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Cooper III, Tim Ervin

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Tokugawa Yoshimune versus Tokugawa Muneharu:
Rival Visions of Benevolent Rule

by

Tim Ervin Cooper III

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

Requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Mary Elizabeth Berry, Chair
Professor Irwin Scheiner
Professor Susan Matisoff

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Abstract

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This dissertation examines the political rivalry between the eighth Tokugawa shogun, Yoshimune (1684-1751, r. 1716-45), and his cousin, the daimyo lord of Owari domain, Tokugawa Muneharu (1696-1764, r. 1730-39). For nearly a decade, Muneharu ruled Owari domain in a manner that directly contravened the policies and edicts of his cousin, the shogun. Muneharu ignored admonishments of his behavior, and he openly criticized the shogun's Kyōhō era (1716-36) reforms for the hardship that they brought people throughout Japan. Muneharu's flamboyance and visibility transgressed traditional status boundaries between rulers and their subjects, and his lenient economic and social policies allowed commoners to enjoy the pleasures and profits of Nagoya entertainment districts that were expanding in response to the Owari lord's personal fondness for the floating world. Ultimately, Muneharu's fiscal extravagance and moral lenience—benevolent rule (*jinsei*), as he defined it—bankrupted domain coffers and led to his removal from office by Yoshimune. Although Muneharu's challenge to Yoshimune's political authority ended in failure, it nevertheless reveals the important role that competing notions of benevolence (*jin*) were coming to play in the rhetoric of Tokugawa rulership. Yoshimune's response to Muneharu demonstrates the capacity of the Tokugawa political system (*bakuhan taisei*) to change in subtle yet significant ways. This flexibility provided the *bakuhan taisei* with the durability needed to survive for nearly three centuries.

Through an original analysis of primary texts such as *Ōmu rōchū ki*, *Yume no ato*, *Kyōgen emaki*, and Muneharu's *Onchi seiyō*, this dissertation demonstrates that competing concepts of benevolence were becoming increasingly important to the rhetoric of rulership in Tokugawa Japan. Muneharu demonstrated his benevolence through lenient economic and social policies that fostered the wealth and well-being of his subjects. He criticized the shogun for lacking such benevolence and thus lacking legitimacy as a ruler. This dissertation contends that Muneharu's formula of political legitimacy represented a genuine threat to the shogun and the premises of the *bakuhan taisei*. While Yoshimune safeguarded the stability of the shogunate by rejecting Muneharu's specific formula of benevolent rule, the concept was nevertheless becoming a central part of eighteenth-century Tokugawa political rhetoric. By defining rulers in terms of

their posture toward their subjects, the concept of benevolence stretched, and ultimately transformed, the Tokugawa political system.

The durability of the Tokugawa political system is impressive. Historians often attribute its terrific lifespan (1603-1868) to the inertia they see in eighteenth-century politics. Yet this dissertation's closer examination of the rivalries between Yoshimune and Muneharu, between premodern and early modern notions of rulership, and between birthright and benevolence reveals that Tokugawa politics were, in fact, undergoing important changes in the first half of the eighteenth century. The ability of the *bakuhau taisei* to adapt to the demands of changing social, economic, and political realities was born of its non-constitutional structure, which maintained the viability of the shogunate and the broader *bakuhau taisei* for nearly three centuries. This dissertation argues that Yoshimune's resolution of those rivalries helped the shogunate survive the challenges of early modernity into the nineteenth century. Yet resolution did not bring rigidity or stasis—the political system retained its plasticity. Indeed, without the flexibility to meet the challenges and changes of early modern society, the *bakuhau taisei* would have been “dead” in the middle of the Tokugawa period.

For my Mother, who asked that I finish school
And my Father, who made it possible

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I cannot say enough about my many outstanding colleagues in the History Department at UC Berkeley. Over the past seven years, I have made many friendships that I shall always treasure, but my life and my learning experience have truly been enriched by the company of David Spafford, Filippo Marsili, Miriam Kingsberg, and Deborah Kang. My deepest gratitude goes to the members of my writing group. Sabrina Soracco, Andy Engen, Araceli Hernandez, Luis Ramos, Esperanza Sanchez, and Orna Shaughnessy all read countless drafts of my dissertation chapters. Their insightful and constructive comments brought out the best in my writing. Most importantly, their unconditional support saw me through the roughest times, and I shall forever be in their debt. Finer people than these you will not meet. I am humbled to call all of them my colleagues; I am blessed to call all of them my friends.

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Tim Ervin Cooper III
July 23, 2010

Postscript:

Finally, for anyone reading this who might be considering returning to graduate school with a family, I must caution you to think carefully before you make your decision. Your road will be longer, your work will be harder, and your risks will be greater than you would otherwise wish them to be. But your journey will be more joyful, your experiences richer, and your rewards all the sweeter for the love and inspiration your family will bring. This is the lesson that graduate study has taught me.

Chapter 1

Ambiguous by Design: The Viability and Vulnerability of the *Bakuhan Taisei*

Fifteen generations of Tokugawa shoguns ruled Japan for nearly three hundred years. For such a venerable system of rule, there was relatively little bloodshed and even less enthusiasm for preserving the Tokugawa state when the end finally came in 1868. The ease with which Meiji leaders shrugged off their former political system has suggested to some scholars that the bakufu had suffered from chronic anemia for a very long time. Harold Bolitho, for one, has made the powerful argument that the divided loyalties of the shogun's hereditary (*fudai*) retainers contributed to a "cumulative decline" of bakufu authority from which it could not recover when faced with the threat of foreign warships at the end of the nineteenth century.¹

While Bolitho's argument may help explain the lack of support for the shogunate in its final moments, the fact remains that the Tokugawa political system survived for nearly three centuries before capitulating to pressures external to its own political logic. Absent the forced encounter with the modern, international political order, which demanded the rationalization of power relationships not only between Japan and the rest of the world, but also between political actors within Japan, there is little evidence to suggest that the Tokugawa political system (*bakuhan taisei*) could not have survived the nineteenth century.² The striking durability of this political system merits a closer examination of the ways in which the state weathered challenges to its legitimacy across the Tokugawa period.

Entropy might suggest itself as one viable explanation for the longevity of the shogunate. The three centuries of Tokugawa rule are often divided into periods of political growth, stasis, and decline. This familiar narrative of a "dynastic lifecycle" implies that, having reached a developmental peak somewhere in the seventeenth century, the *bakuhan taisei* possessed sufficient momentum to lumber comatose across the eighteenth century until it finally broke down in the decade following Commodore Perry's arrival in 1854. Had the *bakuhan taisei* been truly static, however, it would have perished long before this, for the polity that it governed was constantly changing to meet the demands of new economic and social realities.³ Without the flexibility to adapt to those changing realities, it is impossible to imagine the Tokugawa political system surviving the dramatic changes of the seventeenth century, including rapid population, market, and urban growth.

Rather than entropy, stasis, or schism, this dissertation contends that the Tokugawa political system was characterized by its subtle yet significant malleability at key moments of contention and crisis. While the basic framework of the *bakuhan taisei* retained its integrity

¹ Harold Bolitho, *Treasures Among Men: The Fudai Daimyo in Tokugawa Japan* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1974), 19.

² The term "*bakuhan*" refers to the two primary components of the Tokugawa political system: the shogunate (bakufu) and the domain (*han*) governments.

³ Thomas C. Smith, *The Agrarian Origins of Modern Japan* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1959).

across three centuries of Tokugawa rule (perhaps contributing to the popular perception of political stasis), ambiguities within its non-constitutional structure provided it with the flexibility required to adjust to the changing demands of the times. The *bakuhān taisei* was the product of Toyotomi Hideyoshi's political resolution to the military strife of the Warring States (*sengoku*) era (1467-1573). The balance of power that Hideyoshi had struck between and among himself and the *sengoku* daimyo at the end of the sixteenth century was inherited by the Tokugawa shoguns. Yet the political administration (*bakufu*) that grew up around the shogunal house over the course of the Tokugawa period never produced a formal declaration of the rights or responsibilities of the shogun vis-à-vis those daimyo lords, many of whom continued to enjoy near autonomous rule over their domains. Lacking a rationalized articulation of self-evident truths at its moment of genesis, the *bakuhān taisei* retained critical ambiguities within its fundamental structure that provided it the strength to endure three centuries of social and economic transformations.

The *bakuhān taisei* thus survived because of its structural ambiguities rather than in spite of them. Ideological ambiguities such as the locus of political power or the definition of good rule served as structural fault lines within the *bakuhān taisei* that allowed the system to change over time. However, these fault lines were also points of vulnerability that caused great anxiety for rulers who sought to mask those weaknesses with the narratives that they told about themselves. One myth that the *bakuhān taisei* championed vociferously was that of dynastic constancy by virtue of birthright. Another was the myth of the benevolent ruler. This dissertation attempts to peer beneath these narratives and understand more clearly how rulers shaped political discourses around these ideological fault lines, and how resolution of those ambiguities helped change the contours of the *bakuhān taisei* such that it remained a viable political system across three centuries of Tokugawa rule. It focuses on the political rivalry between the eighth Tokugawa shogun, Yoshimune (1684-1751), and the daimyo of Owari domain, Tokugawa Muneharu (1696-1764), which grew out of the Owari lord's challenge to the shogunal authority of his cousin.

This uniquely direct challenge to shogunal authority, which unfolded over the course of the 1730s, provides a rare opportunity to witness the manner in which rivals for political legitimacy framed their dispute and responded to each other's provocations over the nature of good rule in Tokugawa Japan. As lord of the senior-most Tokugawa collateral house, Muneharu was the highest-ranking, most powerful, and most intimately connected person ever to flout the laws of the shogun, criticize his reform policies, and question his right to rule in public. His special position within the political hierarchies of both the *bakuhān taisei* and the Tokugawa house provided him with a unique ability to challenge the authority of the shogun. Additionally, Yoshimune was uniquely vulnerable to an attack from someone of Muneharu's stature and temperament. He had been adopted as shogunal heir from a junior *gosanke* house, and his legitimacy may have remained questionable in the minds of his subjects. Furthermore, his stringent Kyōhō era (1716-36) reforms made the shogun unpopular and provided Muneharu with an easy target for criticizing Yoshimune's rigid brand of rulership.

Muneharu raised questions about the premises of shogunal authority that only he could raise, and he did so in a manner that only he was capable of doing. Ultimately, he was a problem that only the shogun could resolve (although he could not do it alone). Muneharu was too high-ranking, too close to the heart of the political system, and his challenge too

threatening for Yoshimune to leave to one of his councilors or chamberlains. The rivalry between these two men remained within the sphere of familial politics, and it is rare for us to witness such a public rift within the shogunal house. The rivalry of Yoshimune and Muneharu therefore merits our close attention because of the opportunity it affords us to catch a glimpse of the manner in which the narrow machinations of familial politics affected broader shifts in the contours of the Tokugawa polity. The following chapters examine the rivalry between Yoshimune and Muneharu in an effort to understand the process by which the political system flexed and stretched itself around particular structural ambiguities in order to retain its viability in the face of social and economic changes of the Tokugawa period.

Chapter 2 examines official and unofficial accounts of Tokugawa Yoshimune's selection as shogun following the death of his predecessor, Ietsugu, in 1716. It establishes the version related by the *Tokugawa jikki* as an attempt by bakufu historians to gloss over the messy familial politics of succession and present a facade of continuity that masked any potentially lethal political fissures within the bakufu. Secret diaries kept by a low-ranking retainer of Owari domain, however, indicate that a genuine rivalry for the title of shogun existed between the Owari and Kii houses, and that Yoshimune was not the only lord of a Tokugawa collateral house (*gosanke*) who might have inherited the title of shogun in 1716.

Yoshimune was selected as shogun based on a particular interpretation of the lines of succession within the Tokugawa house that allowed him to usurp the title from his higher-ranking cousin from Owari, Tokugawa Tsugutomo. Although he was said to have been chosen as heir because it had been the will of the former shogun, Ienobu, and because he was closer in blood line to the founder, Ieyasu, Yoshimune was, in fact, selected by bakufu leaders based on his competency as a ruler who had restored the finances of the impoverished Kii domain.⁴ Yet the notion of choosing the shogun based on the meritocratic principle of ability was an anathema to traditional ideas of political legitimacy based on genealogy. Therefore, any possible objection to Yoshimune's inheritance had to be avoided by championing the narrative of birthright as enthusiastically as possible in the official record. Establishing Yoshimune as the rightful ruler of the bakufu was critical to maintaining the stability of the shogunate, for it created the illusion of constancy and stasis within the *bakuhan taisei*. Although every effort was made to justify the righteousness of his claim to the title of shogun, birthright remained a flexible point of ambiguity within the *bakuhan taisei*, and his cousin, Muneharu, possessed both the capacity and the will to challenge Yoshimune's pedigree as shogun.

While Chapter 2 focuses on questions about Yoshimune's birthright and the attempt by the shogun and his biographers to obfuscate the political fissures that they created, Chapter 3 looks more closely at structural and ideological ambiguities of the *bakuhan taisei* that allowed Muneharu to critique the policies and challenge the legitimacy of his cousin as shogun. It begins with a discussion of Muneharu's unique position within the *bakuhan taisei* as a *gosanke* lord, which provided him with the pride of pedigree and willful temerity to challenge the authority of the shogun in the first place. Muneharu's sense of superiority over Yoshimune was compounded by ambiguities regarding the balance of political power between the shogun and the daimyo within the *bakuhan taisei*. Muneharu took advantage of the autonomy he enjoyed

⁴ Muro Kyūsō, "Kenzan hisaku," in *Nihon keizai taiten*, ed. Takimoto Seiichi, vol. 6 (Tokyo: Shishi shuppansha, 1928), 377.

within the borders of Owari to govern his domain according to very unorthodox economic and social ideas. In identifying Muneharu's special status as a *gosanke* lord as a major source of his discontent toward Yoshimune, this chapter argues that challenges to the political system were ironically born of the same structure that was meant to protect it.

Chapter 3 also examines several of the shogun's most important Kyōhō era reforms in order to explain how these were both the source and object of Muneharu's discontent with the rule of Yoshimune. As shogun, Yoshimune implemented numerous reforms aimed at controlling the finances of the state and stabilizing the Tokugawa economy. While he was doubtless concerned for the welfare of the broader Tokugawa economy, the uneven and often ad hoc quality of his reforms suggests that they were aimed first and foremost at improving the health of bakufu coffers, regardless of any suffering they might cause his subjects. Many of Yoshimune's Kyōhō era reforms, such as the fixed tax (*jōmen hō*) and gift rice policy (*agemai no sei*), were unpopular with commoners and daimyo alike, and thus presented themselves as targets for Muneharu's critique. Muneharu gave voice to this discontent in his brief treatise on benevolence and rulership for the sake of the people, *Onchi seiyō*.

Chapter 4 provides an analysis of Muneharu's 1731 polemic treatise, *Onchi seiyō*, in which he criticizes the shogun's stringent economic reforms as evidence of his lack of benevolence for his subjects. Benevolence (*jishi*) was one of the most ambiguous terms operating in Tokugawa political discourse, and this fact afforded Muneharu the opportunity to challenge Yoshimune's authority by re-defining benevolence as the ends rather than the means of rulership. That is, benevolent rule (*jinsei*) was not limited to the tangible provision of tax relief (*tokusei*), debt moratoriums (*kienrei*), or the release of grain stores in times of famine or financial hardship. Rather, according to Muneharu's logic (which reflected shifting eighteenth-century attitudes), benevolence was the normative posture of the ruler toward his subjects. It formed the basis of political legitimacy by demanding rulers enact lenient social and economic policies that fostered the prosperity of their subjects. Failure to provide this type of benevolence, Muneharu held, would bring the downfall of the ruler. For Yoshimune, however, benevolent rule continued to confirm his right to strictly control the finances of his subjects through austere economic policies and repeated frugality ordinances. For Yoshimune, benevolent rule remained rule from above that kept commoners in service to their samurai lords. Yoshimune's benevolence manifested itself in charitable acts such as the establishment of the petition box (*meyasubako*), the Koishikawa sanatorium (*yōjōsho*), and the Edo fire brigades, none of which threatened the hierarchical relationship between ruler and subject.

The rivalry between Muneharu and Yoshimune over the definition of benevolent rule broke along the intersection of premodern notions of political authority and the growing pressures of early modern socioeconomic realities in Japan. Simply put, the *bakuhan taisei* had to make ideological room for the growing population of commoners and their complex market economy. While Muneharu's definition of *jinsei* never enfranchised commoners as active political agents, it did define rulers in terms of their responsibility to their subjects. Taking this logic to its limits, Muneharu's definition of *jinsei* held the potential to transform the *bakuhan taisei* into what I call a "meritocracy of benevolence." Yoshimune resisted this reformulation of benevolence in favor of a more traditional relationship in which rulers assumed a paternalistic role as shepherds of their subjects. By the eighteenth century, the question was not whether the legitimate ruler had to provide his subjects with benevolence, but rather what form

benevolence his rule would take. Ultimately, Yoshimune would bring resolution to this crisis by removing Muneharu from Tokugawa political discourse and rejecting his re-definition of benevolence, thereby bringing greater clarity to the structural ambiguities of the *bakuhan taisei* and allowing the political system to maintain its durability well into the nineteenth century.

Chapter 5 examines Yoshimune's many efforts to resolve the crisis of rulership precipitated by Muneharu during his eight-year tenure as daimyo of Owari. Yoshimune made numerous attempts to remove the threat posed by Muneharu. Initially, the shogun appealed to Muneharu as a kindred spirit to whom the responsibilities of rulership had suddenly fallen. Like the shogun, Muneharu was the youngest son of a powerful daimyo, and had not been expected to inherit his father's title. However, Yoshimune's overtures failed to win Muneharu's support for his austere economic reforms, and the shogun was forced to chastise Muneharu for his violation of bakufu law and custom while in Edo. Muneharu remained defiant, publicly criticizing Yoshimune's governance of the realm in his polemic treatise, *Onchi seiyō*, which he gave a Kyoto bookseller permission to publish in 1732. Yoshimune moved to silence his cousin by censoring *Onchi seiyō*, but Muneharu only persisted in further challenging the premises of Yoshimune's economic policies by making a spectacle of his rule in Owari. Muneharu's visibility drew attention to his unorthodox social and economic policies, and attracted merchants, artisans, and entertainers from throughout Japan to Nagoya in search of profit and pleasure. Finally, after nearly a decade of enduring the provocations of his cousin, Yoshimune erased Muneharu from Tokugawa political discourse altogether through a coup organized in conjunction with Muneharu's own housemen.

Yoshimune was able to weather the challenge of his cousin because of his own political acumen and because Muneharu's reforms in Owari lacked substance. They were as much about satisfying Muneharu's personal desire for luxury and entertainment as they were about providing his subjects with benevolence. More important, however, Yoshimune was also able to survive Muneharu's attacks because of the resiliency of the *bakuhan taisei*, which possessed powerful structural ambiguities built into its non-constitutional polity. The *bakuhan taisei* and the shogun thus reinforced each other: the former had the capacity to adapt to new socioeconomic realities at key points of structural ambiguity, and the latter had the ability to clarify those ambiguities by engaging in and shaping Tokugawa political discourse.

Yoshimune and the *bakuhan taisei* survived the crisis of Tokugawa Muneharu without much visible ordeal. Bakufu historians covered over any questionable matters in the official record regarding shogunal succession. Yoshimune erased Muneharu from political discourse and Owari archivists erased him from the official record almost entirely. Tokugawa rulers continued to be legitimized by their birthright. The *gosanke* were never again contenders for the title of shogun. By all accounts, it would appear that Yoshimune defended his claim to the title of shogun as well as the premises of his authority.

Yet, as the following chapters demonstrate, the *bakuhan taisei* emerged from the many crises it faced in the first half of the eighteenth century changed in subtle yet significant ways. Most importantly, the framework of the political system had stretched and shifted to allow those premises of rulership to meet the demands of the early modern period while retaining the outward appearance of stability and, yes, even stasis. The integrity of the system over time was made possible by what this dissertation refers to as structural ambiguities: unarticulated

roles, relationships, and responsibilities within the *bakuhan taisei* that were the source of both its viability and its vulnerability throughout the early modern period.

Ultimately, the greatest structural ambiguity of the *bakuhan taisei* was the role of the shogun: it could change with each generation. Yoshimune's confrontation with Muneharu, for example, demonstrates that the shogun had the capacity to act as the final arbiter of permissible utterances within Tokugawa political discourse, and thereby to define the contours of the *bakuhan taisei*. Yet Yoshimune's active rule did not set some eternal standard or define the duties of the shogun absolutely. The polity remained non-constitutional. As a structural ambiguity of the *bakuhan taisei*, the role of the shogun continued to enjoy the strength and flexibility to change with the times through the end of the Tokugawa period.

* * * * *

To return to the question to which Harold Bolitho and so many other scholars of Tokugawa Japan have devoted such great energy, there are many reasons that the *bakuhan taisei* could not survive the pressures of the 1860s, and it impossible to know whether Yoshimune's tenure as shogun either doomed the *bakuhan taisei* or prolonged its lifespan—though many have offered their speculations. However, what can be said—and what this dissertation seeks to demonstrate—is that Yoshimune's resolution of the many crises facing the bakufu in the first half of the eighteenth century reveals the inherent flexibility of the *bakuhan taisei* that allowed it to maintain its integrity across three centuries of Tokugawa rule. To reiterate, if Japan had not been forced into modern diplomatic relationships that were intolerant of the Tokugawa political system, there is little reason to doubt that the *bakuhan taisei* would have outlived the nineteenth century. The striking durability of this political system therefore merits a closer examination of the specific ways in which the state weathered challenges to its legitimacy across the Tokugawa period. The following chapters represent the first step toward understanding the role of the shogun, Tokugawa Yoshimune, to the survival of the shogunate in the first half of the eighteenth century.

Chapter 2

Crisis and Continuity in the Shogunal Succession of Tokugawa Yoshimune

July 6, 1716. Hachizaemon told me that under the will of the Shogun [Tokugawa Ienobu] the lord of Ki [sic] no Kuni [Tokugawa Yoshimune] has provisionally been appointed head of state. He is thirty years old and has two sons.

July 9. The Japanese think that the Shogun [Tokugawa Ietsugu] has been dead for quite some time.

July 17. The Owari faction does not agree with the nomination of Ki no Kuni as future head of state.

August 9. Kishichi told me that the mourning period for the late Shogun was over. Furthermore he told me that due to the intercession of Mito sama [Tokugawa Tsunaeda], Owari has renounced his claims to the throne as it is likely that Ki no Kuni will become the new Shogun. It is still not sure because he is thought by many to be half crazy.

August 13. I think that the factions are still at odds about the question [of] who should become the new Shogun because a Shogun has not yet been enthroned. Also I wonder whether the Emperor is not angry because of the treatment of his daughter who, after all, has married a dead person [Ietsugu].

Gideon Boudaan, Dejima Opperhoofd, VOC, 1715-1719¹

News traveled quickly to the port of Dejima, the man-made island in Nagasaki Bay where the Dutch, the only Europeans licensed to trade in Japan, were forced to reside. Six hundred miles from Edo, the journey between Dejima and the shogun's capital typically required a full month to complete.² However, Gideon Boudaan, the Dejima Opperhoofd (Factory Chief) for the Dutch East India Company in 1716, recorded these events in the

¹ Paul van der Velde and Rudolf Bachofner, eds., *The Deshima Diaries: Marginalia, 1700-1740*, Scientific Publications of the Japan-Netherlands Institute 12 (Tokyo: Japan-Netherlands Institute, 1992), 200.

² The departure and arrival dates given by Engelbert Kaempfer for both of his journeys (1691, 1692) to Edo and back confirm this estimate. See: Engelbert Kaempfer, *Kaempfer's Japan: Tokugawa Culture Observed*, ed. Beatrice M. Bodart-Bailey (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999).

company *dagregister* (daily register) just over two weeks after they had occurred.³ In fact, on the very day that Boudaan was wondering if factions within the bakufu had settled on an heir to Tokugawa Ietsugu (1709-16), the Emperor was awarding the title of *Sei'i tai shogun* (Barbarian Subduing Generalissimo) to the former lord of *Kii no kuni* (domain), Tokugawa Yoshimune.

News not only came quickly to Dejima, it also came accurately. Boudaan's informants, Kafuku Kishichirō and Namura Hachizaemon, appear to have been very forthcoming with their Dutch counterpart, telling him the news from Chiyoda (Edo) castle as they interpreted it, for he was very well apprised of the political rift that had divided the bakufu into two factions struggling over the selection of the next shogun. In particular, Boudaan's entry for August 9, 1716 echoes the official voice of the bakufu, which trumpeted the selection of Yoshimune as the will of the former shogun, Tokugawa Ienobu (1662-1712).

Ten'ei-in (the mother of the former shogun, Ietsugu) summoned Yoshimune into the Great Interior [*ōoku*] and told him, "It was the will of Ienobu [that you become guardian and the next shogun]. For the sake of the people of the realm [*tenka banmin no tame ni*] you must take the reigns of government!"⁴

Boudaan's marginalia indicate not only that news from Edo arrived in Nagasaki in a timely manner, but also that the voice of the bakufu, while official, was not trusted. Unable to ascertain for themselves what had actually transpired within the walls of Edo castle, officials in Nagasaki knew better than to accept reports from the bakufu at face value. Boudaan indicates, for example, that they suspected that the former shogun, Ietsugu, had passed away well before they received any official announcement from Edo. Moreover, it was known that within the bakufu the Owari faction was resisting Yoshimune's promotion to shogun in favor of their own candidate. Both of these unofficial pieces of information were accurately distilled from the mixture of rumors and announcements arriving from Edo, revealing that the people of Nagasaki were accustomed to and skilled at decoding the utterances of the state.

Like the residents of Dejima and Nagasaki, this chapter attempts to separate fact from myth regarding the events surrounding the selection of Tokugawa Yoshimune as heir to the child shogun, Ietsugu, whose death in 1716 brought the main line of the Tokugawa house (*sōke*) to an end. Through its examination various archival records and the histories of the individuals involved in the selection of Yoshimune as shogun, this chapter discovers crisis and conflict where the official record portrays composure and consensus. I conclude that the smooth operation of the political apparatus and the selection of Yoshimune based his birthright were both fictions created by Yoshimune, the officials around him, and his later biographers. These myths were fabricated to gloss over major rifts within the Tokugawa political system (*bakuhan taisei*) where meaningful political conflict could and did occur. As subsequent chapters in this dissertation will show, there was a genuine risk that someone might challenge the authority of the shogun or question the premises of the political system through an attack on one of these

³ Tokugawa Yoshimune was named guardian (*kōken*) to Ietsugu on June 19, 1716, the same day that Ietsugu officially died. Boudaan notes that Yoshimune has been named shogun in an entry dated August 24; again, about two weeks after the actual date. van der Velde and Bachofner, *The Deshima Diaries*, 201.

⁴ Kuroita Katsumi, ed., *Tokugawa jikki*, vol. 8, Shintei zōho kokushi taikai 45 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1933), 2.

structural ambiguities of the *bakuhan taisei*. This chapter shows how elements within the shogunate (bakufu) worked to reduce that risk by propagating the myths of genealogical continuity and political stability. Once we recognize these myths and images for what they were—elaborate fabrications supporting the rule of the Tokugawa—we will be better able to understand how Tokugawa Muneharu saw in those myths and images the origins and objects of his challenge to the shogun, Yoshimune.

* * * * *

The Masking of a Crisis

The *Tokugawa jikki* (True Record of the Tokugawa), which relates in over five hundred volumes the history of the first ten Tokugawa shoguns from 1542 to 1786, is one of the most important sources available to historians of early modern Japanese politics.⁵ Compilation of the manuscript began in 1809 under the guidance of the Confucian scholar, Hayashi Jussai (1768-1841), and was completed some forty years later. The entries of the *Tokugawa jikki* are primarily concerned with the daily activities of the officers, institutions, and administration of the bakufu, including the shoguns and the daimyo.⁶ The compilers of the *Tokugawa jikki* drew on many original sources, including the unpublished *Bakufu nikki* (Daily Record of the Tokugawa Bakufu) in producing their official history of the shogunate. However, many historical records that they might have otherwise used were lost in the Meireki Fire of 1657, and they were forced to rely on secondary sources for much of their information concerning the early Tokugawa shoguns. Despite this, historians today generally believe that the text draws faithfully and objectively on its sources.⁷

Although it enjoys a reputation for objectivity and accuracy, the *Tokugawa jikki* is an official history of the Tokugawa bakufu—not the Tokugawa family.⁸ This distinction is critical because many of the most important political decisions of the bakufu were made within the shogun's private quarters, the Great Interior (*ōoku*) of Edo castle. Thus, although bakufu historians compiled a great amount of data concerning the administration of the shogunate, there was much (perhaps even more) that they could not include in their history, for it lay beyond their purview. In short, quite apart from the loss of records due to fire or other calamities, there was simply much about the working of the bakufu that was not meant to be known by anyone other than those directly involved in its administration. Politics in Japan were not only monopolized by samurai elites, but they were also defined by their familial quality. Familial politics are complex, untidy, and tangled affairs; they are rarely straightforward or

⁵ The *Kenjōbon* (*Tributary manuscript*) contains 447 volumes in the main body of the text, 68 *furoku* volumes, and two volumes of appendices for a total of 517 volumes. However, there is no standard number of volumes among the various editions.

⁶ Jussai's original plan was to continue compiling histories for each subsequent shogun. However, a lack of funding forced the bakufu to abandon this plan. The *Zoku Tokugawa jikki*, a sequel published in five volumes between 1905 and 1907, recounts the histories of the last five Tokugawa shoguns.

⁷ *Kokushi daijiten*, s.v. "Tokugawa jikki."

⁸ For a discussion of the bakufu as an extension of Tokugawa household administration, see: Conrad D. Totman, *Politics in the Tokugawa Bakufu, 1600-1843* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 8-43.

transparent as the *Tokugawa jikki* would have its readers believe—particularly in moments of great anxiety or crisis.

The Tokugawa family had come to just such a moment of crisis in the spring of 1716 when the main line (*sōke*) of the Tokugawa house ended with the sudden death of the child shogun, Tokugawa Ietsugu. The *Tokugawa jikki* describes the selection of his successor in the following manner.

Because Tokugawa Ietsugu was still a child, he was without an heir.⁹ Lord Tsugutomo of Owari and lord Tsunaeda of Mito conferred with the *rōjū* senior retainers, and in accordance with the will of Ienobu, they recommended that Yoshimune be named his guardian. However, Yoshimune refused on the grounds that Tsugutomo and Tsunaeda were senior to him in rank and age, respectively. Ten'ei-in (the mother of Ietsugu) summoned Yoshimune into the Great Interior [*ōoku*] and told him, “It was the will of Ienobu [that you become guardian and the next shogun]. For the sake of the subjects of the realm [*tenka banmin no tame ni*] you must take the reigns of government!” Although she pleaded earnestly, Yoshimune replied, “I must leave it to the will of the other *gosanke* lords, the Tokugawa house, and the senior ministers.” He thereupon took his leave. Of course, the three houses [the main Tokugawa line, Owari, and Mito] and the senior ministers all recommended that Yoshimune become the guardian of Ietsugu. Because they were all of one mind, Yoshimune reluctantly accepted the office. Certainly, Yoshimune was chosen to become shogun because he was the great-grandson of Tokugawa Ieyasu. What is more, it is also said that he was chosen because his ancestry was closer to Ieyasu than that of the other *gosanke* lords [*onkettō no chikaki ni yori shi tokoro to zo kikiyu*].¹⁰

In accordance with the will of the sixth shogun, Ienobu (1662-1712), Tokugawa Yoshimune (1684-1751) was presented to the assembly of daimyo and housemen (*gokenin*) at Edo castle as the guardian (*kōken*) of the child shogun, Ietsugu, on the first day of the fifth month of 1716. From the following day onward, he was addressed as *uesama*, the appellation reserved for the shogun. And because of his close genealogical ties to the founder of the bakufu, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616), Yoshimune was officially awarded the titles of “Chief of the Minamoto Clan” (*Genji chōja*) and “Barbarian Subduing Generalissimo” (*sei'i tai shogun*) by the

⁹ Tokugawa Ietsugu (1709-16) became the seventh Tokugawa shogun in 1713 at the age of four (three by western count). He fell ill during the third month of 1716, and died at the end of the following month.

¹⁰ Kuroita Katsumi, *Tokugawa jikki*, 8:2. Citing: Muro Kyūsō, “Kenzan hisaku,” 389-91. Kyūsō (1658-1734) was a Confucian scholar in service to the Maeda clan in Kaga when Hakuseki, who had studied under Kinoshita Jun'an with Kyūsō, recommended him for a position with the bakufu in 1711. He later served as Yoshimune's tutor and as a lecturer at the Takakura Yashiki, a Confucian college established by Yoshimune in 1719. The *Kenzan hisaku* is a collection of letters from Kyūsō to two of his former pupils in Kaga, Aochi Kenzan and his brother, Reikan. The *Tokugawa jikki* cites *Kenzan hisaku* throughout the chapters dedicated to Yoshimune. This account—including the speech of Ten'ei-in—was reported by Hakuseki to Kyūsō, who passed it on to his pupils. Thus, this highly suspect glimpse inside the *ōoku* provided by the *Tokugawa jikki* is four times removed from the actual events that it purports to narrate.

Emperor on the thirteenth day of the eighth month.¹¹ His ascendancy was a continuation of the traditions that had kept the Tokugawa house in power for a century, and was supported by the entire administration of the shogunate. Senior retainers (*kashin*) of the main Tokugawa house (*sōke*), bakufu elders (*rōjū*), Ienobu's principal wife (*seishitsu*), Ten'ei-in, and the other collateral Tokugawa houses (*gosanke*) all agreed that Yoshimune should become the next shogun. Despite his attempts to defer to the other *gosanke* lords, the people of the realm needed his leadership, and Yoshimune ultimately had no choice but to bear the burden of a title that he did not seek for himself. This, at least, is how the official record of the *Tokugawa jikki* would have us understand Yoshimune's remarkable ascent to power: it was meant to appear as natural and unexceptional as possible. In fact, nothing could have been further from the truth.

