit the inherited paradigms. Second, though their conclusions are exciting, they are tentative, because all of these scholars recognize the particularity of their data; the "final" word on all of these questions must await further study of more regions, which these papers clearly invite. Third, these papers make it clear that Japan in the 19th century was an intensely regional place, with local identity and society far more important to most people than national concerns or events, and with a great deal of regional variation among economic, religious, political and social systems. Finally, without denying the importance of national leadership and "Great Men", these papers highlight the experiences of Japanese with little or no official authority, and credit them with active, thoughtful and effective participation in social, economic, religious, and political arenas.
Community and Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Japan: A Re-consideration
Edward Pratt
William and Mary College

“One evening at the end of March,” Ichikawa Shōemon wrote in his diary, “there was a fire at the house of Mohachi of Arata. But . . . this person did not know a thing about it. I heard the story the next day. Thus, I did not go there at the time.”1 The failure of his neighbors to communicate the news about the fire clearly frustrated Shōemon. It did not matter that he was seventy-nine years old and in poor health. It was the duty of neighbors, after all, to lend a hand, first in putting out the fire and later in the clearing of the ashes and the rebuilding of the house. They assisted one another, too, when their roofs needed to be re-thatched and in the preparations for funerals, marriages, and coming-of-age ceremonies. They joined together to offer prayers to ward off contagion from the village and to go on pilgrimages to Ōyama to pray for rain. They formed revolving credit associations to provide themselves the funds necessary to sustain or to expand their farm operations. Shōemon’s experiences, and indeed the experiences of many other farmer diarists, seemingly challenge prevailing wisdom on the conflictual nature of the nineteenth-century village.

The works on peasant revolts, for example, portray a rural populace besieged by inequality, discord, and rebellion.2 More recently, this view of the village as conflictual has been articulated forcefully by Irwin Scheiner and Herman Ooms. Scheiner writes about the “myth of community”; he even goes so far as to call portrayals of villagers acting collectively as “imagined communities.”3 Ooms contends that the Tokugawa village is best characterized by strife and discord. He writes, “The frequent description of villages as harmonious and consensual is a misrecognition if not an outright denial of these realities.”4 Both writers leave little room for considerations of the nineteenth-century village as communitarian.

According to the Western theoretical literature, this view concerning the absence of community on the eve of Japan’s Meiji transformation seems to make perfect sense. Eminent social scientists such as Ferdinand Tönnies, Max Weber, and Talcott Parsons long ago argued that collective behavior and community necessarily decline with the arrival of “modern” society, especially with the onslaught of market forces and bureaucratic centralization. Tönnies viewed this transformation along a spectrum, with Gemeinschaft at the one end and Gesellschaft at the other. Whereas Gemeinschaft is characterized by collective will, folkways, and religious life, its destruction leads to Gesellschaft, whereby the growing importance of convention, law, and public opinion culminate in individualism.5 Since Japan witnessed remarkable growth in its market economy in the nineteenth century, and because the Meiji state enacted policies that increasingly eroded local autonomy, it seems only natural that collective activity there, too, would decline.

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5 Ferdinand Tönnies, Community and Society (Gemeinschaft under Gesellschaft) New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1988, see esp. chapters 4 and 5.
Adding to the general confusion surrounding the issue of rural conflict and cooperation is the fact that ethnographic accounts portray twentieth-century villages where farmers engaged in a host of collective activities and placed a high premium on consensus and harmony. This is clear from the works of John Embree, Robert Smith, and Ronald Dore, for example. 6 What happened? Was collective behavior something that came into being only in the twentieth century? That seems highly unlikely. Despite the current fascination with “invented traditions,” it is doubtful whether the modern Japanese state and its surrogates could have remolded the Japanese people along communal lines out of a cast forged from conflict.

Many studies have emphasized the conflictual nature of rural society, I contend, because the documents they rely on -- materials relating to peasant revolts and intra-village conflict -- have predisposed them to this view. Perhaps because we lack case studies of individual villages, we also have an incomplete understanding of how farmers handled conflict on an everyday level. It is especially important to examine community dynamics over the long term, so as to better ascertain the enduring consequences, if any, of discord and strife. This paper, as well as the broader research project, uses diaries as a major source, not because they are inherently better or tell us more than other types of documents, but because they are attuned to the quotidian, to the structures and rhythms of everyday life. Though oftentimes cryptic, they afford a much better sense of the variety and frequency of collective activity.

Ichikawa Shōemon’s diary, covering the period 1859-1897, provides particular insight into the dynamics of community life. Most diaries were written by village elites, the very wealthiest people in rural society, especially headmen and village merchants. Shōemon’s diary is unusual in that it was written by a middling farmer. This perhaps explains why many of the things he writes about are not found in other diaries, at least not with the same amount of detail. Shōemon lived in a mountain village, Minami-osoki (currently part of Ōme city), in Musashi province.

Much of the diary concerns the collective activities of the villagers and the various relationships among them. Surprisingly, the village itself was not so important. The most important unit for Shōemon was the hamlet or neighborhood. Most collective activity centered around the hamlet, not the village, and the hamlet association (kumiai) frequently met to resolve problems. Minami-osoki contained six hamlets, with an average of 27.5 households in each. In this part of the Kantō hamlets were known as niwaba; in other parts of Japan, they were known by such terms as tsubo, konai, and kaito. The fact that the hamlet figures so prominently is an important point, because with the dizzying administrative changes of the Meiji period, the village was continually being reconstituted into larger entities, but the hamlet itself remained unchanged. This might explain the persistence of collective activity well into the twentieth century.

Minami-osoki certainly had its share of troublemakers, but Yoshisaburō was probably the worst of the lot. At the end of 1860, he had been “acting violently,” compelling his father to tie him up. After gnawing away at the ropes, Yoshisaburō escaped, shouting obscenities as he fled. Neighbors rarely intervened in family disputes, but Yoshisaburō’s wild and violent behavior demanded immediate action. When Yoshisaburō refused to listen to the suggestions of members of his hamlet association, they convened a meeting (yorai) and decided to put him in their custody. The diary does not tell us more, but we can assume that neighbors housed him

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and kept him under their watchful eye until he was back on proper terms with his father. The following evening the hamlet association had to convene yet another meeting. The previous year Yoshisaburō had put into pawn the bell from the local temple. The redemption period was about to expire, but he lacked the money to get it back. We do not know the outcome, but the association must have raised the money, because the same bell appears several more times in the diary.

In 1862 Yoshisaburō got into a fight with the village ruffian Shōhei, who demanded that he repay a loan. Members of their respective hamlet associations intervened, serving as intermediaries between the two parties. The following day the matter was “settled,” meaning that the two parties had reached an accommodation.

After each incident, Yoshisaburō was not expelled or ostracized but was reintegrated back into the collective life of the community. When the dispute with his father emerged into public view, his neighbors mediated and took measures to restore calm until tempers subsided. When incidents arose involving people from other hamlets, intermediaries from the two sides would arbitrate to bring about an amicable settlement.

The neighbors’ indulgent treatment of Yoshisaburō is well documented in the diary. When he held a meeting in 1863 of a religious confraternity, known as the Hatsuuma Bisha-kō, the diarist Shōemon and his neighbors attended. Similarly, when Yoshisaburō held an untying-of-the-obi ceremony for his son, members of his hamlet association went over to assist in the pounding of the rice cakes (mochi). People were also at his house in 1865 when he had a priest from a nearby village deliver a sermon (kōshaku). And when Yoshisaburō went on a group pilgrimage to Ise in 1873, members of his hamlet association came out to send him off.

The villagers’ patience with errant neighbors is best reflected in their treatment of Seibei’s four sons. Whereas Seibei appears to have been an upstanding member of the village, his sons were ne’er-do-wells. In 1862 Seibei kicked his eldest son Izaemon and his wife out of the house. We meet Izaemon again in 1871, when we learn that he put into pawn the temple bell, the same bell that Yoshisaburō had pawned several years before. Izaemon did not have the money to redeem it, so his hamlet association met to discuss what to do. The matter was especially troublesome, because the domain was sending out officials for an inspection of the territory’s temples and shrines, to ensure that nothing was missing. The association had no choice but to borrow the money to get the bell back.

Izaemon makes his next appearance in the diary in 1876. While in a drunken stupor at a memorial service at the local temple, he got into an argument with Tomizō and threw boiling water in his face. His brother Umegorō apprehended him and tied him up, but Izaemon’s rage continued unabated. He shouted obscenities at everyone and finally managed to get loose. With a priest from the local temple and other locals acting as intermediaries, Izaemon later agreed to send a written apology to Tomizō and to reimburse him for his medications. Izaemon also paid the various costs associated with the mediation of the dispute, up until the point of settlement (rakuchaku). Both parties, however, paid the costs for the final reconciliation (teuchi nyūyō), which took place three days after the incident.

The second son Seitarō apparently found much to admire in the conduct of his older brother. His father disinherited him in 1860 and asked the village headman to have him removed from the books (chōgai), meaning to expunge him from the population records. The diary does not cite the cause, but it appears to have had

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8 IKN, 74.
9 IKN, 82.
10 The Bisha-kō was a religious confraternity celebrating Inari, the deity of agriculture. The members of the confraternity took turns hosting and lodging the other members. They feasted and drink and sometimes invite in a blind female strolling musician (goze).
11 IKN, 95.
12 IKN, 106-7.
13 IKN, 159-60.
14 IKN, 81.
15 Undoubtedly the bell had been put in the custody of the village youth group, or wakamonogumi.
16 IKN, 151-52.
17 IKN, 172.
its origins in a loan Seitarō took out. The headman called the son in for questioning and, together with neighbors and other villagers, did everything in his power to get the father to back down. The headman finally worked out a compromise. To save face, the father kept the son in the house but only as a boarder (heyazumi), not as heir, and Seitarō agreed to repay the loan.18

This was hardly the last time that Seitarō caused anguish for his father and Minami-osoki villagers. In 1861 someone came to the village demanding that Seitarō repay a loan, undoubtedly from gambling; when that failed, he asked the hamlet association to intercede. Because there was a difference of opinion concerning the loan, the association refused his request. Also around this time, gamblers and other miscreants came to the village demanding that Seitarō return money he had borrowed, this too the result of a fondness for gambling.19

In 1862 Seitarō ran off, and his exasperated father brought before the hamlet association the matter of removing him from the books. The association got the father to postpone submitting the request to the headman until members could talk to his son. They were unable to locate him, however, so Seibei’s petition went before the village officials.20 The following month, before the case could be resolved, Seitarō found himself in far more serious difficulty. He had gone to three public baths in the town of Ōme and changed into other people’s clothing on the way out. He then ran off to gamble with the money received from their pawn. The hamlet association again got involved, first by talking to the parties concerned and then by raising the money to redeem the clothing.21 Six months passed before his father repeated his request that Seitarō be removed from the books, but he was once again talked out of it by various parties, including members of the village youth group (wakamono-gumi) and the hamlet association.22 The father eventually allowed Seitarō to build a house on family property. Despite all of the problems Seitarō caused for his neighbors, he was not at all ostracized. They assisted him, in fact, when his house was being constructed in 1865.23 They treated him just like everyone else in the community.

Particularly illustrative is the community’s response to Seitarō’s arrest and incarceration for participating in the Bushū Uprising of 1866. Ignited by a steep rise in prices brought on by the opening of the ports and increased exactions imposed as a result of bakufu campaigns against Choshu, the Bushū uprising included as many as 100,000 poor farmers in Musashi and Kōzuke provinces. They demanded such things as relief rice, the lowering of interest rates, and the return of pawned items, all of which they considered crucial to their survival as farmers. The reasons for Seitarō’s participation, however, are unclear. His primary exploiters, after all, were his gambling cronies, not people of wealth in the Musashi area. At any rate, Seitarō did not return after authorities and peasant militia suppressed the rebellion, so neighbors tried to find out where he was. When they learned that he had been jailed in Hachiōji, they went there to inquire and to seek his release. And when authorities transferred Seitarō to an Edo prison, village representatives went to look after him.24 The expense of all of this must have been enormous. Whenever anyone was jailed, relatives and neighbors had to pay for their food. The cost of lodging the villagers in Hachiōji and Edo, too, must have been considerable. Here, too, we find villagers not ostracizing malcontents but doing whatever possible to bring them back into the fold.

Seibei’s third son, Kesasaburō, like the others, proved to be a most unworthy child. Not long after being designated the heir, in 1864 and again in 1865 he ran off, first to Ashikaga and then to Edo, leaving behind his wife and child.25 In 1867, his father Seibei asked that he be removed from the books.26 The diary does not tell us more, but we do know that he was disinherited.

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18 IKN, 73.
19 IKN, 76.
20 IKN, 81.
21 IKN, 82. When Seitarō finally returned to the village two months later -- with the measles -- another villager took him in; see IKN, 84.
22 IKN, 90.
23 IKN, 107.
24 IKN, 113-16.
26 IKN, 119.
With Kesasaburō, too, neighbors treated him as a regular member of the community. When he returned from Edo in 1865 and his father would not let him into the house, the hamlet association intervened and suggested that he write his father a letter of apology.  When Kesasaburō returned from a shrine pilgrimage to Ōyama in 1866, he was devastated to learn that his son had died. Neighbors made all the arrangements for the funeral, just as they did for everyone else.

Umegorō, the youngest son, followed proudly in his older brothers’ footsteps. He, too, sometimes left the village, abandoning his wife and child. When questioned about getting someone pregnant in 1869, he replied “I don’t remember a thing.” In later years, he was arrested several times for gambling. Just as with the other brothers, neighbors exerted every effort to restore harmony between disputing villagers. When Umegorō got into a fight in 1874 with his brother Seitarō and his friend Yoshisaburō, neighbors intervened and ensured that the two sides reached a reconciliation.

The enormous efforts made to resolve conflict imply, however, that other considerations were also at work. Especially important was the desire to ensure that disputes be quickly brought to resolution and that villagers were back on speaking terms. This perhaps explains why almost all serious disputes in the diary utilized the services of intermediaries in their resolution. The diary tells us little about the choice of intermediaries, but there is no evidence to suggest that their selection was dictated by village elites or other village notables. Oftentimes the local priest, if one was available, mediated disputes; many disputes required the services of several intermediaries, especially if they involved people from more than one hamlet. As part of the final resolution, the parties to the disputes paid the expenses associated with mediation. The diary does not tell us what these expenses entailed, but we can assume that the disputants reimbursed the intermediaries for the costs of the food and sake consumed in the process of arbitration. The diary also suggests the importance of the final act of reconciliation. That expenses were associated with the reconciliation suggests that this was a formal affair, bringing together the two parties to raise their sake cups as a symbol of the restoration of harmonious ties.

Shōemon’s diary presents many other examples of attempts to resolve conflict and restore harmony to the village. One dispute involved the headman:

Concerning the matter of the village headman Hachirōbei and Hanzō of Himuki and Közō of Ōhira, [they were told that] they had to talk over and resolve [the dispute]
that had left them on bad terms since April of last year, so [these] three people came over [to my house]. After discussing it, both sides came to an agreement and reconciled.35

The diary does not tell us who initiated the process of mediation, but the fact that one of the disputants was the village headman suggests that arbitration was not simply mandated from above. Villagers themselves, or their hamlet associations, took the initiative. This concern with harmonious relations sometimes even extended to one’s associations with people in neighboring villages:

Both Chōjirō of Tomioka [village] and Tomizō of Kogaido came over. The gist of their conversation was that since last year Hikoshirō of Tomioka and Shōemon [the author of the diary] have been on bad terms. Recently [Hikoshirō’s wife] Okeru passed away. Hamlet association people learned about it and acted as go-betweens. [The above two people] said we must agree [to their mediation] and, moreover, said that we must be [on good terms] as we were in the past. Okeru [was buried] on 9/23, the fall equinox week. I visited her grave.36

In the above example, go-betweens from both villages mediated to ensure that Shōemon was back on good terms with his old friend Hikoshirō. Any rupture of ties immediately brought a response from concerned neighbors.