The selection of anyone other than a member of the Tokugawa *sōke* as shogun was unprecedented. True, inheritance of the title of shogun had never been a wholly straightforward matter. Although primogeniture was the nominal rule of inheritance in warrior houses (*buke*), the Tokugawa had seen nothing but exceptions to that rule since the days of the first shogun. Even so, they had never been forced to look beyond the main line for an heir in over a century of their rule. The title of shogun remained solidly within the main Tokugawa line for seven generations until the child shogun, Ietsugu, died without issue, forcing the bakufu to select a successor from one of the three collateral houses.

Tokugawa Ieyasu had established the collateral houses in order to provide a successor to the shogun should the *sōke* come to an end. Ieyasu was keenly aware of the dangers posed by factionalism and infighting (*oiesōdō*) over succession within warrior houses. Even within a minor house, a power struggle could easily escalate into a regional conflict. The early Tokugawa shoguns thus worked hard to prevent such strife from occurring, imposing attainder upon fifty-eight domains during the first half of the seventeenth century for the crime of failing to name a successor before dying.¹²

Ieyasu knew all too well what it meant for a ruler to die without clearly fixing on a successor. His own lord, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, had been survived by his five-year-old son, Hideyori (1593-1615), who was dependent upon the council of elders (*gotairō*) that Hideyoshi had established shortly before his death. Despite the many oaths that Hideyoshi had extracted from the *gotairō* not to betray his son, factionalism set in almost immediately and the powerful Ieyasu established himself as hegemon of the realm after defeating Toyotomi loyalists at the battle of Sekigahara in 1600.¹³ Ieyasu claimed the title of shogun in 1603 and passed it on to his son, Hidetada (1579-1632), two years later in order to prevent his own house from meeting with a similar end. Ieyasu continued to rule as cloistered shogun (*ōgoshō*) from his villa in Sumpu until his death in 1616, but there was no question as to who would govern once he was

¹¹ These offices were officially conferred upon Yoshimune on the thirteenth day of the eighth month, 1716. He also received a promotion to Second rank, first class (*shō ni-i*) and the offices of Minister of the Right (*Udaijin*), Commander of the Imperial Guards on the Right (*Ukonoe taishō*), Lieutenant of the Imperial Stables on the Right (*Umeiryō*), and Rector of the Jun'na and Shōgaku Colleges (*Junna shōgaku ryōin bettō*). These ranks and titles are historically associated with the person of the shogun.

¹² For a discussion of the use of attainder by the bakufu, and the efficacy thereof, see: Bolitho, *Treasures Among Men: The Fudai Daimyo in Tokugawa Japan*, 166-67.

¹³ Hideyori perished and the Toyotomi house was eradicated following the siege of Osaka castle in 1615.

gone. The transfer of power from one generation to the next was thus secured by Ieyasu's keen foresight.

* * * * *

The Making of a Shogun

The compilers of the *Tokugawa jikki* would have their readers believe that one hundred years after his death, the *gosanke* readily and amicably performed their duty as Ieyasu had intended.¹⁴ With no heir to succeed him, Ietsugu adopted the lord of the collateral Kii house, Tokugawa Yoshimune, thereby guaranteeing the constancy of Tokugawa hegemony for future generations. Yoshimune, we are meant to believe, stepped smoothly—if reluctantly—into the role of shogun after successfully governing one of the most important domains in the realm for over a decade. However, the apparent ease with which the political apparatus functioned belies the severity of the crisis that the bakufu faced in the spring of 1716. The successful transition of rule to a member of the *gosanke* was never a foregone conclusion, and there was no clear mandate as to who should become shogun after Ietsugu.

Yoshimune was not the only candidate for the title of shogun in 1716. There were several compelling reasons that contemporaries would have expected his cousin, Tokugawa Tsugutomo (1692-1731), to become shogun following the death of Ietsugu. First, in a world where access to title and office was determined by finely calibrated and potent hereditary status differences (*kakaku*), Tsugutomo outranked Yoshimune. Ieyasu's ninth, tenth, and eleventh sons had been established as heads of the Owari, Kii, and Mito houses, respectively.¹⁵ Based on birth order as well as the putative value of each domain (*omotedaka*) as measured by its assessed rice harvest (*kokudaka*), Owari was the senior-most house, thereby giving Tsugutomo a legitimate claim to the title of shogun—one that Yoshimune fully acknowledged, according to the *Tokugawa jikki*.¹⁶

Additionally, on his deathbed, the former shogun, Ienobu, had considered appointing Tsugutomo's older brother, Tokugawa Yoshimichi (1689-1713), regent to Ietsugu until the child came of age. However, Ienobu was dissuaded from this plan by his advisor, Arai Hakuseki (1657-1725), who worried that such a move would undermine the authority of the *sōke* and lead to a power struggle, should anything happen to the boy. Had Ienobu placed Yoshimichi in de facto control of the bakufu, the title of guardian—and thus successor—to Ietsugu would have fallen to Tsugutomo in 1716 as a matter of course. Finally, Tsugutomo seemed most likely to become shogun because he enjoyed the support of the three most influential people within the bakufu: Ietsugu's biological mother, Gekkō-in (1685-1752), and his two chief advisors, Manabe Akifusa (1666-1720) and Arai Hakuseki (1657-1725). Although Ienobu's principal wife (*seishitsu*), Ten'ei-in (1666-1741), outranked his consort (*sokushitsu*), Gekkō-in, the latter was

¹⁴ Hakuseki advanced this notion even at the time of Ietsugu's succession. See: Muro Kyūsō, "Kenzan hisaku," 252.

¹⁵ Tokugawa Yoshinao (1600-50), Tokugawa Yorinobu (1602-71), and Tokugawa Yorifusa (1603-61).

¹⁶ Owari domain was valued of 619,500 *koku*, Kii at 555,000 *koku*, and Mito at 350,000 *koku*, although actual yields were often much higher than reported. Owari, for example, actually produced close to one million *koku* of rice, annually. One *koku* was, in theory, the amount of rice required to feed an adult male for one year and was equivalent to approximately 278 liters of rice.

lenobu's favorite, and her authority only grew when she bore him a son (letsugu) in 1709. After the death of lenobu, Gekkō-in formed an intimate alliance with Akifusa and Hakuseki, and together they conducted the affairs of state on behalf of letsugu.

With so much in his favor, why was Tsugutomo passed over as shogun? Moreover, why does the official record portray Yoshimune as the unanimous choice for shogun? Despite the efforts of bakufu historians to smooth over the rough edges of succession politics, the shogunate was not "all of one mind" in its support for Yoshimune. Familial politics and factionalism divided the bakufu broadly into two camps, each supporting its own candidate for the right to inherit the title of shogun in 1716.

Tsugutomo enjoyed the support of Gekkō-in, Akifusa, and Hakuseki, who had been ascendant during the reigns of lenobu and letsugu. However, their administration of the bakufu on behalf of the shoguns had incurred the ire of many senior officials and members of the Tokugawa family. As mother of the shogun, Gekkō-in controlled access to letsugu in order to influence bakufu politics and dominate the Great Interior. She became so powerful that she was able to secure direct entry to the *ōoku* for Akifusa—a prerogative that typically belonged to the shogun alone. The relationship between Gekkō-in and Akifusa was so familiar, in fact, that it was widely rumored that they were involved in a love affair.¹⁷ Her political authority and scandalous behavior made Gekkō-in the object of antipathy for Ten'ei-in and many others within the Great Interior of Edo castle.¹⁸

Gekkō-in's confidant, Akifusa, had been born into a family of noh actors, and entered the service of lenobu while he was still the lord of Kōfu. lenobu promoted Manabe over other bakufu officials with more elite pedigrees to the position of Grand Chamberlain (*sobayōnin*). As *sobayōnin*, Manabe acted as liaison between the shogun—who spent his days cloistered within the confines of the *ōoku*—and his ministers, most of whom were permitted access to their lord only on special occasions. His regular and personal contact with lenobu made Manabe one of the most influential men in the bakufu, and his humble origins made the political power he wielded chafe senior bakufu retainers all the more.¹⁹

Like Akifusa, the Confucian scholar Arai Hakuseki had followed lenobu to Edo from Kōfu. Also like Manabe, he had made many enemies within the ranks of senior bakufu retainers because of the political reforms that he instigated with the backing of the shogun. The reforms increased the autocratic powers of the shogun in line with Confucian ideology, as Hakuseki understood it. In doing so, they also antagonized many of the *rōjū*, who lost much of the

¹⁷ Asahi Monzaemon, *Ōmurōchū-ki*, ed. Ichihashi Taku, vol. 4, Nagoya sōsho 12 (Nagoya: Nagoya-shi Kyōiku linkai, 1964), 227.

¹⁸ Cecilia Segawa Seigle has written on the relationship between Ten'ei-in, Gekkō-in, and lenobu. She holds that Ten'ei-in was not the "neglected and suffering wife" (486) that historians typically depict her to have been. See: Cecilia Segawa Seigle, "The Shogun's Consort: Konoe Hiroko and Tokugawa lenobu," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 59, no. 2 (December 1999): 485-522.

¹⁹ Kate Wildman Nakai, *Shogunal Politics: Arai Hakuseki and the Premises of Tokugawa Rule*, Harvard East Asian Monographs 134 (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1988), 15-16.

authority that they had gained since the reign of the fourth shogun, Ietsuna.²⁰ In addition, Hakuseki was openly critical of many of the *rōjū*, whom he considered incompetent.²¹

In 1714, the Gekkō-in faction suffered a major blow when the Ejima-Ikushima scandal rocked the *ōoku*. Ejima (1681-1741) was lady-in-waiting to Gekkō-in. As senior elder (*ōtoshiyori*) of the *ōoku*, she was an important supporter of Gekkō-in within the Great Interior. She was dismissed from service and banished to the hinterlands of Shinano (modern Nagano Prefecture) when it was discovered that she had been having an illicit affair with the popular kabuki actor, Ikushima Shingorō (1671-1743). In addition to Ejima, the bakufu punished over one thousand people involved in the incident with sentences ranging from the death penalty to house arrest. Ikushima was exiled to Miyakejima, an island one hundred miles off the coast of Edo, and more than sixty courtesans were expelled from the *ōoku*.²²

The loss of her base of support within the *ōoku* weakened Gekkō-in politically, but even more devastating was the death of Ienobu two years later. Each member of the Gekkō-in clique had been dependent on his or her personal relationship with the former shoguns, Ienobu and Ietsugu. With these two gone, and their political base in the Great Interior severely weakened, there was little that they could do against the combined forces of Ten'ei-in and the *rōjū*, who supported making Yoshimune the next shogun.²³ Familial politics, which so often work in complicated ways and produce surprising results, cut against Tsugutomo in this instance and undermined his bid for the title of shogun.

Ienobu's principal wife, Ten'ei-in, backed Yoshimune in opposition to the Gekkō-in clique.²⁴ She repeatedly urged him to become Ietsugu's guardian, asserting—as in the passage quoted above—that such had been the will (*yuikyō*) of her late husband.²⁵ However, there is no evidence that Ienobu ever stated explicitly who was to become shogun if Ietsugu should die.²⁶ Ten'ei-in and other members of the Tokugawa household had been forbidden from visiting Ienobu almost an entire month before he died. If Ienobu had made his will known to her, as she claimed, it would have been at some time before this date. His wishes concerning succession would have been more widely known, and Yoshimune would not have been able to decline the

²⁰ Muro Kyūsō states that Hakuseki was referred to as a “devil” by the *rōjū*, many of whom were terrified of him. Muro Kyūsō, “Kenzan hisaku,” 412-13.

²¹ Nakai provides several examples of Hakuseki's conflicts with bakufu elders. For example, see: Nakai, *Shogunal Politics*, 74-75.

²² Donald H. Shively, “Bakufu Versus Kabuki,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 18, no. 3 (1955): 326-356.

²³ For a discussion of factional politics based around vertical cliques within the bakufu, see: Totman, *Politics in the Tokugawa Bakufu, 1600-1843*, 179-204.

²⁴ Some histories reverse these factions. This reflects the view of the *Sannō gaiki*, a fictional account of Tsunayoshi, Ienobu, and Yoshimune authored by the Confucian scholar, Dazai Shundai (1680-1747) under the pseudonym, Tōbu Yashi. Seigle points out that Ten'ei-in was the aunt of Tsugutomo's wife, Ategimi, a family connection that might have had some influence on her choice for shogun (Seigle, 517-18). See also: Koishi Fusako, “Yoshimune o meguru onnatachi,” in *Tokugawa Yoshimune no subete*, ed. Andō Seiichi and Ōishi Shinzaburō (Tokyo: Shinjinbutsu Ōraisha, 1995), 157-78.

²⁵ Elsewhere, *Tokugawa jikki* uses the term, “*yuikyō*” interchangeably with “*yuimei*.” See: Kuroita Katsumi, ed., *Tokugawa jikki*, vol. 9, *Shintei zōho kokushi taikai* 46 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1934), 141. Muro Kyūsō uses the term, “*yuigon*.” See: Muro Kyūsō, “Kenzan hisaku,” 390. All three words refer to a person's dying wishes or will.

²⁶ *Nanki Tokugawa shi* includes a reproduction of Ienobu's will, which does not mention Yoshimune. See: Horiuchi Shin, ed., *Nanki Tokugawa shi*, vol. 1, *Nanki Tokugawa shi* (Wakayama: Nanki Tokugawashi Kankōkai, 1930), 536-39.

title of shogun repeatedly, as the official record claims. In fact, only after conferring privately with Arai Hakuseki on his deathbed did Ienobu settle on a plan for succession.

According to Hakuseki, Ienobu had thought to make the lord of Owari, Tokugawa Yoshimichi, guardian of Ietsugu until the child came of age and could rule on his own. However, Hakuseki warned Ienobu against such a move, suggesting that it could undermine the authority of the shogun and lead to the outbreak of hostilities. The title of shogun, Hakuseki said, should pass directly to Ietsugu. Should anything happen to the boy, then the bakufu might turn to the *gosanke* beginning—as Ieyasu had intended—with the senior-most house, Owari. The ailing Ienobu accepted Hakuseki's advice, and Ietsugu was made shogun at the tender age of four. Given Hakuseki's account (confirmed by Muro Kyūsō) of this episode, it is difficult to accept Ten'ei-in's claim that Ienobu had wanted Yoshimune, specifically, to become shogun should Ietsugu die.²⁷

Likely, the "will" to which Ten'ei-in referred was Ienobu's broader wish that the title of shogun should go to one of the *gosanke* lords in order of seniority, as Hakuseki had advised. That order, however, had been complicated when the youthful Yoshimichi and his infant son, Gorōta, died in quick succession in 1713, and stewardship of the Owari house passed to Yoshimichi's half-brother, Tokugawa Tsugutomo (1692-1731), thereby providing the supporters of an alternate shogunal candidate—Yoshimune—the opportunity to press for his promotion.²⁸ This was a chance that Ten'ei-in and the disenfranchised *rōjū* could not afford to let pass, lest they be shut out of bakufu politics altogether by their rivals. They thus orchestrated the promotion of their candidate for shogun, Yoshimune.

Much was at stake in determining who would take the reins of government, and those vested in the familial politics of the bakufu sought to make certain that the title of shogun fell to their man. Ienobu's powerful wives had been vying for control of the *ōoku* for years. Theirs was a deeply personal battle with enormous political implications. Over the course of the seventeenth century, access to the shogun via the women of the *ōoku* had become an important means of influencing bakufu politics. Ten'ei-in, daughter of Kyoto nobility, held the pretender, Gekkō-in, in contempt.²⁹ Conversely, Gekkō-in, who had risen from humble samurai origins through dint of tenacious ambition, was loath to forfeit her hard-earned privileged status within the Great Interior.³⁰ Each sought an ally and patron in the next shogun.

Similarly, the bureaucratic reforms of Akifusa and Hakuseki, which constituted a direct attack on the authority of the *rōjū*, coupled with their mean origins, put them at loggerheads with bakufu elders. The *rōjū* were senior ministers typically drawn from the highest ranks of the hereditary retainers (*fudai*) to the Tokugawa, many of whom could trace their family's record of service back to Ieyasu and beyond. Over the course of the seventeenth century, they had expanded their role within the government to include oversight of the most important bakufu offices that controlled the major cities of Japan (Edo, Kyoto, Osaka), temples and shrines,

²⁷ Muro Kyūsō, "Kenzan hisaku," 251-53.

²⁸ Yoshimichi died suddenly after eating, leading to some speculation of poisoning. See: Muro Kyūsō, "Kenzan hisaku," 250-51; Asahi Monzaemon, *Ōmurōchū-ki*, 4:265-66.

²⁹ Ten'ei-in was the daughter of the court noble, Konoe Motohiro (1648-1722).

³⁰ Gekkō-in served as handmaid to the nurse of the fourth shogun, Ietsugu. She attracted Ienobu's attention while serving at the Sakurada mansion in Edo, where Ienobu resided before being named heir to Tsunayoshi. Like Hakuseki and Akifusa, she followed Ienobu to Edo castle upon his appointment as shogun.

finances, foreign affairs, relations with the Kyoto court, and administration of Tokugawa lands. Their authority had been gradually eroded, however, from the mid-seventeenth century onward by reform policies of men like Hakuseki and Akifusa, who had established themselves as confidantes to shoguns with increasingly autocratic powers. At stake for these two groups was a vision of the shape of the bakufu, and their role within it.³¹

While the men and women surrounding the shogun were competing to influence both Tokugawa bakufu and Tokugawa family politics, the stakes were highest for the lords of Owari and Kii, in whom the politics of state and family coincided. Nothing less than the bloodline of all future rulers of Japan rode on the outcome of events inside Edo castle, and the winner of this contest would become the progenitor of all subsequent shoguns. In over a century of Tokugawa rule, such an opportunity had never presented itself, and it was unlikely to come again. Legally, Ietsugu's successor would be adopted into the main line of the Tokugawa family, thereby insuring the continuation of the house. In reality, however, the bloodline that passed through Hidetada from Ieyasu had come to an end. Hereafter, shoguns would trace their lineage back to either Yoshimune or Tsugutomo.³²

Thus, despite the claims of the *Tokugawa jikki* to the contrary, personal ambition played a very real role in making Yoshimune shogun. Adopting Yoshimune into the Tokugawa *sōke* did not elevate his former house, Kii. Although his immediate family members and closest aids stood to benefit from his promotion, there would be no change in the relative status of the *gosanke* houses.³³ Moreover, once adopted into the *sōke*, Yoshimune no longer directly controlled his previous domain (although as chief of the Minamoto and head of the Tokugawa, he held great sway over all branches of the clan). Thus, his accession was personally significant not because later shoguns would be "Kii men," so much as they would be descendants of Yoshimune. On a fundamental level, then, Yoshimune did not seek the title of shogun for the sake of his house or the people. He did so because he knew that if he missed this opportunity, he and his descendants would remain subjects of Tsugutomo and his offspring for generations to come. There was no other option but for Yoshimune to enter into the political fray and lay claim to the title of shogun.

³¹ For a discussion of the contours of the Tokugawa bakufu, see Totman, *Politics in the Tokugawa Bakufu, 1600-1843*, 204-33. In particular, Totman develops a model of "stages of leadership" of the bakufu that oscillate between independent, assertive shoguns and rule by ministers—either the *rōjū* or the shoguns' personal attendants, such as Akifusa, who administered the government as *sobayōnin* under Ienobu and Ietsugu.

³² After Yoshimune, every shogun traced his lineage back to the eighth shogun until the last, Tokugawa Yoshinobu (also known as Tokugawa Keiki, 1837-1913). All shoguns after Yoshimune were appointed from either the Kii house or one of the *gosankyō* (Three Lords). Yoshimune and Ieshige established the *gosankyō* as collateral houses to the Tokugawa *sōke* in manner similar to the *gosanke*. Yoshimune set up the Tayasu house for his second son, Munetake (1715-71), and the Hitotsubashi house for his fourth son, Munetada (1721-64). Ieshige established the Shimizu house for his second son, Shigeyoshi (1745-95). The *gosankyō* received stipends of over 100,000 *koku* from the bakufu, placing them on par with daimyo (during the Edo period, daimyo were defined as lords of domains with putative values in excess of 10,000 *koku*), but they did not rule independent domains. They took their family names from the Edo districts where their mansions were located. See: Appendix D.

³³ Although Yoshimune ultimately brought only a few men of significant rank with him from Kii, senior retainers within the Owari and Kii houses likely expected to move with their lord to Edo, based on the reigns of Tsunayoshi and Ienobu. Iwamoto Kaoru, "The Process of Acquisition of Residences in Edo by the Tokugawa Shogunate Retainers Who Came from Kishu-Han," *Japan Architectural Planning and Environmental Engineering* 561 (November 2002): 285-290.

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The View from Below

Quite apart from the account provided by the *Tokugawa jikki*, then, the bakufu in 1716 was not unified in its support for Yoshimune. Familial politics divided the bakufu into two camps; each supporting a candidate whom they hoped would protect their political interests. Although Tsugutomo's superior rank and powerful allies initially seemed to give him an advantage over Yoshimune, the untidy stuff of familial politics undermined his bid for the title of shogun, and provided his rivals with an opportunity to orchestrate a coup d'état. The entry for the twenty-ninth day of the fourth month of 1716 in the *Tokugawa jikki* begins in the following manner.

An urgent dispatch from arrived from Edo castle while Yoshimune was practicing archery at Okayama garden on the grounds of the Akasaka mansion. Since the [lords of the] three collateral houses were ordered to appear [at the castle], Yoshimune quickly ate a meal of rice gruel and went at once to the castle. Because Ietsugu's illness had worsened, the Middle Councilors, lord Tsugutomo of Owari and lord Tsunaeda of Mito, were already at the castle.³⁴

According to the *Tokugawa jikki*, when news of Ietsugu's impending demise arrived at the Kii mansion, the imperturbable Yoshimune put down his archery practice and went immediately to the castle where his cousins, Tsugutomo and Tsunaeda, were already in deliberations with Ten'ei-in and the *rōjū* about who should become Ietsugu's guardian and successor. This passage suggests that Yoshimune played no role in his selection and that he had no personal desire to become shogun. The *Tokugawa jikki* thus creates an image of an independent Yoshimune, removed from (and untainted by) court politics. A true samurai ruler, he is depicted practicing archery—the quintessential marker of a warrior—in deep, focused contemplation; yet ready to act in a decisive manner when called upon.

The *Ōmu rōchū-ki*, the secret musings of a low-ranking Owari retainer by the name of Asahi Monzaemon Shigeaki (1674-1718), provides a very different perspective of the events surrounding Yoshimune's selection as shogun. Asahi held the lowest office in the Owari domain bureaucracy. As Tatami magistrate (*tatamibugyo*), he was responsible for procuring and maintaining the domain's tatami floor mats. His job provided him with a modest income and plenty of free time, which he spent drinking, fishing, attending *ningyō jyōrui* puppet plays with his companions, and—over the course of twenty-seven years—filling over 4000 pages of his secret diary with accounts of scandals, disasters, love-suicides, and other sensational rumors and news of the day. Asahi's accounts of the (sometimes-licentious) activities of his own lord

³⁴ Kuroita Katsumi, *Tokugawa jikki*, 9:141. This entry opens Chapter 2 of the more narrative *furoku* (Appendix) section of the *Tokugawa jikki*. There are some minor discrepancies between this account and the terse entry of the *Yūtokuin gojikki* (*The True Record of Tokugawa Yoshimune*). For example, the latter gives the date as the thirtieth, and does not mention Yoshimune eating before proceeding to Edo castle. See: Kuroita Katsumi, *Tokugawa jikki*, 8:2.

were often unflattering and could easily have cost him his office—or worse, his life.³⁵ As such, they testify to his success in keeping his diary hidden from domain officials.³⁶

Asahi commented freely on events in Edo, Kyoto, and his hometown of Nagoya, but always with an even hand. He indicated whenever he believed something to be a falsehood (*usoka*), and regularly returned to earlier entries in order to note them as such. In short, whereas the *Tokugawa jikki* represented a major political investment by its compilers in a sanitized version of the truth, the *Ōmu rōchū ki* had no such agenda at its heart. Asahi's account of the events surrounding Yoshimune's promotion to shogun lends credence to the notions that Yoshimune actively sought the title of shogun and that he worked with supporters inside Edo castle to secure his promotion over Tsugutomo. It is thus worth quoting at some length:

No dispatch arrived [at the Owari mansion] on the twenty-ninth [from Edo castle]. At the hour of the sheep on the thirtieth, Edo castle was filled with a great clamor when the condition of the shogun [Ietsugu] became suddenly very grave. A runner brought news that Yoshimune and the *rōjū* had already arrived at the castle, and that all of Edo was seething [with excitement]. Without waiting for a palanquin to be prepared, [Tsugutomo] called for a horse and rode at once for the castle. The retainers all ran helter-skelter after him. Around Edo, some said his haste was a good thing [i.e., that it showed his earnest concern for Ietsugu] while others saw it as a blemish on his reputation [i.e., that he had failed to make adequate preparations].

The lord of Kii, however, had received some secret information on the evening of the twenty-ninth, and the Kii mansion was abuzz with excitement the next morning. Fishmongers and oil dealers outside wondered, “What is all the commotion?” Nevertheless, in the latter part of the hour of the horse [around 2:00 p.m.], Yoshimune proceeded to the castle accompanied by twice the usual number of retainers and with both house elders [*karō*] on horseback. The retinue moved silently and in an orderly fashion to the castle. Our lord [Tsugutomo] arrived about one hour after Yoshimune. Tsunaeda had been the next to arrive, after Yoshimune. Some accused the *oshirotsuki*, Mizuno Yajidaiyū, of failing to investigate such an important matter thoroughly, and complained that it was an error of gross negligence. [Later,] the *rōjū* departed around six o'clock in the evening, followed by our lord, and the lord of Mito, both of whom appeared dejected. Claiming that he had some other business, Yoshimune stayed in the castle that night. Immediately after [the lords of] Mito and Owari had left, the *rōjū* ordered Yoshimune to move into the Second Enceinte. It is not known what occurred within [Edo castle] after that. . . . That evening, Tsugutomo called [the Owari house elders] Hayato no kami, Iki no kami, and Noto no kami,

³⁵ Asahi Monzaemon, *Ōmurōchū-ki*, ed. Ichihashi Taku, vol. 3, Nagoya sōsho 11 (Nagoya: Nagoya-shi Kyōiku linkai, 1964), 167.

³⁶ Asahi's diary was kept secret through the end of the Tokugawa period because of entries that mention the sexual practices of Tokugawa Yoshimichi (Ibid., 3:168.) as well as those of his mother (Ibid., 3:56.).

into the Middle Chamber [of the Owari mansion] to speak with them in private concerning some matter. Their conversation could not be overheard. It is said that Hayato no kami raised his voice on two or three occasions and then stormed out of the room in a great fluster.

On the evening of the twenty-ninth, while the *gosanke* lords were in attendance, Ietsugu's condition worsened and the *rōjū* commanded that Yoshimune become his guardian while he remained alive. That evening, because he had been ordered to do so, Yoshimune stayed in the castle while the others departed. The following morning, when they went up to the castle to inquire about the health of the shogun, they were not served their customary meals. The shogun had passed away during the night. The *rōjū* assembled and Manabe announced to the various daimyo lords that [Yoshimune's son,] Ieshige would move into the Western Enceinte and that Tokugawa Yoshinao would be named successor of the Kii house. Everyone was amazed by the great success of the [political] apparatus (*sono shikumi no ōdeki, hito minna kanshi tatematsuru*).³⁷

Asahi's account of the events surrounding Yoshimune's promotion to shogun stands sharply at odds with that of the *Tokugawa jikki*. According to Asahi, Yoshimune was the first to arrive at Edo castle on the day Ietsugu died—not the last, as the *Tokugawa jikki* claims. His retinue wound through the streets of Edo quietly and in an orderly fashion, yet brought Yoshimune to the castle gate before the other *gosanke* lords. Such a feat required forethought and planning that was made possible by the arrival of secret information from Edo castle the previous night.

The size of his retinue—twice the usual number of guards—was not only a sign of Yoshimune's respect for the gravity of the situation inside Edo castle, it was also a display of his power and authority, but for whose benefit? The townspeople knew that events were unfolding rapidly inside the castle; the scene in Edo, Asahi notes, was hectic (*niekaeru*). In the midst of this, Yoshimune moved calmly and authoritatively toward the castle. Surely more than one onlooker recognized their future ruler in the midst of his procession—just as they recognized Tsugutomo's loss of face in his mad dash to the castle. Yoshimune's actions were not those of a man removed from the worldly affairs of bakufu politics as the *Tokugawa jikki* would have its readers believe. Rather, they suggest that he was well apprised of conditions inside Edo castle, and of his imminent appointment as shogun. Yoshimune was a man of action, and given his long record of active involvement in the administration of his governments (first as daimyo of Kii and then as shogun), it is difficult to believe that he did not move actively to secure the title of shogun for himself, as Asahi's account suggests.

The *Ōmu rōchū ki* provides further evidence of the determination with which Yoshimune and his supporters acted. Asahi notes the astonishing speed with which Tokugawa Munenao

³⁷ Asahi Monzaemon, *Ōmurōchū-ki*, 4:584-85. Asahi notes earlier that Yoshimune initially moved into the Second Enceinte due to an ill omen, and that he moved to the Main Enceinte on the eighteenth of the fifth month.

(1682-1757), Yoshimune's cousin, was named the sixth lord of Kii.³⁸ Munenao had been the lord of Saijō domain, a collateral house of the Kii Tokugawa, until the very day that Yoshimune became shogun and chief of the main Tokugawa line. Under normal circumstances, the formalities of adopting Munenao into the main house would have taken some time. When Yoshimune had been appointed lord of Kii, for example, nearly a month passed between the time that he was named heir and the date he formally inherited the title of daimyo from his elder brother.³⁹ The fact that Munenao was installed as daimyo of Kii in concert with Yoshimune's promotion as *kōken* suggests that there had been sufficient warning to arrange for his adoption before the death of Ietsugu.

Finally, Asahi's account of events at the Owari mansion following the accession of Yoshimune underscores the fact that his selection as shogun was neither a natural nor a foregone conclusion. The anger of the Owari domain elder, Hayato no kami, was likely directed at Tsugutomo's advisor, Mizuno Jidayū, who had let control of the realm slip from the fingers of his lord. Several examples of contemporary graffiti cited by Asahi reveal that townspeople shared in this assessment of events at the castle; Yoshimune had stolen the title of shogun from its rightful inheritor, the lord of Owari.

Incompetent monkeys assembled in Owari
They see nothing; they hear nothing; they rule nothing

*Owari ni wa nōnashizaru ga atsumarite
Mizaru, kikazaru, tenka torazaru*⁴⁰

Even in far off Nagasaki, this popular sentiment was echoed. On August 27, the Dutch Opperhoofd, Gideon Boudann, noted in his daily register, "The councilors Abe Bungo and Manabe Echizen have fallen in disgrace. With Owari they are daily the subject of many a lampoon."⁴¹

Sources such as Asahi's *Ōmu rōchū ki*, the *Deshima Dagregister*, and the personal histories of those involved in the selection of Yoshimune as shogun reveal that Tokugawa politics were not marked by harmony and consensus, but instead were fraught with sharp factionalism and fierce rivalries for the future of the bakufu. Much was at stake in this rare opportunity to seize the mantle of power, and Yoshimune was personally invested in securing the title of shogun for himself. His disciplined samurai mind did not allow him to detach himself from events inside Chiyoda castle. If anything, his strategic mentality allowed him to skillfully navigate the intricacies of familial politics, access important information via secret channels, and usurp the title of shogun from his cousin who officially outranked him.

³⁸ Ibid., 4:586. For a discussion of the events that brought Yoshimune to power as shogun, see: Andō Seiichi, "Shogundori no butai ura," in *Tokugawa Yoshimune no subete*, ed. Andō Seiichi and Ōishi Shinzaburō (Tokyo: Shinjinbutsu Ōraisha, 1995), 42-62.

³⁹ Tokugawa Yorimoto died on the eighth day of the ninth month, 1705. Yoshimune officially inherited the title of daimyo on the sixth day of the tenth month.

⁴⁰ Asahi Monzaemon, *Ōmurōchū-ki*, 4:581.

⁴¹ van der Velde and Bachofner, *The Deshima Diaries*, 201.

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Yütokuin-dono: A Virtuous (and Meritorious) Lord

Having established that the narrative of the *Tokugawa jikki* is a fabrication meant to gloss over political fault lines within the bakufu, we must now turn to a discussion of the actual reason that Yoshimune was selected as shogunal heir: merit. Simply put, bakufu elders recognized Yoshimune as a capable ruler with the discipline and experience to resolve the financial problems of the bakufu as he had restored the finances of Kii domain.

Yoshimune had inherited a domain in dire financial straits in 1705. Economic problems had begun for Kii as early as 1668, when fire ravaged the domain's secondary mansion (*nakayashiki*) in the Akasaka district of Edo. Throughout the spring and summer of that same year, a severe drought that cut deeply into tax revenues made it impossible for the domain to cover the cost of rebuilding its mansions in keeping with its status as a member of the *gosanke*. It was thus forced to borrow 10,000 *ryō* from the bakufu—an unprecedented action for a house of such high status.⁴² The loan was only a stopgap, however, and two years later, Kii turned to the Mitsui merchant house for further economic assistance. Fire destroyed the Kii mansions three more times before Yoshimune became daimyo, and on each occasion the domain was forced to turn to the bakufu for financial assistance in order to rebuild.⁴³

Misfortunes such as fire and drought were not the only source of economic distress for Kii. Felicitous occasions also required large outlays of cash that wreaked havoc on domain coffers. In 1685, Tokugawa Tsunanori, Yoshimune's oldest brother, married the daughter of the shogun and the domain expanded the building complex of its *nakayashiki* mansion in order to provide her with accommodations befitting her status. Visits by the shogun, Tsunayoshi, to the Kii mansion in 1697 and 1701 also demanded special construction projects and lavish ceremonies that further strained domain coffers. Finally, the year that Yoshimune came to power as daimyo was particularly injurious to the Kii fisc, as the domain had to shoulder the economic burden of accession ceremonies and funerals for three daimyo in a single year.

Yoshimune's father, Tokugawa Mitsusada, retired as daimyo of Kii in 1698 at the age of 72, passing the title on to his eldest son, Tsunanori, who looked forward to a bright future as domain ruler and a leader in bakufu politics. In 1685, Tsunanori had wed Tsuruhime, the daughter of the shogun, Tsunayoshi. He had even been granted the honor of making use of one

⁴² Officially, 1 gold *ryō* = 50 silver *monme* = 4 copper *kan*. In reality, however, the value of Edo coins fluctuated. See: Nakamura Takafusa et al., eds., *The Economic History of Japan, 1600-1990: Emergence of Economic Society in Japan, 1600-1859* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 372-73.

⁴³ 1682, 1695, and 1703. Kii maintained three mansions in Edo, the largest of which was its secondary residence located in the Akasaka district. The number and sizes of buildings, their construction materials, and ornamentation were all carefully prescribed by both law and custom. As one of the three collateral Tokugawa houses, Kii was obligated to display a level of opulence in its Edo residences commensurate with the status of the domain. This demanded an enormous economic outlay, revealing Edo-period sumptuary laws for the double-edged blade that they were: not only did they deny luxuries to lower-ranking members of society; they also forced elites to consume well beyond their means. The Kii *nakayashiki* was a vast complex located on over thirty acres of land in Akasaka, almost half of which (14.7 acres) was dedicated to building floor space, and which had a total circumference of just over three kilometers (two miles). See: Tsuji Tatsuya, *Tokugawa Yoshimune-kō den* (Nikkō: Nikkō Tōshōgū Shamusho, 1962), 9. n. 11.

character from the shogun's name (Tsunayoshi) in his own. His ties with the bakufu were strong, and when the shogun's only son, Tokumatsu, died at the age of five leaving Tsunayoshi heirless, there was talk that the title of shogun would fall to Tsunanori. However, in 1705 Tsunanori, who had been groomed to become daimyo of Kii (and possibly shogun), suddenly fell ill. Having no heir (his principal wife had died just the year before and he had taken no others), a deathbed adoption made his younger brother, Yorimoto, the fourth lord of Kii.

Just one month after he had assumed the title of daimyo, Yorimoto died at the age of twenty-six, and stewardship of the Kii Tokugawa house fell to Yoshimune, who was twenty-one at the time. In line with his inheritance of the title of daimyo, Yoshimune received a promotion to junior third rank and the office of Provisional Captain of the Guards on the Left (*jusan'i saemon gon no chūjō*). He also changed his name to Yoshimune, after receiving permission to make use of one character from the name of the shogun (Yoshi).⁴⁴ The following year, he wed the third daughter of prince Fushiminomiya, Sananomia Masako (1691-1710), who died just four years later at the age of twenty due to complications related to a miscarriage, leaving Yoshimune without a wife or an heir.⁴⁵

Few could have predicted that Yoshimune, as fourth son of Mitsusada, would become the daimyo of Kii, let alone ruler of all Japan.⁴⁶ His status as a "relegate" child did not even qualify him to hold an independent fief, and under normal circumstances he would have lived out his days in relative obscurity as a minor lord of the Kii Tokugawa house.⁴⁷ Yoshimune's life, however, was to be anything but normal.

When Yoshimune's father, Tokugawa Mitsusada, was informed that his consort (*sokushitsu*), Omon, would bear him a child, he declared that if the child were a girl, she would be raised as his daughter. However, should she bear him a son, the child would be placed in the

⁴⁴ Yoshimune was originally named Genroku. He took the names Shin no suke and Yorikata at age eleven and thirteen, respectively.

⁴⁵ In addition to his principal wife, Yoshimune took five consorts, who together bore him one daughter and five sons, the eldest of whom, Ieshige (1711-61), became the ninth Tokugawa shogun. Additionally, Yoshimune adopted two daughters and one son.

⁴⁶ The events that made Yoshimune lord of one of the most important domains in the realm have led to some speculation that Yoshimune and his supporters within the Kii Tokugawa house had a hand in bringing him to power. Indeed, the rapid succession of premature deaths that made Yoshimune shogun is "stranger than fiction" and the subject of numerous fictional accounts of Yoshimune's life. However, there is no concrete evidence that Yoshimune had a hand in the deaths of his elder brothers. Nevertheless, some historians point to a few pieces of circumstantial evidence in order to suggest that there was more at work than fate in Yoshimune's accession as daimyo. According to the *Ozaki-ke keifu* (*Genealogy of the Ozaki House*), Kii samurai were ordered to perform special guard duty (*kunigatame*) in the castle town of Wakayama for the entire month between the death of Yorimoto and the succession of Yoshimune. Such special guard duty was usually reserved for moments when the domain feared a peasant uprising (*hyakusho ikki*) was imminent. That the domain chose this moment to call up its samurai suggests that some feared that they might lose control of the situation. Yoshimune's succession may not have been as amicable a matter as either the *Tokugawa jikki* or the *Nanki Tokugawa-shi* would have readers believe. See: Wakayama Kenshi Hensan linkai, ed., *Wakayama kenshi: Kinsei* (Wakayama: Wakayama-ken, 1990), 273-75.

⁴⁷ The term "*shoshi*" referred to the sons of consorts as opposed to those of the principal wife. *Shoshi* did not enjoy the same inheritance privileges as their "principal" (*chakushi*) siblings. Even if *shoshi* were older than their *chakushi* siblings, they were still considered subordinate to the legitimate heir. Prior to his audience with Tsunayoshi, Yoshimune held junior fourth rank, lower grade, the title of Provisional Junior Captain of the Guards on the Right (*Sakon'e no shōshō*), and the office of Head of Tax Collection (*Shuzeitō*).

care of suitable household.⁴⁸ Mitsusada had already fathered three sons, the youngest of whom had died only a few years earlier.⁴⁹ Popular belief held that in such instances subsequent sons should be “abandoned” (*suteko*) in order to prevent them from inheriting the bad luck of their older brothers. Accordingly, when Yoshimune was born, Mitsusada placed him in the charge of a retainer by the name of Kanō Gorozaemon until the age of five. Yoshimune’s physical stamina, love of hunting, and even his lack of interest in effete pleasures (including women) have all been attributed to the fact that Yoshimune was initially raised outside the walls of Wakayama castle, and thus spared the pampering that the children of elite samurai typically received.⁵⁰

Mitsusada’s faith in folk traditions would seem to have borne fruit, for his son enjoyed uncanny good fortune throughout his life. In 1697, for example, Tsunayoshi paid an official visit to the Edo mansion of Kii. Because of his status as a relegate child (*shoshi*, i.e., the child of a consort other than the lord’s principle wife), Yoshimune was not initially presented to the shogun, but was made to wait in an antechamber until the *rōjū*, Ōkubo Tadatomo, intervened and informed the shogun, “There is another [son] among the Lord’s household.”⁵¹ Tsunayoshi commanded the boy to appear before him alongside his brothers, and at the end of their audience, he awarded Yorimoto and Yoshimune small fiefs worth 30,000 *koku* each. Yoshimune thus quite unexpectedly became daimyo of Kazurano, a domain that was carved out of bakufu lands in the province of Echizen especially for him.

Yoshimune never visited Kazurano, but remained an absentee lord living in Edo (a common practice) until 1705, when the deaths of his father and brothers suddenly catapulted him to power as daimyo of one of the most influential domains in the realm. Still, the domain suffered from a chronic monetary shortfall—a situation exacerbated when a tsunami hit the southern coast of Kii following a major earthquake in 1707, killing thousands, damaging crops, wiping out much-needed tax revenues, and forcing the domain to provide tax relief (*tokusei*) for local residents.⁵² The same year, locusts devoured crops in the Iga region of Kii, a second insect infestation destroyed the cotton harvest, and the Kii River overflowed on two occasions. The following year, as part of Arai Hakuseki’s economic reform policies, the bakufu banned the further issuance of domain scrip (*hansatsu*), which Kii had used since the late Genroku era (1688-1703) in order to settle many of its debts.⁵³ Lacking sufficient funds to cover the currency already in circulation, the domain exchanged its notes for a mere twenty percent of their

⁴⁸ Horiuchi Shin, *Nanki Tokugawa shi*, 1:515.

⁴⁹ Jirokichi (1667-1679) was Mitsusada’s second son, born to an unrecorded wife. Because he died prematurely, Yoshimune is sometimes listed as Mitsusada’s third son.

⁵⁰ Koishi Fusako, “Yoshimune o meguru onnatachi,” 159.

⁵¹ Kuroita Katsumi, *Tokugawa jikki*, 9:135. Ōishi Shinzaburō suggests that this was an apocryphal tale created in order to elevate the image of Yoshimune by strengthening his connection to Tsunayoshi. See: Ōishi Shinzaburō, “Tokugawa Yoshimune to sono jidai,” in *Tokugawa Yoshimune no subete*, ed. Andō Seiichi and Ōishi Shinzaburō (Tokyo: Shinjinbutsu Ōraisha, 1995), 11.

⁵² The Hōei Earthquake struck on the fourth day of the tenth month in 1707. Horiuchi Shin, *Nanki Tokugawa shi*, 1:527.

⁵³ Article no. 1780 in Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke, eds., *Ofuregaki kampō shūsei* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1934), 898. Kii, like many domains, had increasingly turned to the use of paper scrip for settling dominant debts. The oldest extant example of Kii domain scrip dates from 1702.

denomination.⁵⁴ The same year, Kii was ordered to repay one-third of all the funds that it had borrowed from the bakufu during the rule of Tsunayoshi.⁵⁵ Finally, in 1710, the amount of rice that Kii was required to provide its collateral house, Iyo Saijō, was increased from 20,000 to 30,000 bales (*hyō*), annually.⁵⁶

Yoshimune began to tackle Kii's financial problems as soon as he became daimyo, and his economic reforms can be understood in two broad categories. First, he instituted policies aimed at increasing both short- and long-term domain revenues. Second, he reduced expenses by tightening the budget of the Kii house and by reducing the size of the domain government. Yoshimune's reforms appeared conservative because they relied heavily on precedent. However, the manner in which he bound the various elements of his reforms together with an apparatus that let him govern through the effective collection, organization, and utilization of information was novel. Yoshimune ordered villages throughout Kii to submit reports detailing the conditions in their localities in 1705. The reports (*ōzashi shuchō*) provided Yoshimune with data on crop yields, acreage under cultivation, numbers of registered households, and the populations of Kii villages.⁵⁷ This information became the basis of his economic reforms aimed at putting domain coffers in the black by reducing expenses and increasing tax revenues through administrative reforms and land reclamation projects. Yoshimune achieved an immediate increase in domain revenues by requiring all household retainers to make personal "donations" (*sashiagekin*) to the domain beginning in 1707, effectively reducing their annual stipends by five percent. Such a policy, although onerous, enjoyed the advantage of being relatively simple to implement by fiat. More difficult, yet more effective in the long term, were land cultivation projects aimed at increasing the productivity of paddy fields—and thus tax revenues—throughout the domain. For this, Yoshimune enlisted the aid of "men of talent," such as Ōhata Saizō (1642-1720), who had served the domain since the era of Mitsusada.

Ōhata was born into a family of village headmen (*shōya*) of Kamuro village in Kii. His aptitude for arithmetic won him an appointment to a minor domain post in 1697, and he was charged with leading several major irrigation projects as part of the domain's ongoing land reclamation efforts. In 1708, at the order of Yoshimune, Ōhata undertook construction of the Ota dam, the largest dam in Kii, which irrigated five thousand *koku* of land in sixteen villages as far as twelve miles away.⁵⁸ By the time Yoshimune became daimyo, Kii had already managed to

⁵⁴ Horiuchi Shin, *Nanki Tokugawa shi*, 1:540. The policy caused the value of the scrip to plummet. One *koku* of rice that typically sold for 60 *monme* (one *monme* = 3.75 grams) of silver cost 350 *monme* worth of scrip. See: Wakayama Shishi Hensan linkai., ed., *Wakayama shishi*, vol. 1 (Wakayama: Wakayama-shi, 1975), 295.

⁵⁵ Article no. 1696, Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke, *Ofuregaki kampō shūsei*, 855-56.

⁵⁶ The volume of one *hyō* fluctuated throughout the Edo period, but represented approximately 50 kg of rice.

⁵⁷ *Wakayamashi-shi* notes that the 1705 reports reveal that farmers, townspeople, and domain officials had been vigorously pursuing both small and large-scale land reclamation projects throughout the seventeenth century. By the time Yoshimune came to power as daimyo of Kii, most available arable had been brought into cultivation. Yoshimune therefore concentrated his efforts on increasing the productivity of those lands. Wakayama Shishi Hensan linkai., *Wakayama shishi*, 1:298-99.

⁵⁸ Horiuchi Shin, ed., *Nanki Tokugawa shi*, vol. 10, *Nanki Tokugawa shi* (Wakayama: Nanki Tokugawashi Kankōkai, 1941), 500-503. A survey conducted in 1899 found that the water system fed by the Oda dam continued to supply irrigation water to over 2600 acres of wet paddy in 65 villages as late as 1899. Ōhata recorded the details of the domain's many waterworks and riparian projects in his *Jikata no kikigaki* (also referred to as the *Saizō-ki*). See:

bring practically all of its available arable into cultivation. Yoshimune and his ministers thus focused the bulk of their energies on increasing the annual yield of those fields through improvements in productivity.

In addition to increasing domain revenues, Yoshimune moved quickly to bring domain expenses under control by curtailing even minor costs, beginning with his own house. For example, he forbade the exchange of all but the most formal New Year's and mid-summer gifts between family members and the Tokugawa *sōke*.⁵⁹ In addition, upon the occasion of his first visit to Kii as daimyo in 1710, Yoshimune arrived in Wakayama on horseback (rather than aboard a palanquin) wearing only modest apparel. Retainers who rode out from the castle to greet him lavishly attired in formal costume were denied the gifts and rewards that were typically dispensed upon a lord's return from Edo.⁶⁰ Similarly, in 1715, on the centennial anniversary of Tokugawa Ieyasu's death, Yoshimune made his pilgrimage to the Tokugawa mausoleum at Nikkō in very light attire.⁶¹ Yoshimune thus led by example, indicating to his retainers and subjects that he shared in their economic hardships. This posture added to his image as a fair and benevolent lord, made it easier to carry out burdensome administrative reforms, and ultimately made him a more attractive candidate for shogun in 1716.

Personal household expenses were not the only target of Yoshimune's efforts to control expenses. He looked for large and small ways to trim the budget of the domain bureaucracy. For example, housemen who had been forced to make personal "donations" to the domain were actually among the more fortunate Kii retainers. Yoshimune released over eighty minor officials from domain service in 1709 as part of his quest to reduce the operating size of the domain government.⁶² He also understood the value (as well as the cost) of the margin, and everything (ink, brushes, paper, candles, charcoal for heating) that could be reduced or eliminated from the budget was fair game. For example, in 1710, Yoshimune issued strict orders on the conduct of domain business while on duty at Wakayama castle. Retainers were instructed to arrive by five o'clock a.m. and depart by noon so they might complete the bulk of their work by daylight. They were not to linger at the castle after completing their tasks for the day, and those who had to work late were to assemble in a single room in order to economize on operating costs of the castle. Paperwork was reduced to all but the most essential record-keeping, and those with questions about the performance of their jobs were instructed to inquire with their superiors. No longer would they be allowed to waste precious time and resources writing lengthy journal entries on the details of their work. All of this was done with an eye to reduce domain expenses.⁶³

Horiuchi Shin, *Nanki Tokugawa shi*, 10:685-778; Horiuchi Shin, ed., *Nanki Tokugawa shi*, vol. 11, Nanki Tokugawa shi (Wakayama: Nanki Tokugawashi Kankōkai, 1941), 1-167.

⁵⁹ Similar measures had been taken in 1699 and 1703. Wakayama Shishi Hensan linkai, ed., *Wakayama shishi*, vol. 2 (Wakayama: Wakayama-shi, 1975), 294. In addition to formal gift giving between the Tokugawa and collateral houses, Mitsusada, his sons, and their wives also presented each other with minor tokens of their esteem and gratitude. Gifts were also given to servants and retainers.

⁶⁰ Horiuchi Shin, *Nanki Tokugawa shi*, 1:532.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 1:541.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 1:540.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 1:533.

The same year, Yoshimune reduced many of the punishments for petty criminals and minor offences in Kii. Certain harsher punishments, such as locking criminals in stockades, binding their hands or feet, and placing them under house arrest were eliminated altogether. Yoshimune's action was likely influenced by a similar order given by the bakufu one year earlier. He also took this measure as a pragmatic response to the fact that petty offenders often absconded, and there was not a single prisoner being held by the domain at the time.⁶⁴ Economic concerns surely lay at the heart of these legal reforms. The system of punishments that had been in place prior to his accession as daimyo was ineffective, and Yoshimune saw no practical reason for maintaining it at great expense. He therefore changed domain laws to better suit the reality of the situation in Kii.⁶⁵ Relaxing punishments also cast Yoshimune as a benevolent ruler in the Confucian tradition, and his rule was remembered with an almost utopian nostalgia.

For the six years until the fifth year of Shōhō [*sic*, Shōtoku 6, 1716] none of the aforementioned [petty] criminals were reported, and no one was exiled, placed under house arrest, written up, or severely scolded. [As a result,] arson, burglary, banditry, and petty thievery—not to mention arguments and quarrels—were rare. None complained, and people could depend on each other. The entire domain came together like a family, and in every village from Kumano to Ise, requests for [civil] adversarial proceedings [*deiri*] were uncommon.⁶⁶

Any real decline in the number of *deiri* was likely more attributable to the refusal of the domain to prosecute such cases than to the sudden development of communal goodwill that Yoshimune's rule may have inspired among the people of Kii. Under Yoshimune, the bakufu's highest juridical body, the *hyōjōsho*, similarly refused to hear civil suits involving the collection of debts (*kanekuji*) after Yoshimune issued the Mutual Settlement Ordinance (*aitai sumashi rei*) in 1719. Relaxing punishments allowed the domain to shift the burden of meting out justice to villages, which they could do in line with local customs and based on their familiarity with the particulars of specific cases.⁶⁷ It also kept petty offenders out of prison and in the villages, where they remained free to work the fields. In doing so, it transformed them from a drain on domain coffers to a potential producer of tax revenue. Thus, Yoshimune's pragmatic policy had

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Tsuji Tatsuya makes a similar argument about the *Osadamegaki hyakkajō* and its reduction of penalties for criminal offenders. His point, however, is that the bakufu recognized the changing social conditions in Edo, where a large population of male day laborers resided apart from their families. Yoshimune ended the punishment of family members of criminals in response to this development, which had made traditional legal practices not only impractical, but also detrimental to society. See: Tsuji Tatsuya, "Politics in the Eighteenth Century," in *Early Modern Japan*, ed. John Whitney Hall, trans. Harold Bolitho, vol. 4, The Cambridge History of Japan (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 447-48.

⁶⁶ Horiuchi Shin, *Nanki Tokugawa shi*, 1:533.

⁶⁷ Amy Stanley finds in the local settlement of civil suits (particularly divorce proceedings) an example of resistance by commoners to Yoshimune's legal codes as articulated in the *Osadamegaki hyakkajō*. I would argue that in many instances, the bakufu likely found it advantageous to shift the burden of enforcing statutes and polices onto localities. See: Amy Stanley, "Adultery, Punishment, and Reconciliation in Tokugawa Japan," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 33, no. 2 (2007): 312.

less to do with ruling benevolently and more to do with reducing the costs associated with pursuing and punishing criminals.

Yoshimune did not set any precedents by relaxing punishments in 1710. The bakufu, as mentioned earlier, had done the same just one year earlier. Likewise, neither land reclamation nor irrigation projects were new to Kii under Yoshimune; frugality ordinances (*ken'yaku rei*) had been issued countless times by daimyo and shogun, alike.⁶⁸ Yet under the guidance of Yoshimune, these well-worn administrative policies somehow managed to put the domain balance sheet back in the black—a feat remarkable enough to earn Yoshimune the appellation, *meikun* (enlightened lord). One factor that may have allowed Yoshimune to succeed where others had failed was his establishment of two groups of inspectors, the *geimetsuke* and the *machimawari yokome*, who were charged with closely monitoring the behavior of his samurai retainers in the castle town of Wakayama.⁶⁹ The *machimawari yokome* had the authority to enter the homes of samurai retainers and investigate their daily activities. If, for example, children were discovered to be wearing silk garments, their fathers would be summoned to the castle and reprimanded for being “ignorant of the way of raising warriors.” They would be informed that dressing children in warm silks weakened their constitutions, and that the appropriate material for the clothing of samurai children was coarse cotton (*momen*).⁷⁰

Geimetsuke were charged with reporting on the practice of martial arts by domain retainers. They would enter training halls unannounced in order to check on the level and conditions of practice as well as attendance levels. Retainers who were discovered practicing *jōruri*, *noh*, or other forms of entertainment considered inappropriate for samurai, were reported to domain officials.⁷¹ The *geimetsuke* and *machimawari yokome* were thus one way that Yoshimune sought to better coordinate domain administration and encourage correct moral behavior through the effective collection and use of information. The watchful eye of their lord encouraged a stronger identity of domain retainers as warriors, which allowed Yoshimune to extort greater financial sacrifices and admonish them to be ever more frugal, all in the name of loyal service to their lord. It also alleviated some of the sting of those frugality measures by reaffirming the social superiority of the samurai as a warrior class—a notion that had been battered by the expansion of the market economy and appearance of merchants and villagers more wealthy than their samurai betters.

Another important innovation for the collection of information by the state was the erection of a petition box (*toshōbako*) outside the entrance to Wakayama castle in 1711, which allowed the subjects of Kii to remonstrate directly with their lord. It served several purposes for Yoshimune. First, it provided him with an additional means of monitoring the actions of his retainers in their administration of the domain. The petition box gave commoners the opportunity to expose corruption and incompetence among domain officials by submitting

⁶⁸ *Ofuregaki kampo shūsei* lists 32 *ken'yaku rei* promulgated between 1641 and 1744. Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke, *Ofuregaki kampo shūsei*, 549-66.

⁶⁹ Horiuchi Shin, *Nanki Tokugawa shi*, 1:532. *Yokome* were originally sentries employed on the battlefield to keep track of the movements of enemy forces as well as one's own troops. They would watch out for possible traitors as well as displays of valor during battle.

⁷⁰ Kuroita Katsumi, *Tokugawa jikki*, 9:138.

⁷¹ Horiuchi Shin, *Nanki Tokugawa shi*, 1:532. *Jōruri* narrative chanting was popularly performed in conjunction with *bunraku* puppet plays and accompanied by a *shamisen* lute.

petitions directly to Yoshimune. In essence, the *toshōbako* allowed Yoshimune to recast the eyes of his subjects as eyes of the state. Yoshimune's subjects now monitored the actions of bureaucrats and officials on his behalf, yet from an altogether new and different viewpoint. Second, it also allowed Yoshimune and domain officials to tap the knowledge and suggestions of commoners, such as Ōhata Saizō, in order to better administer the domain. Finally, the existence of the petition box indicated to Yoshimune's subjects that their lord was willing to hear their pleas and possibly alleviate their frustrations. This came to be a major factor in establishing his reputation as a *meikun*. While Yoshimune was not the first daimyo to make use of a petition box, his experience with the *tōshobako* informed his decision to establish the famous *meyasubako* in front of the *hyōjōsho* in Edo during his tenure as shogun.⁷²

By 1710, the domain had ceased to require *sashiagekin* donations from its retainers and had restored stipends to their previous levels.⁷³ What is more, following a poor harvest in 1714, Yoshimune was able to stave off famine by dispensing emergency rice stores that sustained the people of Kii until the wheat and barley harvests came in later that year. When Yoshimune became shogun in 1716, he left behind a domain with 140,887 *ryō* of gold in its coffers and 116,400 *koku* of rice in its storehouses.⁷⁴ The capacity he had shown as daimyo of Kii—coupled with the family politics of the Tokugawa house—helped bring him to power as shogun in 1716, and established his reputation as a *meikun*.

* * * * *

Conclusion

This chapter began by making the argument that the official record of events surrounding the succession of Tokugawa Yoshimune as shogun is a fabrication intended to create the illusion of political continuity within the Tokugawa house and bakufu. Writing nearly a century after the events they relate, the compilers of the *Tokugawa jikki* could not have known what went on behind the scenes in Edo castle any better than the Nagasaki officials communicating with Dutch traders in 1716. Yet the compilers of the *Tokugawa jikki* write as if they had overheard the words Ten'ei-in spoke to Yoshimune in the private chambers of the *ōoku* themselves, "It was the will of Ienobu!" We must remain as skeptical today of the official word of the bakufu as Nagasaki officials were in 1716.

⁷² Luke Roberts has written on the use of petition boxes by the bakufu and numerous daimyo throughout the Edo period. Roberts has compiled a list of petition boxes erected throughout the Edo period, and although the list is incomplete, it indicates that more petition boxes were established during the thirty years of Yoshimune's rule as shogun than at any other time, suggesting that the bakufu's use of the *meyasubako* had a significant influence on other domains. See: Luke S. Roberts, "The Petition Box in Eighteenth-Century Tosa," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 20, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 423-458. Ōishi Shinzaburō has suggested that the use of a petition box in Wakayama may be an anachronistic projection backward from the *meyasubako*. See: Andō Seiichi and Ōishi Shinzaburō, eds., *Tokugawa Yoshimune no subete* (Tokyo: Shinjinbutsu Ōraisha, 1995), 13.

⁷³ The *Nanki Tokugawa-shi* notes that the "donations" were refunded in full. Horiuchi Shin, *Nanki Tokugawa shi*, 1:532. However, the *Wakayamashi-shi* argues that this is unlikely, because domains often failed to repay the loan principle in full in other instances of forced loans. Wakayama Shishi Hensan linkai., *Wakayama shishi*, 1:296.

⁷⁴ Horiuchi Shin, *Nanki Tokugawa shi*, 1:540-41.

What is certain, however, is that Yoshimune's selection as shogun was not a foregone conclusion. Moreover, bakufu elders and Tokugawa family members made Yoshimune shogun for reasons other than those given in the official record. This chapter has argued that Yoshimune was selected as shogun because of his success in rehabilitating the finances of Kii domain. While bakufu elders might have sought a weak ruler—someone they could have easily controlled and relegated to the Great Interior of Edo castle—they selected a competent adult who was well-known as an active ruler with a proven record of effective fiscal reform. Thus, Tokugawa Yoshimune was selected based on his ability as a ruler, and this meritocratic impulse was covered up by emphasizing his genealogy and by constructing his image as an enlightened samurai ruler in the mode of Ieyasu.

Yoshimune won the title of shogun based on his ability as a ruler and his achievements as lord of Kii—the same qualities that ultimately earned him his reputation as an enlightened lord (*meikun*). However, admission of that fact posed a threat to his authority as shogun, for meritocracy stood as an anathema to the premise of rule by status, the defining characteristic of the Tokugawa polity.⁷⁵ To admit that Yoshimune had been selected based on ability was to risk transforming the shogun into another bureaucratic officer of the state, and thereby court challenges to his authority. What is more, every shogun after Yoshimune (except for the last, Yoshinobu) traced their lineage back to him, and their political legitimacy ultimately hinged on their ancestor's right to the title of shogun.⁷⁶ It thus became critical to mask the true reasons for his selection as shogun by asserting his birthright and the will of Ienobu as the two factors that had elevated him over Tsugutomo.

Not only were Yoshimune's close biological ties to Ieyasu provided as justification for his selection as shogun, but Tsugutomo's lack of pedigree was also cited as a reason for passing over the lord of Owari. "When the lord of Mito [Tsunaeda] was consulted [on the matter of succession], he replied, 'The Owari house ended with [the death of] Gorōta, and it is as if it were a new [separate] house. It is best to do as Ten'ei-in thinks.' When he said this, not one among the *rōjū* answered him."⁷⁷ Although he might have pressed his own claim to the title of shogun had he desired, Tokugawa Tsunaeda played an important role in making Yoshimune shogun. His counsel was sought throughout the deliberations, and in each instance, he entreated his cousin to follow the will of Ienobu and Ten'ei-in, and to accept the reins of government.⁷⁸ The silence of the *rōjū* at this moment is striking, and further hints at the behind-the-scenes machinations working to bring Yoshimune to power. On more than one occasion, Muro Kyūsō (1578-34), Confucian scholar and advisor to Yoshimune, noted that after Tsunaeda urged Yoshimune to accept the title of shogun, "not one among the *rōjū* spoke a word."⁷⁹ The *rōjū* had much to gain from seeing the title of shogun go to a man who could put Gekkō-in, Manabe, and Hakuseki in check, and their orchestrated silence indicated their

⁷⁵ See: John Whitney Hall, "Rule by Status in Tokugawa Japan," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 1, no. 1 (1974): 39-49.

⁷⁶ Tokugawa Yoshinobu (1837-1913) was born into the Mito Tokugawa family. He was adopted into the Hitotsubashi house (one of the *gosankyō*) before becoming shogun in 1868. His brief tenure as shogun witnessed the end of the Tokugawa bakufu. See Appendix D.

⁷⁷ Muro Kyūsō, "Kenzan hisaku," 390.

⁷⁸ Kuroita Katsumi, *Tokugawa jikki*, 9:141.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

support for Yoshimune over Tsugutomo.⁸⁰ None used this opportunity to challenge Tsunaeda's questionable assertion that the Owari line had become "a new house" with the succession of Tsugutomo.⁸¹

It is worth noting that Tsugutomo was the twelfth son of the second lord of Owari, Tokugawa Tsunanari (1652-1699). Neither Tsugutomo nor his predecessor, Yoshimichi, was the son of Tsunanari's principal wife. Each was the child of one of their father's thirteen consorts.⁸² There was very little difference, then, between Tsugutomo's pedigree and that of his cousin, Yoshimune, who had been born to a consort who may well have been a bathhouse maid.⁸³ Genealogy—and its fabrication—played an important role in allowing Yoshimune to claim the title of shogun; it also helped legitimize his authority once he had secured that title.

Claims to birthright allowed Yoshimune to invoke the spirit of his great-grandfather, Ieyasu, who had been deified over the course of the sixteenth century as the Great Shining Avatar of the East (*Tōsho daigongen*). Ruling actively after shogunal chamberlains (*sobayōnin*) had dominated bakufu politics under Tsunayoshi, Ienobu, and Ietsugu, Yoshimune effectively cast himself as a true samurai ruler in the mode of Ieyasu, thereby making his rule appear conservative (and thus acceptable to his backers) despite the fact that many of his Kyōhō era reforms carried forward the bureaucratizing trends of Tsunayoshi and Hakuseki.⁸⁴ Birthright alone, however, was not enough to assert Yoshimune's authority over those from whose ranks he had recently risen, or to extinguish potential challenges to his authority from *gosanke* rivals. It became essential for Yoshimune to "perform" as shogun and thereby establish his image as

⁸⁰ In particular, the *rōjū*, Inoue Masamine (1653-1722), who was married to Yoshimune's sister, is believed to have had a hand in bringing Yoshimune to power. There was no love lost between Masamine and Hakuseki, and a shogunal ally could prove a powerful asset to either man.

⁸¹ Yoshimune began to make good on his political debts immediately after becoming shogun. His first order of business was to enact frugality measures, calling previous extravagances a malady, and reassigning the Grand Chamberlain, Manabe, to the Karinoma offices as a regular fudai daimyo. Hakuseki was similarly released from service to the bakufu. Yoshimune installed forty Kii retainers in minor offices such as pages (*koshō*, *konando*) and minor liege vassals (*kobushin*), and ordered that custom of relying on *toritsugi*, which had begun during the rule of Tsunayoshi, would be abolished. In the future, *rōjū* were told that they should consult Yoshimune directly on all matters. Muro Kyūsō, "Kenzan hisaku," 377.

⁸² Tsunanari was a prodigious man. His fourteen wives bore him forty children: 22 sons and 18 daughters, the majority of who did not reach adulthood—a testament to the high rate of infant mortality in the Tokugawa period.

⁸³ *Nanki Tokugawa-shi* provides several theories of Oyuri no kata's origins. Horiuchi Shin, *Nanki Tokugawa shi*, 1:512-16. The Japanese scholar, Koyama Yoshiki, has sorted through the many facts and fictions of the various stories concerning Oyuri no kata's parentage and has found several points of convergence as well as many discrepancies among them. While no single account is wholly dismissible, neither can any one tale be verified beyond the shadow of a doubt. Ultimately, Koyama concludes that the most common element among the various theories is the low status of Oyuri no kata's parents. By combining several of the points in common among the various stories, Koyama suggests that it is possible to imagine that Oyuri no kata was distantly related to the Kose clan and that her mother was banished and fled to Kyoto where she worked in a bath house. This is where she likely took the name of Kose—either through marriage or from a relative. After her husband passed away, she took her two children with her to Wakayama. Here she was taken in by a temple dedicated to Daikokubashi, the deity of fortune. Koyama's theory, however, remains speculation. There is no way to know the truth about Oyuri no kata's genealogy, and this is, perhaps, precisely what bakufu historians wished. See: Andō Seiichi and Ōishi Shinzaburō, *Tokugawa Yoshimune no subete*, 25-39.