Not all disputes, of course, were resolved in an amicable way. The dispute over Motoemon’s actions is a case in point.37 Motoemon committed a serious breach of village regulations: he had cut down trees on a mountain owned by the village. The hamlet association met to discuss the case and, with two village officials as mediators, forced Motoemon to pay 2 ryō to cover miscellaneous costs, presumably relating to the meeting and the mediation, and 2 ryō for the cost of the trees. They also had him write a letter of apology to the diarist, who appears to have the overseer of the village commons. Shōemon himself, however, could not attend the meeting or take part in the deliberations, because his father was seriously ill.

Furious at the village’s decision, Shōemon tossed the letter of apology into the fire. This was not the way these things were supposed to be handled, he fumed. There had been a similar case in the past, and the village had drawn up regulations to ensure that it would not happen again. The fine stipulated in the regulations, he stated, was much harsher than that imposed on Motoemon.

Why was this so important to Shōemon? The land in contention was village commons and thus shared equally by all full-fledged members of the community. Indeed, these lands were vital to their survival as farmers. This is where they gathered grasses and leaves to use as fertilizer or to re-thatch their roofs, where they obtained fodder for their farm animals, where they collected firewood to use as fuel, and where they felled trees to use in the construction of their houses. Villagers could not walk into a village forest and take whatever they pleased. Resources were limited, so villages drew up detailed regulations for their use, including stipulations for when those areas could be entered and how much each family could take out.38 Motoemon was not ostracized from the community, but it was made clear that he had committed a serious infraction. Once settled, however, Motoemon once again became an integral member of the community. When his two children fell ill from an epidemic, villagers joined together in performing the hyakumanben nenbutsu, a religious ceremony in which they moved from house to house reciting invocations to the Buddha so as to dispel from the village the evil deity responsible for the contagion.39 Members of his hamlet association saw him off when he went on a pilgrimage to Ise with other villagers.40

35 IKN, 171.
36 IKN, 170.
37 IKN, 110-11.
Far more serious was the case involving Ji-rōkichi. Shōemon referred to Ji-rōkichi as a “house renter.” This was a very disparaging term, implying that he was not a regular member of the village and thus not to be accorded full rights. A serious problem arose in 1864, when Ji-rōkichi took in the younger sister of his wife. While in the care of Ji-rōkichi, she had an affair with someone and was now with child. Ji-rōkichi wanted the matter settled privately, with only his friend Tokubei assisting. He handed his sister-in-law over to the man responsible and received money from him, perhaps in compensation for the breach to the honor of his house.

The members of the village youth group, the wakamonogumi, soon learned of the incident and were outraged. In addition to arranging festivals and plays and other forms of village entertainment, youth groups like the one in Minami-osoki were responsible for protecting the unmarried daughters of the community. When a young woman got pregnant out of wedlock, they would march angrily to her parents’ house and to the house of the man responsible for getting her pregnant. They would demand satisfaction in the form of a monetary settlement, which they would promptly use to have a feast and to drink sake.

Ji-rōkichi refused to negotiate with the youth group, however. He said that the woman was his wife’s sister and from another village, and thus the case was of no concern to them. To the diarist Shōemon, this was an egregious transgression: Ji-rōkichi, this “house renter,” was ruining the reputation of the hamlet. Tempers flared on both sides, with each refusing to budge from their respective positions. Infuriated, members of the hamlet association decided to take drastic measures. In addition to ordering Ji-rōkichi to pack up and leave, they imposed mura hachibu on his chief supporter Tokubei, informing him that they would have nothing to do with him henceforth. This was a most extraordinary measure, compelling the village headman and farmers from other parts of the village to intervene. The headman, in particular, was infuriated by the rash actions of the hamlet association. Through the use of intermediaries, the various sides to the dispute arrived at a settlement, with Ji-rōkichi having to pay 1 ryō in sake costs.

The incident with Ji-rōkichi can be seen in several different lights. Obviously, it demonstrates the coercive power of the community. Villagers could not simply do whatever they pleased. There were clear regulations and codes of conduct to follow, and those breaching them faced serious reprisal. The headman’s response to the hamlet association’s decision suggests, however, that expulsion and ostracism were most exceptional forms of community sanction. The imposition of such sanctions brought an immediate response from both the headman and other villagers. At the same time, we must recognize the extraordinary efforts villagers took to resolve the conflict. The neighborhood association held six days of meetings to discuss the case; on three of those days the meeting lasted from the morning until the evening, and a fourth meeting lasted from the afternoon until the early hours of the morning.

The community’s tremendous coercive powers can also be found in its response to Jūzaemon. Like so many people in late Tokugawa and early Meiji society, Jūzaemon was intensely religious. A problem arose, though, because he had become a follower of the outlawed Nichiren sect and had brought his faith into the public sphere. In 1869 he and other adherents recited prayers at a village assembly. When the youth group expressed its displeasure, villagers ordered Jūzaemon to sign a document stating that he would no longer recite prayers publicly and that he would not lodge Nichiren adherents from other areas. He also had to pay 2 ryō for the expenditures involved in the dispute. The measures had little effect. Two months later there was a report that he was continuing to pray in public. Villagers again reprimanded him and ordered him to pay additional expenses for settling the dispute. Another two months later, they went a step further. They tore down the temple he had built for Nichiren adherents. This is the last we hear about Jūzaemon in the context of his religious

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42 IKN, 141.
43 IKN, 143.
activities. The villagers had sent him an unmistakable message; they had clearly defined the boundaries of his religious activities.

How typical was this village? Perhaps equally important, how typical was the author of the diary? Undoubtedly, there was a variety of responses to issues relating to conflict and cooperation in the nineteenth-century village. There were differences among regions in the extent of cooperation. Rice cultivation regions, for example, required a much higher degree of collective activity in the fields than dry field forms of agriculture. What diaries reveal most vividly, however, is that villages were populated with very distinct personalities. You see glimpses of these personalities not only in people like Yoshisaburō and Seitarō and Jūzaemon but also in the author of the diary himself, Ichikawa Shōemon. Shōemon displays an extraordinary level of commitment to the community of which he was a part. When neighbors needed assistance, he was always there to lend a helping hand. His diary reminds us that, when historians focus on the “local,” they must keep in mind that the “local” spoke in multiple voices.

At the same time, every village maintained some degree of collective life. In addition to the examples of collective activity mentioned above, farmers joined together in myriad ways. According to the findings of Watanabe Takashi, Suwa area villages took out loans as a unit in times of need; they hired teachers for the local school, as well as doctors to treat their sick. They collectively owned the equipment necessary to fight fires. They maintained storehouses to house their tax rice and officials documents.

Villagers also celebrated together in a host of festivals and religious observances. At festivals for the local guardian deity, they performed plays and held sumō matches. Shōemon’s diary and the diaries of other western Musashi farmers attest to the importance of the himachi celebration. Literally “waiting for the sun,” the himachi had religious origins, but in the late Tokugawa and Meiji it also served as a social gathering, a time when neighbors celebrated together on particular days of the year or after completing a particular task. Shōemon’s diary mentions around ninety-five such occasions. Kuroyama Gisaburō’s diary contains similar entries: a himachi for ritual purification after a body was found dead on the road; a himachi held after the lion mask dance festival; another held after finishing the felling of trees on a local mountain; yet another to worship the local guardian deity, to name but a few. Women, too, frequently held their own himachi; they also got together to recite the nenbutsu.

What compelled farmers to cooperate? As with any social practice, origins can be most elusive. In part it stemmed from the very structure of late Tokugawa society. Villages operated within the muradaka system, by which authorities assigned them responsibility as a unit for tax collection, corvee, and the maintenance of peace. Authorities, too, imposed regulations on the gonin gumi to ensure that farmers dedicated themselves to agriculture and obeyed dictates from above; they held them mutually responsible for transgressions and wrongdoing. Also, villages had no staff to collect taxes, no paid labor to engage in public works projects, no police to maintain the peace. Responsibility for these various tasks rested entirely with the farmers themselves, so most villages devised regulations to ensure an equitable distribution of duties. In every village there were teams for repairing or building roads and bridges or for clearing them of snow. Villagers also had to ensure equitable access to the raw materials necessary for their survival as farmers.

Perhaps, too, a growing need to cooperate appeared with the collapse of patriarchal farm units in the seventeenth century. Small farmers now had to join together to take over the functions once monopolized by families of distinguished lineage. Having won their independence, these smallholders vigorously sought to

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45 See, for example, *IKN*, 70.
47 Ibid., 59, 82.
ensure equality of access to the raw materials necessary for their survival as farmers. Their regulations also guaranteed them the labor necessary for house construction and re-thatching, tasks that required more than their families could supply. Tied together by such means, it is not surprising that farmers found other avenues for cooperation, as well.

It was not my intention here to negate or even to downplay the importance of conflict in nineteenth-century rural life. Anyone who has worked in village archives knows the folly of such an endeavor, because the volume of materials relating to conflict is staggering. This paper, too, reinforces contentions concerning the troubled conditions in rural Japan, especially in the decades bracketing the Meiji Restoration. But it also seems clear that the existence of conflict does not necessarily preclude vibrant collective activity. Indeed, we might even argue that crisis might strengthen the collective impulse all the more. At the same time, rural collective activity should not be eulogized. Farmers’ activities came under the close scrutiny of their neighbors and, on some matters, the community had considerable power over an individual’s actions.

EDITOR’S NOTE:

As several pages in this issue indicate, EMJ occasionally has need of illustrations that we can use to accompany articles. It would be helpful if we had an archive of photographs and other illustrations on a wide variety of subjects relevant to early modern Japanese studies. If you have, or know of, appropriate material (digital or hard copy) that we might save for future use please contact Philip Brown at the following e-mail: brown.113@osu.edu. If you hold copyright, we would like written permission to use your material (we will, of course, acknowledge your copyright and permission). If you suggest material for which you do not have copyright, it would be helpful if you could provide contact information to obtain copyright for the material.

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48 Ōshima makes this point in Kinsei nōmin shihai, 377-88.
Lost in History: Aizu and the Meiji Restoration
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On a hillside overlooking Gold Trail Elementary School in an area of Coloma, California, known as Gold Hill, there is a solitary grave of a young woman who died nearly 130 years ago. One side of the headstone reads, “In Memory of OKEI, Died 1871. Aged 19 years. (A Japanese Girl).” The other side is written in Japanese: [nihon kokoku meiji shinen, gappi bossu, OKEI no haka, gyonen jukyusai]

Okei was a member of what is known as the Wakamatsu Colony; a group of more than twenty Japanese who arrived in northern California in the summer of 1869. Lasting for two years, the Wakamatsu colonists built a tea and silk farm which was initially successful but ultimately failed due to a lack of water and a lack of money. Most of the colonists then left the area, and the fates of only three are known in any detail. Okei was one of three Japanese who remained in Coloma.1 Tragically, she died – perhaps from malaria – soon after the breakup of the colony.

As the Wakamatsu Colony existed two decades before Japanese immigration to the United States was even a trickle, why did this group of Japanese leave their familiar home in Aizu and embark on a perilous journey overseas?2 The short answer is that they were from Wakamatsu, the castle town of Aizu domain, and were subjects of Aizu’s daimyo, Matsudaira Katamori—a prominent opponent of the Satsuma and Choshu-led movement that ultimately overthrew the shogun and the bakufu government. The Wakamatsu colonists were on the losing side of the Meiji Restoration; and like many people who end up on the losing side of political upheaval, they left their country as refugees in search of a new life.

This paper does not directly explore the issue of how these early Japanese immigrants struggled to survive in a strange land. It explores the issue of why they fled Japan for a strange land. Moreover, this paper challenges Japan’s national narrative, a narrative that asserts a relatively peaceful transfer of power from the Tokugawa bakufu to the samurai leaders from Satsuma and Choshu who claimed their tōbaku (anti-bakufu) movement in the name of the Emperor.

Matsudaira Katamori, Aizu and Civil War

When United States Navy Commodore Matthew Perry and his fleet of “black ships” appeared in Uraga Bay near Edo in 1853, Japan was thrown into a state of confusion about how to deal with the threat from the West. Two and a

1Sakurai Matsunosuke worked as a farmhand and lived the remainder of his life in Coloma, where he died and was buried in 1901. It was Sakurai who had the headstone made for Okei’s grave. Masumizu Kuninosuke lived in Coloma for more than ten years before moving to Sacramento, and then on to Colusa where he died in 1915. While in Coloma, Masumizu married Carrie Wilson, a woman of Indian and African-American descent, and they had at least three children who survived infancy. Masumizu’s descendants are the only known descendants of the Japanese who left Aizu and came to California as part of the Wakamatsu Colony. See Note 4 for sources on the Wakamatsu Colony.

2According to Ninth Census of the United States, The Statistics of the Population of the United States [1870], Volume 1, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1872, p. 8, pp. 15-16, and pp. 90-91, there were 55 Japanese in the United States. Thirty-three were in California; of these 22 were in El Dorado County, all at Gold Hill in Coloma. The 1870 federal census is the first that lists Japanese residents in the United States. The unpublished manuscript schedules of the 1870 Census, State of California, El Dorado County contain the names of 22 Japanese at Coloma Township.

half centuries after the West had been kicked out of Japan (with the exception of the handful of Dutch allowed on Deshima Island in Nagasaki Bay), they were back. Unlike two and a half centuries earlier, the Western powers—even a middling power such as the United States—were now far more powerful than Japan, both economically and militarily. The Tokugawa shoguns had no practical alternative except to sign lopsided agreements on trade, extraterritoriality, and other matters. The *baku-han* system, upon which the legitimacy and hegemony of the Tokugawa bakufu depended, had been unraveling for many years. And then Perry’s arrival and the subsequent “unequal treaties” ripped wide open a Pandora’s Box of long-simmering grievances among daimyo, their samurai vassals, and the Tokugawa bakufu. A few *tozama* domains with large numbers of samurai and the all-but-forgotten imperial house grabbed this golden opportunity of Western-induced commotion to challenge the legitimacy of Tokugawa bakufu rule.

Matsudaira Katamori (1835-1893) did not fit into the two major categories of daimyo: *fudai* (hereditary vassal of the Tokugawa shogunate) and *tozama* (outside lord).\(^4\) He was one of a small number of *kamon* daimyo, a division of *shimpan* daimyo, who were related to the ruling Tokugawa family.\(^5\) Hoshina Masayuki (1611-1672), considered the founder of Aizu domain, was a son of Tokugawa Hidetada, the second Tokugawa shogun. Because Hoshina’s biological mother was one of Hidetada’s concubines, Hidetada’s wife insisted that their son Iemitsu succeed Hidetada as shogun. Nevertheless, Hoshina and all Aizu daimyo who succeeded him were close advisors to the Tokugawa shogunate.

In 1862, with Kyoto fast becoming the headquarters for the anti-bakufu movement, the shogun appointed twenty-six year-old Matsudaira Katamori of Aizu as *shugoshoku* (“defender”) of the imperial capital. In this hazardous position, Matsudaira carefully navigated between the disparate anti-bakufu forces who demanded Japan’s return to the national seclusion policy and the expulsion of all foreigners, and the bakufu which contended that increased, regulated contact and trade with the West was regrettable but inevitable.\(^6\) In a message to the bakufu in late 1862, Matsudaira criticized the shogun’s government for treating foreigners “with consideration,” leading to “a truly grievous state of affairs.”\(^7\) Yet, he also disparaged the idea of returning to the policy of national seclusion because Japan would then “have no means of understanding foreign conditions and adopting their ways where they are good.”\(^8\) By this Matsudaira meant that Westerners “built great ships and guns” which he believed would help strengthen Japan’s own military forces.\(^9\) Such views may appear contradictory, but they demonstrate Matsudaira’s belief in Sakuma Shozan’s “Eastern ethics, West-

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\(^5\)Another way to delineate the difference is that *sanke* daimyo (from the Tokugawa domains of Mito, Owari, and Ki) were the senior *shimpan* while the *kamon* were the junior *shimpan*. This difference among *shimpan* daimyo, however, was not always clear.