⁸⁴ Regarding *sobayōnin* politics, see: Totman, *Politics in the Tokugawa Bakufu, 1600-1843*, 214-17.

the legitimate ruler of Japan. The traditional martial trappings of the samurai provided an excellent opportunity for Yoshimune to perform as a genuine ruler.⁸⁵

The image of Yoshimune as a samurai ruler was established in both the broad brushstrokes and finely nuanced details of texts like the *Tokugawa jikki*, where he is remembered as a patron of the martial arts, and is often credited with restoring a sense of pride to samurai as military rulers of Japan.⁸⁶ We have seen how the *Tokugawa jikki* used the practice of archery to depict Yoshimune as a composed martial leader, and historians typically point to his equestrian skills, his revival of hawking and hunting, and his establishment of the *geimetsuke* as evidence of his encouragement of martial arts.⁸⁷ Records show that Yoshimune witnessed a handful of martial arts demonstrations at Edo castle, and that both of his sons were provided with fencing instructors in their youth.⁸⁸ Beyond this, however, there is no evidence that Yoshimune practiced any form of martial art more than any daimyo or shogun before him.

Hawking, hunting, and horseback riding were less important to Yoshimune for any military skill or martial prowess they might have provided than as opportunities for him to “perform” as a samurai and a shogun on a grand scale before his retainers and subjects.⁸⁹ This political performance not only underscored his legitimacy as shogun, but it helped establish him as a model samurai ruler for later generations to emulate. In this way, Yoshimune came to be remembered as a *meikun* in texts like the *Tokugawa jikki*, which were invested in portraying Yoshimune as the legitimate inheritor and transmitter of Tokugawa authority.

Yoshimune is remembered in the historical and popular literature as a *meikun*—a hagiographic term that was given to him soon after his death, and which he enjoys to his day.⁹⁰ The appellation was ascribed to rulers of superior quality, and stood as an index of their capacity to deal effectively with the many social and economic problems facing their governments. More important, it described them as particularly just and benevolent lords who were concerned for the well-being of their subjects. Critically, it differed from other terms such as *uesama*, which alludes to the shogun’s elevated status, or *kubōsama*, which refers to the

⁸⁵ Akabane Tatsuo, *Tokugawa shogun to Yagyū shinkage-ryū* (Tokyo: Nansosha, 1998), 201.

⁸⁶ According to the *Tokugawa jikki*, Yoshimune’s support for the martial arts brought many famous instructors to Edo Kuroita Katsumi, *Tokugawa jikki*, 9:229. His orders to Tokugawa retainers to practice martial arts likely brought about a boom in the market for instruction. Kuroita Katsumi, *Tokugawa jikki*, 8:248-49.

⁸⁷ For example, see: Tsuji Tatsuya, “Politics in the Eighteenth Century,” 441-42. Hunting, falconry, and the killing of animals had been outlawed by the fifth shogun, Tsunayoshi, in his infamous Laws of Compassion for Living Things (*Shōrui awaremi no rei*), which he promulgated beginning in 1685. For a discussion of the Laws of Compassion for Living Things, see: Beatrice M. Bodart-Bailey, *The Dog Shogun: The Personality and Policies of Tokugawa Tsunayoshi* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2006), 128-160.

⁸⁸ Kuroita Katsumi, *Tokugawa jikki*, 9:267. Yoshimune observed a demonstration by the head of the Yagyū shikange-ryū of swordsmanship on 9/1/1726. The Yagyū had been official fencing instructors to the shoguns since the time of Ieyasu. This is the only recorded instance of Yoshimune interacting with anyone of the Yagyū school. See: Akabane Tatsuo, *Tokugawa shogun to Yagyū shinkage-ryū*, 184-202.

⁸⁹ For a discussion of Yoshimune’s use of hawking as a means of controlling daimyo and administering bakufu lands in the Edo environs as well as equating himself with Ieyasu, see: Ōishi Manabu, “Kantō ni okeru takaba seido: Kyōhō kaikaku to chiiki hensei,” in *Kyōhō kaikaku to shakai hen’yō*, ed. Ōishi Manabu, *Nihon no jidaishi 16* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2003), 93-119. See also Bodart-Bailey, *The Dog Shogun: The Personality and Policies of Tokugawa Tsunayoshi*, 46-50.

⁹⁰ Baba Bunkō, *Baba Bunkō shū*, ed. Takada Mamoru, Hara Michio, and Okada Satoshi (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1987), 255-302.

public authority of shogun. “*Meikun*,” by contrast, represented a subjective judgment of the ruler by the ruled, commenting on the quality of the lord’s rulership. As such, it held the ruler to an elusive standard that was imposed upon him by others, and thereby took him as the subject of their gaze. Use of the term was indicative of a shift in the nature of rulership in the eighteenth century, when subjects in all corners of the realm increasingly came to expect their rulers to govern with the people’s interests in mind.⁹¹

As the remaining chapters of this dissertation will demonstrate, this rhetoric of benevolent rulership came to exert great influence on politics in eighteenth-century Japan. However, the definition of benevolent rule remained protean throughout the Tokugawa period, and this fact could be exploited by someone with the capacity and desire to challenge the authority of the shogun. This chapter has shown that the state attempted to prevent such challenges from arising by concealing the fault lines created within the political system at moments of crisis, such as the succession of Tokugawa Yoshimune as shogun. The next chapter explains how the seventh lord of Owari domain, Tokugawa Muneharu, exploited these fault lines, which I refer to as “structural ambiguities” of the *bakuhau taisei*, in order to raise a credible challenge to the shogunal authority of his cousin, Yoshimune.

⁹¹ For a discussion of what has been referred to the “covenant” between the ruler and ruled, see: Irwin Scheiner, “Benevolent Lords and Honorable Peasants: Rebellion and Peasant Consciousness in Tokugawa Japan,” in *Japanese Thought in the Tokugawa Period, 1600-1868: Methods and Metaphors*, ed. Tetsuo Najita and Irwin Scheiner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 39-62.

Chapter 3 The Origins of Muneharu's Discontent

During the eight years that Tokugawa Muneharu ruled Owari domain (1730-39), he repeatedly challenged the authority of the shogun by criticizing his governance of the realm, contravening his sumptuary laws and frugality ordinances, and relaxing economic and moral controls within the borders of Owari.¹ This chapter argues that three factors in particular made Muneharu's challenge to Yoshimune possible: the Tokugawa political system (*bakuhan taisei*), the special place of the Tokugawa collateral houses (*gosanke*) within that system, and the painful effects of the shogun's Kyōhō era (1716-1735) reforms. The first provided Muneharu with the ideological leeway to challenge the political legitimacy of the shogun, the second supplied him with the requisite pedigree and power to do so, and the third became a point of critique for Muneharu as well as a means of establishing himself as a more benevolent—and thus more legitimate—ruler than Yoshimune. This chapter asserts that these origins of Muneharu's discontent were born of the same structural ambiguities of the *bakuhan taisei* that allowed for its flexibility and continued viability over the course of three centuries. In short, the greatest strengths of the Tokugawa political system were also its most exploitable weaknesses.

Tokugawa Muneharu (1696-1764), younger cousin to the shogun, Yoshimune, governed the most powerful collateral Tokugawa domain for eight years before Yoshimune removed him from office in a bloodless coup that he orchestrated in conjunction with Muneharu's own housemen.² In this, Muneharu enjoys the ignoble distinction of being the only daimyo of a Tokugawa collateral house ever to suffer attainder of his domain. The reasons behind Yoshimune's decision to censure his cousin were obvious enough to those who removed him: in eight years of ruling Owari, Muneharu had flouted shogunal decrees, squandered domain revenues, and allowed his retainers and subjects to sink into moral debauchery and indolence.³ However, the reasons behind Muneharu's decision to govern his domain in such an unorthodox manner, to make utterances and to behave in ways that could only be considered acts of *lèse*

¹ Throughout the Tokugawa period, 93 *shimpan* lords, 57 from the *gosanke* houses and 36 from the *gosankyō* houses ruled over collateral domains. The term *shimpan* designates houses related to the founder of the Tokugawa dynasty, Iyasu, by blood. The *gosankyō* were three collateral houses of the new Tokugawa *sōke* that were established by Yoshimune and his son, Ieshige. They did not govern independent domains, but were stipended by the bakufu. They took their names: Tayasu, Hitotsubashi, and Shimizu, from the neighborhoods surrounding Edo castle where their mansions were located. After Yoshimune inherited the title of shogun, no other *gosanke* lord was ever promoted to shogun. However, *gosankyō* lords were adopted as heirs to *gosanke* houses and even as the shogun.

² Tokugawa Muneharu became the seventh daimyo of Owari on the twenty-eighth day of the eleventh month of 1730, and suffered attainder (retired) on the twelfth day of the first month of 1739. Although his actual tenure as daimyo was slightly longer, for the sake of convenience, I refer to Muneharu as having ruled Owari for eight years throughout this dissertation.

³ Miyamoto Tsuneichi, Haraguchi Torao, and Higa Shunchō, eds., "Yume no ato," in *Tochi fūzoku*, vol. 15, Nihon shomin seikatsu shiryō shūsei (Tokyo: San'ichi shobō, 1968), 815.

majesté, are less patent. As a blood relative of the shogun and lord of one of the wealthiest and most prestigious houses in the Tokugawa political hierarchy, Muneharu was arguably one of its principle beneficiaries. He had as much to gain from insuring the durability of the political system as he did from challenging it, yet he chose the latter path because he was uniquely positioned to do so, and because Yoshimune's authority over the new Tokugawa regime remained vulnerable in 1730.⁴

In many ways, Muneharu's rise to power paralleled that of Yoshimune a quarter of a century earlier. As had been the case for Yoshimune, rank, title, and authority had all come unexpectedly to Muneharu when he inherited lordship of a major Tokugawa collateral domain following the death of his older brother in 1730.⁵ Like Yoshimune, Muneharu had been born the youngest son of a *gosanke* lord, and thus (also like Yoshimune), he had not been groomed to inherit his father's patrimony.⁶ Muneharu had received a small inheritance from his father in 1699, but before his promotion to daimyo, he could not have expected ever to hold such a high rank or office.⁷ Perhaps recognizing something of himself in Muneharu, Yoshimune had made his cousin lord of a minor domain in the far northern province of Mutsu in 1729, much as the shogun, Tsunayoshi, had done for the young scion of Kii in 1697.⁸ One year later, Muneharu succeeded his older brother, Tokugawa Tsugutomo, as the seventh lord of Owari domain, at which point he was granted his first official audience with Yoshimune, who permitted his cousin to use the character "Mune" in his name and presented him with an heirloom sword engraved with the phrase "*enju kunisuke*" (Long life in service to the realm).⁹ Thus, Yoshimune appears initially to have looked favorably upon his younger cousin. However, Muneharu did not reciprocate those feelings of affinity with the shogun.

Prior to 1729, Muneharu had been living as a dependant (*heyazumi*) of his father's house. He thus received little in the way of grooming for political office or attention from the historical record. With much time and a modicum of wealth at his disposal, Muneharu had

⁴ According to their (approximate) putative rice yields, the domains were ranked in the following order after bakufu holdings (4,000,000 *koku*): Kaga (Maeda clan, 1,025,000 *koku*), Satsuma (Shimazu clan, 770,000 *koku*), Sendai (Date clan, 625,000 *koku*), Owari (620,000 *koku*), and Kii (555,000 *koku*). Mito domain, the junior-most Tokugawa collateral house, ranked twelfth among the 250-odd daimyo (350,000 *koku*). Owari was the highest ranking domain that was not a *tozama* domain. One *koku* was equivalent to 278 liters of rice, and was the amount required, in theory, to feed one adult male.

⁵ Muneharu's father was succeeded by his ninth son, Yoshimichi (1689-1713), who was succeeded first by his infant son, Gorōta (1711-1713), and then by his brother, Tsugutomo (1692-1730), Yoshimichi's eleventh son. See Appendix C.

⁶ Muneharu was the twentieth son of the third Tokugawa lord of Owari, Tsunanari (1652-1699). Tsunanari fathered 22 sons and 18 daughters by eleven wives (*sokushitsu*). His principle wife (*seishitsu*) bore him no children.

⁷ In a will dated 1697, Muneharu's father, Tokugawa Tsunanori, stipulated that Yoshimune receive two thousand *ryō* as an inheritance. Ōishi Manabu, *Kisei kanwa ni idonda "meikun": Tokugawa Muneharu no shōgai* (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 1996), 41-42.

⁸ Kuroita Katsumi, *Tokugawa jikki*, vol. 8. 505. Yanagawa domain had a putative annual yield of 30,000 *koku*. Muneharu never visited the domain.

⁹ Muneharu went by the name Michiharu as a child. *Hen'nen tairyaku* records Muneharu visiting Edo castle for the first time in an official capacity on the twenty-eighth day of the twelfth month of 1730, and exchanging gifts with the shogun. Subsequent entries note Muneharu's receiving the heirloom sword from Yoshimune on the nineteenth day of following month. Nagoya-shi Kyōiku linkai, ed., *Kiroku hen*, vol. 1, Nagoya sōsho 4 (Nagoya: Nagoya-shi Kyōiku linkai, 1960). 354.

plenty of opportunities to enjoy the cultural offerings of the shogun's capital, and he developed a love of the kabuki theater and other entertainments of Edo's Yoshiwara pleasure district prior to becoming lord of Owari.¹⁰ Despite the fact that samurai were forbidden from entering the Yoshiwara pleasure district in Edo, and although kabuki was considered beneath the daimyo elite, who were patrons of the classical noh drama, Muneharu had no intention of renouncing these passions upon investiture of office.¹¹ As Chapter 5 details, Muneharu was not satisfied with having to wait until he was in Edo on official duty to enjoy the kabuki theater, and he therefore promoted the development of theaters and entertainment districts around his home in Nagoya. Muneharu seems to have been incapable of upholding the strict economic and moral values that Yoshimune was so forcefully championing at the time, and the shogun soon took his cousin to task for his unseemly behavior while in Edo.¹² The shogun expected Muneharu, as a member of the *gosanke*, to set a strong positive example for others by controlling his behavior and demonstrating fiscal responsibility. Instead of acquiescing and reforming his behavior, Muneharu responded to his cousin's accusations by criticizing the shogun's austere economic policies as unsound, and by relaxing economic and moral restrictions within the borders of Owari. His intention, so he claimed, was to provide his subjects with benevolence so that they might enjoy the fruits of their labor.

It is certainly true that much of Muneharu's reform agenda in Owari was based on his desire to maintain—and even enhance—the life that he had come to enjoy as the junior son of a wealthy and powerful domain lord living in Edo. An even more cynical view of Muneharu's actions might suggest to some that his domain reforms were little more than a thinly-veiled attempt to justify the continued pursuit of pleasures that were officially forbidden to a person of his (newfound) rank and status. Yet Muneharu did more than simply espouse the need for benevolence and fewer economic and moral restrictions. He actually implemented policies based on the ideas he put forth in his treatise, *Onchi seiyō*, and that—at least for a few years—appeared to be effective in stimulating economic growth and prosperity in Owari at a time when the rest of Japan was in economic decline.¹³

The fact that Muneharu implemented reform measures that directly breached the laws and edicts of the shogun challenges any cynical notion that his rhetoric of benevolence was

¹⁰ The immediate influx of kabuki and other performance troupes from Osaka and Kyoto testifies to the demand that Muneharu created in Nagoya for the entertainments he loved. See: "Yume no ato" in Haraguchi Torao and Higa Shunchō, eds., *Nihon shomin seikatsu shiryō shūsei*, vol. 15 (Tokyo: San'ichi shobō, 1968), 810.

¹¹ In 1714, more than fifty women were expelled from the Great Interior (*ōoku*) after it was discovered that a senior lady-in-waiting had not only attended the theater in lieu of performing memorial services in honor of the former shogun, Ienobu, but had also been having an affair with a popular actor (Muro Kyūsō, "Kenzan hisaku," 495.). The incident, known as the Ejima-Ikushima incident, caused a great scandal within Edo castle, and may have weakened the supporters of Tokugawa Tsugutomo's bid for shogun the following year (Chapter 2). For statutes prohibiting samurai from entering the Yoshiwara pleasure district, see: *Ofuregaki Kanpō Shūsei* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten), 580.

¹² In 1731, Yoshimune sent two envoys to the Owari mansion in Edo to cross-examine Muneharu regarding his recent exploits in the shogun's capital. Briefly, the shogun accused Muneharu of loitering in Edo when he was supposed to be in his home domain of Owari, of allowing commoners to gaze upon a piece of sacral memorabilia of Tokugawa Ieyasu, and of violating the shogun's sumptuary laws. These accusations and Muneharu response are examined in further detail in Chapter 5.

¹³ Nakamura Takafusa et al., *The Economic History of Japan, 1600-1990*, 119-129.

little more than a facade for his desire to enjoy the worldly pleasures that wealth and status could provide him. Moreover, the radical nature of his reforms and the confrontational nature of his rhetoric raise the question, “Why risk losing such immense privilege and honor by contravening the will and challenging the legitimacy of the shogun?” Why should he have extended such benevolence (as Muneharu understood it) to commoners whose primary function was to produce the tax revenues that supported the ruling samurai class? If Muneharu’s only desire had been to enjoy the kabuki theater and the Yoshiwara district, there would have been little trouble in discreetly availing himself of their pleasures. Profligate rulers were nothing new to the Tokugawa political system, and if he had been thoroughly disinterested in ruling as daimyo, he could easily have left domain business to his senior retainers and advisors.¹⁴ Instead, Muneharu went well out of his way to articulate and implement a radical vision of rule that challenged the authority of the shogun, potentially undercut the logic of the Tokugawa political system, and placed Muneharu at great risk of losing every privilege he enjoyed. But why?

The risk was very real, despite the static social and political climate that historians have ascribed the “dead” middle of the eighteenth century.¹⁵ Although it was not marked by the heady growth of the early seventeenth century, the confidence and flamboyance of the Genroku period (1688-1704), or the sense of novelty and excitement of the *bakumatsu* era (1854-68), the eighteenth century was a time of constant challenges and changes for rulers at every level of government. By 1730, Yoshimune had established himself as a vigorous and independent ruler who was capable of fully exercising his power as shogun in order to meet the challenges of his day. Muneharu surely understood the risk he was taking by criticizing a man like Yoshimune and his reforms. So why would he have done such a thing? The most plausible explanation for Muneharu’s radical utterances and unorthodox rule of Owari is that he sought some greater reward than simply being able to attend the kabuki theater to his heart’s content. Tokugawa Muneharu desired to rectify the insult his house had suffered in 1716, when it had been passed over for the title of shogun, and he sought to project an image of himself as a legitimate contender for the title of shogun based on the benevolence he provided his subjects. Having suggested an answer to the question of *why* Muneharu challenged Yoshimune, we must consider the political and economic realities upon which Muneharu based that challenge. In other words, *what* made Muneharu believe that he could do such a thing?

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¹⁴ To give but one example, Muneharu’s predecessor and one-time candidate for shogunal regent, Tokugawa Yoshimichi (1689-1713), was rumored to have taken courtesans from the Yoshiwara district. Asahi Monzaemon, *Ōmurōchū-ki*, 3:167.

¹⁵ Conrad D. Totman, *Early Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 573. Miyamoto Matao concludes that the apparent economic stasis of the eighteenth century was “superficial,” and that the economy experienced real, if only constrained, growth. Miyamoto Matao, “Quantitative Aspects of Tokugawa Economy,” in *The Economic History of Japan, 1600-1990: Emergence of Economic Society in Japan, 1600-1859*, ed. Nakamura Takafusa et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 54-55.

The Non-constitutional Tokugawa Polity

Technically speaking, Muneharu was acting within his prerogative as a daimyo to govern his domain as he did, for the Tokugawa political system lacked any formal expression of its contours or contents, such as a constitution or code of civil and legal statutes that might have delimited or defined his authority more clearly. In fact, the most important articulation of the powers and duties of the daimyo within the *bakuhans taisei* was the laconic *Laws Governing Warrior Houses (Buke shohatto)*, which outlined in approximately twenty brief articles general obligations and prohibitions for daimyo conduct vis-à-vis the shogun.¹⁶ Among other things, the *Buke shohatto* commanded daimyo maintain but one castle within their domains, not enter into marriages or alliances without the consent of the bakufu, and attend on the shogun in Edo for a portion of each year.¹⁷ Importantly, it said nothing about either the limits of daimyo autonomy or the extent of shogunal authority; nor did it provide a positive definition of either entity's role within the *bakuhans taisei*. The purpose of the *Buke shohatto* was not to spell out how a daimyo should govern his domain. Its primary goal was to weaken the ability of the daimyo to challenge the Tokugawa militarily. In this, the *Buke shohatto* remained a document of the seventeenth-century political reality from which it was born, and could not address the complex social and economic problems facing the *bakuhans taisei* in the eighteenth century. Ironically, this focus on weakening the military capacities of rival daimyo is precisely what allowed Muneharu to challenge the political power of the shogun through his unorthodox rule of Owari.

Although the *Buke shohatto* decreed that daimyo were to follow the precedents of Edo, shogunal edicts functioned as established law only within the borders of lands directly under the control of the Tokugawa house (*tenryō*). Outside of the *tenryō*, more than two hundred daimyo across Japan were responsible for establishing and enforcing laws within the borders of their domains. This unresolved tension between the central authority of the shogun and the local autonomy of the daimyo provided Muneharu with the ideological leeway to ignore the policies and precedents of the shogun, and to govern Owari in the manner he believed would bring his domain greater prosperity.¹⁸ Yet there remained a real danger in Muneharu's actions, for even without clearly defined rights and responsibilities, the shogun and his state were

¹⁶ The *Buke shohatto* were promulgated eight times during the course of the Tokugawa period (1615, 1617, 1629, 1635, 1663, 1683, 1710, 1717), the last time at the order of Yoshimune. The contents of the laws remained relatively constant across all six versions, although the exact number of articles varied between 11 (1630) and 21 (1617, 1663). See: Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke, *Ofuregaki kampō shūsei*, 1-13. for all eight versions. Scholars have examined the variations as a measure of subtle shifts in the nature of shogunal power through the first half of the Tokugawa period. For discussions of the importance of the *Buke shohatto* and its political importance to shogunal authority, see: Nakai, *Shogunal Politics*; Bolitho, *Treasures Among Men: The Fudai Daimyo in Tokugawa Japan*; Bodart-Bailey, *The Dog Shogun: The Personality and Policies of Tokugawa Tsunayoshi*.

¹⁷ Kikuchi Shunsuke and Ishii Ryōsuke, eds., *Tokugawa kinreikō*, vol. 6 (Tokyo: Sobunsha, 1959), 1-13.

¹⁸ This balance of power has been the topic of great debate in both Japanese- and English-language scholarship of Tokugawa political history. For some of the most cogent arguments see: Nakai, *Shogunal Politics*; Mark Ravina, *Land and Lordship in Early Modern Japan* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999); Luke S. Roberts, *Mercantilism in a Japanese Domain: The Merchant Origins of Economic Nationalism in 18th-Century Tosa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Ronald P. Toby, "Review: Rescuing the Nation from History: The State of the State in Early Modern Japan," *Monumenta Nipponica* 56, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 197-237; Fukai Masaumi, *Tokugawa shogun seiji kenryoku no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1991); Ōishi Shinzaburō, ed., *Shogun to sobayonin no seiji*, Shinsho Edo jidai 1 (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1995).

universally recognized as the ultimate political authority in the realm. The question for Muneharu was the degree to which he could exploit this ambiguity of the *bakuhan taisei* without being punished by the shogun. Whereas a daimyo of a smaller domain or of lower status would have deferred more readily to the will of the shogun, Muneharu was likely bolstered in his sense of righteousness by his pride of pedigree as lord of the senior-most Tokugawa collateral house.

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The Gosanke

In addition to the ambiguities concerning the locus of power within the *bakuhan taisei*, Muneharu's challenge to Yoshimune was made possible by the special pride of place that he enjoyed within the status hierarchy that defined the Tokugawa political system.¹⁹ Technically speaking, Muneharu's pedigree was more elite than the shogun's had been prior to his adoption as shogunal heir from the junior Kii Tokugawa house.

In theory, the relationship between the *sōke* and the *gosanke* houses was defined by a status hierarchy based on the birth order of Ieyasu's sons. Between 1609 and 1619, Tokugawa Ieyasu's ninth, tenth, and eleventh sons were established as heads of collateral houses (*gosanke*) in Owari, Kii, and Mito domains, respectively, and charged with supplying male heirs to the shogunal line (*sōke*) should it come to an end.²⁰ Yet, as Chapter 2 demonstrates, the hierarchical relationship among these three collaterals was complicated by the mandate that they shared to supply heirs to the *sōke*.²¹ The fact that any of the three collateral houses could provide a shogunal heir produced rivalries among the *gosanke* lords. Moreover, their semi-autonomous status as daimyo meant that the personal and political interests of daimyo were often (as the case of Muneharu demonstrates in the extreme) at odds with those of the *sōke*. *Gosanke* support for the *sōke* was never a foregone conclusion, despite the fact that they were among the principle beneficiaries of the *bakuhan taisei*. Muneharu's belief that he enjoyed both the status and autonomy to govern Owari domain in a manner that contravened the will of his cousin—and that he might succeed in his effort to do so—was neither as delusional nor narcissistic as one might initially believe. To the contrary, Muneharu's challenge to Yoshimune was born of his rational understanding of the structural realities of the *bakuhan taisei*.

¹⁹ Hall, "Rule by Status in Tokugawa Japan."

²⁰ Mito domain was granted in 1610 to Tokugawa Yorifusa (1603-61), Owari domain was granted in 1616 to Tokugawa Yoshinao (1600-1650), and Kii domain was granted in 1619 to Tokugawa Yorinobu (1602-71).

²¹ Prior to 1716, the lords of Owari and Kii seemed poised to inherit the title of shogun on more than one occasion. Yoshimune's half-brother, Tokugawa Tsunanori (1665-1705) had married the daughter of the fifth shogun, Tsunayoshi, and had even received permission to use the character "Tsun" in his own name. There was good reason to believe that Tsunanori would be selected as the heir to the childless shogun, and his father groomed him carefully for that role. However, Tsunanori died suddenly in 1705 and the title of shogun eventually passed to Tsunayoshi's nephew, Ienobu, in 1709. Four years later, when the sickly Ienobu grew moribund, he considered appointing the youthful Tokugawa Yoshimichi (1689-1713) of Owari as regent to his son, Ietsugu. However, Ienobu's Confucian advisor, Arai Hakuseki, warned that such a move ran the risk of dividing loyalties between the regent and the shogun. Yoshimichi's death in 1713 made Yoshimune of Kii the closest living descendant of Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1716, when Ietsugu died without an heir at the age of seven.

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The Origins of Economic Growth and Decline

Pride of pedigree and ambiguities of political power explain much of Muneharu's ability to challenge the authority of his cousin. That is, they answer the question of *how* he could do such a thing. The question remains, however, of *why* he chose to challenge the shogun by criticizing Yoshimune's Kyōhō era reforms and by offering a radically different economic model within the borders of Owari domain. The answer, in short, is that Muneharu recognized that Yoshimune was vulnerable because he had been selected as shogun specifically for his ability to resolve the financial problems of the bakufu. If Muneharu could undermine people's faith in Yoshimune's ability to deliver on this mandate, the young lord of Owari could undermine their faith in the legitimacy of his claim to the title of shogun as well. Once again, we discover that the structure of the *bakuhān taisei* provided Muneharu with the ability to challenge the authority of the shogun and to offer a very different solution to the economic problems facing Japan in the seventeenth century.

While a comprehensive analysis of Tokugawa economy is beyond the scope of this dissertation, a brief explanation of why the Kyōhō reforms were necessary is in order at this point. In particular, I would like to highlight the structural origins of the need for reform. That is to say that the institutions of the *bakuhān taisei* that resolved the military strife of the sixteenth century not only produced the economic growth of the seventeenth century, they also brought about a severe economic crisis by the turn of the eighteenth century. Yoshimune's attempts to strengthen the finances of the bakufu through austere economic reforms (higher taxes, decreased spending) brought suffering to many of his subjects. Ultimately, this economic hardship provided Muneharu with the target for his critique of the shogun's rulership.

To give but one example, one of the most important tools that the Tokugawa had at their disposal for controlling the daimyo, *sankin kōtai*, not only catalyzed urban growth, fostered trade and commerce along Japan's highways, and brought the culture of Edo to the provinces, it also became the principle drain on domain economies, typically accounting for well over half of a domain's annual budget.²² While crippling domains economically may have been a wise military strategy for Tokugawa shoguns in the early seventeenth century, by the end of the Genroku era, its harmful effects had begun to impact the broader Tokugawa economy.

There were many costs involved in *sankin kōtai*, including those associated with travelling to and from the shogun's capital, as well as expenses connected to the staffing and maintenance of domain mansions in Edo. Domain lords were required to bring military retainers to Edo proportionate in number to the putative value of their domain revenues.²³ For daimyo with great distances to travel or great numbers of people to move between their domain and the shogun's capital, this meant spending terrific amounts of time and money travelling along

²² Constantine N. Vaporis, *Tour of Duty: Samurai, Military Service in Edo, and the Culture of Early Modern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 27.

²³ Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke, *Ofuregaki kampō shūsei*, 474-75.

Japan's busy highways.²⁴ In Edo, daimyo were required to maintain at least one mansion (almost all had at least three mansions) where their wives and heirs lived as hostages of the Tokugawa shoguns. While the size, number, and opulence of Edo residences were, in theory, regulated by bakufu sumptuary laws and corresponded to the wealth and prestige of each domain, daimyo were constantly striving to outdo each other in their displays of wealth and influence.²⁵ Construction and other costs could easily soar on the occasions of state ceremonies, such as shogunal visits, weddings, or funerals, and were exacerbated by the repeated destruction of large sections of Edo by fire and other natural disasters.²⁶ Daimyo mansions were staffed by officials brought from the domain in order to manage the finances and business of the lord while in Edo. In addition to handling the intricacies of formal interactions between their lord and the shogun, and performing all manner of tasks associated with the office of their lord, these could also be called upon to staff the guard units and bureaucratic offices of the shogunate, depending on the status of the daimyo.

Many daimyo extracted "loans" from prosperous merchants and villagers in order to finance the building projects that were required of them—both in service to the shogunate and in maintaining a standard of living commensurate with their sociopolitical status.²⁷ Domains also sought to balance their books by reducing the number of retainers in their service and withholding "gift money" (*sashiage kin*) from samurai stipends. While samurai stipends managed to keep abreast of rising inflation in real monetary terms, the cost of living in Edo, of maintaining even the minimum level of social obligations and gift-giving appropriate to one's station, and of increasingly complex and lavish rites and ceremonies associated with samurai rank and office continued to increase throughout the Edo period.²⁸ Coupled with fluctuations in

²⁴ Engelbert Kaempfer notes, "To pass the procession of one of the greatest territorial lords takes several days of travelling; since we traveled fast, we would always spend two days passing various groups of the advance party, consisting of lower servants, officials in charge of the baggage, and porters, before finally on the third day we saw the territorial lord himself, traveling in closed formation with his courtiers. It is estimated that the processions of the greatest daimyo consist of about two thousand people, those of the *shōmyō* [Minor lords, as opposed to the Great Lords (daimyo)] have half that number, and those of the shogunal stewards of cities and provinces, one or several hundred people, depending on income and title." Kaempfer, *Kaempfer's Japan: Tokugawa Culture Observed*, 271. In an effort to curb this expense, Yoshimune set new limits on the numbers and types of retainers that were required to escort daimyo of various ranks to Edo in the tenth month of 1721. Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke, *Ofuregaki kampō shūsei*, 474-75.

²⁵ Donald H. Shively, "Sumptuary Regulation and Status in Early Tokugawa Japan," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 25 (1964): 123-164. For discussions of the use of cultural artifacts and opulent building projects as expressions of political authority, see: Karen M. Gerhart, *The Eyes of Power: Art and Early Tokugawa Authority* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999); William H. Coaldrake, "Edo Architecture and Tokugawa Law," *Monumenta Nipponica* 36, no. 3 (Autumn 1981): 235-284. For a record of Tsunayoshi's personal development of lavish court ritual, as well as his proclivity for visiting daimyo mansions throughout Edo, see: Beatrice M. Bodart-Bailey, *The Dog Shogun: The Personality and Policies of Tokugawa Tsunayoshi* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006). This tendency was further encouraged by the advisor to Tokugawa Ienobu, Arai Hakuseki. See: Nakai, *Shogunal Politics*.

²⁶ The Tokugawa *jikki* lists 18 major floods between 1700 and 1720 that destroyed bridges, homes, and other valuable assets.

²⁷ The bakufu employed domain resources (labor and monetary) to complete *otetsudai* and *kuniyaku* construction projects, such as dams and irrigation projects, highways, bridges, and even sections of Edo castle.

²⁸ Kozo Yamamura, *A Study of Samurai Income and Entrepreneurship: Quantitative Analyses of Economic and Social Aspects of the Samurai in Tokugawa and Meiji, Japan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974).

the price of rice (and thus the value and purchasing power of their stipends), steady increases in the cost of living were exacerbating the hardship caused to the samurai by many of the structural ambiguities of the Tokugawa economy.

Thus, the same structural apparatuses, such as *sankin kōtai*, that had fueled a century of population, urban, and economic growth culminating in the prosperity of the Genroku era had also impoverished so many samurai by the end of the seventeenth century that large segments of Tokugawa society were suffering from the constraints of its moral economy. Limited largely to tax revenues from rice farming and fixed stipends inherited from their fathers, samurai of all stations found it increasingly difficult to keep up with the costs of living associated with navigating the acutely status-conscious military and bureaucratic hierarchies that were their only sanctioned means of supporting themselves, their families, and their retainers.²⁹ More and more samurai borrowed against their future rice stipends, pawned their clothes and furnishings, and sold their heirloom swords in order to survive; yet this was often still not enough. Putative beneficiaries of the socio-political order, the samurai were constrained by a moral economy of their own making and could not have escaped their situation without the type and scope of reform that would have eliminated what few real privileges they enjoyed, as the experience of the Meiji restoration would eventually show. Ultimately, the source of these economic problems could be traced to many of the same basic structural elements of Tokugawa society that had produced the affluence of the Genroku era.

* * * * *

Yoshimune's Painful Kyōhō Era Reforms

The need to reform the Tokugawa economy was apparent by the turn of the eighteenth century; at issue, however, was the substance of that reform. The sixth Tokugawa shogun, Ienobu (1662-1712), began implementing a series of bureaucratic reforms aimed at remedying the economic problems of the bakufu and domains with the support of his chamberlain, Manabe Akifusa (1667-1720), and his Confucian scholar, Arai Hakuseki (1657-1725). However, these reforms were also an attempt by Hakuseki to recast the shogun as a Chinese-style Confucian ruler with increased autocratic powers. This caused great anxiety among the traditional supporters of the Tokugawa, the *fudai* (hereditary vassal) daimyo, whose powers within the Tokugawa bureaucracy were threatened by Hakuseki's plan. The fears of the *fudai* were exacerbated by the death of Ienobu in 1713 and the appointment of his four-year-old son,

Constantine N. Vaporis mentions the rising cost of sankin kōtai in Constantine N. Vaporis, "To Edo and Back: Alternate Attendance and Japanese Culture in the Early Modern Period," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 23, no. 1 (Winter 1997): 25-67.

²⁹ Mark Ravina has produced a study of domain efforts to increase revenues through the use of monopsonies on locally produced commodities such as indigo dye. This was, however, a late development that was taken in response to the financial difficulties that domains had been experiencing since the late seventeenth century. The search for novel sources of revenue was fraught with tension for both domains and the bakufu who feared the response of angry villagers. See: Mark Ravina, *Land and Lordship in Early Modern Japan* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999). For a discussion of the real value of samurai stipends, see: Kozo Yamamura, *A Study of Samurai Income and Entrepreneurship: Quantitative Analyses of Economic and Social Aspects of the Samurai in Tokugawa and Meiji, Japan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974).

letsugu (1709-1716), as shogun. With Manabe now serving as letsugu's guardian, there seemed little that bakufu elders could do to counter Hakuseki's painful reforms. When letsugu died three years later, however, bakufu elders seized the opportunity to push back Hakuseki's reforms by installing a shogun more accepting of their traditional role in state politics. Although they were taking a risk in selecting a mature ruler who had proven his ability to govern independently, Yoshimune's conservative political, economic, and social tendencies made him a clear favorite for shogun in 1716. The political risks were further mitigated by the fact that Yoshimune was from a junior *gosanke* house. His indebtedness for their backing likely stood as collateral in the minds of bakufu elders.³⁰ Ultimately, Yoshimune proved a safe bet as his economic reforms reconfirmed the Tokugawa political order and the fudai daimyo's place within it.

Although Yoshimune implemented a wide variety of reforms as part of his efforts to restore bakufu finances to healthy levels, his basic economic formula remained simple: increase revenues and decrease expenses, and each of his economic reforms can be understood as falling into one of these two very broad categories. A more rewarding line of historical analysis, however, may be arrived at by considering each of Yoshimune's reforms in terms of its respective target: bakufu income and expenses, samurai finances, and the welfare of the people. This taxonomy helps us better understand Yoshimune's economic and political priorities and reveals the uncoordinated quality of the shogun's Kyōhō era economic reforms. It is worth considering the respective targets of Yoshimune's Kyōhō era economic reforms because doing so calls into question Yoshimune's posthumous image as a model ruler, or *meikun*, and this was the point upon which Muneharu based his criticism of the shogun. As the following analysis of some of Yoshimune's most important reforms suggests, it is ultimately difficult to argue that the shogun's agenda went far beyond fortifying bakufu finances and solidifying his position atop the bureaucratic state structure. Higher taxes, restrictions on monetary supply, and tighter controls on the circulation of money through sumptuary laws and frugality ordinances brought state finances under control, but they retarded the ability of commoners to profit through either agrarian production or the market economy. Unlike Muneharu, providing benevolence to his subjects was not Yoshimune's primary objective.

Compared to Muneharu, who bankrupted the Owari fisc in pursuit of policies that favored the economic well-being of the commoners, Yoshimune pursued policies that reconfirmed the social and political superiority of the samurai over the other hereditary classes (farmers, artisans, and merchants). It comes as no surprise that history, written by samurai elites, elevated Yoshimune to the pantheon of exemplary samurai rulers (*meikun*) while Muneharu's voice of dissent was silenced following a coup that was organized by his own retainers. Chapter 4 examines the theoretical substance of Muneharu's challenge to Yoshimune's legitimacy more closely, but as the following analysis of several of Yoshimune's Kyōhō era reforms concludes, there was some validity to Muneharu's assertion that Yoshimune

³⁰ It has been argued that the absence of major reforms during the first four years of Yoshimune's tenure as shogun are a result of the political deference that he showed bakufu elders. By 1720, however, most of the *rōjū* had retired or passed away. Yoshimune neglected to replace them, thereby availing himself of the political leeway to implement many reforms that largely perpetuated the autocratic trend begun by Hakuseki. See: Tsuji Tatsuya, "Politics in the Eighteenth Century."

placed his personal goals as shogun before those of the people: above all else, Yoshimune worked to stabilize the fisc of the bakufu and his place atop its bureaucratic apparatus.

Because rice was the basic currency of both annual taxes (*nengu*) and samurai stipends (*fuchi; kyūmai*), land reclamation (*shinden kaihatsu*) had been one of the principle means of increasing bakufu revenue. However, by 1715, these projects had ceased to deliver the level of returns that they had once produced.³¹ Pressured initially by the costs of constant warfare and later by the demands of a massive population explosion, regional daimyo had begun encouraging the systematic reclamation of uncultivated lands during the Warring States period as they rationalized their control over increasingly larger areas of land.³² Their early successes encouraged local villagers, domain governments, wealthy merchants, and bakufu intendants (*daikan*) to open up more and more paddy lands until the amount of arable had nearly doubled by the end of the seventeenth century. Most of the expansion took place throughout the seventeenth century. However, by the eighteenth century what little uncultivated land remained could only be brought under tillage at great cost. What is more, overproduction of paddy lands had placed great strains on the productive capacities of the land and the increasing need for irrigation waters became a constant source of inter-village and inter-domain strife.³³

Nevertheless, in an effort to increase revenues by maximizing use of bakufu lands, Yoshimune issued a thirty-six article proclamation in 1726 calling for stricter inspections of new paddy (*shinden*), further reclamation of wastelands, and accurate payment of *nengu*.³⁴ The central and western portions of Japan were historically some of the most agriculturally developed lands in all of Japan. In particular, the *Kinai* region surrounding Osaka and the ancient capital of Kyoto was home to a diverse mixture of multi-crop rice farming and cash cropping (including cotton, tobacco, and mulberry for silk production). Therefore, the majority of land reclamation projects begun under Yoshimune were located throughout the Kantō plain and in the northeastern regions of Japan—the only areas with tracts of land large enough to warrant reclamation efforts. Many of these projects were financed by wealthy merchants and landowners at the behest of the bakufu, and it was many years before the largest of them came to fruition. Although it had been one of the most successful means of increasing state revenues, expanding wealth, and fostering a growing population for over a century, by the 1720s the returns on investment in land reclamation had diminished to a point where land reclamation alone was not enough to remedy the financial difficulties of the bakufu.³⁵ Recognizing this, Yoshimune attacked the problem from multiple angles, as if he were searching for any remedy that worked within the established contours of Tokugawa society.

In 1722, Yoshimune implemented a gift rice policy (*agemai no sei*), which amounted to a tax on the revenues of daimyo throughout Japan, and was very similar to the *sashiage kin* he had levied on his household retainers while lord of Kii.³⁶ In exchange for an annual payment to

³¹ Miyamoto Matao, "Quantitative Aspects of Tokugawa Economy," 41-45.

³² One of the earliest to do this was the Imagawa clan. See: Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Hideyoshi*, Harvard East Asian Series 97 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), 26-34.

³³ Conrad D. Totman, *Green Archipelago: Forestry in Pre-Industrial Japan* (Ohio University Press, 1998), 158.

³⁴ Kikuchi Shunsuke and Ishii Ryōsuke, *Tokugawa kinreikō*, 6:312-315.

³⁵ Miyamoto Matao, "Quantitative Aspects of Tokugawa Economy," 45.

³⁶ Ōguchi Yūjirō has noted the originality of Yoshimune's *agemai no sei*; See: Takafusa Nakamura et al., *The Economic History of Japan, 1600-1990: Emergence of Economic Society in Japan, 1600-1859* (Oxford University

the bakufu of 100 *koku* for every 10,000 *koku* at which daimyo domains were valued, Yoshimune's *agemai no sei* policy relaxed the *sankin kōtai* responsibilities of daimyo. Thus, a daimyo whose holdings were valued at 30,000 *koku* and who was normally required to spend every other year in Edo would only serve six months in the shogun's capital in exchange for 300 *koku* per year paid to the bakufu. The policy resulted in an immediate thirteen percent increase in bakufu revenues, an amount sufficient to cover half of the stipends the shogunate paid its retainers (*hatamoto* and *gokenin*).³⁷ As had been the case when Yoshimune was daimyo of Kii, the gift rice policy was rescinded in 1730, when bakufu finances were believed to have stabilized, and *sankin kōtai* responsibilities were returned to normal. Although the *agemai no sei* proved to be an effective means of increasing the bakufu's short-term revenue stream, it remained an extraordinary move on the part of the shogunate, and the reduction of *sankin kōtai* responsibilities served as an indication to all that it would not become a permanent tax on the daimyo.³⁸ For long-term increases in bakufu tax revenues, Yoshimune looked to the peasants rather than the daimyo as the source of his much-needed revenue.³⁹ Once again, Yoshimune relied on a reform that had been used with intermittent success in the past: the fixed tax (*jōmen*). Yoshimune implemented the *jōmen hō* in 1722, the same year he began levying the *agemai no sei* on daimyo.⁴⁰

The *jōmen hō* fixed village tax rates based on rice crop yields averaged over several years.⁴¹ Villages were expected to pay their annual tax (*nengu*) in full, regardless of the quality or quantity of that year's harvest (reprieves were given in years of extreme drought or famine due to crop failure). This constituted a significant break with earlier bakufu policy, which had set a new tax rate each year following an inspection of crop conditions by local *daikan* or officials dispatched from Edo. Not only had the earlier (*kenmi*) system resulted in revenue fluctuations each year, it created many opportunities for graft and corruption that ate further into bakufu income.

Implementation of the *jōmen hō* had several positive effects for both the state and the people. First, by regularizing the amount of *nengu* tax that villages were expected to pay each year, the bakufu enjoyed not only higher revenues, but also greater stability and predictability

Press, 2004), 198. However, while the policy was certainly an unprecedented move for any shogun (in particular, the relaxation of *sankin kōtai* responsibilities has been interpreted as a sign of flagging shogunal authority over the fudai daimyo; See: Harold Bolitho, *Treasures Among Men: The Fudai Daimyo in Tokugawa Japan* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1974). The concept of extorting gift money from retainers and/or wealthy merchants was not a new one in 1722. See: Horiuchi Shin, *Nanki Tokugawa shi*, 1:540., and Kaga Kishirō, *Asahi Bunzaemon "Ōmurōchū-ki"*, Edo jidai sensho 1 (Tokyo: Shuppan Kōbō, 2003), 20-22.

³⁷ *Nihon Daihyakka zensho*, s.v. "*agemai*."

³⁸ The *agemai no sei* was rescinded in 1730 and *sankin kōtai* responsibilities returned to normal, indicating that Yoshimune and his advisors believed the health of bakufu finances had been restored to an adequate level. Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke, *Ofuregaki kampō shūsei*, 563-64.

³⁹ The finance magistrate (*kanjō bugyō*), Kan'ō Haruhide (1687-1753), is said to have remarked, "The peasants are like sesame seeds, the harder you press them, the more they produce." See: Tsuji Tatsuya, *Kyōhō kaikaku no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Sogensha, 1963), 131.

⁴⁰ Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke, *Ofuregaki kampō shūsei*, 859-60.

⁴¹ Typically five, ten, or twenty year averages. Traditionally, tax rates were set according to annual assessments (*kemi*) of actual yields. See: Ōishi Shinzaburō, *Kyōhō kaikaku no keizai seisaku* (Tokyo: Ochanomizu Shobo, 1968), 122-67.

in the collection of those taxes.⁴² The *jōmen hō* also eliminated the necessity of costly annual field assessments (*kenmi*) to determine the tax rate. Finally, although the new, higher fixed tax rates were initially a significant burden on villagers, they ultimately resulted in increased production and wealth, for farmers kept any excess revenue for themselves. This is not to suggest that the *jōmen hō* was without negative effects. Many farmers who were barely managing to survive under the *kenmi* system abandoned their old fields, which were now heavily taxed, to work *shinden*, which were typically either taxed at a substantially lower rate or exempted altogether from taxation for a set number of years as an incentive to bring them into cultivation.⁴³ Nevertheless, the *jōmen hō* remained a net positive for both the people and the state over the long term: no policy did more to bolster Tokugawa finances, and together with *shinden kaihatsu* efforts and the *agemai no sei*, the *jōmen hō* helped Yoshimune bring annual bakufu tax revenues to nearly 1.8 million *koku* in 1744, their highest level of the entire Tokugawa period.⁴⁴ While the *jōmen hō* was a great success for Yoshimune's primary goal of restoring bakufu coffers, any positive or negative effects the policy may have had for the commoners were not his concern.

In conjunction with his many policies aimed at increasing bakufu revenues, Yoshimune endeavored to reduce bakufu expenditures at every level, beginning with his own. He famously wore only simple cotton fabrics when engaged in the day-to-day business of the bakufu, and took just two simple meals a day of rice, soup, and vegetables. He was temperate in his consumption of alcohol, eschewed entertainments such as *noh* (of which Tsunayoshi and Ienobu had both been exceedingly fond), and took little pleasure in the company of the women of the Great Interior (*ōoku*; the shogun's private quarters). In 1722, he ordered a list compiled of the fifty most beautiful women in the *ōoku*. Rather than shower these women with gifts and other favors, he dismissed them all from his service, declaring that such beautiful women would have no difficulty finding service in other households, but that less handsome women required protection.⁴⁵ This action surely caught many off guard, and is an example of Yoshimune's shrewd political acumen. Not only did he reduce the household expenses of the bakufu, but he did so under the pretext of showing benevolence to those who truly needed it. It also sent a clear message that Yoshimune—unlike previous shoguns—could not be influenced via the women of the *ōoku*.⁴⁶

Personal and household expenses of the shogun were perhaps the most obvious targets for Yoshimune's cost cutting efforts, and their impact was—as illustrated above—often more symbolic than substantial. Yet Yoshimune's object was by no means a superficial reduction in a few personal “frills.” His genuinely spartan inclinations informed his administrative impulses as

⁴² *Ibid.*, 132-45.

⁴³ The initial notice posted at Nihonbashi in 1722 set a rate of ten percent of the regular tax rate for reclaimed lands. Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke, *Ofuregaki kampō shūsei*, 65.

⁴⁴ Ōishi Shinzaburō, *Kyōhō kaikaku no keizai seisaku*, 163.

⁴⁵ Muro Kyūsō, “Kenzan hisaku,” 495-96; Kuroita Katsumi, *Tokugawa jikki*, 9:328.

⁴⁶ Yoshimune was noted for the respect that he showed both Gekkō-in (mother of Ietsugu) and Ten'ei-in (wife of Ienobu), who led the two most powerful factions within the *ōoku*. Kuroita Katsumi, *Tokugawa jikki*, 9:325. Yoshimune stipended each commensurate with her rank.

well, and Yoshimune made frugality the *modus vivendi* of the bakufu.⁴⁷ In a move that pleased bakufu elders, he scaled back or eliminated many of the costly state ceremonies that Hakuseki had instigated as part of his efforts to enhance the shogunal authority and grandeur of Ienobu and Ietsugu.⁴⁸ He even went so far as to order that the remains of the previous shogun, Ietsugu, be interred with those of Tsunayoshi, citing insufficient funds for the construction of a separate mausoleum.⁴⁹ While such unrelenting thrift was a boon for the health of bakufu coffers, many felt that the new shogun was going too far. Yoshimune's Confucian advisor, Muro Kyūsō, complained privately, "There is a difference between economy and parsimony, and this is parsimony."⁵⁰

The Mutual Settlement Ordinance (*aitai sumashi rei*) of 1719 was an instance when bakufu interests serendipitously aligned with those of the samurai in general, and a policy implemented for the sake of the state also appeared to demonstrate the shogun's benevolence for those who shared his samurai status. That the samurai benefited from the *aitai sumashi rei* to the detriment of wealthy merchants and villagers could only have added to the perception of Yoshimune as the champion of martial values and samurai privilege.⁵¹ Merchants, townspeople, and villagers often enjoyed greater wealth and luxuries than some of their superiors, the samurai. The Confucian moral economy, which was predicated on the supremacy of the samurai among the four classes (*shi, nō, kō, shō*), was turning out to be an economic straightjacket for many samurai who found themselves simultaneously at the mercy of the economy and unable to escape those values and ideas that gave them their identity as samurai.

Overwhelmed by the number of financial lawsuits (*kanekuji*) brought by merchants against samurai who had defaulted on their loans, Yoshimune promulgated the *aitai sumashi rei* in 1719, declaring that in the future all such financial agreements would be considered private affairs, and therefore beyond the jurisdiction of the *hyōjōsho*.

In recent years, [the number of] monetary lawsuits has gradually increased, and the *hyōjōsho* council—overwhelmed by handling them—cannot perform its actual task of adjudicating suits related to the business of the bakufu (*kuji soshō*). Because financial matters related to monetary loans are private

⁴⁷ "Yoshimune's first order of business was to enact frugality measures, for the reason that heaven despises extravagance." Muro Kyūsō, "Kenzan hisaku," 377.

⁴⁸ Most famously, Hakuseki's protocol reforms for receiving Korean embassies had raised the ire of officials on both sides of the Tsushima Strait. Yoshimune reversed these reforms in 1717 upon the advice of Hayashi Hōkō (1645-1732), the headmaster of the Hayashi school of Confucian scholars. Kuroita Katsumi, *Tokugawa jikki*, 8:68.

⁴⁹ Nakai, *Shogunal Politics*, 297.

⁵⁰ Tsuji Tatsuya, "Politics in the Eighteenth Century," 445.

⁵¹ It has been noted that Yoshimune made a great show of honoring the martial pedigrees of his daimyo ministers while downplaying any genuine connection between their ancestors' service on the battlefield and their contemporary bureaucratic responsibilities within the bakufu administration. His image as a supporter of the samurai and martial values, Tsuji Tatsuya notes, was "exaggerated." *Ibid.*, 442-44. This dissertation argues an even more narrow understanding of Yoshimune's objectives in implementing his many Kyōhō era reforms: restoring the bakufu fisc and confirming his authority as shogun.

affairs, the Three Magistrates (*sanbugyō*) must not take up [these types of] law suits (*sumikuchi*).⁵²

The *aitai sumashi rei* was not without precedent; similar ordinances had been issued by both domain governments and the bakufu in the past.⁵³ As opposed to earlier instances, however, Yoshimune possessed the political authority as a mature ruler to insure that his ordinances were carried out, and the number of lawsuits that the bakufu adjudicated fell off precipitously in 1720.⁵⁴ Without the guarantee of adjudication by the bakufu, moneylenders could not feel certain that samurai would pay back their loans. Although the *aitai sumashi rei* may have prevented many samurai from falling further into debt for a short time by discouraging merchants from making risky loans to them, this was an ancillary effect of the policy.⁵⁵ Yoshimune's primary goal was simply to reduce the amount of time and money that the bakufu was spending to adjudicate the many *kanekuji* lawsuits on its books.⁵⁶ The 1719 edict does not mention any reason for its promulgation other than the recent increase in the number of lawsuits.

The benefits of the *aitai sumashi rei* for the bakufu and samurai were real and immediate. While the former enjoyed increased efficiency and a lightened workload, the latter profited from debt forgiveness. These rewards did not come without a price, however. Samurai gain meant commoner loss, and Yoshimune's policy caused financial hardship to many merchants who would never recoup money they had loaned to samurai, and cut into the potential profits of future lenders. The *aitai sumashi rei* thus had a negative impact on the overall Tokugawa economy by further inhibiting the circulation of currency and material goods just as Yoshimune's recoinage policy was beginning to reduce the amount of currency available to purchase those goods.⁵⁷ Combined with the chilling effects of the shogun's frugality ordinances (*ken'yaku rei*), which forbade the purchase of luxury goods and items beyond one's

⁵² Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke, *Ofuregaki kampō shūsei*, 1202. The *san bugyō* were the three most important administrative offices of the bakufu: the Edo City Magistrate (*machi bugyō*), the Finance Magistrate (*kanjō bugyō*), and the Temples and Shrines Magistrate (*jisha bugyō*).

⁵³ The shogunate issued mutual settlement ordinances on eight occasions throughout the Tokugawa period, beginning in 1661. *Ibid.*, 1194. However, Yoshimune's proclamation was unique, not only because it forgave the debts that samurai had accrued to that point, but also because it managed to deliver on its promise of limiting bakufu involvement in the financial affairs between samurai and commoner money lenders.

⁵⁴ For a discussion of Yoshimune's restructuring of the Kanjōsho (Finance office), see: Tsuji Tatsuya, *Kyōhō kaikaku no kenkyū*, 135-45.

⁵⁵ Shimai Sōshitsu (1539-1615), for example, commanded his descendants, "Never lend money, even to a friend or a relative, without receiving suitable security. If, however, the lord of Hirado orders you to lend him money, . . . lend it, but do not lend to any other daimyo." J. Mark Ramseyer, "Thrift and Diligence: House Codes of Tokugawa Merchant Families," *Monumenta Nipponica* 34, no. 2 (Summer 1979): 225. Yoshimune's *aitai sumashi rei* further hindered the ability of samurai to borrow by removing an important form of security that Shimai and other merchants required to lend.

⁵⁶ Throughout his tenure as shogun, Yoshimune worked to improve the efficiency of the *hyōjōsho* and its ability to handle the legal case load before it. Famously, he observed a full day of *hyōjōsho* proceedings in the spring of 1721. Kuroita Katsumi, *Tokugawa jikki*, 8:226.

⁵⁷ The *aitai sumashi rei* was rescinded in 1729 citing the negative impact it was having on the circulation of currency. Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke, *Ofuregaki kampō shūsei*, 1208. For a discussion of Yoshimune's recoinage policy, see: Tsuji Tatsuya, *Kyōhō kaikaku no kenkyū*, 197-238.

station, Yoshimune's Kyōhō reforms caused an economic downturn that lasted into the early 1730s.⁵⁸ Given the negative impact of Yoshimune's policy reforms, why is he remembered as an exemplary ruler?

Although it is a central contention of this dissertation that Yoshimune's primary political and economic goals were relatively limited in scope (insuring the stability of the bakufu and his place atop it), this is not to say that the shogun was unconcerned about the health of the broader Tokugawa economy. To the contrary, since the fortunes of the former were nested within and depended on the strength of the latter, Yoshimune could not hope to achieve his goals without stabilizing the prices of basic commodities such as saké, coal, and paper in relation to the value of rice, which fluctuated constantly with each year's harvest.⁵⁹ Where it served his interests (and those of the shogunate), Yoshimune was thus very involved in attempting to remedy the woes of the broader Japanese economy. An apocryphal tale provides some sense of the depth of his interest in economic matters of the realm: When the shogun's private quarters were being cleaned following his death in 1751, a small wooden box that he had kept constantly by his side was found to contain thin strips of paper covered on both sides in fine handwriting. Upon closer inspection, it was discovered that the Yoshimune had kept detailed lists of the daily price fluctuations of rice at the Asakusa market in Edo.⁶⁰ While the veracity of this anecdote may be questionable, Yoshimune's well-earned epithet, "Rice Shogun," reflects his very real personal involvement in controlling the price of rice.⁶¹ As the private diary of Muro Kyūsō and the official record of the bakufu demonstrate, Yoshimune worked closely with his advisors to devise fiscal policies that would stabilize the Tokugawa economy in line with contemporary notions of morality and status.⁶²

Nevertheless, the fact that he gave serious attention to political and economic concerns beyond the *tenryō* should not be taken as an indication that his primary goals went very far beyond caring for his house and his government. The number and variety of reforms that Yoshimune implemented in order to tame the painful fluctuations in rice prices are too great to detail here, and a thorough analysis of his economic policies is beyond the scope of this dissertation.⁶³ However, a few of the shogun's policies are worth discussing at this juncture, for they help us to understand the limits of Yoshimune's economic objectives. Moreover, they shed light on the origins of Tokugawa Muneharu's objections to his cousin's Kyōhō reforms, which—

⁵⁸ Protracted economic recession caused by constricted monetary supply led Yoshimune to reverse his conservative economic policy in 1736 and to debase the value of Tokugawa currency as his predecessors had done in the late seventeenth century. The Gembun recoinage (*Gembun ichibukin*) increased the volume of gold and silver coins by more than fifty percent, and produced enough copper coins to supply the Tokugawa economy until the fall of the bakufu in 1868. Miyamoto Matao, "Quantitative Aspects of Tokugawa Economy," 36-84; Tsuji Tatsuya, "Politics in the Eighteenth Century," 453.

⁵⁹ Nakamura Takafusa et al., *The Economic History of Japan, 1600-1990*, 119-58.

⁶⁰ Matsudaira Yoshinaga, *Matsudaira Shungaku zenshū*, Meiji hyakunenshi sōsho 197 (Tokyo: Hara Shobō, 1973), 125.

⁶¹ Tokutomi Iichirō, *Tokugawa Yoshimune jidai*, vol. 21, Kinsei Nihon kokuminshi (Tokyo: Min'yūsha, 1918), 281-336.

⁶² Muro Kyūsō, "Kenzan hisaku," 719-29.

⁶³ For a general economic history of the Tokugawa period, see: Nakamura Takafusa et al., *The Economic History of Japan, 1600-1990*. See: Ōishi Shinzaburō, *Kyōhō kaikaku no keizai seisaku*. for a detailed examination of the economic policies of the Kyōhō reforms.

given historical hindsight—often appear more unified, directed, and beneficial to the people of Japan than they were at the time.

As discussed above, Yoshimune made land reclamation projects a central pillar of his efforts to increase bakufu income. Despite the limited amount of arable land remaining throughout Japan for cultivation, a modest growth in rice production combined with the *jōmen hō* tax system managed to produce an increase in tax revenue of more than ten percent.⁶⁴ However, by 1730, bountiful harvests had resulted in an overabundance of rice in the market, driving the price of rice down precipitously and making it difficult for samurai to purchase many basic necessities.⁶⁵ Yoshimune's efforts on behalf of the bakufu ultimately forced samurai to take out more loans from merchants in order to make ends meet. Yoshimune subsequently authorized the bakufu to purchase large quantities of rice in order to stabilize its price, and had the surplus stored in granaries to be dispensed in times of famine. These measures helped the bakufu mitigate some of the starvation in western Japan during the Kyōhō famine of 1732-33 by ordering reserves shipped from the northeast.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, food shortages drove up the prices of nearly all commodities and forced Yoshimune to issue price controls on basic necessities such as lamp oil and salt in order to reduce the risk of uprisings in Edo.

The many price control and taxation regulations that Yoshimune implemented—and their subsequent reversals—indicate the degree to which taming the price of rice was a haphazard affair. The rapidity with which the shogunate backed down from so many of those reforms when faced with the threat of peasant uprising also suggests a lack of foresight and concern for the well-being of the peasants on the part of Yoshimune and bakufu officials.⁶⁷ Yoshimune's priorities were clear: insuring his authority as shogun by restoring the bakufu fisc. When the economic interests of the shogunate happened to coincide with those of domain administrations and the samurai class, Yoshimune's priorities as shogun also aided these other groups. This constituency of elite samurai was the same one from which Yoshimune had risen to the position of shogun, and it recognized (perhaps falsely) in Yoshimune someone who had its interests at heart and who personified many of the values that it extolled (martial prowess, spartan lifestyle, respect for traditional hierarchies). Yoshimune's support from this quarter was critical to establishing his reputation as one of the greatest Tokugawa shoguns—a ruler, like his great-grandfather, to be exalted and emulated.⁶⁸ Yoshimune's later designation as a *meikun*

⁶⁴ Ibid., 162-63.

⁶⁵ Nakamura Takafusa et al., *The Economic History of Japan, 1600-1990*, 57-67.

⁶⁶ Over half (1,730,349 *koku*) of the annual rice crop in more than 46 domains from the *Kinki* (Osaka-Kyoto) region westward was destroyed by locust in 1732, leading to violent uprisings (*uchikowashi*) against Edo rice merchants who were rumored to be hoarding their stockpiles in order to inflate market prices. Approximately 2,640,000 people suffered from hunger and privation, and 12,170 are estimated to have starved to death. See: Keizai Shiryō Kyōgikai, *Nihon keizai tōkei shiryō sōgō mokuroku, zaisei kyū keiei shōgyō bōeki un'yu hen: Meiji 42-Nen - Shōwa 22-Nen* (Kyoto: Dōhōsha Shuppan, 1980). Vol. 1, 499-501, Vol. 2, 62-63, Vol. 3, 318-319, Vol. 6, 205-206, Vol. 7, 439-441.

⁶⁷ For example, within five years of establishing the *jōmen hō*, Yoshimune allowed tax rates—initially fixed, regardless of the actual harvest yield—to be reduced in cases where more than half of the annual harvest had been lost. Two years later, in 1730, this was reduced to instances of thirty percent loss.

⁶⁸ As evidence of Yoshimune's aggrandizement, one need only point out that more chapters of the *Tokugawa jikki* are devoted to the reign of Yoshimune than any other shogun except Iemitsu, despite the fact that Yoshimune's thirty-year tenure as shogun was very average in length.

was not given in recognition of his concern for the commoners of Japan. Rather, it was an elegy for a ruler whom samurai elites believed had championed their interests, and as such stood as a model shogun.

To reiterate, we can say very little about Yoshimune's policy objectives beyond his obvious primary concern for establishing and maintaining authority over the Tokugawa house and bakufu. Barring the discovery of documents that could shed light on Yoshimune's personal motives, however, it is impossible to attribute a greater objective than this to any of Yoshimune's Kyōhō reforms. In the case of the *aitai sumashi rei*, it is clear that he sought to reduce bakufu expenses associated with adjudicating *kanekuji* lawsuits. Serendipitously, there was merit in alleviating—even if only temporarily—the economic burdens of the samurai class, for this was the hereditary class of elites that the Tokugawa moral economy was intended to benefit. Yoshimune's show of compassion for the economic plight of the samurai helped establish his stature as an enlightened lord (*meikun*) whose responsibility was properly directed toward the samurai class.⁶⁹ The positive gains that the *aitai sumashi rei* brought the samurai and shogunate were evidence of success for a shogun who ruled over samurai on their behalf, and helps to explain Yoshimune's enduring legacy as an exemplary ruler, despite the negative impact it had on the broader Tokugawa economy.

The Supplemental Stipend (*tashidaka*) system was another example of how shogunal interests coincided with those of his samurai retainers, thereby establishing Yoshimune's veneer as a benevolent ruler. By the early 1720s, incompetent and indolent officials were frustrating Yoshimune's efforts to reduce expenditures by streamlining the day-to-day operations of the bakufu.⁷⁰ However, there was little that the shogun could do to remove or replace them, because bakufu offices were awarded according to a samurai's rank, which was based on the stipend that he had inherited from his father. This system provided security to supporters of the Tokugawa, but allowed small groups of families to monopolize access to specific offices through their nepotistic practices. Descendants of once great military leaders were guaranteed to hold hereditary offices—regardless of their own competence.⁷¹

Yoshimune consulted with his Confucian advisor, Muro Kyūsō, on how he might resolve this dilemma and make use of talented men from among the lower ranks of samurai. In 1723, Kyūsō suggested a system based on Chinese precedent that would allow for temporary promotion to higher ranks through the use of supplemental stipends.⁷² Perhaps the most famous beneficiary of the *tashidaka* system was Ōoka Tadasuke (1677-1752), whom Yoshimune promoted to daimyo status in 1748 as reward for his many years of service, first as Edo City

⁶⁹ The very real potential for samurai rebellion had been demonstrated on two occasions prior to Yoshimune's becoming shogun. First, in 1651 an uprising led by the *rōnin*, Yui Shōsetsu (1605-51), had been only narrowly averted when the bakufu discovered Shōsetsu's planned coup. More recently, the Akō Incident of 1703 had caused great debate within the bakufu regarding the legality of carrying out revenge outside the legally permissible boundaries. Together, these events—both well within living memory—stood as proof of the need to insure the samurai place of privilege.

⁷⁰ Yoshimune was visibly angered and frustrated by the inefficiency of the system of records keeping used by the *hyōjōsho*. See: Ōtomo Kazuo, *Edo bakufu to jōhō kanri*, Genten kōdoku seminā 11 (Kyōto: Rinsen Shoten, 2003).

⁷¹ The office of *tairō* (Great Elder), for example, was commonly held by the li family. For a detailed discussion of the bureaucratic form and function of the bakufu, see: Conrad D. Totman, *Politics in the Tokugawa Bakufu, 1600-1843* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

⁷² Kuroita Katsumi, *Tokugawa jikki*, 8:861.