\(^8\)Ibid., p. 226.

\(^9\)Ibid.
ern science” philosophy that many samurai adopted during the turbulent bakumatsu era. Furthermore, as Harold Bolitho writes of Matsudaira during this period, he “managed to tread a very distinct path which, while leaving him on reasonably good terms with both bakufu and Court also helped him avoid anything like a total commitment to either of them.” Evidence of this can be found in the November 1862 message to the bakufu cited above, in which Matsudaira identified himself as an advocate of kōbu gattai (court-bakufu harmony); a vague, middle-of-the-road policy promoted by a handful of daimyo and court nobles.

Relations between Matsudaira and the samurai of Satsuma, Choshu, and other anti-bakufu proponents in Kyoto were anything but harmonious. Political intrigue, assassinations, and sporadic fighting typified the fractious relationship among these anti-bakufu groups and Matsudaira’s forces throughout the 1860s. Satsuma officials challenged Aizu by trying to have their own daimyo, Shimazu Hisamitsu, replace Matsudaira as defender of Kyoto immediately after the Aizu daimyo took up his post. Samurai from Choshu, generally considered more radical and belligerent than those from Satsuma, were quick to defy bakufu policies and constantly antagonized the Aizu daimyo and his samurai in Kyoto. In 1864, Matsudaira wanted to battle Choshu samurai encamped just outside of the imperial city, but the shogun demurred. The following year, Matsudaira helped lead the first bakufu campaign against Choshu domain, which ended when Choshu officials pledged their allegiance to the shogun. In 1866, he became furious with the bakufu for calling off the second campaign against Choshu. In essence, while Matsudaira promoted the fence-riding policy of court-bakufu harmony, his military policy was staunchly oriented against Satsuma and Choshu.

Soon after Tokugawa Yoshinobu resigned his post as shogun in late 1867, the imperial court dismissed Matsudaira and his Aizu samurai from guarding the palace in Kyoto. They were replaced by Satsuma and Choshu samurai, who had gained control of the imperial court and the fifteen-year-old Emperor. In late January 1868, the forces of Aizu and Kuwana (the domain of Matsudaira’s brother, Sadaaki), along with bakufu samurai from other Tokugawa domains, were defeated in fierce battles with Satsuma, Choshu and other newly-designated “imperial forces” at Toba and Fushimi outside Kyoto. Won by the imperial forces, these military encounters marked the end of 268 years of Tokugawa bakufu control of Japan, and the beginning of the Meiji Era. They also represented the beginning of a civil war, known as the Boshin War, that raged throughout most of 1868.

The imperial forces marched to Edo and took control of the shogun’s capital, of nearby Yokohama, and of the central government after a few days of fighting against Tokugawa loyalists. The new government, consisting primarily of samurai from Satsuma and Choshu, issued an imperial proclamation declaring that Matsudaira and the Aizu domain were “traitors” fighting in the “rebellion.” Tokugawa Yoshinobu gave up all his powers to the Emperor and quietly returned to his home domain of Mito. Matsudaira and his samurai returned to Aizu in northern Japan and prepared for war.

Matsudaira refused to capitulate because the new imperial forces had yet to prove that they actually controlled Japan. Japan had over 250 semi-autonomous domains and it would be an enormous burden to centralize and control such an unwieldy conglomeration of mini-states. Moreover, Matsudaira and some other northern daimyo considered the “imperial restoration” as little more than a coup by their hated southern rivals, a coup that might not succeed if decisively challenged. In 1868, no one knew that the Satsuma/Choshu coup would ultimately succeed and

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the result would be the Meiji Restoration.

Matsudaira may not have realized that among his supporters were Americans living in Japan. A United States Navy doctor stationed in Yokohama gleefully wrote in his diary on May 26, 1868, that “Aidzu has flogged the troops of Satsuma in every engagement. From all accounts the cause of Aidzu is not a bad one. We are all anxious to see him win the day...” The next day he wrote, “Everyone is an Aidzu man now.” Matsudaira probably received such unsolicited support because American officials presumed he was fighting on behalf of the shogun, whom they credited with “observing the treaties, and of strengthening the friendly relations with other countries, especially the United States...” Robert Van Valkenberg, the American minister to Japan, maintained formal neutrality during Japan’s civil war; but his messages to the State Department throughout 1868 clearly indicated his support for Matsudaira and Shogun Yoshinobu. He even allowed the shogun and some of his bakufu officials safe haven aboard the United States Navy’s Iroquois anchored in Osaka Bay after the battles at Toba and Fushimi. In comparison with the constant anti-foreign rhetoric of the anti-bakufu forces and the danger posed by anti-foreign rōnin, the shogun and Matsudaira appeared supportive of American interests to American diplomats.

After battling other northern domains in the summer of 1868, the imperial forces marched into Aizu in September. The single most famous, tragic, and romanticized event in Aizu’s long history took place during this war when twenty teenaged boys of the Byakkotai (“White Tiger Brigade”) committed mass suicide because they mistakenly thought Tsuruga Castle in Wakamatsu—Matsudaira’s headquarters—was burning down.

An estimated 30,000 troops besieged Tsuruga Castle. Inside the castle were 3,000 samurai and 2,000 dependents. The imperial armies plundered and burned much of the city of Wakamatsu. Many of the elderly, women, and children living in the city committed suicide during this violent rampage by soldiers from Satsuma and Choshu. The invading forces then sealed off the entrances to the castle and began a massive bombardment. Out of food, with many of his samurai dead or dying, Matsudaira realized the futility of further resistance and surrendered on November 5, 1868. Aizu lost nearly 3,000 samurai from the beginning of 1868 to Matsudaira’s surrender in November. This was more than twice as many as any other domain resisting the “ imperial” armies. Satsuma and Choshu, Bolitho writes, “gambled and won, earning for themselves positions of national eminence and responsibility.” Matsudaira and Aizu gambled and lost, earning the opprobrium of being stubborn opponents of the new imperial order.

Satsuma and Choshu had condemned Matsudaira to death before the battles and Toba and Fushimi. Yet, surprisingly he was spared the death sentence despite his prominent role in the civil war. He and Tokugawa Yoshinobu were

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15Ibid., p. 49.
17Numerous messages from Van Valkenberg to Secretary of State William H. Seward in the 1867-1869 volumes of FRUS and Despatches attest to his support for the shogun and Matsudaira.
18FRUS 1867-68, Pt. 1, Van Valkenberg to Seward, February 3, 1868, p. 636. According to this message, the shogun was aboard the Iroquois for two hours while waiting for his own ship to arrive and take him back to Edo.
19For a personal account, see Goro Shiba, Remembering Aizu: The Testament of Shiba Goro Mahito Ishimitsu).
21For example, Shiba Goro’s grandmother, mother, two sisters, and one sister-in-law committed suicide during the destruction of Wakamatsu. See Shiba, pp. 54-59. The number of people who committed suicide during the Boshin War in Aizu is unknown, but it was certainly in the hundreds.
formally pardoned in a decree issued the following year. Charles De Long, who replaced Van Valkenberg as the United States’ Minister to Japan, believed that the new government, well-aware of its precarious control over Japan, decided not to execute the Aizu daimyo because it feared that his death by execution or ritual suicide would have the “inevitable consequences” of elevating him to martyrdom and act as a unifying symbol to daimyo still incensed at the new Satsuma/Choshu-dominated government. After a brief period of imprisonment, Matsudaira became a Shinto priest and eventually served for many years as the chief priest at Toshogu Shrine in Nikko, the mausoleum of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the founder of the Tokugawa shogunate.

The people of Aizu faced a bitter winter in 1868-1869. The wartime destruction of Waka-matsu and the surrounding areas led to impending starvation and yonaoshi (“world rectification”) uprisings throughout Aizu. The new imperial government took direct charge of the domain’s affairs and, writes Marius Jansen, “no other domain was treated as harshly” as Aizu in the aftermath of the civil war. Disillusioned, destitute, and branded as traitors, thousands of Aizu’s people migrated to northern Tohoku and Hokkaido in search of food, refuge, and a new life in post-Tokugawa Japan. Many of those who left Aizu were forced by the imperial government to move to a newly created, dreary domain on the Shimokita Peninsula in the northernmost corner of Honshu. The destruction of Aizu, resulting from the political transformation from Tokugawa to Meiji, also pushed a handful of these refugees to seek a new life by establishing a tea and silk colony in a strange, overseas land they may have heard of but certainly knew almost nothing about: the California frontier.

Lost In History

Aizu’s prominent position in the history of the Meiji Restoration has been noted in a few specialist works (especially by Harold Bolitho), and the Boshin War is often noted—albeit briefly—in Japanese language narratives of modern Japanese history. Yet, in most survey narratives of Japan history by Western or Japanese scholars, Aizu’s role in the Meiji Restoration is at most only briefly mentioned despite Matsudaira Katamori and Aizu’s prominence as the most active opponents of the Satsuma and Choshu-dominated “imperial” coalition. Why has Aizu been lost in this extremely important and influential event of Japan’s history? There are, I believe three interrelated reasons.

First is that the loser’s version of history is rarely the dominant national narrative—and Aizu was clearly on the losing side of the Meiji Restoration.

Second is that the nineteenth century was, in addition to being a century of industrialization, a century of nationalist emphasis. France, Britain, Germany, the United States, and then Japan created national symbols and emphasized national traditions, including the promotion of national narratives. In Japan, nationalism was increasingly emphasized from the 1868 Meiji Restoration onwards as a method of creating unity among a historically diverse people whose primary political and social loyalties were to their villages and domains.

Third, the once semi-autonomous, semi-independent domains of the Tokugawa era were transformed into fewer prefectures, which were

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25 Ibid., De Long to Fish, November 26, 1869.
26 Stephen Vlastos, Peasant Protests and Uprisings In Tokugawa Japan, pp. 142-53.
28 Aizu no Rekishi, pp. 127-28. The population of the city of Wakamatsu dropped from 70,000 before the civil war to around 16,000 afterwards.
were increasingly controlled by a central government creating and promoting a nationalist ideology. In other words, disparate regional areas of Japan were turned into peripheries of the nation, and the core of the nation was the newly re-named capital of Tokyo, which would be controlled for more than two generations by the former samurai of Satsuma and Choshu (and to a lesser extent by their former allies from Tosa and Hizen). These former samurai controlled not only the nation but also the nation’s history, which taught that there had not been a violent transfer of political power from the old regime to the new regime as was common among other nations. According to this national history, there had been a peaceful transfer from the shogun to the Emperor because from the dawn of time Japanese had always been unique, united, and virtuous.

During the twilight of the Tokugawa Era and the dawn of the Meiji Era, Japan underwent a momentous political transformation, a transformation that in many ways charted the course of Japan’s history in the 19th and 20th centuries. Aizu was caught in the midst of this political transformation. Worldwide nationalism and nationalization of Japan left little room in the historical narrative for those who had challenged the new rulers and the new political order of the Meiji Restoration.

Epilogue

In the 1960s, local historians in Aizu and northern California managed to get the Japanese American Citizens League and the California State government to designate 1969 as the centennial year of Japanese immigration to the United States because of the arrival of the Wakamatsu colonists in 1869. Governor Ronald Reagan and Japanese Consul General Shima Seiichi came to Coloma on June 7, 1969 and dedicated a state historical plaque at the former site of the Wakamatsu Colony. One of the sponsors of the centennial year and the dedication ceremony was the Bank of Tokyo of California, whose chairman was Matsudaira Ichiro, the grandson of Matsudaira Katamori. Every year in Aizu there is a ceremony on Mt. Iimori to honor the memory of those who sacrificed their lives during the Boshin War. This solemn ceremony is always attended by descendants of Matsudaira Katamori. The memory of Aizu’s history may have been conveniently and deliberately forgotten by the national narrative, but the people of Aizu have continued to remember those who sacrificed and struggled on behalf of Aizu’s challenge to the Tokugawa-Meiji transformation of Japan.
Meiji Education and the Uses of Local History
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One of the most ambitious, radical nationalizing projects in world history occurred in Japan during the last few decades of the nineteenth century. A loose network of relatively autonomous domains was transformed into a rationalized, hierarchical political structure guided by an (eventually) powerful central government in Tokyo. This new Meiji government formally abolished status distinctions in order to erase the intermediary boundaries that stood between the people and the national state, thereby weakening alternative, non-national loci of identification. The Meiji government also drew the boundaries of local life (with school districts, new units of political administration, Shinto shrine registration districts, and so on) in order to heighten the sense of discontinuity with pre-existing local identities and patterns of life, creating new people undistracted in their identification with each other and with the new government.

Another radical reform essential to the Meiji government's nationalizing project was the creation of a centralized, compulsory educational system. Schools were deemed necessary to inculcate future generations with the knowledge and values that were important to the modernizing nation, and to integrate children and families on a daily basis into the institutions of the state. In addition, the new school system played a central role in the Meiji government's attempt to stigmatize the local. The two principles that defined the new educational system were centralization and standardization; in the minds of early Meiji officials, these principles served as counterweights to the backwards, narrow-minded influence of old, evil schooling practices entrenched in the village. The government sought to bring new schools to isolated mountain villages, illuminating the dark corners of the local with the light of the nation.

Whether our focus is on official ideology, institutional development, or popular consciousness, our analysis of Meiji education is unavoidably structured by the narrative of nationalization—even if we successfully divest that narrative of its late nineteenth-century moral connotations (which is done with surprising infrequency). Historians of Meiji education who purport to engage in "local history" must therefore confront some basic questions: When studying a time (the Tokugawa-Meiji transition) and a topic (education) in which nationalization is of such obvious importance, what is the role of local history? Can the local history of Meiji education pose a challenge to national narratives, despite the fact that the educational system played such a crucial—and effective—part in the effort to establish those narratives as unchallengeable? This essay explores some of the ways in which postwar historians in Japan and the West have addressed these questions. In addition, based on my own investigation of educational system-building in Nagano prefecture, I suggest an alternative way of conceptualizing the challenge that local history can pose to national narratives—a challenge in which local history is used not principally to negate or critique the emergence of the national state, but to highlight the influence of local society upon the national state's formation.

As Philip Brown discusses in the comments for this volume, local history has played only a marginal role in the English-language historiography on Tokugawa and Meiji Japan for much of early Meiji years, but the most influential example is the prologue to the 1872 Fundamental Code of Education (Gakusei). For an English translation of this document, see Herbert Passin, Society and Education in Japan, New York: Columbia University, Teachers College Press, 1965, pp. 210-211.

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2One can find such rhetoric in most official pronouncements on education during the early Meiji years, but the most influential example is the prologue to the 1872 Fundamental Code of Education (Gakusei). For an English translation of this document, see Herbert Passin, Society and Education in Japan, New York: Columbia University, Teachers College Press, 1965, pp. 210-211.
the postwar period. As Brown points out, a number of scholars have focused their research on specific localities, but most of these scholars selected these localities either because they played significant roles in a national historical narrative (for example, Choshu), or because those localities were deemed typical or representative enough to illustrate presumably "national" trends. The few monographs published in the field of educational history follow this general pattern. For example, Ronald Dore's study of Tokugawa education culls data from various prefectures, but Dore's purpose in using such local data is to find evidence of national trends. Richard Rubinger's book examines a number of private academies in Tokugawa Japan (many of which were located outside of the urban centers of Edo, Tokyo, and Osaka), making extensive use of archival material relating to these institutions. However, Rubinger examines these local institutions precisely because their significance transcended the locality: he argues that these schools played an instrumental role in breaking down regional isolation, cultivating a national consciousness, and creating a group of elites who would later assume roles of national leadership in the Meiji state. In other words, educational historians, too, have either assumed an explicitly national focus or have used local studies to reaffirm the primacy of the nation as the legitimate unit of analysis.