Magistrate (*machibugyō*) and later as Temple and Shrine Magistrate (*jishabugyō*).⁷³ The *tashidaka* system allowed Yoshimune to promote competent administrators like Ōoka Tadasuke and Tanaka Kyūgū (1662-1730) to positions where they could effectively implement the reforms necessary for improving bakufu finances.⁷⁴

The *tashidaka* system also mitigated some of the frustrations of samurai whose stipends were inherited and thus fixed for generations—regardless of increases in the real costs of living.⁷⁵ Because a samurai's office was determined by his stipend, there were few opportunities for promotion, and many very low-ranking samurai abandoned hope of securing regular employment with either the bakufu or domain.⁷⁶ The *tashidaka* system alleviated these problems by providing samurai both increased income and hope that meritorious service could earn them the prestige of higher office. Relief was, however, often only temporary; and the fact that stipend increases and higher offices were not heritable eventually became another source of samurai grievance.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, the *tashidaka* system furthered the early modern trend toward meritocracy and heightened Yoshimune's image as a *meikun* who was concerned with the welfare of his retainers. More important, however, it provided Yoshimune with an effective means of improving the efficiency of bakufu operations by replacing incompetent officials with men who had proven their capabilities and whose loyalties would be strengthened by their sense of duty and obligation to the shogun who had raised them up from a lower status.

Yoshimune's image as a benevolent ruler was largely the creation of chroniclers and historians who shared samurai status with the shogun, and who looked favorably upon a ruler whose reforms advanced their shared interests. Still, several of his Kyōhō-era innovations have also enhanced his reputation as a *meikun* who was concerned for the welfare of his subjects.⁷⁸ One of the most visible and well-remembered expressions of that concern was the erection of a petition box (*meyasubako*) outside of the *hyōjōsho* offices in 1721, which purported to establish a direct link between the shogun and his subjects.

Beginning in the eighth month of 1721, a large wooden petition box was placed outside the walls of Edo castle on the second, eleventh, and twenty-first days of each month. Commoners were permitted to deposit pleas for intervention in legal cases, reports of misconduct by officers of the shogunate (often local *daikan* administrators), and suggestions for

⁷³ Ōoka was born into a *hatamoto* family that received an annual stipend of 1700 *koku*. The title of daimyo was given to those with income of 10,000 *koku* or more. The *tashidaka* system enabled Yoshimune to appoint Ōoka to some of the highest and most important positions in the bakufu by increasing his income nearly six times what he had inherited from his father.

⁷⁴ Yoshimune awarded Tanaka Kyūgū, a commoner, the rank of *daikan* in 1729 in honor of the service he provided in irrigation, flood control, and riparian projects along the Arakawa and Tamagawa rivers. See: Ōishi Manabu, *Kyōhō kaikaku no chiiki seisaku* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1996), 221.

⁷⁵ Yamamura, *A Study of Samurai Income and Entrepreneurship: Quantitative Analyses of Economic and Social Aspects of the Samurai in Tokugawa and Meiji, Japan*, 41.

⁷⁶ Thomas C. Smith, *Native Sources of Japanese Industrialization, 1750-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988). Kokichi Katsu, *Musui's Story: The Autobiography of a Tokugawa Samurai*, vol. 1 (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988).

⁷⁷ Smith, *Native Sources of Japanese Industrialization, 1750-1920*, 160-61.

⁷⁸ See: Ōishi Manabu, "Kasōmin taisaku to Koishikawa yōjōsho," in *Ōoka Tadasuke, Jinbutsu sōsho* (shinsōban) 245 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2006), 96-104.

improvements in bakufu administration.⁷⁹ In each case, Yoshimune sought to take advantage of commoners' knowledge of the workings of the *bakuhan taisei* that high-ranking officials lacked.⁸⁰ Use of the petition box was strictly limited to commoners (samurai were expected to make such appeals through the regular bureaucratic channels of the bakufu), who had to exhaust all normal avenues of appeal before making their petitions. Anonymous petitions were ignored; they were burned along with any petition that did not conform to the strict regulations Yoshimune set for making use of the *meyasubako*. In theory, the petition box was carried directly to Yoshimune, who held the only key to its lock. The *meyasubako* was thus meant to provide the shogun's subjects with a direct link to their lord, who would personally hear their pleas for benevolence.

Although the *meyasubako*, as it was imagined (or meant to be imagined) by commoners, likely served as an outlet for some amount of commoner frustration with the political system, this was not its primary purpose.⁸¹ Yoshimune's petition box is best understood as a device that improved the shogun's control over the administration of his government by transforming his subjects into eyes of the state. The petition box was an efficient surveillance device that allowed Yoshimune to monitor corners of the bakufu that normally would have been beyond his purview. The knowledge that their subjects could inform their lord of dishonesty or graft made many samurai officials nervous, and together with the memory of Yoshimune's 1719 purge of corrupt *daikan*, likely led to improved behavior on the part of bakufu officials and improved revenues for bakufu coffers.⁸² Finally, the *meyasubako* was a tidy way of mitigating the problem of illegal and anonymous petitions (*osso; sutebumi*) that had plagued the *hyōjōsho* for many years. In this way, the *meyasubako* served as tool for administrating the bakufu and governing the people. Still, Yoshimune enjoyed a reputation as a benevolent lord by implementing several suggestions made by commoners via the *meyasubako* for improving the condition of life in Edo.

For example, the samurai physician, Ogawa Shōsen (1672-1760), petitioned the bakufu in 1721 to establish a hospital for Edo's growing population of indigents. Following an interrogation of Ogawa by Ōoka Tadasuke and other members of the *hyōjōsho*, Yoshimune ordered a sanatorium (*yōjōsho*) built on the grounds of the Koishikawa botanical gardens, where the shogun was making efforts to domesticate the production of medicinal herbs such as Korean ginseng. The sanatorium was initially staffed with seven physicians and provided with the funds to care for approximately forty patients. Although the staff grew in number a few years later, the hospital quickly filled to capacity and physicians were never able to provide more than a minimum level of care to any of their patients. Nevertheless, no shogun before Yoshimune had shown the people of Edo such benevolence. The establishment of the *yōjōsho* at Koishikawa stood as a marker of Yoshimune's concern for the well-being of his subjects, and helped enhance his image as an enlightened lord.

Similarly, Edo fire brigades (*hikeshi*) were famously reorganized during Yoshimune's tenure, again as a result of a suggestion made to the shogun via the *meyasubako*. Prior to the

⁷⁹ Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke, *Ofuregaki kampō shūsei*, 64.

⁸⁰ Roberts, "The Petition Box in Eighteenth-Century Tosa," 430.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 437.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 447. For a discussion of Yoshimune's purge of corrupt *daikan*, see: Ōishi Shinzaburō, *Kyōhō kaikaku no keizai seisaku*, 162.

Kyōhō era, firefighting had been the responsibility of the daimyo on duty in Edo. Their forces of domain retainers were often too few in number and lacked sufficient coordination to prove effective against increasingly large and frequent conflagrations, such as the Meireki fire of 1657 that destroyed over half of the city and is estimated to have killed as many as 100,000 people.⁸³ Thus, one year after his appointment to office in 1717, Yoshimune's handpicked *machibugyō*, Ōoka Tadasuke, organized the commoners of Edo into forty-seven fire-fighting companies, which came to be manned by as many as 10,000 Edo residents at their peak.⁸⁴ Not only was the new *i-ro-ha* system more efficient and effective at mobilizing large numbers of fire-fighters, but residents took great pride in their local companies (*kumi*), which could be easily identified by the insignia on their bright banners (*nobori*), sign posts (*matoi*), and uniforms (*happi*).⁸⁵ Like the *yōjōsho*, the *hikeshi* would seem, at first, to be an example of Yoshimune's concern for the safety and well-being of his subjects. However, bakufu finances were dependent upon the broader Tokugawa economy, which was driven by the engine of urban centers like Edo and Osaka.⁸⁶ Fires were a daily occurrence, and could decimate the economy as easily as could famine and other natural disasters. Any of these could lead to peasant unrest and uprisings, so it is no surprise that Yoshimune moved to mitigate these threats to his capital and his government.

The establishment of institutions such as the *yōjōsho* and the *hikeshi* would seem to indicate Yoshimune's concern for the well-being of his subjects. However, both of these institutions were born of suggestions that had been made by commoners. They were not Yoshimune's own ideas. To his credit, Yoshimune was open-minded and flexible in his approach to solving the social and economic problems of the eighteenth-century. On the other hand, his need to look outside the bakufu for creative solutions indicates that Yoshimune's Kyōhō era reforms lacked any cohesive strategy for resolving those problems. We must therefore abandon any conception of the Kyōhō era reforms as a unified set of policies aimed at maintaining a static form of the state. Instead, they should be understood as a series of individual responses to specific problems facing Yoshimune and the shogunate at a particular moment in time. This perspective also reveals the adaptability of the Tokugawa political system and helps us understand the ability of the *bakuhau taisei* to survive nearly three hundred years of changing socioeconomic realities.

Yoshimune's Kyōhō era reforms were aimed primarily at restoring bakufu coffers to a healthy level by increasing revenues and decreasing expenditures. By 1728, his efforts had begun to pay off, and he was able to finance the first shogunal pilgrimage to the Tokugawa

⁸³ William W. Kelly, "Incendiary Actions: Fires and Firefighting in the Shogun's Capital and the People's City," in *Edo and Paris: Urban Life and the State in the Early Modern Era*, ed. James L. McClain, John M. Merriman, and Ugawa Kaoru (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994), 311.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 321.

⁸⁵ Each company (*kumi*) was designated by a *kana* from the Japanese syllabary, which traditionally began with the three characters: *i*, *ro*, and *ha*. In case of fire, brigades from the Edo wards upwind and on either flank of the fire would join in efforts to fight the fire. The *iroha* system could quickly mobilize over 150 fire-fighters—a vast improvement over the previous system that relied on the limited number of domain samurai who happened to be stationed in Edo at any given moment.

⁸⁶ Gilbert Rozman, "Edo's Importance in the Changing Tokugawa Society," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 1, no. 1 (Autumn 1974): 91-112.

mausoleum at Nikkō in sixty-five years.⁸⁷ However, policies that were beneficial for the bakufu, such as the *jōmen hō* and *aitai sumashi rei*, were heavy economic burdens to commoners, and overtures at benevolent governance, such as the *meyasubako* and *yōjōsho*, did little to mitigate the hardship they suffered. In fact, many of Yoshimune's economic policies had the negative effect of dampening economic growth throughout the 1720s by limiting the supply of money and driving down the purchasing power of rice even as they raised the cost of basic commodities. In 1718, for example, the bakufu began re-minting its gold and silver coins, which had suffered multiple debasements under Tsunayoshi and Ienobu.⁸⁸ In addition, Yoshimune promulgated on six occasions by 1730 frugality ordinances (*ken'yaku rei*) that proscribed the purchase of goods that were legally beyond one's station.⁸⁹ Although he succeeded in improving the quality and value of bakufu specie and reigning in the spending habits of samurai to some degree, he also managed to reduce the flow of currency and weaken the broader Tokugawa economy. Peasants, already struggling under the weight of Yoshimune's higher tax rate, were often forced to borrow money in order to plant the next year's rice crop. When drought or famine struck, they could abandon their fields or rise up in protest.

Peasant protests were a regular occurrence throughout the Tokugawa period.⁹⁰ At times, uprisings could turn destructive as villagers attacked the warehouses and homes of money lenders or merchants whom they believed to be hoarding rice or charging usurious interest rates for loans.⁹¹ Although uprisings never directly challenged the premises of samurai rule, the number and destructive force of peasant uprisings (*uchikowashi*) began to increase steadily during Yoshimune's tenure, and for the first time in the history of the bakufu, the destruction moved into the shogun's capital of Edo.

Following the loss of over half of the rice crop in 1732, famine swept across Japan, leaving tens of thousands dead and millions starving. The price of rice soared to more than five times its normal rate, and angry peasants took to the streets of Edo to punish merchants they believed were purposefully inflating the price of rice through hoarding. In response, the bakufu dispensed rice reserves, granted tax relief to afflicted areas, and leaned on wealthy merchants and Buddhist temples to provide further relief to peasants. In 1734, Yoshimune was forced to backpedal on one of his most important fiscal reforms, the flat rice tax (*jōmen hō*), which—in the ten years since its implementation—had significantly increased bakufu tax revenues. The *jōmen hō* set a fixed rate of taxation on villages, regardless of the actual productivity of their rice fields. The rate was arrived at by averaging yields for the previous five to twenty years, but was often significantly higher than former tax rates. This resulted in a boon for bakufu revenues, but caused villagers significant suffering. In particular, the earliest formulation of the *jōmen hō*

⁸⁷ Kuroita Katsumi, *Tokugawa jikki*, 8:457.

⁸⁸ Although the recoinage vastly improved the quality of bakufu currency over Shotoku era (1711-15) coins, this policy was ultimately reversed as well in 1736, when the shogunate began minting coins on a massive scale, doubling the number of gold and silver coins, and rolling out more than half of the copper pieces produced throughout the entire Tokugawa period. Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke, *Ofuregaki kampō shūsei*, 917.

⁸⁹ 1716, 1721, 1722, 1724, 1729, and 1730. *Ibid.*, 560-65.

⁹⁰ Anne Walthall cites over 2500 village uprisings between 1700 and 1870 in addition to the 3000 uprisings noted by Herbert Bix across the entire Tokugawa period. Anne Walthall, ed., *Peasant Uprisings in Japan: A Critical Anthology of Peasant Histories*, trans. Anne Walthall (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 223.

⁹¹ Stephen Vlastos, *Peasant Protests and Uprisings in Tokugawa Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 14-18.

did not even provide villagers with tax relief in the case of famine or crop devastation. This had been modified somewhat in 1730, when the bakufu granted tax relief in instances where fifty percent or more of the harvest had been lost. In the wake of the Edo uprisings brought about by the Kyōhō famine, Yoshimune was forced to lower the threshold for tax relief to thirty percent crop loss.

* * * * *

Conclusion

The economic policies that Yoshimune began to put into effect during the Kyōhō era continued to bring in increasingly high revenues for the bakufu. In fact, the shogunate reached the highest level of tax revenue for the entire Tokugawa period in 1744, just one year before Yoshimune retired as shogun. In the long run, policies such as the *jōmen hō* proved beneficial for the peasants as well as the state. The fixed tax rate did not increase, and by allowing villagers to keep any surplus rice, it encouraged greater productivity on lands that had little room for expansion by the eighteenth century. In 1730, however, these positive long-term outcomes remained uncertain, and there was good reason to question the “success” of Yoshimune’s Kyōhō era reforms.

In 1730, a young and politically inexperienced Muneharu was suddenly promoted to the position of daimyo of the wealthiest and most powerful collateral house of the ruling Tokugawa clan. Rather than working to ensure the stability of the political system that had made him one of its principle beneficiaries, Muneharu chose to use his position as daimyo to publicly challenge the legitimacy of his cousin, the shogun, by articulating in print and implementing in policy radical economic ideas that allowed his subjects not only to prosper, but also to enjoy the fruits of their labor. During Muneharu’s tenure as daimyo, merchants, artisans, actors, and entertainers were drawn to the castle town of Nagoya by the opportunity to prosper from the benevolence the Owari lord showed his subjects. Muneharu’s promotion of consumerism, his flamboyant display of wealth, and his depletion of domain coffers were all antithetical to the shogun’s austere economic measures aimed at increasing tax revenues while decreasing the expenses of the state. In hindsight, such brazen critiques of the shogun and his policies can only be seen as a form of *lèse majesté*, and one is left to wonder why he would risk losing his extremely privileged position in this way.

This chapter has argued that structural ambiguities within the *bakuhān taisei* provided Muneharu with the motives and rationale to challenge the authority of his cousin. That is, those points of political and social ambiguity that provided the *bakuhān taisei* with the flexibility to adjust its contours over time also provided Muneharu with the opportunity to threaten the shogun by exploiting those points of contention within the political system.

First, the *bakuhān taisei* lacked a constitutional definition of the rights and responsibilities of the shogun vis-à-vis the daimyo. It thus never specified where the balance of political power lay between the central authority of the shogun and the local autonomy of the daimyo. This provided Muneharu with the political leeway to rule Owari domain with almost total disregard to the laws of the shogun. As Chapter 5 will show in further detail, Muneharu

was able to deny the authority of the shogun over him and rule in a manner he claimed was more benevolent—and thus more legitimate—than the shogun.

Second, within the *bakuhan taisei*, Muneharu enjoyed a special pride of pedigree as the lord of the highest-ranking *gosanke* house. The *gosanke* played an ambiguous role within the *bakuhan taisei*. As blood relatives of the shogun, they were simultaneously some of his closest supporters, and some of his fiercest contenders for power. This status provided Muneharu with the self-righteousness to claim parity with (even superiority to) the shogun, who had usurped his title from Muneharu's older brother in 1716. In 1730, Muneharu still stung from the wrong that Yoshimune had perpetrated against his house some fifteen years earlier. Moreover, Muneharu knew that had his brother inherited the title of shogun instead of Yoshimune, it would have fallen to him when Tsugutomo died, and he would have become the ruler of Japan.

Finally, this chapter examined Yoshimune's famous Kyōhō era reforms in order to understand how they served as both the source and the object of Muneharu's discontent. Although historians typically group Yoshimune's reforms together under the label, "Kyōhō reforms," I contend that this misleading designation provides the reforms with greater unity of purpose than they actually enjoyed at the time. Yoshimune's Kyōhō era reforms are only unified by the fact that many were implemented during the Kyōhō era (1716-36) in an effort to solve specific social, economic, or political problems facing the bakufu at the time. They were not part of a master plan on the part of Yoshimune to preserve the form of the *bakuhan taisei* as he had inherited it from his ancestors.

By considering several of Yoshimune's most famous Kyōhō era reforms in terms of who they were meant to benefit, this chapter has argued that Yoshimune's primary objective was securing the financial stability of the Tokugawa bakufu and his place atop its administration. Beyond this, any benevolence or concern Yoshimune appeared to show for the samurai or commoners through his reforms was coincidental. Many reforms that greatly aided bakufu coffers were onerous to commoners and low-ranking samurai, who continued to suffer under great financial hardship. In 1730, when Muneharu became lord of Owari, there was good reason to doubt the efficacy and benevolence of Yoshimune's reforms; there was also much to gain for anyone with the political power, pedigree, and pride to challenge the shogun. Together with the structural ambiguities of the *bakuhan taisei*, the deleterious effects of Yoshimune's Kyōhō era reforms on the broader Tokugawa economy help explain how and why Muneharu chose to risk losing the privilege and prestige that he enjoyed as lord of one of the most powerful domains in the realm.

Prior to becoming daimyo of Owari domain, Tokugawa Muneharu had spent most of his life in Edo, where he developed a taste for kabuki theater and other cultural offerings of the shogun's capital.⁹² With few administrative responsibilities and ample time to spend in the city, Muneharu would have had plenty of opportunities to witness, first hand, the effects of the shogun's sumptuary laws and frugality ordinances on the lives of those around him (even if he did not personally suffer under them).⁹³ Moving through the streets of Edo, Muneharu would have seen not only the harsh conditions in which most commoners lived, but also the growing

⁹² Ōishi Manabu, *Kisei kanwa ni idonda "meikun": Tokugawa Muneharu no shōgai*, 39-60.

⁹³ *Ibid.* Only five of Tsunanari's sons and one of his daughters reached adulthood. Each of the sons was provided with a monetary inheritance upon the death of Tsunanari, and a stipend upon reaching the age of fifteen.

disparity between the nominally elite social status of the samurai and the reality of their impoverished living conditions. He was thus well apprised of the real cost of Yoshimune's fiscal policies by the time he was appointed daimyo of Owari in 1730, and he seized the opportunity of his promotion to sharply criticize Yoshimune's onerous reforms in his polemic manuscript, *Onchi seiyō*. The following chapter will examine his radical political and economic theories of benevolent rule through economic and social leniency, which he outlined in *Onchi seiyō*.

Chapter 4
Onchi seiyō: Essential Wisdom for Benevolent Governance

I have written the characters *ji* (慈, affection) and *nin* (忍, tolerance) on hanging scrolls, and have drawn a sun above the character *ji*. If affection is hidden away in one's heart, it will be of no use. If it is expressed outwardly with the intention to shine into every nook and corner [of the realm], the sun's virtue will be adored. I have drawn the moon above the character *nin*. I have drawn the moon in order to indicate the notion that tolerance is to be kept in one's heart. When the characters for sun (日, *hi*) and moon (月, *getsu*) are combined, the result is "enlightenment" (明, *mei*). Does the *Great Learning* not say, "Illustrate illustrious virtue"? If all things are not made clear, then good and proper reason (*dōri*) cannot be attained. I have instructed that the coats of palanquin-bearers be marked with the character *jin* (仁, benevolence). Thus, by seeing the characters *ji* and *nin* when inside and the character *jin* when outdoors, I plan to ceaselessly bear these [concepts] in mind day and night and practice them without fail.

Councilor, Lord of Owari, Minamoto Muneharu¹

This chapter provides an analysis of Tokugawa Muneharu's political treatise, *Onchi seiyō*, and contends that—together with the lenient economic and social policies he enacted as lord of Owari—it constituted a credible challenge not only to the authority of the shogun, but also to the logic of the broader Tokugawa political system (*bakuhan taisei*). Muneharu asserted that the primary obligation of a ruler was to show his subjects benevolence, compassion, and mercy. He criticized the shogun's many conservative social and economic reforms, which restored bakufu coffers to healthy levels and reconfirmed the authority of Yoshimune as shogun, for the hardship they brought commoners and low-ranking samurai. Muneharu asserted that Yoshimune's Kyōhō era reforms advanced the shogun's personal interests at the expense of his subjects, an action that risked costing him the title of shogun.

* * * * *

Speaking of Benevolence

In 1731, when he entered Owari domain for the first time in his official capacity as daimyo, Tokugawa Muneharu presented his retainers with copies of a text that he had composed in order to inform them of the principles of governance by which their new lord intended to rule. Producing a code of regulations for his house was nothing out of the ordinary

¹ Naramoto Tatsuya, *Kinsei seidō ron*, vol. 38, Nihon shisō taikēi (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1976), 157.

for a daimyo of the Tokugawa period. Emulating Heian Era (794-1185) aristocrats, warriors had been producing house laws (*kakun*; *kahō*) aimed at stabilizing their political authority by controlling the behavior of their relatives and retainers since well before the Warring States period (1467-1573).² By the seventeenth century, house laws enjoining retainers not to engage in private quarrels (*kenka*), to maintain their martial skills, and to behave in a manner befitting their status could be found on the walls and on the books of samurai households throughout Japan.³ Muneharu's *Onchi seiyō*, however, was a *kakun* of a different order; it criticized the economic policies of the shogun for the hardship they caused commoners and low-ranking samurai, and it challenged Yoshimune's political authority by virtue of the polemic nature of its contents and the public nature of its discourse. This made *Onchi seiyō* more akin to a political treatise or manifesto than a *kakun*, and ultimately led Yoshimune to censor the text and censure his cousin for the threat that they posed to his authority as shogun.

At first glance, there would seem to have been little threat in the benign title of his manuscript, *Onchi seiyō (Essential Wisdom for Benevolent Governance)*, the orthodox Confucian rhetoric that filled its pages, or the magnanimous tone in which Muneharu delivered his message. "I have put down the above articles," he told his retainers, "not with the intention of commanding [others] through strict laws, but only in the hope that people will keep this volume by their side, know my true mind in detail, and—more than reading carefully and appreciatively—they will rectify their hearts and master their actions of their own accord, and thus be of service in governing [the domain.]"⁴ Those who read Muneharu's *Essential Wisdom* "carefully and appreciatively," however, understood the deeper implications of his message and recognized the threat that it posed not only to the shogun, but also to the broader Tokugawa political system (*bakuhan taisei*). The confidence with which Muneharu, who had neither grooming nor practical experience in governing before 1730, declared his ideas on benevolent governance suggests that he had been ruminating over the many problems facing Japan in the early eighteenth century for some time, and that he saw his promotion to lord of the most powerful Tokugawa collateral house as an opportunity to "rectify" the wrongs that the state was perpetrating upon its subjects. More important, he saw it as an opportunity to challenge the authority of his cousin and rectify the injury that the Owari house had suffered at the hands of Yoshimune when he inherited the title of shogun in 1716.

As a principle beneficiary of the *bakuhan taisei*, Muneharu might have been expected to write a more traditional *kakun*, one lauding the great wisdom of Tokugawa rulers and the success of their policies. Muneharu had much to gain by declaring his intent to uphold the august traditions of his ancestors. Such a treatise would likely have endeared him to the shogun and further solidified his privileged position atop the Tokugawa socio-political order. Instead, Muneharu chose to challenge that system by rebuking mean rulers and their injurious economic policies, and by pledging to show his subjects benevolence (*jin*) through greater economic and moral leniency. This was not a message that powerful elites wanted to hear, for

² Carl Steenstrup, "Hojo Soun's Twenty-One Articles. The Code of Conduct of the Odawara Hojo," *Monumenta Nipponica* 29, no. 3 (Autumn 1974): 283-303.

³ *Kakun* were often displayed on hanging scrolls. See: Ramseyer, "Thrift and Diligence: House Codes of Tokugawa Merchant Families." Tetsuo Najita, *Visions of Virtue in Tokugawa Japan: The Kaitokudo Merchant Academy of Osaka* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997).

⁴ Naramoto Tatsuya, *Kinsei seidō ron*, 38:168.

it incriminated them as selfish, ignorant, and mean rulers.⁵ Muneharu's call for benevolent governance (*jinsei*) was premised upon the notion that the Kyōhō socio-political order—far from being a world in which enlightened rulers provided the people with *jinsei*—was one in which obtuse lords governed by caprice without concern for the effects that their self-serving laws and regulations had on the lives of those who labored in their service. An uncaring political apparatus, he claimed, wasted human talent, constricted human nature through outdated moral codes, and stunted economic growth with misguided fiscal policies. All of these were the result of poor governance that was defined, in the mind of Muneharu, by its lack of benevolence for the people. By making the provision of benevolence to his subjects the primary duty of a ruler, and by suggesting that the shogun was failing in this obligation, Muneharu was simultaneously calling Yoshimune's authority to govern into question and projecting an image of himself as a more benevolent—and thus more legitimate—ruler than his cousin.

In order to successfully challenge his cousin's political legitimacy as shogun, Muneharu first had to frame the nature of any debate about that legitimacy in terms that he could define most favorably for himself. The protean trope of "benevolence" provided Muneharu with a convenient basis for criticizing Yoshimune based on the fact that his Kyōhō era reforms were causing peasants and townspeople throughout Japan great hardship. This could be used as evidence that Yoshimune was a mean ruler who should therefore be replaced. Of course, Muneharu could not state this challenge directly, but he could couch it in terms that would be understood by all, and he could make his message available to a broad audience throughout the shogun's realm. The censorship of *Onchi seiyō* and the punishment that Muneharu ultimately received at the hands of the shogun indicate that Yoshimune clearly understood the message of *Onchi seiyō* as well as the significance of his cousin's challenge to his rule.

Although the Tokugawa bakufu did not adopt Neo-Confucianism (*shushigaku*) as its official state ideology until relatively late in its history (Kansei era, 1789-1801), many of its tenets had underwritten Tokugawa hegemony from the time of Ieyasu.⁶ In fact, couched within Buddhist doctrine imported from China in 538 A.D., the basic precepts of Confucianism (*jukyō*), which stood as the basis for Zhuzi's (1130-1200) twelfth-century moralistic reinterpretation of

⁵ Two notes on usage: First, throughout this dissertation, I use the term "mean" to describe the ruler who, in Muneharu's view, fails to provide his subjects with benevolence. I believe this term—in its classic, not colloquial definition—to be the most suitable because the malevolence of Muneharu's mean ruler is born of his parsimony and selfishness, both of which do harm to his subjects. In other words, the mean ruler does not maliciously intend to injure the people directly; nevertheless, his pursuit of private desires causes them very real harm, if only indirectly. Second, I also make use of the gender-specific pronoun, "he," when referring to Tokugawa rulers because official political authority was thoroughly monopolized by men of the samurai class through the end of the Tokugawa period. This is not to say that women did not wield very real political authority over the state through alternative and unofficial channels. The important role that the women of the Great Interior (*ōoku*) of Edo castle played in the daily politics of the bakufu continues to be a rich source of literature in Japanese-language scholarship. For example, see Hata Hisako's recent work: Hata Hisako, *Tokugawa seikenka no ōoku to oku jochū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2009). In English, see: Totman, *Politics in the Tokugawa Bakufu, 1600-1843*, 103-109; Hata Hisako, "Servants of the Inner Quarters: The Women of the Shogun's Great Interior," in *Servants of the Dynasty: Palace Women in World History*, ed. Anne Walthall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 172-190.

⁶ See Maruyama Masao, *Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1974); Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570-1680*, Michigan Classics in Japanese Studies 18 (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1998).

the Classics, had informed Japanese notions of rulership since at least the Nara era (710-794).⁷ Nevertheless, Neo-Confucian ideas and ideology remained an inchoate part of Tokugawa epistemology until well into the eighteenth century, and precedent for *jinsei*, as it was practiced by the Tokugawa Japanese, is not to be found in either pre-Tokugawa Japan or China. Even as late as 1650, the daimyo of Aizu domain and champion of Neo-Confucianism within the bakufu, Hoshina Masayuki (1611-73), could complain that elite samurai remained ignorant of Confucian notions of benevolent rule. Less than a century later, however, Muneharu quite naturally assumed that he could speak with ease about concepts such as *jinsei* and *jinin* to an imagined audience that potentially included the entire population of Japan; what had changed during that interim?

Stephen Vlastos contends that *jinsei*, as the Tokugawa Japanese came to practice it, was born of structural inconsistencies specific to their moral economy.⁸ Strictly speaking, benevolent governance constituted the timely provision of *tokusei* (tax relief) by the lord to his subjects in times of famine or poor harvest. Vlastos argues that lords had to provide their subjects with succor in such times of hardship in order to retain the ability to extract annual rice taxes (*nengu*) from the land. If he failed to provide *jinsei*, the lord's subjects would abscond or protest, either of which indicated the lord's incompetence and was grounds for attainder of his domain. Tokugawa rulers thus often lived in fear of their subjects, whom they needed to assist lest they run the risk of forfeiting their rights to *nengu* revenues. The repeated performance of this normative relationship, holds Vlastos, gave the Tokugawa Japanese their unique understanding of Neo-Confucian *jinsei*.

Irwin Scheiner has gone so far as to call this institutionalized expectation of *jinsei* a "covenant" between the lord and his subject that presupposes reciprocity between the two.⁹ Within the parameters of the Tokugawa moral economy, it was fully expected that those above could and should intervene in the market in order to bring it in line with social mores. That is to say, "peasants believed and acted *as if* they lived in a world of justice, where they were ensured a hearing of their demands by a lord who owed them his benevolence because of his commitments to a higher justice (*gi*) and his obligation to the shogun; and peasants believed that they were owed such a justice."¹⁰ Yet, as the actions of the bakufu during the Kyōhō

⁷ The notion of the benevolent ruler who cares for his subjects entered Japan early. The *Nihon shoki* (720) records Emperor Nintoku (r. 313-399) as stating, "When Heaven establishes a Prince, it is for the sake of the people. The Prince must therefore make the people the foundation. For this reason, the wise sovereigns of antiquity, if a single one of their subjects was cold and starving, cast the responsibility upon themselves. Now the people's poverty is no other than Our poverty; the people's prosperity none other than Our prosperity. There is no such thing as the people's being prosperous and yet the Prince in poverty." W. G. Aston, *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697* (Rutland, Vt.: C. E. Tuttle Co., 1972), 279. The account of Nintoku's reign tells of how the Emperor made the people prosperous once again by imposing severe frugality measures on the court and dispensing with onerous corvée labor for three years. In return for his benevolence, the people "worked their hardest without distinction of night or day, vying with one another in the construction" (280) of the Imperial palace, which had fallen into dilapidation. Nintoku then undertakes a number of public works projects, such as constructing levies and bridges, all of which benefit the livelihood of his subjects. "Therefore up to the present day he is styled the Sage Emperor."

⁸ Vlastos, *Peasant Protests and Uprisings in Tokugawa Japan*, 16.

⁹ Scheiner, "Benevolent Lords and Honorable Peasants: Rebellion and Peasant Consciousness in Tokugawa Japan," 41.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 50.

Famine (1732-33) demonstrate, the view of the lord regarding his responsibility to provide *jinsei* was not always the same as that of his subjects. Following a devastating locust infestation in the autumn of 1732, western Japan was ravaged by privation and hunger. Food shortages caused rioting in Edo during the first month of 1733, after bakufu officials “impervious to the commoners’ complaints” repeatedly refused to lower the price of rice or distribute stockpiles to the needy.¹¹ Although the commoners believed that it was their lord’s duty to alleviate their economic suffering and physical starvation, Yoshimune’s bakufu saw its responsibility quite differently, and its reluctance to intervene in the rice market on behalf of commoners helped spark the first urban uprising (*uchikowashi*) in the history of the shogun’s capital.

Herein lay one of the paradoxes—and, indeed, one of the hallmarks—of *jinsei* within the framework of the Tokugawa moral economy: “benevolent” rule by the lord did not necessarily mean “kind” or “generous” rule by the lord.¹² Indeed, the lord might show benevolence toward his subjects by strictly upholding sumptuary laws and frugality ordinances, or by regulating commercial activities and access to “immoral” entertainments, such as kabuki theater or sumo wrestling. In theory, all of these restrictions were levied upon commoners for their own good, lest they debase themselves by succumbing to their private desires. In fact, as the case of Yoshimune’s Kyōhō era reforms demonstrates, such “benevolence” was often an effective means of ensuring delivery of tax revenues and protecting the privileges of the samurai elite against encroachment from commoners. To govern was to be moral, and to be moral was to govern.¹³ Thus, rulers (and the ruling samurai class) assumed a paternalistic attitude toward commoners, who possessed neither the morality nor the common sense to know what form of benevolence was truly in their best interest. Like forcing a child to swallow a bitter medicine, benevolent rule often meant causing one’s subjects to suffer for their own good.