This emphasis on national narratives and the subsequent marginalization of local history is not surprising, given the influence of modernization theory upon the Japan field in the postwar period. In Cold War-era modernization theory, the nation-state was almost invariably the subject of historical inquiry, for it represented the culmination of the process of modernization. "Becoming modern" was seen as the pivotal experience in human history, and this process necessarily took place in the setting of the nation and reached its fulfillment in the modern nation-state. Even when studying time periods (like the Tokugawa period) in which the nation-state did not yet exist, Western scholars of Japan nevertheless took as their spatial focus the geographical territory that would eventually constitute the boundaries of the nation-state. Indeed, if we see Japanese history through the framework of modernization (as it was defined by postwar scholars in the West), local boundaries and particularities are significant only in their inevitable disappearance: since modernization is characterized by centralization, standardization, and nationalization, then the image of Japan as a "success story" of modernization presumes that Japan had overcome local differences to become a national unit.

As many critics of modernization theory...
have pointed out, this focus on modernization often leads scholars to privilege those elements of the pre-modern historical experience that presumably contributed to Japan's modernization, while marginalizing those that presumably did not. The case of educational history is instructive here. Tokugawa education was, by all accounts, decentralized, unstandardized, and distinctly local in structure and orientation. However, since postwar scholars studied Tokugawa education with the explicit goal of evaluating its contribution to educational modernization during the Meiji period—in Dore's words, its "legacy"—they either de-emphasized these pre-modern (or anti-modern) aspects of the Tokugawa schooling experience or treated them as remnants that would eventually be overcome during the process of modernization. In turn, when narrating the shift from Tokugawa to Meiji, scholars taking this perspective usually privileged continuity over disruption, characterizing the process as a relatively smooth, consensual transition.

While the emphasis on modernization, viewed and modeled at the national level, continued to prevail in the West during the first few decades after World War Two, the same period in Japan generated a widespread interest in local history. Mainstream historical scholarship in Japan continued to focus mainly on the geographic unit of the nation—or, to focus on specific localities in order to demonstrate how they exemplify and illustrate national trends. However, professional and amateur historians—especially those working in prefectural universities, archives, museums, and other local research institutions—began to produce voluminous scholarship with the primary purpose of exploring the particular historical experience of the locality. Though we can trace the genealogy of Japanese local history back to prewar (and earlier) literary and intellectual developments, the postwar local history movement (under the rubric chihōshi) began in the 1950s and culminated in the 1970s and 80s with the widespread publication of local histories at the prefectural, city, and village level. This burgeoning of local history was fueled by a number of interrelated factors, including the reaction (particularly of leftist academics) against both wartime nationalism and the postwar conservative government, the political movement against excessive centralization, the critique of Western modernity, the fear that high-speed economic growth would result in the permanent loss of Japan's national heritage and cultural identity, and the creation of formal institutions entrusted with the task of preserving the cultural and historical resources of the locality.


8 The term "legacy" is used in the title of the final chapter of Dore's Education in Tokugawa Japan, and also in his article, "The Legacy of Tokugawa Education," in Jansen, ed., Changing Japanese Attitudes Toward Modernization. Richard Rubinger, for example, addresses these characteristics of the Tokugawa educational experience in some detail, framing them as "traditional patterns" and contrasting them with "modern portents" that were also present in Tokugawa education. Rubinger, "Education: From One Room to One System," in Marius Jansen and Gilbert Rozman, eds., Japan in Transition: From Tokugawa to Meiji, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986, pp. 196-202. Consequently, though Rubinger gives "traditional patterns" and "modern portents" equal treatment, the former are inevitably relegated to a marginal role in the historical narrative when the goal of history is modernity. As a result, "the local" again loses out in the narrative of nationalization and modernization, serving as a witness to its own impending irrelevance.

9Harootunian, "America's Japan, Japan's Japan."


11Amino Yoshihiko traces some of the factors behind the postwar local history movement in "Undō to shite no chikishiki kenkyū o megute," in Asao Naohiro, et. al., eds., Iwanami kōza Nihon tsūshi,
Although this local history movement did not develop as a critique of the postwar Western focus on the process of national modernization, its explicitly local focus resulted in scholarship that undermines some of the assumptions of modernization theory. For example, in contrast to the image of the Tokugawa-Meiji transition as an essentially smooth, consensual process, local historians in Japan who focused on the local response to the Meiji government's reforms revealed that this transition was far from conflict-free. This is particularly the case in the study of Meiji educational reform, which was often seen by Western historians as a success story of rapid change, a positive transformation that was initiated by a reformist state but one that received the full cooperation of the Japanese people. However, local historians in Japan discovered not only a tremendous gap between central policy and local conditions, but also uncovered a significant amount of local resistance to Meiji educational reforms. Incidents that appear to be mere bumps in the road from the perspective of long-term, inevitable nationalization, often reveal themselves as moments of real opposition to the basic principles of the government's vision of education.

The most obvious example of this resistance took the form of the “anti-new order uprisings” (shinsei hantai sōjō), in when villagers destroyed nearly two hundred new schools in around ten separate riots in the years following the promulgation of the new education laws in 1872. Newly appointed teachers were attacked, and some were beaten to death with bamboo clubs. Protesters perceived the new schools as a symbol of the unpopular reforms that had been enforced by the Meiji government—in particular, the new land tax, the conscription laws, and the liberation of the burakumin. In turn, the destruction of the schools expressed popular opposition and anxiety, both towards these reforms and towards the new government that had initiated them.

But popular opposition was not confined to general statements of hostility or uncertainty. Particularly during the second wave of anti-new school uprisings in 1876-77, protesters expressed more specific criticisms of the new educational policies. In particular, they resented the fact that the new government expected localities to pay for this intrusive institution. The principle of local funding was not new: pre-Meiji commoner schools, too, were funded by the community in which they were located. However, the new system of educational funding, outlined in the 1872 Fundamental Code of Education, departed from pre-Meiji precedent in two important ways. First, while pre-Meiji commoner schools were funded by the tuition payments of children who actually attended the school, Meiji schools were funded primarily by school taxes—which were usually levied upon all families, regardless of whether or not their children attended the new schools. Second, pre-Meiji schools were both funded and controlled at the local level; there existed no institutional mechanism by which the Tokugawa bakufu or domain governments influenced the practices of these local institutions. As a result, the schools necessarily responded to the demands and expectations of the families who paid for the school. In contrast, while the Meiji government passed the burden of school funding onto the locality, the central government reserved for itself ultimate legal authority over the administration of each local school. Both local officials and ordinary people recognized this contradiction between local funding and central control, and often resented it. For example, protesters in

_bekkan 2: Chiikitshi kenkyū no genjō to kadai, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1994, pp. 105-113._


Gifu articulated such a recognition when, after destroying several new school buildings, they approached a new school held in an old building and destroyed only the new equipment housed inside, carefully avoiding any damage to the structure itself. Protesters in Mie also expressed a resentment of the new principle of central control when they burned over forty schools while shouting the slogan, "Destroy and burn everything that belongs to the government!" In other words, these protesters were arguing that the local school now "belonged to" the government, by virtue of the fact that local administrative control over the new schools had been wrested from the locality by the central government. Burning the schools, in turn, articulated both an awareness and resentment of the fact that local people had to pay for an institution that did not serve their interests. Other complaints articulated by the Japanese people about the content, schedules, and other aspects of the new schools were informed by a recognition of this basic contradiction.

In Nagano prefecture, the focus of my own research, there were no such violent uprisings in opposition to the Meiji school system. In fact, just as Western scholars have often held up Japan as a model of rapid, yet peaceful, educational reform, Nagano was often held up by the Meiji government itself as the model for other localities to emulate: the project of establishing new schools and encouraging parents to send their children to them proceeded more rapidly in Nagano than anywhere else in the country. And yet, even in Nagano, I have found various non-violent forms of local opposition to Meiji educational reforms. For example, pre-Meiji village schoolteachers who were both criticized and left unemployed by the Meiji education laws often spread rumors about the new schools, impeded fundraising efforts, and even re-opened their old schools illegally. Families defied authorities by refusing to pay the new school taxes, and, more commonly, simply refused to send their children to the new schools. These were not the acts of a stubborn peasantry opposed to the very idea of formal education; in fact, towns and villages throughout Nagano had established over six thousand schools during the century and a half that preceded the Meiji Restoration in 1868, with essentially no support from political authorities. Consequently, we should see these acts as strategic statements of opposition to specific aspects of the new school system that people deemed undesirable—for example, compulsory attendance, centralized control, rigid schedules, school taxes, irrelevant curriculum, and so on.

One does not necessarily have to do local history to identify these acts of resistance. Indeed, some of the scholarship on popular resistance to the new school system—particularly those works on large-scale, violent rebellions—has been done by scholars who probably would not assume the mantle of "local historian." Nevertheless, we are more likely to ascribe significance to these acts of opposition when the geographic focus is narrower: the stakes seem much larger, the effects more immediate, the tragedies more personal. This is undoubtedly one reason why Japanese scholars have positioned the local overwhelmingly as a site of resistance—or, more broadly, as a site of alterity—vis à vis the Japanese state. Unlike those Western scholars who implicitly celebrated Japanese modernization and its concomitants, many postwar Japanese scholars have lamented these developments, emplotting them into a tragic narrative of loss, betrayal, and thwarted potential. Neither Marxist historians nor People's Historians, who reflect the two major historiographical perspectives in postwar Japanese scholarship, necessarily oppose modernity itself. Rather, they espouse visions of an alternative modernity, one that is more democratic and (for People's Historians) more authentically Japanese than the modernity that eventually took shape in nineteenth and twentieth century Japan.

14Hori, p. 24.

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and People's Historians in Japan link the suppression of these alternative modernities with the rise of an absolutist, centralized Japanese state, the local becomes an effective site of alterity vis a vis the Japanese state—a site where the Japanese people attempted, nobly but futilely, to resist the state. Local history, in turn, often functions to recover those voices of opposition from the past, and provides the weight of historical precedent to voices of opposition in the present. The case of education is especially relevant here, as educational historians often emphasize the suppression of local, dissenting voices during the formation of the modern educational system in order to critique the highly centralized, bureaucratic educational system of the present.

Although local history can indeed provide an effective foundation from which to challenge the narrative of a smooth, consensual, centrally-directed process of nationalization and modernization, we should also recognize the potential problems with a brand of local history that automatically positions the local in opposition to the national state. First, localist loyalties are not necessarily counterproductive to the cause of nationalization. As Kären Wigen has demonstrated, local loyalties can serve as an integrative force for the nation. In the case of the Meiji educational system, village elites in Nagano often used local pride as a mobilizing force when collecting funds for school construction or when encouraging attendance, thus furthering national goals while trumpeting local particularity. In addition, efforts to preserve the autonomy of the local school in the face of an encroaching state were often successful, but usually were achieved by following proper administrative procedures, which served to legitimize the machinery of the state. Consequently, while using localist rhetoric or pursuing decidedly localist goals, people often fostered the integration of the locality into the state.

A second problem with positioning the locality in opposition to the Meiji state is that the local response to state policies was not always one of resistance and recalcitrance. While some villagers did respond with indifference or even open hostility to the new educational policies, others responded with enthusiastic cooperation. In particular, many village elites adopted the cause of educational reform as a personal mission, making every effort to meet—in fact, to exceed—the government's recommendations. Many village elites scurried around frenetically during the early 1870s, raising funds, studying the architectural plans of the latest schools in Europe and America, overseeing the schools' construction, personally visiting with families to convince parents of the value of education, and proclaiming proudly that their local school would bring progress to the community and glory to the nation. Of course, their cooperation was usually based on motives and assumptions that were quite different from those of central policymakers. Furthermore, this cooperation was often conditional: many people who had initially responded with enthusiasm to the Meiji government's educational project later opposed it as their interests diverged from those of the new state. Nevertheless, seeing the local exclusively as a site of resistance fails to capture the complex range of local responses to the state's

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17Amino, pp. 105-107.
18For example, see Ishijima Tsuneo and Umemura Kayo, eds., *Nihon minshū kyōiku-shi*, Tokyo: Azusa Shuppansha, 1996.
educational reforms. A third problem that results from assuming an intractably antagonistic relationship between local society and the Meiji state is that such an assumption diverts our attention from the ways in which local society influenced the state’s development. Most Marxist and People’s historians in Japan are heavily invested in claiming (and ruling) the failure of local opposition to the Meiji state: by denying that the people had any voice in the formation of the state, “the people” and “the local” are shielded from implication in the less desirable parts of Japan’s modern history. In the process, localities are often denied agency as well, thus paradoxically celebrating the local while reaffirming the primacy of national history.

However, if we study the local response to Meiji educational reform while keeping one eye on the changes in educational policy made by the central government, we can see how local society shaped the development of the national educational system. For instance, when state policies met with resistance at the local level, the central government usually responded not with suppression, but compromise. While the large-scale rebellions were indeed put down violently, many of the demands articulated in those rebellions—demands that were expressed in more localized, non-violent forms at the village level and communicated to prefectural and central government officials through village notables—were accommodated in subsequent policy changes. The 1879 Educational Ordinance, for example, represented a clear compromise by the Ministry of Education to local demands for smaller schools, shorter commutes, more relevant content, less demanding schedules, and more local autonomy. While the Ministry of Education revised this ordinance a year later to emphasize the prerogative of central government in education, many of these compromises remained, and local demands continued to find their way into central government rhetoric and policy.

While localities often took an oppositional stance towards the new educational system in order to influence central policies, they could also shape the educational system from below through an active, positive response to the call for educational reform. In fact, enthusiastic cooperation by communities often functioned as a kind of preemptive strike to dictate the terms by which the educational system would take shape in their own local area. For example, villages often took the initiative to raise funds and establish a school for an area that did not conform to the newly drawn school districts. Villagers would then write a petition to open the school, skillfully co-opting the language of educational reform sanctioned by the state to justify their local claims. Local officials would write the prefectural government for guidance, and the prefectural government would then send the query on to the Ministry of Education in Tokyo, which usually responded by accommodating demands from below. Often, the collective weight of hundreds or thousands of these local claims would influence the central government to consider changes in policy. In fact, following the promulgation of the Fundamental Code of Education in 1872, the Ministry of Education was inundated with queries and complaints from local officials about how to implement the often vague or impractical policies in their own local areas. In its responses, the Ministry of Education frequently amended or qualified its initial policies in order to accommodate the realities of local implementation. Furthermore, by publishing its answers to these questions and distributing them to prefectural and local governments throughout the country, the answers functioned as precedence for future decisions, thus enabling local society in influence policy debates at the national level. In this fashion, the Meiji educational system emerged out of a dialogue, or negotiation, with local society.