Within Neo-Confucian ideology, the definition of terms such as “*jinsei*” thus remained ambiguous by design, for it strengthened the normative powers of the ideology by conflating the part with the whole and by discovering correspondence (and thus confirmation of Confucian principles) in all things throughout the universe.¹⁴ The protean definition of “*jinsei*” allowed for multiple interpretations of what it meant to foster the people through benevolent governance. At times “*jinsei*” could mean disciplining the people; at times it could mean supporting them. Whatever the definition, it always meant samurai domination over the commoners and their exclusion from the political sphere. Yet this ambiguity was never strictly resolved, and like so many contours of the Tokugawa polity, the definition of *jinsei* was constantly negotiated between lord and subject through three centuries of proclamations, petitions, and peasant uprisings. Benevolence (*jin*), compassion (*jihi*), and tolerance (*nin*) thus became convenient rhetorical tools with which Muneharu could leverage his pedigree and power to challenge the shogun. He could contend that Yoshimune’s Kyōhō era reforms were antithetical to benevolent rule, which was meant to foster the well-being of the people rather

¹¹ Anne Walthall, “Edo Riots,” in *Edo and Paris: Urban Life and the State in the Early Modern Era*, ed. John M. Merriman, James L. McClain, and Kaoru Ugawa (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994), 412.

¹² James W. White, “State Growth and Popular Protest in Tokugawa Japan,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 14, no. 1 (Winter 1988): 23.

¹³ In the words of Herman Ooms, “The exercise of power by warriors becomes a dispensation of virtue by the virtuous.” Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570-1680*, 47.

¹⁴ Maruyama Masao, *Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan*, 195-205.

than to restrict their natural ingenuity and morality. Moreover, Muneharu could make his argument because he couched it in the orthodox ideology of Neo-Confucianism that had come to underwrite samurai hegemony.

There is no objective means of establishing whether or not Yoshimune was a benevolent ruler; the term remains as slippery today as it was in the Tokugawa period. Nevertheless, historians (typically writing from either an elite vantage point or a great historical distance) have tended to look favorably upon the effects of Yoshimune's Kyōhō reforms. Yoshimune is remembered as an enlightened lord (*meikun*) and as the "Champion of the Tokugawa Restoration" (*Tokugawa chūkō no eishu*) who revived shogunal authority at a time when the hegemony of the former and autonomy of the latter were under attack from disparate groups within the *bakuhan taisei*. His Kyōhō reforms are typically understood to have enabled the shogunate to survive for another century and a half after his rule, and his successors invoked Yoshimune as a model ruler as they pressed their own reform agendas during the Kansei (1789-1801) and Tempō (1830-44) eras. After Ieyasu, Yoshimune is arguably the most well-known Tokugawa shogun; and bakufu historians have dedicated more pages to his tenure as shogun than to the rule of any other shogun. In modern times, the popular television drama series, *Abarembō shogun* (*The Unruly Shogun*), aired over eight hundred episodes, specials, and made-for-television movies between 1978 and 1988. (The people of Japan certainly saw more of the shogun in those thirty years than in the entire three hundred years of the Tokugawa period.) Although Yoshimune and his Kyōhō era reforms have received favorable treatment at the hands of historians, it must be remembered that "enlightened" and "popular" are not necessarily the same as "benevolent."

As Chapter 3 argues, there was nothing particularly benevolent about Yoshimune's Kyōhō era reforms. In fact, it is difficult to conclude that they were anything more than a series of individual reactionary measures aimed at resolving some political, economic, or social problem facing the bakufu at the moment. Yoshimune did not possess a vision of the polity under his rule that would allow us to group his many reform policies under a unifying label, such as the "Kyōhō reforms." They were the "Kyōhō reforms" only in as much as Yoshimune instigated them during the Kyōhō era; they were unified primarily by the fact that a singularly active ruler, Yoshimune, worked unflinchingly to maintain the solvency of bakufu coffers and thereby legitimize his claim to shogunal authority that he had usurped from his cousin in 1716. Beyond these two goals, as Chapter 3 has argued, it is difficult to ascribe a more altruistic or "benevolent" motivation to Yoshimune's reforms—even though some of his policies did aid his subjects and thereby tinged Yoshimune with the color of a benevolent ruler. Thus, with the Tokugawa economy reaching its nadir in 1730 and Yoshimune enacting multiple reforms aimed at saving the finances of his own house and government, there would have been good cause for Muneharu to challenge the notion that his cousin was a benevolent or enlightened ruler in the mode of Tokugawa Ieyasu. Muneharu had only to shift the definition of benevolence in order to cast doubt on his cousin's legitimacy to rule. Muneharu defined benevolence solely in terms of fostering the people through moral and economic leniency rather than disciplining their behavior through rigid laws and edicts. This subtle shift in the definition of benevolence allowed Muneharu to not only criticize Yoshimune as a mean ruler, but to offer himself as a more benevolent—and thus more legitimate—ruler of the people.

While Muneharu's ultimate goal is to extol the superior qualities of the benevolent ruler and the positive attributes of the people, it is the mean ruler and the harmful effects of his bad policies on the people that command much of the Owari lord's attention throughout *Onchi seiyō*. Muneharu condemns the lack of benevolence, the pursuit of private desires, excessive frugality, and parochialism as markers of a mean ruler.

* * * * *

The Mean Ruler

Muneharu's conception of mean and benevolent rulers and their relationship to the people lie at the heart of his challenge to Yoshimune. The mean ruler selfishly pursues his private interests and desires at the expense of the public good. His own success is more important to him than is the well-being of his subjects. He is unaware of the truly deplorable conditions of the people, and his ignorance is fueled by his unwillingness to consult with and learn from others. In contrast to the mean ruler, the benevolent ruler keeps compassion and mercy for the people constantly in his mind. He works tirelessly on their behalf to resolve their problems and alleviate their sufferings. Most importantly, asserts Muneharu, whereas the mean ruler is destined to fall from power, the benevolent ruler will enjoy a legacy that extends into the future for countless generations.

From ancient times in China and Japan, there have lived countless warriors of fame who surpassed millions in both bravery and ingenuity. However, following their [military] exploits, they were not successful [in governing the realm], and their legacies were utterly swept away. Their descendants did not survive beyond two generations because they did not have compassion (*jinin*) in their hearts, they cultivated their private desires, their luxuries and extravagance were extreme, and they had absolutely no true desire to foster the people.¹⁵

The mean ruler is important to Muneharu because history has shown that he will ultimately fall and be replaced by the benevolent ruler. The mean ruler's downfall is caused by his lack of benevolence, which Muneharu glosses as "*jinin*," the twin qualities of affection (*ji*) and tolerance (*nin*). Without these two essential qualities in his heart, a ruler—no matter how great his stature—will not succeed in his governance of the realm, for he will be unable to foster the people, which Muneharu reiterates throughout *Onchi seiyō* as the principle job of the ruler. The mean ruler does not foster the people because he is too concerned with satisfying his personal desires at the expense of the public good.¹⁶

¹⁵ Naramoto Tatsuya, *Kinsei seidō ron*, 38:157. Iwanami notes that the reference to dynasties not surviving beyond two generations is an allusion to Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi. The implications would not have been lost on Yoshimune, who had effectively established a new Tokugawa dynasty with his adoption into the shogunal house (*sōke*).

¹⁶ For a discussion of public (*kō*) versus private (*shi*), see: Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Japan in Print: Information and Nation in the Early Modern Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 49-50.

The implications of Muneharu's reference to the dynasties of mean lords dying out after but two generations would not have been lost on the shogun, who had successfully usurped the title of shogun from his cousin, Tokugawa Tsugutomo, fifteen years earlier. As the first (and last) adoptive shogunal heir from the *gosanke* in over a century of Tokugawa rule, Yoshimune had established a new shogunal blood line in 1716. Every successive shogun would trace his genealogy back through Yoshimune to the founder of the dynasty, Ieyasu. The implications of this fact were clear to everyone involved in the familial politics of the Tokugawa house, and Yoshimune accordingly moved to protect his descendants from challenges to their authority by establishing two of his sons, Tokugawa Munetake (1716-1771) and Tokugawa Munetada (1721-1765), as lords of two new collateral houses (*gosankyō*) that provided shogunal heirs instead of the *gosanke*.¹⁷ Muneharu's warning that a ruler who lacks benevolence was sure to bring an ignominious end to his family likely resonated with Yoshimune, and this slight would have been exacerbated by Muneharu's assertion that it was the founder of the original Tokugawa dynasty, Ieyasu, who had been a truly benevolent ruler.

The Shining Avatar of the East (Tokugawa Ieyasu) possessed the virtue of tolerance in his heart. His profound benevolence (*jishi*) reached the lowest orders [of society], and he even forgave his enemies for their crimes [of treason] when they mended their hearts and submitted to his rule. Because he was an enlightened ruler (*meikun*) who put righteousness (*gi*) ahead of even his own needs, each and every last one of his descendants has inherited his honorable virtue, and theirs is an eternal dynasty the likes of which were seldom known even in antiquity. Since governance of the realm passed into the hands of the warrior houses, there has never been a house such as ours that has firmly upheld the laws of the bakufu to the very corners of the realm without even the slightest objection. Surely there is no sentiment that surpasses the saying of the ancients, "The benevolent man has no enemies."¹⁸

Muneharu asserts that the success and longevity of Ieyasu's government was the direct result of his righteousness and compassion.¹⁹ He points to Ieyasu as the epitome of the enlightened ruler who succeeded where others had failed—not because of his brilliant military capacities or

¹⁷ Yoshimune's eldest son and successor, Tokugawa Ieshige, expanded the number collateral lords to three, to include his second son, Tokugawa Shigeyoshi (1745-1795), thus explaining the name by which the houses are collectively known, "*gosankyō*," "The Three Lords." The *gosankyō* did not govern their own domains, but were stipended scions of the bakufu. They took their names from the neighborhoods surrounding Edo castle where their mansions were located: Tayasu, Hitotsubashi, and Shimizu. See: Appendix D.

¹⁸ Naramoto Tatsuya, *Kinsei seidō ron*, 38:157. The final reference is to Mencius, *King Hui of Liang, Part I*: "Those rulers, as it were, drive their people into pit-falls, or drown them. Your Majesty will go to punish them. In such a case, who will oppose your Majesty? In accordance with this is the saying, 'The benevolent has no enemy.' I beg your Majesty not to doubt what I say." Mencius, *The Works of Mencius*, trans. James Legge (North Chesham, MA: Courier Dover Publications, 1990), 136.

¹⁹ The idea that Ieyasu had succeeded where others failed because his virtue had won him Heaven's Mandate (*tenmei*) was not new. Muneharu's language closely reflects that of earlier texts lauding Ieyasu, such as the *Tōshōgu goikun* (*Tokugawa Ieyasu's Testament*), which he surely read. See: Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570-1680*, 66-71.

political acumen, but because he possessed the qualities of a *meikun*: compassion, tolerance, benevolence, and righteousness.

Once again, the subtle slight would not have been lost on Yoshimune, whose claim to the title of shogun in 1716 had been based on his close genealogical ties to the founder (Chapter 2). Moreover, as shogun, Yoshimune deliberately associated himself with the memory of Ieyasu, proclaiming that he would “rule in the style of the former Shogun Gongen sama [Ieyasu],” and undertaking the first shogunal pilgrimage to Ieyasu’s mausoleum at Nikkō in sixty-five years.²⁰ Muneharu challenged Yoshimune’s claims to privileged birthright by asserting that all of Ieyasu’s descendents received his patrimony of benevolence in equal measure. Thus, in the same breath that Muneharu lauds his great-great-grandfather, he asserts that he has an equal claim to those qualities that made the Tokugawa shoguns so exceptional. Muneharu’s implication throughout *Onchi seiyō* is that he could lay equal—if not greater—claim to the title of shogun based on a combination of pedigree, rank, and his own brand of benevolent governance.

According to Muneharu’s logic, the mean ruler not only lacks benevolence, he is concerned only about his personal interests: “Everyone has their likes and dislikes. Beginning with clothes and food, tastes differ. Attempting to make others like what you like or hate what you hate is extremely narrow-minded and must not be done by those above.”²¹ Scholars agree that in speaking of personal likes and dislikes, Muneharu is referring to Yoshimune’s love of falconry and the hunt.²² Typically understood to have been an expression of traditional samurai values and martial ethos, shogunal hunts could be grand events involving hundreds or even thousands of retainers who roamed over wide areas of land during the course of their outings. Such large and mobile affairs could cause peasants living in the vicinity of hunting grounds great hardships. Not only were precious farmlands put at risk of damage, but the resources (firewood, timber, forest undergrowth for fertilizer, wild game for food, and so on) of the hunting reservations were all denied to peasants, who could have otherwise benefited from them. Peasants could also be called upon to provide corvée labor or lodging to the hunting parties, thereby disrupting their seasonal farm work and depleting their food supplies.²³ In contrast, Muneharu’s love of the Kabuki theater, despite its negative moral associations, did little to harm peasants, and according to this logic, Muneharu’s could even be considered a

²⁰ van der Velde and Bachofner, *The Deshima Diaries*, 201. Muro Kyūsō credits Yoshimune with stating that he will rule in a manner similar to his great-grandfather, Tokugawa Ieyasu. Muro Kyūsō, “*Kenzan hisaku*” In Takimoto Seiichi, *Nihon keizai taiten*, vol. 6 (Tokyo: Shishi shuppansha, 1928), 383.

²¹ Naramoto Tatsuya, *Kinsei seidō ron*, 38:160.

²² Ōishi confirms Naramoto’s reading of this passage as a veiled reference to Yoshimune’s love of the hunt and falconry. See: Tokugawa Muneharu, *Tokugawa Muneharu Onchi seiyō*, ed. Ōishi Manabu (Nagoya: Kaietsu Shuppansha, 1996), 35.

²³ Muro Kyūsō notes that not being allowed to kill animals caused the people suffering under Tsunayoshi, who is famously remembered as the “Dog Shogun” for his *Shōrui awaremi no rei* (Laws on Compassion for Living Things). Kyūsō remarked that under Yoshimune, however, killing animals (ie. hunting) was causing them to suffer. Muro Kyūsō, “*Kenzan hisaku*,” 401.

compassionate means of supporting the lower classes through the many expenses associated with an outing to the theater.²⁴

The private interests to which Muneharu refers, however, are not limited to entertainments and personal pleasures of the ruler. Those rulers who place their own advancement or the achievement of greatness above their obligation to serve the people are equally culpable in Muneharu's view.

When those who might some day be of use are just beginning their careers and have not yet attained the position they desire, they impatiently complain that if only they should be given employment they would of course serve those above and below without fail. However, when they do attain office, they are of a very different mind than before, and are no different than those they once scorned and criticized. Rather, they do nothing but plot the destruction of their former peers because their minds turn only to their base desires. Similarly, although those above initially show great interest [in governing] and behave discreetly so that the world might call them "wise rulers" (*kenkun*), they later become disinterested, accustomed to governing, and profligate for no reason at all.²⁵

Although Muneharu does not mention Yoshimune specifically, there were few rulers to whom he could personally refer as "those above," and he had known no lord other than Yoshimune as an adult.²⁶ The broad generalizations about rulers who plot against their peers and who become complacent once they have attained rank and office couch subtle accusations that Yoshimune had willfully usurped the title of shogun from Muneharu's brother, Tokugawa Tsugutomo in 1716, and that Muneharu was unimpressed by the results of Yoshimune's Kyōhō era reforms. In looking for an explanation for Yoshimune's censorship of *Onchi seiyō*, which is otherwise steeped in seemingly benign Confucian rhetoric, it seems likely that the shogun understood Muneharu's implications all too well. If Yoshimune had cause to take umbrage at Muneharu's criticism of profligate rulers (or of anything in *Onchi seiyō*), it was because his veiled accusations incriminated the shogun rather too baldly.

It is impossible to say for sure what Muneharu's feelings were for his cousin who had little interest in Confucian thought, poetry, theater, or the other cultural pursuits that the lord of Owari enjoyed.²⁷ It is notable, however, that overtures of amity between the two men were

²⁴ Muneharu asserted that "The splendor of those above is a value to those below" in his retort to Yoshimune's chastisement. Abe Naosuke, *Bihan seiki*, vol. 1, Nagoya sōsho sanpen 2 (Nagoya: Nagoya-shi Kyōiku linkai, 1987), 342.

²⁵ Naramoto Tatsuya, *Kinsei seidō ron*, 38:158.

²⁶ Born in 1696, Muneharu was eight when Ienobu became shogun and fifteen when Ietsugu inherited the title. He reached adulthood just as Yoshimune became shogun in 1716.

²⁷ Before Yoshimune became shogun, Muro Kyūsō noted that the lord of Kii was not fond of studying. Muro Kyūsō, "Kenzan hisaku," 368. In fact, however, Yoshimune took great interest in the classical legal traditions of Han and Tang China, and he summoned experts to Edo castle in order to lecture on the subject. (For example, see: Kuroita Katsumi, *Tokugawa jikki*, 8:391-92. His desire to understand these traditions more accurately led ultimately to the production of two translations of the Chinese classic, *Rikuyū engi tai-i (Six Admonitions)*, one by Ogyū Sorai and the other by Muro Kyūsō. It is safe to say, however, that Yoshimune's interests were of a different quality than those of either Muneharu or Tsunayoshi, who, it has been argued, sought to establish a Confucian-style monarchy in

all made by the shogun toward Muneharu, and never in the other direction.²⁸ Muneharu seems to have had little need for the shogun's approval, and if it is possible to take the "wise ruler" of this passage as Yoshimune, then Muneharu's words suggest that he was unimpressed by the man whom history has judged to be the most noteworthy Tokugawa shogun after Ieyasu.²⁹ For Muneharu, the shogun's economic reforms and re-invigoration of samurai values ran roughshod over the lives of peasants, and were little more than expressions of the shogun's personal desire for economic stability and political security for himself and his government. Frugality may have suited the personality and program of the shogun, but to impose such strict parsimony on all of his subjects violated Muneharu's definition of benevolent rule.

Since controlling expenses is the foundation of ruling one's house, we must all endeavor to this end. Insufficient domain currency impedes all manner of things and leads to extreme poverty. Nevertheless, if one goes against reason and continually cuts corners without thought, your benevolence will become attenuated. Before you know it, you will unwittingly cause malicious and cruel governance to occur, bring great pain and suffering upon the people, and your frugality will instead invite useless expenses.³⁰

By 1730, the shogun had established a reputation for such extreme fiscal restraint that even his closest advisors had cause to comment on his parsimony.³¹ Muneharu's condemnation of the Yoshimune's many frugality ordinances and sumptuary laws is even more pointed than his criticism of the shogun's pursuit of personal pleasures and advancement. He asserts that excessive frugality is injurious to the welfare of the people and that it results in increased expenses and waste—precisely the opposite of Yoshimune's goal. For Muneharu, fiscal responsibility meant more than simply conserving the wealth of his house. The health of his household and domain finances had to be balanced against the effects of any fiscal policy on the well-being of the people. Muneharu recognized that commoners were dependent upon samurai consuming their goods and products, just as samurai retainers were dependant upon

Japan. See: Bodart-Bailey, *The Dog Shogun: The Personality and Policies of Tokugawa Tsunayoshi*. Whereas Tsunayoshi and Muneharu sought to embody Neo-Confucian morality and to make that morality the basis of their respective reigns, Yoshimune was more interested in the practical lessons in governance and administrative practices that the classics offered. While Yoshimune certainly made a show of rewarding those subjects who demonstrated filial piety (Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke, *Ofuregaki kampō shūsei*, 566-77.), he never attempted to make Neo-Confucian morality basis of his rule or the litmus test of his political legitimacy.

²⁸ In addition to promoting Muneharu to the rank of daimyo in 1729, Yoshimune allowed Muneharu to use the character "mune" from his name, presented him with a prize sword, and promoted him first to Sangi (Councilor) and later to Gon-chūnagon (Middle Councilor), likely in an attempt to win Muneharu over as a supporter. Although Muneharu gave numerous and expensive gifts to the shogun at various times throughout his tenure as daimyo, his gift-giving was commensurate with his rank and the nature of the occasions. There is nothing to suggest that Muneharu went out of his way to express great respect, gratitude, or fondness for the shogun. "*Hen'nen tairyaku*" in Nagoya-shi Kyōiku linkai, ed., *Bunkyo hen*, Nagoya sōsho 1 (Nagoya: Nagoya-shi Kyōiku linkai, 1960), 354-355.

²⁹ More chapters (82) of the *Tokugawa jikki* are dedicated to Yoshimune than any other shogun except Iemitsu (86).

³⁰ Naramoto Tatsuya, *Kinsei seidō ron*, vol. 38., 161.

³¹ Muro Kyūsō, Yoshimune's Confucian advisor, noted in a letter to his former pupils, "There is a difference between frugality and parsimony, and this is parsimony." Muro Kyūsō, "Kenzan hisaku," 383.

their lords for employment, and he therefore advocated appropriate spending and consumption by the lord as a means of stimulating the domain economy. Muneharu understood that simply reducing household and administrative costs without careful consideration would effect far more than domain balance sheets, and he provides a concrete example of how reducing costs could have dire consequences.

Whether of high or low status, if one does not have sufficient numbers of people [in one's employment,] it is unsuitable for all [sorts of] things and will only result in misfortune. However, because it is a time for strict economy, [people] make do and endure with a feeling of great restriction. More than ever, [the number of] retainers is being reduced. Illustrious people likewise live in this manner, employing three for the job of five and one for the job of three. When these people put on an auspicious or solemn event or hold a banquet requiring many people, they somehow manage by mobilizing people from different posts. However, in the event of a fire or some such emergency when there is no time to think, no matter how hard you endeavor, you will not succeed because you have too few people [in your service]. Moreover, even if hundreds or thousands [of retainers] are stationed [in Edo] on a regular basis, any number of these will be ill or absent from their post, and it is always the case that when one believes he has twenty or thirty retainers [to chose from], suddenly there are [in fact] only five or ten who can be employed. Nevertheless, many believe it wasteful to maintain excessive numbers [of retainers] on a daily basis for just these reasons. They hope by being prepared on a daily basis—and by being extra alert on days with strong winds—by fortifying storehouses and the like well, and by remaining calm so as not to panic, they can make those on hand fight the flames head on. If a few people are scattered about in many directions and made to do various things such as fighting the flames and manning the [fire-fighting] gear, this will only result in numerous casualties. Even though an item is made of a thousand [ryō of] melted gold, it cannot be exchanged for the life of [even] the lowest person. These kinds of things happen because those above lack discernment and are irresolute.³²

According to Muneharu, the shogun was forcing his personal desire to reduce expenditures on all of his subjects, and this short-sighted policy made it impossible for daimyo to carry out their duties and responsibilities in a suitable manner. The shogun's frugality not only hurt the finances of commoners and low-ranking samurai by impeding the circulation of currency throughout the economy, it threatened the safety of the shogun's capital by denying daimyo the human resources needed to protect the city from fire and other disasters. Although parsimony served the immediate financial goals of the shogun, the harm that such extreme frugality caused to others demonstrated a lack of benevolence on Yoshimune's part.

Muneharu's mean ruler is not only excessively frugal, but also parochial and inflexible in his thinking, and ignorant and unwilling to learn from others. Allusions to *Mencius*, the *Great*

³² Naramoto Tatsuya, *Kinsei seidō ron*, 38:165-66.

Learning, and other Chinese classics throughout *Onchi seiyō* demonstrate that Muneharu received a formal education in his youth, although there is nothing in the text to suggest that he was anything more than proficient in his book learning. Muneharu also studied several popular forms of art. He composed both Chinese (*kanshi*) and Japanese (*waka*) poetry, painted still life (*shaseiga*) and monochrome ink (*sumie*) scroll paintings, practiced noh dance (*shimai*) and chant (*utai*), and was a connoisseur of Japanese tea (*chadō*) ware. Again, there is no evidence that Muneharu was particularly adept at any of these pastimes; however, he was proficient (or at least confident) enough to recognize and decry the work of dilettantes.

One who studies many arts for two or three years in a spotty fashion and soon believes that he has reached a level of skill will become unforgivably arrogant, will slander and scoff others, and will never become proficient at anything. Among those who roughly imitate another's art and laugh at other ways (styles), none have brilliant (inspired, clever) elegance (style). Because seven or eight out of ten [people] simply fail [in their artistic endeavors], one must know when one is unprepared due to inexperience.³³

Muneharu's criticism is not aimed at an individual's lack of skill, but at his ignorance, which was born of pride and inexperience. Indeed, Muneharu considered ignorance a serious offence by rulers of his day: "Ignorance in any matter is an incalculable source of shame among people," he lamented.³⁴ Yet he did not insist rulers study the Classics or refined art forms in order to improve themselves: "Although it goes without saying that one's mind improves with learning, it is not necessary to study. Especially for those above, compassion and mercy are seen as the most important lessons."³⁵ The lessons that could aid the ruler most, Muneharu believed, were those that taught sympathy and compassion toward his subjects—lessons that could only be learned through knowledge of the actual living conditions of the people. Yet it was beyond the ability of most rulers to perceive such conditions.

Whether one commands tens of thousands [of men], a thousand, a hundred, five, three, or a single servant, without firsthand experience one cannot truly understand the conditions of those below and the reasons for their behavior. Nobles [and aristocrats] reside in cool, open places in hot weather; they eat wholesome, palatable food; in cold weather, they wear warm clothes and have braziers (*hibachi*) in their floor wells (*kotatsu*). They have many layers of bedding and eat warm and delicious food to their heart's content. When they go out, they ride on horses or in a palanquin and employ large retinues of retainers. There is not one thing that they lack. From the middle ranks [of samurai] on down, however, although there are many minor differences among their [particular] situations, it is never their fault that they cannot fulfill their obligations and that they [must] struggle day and night to make ends meet.

³³ Ibid., 38:164.

³⁴ Ibid., 38:165.

³⁵ Ibid., 38:160.

Lacking even basic necessities such as food and clothing, the plight of the lowest [among them] is beyond description.³⁶

While it was critical for Muneharu's benevolent ruler to understand the plight of his subjects in broad terms, "knowing the condition of the commoners too well—to the point of knowing the price of goods [in the market]—will only bring them pain and suffering," he held.³⁷ Yoshimune had information regarding the conditions of the world outside Edo castle routinely delivered to him, including daily price fluctuations in the Edo rice market.³⁸ Yet, this detailed understanding of the world outside Edo castle remained imprecise in Muneharu's view. It divorced the ruler from his subjects and abstracted their sufferings (in this instance into numbers on a page). Forced to rely on the advice and consultation of others, Muneharu asserted that such a ruler would not be able to provide his subjects with benevolence, and that he would make many errors in his governance of the realm.

One of the greatest errors the mean ruler can make is to enforce unnatural and oppressive laws that restrict the people rather than to provide them with benevolence that allows them to flourish. "If those who now govern suddenly create rules (rites, ceremonies), even though they profit the people or the domain, they will upset the masses, who will reject them and they will not go as planned."³⁹ Once again, Muneharu's criticism seems meant for Yoshimune, who had made a profitable state fisc his primary objective as both daimyo and shogun. Despite his success, the means by which Yoshimune achieved his financial goals (*jōmen hō*, *aitai sumashi rei*, *ken'yaku rei*, *sashiage kin*, etc.) placed a tremendous burden on his subjects. These excessive legal reforms and moral retrenchments did not fit the natural and commonsensical ways of the people. "If reforms are believed to be only good things, great mistakes will certainly be made over and over again. It will produce speculation in even worthless goods, laws will be taken lightly, and the results will surely be imprudent."⁴⁰ Rather than trying to force the people into behaving in ways that go against their nature, the ruler should reduce the size of his state apparatus, eliminate laws that restrict the ability of the people to prosper, and loosen monetary constraints that cause his subjects to suffer.

According to Muneharu, the shogun's many rigid sumptuary regulations—implemented for the good of both bakufu finances and social mores—were an impediment to the real economic advancement of the commoners. They did not "pacify the people" as Muneharu (referencing the *Great Learning*) claimed was the way of governing the state, and he therefore sought to reduce the number of laws on the Owari books.⁴¹

With the myriad laws and edicts increasing annually, the number of violators has naturally increased and enforcement of the laws has now become cumbersome. If this trend continues for several more decades, there will be

³⁶ Ibid., 38:166.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Matsudaira Yoshinaga, *Matsudaira Shungaku zenshū*, 125.

³⁹ Naramoto Tatsuya, *Kinsei seidō ron*, 38:167.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Naramoto Tatsuya, *Kinsei seidō ron*, 38:156; Confucius and James Legge, *The Confucian Analects, the Great Learning & the Doctrine of the Mean* (Cosimo, Inc., 2009), 356.

none who dare not refrain from speaking in a loud voice. Moreover, if conditions do become like this, will officials ever have a moment's rest from handling all of the protocols and official duties? If we first resort to making many laws, the people will lose their ingenuity. They will be cowed and will constantly be looking over their shoulders. They will complain constantly, and there will be nothing to prevent the natural weakening of their loyal hearts. Since this is the case, after carefully considering their contents, there are many laws that hinder the people or are trivial, and that I wish to repeal. When controls are reduced will it not be easier to perform one's duties and defend [the domain]? When the laws are reduced in number, will criminals not become rare, hearts rejoice, and pursuit of the various arts be enjoyed [by all]? In both Japan and China, the constraint of many laws is believed to be a bad thing.⁴²

Part of the power and appeal (and thus the danger) of Muneharu's message lay in its familiarity. The elimination of oppressive and excessive laws was an ancient trope, and Muneharu's readers would have immediately recognized his reference to the first Han emperor, Gaozu (256-195 B.C.), who abolished the cruel laws of the short-lived Qin dynasty (221-206 B.C.) upon establishing the Han dynasty in 206 B.C.⁴³ Drawing a parallel between Yoshimune and the Qin emperors on the one hand, and himself and the founder of the Han on the other, was a provocative assertion, and likely contributed to the censorship of *Onchi seiyō* by Yoshimune.

The shogun's efforts to return social mores and behavior to the days of Ieyasu were not only impractical, they were the source of hardship for samurai and commoners throughout the realm. "Even when bad things are improved and the ancient laws and customs are revived, they will not be accepted willingly, and will surely be criticized and considered troublesome."⁴⁴ The times, he asserted, had changed; and the laws of the land should be made in accordance with those changes—a notion very much in line with thinkers of the mid-Tokugawa period.⁴⁵ Not only was the object of Muneharu's reforms different from that of the shogun, but his conception of the type of reforms that were necessary was diametrically opposed to that of Yoshimune.

⁴² Naramoto Tatsuya, *Kinsei seidō ron*, 38:160. Iwanami notes the reference to Gaozu (256-195 B.C.), the founder of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.—220 A.D.), who eliminated the many onerous laws of the Qin, and replaced them with only three of his own laws.

⁴³ "I am now king of this territory within the Pass. I hereby promise you a code of laws consisting of three articles only: He who kills anyone shall suffer death; he who wounds another or steals shall be punished according to the gravity of the offence; for the rest I hereby abolish all the laws of Ch'in." Sima Qian, *Records of the Historian: Chapters from the Shih Chi of Ssu-ma Ch'ien*, trans. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 118. The Eastern and Western Han dynasties ruled China from 206 B.C. to 220 A.D.

⁴⁴ Naramoto Tatsuya, *Kinsei seidō ron*, 38:161. Yoshimune worked methodically to associate himself with the regimes of his successors. Joan Aouwer, the Dutch *Opperhoofd* in Dejima at the time of Yoshimune's accession, noted in his diary, "The present Shogun is reigning in the spirit of the Shogun Genjōin Sama (Tokugawa Ietsuna), who reigned from 1651 to 1680. I have read the diaries which were kept during his reign and I hope that we will enjoy as much freedom to trade as we had during those days." van der Velde and Bachofner, *The Deshima Diaries*, 207.

⁴⁵ Most notably, Ogyū Sorai. See: Maruyama Masao, *Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan*, 206-73.

Reform, for Muneharu, did not mean forcing the people to mend their ways and return to the nobler values of a bygone era. Instead of attempting to reform the ways of the people according to government ideology through drastic and unrealistic ordinances, Muneharu believed rulers should bring their methods of governance more in line with the natural and commonsensical ways of the people. This concept rested upon his essentially Mencian world view, which saw human nature as fundamentally good and capable of naturally righting itself.⁴⁶ Ultimately, Muneharu held that both shogunal and domain governments stood in the way of the commoners' innate capacity to improve their lot.

Muneharu's particular view of the peasants and his definition of benevolence were the foundation of his ideas on economic leniency. Peasants and townspeople were stifled by an overly-rigid moral economy that Yoshimune was exacerbating through his many sumptuary laws and frugality ordinances that attempted to restore the social morals of a bygone era. This unnatural attitude lacked benevolence, and prevented commoners from improving their economic conditions. At the heart of this approach, Muneharu held, was a basic misconception about the source of economic problems. Neither commoner profit nor samurai consumption was the root of the economic problems facing Japan in 1730. Quite the opposite, the problem was the moral assumption that such profit and consumption were the source of social ills. Thus, rather than creating a creating the social and economic conditions that would allow commoners to improve their situation of their own accord, samurai rulers placed punitive restrictions on commoners based on their notions of moral superiority.