This dynamic of compromise and negotiation played a crucial role in the process of modern Japanese state formation, yet it can easily be concealed by a historical methodology that focuses exclusively on the center or on the nation as a whole. Consequently, much of the value of local history lies in its capacity to expose this important area of contingency in the formation of the national state, thus challenging the narratives constructed by modern states to legitimize their authority. Of course, highlighting the agency of

22 Many of these queries were printed in Monbushō Nisshi, a Meiji-period education journal published by the Ministry of Education.
local society in the process of state formation does not amount to a denial of the eventuality of centralization and nationalization in Meiji Japan. In the area of education, for example, Japan did indeed have a relatively centralized and standardized school system by the end of the Meiji period in 1912. However, this does not represent the triumph of the state over local society, as is often portrayed by both critics and supporters of the state. Such an interpretation relegates to local historians the role of what Marc Bloch calls "energetic gardeners," unearthing facts to be assimilated into the national narrative, whether that narrative is triumphal or tragic. Instead, by recognizing the role of local resistance, local initiative, and local identities in the process of state formation, local history can challenge national narratives by pointing out the ways in which the national state bears the imprint of local demands and expectations.
Sacred Sites and the Dynamics of Identity
Sarah Thal
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Local histories have long examined both the ties that bind communities together and the developments that make them distinct. As is evident in the term itself, "local" history takes as the most fundamental of these ties the connection of a group of people to a particular location. It is curious, therefore, that writers of local history have often taken this geographic connection for granted. There are clear political reasons for this narrative viewpoint: local governments of towns, districts and prefectures have sponsored many of these writing projects to cover the areas within their jurisdiction. But such politics of publishing have begged the question of how inhabitants of an area come to associate themselves not just with local units of administration but with the land itself. How do they define their communities in relation to the physical landscape, thereby locating themselves not only in geographical, but in social, political, and intellectual space as well?

In Japanese history, this question holds particular relevance for the study of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The transition from the early modern bakukhan system to the modern nation-state has often seemed to imply the disappearance of distinctive, local identities into a single sense of nation. The most prominent printed images of each period reinforce this seeming dichotomy: Bashō's poetry, Jippensha Ikku's humorous travel tales, and Hiroshige's and Hokusai's prints of famous places depict vivid, vibrant local color before 1868, while afterward, national newspapers, books, and prints of the emperor draw attention to Tokyo and the imperial institution. Despite this image of centralization and homogenization, local histories have shown that many elites throughout the countryside retained and, in some cases, increased their influence under the new regime. Likewise, I contend here that people continued to use the famous sites that had distinguished their communities in the early modern period to maintain and create a variety of intellectual, social, and cultural communities well into the twentieth century. As individuals and groups defined themselves around these prominent places, they perpetuated the landmarks of early modern Japan as important foci around which to create new identities for themselves and their communities in the modern age.

The study of landmarks in Japan almost inevitably leads to the study of sacred sites. Throughout Japanese history, notable mountains, caves, or springs have been identified as sites of sacred power: worshipers approached them with offerings, consecrated them with rituals, and publicized their miraculous powers in performances and in print. During the early modern period, this focus on powerful religious sites blossomed amidst growing prosperity, an increasingly commercial economy, and a prolific culture of print and performance to fuel a spectacular boom in pilgrimage and tourism by the early nineteenth century. In popular culture, the Bunka-Bunsei period (1804-1830) became an age of gods and miracles, inseparable from the famous sites in which those gods resided. Thus, people from every domain converged on pilgrimage centers such as Ise, Kompira, Zenkō-ji, or Mt. Fuji in search of miraculous benefits and pleasurable entertainments. Hundreds of thousands of visitors each year offered donations and purchased amulets at these places in the hope of securing the gods' protection for themselves, their families, and their businesses. Impressive miracle tales were retold, embellished, and set in print, advertising the power of certain deities and their shrines to heal blindness, prevent fire, multiply wealth, or prevent drowning. Pilgrimage traffic provided the livelihoods of souvenir sellers at the most popular destinations, and supported innkeepers and boat operators along travel routes.

1 Constantine Vaporis, in Breaking Barriers: Travel and the State in Early Modern Japan, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994, especially pp. 217-254, addresses the culture of pilgrimage as a culture of travel, thereby seeing -- along with many other scholars -- a "secularization" of pilgrimage. But the religious context within which commoners saw the places to which they journeyed on their pilgrimages could simultaneously work to associate seemingly a-religious actions, such as travel, with the gods and their miracles.
throughout the country.

The sacred sites around which this economy and culture of pilgrimage revolved became focal points for the development of a national identity that helped shape the modern nation-state. Not only did the ceaseless travels of pilgrims and sightseers bring people from throughout the islands into communication with each other, but the sites of the deities themselves gained new significance as local gentry increasingly sought to identify themselves and their homes with a national essence. It was around such centers of worship that the nativist ideologies of Motoori Norinaga and, especially, Hirata Atsutane developed and spread in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Literary scholars near many sites identified their locally enshrined deities as Shinto kami named in the ancient texts. As Hirata's fusion of nativist literary analysis with Shinto ritual and religiosity spread throughout the countryside, increasing numbers of these scholars joined the Hirata school, adopted Hirata's designations of local buddhas and bodhisattvas as native kami, and, by the 1860s, began organizing in support of reviving the imperial kami-worshiping bureaucracy of ancient Japan. When influential nativists swept to power alongside their sponsors in the new Meiji government, Hirata's focus on purifying worship sites and governing in conjunction with the kami became, for a short while at least, official policy. In the wake of legislation issued from Tokyo in 1868 separating kami and Buddhas, nativist scholars who had become Shinto priests converted thousands of worship sites into Shinto establishments. Soon, they incorporated the sites into a nationwide system of state shrines where deities were worshiped as kami and the priests lectured on state-defined teachings of obedience, reverence, and patriotism. The Meiji government thus confirmed the importance of prominent Edo-period sites of the gods as outposts of civic education, as ritual centers that enhanced the legitimacy of the imperial government, and (at least for the most dedicated nativists) as institutions whose prayers harnessed the powers of the gods in the service of the state. Despite the growing prominence of Tokyo and the nation -- or, rather, precisely because of it -- the sacred centers of early modern fame remained important and, indeed, gained new significance in the modern period.

The sites of the gods thus became pivotal points of connection between local communities and the modern nation-state. As social, political, and economic patterns changed throughout the Meiji period, people used the sacred sites, as they had in the years before 1868, to negotiate new identities for themselves. The processes by which such identities were shaped were clearly evident at the shrine to Kompira on Mt. Ōzō in the mid-nineteenth century. Buddhist Kompira rivaled Ise as the most common destination of pilgrims nationwide.

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4 Anne Walthall provides a vivid example of the alliance between some of the more prominent nativists and the Choshu samurai in *The Weak Body of a Useless Woman: Matsuo Taseko and the Meiji Restoration*, University of Chicago Press, 1998.

5 Tamamuro Fumio has calculated that of the most influential Edo period temples, more than 98% were converted into Shinto shrines. Tamamuro, "On the Suppression of Buddhism," in Hardacre and Kern, eds., *New Directions in the Study of Meiji Japan*, Leiden and New York: Brill, 1997, 504.


7 In his magnum opus on the social and economic functions of pilgrimage, Shinjō Tsunezō estimated the annual number of pilgrims to Ise, Mt. Kōya, Honganji, and Kompira at approximately
verted to Shinto in 1868, Kotohira Shrine -- as it then officially became known -- lent the prestige of its powerful deity to the new Meiji regime, which in turn conferred upon the shrine the official imprimature of imperial rank and state sponsorship. Kotohira Shrine thus stood at the nexus of popular religious practice and the authority of the emerging nation-state.

As people in Shikoku and beyond renegotiated their positions in the changing order of early Meiji, many used their relationship to the shrine to define themselves and their status in their communities. As they re-conceptualized the shrine, they used the site of the god in three ways that would shape both themselves and the modern age: first, as a source of semi-official social status; second, as the basis for promoting a regional tourist economy; and third, as a marker of the intellectual and civilizational divide between rural and urban Japan. In each case, a group of people -- whether individually or in concert -- created or affiliated themselves with a community of their choosing through their approach to the shrine on Mt. Zōzu.

**Site and Status**

During the early modern period, the social status that accrued from formal association with the shrine of Kompira was not always a matter of choice, at least for residents of the area. The hereditary priest (bettō) of Konkōin, the head sub-temple of the Kompira complex on Mt. Zōzu, ruled over the shrine and the 330 koku domain of Kompira, swearing fealty to the Tokugawa shōgun under the sponsorship of the lord of the Takamatsu domain. Priests of other sub-temples on the mountain acted as administrators of the village, collecting taxes and adjudicating conflicts. In 1868, this network of formal political and ritual ties was disrupted. The head priest of Konkōin, relieved by imperial troops of authority over his small domain, converted to Shinto in a bid to maintain control over the profitable mountain shrine, which he unilaterally converted to Shinto at the same time. Because the administration of the town was now separated from the administration of the shrine, however, assignment of ritual positions in the annual festival and other observances no longer directly mirrored local political hierarchies. Moreover, after the official government designation of Shinto shrines as sites for state worship in 1871, and the centralization of administrative power in Tokyo in 1872, priests at the shrine were no longer determined locally on the basis of heredity, but were appointed by the national and prefectural governments. As the state shrine system developed and new rituals were created and standardized, an official, formal style of reverence was regularly modeled at Kotohira and other shrines. National and local governments provided monetary support for the shrines, and representatives of the village and prefectural governments formally presented donations to the kami on national holidays and at major shrine festivals. Thus, in the Meiji period, officially appointed Shinto priests and government representatives joined prominent local families as formal participants in the annual rites.

With the severance of feudal relations between village leaders and shrine priests, the way was opened for more people to avail themselves of the status offered by formal affiliation with the shrine. In 1874, Kotohira Shrine, like several other shrines to which bureaucrats from Tokyo had recently been appointed, established a new, lay pilgrimage association.


9 *Chōshi Kotohira 3*, 105ff.

part to offset the loss of feudal land-based income with newly-instituted membership dues paid by initiates, the Kotohira Shrine Reverence Association also provided a forum in which priests could inculcate into pilgrims new national teachings established in Tokyo. The priests of the Reverence Association led initiates through a complex bureaucratic registration process, preached to them about civic values, and guided them through the new set of prayers, purification rituals, bows, and hand-clappings that had been defined as the proper form of Shinto ritual. Almost any pilgrim, as long as he or she paid the membership fee, could participate in a formal ceremony akin to the rituals performed by government officials, complete with access to the main sanctuary and the receipt of a specially blessed amulet and a cup of sake in front of the altar. Through the sermons and ceremonies of the Reverence Association, then, association members were trained in the formality of elite obeisance; for the price of a small membership fee, they, too, could pass by less privileged worshipers to climb the steps to the main sanctuary, thereby joining the ranks of the specially recognized.

It seems clear that these special privileges were the reason that almost two million people had joined the Kotohira Shrine Reverence Association by the end of the 1880s. Not only did a recruiting pamphlet for the Reverence Association prominently feature an illustration of the sanctuary ceremony in 1878, but letters to the shrine and association repeatedly inquired about "procedures to enter the sanctuary" (naijin iri no tetsuzuki) and referred to members as "people who have received entry into the sanctuary" (gonaijin iri o setsukerareni sōro). Testimonials written to the shrine also extolled the powers of the special association amulet, attributing to it the rescue of a child fallen overboard or a soldier's survival on the battlefront. In addition to the privileges themselves, many members of the Reverence Association treasured the special relationship to the shrine that those privileges signified. Some votive plaques offered in thanks to the kami explicitly mentioned the Reverence Association affiliation of the donors, attesting to what they saw as the god's partiality to association members. A plaque donated to the shrine in 1881 from Kii province, for instance, recorded the registration number of the local Reverence Association and praised the sincere prayers of the association for their "special ability to rid a woman of fox possession."

Membership in the Reverence Association was thought not only to indicate a privileged status in relation to the deity, but in some cases seems to have signaled higher status in the local community as well. Within the Reverence Association itself, a clear hierarchy both reflected and informed perceptions of social status in communities throughout Japan. To acquire formal office in the association was considered a mark of prestige. The Reverence Association repeatedly issued lists of the criteria for office, stipulating that association officers must not only "have had deep respect for the gods for many years," but must have "demonstrated particular skill in forming associations, be people of repute and proper conduct, and possess more than the average amount of property." Because Reverence Association office was contingent upon the number of individuals and associations a person

11 Kotohira-gū shiryō, v. 11. This number is not implausible. See the introduction by Tamamuro Fumio in Tamamuro, ed., Kotohira-gū sūkei kōsha kōchō mokuroku, Kotohira-chō: Kotohira-gū Shamusho, 1995.
12 Murai Shin'ichirō, ed., Sūkei kō no susume, Takamatsu: Murai Shin'ichirō, 1878; letters from Takimoto Keisaku (ca. 1886) and Kadowaki Hiroomi (16 May 1906).
13 E.g., text of ema donated by Imamura Kichitarō of Okayama, testifying to a miracle in 1879, recorded in Kotohira-gū shiryō, vol. 67; and the letter from Hayashi Torazō, 5 June 1905.
14 Ema from Kii province (1881) in Kotohira-gū shiryō, v. 67.
15 In some communities, membership in the Reverence Association or an independent Kompira kō was apparently limited to the leadership of the community, while in others it seems that almost everyone joined. Shinjō Tsunezō touches on this regional social variation among Tokugawa-period kō in Shaji sankei no shakai keizai shiteki kenkyū, 729.
16 "Kotohira hongū sūkei kōsha jōrei" (1886), in Kotohira-gū shiryō, v. 14.
brought into the organization, many ambitious men vied to create Reverence Association groups in and around their home towns. Others applied to the shrine for official recognition as association leaders or Shinto lecturers. One man, writing to request recognition as a lecturer for the association in 1896, not only avowed a long-standing faith in Kompira, but provided an extensive resume detailing his military service, his membership in the Red Cross, and his leadership experience in such Shinto-affiliated groups as Kurozumikyō and Keishinkyō. Clearly, leadership in the association was considered a respected and effective step upward on the social ladder of voluntary national service.

Village leaders also used worship of Kompira to unite communities under their direction. This was most conspicuous during the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars. During these conflicts, mayors and chambers of commerce in communities within walking distance of the shrine organized residents into monthly, weekly, or even daily processions to Kompira. The organizers who coordinated the ritual with the shrine simultaneously reinforced their own authority within their community and demonstrated to outside observers their unity in support of the troops. In these wartime rituals, villagers worshiped as representatives of their communities much as government bureaucrats worshiped as representatives of the state. As one man reported on a group pilgrimage to Kompira during the Russo-Japanese war:

[On the way,] we encountered people returning from praying for the soldiers. Each group held a flag bearing inscriptions for the health of the soldiers, the victory of the imperial troops, the defeat of the enemy country, and the like. On the sides of the flags were written the name of each village, or "daily pilgrimage flag." Each flag was made of simple cloth, with writing in black ink. The people holding the flags also wore simple clothes and straw sandals. They had serious expressions as they thought of the soldiers abroad. . . . Around noon, we climbed the mountain, arrived in front of the main shrine, washed our hands and rinsed our mouths, and all together were serious and prayed.

Visits to the shrine had acquired a somber overtone of social responsibility -- first among village elites, then during wartime extending among the people they mobilized. As local leaders used the site to bolster their social standing, they transformed the shrine from a source of local political status to a conduit of centralized state power that lent its aura of national prestige to each person to the extent that he or she cultivated an official relationship with the shrine. Through their participation in membership rituals or village processions, worshipers proclaimed their affiliations with like-minded people both nearby and across the nation, identifying with each other on the basis of religious, social, or national concerns through their actions on a mountain in Shikoku.

Culture and Capitalism

More than just offering the perquisites of status, however, the shrine of Kompira and its prominent reputation made possible the economic livelihood of people both in the town and throughout the region. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, business leaders of the area joined together to promote the site, its culture and its history, thereby developing the mountain as a profitable meeting ground for a growing group of educated elites. Joining culture and capitalism at Kompira, they forged ties horizontally with fellow promoters that often reinforced the vertical hierarchies of status.

During the Tokugawa period, the domain of

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17 Although the official name of the shrine and the deity were changed to "Kotohira" in 1868 (and the name of the town a few years later), all are still referred to as "Kompira" in popular parlance. For this reason, when referring to the deity and site in general terms, this essay uses the term, "Kompira."
18 Letter from Saiō [first name illegible], dated 1 June 1896.
19 Matsuoka Mitsugi, Nennen Nikki, 18 August 1894ff.
20 Kagawa Shimpō, 12 November 1904.
Kompira relied for its political and economic prosperity upon business generated by pilgrims to the mountain, which in turn relied upon the national fame of the site. There were two main strategies through which promoters advertised the pilgrimage during these years. The most common was to focus on the miracles of the deity and the pleasures of the entertainments nearby. Thus, playbills advertised kabuki performances, pamphlets related famous miracles of the deity, and flyers published in Edo and Osaka included the names and prices of Kompira's geisha within their national rankings. The Kompira section of Jippensha Ikku's comedic travel tale, *Hizakurige*, published in 1810, publicized this mixture of miracles and entertainment throughout the country. Periodic displays of the Buddha image (*kaichō*) held on the mountain attracted large numbers of people to the shrine, to sideshows, and to the inns, gambling dens, and brothels of the town. This powerful mix of miracles and entertainment formed the popular image of Kompira.

Among a small but influential group of intellectuals and artists, this popular image of the pilgrimage was accompanied by a more erudite interpretation. Poets and painters extolled the site and the deity in imagery from the Chinese as well as Japanese classics. Nativists published local histories and gazetteers asserting connections between Kompira and such imperial figures as Sei Shōnagon or Emperor Sutoku, or identifying it with ancient shrines mentioned in the *Engishiki*.

The priests of Konkōin, like those at other important religious institutions during the Edo period, collected cultural objects, bolstering their positions through conspicuous consumption, commissioning screens, scrolls, and ritual images as well as receiving donations of valuable art objects from neighboring lords. By the mid-nineteenth century, then, Kompira had become for a limited elite not only a popular pilgrimage site but also a storehouse of culture.

Both the popular and the elite cultural versions of Kompira survived and flourished in the Meiji era. From the early 1870s, however, more and more people threw their weight behind promoting the shrine as an imperial and cultural institution. The Shinto priests of the shrine -- and, increasingly, local elites eager for profitable associations with the semi-governmental organization -- worked concertedly to publicize not just the "civilized" culture of the shrine's artistic heritage (in contrast to what some saw as the "superstitious" culture of miracles and entertainment, unsuitable for the modern age), but, at the same time, the shrine's ties to the imperial house, now the symbolic center of modern Japan. During the early years of Meiji, the priests of Kotohira capitalized upon the growing trend to display rare and unusual objects not in *kaichō* (for, as a Shinto shrine, Kotohira no longer had a carved worship image to display) but in nationally publicized expositions. In 1879 and 1880, expositions at Kotohira Shrine attracted more than 250,000 people to see objects shown no longer because of their miraculous, Buddhist attributes, but to dramatize the ties of the shrine to emperors or other cultural figures associated with the area. In 1904, the priests built a two-story, western-style museum within the shrine grounds, making Kotohira the first shrine in the country to display Buddhist statues, scrolls, and other artifacts permanently in its own museum. Inns at the foot of the mountain likewise advertised western-style buildings and cultural displays, extolling the area's cultural heritage and worldly progress in an attempt to attract affluent, culturally knowledgeable guests to the town.

Tourist promotion -- which, in the area of Kompira, was one of the most important strategies of industrial development -- continued to rely heavily upon this cultural interpretation of the shrine in the twentieth century. As the nearby

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21 Chōshi Kotohira 3, p. 166.
24 This imperial focus had, of course, existed before 1868 (especially in Konkōin's campaign for an imperial monopoly in the eighteenth century), but during the Meiji period it intensified and became more widespread.
25 Chōshi Kotohira 3, 446.
ports of Takamatsu, Tadotsu, and Marugame competed for steamship traffic from across the Inland Sea, boat operators funded the publication of tour guides extolling the attractions of the area. Often singling out the shrine as the centerpiece of the region, they capitalized on the fame of the site by calling their publications, "Guide to Kotohira," or placing an image of the shrine or its famous insignia on the cover. The guidebooks functioned as cultural catalogs, filled with descriptions of the art, scenery, and history of the shrine and neighboring attractions that their publishers deemed worthy of the educated tourist's attention.  

In many ways, this cultural emphasis was due to the audience targeted by local promoters. Chambers of Commerce and business associations in Takamatsu, Kotohira and elsewhere focused on attracting the growing numbers of military officers, professionals, and well-to-do businessmen and their families who had the wherewithal to travel by rail or steamship, stay at the most luxurious hotels, order the most expensive meals, and buy the growing number of souvenirs sold at shops near the shrine. These people generally came from well-educated families of the rural gentry, proud of their local heritage and interested in the culture and history of the region. If they came from outside of the prefecture, many were interested in the culture and history of Kotohira as part of the national heritage as a whole. Some travelers kept diaries in which they recorded the number of objects on display, or commented on architectural details of shrine buildings. For these educated gentry, a visit to Kotohira Shrine was a chance to demonstrate their cultural and historical knowledge, and thus their erudition. This was not a new development in the Meiji period: guidebooks from earlier in the nineteenth century had related the local histories of monuments on the mountain, for instance. But in an age in which a familiarity with history, art, and culture increasingly marked a man as a knowledgeable subject of imperial Japan, many visitors valued their knowledge of the imperial ties and treasures of the shrine as evidence of their participation in the broader "civilized" culture of the country's elite.

While schoolteachers and army officers increasingly toured Mt. Zōzu with guidebook in hand, thousands more travelers brought their money to Kotohira to offer to the god or pay for the women. The sheer economic power of these visitors encouraged many businessmen to focus on Kompira not so much as a site of sacred power or as a cultural treasure house, but as the basis for the economic future of the region. As in decades before, makers of amulet boxes and owners of brothels used Kompira's fame to advertise their wares throughout the Meiji era, supporting a flourishing economy rarely acknowledged by the guidebooks or the shrine.

In the late 1890s, the prefectural government began promoting the tourist business as well, seeing the drawing power of Kompira as a powerful engine for economic growth. Governor Tokuhisa, one of the most influential governors in the history of Kagawa Prefecture, spent more government money for the promotion of trade and manufacture per capita in Kagawa between 1896 and 1898 than did the governor of any other prefecture in the country. Around Kompira, this focused on tourism, not just for culturally minded elites but for any traveler with a coin to spend. Soon after his appointment as governor, Tokuhisa toured the prefecture and gave his impressions to a reporter:

When I went to Kotohira Shrine, I learned that there are no fewer than three million pilgrims every year. Now, of these three million pilgrims, each person spends on an average 10 sen in the area, which adds up to 300,000 yen. If the pilgrims increased their spending to one yen each, that would be three million yen. Even if it were only one-third of that, it would be a large amount. It is the urgent work of this area to achieve that goal.

The first item of business is to get the pilgrims to spend more money. What industry would be most appropriate for this? At

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Miyajima, they make plates and other items from the local pine trees and sell them. This brings in a significant amount of money. I notice that there are some nice dishes for sale in Kotohira. But these goods are not made in Kotohira; they are bought from Miyajima. … If dishes were made, this would be a very profitable industry. In any case, if one made a souvenir in Kotohira, pilgrims would buy it and take it home.28

Business groups, both in Kotohira and throughout the prefecture, swiftly pursued this approach. They established a trade school in Kotohira to make chopsticks and other souvenirs patterned after Miyajima and Ise. The town built a park, and inn keepers constructed new inns and amenities at the nearby hot springs, advertising the new resort to military officers and their families. The journalistic and business community of Takamatsu increasingly spoke of Kotohira not as a beneficent deity but as a site of economic development. Proclaimed one editorial in 1897, "Kotohira! Use your god-given capital to make an entertainment fairyland! … Add to the well-known spiritual sites and advertise yourselves to the world as a great paradise of entertainment." The business leaders of Kagawa Prefecture thus joined together around the pilgrimage not as worshipers but as regional planners, eager to promote economic exploitation of the mountain and its pilgrimage.

As entrepreneurs promoted a growing tourist economy based on Kompira, then, they simultaneously provided fodder for new identities to be forged around the sacred mountain. While thousands of people still flocked to the shrine to ask for miracles and enjoy the surrounding entertainments, hundreds of others responded to the growing literature on Kompira's imperial culture and artistic history. At the same time, promoters themselves could publicly debate over the best way to exploit the "capital" of the site. By the turn of the century, when people as far away as Tokyo identified Kagawa Prefecture as "where Kompira-san is," their conceptions of the site may as easily have included the cultural or economic assets of the mountain as the miracles of the god.

An Intellectual Divide

Despite their differences in emphasis, however, members of the shrine's Reverence Association, cultural connoisseurs and promoters of tourism generally shared a basic respect for the gods. Indeed, it was not infrequent for people to espouse a variety of these approaches to Kompira at different times. Joining the Reverence Association to pray for prosperity to an imperial kami, they then toured the mountain, paying a small fee to admire the gold-flecked screens and renowned Buddhist images on display in the shrine's office and museum. Arriving at their expensive inns for the evening, many would summon a geisha or venture out to the red-light district for the evening. Upon returning home, they might read the calls for tourist development in the newspaper and discuss the merits of such a move for the townspeople of Kotohira.

The miracles of the deity remained an important element in the mixture of worship, cultural appreciation, entertainment, and trade that made up the practices of pilgrimage. Throughout the Meiji period and well into the twentieth century, people continued to believe in the magical powers of the gods. They prayed to Kompira and bought amulets from the shrine to save them from accidents, give them long-awaited children, or ensure their profits on the stock market. The Reverence Association itself capitalized on the continuing attraction of amulets and prayer rituals to prospective members.

Yet from the 1870s on, an educated chorus grew that denounced this so-called "superstitious" reliance on magic. Priests at the shrine repeatedly exhorted believers to revere the deity for its own sake instead of petitioning it for miracles. Most

30 Miyoshi Tsunesaburō, "Waga shin'ai naru Sanuki seinen shoshi ni hitogoto su," Sanuki gakuseikai zasshi 13 (May 1901), 3.
31 E.g., Muramatsu Sūei, ed., Kotohira miyage,
vocal, however, were the growing numbers of journalists who prided themselves on their critical, logical, Western-style ideas. Even in the most conservative newspaper in Takamatsu, which wholeheartedly supported the formal worship of Kompira as an expression of civic virtue and upstanding social status, journalists ridiculed the "superstitions" of less educated believers. Articles and cartoons poked fun at a man who waited at the shrine to hear the voice of the god (and who was finally sent on his way by the train conductor speaking over the telephone), or a military recruit who buried his books on the mountain, praying that Kompira miraculously transfer the knowledge into his head. In this way, regional elites reinforced their own idea of superiority based on their approach to the deity as an imperial grantor of respectful petitions, not the object of magical rituals revered by the majority of worshipers. Business leaders of the prefecture shared this bias, focusing tourist promotion efforts on well-heeled and educated visitors, despite the fact that, as one writer remarked, "those so-called gentlemen who wear Western-style clothes and beards are the customers who will not appreciate Kotohira, no matter what. Kotohira's everyday prosperity is due to the people in straw raingear (minokasa) and leggings. Intellectual biases, translated into economic action, supported an increasingly negative image of rural folk and their faith.

Journalists and intellectuals from major cities outside the prefecture were even more critical. In 1912, when the priests of Kotohira Shrine and entrepreneurs of Kagawa Prefecture sought to attract large numbers of people to a great, three-month-long festival, they invited journalists from newspapers around the country to write about the town and shrine. In a series of articles in the *Osaka Asahi Shinbun*, one journalist held up not just the worshipers but the entire town of Kotohira for ridicule. A prime example of the townspeople's stupidity, he wrote, was "the case of Kotohira's useless bus," which operated briefly from the railroad station to nearby Kotaki Springs:

According to the talk of people in town, a salesman said that a simple bus was not interesting enough, and instead proposed the latest, best, clog-wearing bus. On each of its wheels were attached what looked like several wooden clogs. . . [An operator in Kotohira] happily bought and drove it. He kept taking off his own clogs and putting them on the wheels, until after a short while, he went out of business.

Whether or not the tale was based on even a small grain of truth, it dramatically illustrated the viewpoint spread in national newspapers that Kotohira was a place of stupid entertainments left untouched by modern civilization: a site treasured only by a poor, uneducated rural population still steeped in ignorance. Whereas regional promoters had extolled Kotohira as a cultural repository and thus, in some respects, a picture of the past, these journalists depicted it as an uncivilized backwater. Such critical views established a series of tensions defined according to religious practice and location. Urban journalists and intellectuals despised the rural folk not only because of their beliefs but because of their location in the countryside.

Meanwhile, rural residents looked askance at the urban visitors, dolled up in their top hats. In the eyes of many, denigrating remarks about Kompira -- the famous symbol of Kagawa Prefecture as a whole -- reflected upon regional identity as well. The Chamber of Commerce in Takamatsu, for instance, was appalled when these ridiculing stories hit the presses, finding in them not just a criticism of the ignorant peasants, which they had perpetuated themselves, but a dismissal of the entire region. Kompira, after all, was the pride of the prefecture, and much of the area's income was reliant upon its image on the national scene. Just as intellectuals in Tokyo

Kotohira: Kyokuō Gakkai, 1897, passim.
34 "Kotohira mairi" 4, *Osaka Asahi Shinbun*, 4 March 1912.
and elsewhere joined a fellowship of urban skeptics through their criticisms of Kompira and the gullibility of rural worshipers, then, so too did worshipers, vendors, and many regional boosters unite against the comments of their attackers.

Worship sites such as Kompira, then, functioned not only as arenas for the formation of new identities, but also as standards by which different interest groups measured themselves and others. Both religious centers and regional symbols, these sites anchored the identities of the people who worked and lived nearby, as well as those who prayed and made pilgrimages from farther away. How someone approached the shrine in many ways defined who he or she was -- an urban intellectual and skeptic; a cultural connoisseur; a respected leader of the community; a devout believer blessed by the kami; or someone simply eager for a break from the routine, out on an adventure. Many of these identities overlapped, which is what gave Kompira and other sites like it the power to become both unifying and divisive symbols of various social, economic, as well as intellectual communities.

As Kompira changed in the eyes of its beholders, so, too, changed the beholders themselves. When the sacred domain became an official organ of the Meiji state, associates of the new shrine were incorporated into a hierarchy that culminated in Tokyo. When urban intellectuals defined the shrine no longer as an institution of present power but as a site that enshrined either an imperial or an uncivilized past, they defined themselves as self-consciously modern, civilized imperial subjects.

As may be expected in the modern period, the language and iconography of the imperial nation-state became an important part of much popular interaction with shrines such as Kompira. But the story of modern Japan is far more than the dominance of the nation-state. It is how village elites vied for status in the shrine association or led their communities on pilgrimage during wartime, dramatizing their own positions of leadership through the performance of semi-official rituals. It is how regional promoters used local shrines to maintain their place on the cultural, touristic map of the nation. It is how urban intellectuals used pilgrimage sites and their worshipers as a foil against which to define their own, self-consciously skeptical, supposedly "Western" identity. And it is how the majority of the rural population continued to seek in the gods the answer to problems beyond their own capacity to solve.

The localized history of famous places like Kompira reveals the processes through which people reshaped early modern into modern Japan using familiar, site-specific strategies in a changed context. It highlights the ways in which they established their places in the modern nation: as members of communities defined in part by their approaches to the sites of the gods. It was not just through action at the local level, then, but through interaction with the specificities of the local landscape, that the people of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Japan shaped the complex webs of community and identity that characterize local, regional, and national society as we know it today.
Local History’s Challenge to National Narratives

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Local history’s Post-war boom in Japan has produced a tremendous volume of publications, hundreds of volumes that provide materials for Japanese historians of all stripes, local sophisticated amateurs and professional university historians alike. As Gary Allinson noted years ago, these materials also provide a rich trove of materials for scholars outside of Japan: the best include not only surveys of prefecture, county, city, town and village history – surveys that often assume one of a rather limited number of patterns – but also volumes of transcribed primary source materials. American and Western historians have made some use of these materials, but often in the context of writing analyses of ostensibly national developments.

Trends in the Uses of Local Histories

Although an increasing part of late twentieth-century Western historiography, local history has not been prominent in the post-war Japan field. Many of the early examples of it either explored regions that had a special historical role or were used to provide a detailed example of presumably national developments. Examples of the former include works such as Albert Craig’s *Choshu in the Meiji Restoration*, Marius Jansen’s *Sakamoto Ryōma and the Meiji Restoration*, and Thomas Huber’s *The Revolutionary Origins of Modern Japan*. In the latter category fall studies such as J.W. Hall’s *Government and Local Power in Japan 500-700*.

The clear early exception to these patterns of local history monographs is William J. Chambliss’s *Chiaraijima Village: Land Tenure, Taxation, and Local Trade, 1818-1884*. The book was recognized as an interesting and well-done discussion of one village’s transition under the Meiji state, but has not been treated as breaking new intellectual ground: the explanations it invoked reinforced the emerging interpretations (e.g., Thomas Smith’s “The Land Tax in the Tokugawa Period,” and Ronald Dore’s “Agricultural Improvements in Japan: 1870-1900,”) that stressed the latitude for villagers to expand their economic horizons and the positive contributions of traditional values during the Meiji transformations. Chambliss’s work is perhaps the exception that proves the general rule for local studies: despite the fact that he plowed through a number of manuscript sources, 1) his work did not deal with an epoch-making region and 2) it was not cast as a “nationally representative” case. The book found publication in the Association for Asian Studies “Monographs and Papers” series, a very useful venue but one designed specifically to publish very specialized materials that would not fit the needs of other academic or for-profit presses.

During the 1960s and most of the 1970s, advanced graduate students received encouragement to exploit the materials of local history. Two studies drew inspiration from the work of both local and national-level historians: Peter Arneson’s *The Medieval Japanese Daimyō: The Ouchi Family’s Rule of Suō and Nagato* and

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6 Tucson, Ariz.: Published for the Association for Asian Studies by the University of Arizona Press, 1965.


William Hauser’s *Economic Institutional Change in Tokugawa Japan: Osaka and the Kinai Cotton Trade*. Both drew much of their import from the fact that they studied regions that played major political or economic roles in the medieval and Tokugawa periods.

During the same period, several works appeared that drew heavily on social science methodologies and its problem focus. These studies were associated with the “new social history,” comparative politics and demographic history and did not draw inspiration directly from problems defined by past Western-language historical treatments of Japan or even from Japanese historical debates. Indeed, in a number of respects these studies were pioneering or nearly so even in the Japanese scholarly context. Thomas Smith’s *Nakahara: Family Farming and Population in a Japanese Village, 1717-1830* explored demographic history through family reconstitution based on records of religious affiliation (the *shūmon aratame chō*). In the field of modern Japanese history, Smith’s student, Gary Allinson, contributed two monographs based on the study of communities, works that raised questions often drawn from the theoretical and comparative literature of political science as much as from questions derived from Japanese historical processes.

The results of a number of young scholars’ explorations of local history were not published at all; others found their way into print, but in the form of periodical literature, not monographs. Prominent among such publications were studies of demographic history and related studies based on the use of records of religious affiliation. The early work of Susan Hanley readily comes to mind in this regard.

The early 1980s witnessed the publication of six additional monographic studies that focused largely on specific regions. Thomas Huber’s *The Revolutionary Origins of Modern Japan* followed the early pattern of exploring “activist” regions, and James L. McClain’s *Kanazawa: A Seventeenth-Century Castle Town*, re-examined Toyoda Takeshi’s national-level generalizations regarding daimyo management of castle-town growth. McClain’s study drew its problem focus from Japanese historiography – how closely were daimyo able to plan the growth of their castle towns – and focused on the largest urban area outside the three great cities, Edo, Osaka and Kyoto. Conrad Totman examined Akita as a case demonstrating the ways in which Tokugawa developments created precedents for modern forest conservation. On the other hand, Neil L. Waters, *Japan’s Local Pragmatists: The Transition from Bakumatsu to Meiji in the Kavasaki Region*, explored Meiji grass-roots history and did so in an area that “did nothing” during the Restoration and had no other claim to prominence. In this regard, Waters’ work parallels that of Chambliss. The decade produced one other local monographic study, *Deference and Defiance in Nineteenth-Century Japan*, and that not by an historian, but by an anthropologist, William W. Kelly. While these studies all fall

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18 Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press,
into the realm of social and political history, J. Victor Koschmann’s *The Mito Ideology: Discourse, Reform, and Insurrection in Late Tokugawa Japan, 1790-1864*, is distinguished by its emphasis on locally based intellectual history that is intimately related to the mid-19th century restoration movement.19

Local history production has reached a peak in the 1990s. At the start of the decade, Hitomi Tonomura, in *Community and Commerce in Late Medieval Japan: The Corporate Villages of Tokuchin-ho*,20 explored the economic and social history of a community on the shores of Lake Biwa; my own work examined domain formation in Kaga-han;21 Mary Elizabeth Berry examined Kyoto in the Sengoku era;22 David Howell explored economic development in Hokkaido;23 Kären Wigen explored the economic transformation of Shimoina;24 and Luke Roberts examined economic policy in Tosa.25 James Baxter explored the adaptation of Ishikawa Prefecture to the new Meiji state.26 In a study of Okinawan thinkers, Gregory Smits explored how the Ryukyu kingdom saw itself in relation to both Japan and China.27 Finally, anthropologist Arne Kal-
The Challenges of Doing Local History

Why, when a number of historians have clearly discovered the value of local archival collections and the expanding array of published local histories, has the production of local histories been rather modest until quite recently? The relatively low volume of locally-focused histories is a bit puzzling, given the attention paid to local studies in the 1960s to 1980s in the fields of American and European history, studies which exemplified the “new social history” in fields which broadly define the models that Western, and especially American scholars of Japan often emulate.35

Certainly individual career paths and personal predispositions played some role, but structural factors also were important. In the period through the 1960s the field of Japanese history was still quite new and small; there were few trained specialists of any stripe and very few Japanese history courses. In these circumstances the demand for a clear, national narrative for any aspect of Japanese history loomed large and conditioned what scholarship could get published. American audiences in particular, if not Western audiences generally, wanted quick, very generalized and readily comprehensible analyses of Japanese history. That demand for a national narrative for Western audiences dates back to well before the birth of modernization theory, to at least the nineteenth century, of course, and such demands early in the development of Japanese studies are certainly understandable. Nonetheless, they discouraged the analysis of specific regions unless the author could claim that the study played a readily evident national role or represented a broad national development. In the end, the demands on the field and the small number of scholars available to meet that demand (much less to meet any demand for more detailed, sophisticated studies) created little opportunity for scholars to exploit local history materials and still get published. One suspects that such demands were among the variety of influences shaping the limited employment opportunities of scholars like Les Metchnik, and David Davis, who focused on Choshu and the Kaga regions respectively, or the publication prospects of Franklin Odo or Ronald DiCenzo, who both made case studies of local areas for their doctoral theses but did not ultimately publish monographs based on them.36

The fact that most of the studies published to date overwhelmingly focus on the Tokugawa-Meiji transformation in its various aspects may also suggest why the most populated field of Japanese history, kin-gendaishi has seen relatively few local histories: Late Tokugawa administrative units (villages, towns, cities and counties as well as domains) were transformed during the Meiji era into subunits of a centralizing state, largely dependent on Tokyo for direction and budget alike. Once we see the advent of a truly centralized administration, the large number of national-level administrative documents it spewed forth as well as the growth of national political movements that produced fairly centralized archival collections may have created circumstances too convenient and easy to exploit, further tempting students away from local history. Even for the Tokugawa era the volume of materials available is daunting if we think about what it

might take to explore local sources, even just printed sources; it was more convenient to exploit the collected works (zenshū) of well-known thinkers, the printed materials of the Dai Nihon shiryō and the like rather than brave the morass of local materials.

There is also much in contemporary Japanese society that encourages a stress on the “national,” the presence of national uniformity, and policies or social trends emanating from a clearly dominant center such as Tokyo: Racial and ethnic homogeneity is virtually a mantra, and juxtaposed by some to the impossible diversity of a society such as the United States. To Tokyo is ascribed the premier role in setting consumer standards and public opinion. The national government exerts extensive control over prefectural and local administrative budgets as well as issuing extensive and detailed regulations to guide local administrative and legal affairs. None of these or other images of contemporary Japan suggest that there is much room for diversity of experience, initiative from below, or meaningful conflict in modern Japan. That image is replicated in (projected into?) treatments of earlier eras with distorting consequences (several examples are indicated below).

Despite the volume of available materials, another challenging problem confronts scholars who wish to study one region over a long period of time: the problem of getting sufficient data for a good longitudinal study of just one area. This is less of an obstacle for scholars who focus on the nineteenth century, but even in the first half of that century, and certainly earlier, this represents a major challenge. In the realm of printed materials, a major part of the problem lies in the need for editors of local histories to be selective in compiling the transcriptions of documents that comprise an extensive part of prefectoral histories and the best of other local histories. Frequently only sample documents are included. This is especially true for statistical data that consume large amounts of space. A second issue lies in the different emphases of Japanese as opposed to Western scholars. The problem frameworks of each tend to be sufficiently different that Japanese local histories may not include an adequate volume of the kinds of material of interest in some Western research. As just one illustration, consider the contrast between many Japanese local histories that are cast either in the context of either Marxist frameworks or telling the story, local “progressiveness” or just stressing the prominence of local eminences on the one hand, and the interest of American scholars in issues requiring the use of repetitive, statistical data associated with family reconstitution and inheritance (as studied by Susan Hanley, Laurel Cornell or Ann Janetta, for example). From personal experience, I can also indicate that some local histories fail to treat local institutions, such as land redistribution systems (warichi) because there is no standard historical framework.

There is a partial remedy to this situation, but it, too, is often daunting for most young scholars: learn to work with at least some types of handwritten materials. Because the responsibility for creating and using local documents shifted over time – among village headmen or village group headmen in the Tokugawa, from the private collections of Tokugawa village headmen to the offices of newly defined Meiji local governments, for example – there are often sharp breaks in a single village’s documentary record. The problem is further compounded by a lack of trained archivists, inadequate indexing, restricted or closed scholarly access to private collections, and the like.

Pre-Meiji “public” documents such as village headmen’s records are typically treated as the private family documents; they have never legally been classified as public records. While the compilation of local histories in Japan seems to offer a partial remedy to restricted access to these documents – locations of private collections are identified and indexes are created – local archivists also indicate that in the process of researching and duplicating documents, many are in fact misplaced or lost, actually worsening the situation.

41 びっくりデータ情報編、『これがニッポン人の平均値だ！』、東京：夢文庫、1997, presents more than 200 pages of opinion and marketing survey results on issues such as when, if ever, single women are planning to marry, what the average time is when people go out for “a little drink”, and other subjects. A disproportionately large share of the data was collected only from the Tokyo region despite the fact that the book purports to discuss attitudes and practices of the average Japanese.
into which it fits, despite the widespread presence of the system in that region. Or if it is treated, it is in a single, essentialized fashion, rather than in the context of change and development over time.

The best remedy for the selectivity of printed sources is to extend one’s research beyond them and into the realm of manuscript materials. This is a challenge few scholars are willing to accept. Western graduate schools provide no training in reading manuscripts on a regular basis and for many the time that must be invested in mastering the techniques of reading manuscripts is daunting. The use of manuscript sources is further complicated by the necessity of consulting collections that may be inconveniently located and indexed to only a limited degree.

I have hinted above at one final, significant issue that stands in the way of more aggressive use of local historical studies lies in the problem of how to contextualize a local study. In particular, how representative is a given locality? What does it represent? While many of the local histories mentioned above do not directly address this issue -- leaving the impression that their subject was representative -- each of the papers in this symposium as well as studies by Chambliss, Brown, and Waters (for example) raise questions of representativeness. Thall, Platt and Pratt quite explicitly broach the issue, Van Sant’s does so by reflection since regions which actively participated in the Meiji Restoration were the exception, not the rule.

Once we move away from those places that played unique historical roles such as activist domains in the Restoration there are a variety of ways in which one might frame questions of representativeness. Three general approaches quickly come to mind. One approach is that based on a statistical model. This method may be possible in a number of cases, but seems to impose very stringent, even insurmountable obstacles: substantial effort may be required to collect sufficient data to determine a statistical measure of central tendency such as a mean or median, or to help us to identify a pattern of behavior as the most commonly followed. This is especially the case for the early modern era and earlier when national compilations of data are rare and independent efforts would be required to generate a comprehensive database.

Other potential approaches are less daunting: one might, for example, examine two or three local case studies and develop a tentative typology of e.g., village political evolution, factors conditioning the use of infanticide, or similar developments. Still another approach might simply be to show that other locations also exhibited the characteristics a scholar has identified, indicating that the case was not just a statistical outlier. Each of these approaches can establish that a small number of cases represent more than just a statistical outlier, a freak example.

In the first post-war decades even the less stringent of these approaches may have been difficult to implement, but since then several Japanese publication projects considerably ease the task of getting a quick handle on the characteristics and development of most regions of Japan. Scholars can more readily conduct a comparative exploration of developments outside the locale that is the focus of their own work. Three major examples of this kind of material may be briefly noted: One such project is the Yamakawa Shuppansha series of prefectural histories, a number of which are now undergoing revision and updating. The Heibonsha and Kadokawa prefectural place name dictionaries both contain considerable historical data as well as place names. All three employed pre-eminent local historians as authors. While not perfect or complete in their coverage, they are useful in discovering parallel developments in a number of different regions.

The Potential Contribution of Local History

Whatever the reason for their relatively low numbers, local histories have altered our understanding of Japanese history and they have the potential for even greater contributions. They have illuminated major players in epoch-making political developments, the Meiji Restoration in particular. A number of studies provided concrete evidence for developments that were previously described in relatively abstract terms. Despite exceptions, however, many local studies served to underline and represent an existing national narrative, one that focuses overwhelmingly
on the rise and collapse of shogunal regimes, or
the birth of a strong, modern central administra-
tion.

The demand for a national narrative in the
writing of Japanese was very powerful, powerful
enough to be implemented even in the absence of
a centralized state. We see it in descriptions of
“estates” (shōen) the writing of medieval histo-
ries, histories of the Sengoku and Tokugawa eras.
Even periods of civil war are treated in ways that
assume that actors all share a “national” ambition,
all but ignoring (for example) the more defensive
posture of one of Oda Nobunaga’s most formida-
able enemies, the Ikkō ikki.

Delving into local history involves a will-
ningness to complicate our picture of Japanese
history, a willingness to come to grips with the
diversity of Japan’s historical experience; yet
when treated at all, diversity of historical experi-
ence has been confronted in very limited degree,
and its acknowledgement has often been viewed
in negative terms. John W. Hall’s observations
on early Japanese historians’ treatment of an ear-
lier period, the medieval era, reflect this problem:
“The Muromachi age, for all its cultural brilliance,
has been regarded as a time of political weakness
and institutional decay . . . . Some historians
have gone so far as to claim that nothing which
happened prior to the Onin War could be consid-
ered relevant to modern Japan.” He noted
further, “Although historians have recognized the
evidence of economic growth, they have seen it
almost as a contradictory element, something to
set against the picture of political decay. They
have given little thought to the possibility that
such growth might be related to the fundamen-
tal changes in the popular structure of Japanese
society.” Despite the effort of several con-
ferences, the output since the late 1970s on me-
dieval Japanese history is paltry in volume, a fact
that I believe is related to the tentative nature of
the national narrative during this time and to the
need to immerse oneself deeply in local history
materials for the majority of subjects. The pic-
ture may simply be too “disorderly” to attract
many scholars, especially non-Japanese scholars,
and that untidiness leads to a sense of discomfort.
The same issue confronts the problem of how we
understand local histories that may not readily fit
the national narratives on which we have relied to
date.

The failure to cope with the diversity of local
experience extends well beyond this example and,
in particular confronts the problem of how we
understand local histories that may not readily fit
the national narratives on which we have relied to
date. Survey treatments typically describe the
early organization of Imperial landholding under
the Taika reorganization, and then treat the later
organization of shōen as though it became the
dominant form of organizing landholding
throughout the Heian era and beyond. While we
are beginning to treat Kamakura (and perhaps
middle to late Heian) as a transitional era in
which increasingly distinct military and aristo-
cratic organizations co-existed, the tendency
heretofore has been to treat the Heian as aristo-
cratic government and the period following Ka-
makura as a military government with a superfi-
cial aristocratic appendage. The apparent pre-
supposition behind such treatment is that there
can only be one center of authority. We duti-
fully describe Ashikaga shogunal patterns of ad-
ministration but largely ignore the regional and
local forces that routinely operated outside its
sphere of influence and even downplay the
autonomy of some of the components of shogunal
administration. One outcome is that there is a
reasonable description of the precipitating events
of the Onin Wars, but little sense is conveyed of
the dynamics that made shūgo administration
itself so unstable as to make the Onin Wars the
trigger for a complete disintegration of any sem-

43 John W. Hall, “Introduction,” in John W. Hall
and Toyoda Takeshi, eds., Japan in the Muro-
machi Age, Berkeley, Ca: University of California

45 Bob T. Wakabayashi, “In Name Only: Imperial
Sovereignty in Early Modern Japan,” Journal of
Japanese Studies 17:1 (1991), 25-57, confronts this
problem of multiple political centers for a later pe-
riod.
46 Lorraine Harrington, “Regional Outposts of
Muromachi Bakufu Rule: The Kantō and Kyu-
shu,” in Jeffrey Mass and William B. Hauser, eds.
The Bakufu in Japanese History, Stanford, Ca:
blance of order and the rise of endemic civil wars. A more prominent place for discussion of the tensions between shūgo, their deputies the shūgodai, jitä (land stewards) and local notables, illustrated with pertinent local case studies, would help convey the profound political frailty of the Ashikaga political order. The orders of Hideyoshi are typically seen as propelling the methods of land surveys, the separation warrior from peasant and other late sixteenth-century reforms when local studies suggest a more complicated picture. Despite the diversity long apparent in the Japanese literature, mid-Tokugawa political developments have long been largely treated as following a single pattern. Now, fortunately, that sense of diversity is being made available in English.

These examples can be multiplied and suggest that failure to exploit local history materials leaves us with a somewhat stilted picture of the unfolding of Japanese history and the processes through which it evolved.

Despite the challenges to doing good local history, Japanese local histories and materials are sufficiently rich as to reward scholarly efforts with important new perspectives and insights that can critique the narratives we have relied on to date. There can be no better indication of this than the four essays that form this symposium. All present examples of how local histories might revise and extend our understanding of Japanese history, moving beyond the dominant national narrative. These works suggest an alternative approach to the criticism of “meta-narratives” voiced by literary theorists, one that is grounded in the inductive social science methodology that recognizes variation as well as central tendency and the limits of one’s sample. All go beyond using the “local” to illustrate the “national”.

The papers by Thall, Platt and Van Sant focus on how national administrative initiatives were implemented in the face of both threatened and actual local opposition. Thall and Platt suggest a clear influence of the local on the central, demonstrating the potential for local manipulation and use of the central initiatives for the ends of local figures and organizations. Van Sant’s essay in particular, but also Platt’s, present evidence that strongly contradicts the dominant image of the Meiji transition as “peaceful”, analyzing the violence that the center visited on the local. (Van Slant’s analysis of the Bōshin War can be extended to Niigata. Residents there also experienced extreme increases in tax burdens; even today residents feel Niigata was punished for local resistance to Imperial forces. One might extrapolate and conclude that native son Tanaka Kakuei’s aggressive pursuit of “pork” was an act of revenge for that hostile treatment.)

Three of these papers (Platt, Thall and Van Slant) constructively complicate our picture of Meiji political processes even while concerned with the development of a national centralized administration. In this effort they assume that the “national” equals the “state” and that there is only one state in the period they discuss. Such perceptions are natural in the context of the Meiji era, and certainly increasingly reasonable as we move from the early to middle and late Meiji periods. Yet such assumption should be taken as problematic for earlier eras. In this regard, the works by Brown, Ravina, and Roberts mentioned above all call into question the presence of either an effectively functioning central administration or the existence of a single state in the Tokugawa era. That skepticism can be constructively extended into even earlier periods.

Even when we exclude war, major riots such as those in response to compulsory education, conscription, and other despised national policies or the more violent side of the people’s rights movement (jiyū minken), Ed Pratt’s essay shows that in the normal course of village activities might encompass inwardly-directed violence. Such violence was not simply reflective of internal class conflicts, nor did its presence preclude persistent efforts to maintain “harmony” and the continued functioning of cooperative endeavors within the village. Studies by Margaret


McKean of village management of the commons (iriai) shows efforts that parallel Pratt’s description. Only in one village she studied did a complete break result: a family that broke village rules over the commons (iriai) was denied assistance during funerals, in putting out a house fire (perhaps set by other villagers) and other major activities associated with maintaining their day to day lives. Such findings reinforce the complementary nature of conflict and cohesiveness that sociologist George Simmel postulated decades ago: communities are bound together by common understanding as to how to deal with conflict and when and to what degree violations of the group rules can be accommodated.

Two papers suggest uses of local history in addition to examining the development of a national administrative organization. Thall extends the potential of local history into the realm of cultural and intellectual history, noting the role of local sites in the efforts of urban intellectuals for a critique of the countryside, and the rural residents’ use of the same sites as a device for carving out a new self-image during the Meiji. Pratt takes us into the day-to-day relationships and processes of village society, a new direction in the context of Japanese social history.

As a group, the perspectives raised by these papers certainly have the potential to transform Japanese historians’ perceptions of Japanese history. A “new historiography,” rooted in local historical sources and studies would be a substantial contribution for the scholarly world in itself. It would increase the sophistication and depth of our understanding of Japanese history. But there are significant broader implications of a new emphasis on the study of Japanese history.

Broader Implications: Teaching and Public Perceptions

Once we move away from a single national pattern of development we complicate the task of writing Japanese history; yet the consequences of such a “new historiography” extend well beyond the boundaries of the scholarly world and into the realm of changing public perceptions of Japan and the way in which we teach about Japan. We can discuss five general ways in which benefits from increased use of local history that may accrue to fields beyond the scholarly realm.

Diverse images of Japan created by these and other studies of local history will increasingly attack and wear down the perception that Japanese society and its history are composed of automatons. More concrete and detailed descriptions reveal diverse attitudes and conflicts will and help to humanize images of Japan. We will see the role of the nation-state and its reach as more limited and the unfolding of Japanese history as more colorful than heretofore.

Beyond this, local historical study has the potential to promote a new historiography that treats the vaunted “homogeneity” of Japanese society differently and more critically. This endeavor is important strictly within the context of Japanese history. It is important for people to understand that despite racial and ethnic homogeneity, there were plenty of instances in which that was inadequate to maintain a harmonious and peaceful society. As a corollary, we will see that such “homogeneity” does not make Japan uniquely free of significant lines of friction within its social structure as well as its political structures.

Important as such revisions are, they may also provide useful fodder for us to reconsider the whole problem of race and ethnicity: Japan has been a very interesting example of the creativity of a society in generating invidious ascriptive distinctions. In effect, we have many examples here (as Ooms has begun to point out in Tokugawa Village Practice) of creating discriminatory mountains out of molehills of social differences even in the context of racial and ethnic homogeneity. By stressing those concerns that plague our contemporary world, we have ignored or downplayed issues of comparable import to the people of past times.

Local histories should help us uncover regional differences that have a significant impact on social, economic and political developments in Japanese history. It is common, for example, that economic historians divide Japan into ad-

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advanced (read "large urban areas and the countryside that directly serves them") and "backward" regions but these distinctions do not permit us to see gradations that may have had a significant impact on economic diversification and development. We have done little in the early modern era, for example, to examine the impact of domain size, territorial contiguity, distance from Edo and similar factors on the effectiveness of domain administration, despite the fact that generalizations abound. We hear of bifurcations such as eastern Japan’s agriculture was based on horse-power, western Japan’s was based on oxen/cattle, but one wonders if more complex considerations would not yield smaller, more meaningful regional differentiations. In the development of greater sensitivity to regional variations, studies by non-historians such as Kelly and Kalland may also be useful.

Finally, local histories and the conclusions drawn from them may help us to eliminate clear oversimplifications that we inadvertently communicate to non-specialists by virtue of the emphasis we have placed on a national narrative of institutional development and progress. I have in mind the example of Alan Macfarlane, an assiduous scholar with degrees in history and anthropology, who undertook an extensive comparison of how Japan and England escaped the dual Malthusian traps. In the course of his analysis of the English language literature, he pored over the volumes of the *Cambridge History of Japan* and based on its treatment, concluded that warfare did not have a major impact on Japanese population trends because there were no major conflicts in late medieval and early *kinsei* Japan.

## Conclusion

With the aid of local histories such as those in this symposium, we can generate many new insights into Japanese history. There is still a significant place here for the study of unique events. Van Sant’s and Pratt’s essays provide poignant evidence that in this realm, too, there is still much to investigate as part of an effort to tell a more conflict-ridden and human story in Japanese history. Even a study that simply tests accepted generalizations and concludes that there were other similar cases without determining that they were broadly representative or part of a tentatively identifiable set of patterns will challenge standing interpretations and suggest alternatives for future investigation. Such studies have the potential to make the unfolding of Japanese history appear more tentative, more open to recognition of choices made from a variety of options, and less dominated by a sense of inevitability.

But we also may begin to think about patterned regional variation rather than just a simple uniform narrative. The particular approach taken as scholars deal with the issue of the degree to which a given case represents broader phenomenon will have an impact on the picture that emerges from the use of local history. One that contextualizes a local study through statistical analysis will give us a clear sense of how close a given case is to the mean as measured by a number of variables and it will also give us a sense of variation through a statistical measure of deviation. Other approaches may yield a relatively comprehensive and final typology of some sort. Some typologies may be more tentative or incomplete, but still be very useful if taken seriously and investigated in relationship to other issues. For example, we are already well aware of accepted means of classifying daimyo. To name just the most obvious -- large, contiguous domains and small, scattered domains; *fudai*, *tozama*, and *shinpan* domains. Some of these categories have been invoked to explain developments in the Tokugawa economy or the degree of political autonomy, but they have not been tested systematically to determine if the supposed relationship can be demonstrated. By using

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51 For example, Hanley and Yamamura, 21-22, suggest the importance of contiguous and non-contiguous territoriality of domains; Ravina, 20, stresses a distinction between country-holding and non-country-holding daimyo.
local histories to recognize the presence of multiple and varied actors, we again can contribute to telling the story of Japanese history in a less deterministic way that places more emphasis on variation in both process and outcome, and hence provides an image that is less predetermined and perhaps more human.

In discussion during and after this symposium, Professor Donald Hata, California State University, Dominquez Hills, has noted that the images we create of Japan’s history bear on the way in which Japanese immigrants to North America are perceived. A sound understanding of Japanese history helps us to understand the Nikkei residents’ experience as they adapted to and became more fully assimilated in their new homeland. A greater sense of diversity in the Japanese historical experience can help break down the sense that Japanese immigrants were all part of a “perfect minority” and increase our understanding of Nikkei as having diverse experiences. Such a new direction helps to correct a stereotyped image of Nikkei as seen from without, and consciously cultivated by many Japanese-Americans themselves.

Whether in the restricted field of Japanese history, in the broader application of our subject to the fields of public images of Japan, the Japanese and Japanese-Americans, or in the field of public education, continued studies of the sort presented here have a substantial and positive role to play in helping improve our appreciation of the diverse Japanese.

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Two wooden Buddhist sculptures by Enkū, d. 1695.

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52 Comments during discussion of the papers presented in this symposium, private discussion following the session, “The Diverse Japanese: Local History’s Challenge to National Narratives,” 114th Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association, Chicago, Il, January 7, 2000, and personal e-mail communication of 27 February 2000. Professor Hata specifically noted parallels in the use of shrines as described by Professor Thall and the use of shrines in Garden, California. He also mentioned efforts of some Japanese-American leaders encountered in the course of research (his own or that of acquaintances) to deny the presence of prostitutes in the Japanese-American communities of the nineteenth century and intermarriage with blacks as part of an effort to bolster the image of Japanese Americans as a “perfect minority.”

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Book Introduction: Questioning Edo as a Free-Sex Paradise
Lawrence Marceau
University of Delaware

For those interested in the ever-expanding discourse in early modern Japanese gender and sexuality issues, it seems that the temperature has risen a few degrees over the past year. In English, Timon Screech has published Sex and the Floating World: Erotic Images in Japan, 1700-1820 (Honolulu: U Hawaii P, paper ed. 1999) to supplement the version translated into Japanese by Takayama Hiroshi, Shunga: Katate
Pflugfelder provides us with Cartographies of Desire: Male-Male Sexuality in Japanese Discourse, 1600-1950 (Berkeley & Los Angeles: U California P, 1999). In Japanese, Iwanami Shoten’s venerable quarterly Bungaku 『文学』, in its 1999 Summer issue (Vol. 10, No. 3) dedicated to 『張形―江戸をんなの性』 Hyōshō to shite no shunpon 表象としての春本 ("Erotic Books as Emblems"), features a shunga illustration as its first-ever color frontispiece. This issue also provides not one, but two zadankai panel discussions, the first, on 『Shunpon bunka 春本文化(The Culture of Erotic Books), by five males: Hanasaki Kazuo, Nakano Mitsutoshi, Yamaguchi Masao, Asakawa Shōichirō, and Nobuhiro Shinji (moderator), with the second, on Shunpon/Shunga kenkyū no rinkai 春本・春画研究の臨界 (Criticality in Shunpon and Shunga Studies), by five females: Ueno Chizuko, Tanaka Yūko, Saeki Junko, and Sumie Jones (moderator). One of many thought-provoking elements from the latter takes up Screech’s thesis that erotica was consumed by men as an aid in masturbation and turns it on its head, exploring the notion that women were also busy reading "with one hand" while the other was busily engaged in self-gratification. A few months later, Tanaka expanded on this theme with a book-length examination of dildos in early modern Japan, Harigata: Edo wonna no sei 『張形―江戸をんなの性』 (Harigata: Female Sexuality in Edo, Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1999). Of course, all of this discussion, study, and publication is directly related to the recent relaxation of censorship laws governing images of pubic hair, and the subsequent release of multi-volume anthologies of early modern block-printed erotica. (The proliferation of contemporary pornographic texts in Japanese and images over the Internet provides yet another subtext for all of this interest.)

In the wake of all of this publishing, Koyano Atsushi 小谷野敦 has taken the bold step of critiquing what he refers to as the "praise" of sexual practices in the early modern period. In his book, Edo gensō hihan—"Edo no sei Seitai rai sanron wo utsu 『江戸幻想批判—「江戸の性
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