When shrines and temples become dilapidated, highways and bridges need repair, or various places fall into decline such that they become difficult to use, after careful consideration of people's requests, permission is granted to hold a *kanjin* noh performance, sumo match, or some other type of [unofficial] event (entertainment) on a particular day. Or, along pilgrimage routes, permission is granted to erect a tea house, *mochi* (sticky rice cake) or tofu shop, or some other suitable place of business in order to stave off the hunger of travelers. Gradually, [these shops] become prosperous; yet just as the commoners begin to make some financial leeway, not only low-class people but also young samurai who live in ignorance and debauchery become excessively drunk and violent, cause injury to others, and quarrel with women and servants until it reaches the level of a riot. It is a great mistake of our day that when this happens, rather than thinking about punishments for those [guilty] fellows, permission for such events is rashly prohibited, and it remains difficult to do such things again for a long time. First, these reactionary laws are made for those [perpetrators] who have lost their minds. People such as this must be punished to the fullest extent [of the law] after the weight of their offences has been carefully considered. If this is done, all protests will be stopped, [the people] will naturally be placated, and even their customs will improve. Proof of this can be

⁴⁶ John Allen Tucker, "Two Mencian Political Notions in Tokugawa Japan," *Philosophy East and West* 47, no. 2 (April 1997): 233-253.

found in those places where high and low alike have historically gathered for performances without incident.⁴⁷

Samurai could best benefit commoners, held Muneharu, through practical economic measures—not moral chastisement. Patronizing businesses and allowing localities, temples, and shrines to solicit donations by hosting entertainments were two examples that he offered. Muneharu lamented that rulers who found it easier to prohibit such events than to bring miscreants to justice had heretofore mistaken such enterprises as the root of hooliganism and other forms of immoral behavior. Lacking true benevolence, these rulers were essentially blaming the victims for the crime. Muneharu argued, however, that the real moral transgression was the senseless violence of the samurai, not the economic enterprise of the commoner or the natural desire to enjoy entertainments. In place of many restrictive laws and edicts, Muneharu offered his subjects “one or two fundamental [principles from which] emerge a multitude of methods (ideas) [for dealing with any difficulty].”⁴⁸ Thus, in the mode of Gaozu, Muneharu professed a desire to create the conditions within the borders of Owari that would allow his subjects to prosper by eliminating excessive and ill-conceived laws. Freed from unnecessary legal and moral constraints, commoners and samurai would be able to devise their own means of prospering. This natural way of matching the laws to the customs of the people was more suitable for producing benevolent governance.

Muneharu’s criticism that there were too many laws governing the lives of the people was one with which even the shogun might have concurred; Yoshimune is famous for streamlining of the bakufu judicial system through both administrative and legal reforms. For example, in 1721, Yoshimune ordered the Three Magistrates (*sanbugyō*) to regularize and reduce the severity of punishments, and to substitute fines for many of the customary penalties meted out by the bakufu.⁴⁹ He also ordered the compilation of two major collections of Tokugawa legal precedents: *Kujikata osadamegaki hyakkajō* (Official Civil and Criminal Provisions in One Hundred Articles) and *Ofuregaki shūsei* (Collected Official Proclamations), both of which helped to standardize and regularize Tokugawa legal practice through the end of the nineteenth century.⁵⁰

In 1721, Yoshimune also divided the responsibilities of the bakufu finance commissioner (*kanjō bugyō*) between the commissioner for suits (*kujikata*) involving bakufu holdings (*tenryō*) and the finance commissioners (*kattekata*) who, relieved of the responsibility of arbitrating private monetary lawsuits (*kanekuji*), were able to concentrate on better managing bakufu finances. Previously, Yoshimune had issued the *aitai sumashi rei*, which decreed that the bakufu would no longer arbitrate *kanekuji*, and thereby reduced the involvement of the state in the financial affairs of merchants and commoners. However, these reforms highlight the difference

⁴⁷ Naramoto Tatsuya, *Kinsei seidō ron*, 38:162-63.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 38:156.

⁴⁹ Daniel Botsman has argued to the contrary that Yoshimune’s object was to strengthen the hand of the bakufu vis-à-vis commoners by reestablishing its image as a strict warrior government through the use of corporal punishments. See: Daniel V. Botsman, *Punishment and Power in the Making of Modern Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 91-92.

⁵⁰ Dan Fenno Henderson, *Introduction to the Kujikata osadamegaki (1742)* (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 1987).

between the two cousins' ideas concerning the object of good governance: whereas Yoshimune enacted his policies for the economic benefit of the bakufu and to secure his place at its head, Muneharu held that the number of legal statutes and the size of the state should be reduced for the good of the people.⁵¹ Yoshimune, like Muneharu, sought to reduce cumbersome legal practices that conflicted with his reform policies. However, in contrast to Muneharu's professed desire to relax reforms, which relaxed the ruler's control over his subjects, the shogun's reforms managed to strengthen bakufu authority throughout the realm by clarifying the law for those who wielded it. *Osadamegaki* and *Ofuregaki shūsei* eliminated antiquated, redundant, and conflicting case laws, and thereby produced a more rationalized and unified legal code for use by bakufu officials. These legal codes were often emulated by other domains, thereby extending shogunal influence to the peripheries of the realm.⁵² Importantly, the codes and statutes that the *Osadamegaki* and *Ofuregaki shūsei* systematized were never communicated to the shogun's subjects. Yoshimune's conservative impulse was to strengthen the divide that separated rulers from the people they governed. Secrecy and invisibility thus remained important bases for political authority for the Tokugawa regime, and Yoshimune's conservative actions point up the ways in which Muneharu's efforts to make himself a more visible ruler constituted a breach of accepted political practice, and *Onchi seiyō* represented a breach of accepted political discourse in Tokugawa Japan.⁵³

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The Benevolent Ruler

In contrast to the legacy of the mean ruler, which Muneharu asserted would not last "beyond two generations," the benevolent ruler's dynasty "will naturally become as eternal as the universe."⁵⁴ Longevity of the ruler's house, as the case of Ieyasu demonstrated for Muneharu, is a product of the benevolence that a ruler has in his heart. While strategic brilliance may bring victory on the battlefield, a very different quality is required in order to govern the realm. "From ancient times, the way of governing the state and pacifying the people has been to entirely a matter of benevolence."⁵⁵ Although providing benevolence for one's subjects was not a new idea to governance, the degree to which Muneharu remains concerned with the people and their welfare throughout his treatise is striking.

⁵¹ This is not to say that Muneharu did not have his own interests at heart in pursuing his reform agenda in Owari. But it is far too simple to dismiss Muneharu's words and deeds as a thinly-veiled excuse to pursue his personal love of the kabuki theater and the pleasures of the entertainment district. Given the sophistication with which Muneharu made his case for a different *kind* of reform than that of Yoshimune, as well as the vigor with which he implemented his theories within the borders of Owari, this dissertation focuses on examining Muneharu's ideas as a credible expression of his concept of rulership.

⁵² Several domains, such as Kaga and Owari, produced their own law codes, which they also titled *Osadamegaki*.

⁵³ Anne Walthall, "Hiding the Shoguns: Secrecy and the Nature of Political Authority in Tokugawa Japan," in Bernhard Scheid and Mark Teeuwen, eds., *The Culture of Secrecy in Japanese Religion* (London: Routledge, 2006).

⁵⁴ Naramoto Tatsuya, *Kinsei seidō ron*, 38:168.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 38:156. A reference to the *Great Learning*. See: Confucius and Legge, *The Confucian Analects, the Great Learning & the Doctrine of the Mean*, 356.

Muneharu, like Yoshimune, believed that society and the state were facing many problems in the Kyōhō era, and that reform was necessary. However, he and his cousin differed in their understanding of the object of that reform. Whereas the shogun was primarily interested in shoring up bakufu finances and securing his position atop the political hierarchy of the *bakuhan taisei*, Muneharu's stated goal as ruler was to ease the suffering of his subjects.

Quickly reform and repair the sources of people's pain and suffering. As for their lawsuits, petitions, and matters related to their daily concerns, if one does not take care not to dally even while eating, one will only become a hindrance, inconvenience the people greatly, and [be the source of] wasteful expenditure.⁵⁶

In contrast to Yoshimune, who had greatly restricted the number and kinds of lawsuits involving commoners that the bakufu would hear, Muneharu pressed his retainers to work unflinchingly on their behalf.⁵⁷ Not only were domain officials to make every effort to resolve the problems of commoners, but Muneharu's primary concern was that failure to do so would result in greater costs—not to the state, but to those commoners. Displaying a patent disregard for both the fiscal concerns of the state and the social status of its officials, Muneharu put the ruler and his retainers in service to their subjects. This effectively turned the notion of samurai superiority on its head, and likely contributed to his retainers' willingness to join with Yoshimune in overthrowing their lord in 1739. Throughout his eight-year tenure as daimyo, Muneharu continually placed the needs of his subjects before those of his retainers in an effort to show "compassion to everyone, equally, and without the slightest regard for their degree of intimacy."⁵⁸

In sum, Muneharu's benevolent ruler displays the opposite qualities of the mean ruler. He is not excessively frugal, but is magnanimous and his heart is filled with compassion for his subjects. Broad in his thinking, the benevolent ruler is knowledgeable of the world and the conditions of his subjects. He does not govern autocratically or pursue his private interests at the expense of others, but is willing to consult with and listen to others. "If I meet two men," Muneharu advises his readers, "I will practice the positive example of one, eschew the negative example of the other, and in this manner take both as my teachers."⁵⁹ Finally, because the benevolent ruler's primary concern is the well-being of his subjects, his dynasty enjoys great longevity, for he has no enemies.

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⁵⁶ Naramoto Tatsuya, *Kinsei seidō ron*, 38:167.

⁵⁷ The *aitai sumashi rei* of 1719 decreed that the bakufu would no longer adjudicate monetary suits (*kanekuji*) brought by commoners against samurai who had defaulted on their loans. These suits were defined as private matters, and thus beyond the jurisdiction of the state. Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke, *Ofuregaki kampō shūsei*, 1202. Similarly, historians understand one of the primary motivations behind Yoshimune's establishment of the *meyasubako* to have been to provide relief to daimyo who were suffering from a constant barrage of (*sutebumi*, *osso*) petitions thrown into their palanquins as they traveled along the roads of Edo. Roberts, "The Petition Box in Eighteenth-Century Tosa," 430.

⁵⁸ Naramoto Tatsuya, *Kinsei seidō ron*, 38:168.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 38:163.

The Ruler and His Subjects

The twenty-one articles of *Onchi seiyō* reveal the centrality of the common people—their needs and wisdom—to Muneharu's critique of Yoshimune and his Kyōhō era reforms. He extols the virtues of the commoners and their simple way of life as evidence that the shogun's attempts to regulate their behavior was unnatural, unnecessary, and ultimately a sign of his mean rulership.

Those who labor in the fields and pass through this world without wealth or concerns can live to a ripe old age because their hearts are tranquil and their bodies are healthy. When we consider this, it is apparent that despite the fact that one cannot help the ability or intelligence with which one is born, if one simply resolves to labor unflaggingly, he will not suffer in his mind and will be carefree in whatever he does.⁶⁰

Such praise stands in stark contrast to Muneharu's opinion of young samurai of his own day, whose constitutions are weakened “because of poor upbringing, ill manners, and because they [constantly] take the easy way out [of things]. Because of this, their daily interactions are superficial and their hearts suffer constantly. Therefore, when people are not looking, they begin to slip into extreme debauchery and morbidity, and just when their strength should be blossoming; it is sapped from them in their prime.”⁶¹

In contrast to the samurai, Muneharu sees commoners as inherently good and able to improve their ways naturally. The problem is the mean ruler, whose self-serving reforms and numerous laws interfere with the commoners' ability to improve their situation through their own initiatives. If rulers would simply leave commoners to their own devices, Muneharu contends, “gradually, over the course of many years, when [conditions] become ripe, customs will naturally improve in every corner [of the realm] with ease once and for all, and there will no longer be any need to rely on laws.”⁶² The people will be able to improve their customs because they understand the demands of the time in which they live. They will not need unnatural and unpopular laws that force them to live by outmoded standards of an earlier era. This vision of the people as being in harmony with the nature of the times implies that they—more than their lord—know what is best for them. Muneharu's conception of benevolent rule thus denied the samurai their traditionally paternalistic role as moral shepherds of the people. Benevolence, according to Muneharu, is not a matter of forcing the people to do what the ruler believes to be best for them. Rather, true benevolence is having sufficient knowledge of and sympathy for the people to provide them with the moral and economic leeway to improve their conditions of their own accord.

In *Onchi seiyō*, Muneharu was not simply offering an alternative definition of benevolent rule; he was offering an alternative to the present shogun: himself. According to

⁶⁰ Ibid., 38:162.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., 38:167.

Muneharu's reasoning, the ruler is legitimized by the benevolence he shows his subjects, and benevolence is defined as serving their needs. Should the lord fail in this deep obligation to his subjects, he would be replaced by another, truly benevolent ruler, who could better serve the people. Thus, if pushed to its logical end, Muneharu's formula for benevolent rule threatened to replace birthright with a "meritocracy of benevolence" that would allow the people to choose the most benevolent lord to be their ruler. Whether he realized it or not, Muneharu had effectively extended the logic of meritocracy to the person of the shogun.

The meritocratic selection of bakufu officials had been a growing trend since at least the time of Arai Hakuseki, but Yoshimune had formalized a system of advancement known as *tashidaka* in 1723. The *tashidaka* system allowed Yoshimune to promote men of ability to offices that otherwise would have been beyond their station based on the value of the stipends they inherited from their fathers. Most famously, this system had allowed Yoshimune to promote Ōoka Tadasuke first to the office of Edo city magistrate (*machi bugyō*) and later to the more senior post of temples and shrines magistrate (*jisha bugyō*). However, Yoshimune had worked feverishly to insulate his own position as shogun from this growing meritocratic trend in governance. This despite the fact that Yoshimune had been selected from among three viable candidates based on the competency that he had shown in ruling Kii domain and rehabilitating its finances.

Thus, the possibility of selecting the shogun was not beyond the pale in 1732; however, Muneharu had to frame the question of legitimacy in terms that he could manipulate. In 1716, conservative interests within the bakufu had managed to frame the selection of their favored "candidate" in terms of genealogy. Since that time Yoshimune had pursued a reform agenda that solidified his grip on political power through a continuation of that rhetoric of genealogy, which underscored the links between himself and the founder of the Tokugawa bloodline, Iyasu, even as his actions served to sever the links between the new shogunal dynasty and the old. The prestigious *gosanke* houses, which had been kept waiting in the wings for over a century before Yoshimune's adoption as shogunal heir, would never again have an opportunity to offer one of their own as inheritor of that title. The *gosankyō*, on the other hand, would not only provide shogunal heirs, but they would also be installed as lords of the *gosanke* domains. Muneharu likely understood the reality of this political situation all too well from his vantage point in 1732. He had watched his brother lose the title of shogun to their junior-ranking cousin, Yoshimune, and he could see that such an opportunity would likely never come again—unless he could call the legitimacy of the shogun into question and offer himself as a better ruler in his place.

In 1731, Muneharu granted a Kyoto book seller permission to publish *Onchi seiyō*. Had Yoshimune not prohibited the publication of the text, Muneharu's message of benevolent rule would have been carried "far and wide" throughout Japan by early modern commercial printing networks. To this point, we have been primarily concerned with the contents of Muneharu's polemic treatise and the implications of his message of benevolent rule. The following section will consider the public nature of his challenge to the shogun, and the censorship of that message by Yoshimune.

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The Text

Considering deeply [the means of] showing my loyalty to the realm and repaying my great debt to my ancestors, it is nothing other than governing the state peacefully, fostering the people, and insuring that my descendants do not commit improprieties. Therefore, maintaining compassion and sympathy in my heart both day and night, I have written down my thoughts as they are in plain form (in the Japanese vernacular) and bestowed this single volume upon various retainers so that all things [might be] upright and pure of heart (without corruption). This [manuscript] shall inform people far and wide of my true will, serve as eternal evidence of my oath, and express my sincere hope that high and low shall be in harmonious accord [with each other].⁶³

Onchi seiyō was read widely in its day.⁶⁴ More than thirty copies of the text survive in private libraries and collections throughout Japan, testifying to its popularity in the face of official bakufu censorship.⁶⁵ This popularity was due to both the allure and the accessibility of Muneharu's message. The brevity of the text removed one major barrier between Muneharu and his audience; the language of the text eliminated any others. The twenty-one articles in forty-three pages contain a mixture of approximately nine thousand *kana* (cursive syllabary) and *kanji* (Chinese orthography) characters. Muneharu composed his manuscript in *wabun* (colloquial Japanese) as opposed to *kambun* (classical Chinese), the language of official government documents until modern times, and informs his readers: "I have written down my thoughts as they are in plain form (*waji*) so that all things [might be] upright and pure of heart (without corruption)." His use of vernacular Japanese was indicative of the polemic nature of the text: not only did he speak to his audience in a vernacular that was easily comprehensible

⁶³ Tokugawa Muneharu, "Onchi seiyō," in *Ibid.*, 38:156.

⁶⁴ Nakamura Sankinshi (1671-1741), a Confucian scholar living in Kyoto, praised the lord of Owari as one who was "blessed with both benevolence (*ji*) and tolerance (*nin*)." Nakamura Sankishi, "Onchi seiyō hoyoku," in *Bunkyo hen*, ed. Nagoya-shi Kyōiku linkai, Nagoya sōsho 1 (Nagoya: Nagoya-shi Kyōiku linkai, 1960), 111. The apostle of the Fuji cult, Jikigyō Miroku (1671-1733), is also noted to have criticized the bakufu "in the spirit of the book by Minamoto no Muneharu," for the corruption and malfeasance that he witnessed while travelling throughout Japan on pilgrimage. Royall Tyler, "The Tokugawa Peace and Popular Religion: Suzuki Shōzan, Kakugyō Tōbutsu, and Jikigyō Miroku," in *Confucianism and Tokugawa Culture*, ed. Peter Nosco (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 112.

⁶⁵ Extant copies can be found in collections throughout Japan, from Hiroshima to Yamagata. My translation of *Onchi seiyō* (Appendix A) is based on contemporary publications of the text found in Naramoto Tatsuya, *Kinsei seidō ron*, 38:156-68. and Tokugawa Muneharu, *Tokugawa Muneharu Onchi seiyō*. Naramoto's edition is based on a 1731 printed copy (*kampon*) of *Onchi seiyō* held by the Shidō Bunko Shozō library at Keiyō Gijyuku University in Tokyo. Ōishi bases his transcription and modern translation on a *kampon* text from the same year held by the Hōsa Bunko Shozō library in Nagoya. While both texts (*teihon*) survive as printed copies, Peter F. Kornicki confirms that "a considerable body of works dealing with matters too indiscreet to be published" circulated widely in manuscript form thanks to the existence of travelling book lenders (*kashi hon'ya*) who met the demand for such "contraband" materials during the Tokugawa period. See: Peter F. Kornicki, "The Enmeiin Affair of 1803: The Spread of Information in the Tokugawa Period," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42, no. 2 (1982): 503-533. Although Kornicki is primarily speaking of *jitsuroku* (records of factual accounts), this would also account for the circulation of *Onchi seiyō* throughout the major islands of Japan.

to high and low alike, but he based his heterodox ideas of benevolent rule on an orthodox Confucian rhetoric that was immediately recognizable to all. Unlike the laws of the bakufu, which were never made public, the principles of Muneharu's rule were to be knowable to all—not only within the borders of his own domain, but eventually throughout the realm.⁶⁶

Although we will never know how many people read *Onchi seiyō*, Muneharu's message of benevolent governance traveled with sufficient speed and popularity that a Kyoto book seller secured the right to publish the text just one year after Muneharu had composed it. By granting permission to publish *Onchi seiyō*, Muneharu was relaxing the traditionally strict controls on the exchange of information between rulers and their subjects in early modern Japan, thereby breaching the acceptable mode of communication between a ruler of Muneharu's status and his subjects. As Peter Kornicki has observed, "Bakufu edicts, even those addressed to the urban population or to the peasantry . . . are most logically seen as means of control rather than as attempts to communicate."⁶⁷ Notice boards (*kōsatsu*) and intendants (*daikan*) pronounced shogunal edicts (*ofure*) as *fait accompli* to the people throughout the *tenryō*. Even the system of petition boxes that Yoshimune had established to solicit the opinions and suggestions of commoners was highly regulated, limited in scope, and offered no transparency whatsoever once a petition had been deposited inside one of the handful of shogunal *meyasubako* located throughout the realm.⁶⁸ Strict regulation of these lines of communication between rulers and subjects was an important means of protecting the samurai monopoly on Tokugawa political power. In short, Tokugawa rulers spoke to their subjects, not with them.⁶⁹

Entering into a discourse with his subjects on the nature of benevolence and political legitimacy risked weakening the political structure that guaranteed samurai hegemony through secrecy and invisibility. Tearing open the veil that had traditionally separated rulers from their

⁶⁶ While the bakufu posted shogunal proclamations (*ofure*) on notice boards throughout the realm, it never made public any set of codified laws such that the people might know the legal statutes to which they were beholden. Famously, Yoshimune ordered the compilation of bakufu laws into the *Kujikata osadamegaki hyakkajō* (*Official Civil and Criminal Provisions in One Hundred Articles*), in 1742. This was supplemented two years later by the *Ofuregaki shūsei* (*Collected Official Proclamations*), a collection of over three thousand legal precedents in fifty volumes. Both texts were the first of their kind—remarkable considering the Tokugawa had been ruling Japan for over a century when Yoshimune ordered their compilation—yet neither was made available beyond the walls of Chiyoda castle. Only bakufu administrators and councilors had access to the rules by which they governed. See: Henderson, *Introduction to the Kujikata osadamegaki (1742)*. Daniel H Foote, ed., *Law in Japan: A Turning Point* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), 10.

⁶⁷ Peter F. Kornicki, "Literacy Revisited: Some Reflections on Richard Rubinger's Findings," *Monumenta Nipponica* 56, no. 3 (Autumn 2001): 389.

⁶⁸ In theory, petitions were carried directly to the shogun, who personally judged whether or not the contents of each letter merited action on the part of the bakufu. However, it is likely that one of Yoshimune's adjutants (*osoba goyōtorisugi*), such as Kanō Hisamichi (1673-1748), screened petitions before delivering them to Yoshimune. Shogunal *meyasubako* could eventually be found in Edo, Osaka, Kyoto, Sunpu, and Kofu. These petition boxes were variously erected and removed at different moments throughout the Tokugawa period.

⁶⁹ Donald Shively notes, "The Tokugawa laws issued to the common people, known as *Ofuregaki*, were to a considerable extent hortatory. The government's attitude was that the townsmen were 'stupid people' (*gumin*) who had to be talked to like children." Shively, "Bakufu Versus Kabuki," 338. Herman Ooms notes, "Early-Tokugawa [political] discourse . . . was intended mainly, if not exclusively, for internal consumption, that is to say, for the ruling warrior class itself." Herman Ooms, "Neo-Confucianism and the Formation of Early Tokugawa Ideology: Contours of a Problem," in *Confucianism and Tokugawa Culture*, ed. Peter Nosco (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 51.

subjects, Muneharu's direct communication with his subjects would have allowed him to define the relationship between a ruler and his subjects more clearly than the *bakuhan taisei* would permit. In short, Muneharu was offering the people an opportunity to know their ruler in a direct fashion that transgressed accepted norms of discourse between ruler and subject in the Tokugawa polity. Ultimately, Muneharu would lose his political battle with the shogun, and a clear articulation of the relationship between ruler and subject would have to wait until the Meiji era, when the people of Japan were formally introduced to their ruler for the very first time.

In the intercalary fifth month of 1731—just before *Onchi seiyō* was to be published—Yoshimune ordered the Kyoto Magistrate to interrogate its publisher, confiscate the wood blocks, and have them destroyed. The severity of this response reflects the credibility of Muneharu's challenge to the shogun and the gravity of his criticisms of the political system. Given Muneharu's criticisms of the shogun, his subversive agenda, and public manner in which he attempted to challenge the shogun, it is striking that Yoshimune did nothing more to punish its author than censor his manuscript, especially since the shogun had only recently chastised Muneharu for his inappropriate behavior while in Edo (Chapter 5). Beyond censoring the text, however, there is no record of Yoshimune punishing Muneharu for his transgressions in 1732. Muneharu was still a young, inexperienced, and untested domain ruler who—like the shogun—had come into his office unexpectedly. Moreover, the rapid succession of deaths that had brought Muneharu to power had left Owari domain in great need of political stability. Thus, despite the gravity of his cousin's offences, Yoshimune remained willing to give Muneharu another chance to rectify his behavior and to prove his effectiveness as a ruler and his loyalty to the shogun. Seven years later, however, Yoshimune would not prove so lenient toward his cousin, who continued to flout Yoshimune's program of moral and economic retrenchment until his own housemen mutinied against him. In 1738, they conspired with the shogun to remove Muneharu from office, place him under house arrest, and replace him with a more agreeable ruler whose views on governance were more in line with their own. In 1732, however, Muneharu's pedigree and youthful inexperience shielded him from any harsher punishment from the shogun than censorship of *Onchi seiyō*.

* * * * *

Censorship

There were few instances of state censorship of printed materials prior to the early modern period because so few texts were made broadly available to the general populous before the seventeenth century. Prior to the Kyōhō era, the Tokugawa bakufu censored only a few types of texts in a haphazard fashion. Although Yoshimune's laws greatly enhanced the role of the state, censorship in Japan remained mild relative to other places and other times. Technically, Muneharu's *Onchi seiyō* violated the shogun's censorship laws, but those laws had never been meant for someone of Muneharu's stature. Yoshimune's censorship of such unexpectedly treasonous utterances from Muneharu's quarter indicates the gravity of his offence.

Japanese rulers had assumed the prerogative to censor printed materials since the eighth century, when the Taihō and Yōrō codes forbade books dealing with black magic.⁷⁰ However, records survive of only a handful of incidents of actual state censorship in the millennium prior to 1600. This indicates the limited production and distribution capacities of printing technology, the limited demand for large numbers of printed materials, and the limited capacity of the state to control the production of those materials before the early modern period.⁷¹ The expansion of commercial printing during the seventeenth century, however, increased the need for the Tokugawa bakufu to control the publication of information that it believed threatened its hegemony over its retainers, subjects, and the various daimyo who governed the domains outside of the *tenryō*. State censorship of printed materials was thus a practical reaction to the seventeenth-century development of commercial printing, which the bakufu had largely ceded to commoners early in its history. Given this reactive stance, state regulation of commercial printing during the Tokugawa period remained a haphazard (almost *ad hoc*) affair, even when the bakufu exerted its most concerted efforts at controlling the contents of books, broadsheets, and other publications during the Kyōhō (1716-36) and Kansei (1789-1801) eras.

Prior to the Kyōhō era, the bakufu never issued any formal edicts detailing what it believed to be materials inappropriate for publication. This ambiguity—rather than undermining the authority of the bakufu—gave the state great leeway to censor any text or topic it deemed necessary, and encouraged a good deal of self-censorship by authors and publishers who feared punishments that could be meted out according to the whim of the state, and that could range in severity from hand-cuffing to house arrest to execution.⁷² Initially, state censorship efforts concentrated on eradicating any mention of either the enemies of the Tokugawa, including the potentially favorable legacy of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, or the remnants of the seditious Christian faith. By the end of the seventeenth century, an official policy of censoring books imported from Europe and China was in place, and a Chief Censorship Officer (*shomotsu aratame-yaku*) had been installed in Nagasaki, Japan's only official trading port with Europe.⁷³ By the eighteenth century, however, these limited regulations were deemed insufficient by the bakufu, and Yoshimune instituted two important reforms that clarified the state's notions of materials it deemed inappropriate for publication. In 1722, Yoshimune's hand-picked Edo Magistrate (*machi bugyō*), Ōoka Tadasuke (1677-1751), informed printing houses of the bakufu's new Laws Governing Publications (*shuppan rei*) and its Prohibition of Broadsheets (*yomiuri kinshi*). Promulgation of these two edicts indicate that the state was beginning to recognize the power of commercial printing in Tokugawa society; however, the bakufu remained limited in its capacity to monitor all forms of publication, and thus leaned on

⁷⁰ Peter F. Kornicki, *The Book in Japan: A Cultural History from the Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 322.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 321-23.

⁷² The only person ever executed by the bakufu for violation of censorship laws was Baba Bunkō (1718-58), the Edo raconteur whose illicit manuscripts (*jitsuroku*) were often critical of the bakufu or lewd and explicit in their content. See: Baba Bunkō, *Baba Bunkō shū*.

⁷³ The *shomotsu aratame-yaku* was established in 1685 at the order of the fifth shogun, Tokugawa Tsunayoshi. See: Kornicki, *The Book in Japan*, 297.

the publishing guild to help enforce its new regulations.⁷⁴ The first of these edicts, the *yomiuri kinshi*, was narrowly focused on curtailing the printing of a single type of publication: the broadside.

Recently, baseless rumors and matters related to things such as the double-suicides of men and women (*shinjū*) have appeared everywhere in print. Although the publication of these broadsides (*yomiuri*) has been prohibited in the past, it has recently been reported that this law is not being heeded and that illicit copies are being sold. Henceforth, constables must patrol, arrest, and report offenders without fail. When offenders are discovered, they must be reported to both the jailhouse and the office of the monthly guard officer (*tsukiban no bansho*) in the respective wards. If [such illicit sales] are overlooked and a guard makes an arrest, this law must be upheld by reporting the error to the respective Ward Chiefs and Monthly Duty Officers (*gachigyōji*).⁷⁵

The *yomiuri kinshi* sought to control the spread of what the bakufu believed to be baseless rumors by stopping the circulation of cheap broadsides that were read by an urban public consumed with the latest scandals and gossip. Around the time the *yomiuri kinshi* was promulgated, Edo had been gripped by a spate of sensational double suicides (*shinjū*) in which lovers, purportedly frustrated by class differences, family objections, financial constraints, and other obstacles to their happiness, took their own lives. The puppet (*jōruri*) and kabuki theaters quickly produced several plays based on the sensational events that were wildly popular with audiences in Edo, Kyoto, and Osaka. Worried that the popularity of such sanguinary material might encourage more lovers to imitate the scenes they witnessed on stage, the bakufu finally banned the production of all such plays in 1723.⁷⁶

As opposed to the narrow focus of the *yomiuri kinshi* edict, the *shuppan rei* reveals the broader concerns about the types of utterances that the bakufu believed to be injurious to its authority.

Item: The future publication of new texts that alter the precepts of Confucianism, Buddhism, Shinto, medicine, or poetry in the slightest to propagate immoral or unorthodox ideas is strictly prohibited.

Item: Among texts published to date, because they are bad for the morals [of the people,] amorous books must be revised and wholesome copies reprinted.

Item: New books are spreading falsehoods throughout society about things such as people's ancestors and household genealogies. Henceforth, this must stop. If such texts are discovered and a complaint (suit) is filed by a descendant [of a person or household mentioned in the text], then a rigorous investigation should be launched.

⁷⁴ Throughout the early modern period book publishers and book sellers (*hon'ya*) were the same, and were thus controlled by the same monopoly guild. Throughout this dissertation, I refer to the "publishing guild," but this should be understood to include the control of book sales and lending (*kashi hon'ya*) as well.

⁷⁵ Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke, *Ofuregaki kampō shūsei*, 994.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

Item: Hereafter, the real names of the author and publisher must appear on the title page (*okugaki*) of every new book, without exception.

Item: Henceforth, matters pertaining to Gongen-sama (Tokugawa Ieyasu), of course, but also to this [Tokugawa] house, must not be printed. If an unavoidable detail exists, report it to the Magistrate and follow his orders.

Henceforth, all new publications must be examined before sale according to the above articles. If anyone is discovered to be in violation of these laws, he must be reported to the Magistrate. Although several years have passed [since certain inappropriate materials were first published,] whenever they are known, the original publishers must be warned strictly. The publishing guild must conduct [all] investigations and care must be taken so that there are no perpetrators.⁷⁷

The articles suggest that Yoshimune and his ministers were genuinely concerned that commercial printing might allow people to propagate dangerous (and in their minds, false) ideas maligning the person of the shogun, questioning the supremacy of the samurai class, or attacking any of the ideologies that underwrote their hegemony over the realm. In particular, the articles' preoccupation with samurai genealogies—and primarily that of the Tokugawa house—reveals the feeling of insecurity that Yoshimune and his supporters within the bakufu continued to suffer over five years after becoming shogun. Much had been made of his close blood ties to Ieyasu at the time of Yoshimune's accession, despite the fact that it was his successful rehabilitation of Kii domain finances that had made him the best candidate for shogun in 1716. Since then, Yoshimune had worked hard to insulate the position of shogun from the growing meritocratic trend within the bakufu bureaucracy, even as he endeavored to replace deeply entrenched and corrupt hereditary vassals who had successfully monopolized their position as bakufu intendant (*daikan*) for generations.⁷⁸ The *shuppan rei* effectively prevented anyone from challenging the myth that genealogy, not merit, had made Yoshimune shogun in 1716.

It is also worth noting that Yoshimune was not threatened by just any type of information. Just two years before he moved to control commercial printing within Japan, Yoshimune had relaxed the bakufu's long-standing and strict prohibitions on the importation of books from China and Europe—allowing even for the mention of Christianity (in passing, and in translation).⁷⁹ The fact that Yoshimune was willing to risk exposure to seditious ideas from abroad but would not tolerate public discussion of his pedigree indicates that there was much more at stake than just the reputation of the shogun among his subjects. Genealogy mattered in Tokugawa society in ways and to a degree that may be difficult for us moderns to appreciate. The care with which Yoshimune protected his genealogical claims to political legitimacy helps us understand both the slight that Muneharu felt in seeing his cousin promoted over him to the

⁷⁷ Ibid., 993-94.

⁷⁸ Yoshimune ordered the investigation of *daikan* beginning in the sixth month of 1720, and removed several from office who were found to be guilty of graft and corruption in their administration of bakufu lands. Kuroita Katsumi, *Tokugawa jikki*, 8:157.

⁷⁹ Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke, *Ofuregaki kampō shūsei*, 991.

position of shogun and his decision to challenge the authority of his cousin by means other than calling Yoshimune's genealogy into question.

Yoshimune's *shuppan rei* and *yomiuri kinshi* constituted a major development in the censorship of commercial printing by the premodern state. Never before had any Japanese authority, central or local, spelled out in such clear terms what it considered to be inappropriate material for publication. Never before had the state needed to control the utterances of its subjects so directly. Bakufu censorship of printed materials sharpened under Yoshimune, and Peter Kornicki notes that during the Kyōhō era alone at least nineteen edicts (*ofure*) were issued regarding publication and printing.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, state censorship remained mild in Tokugawa Japan compared to other regimes in other parts of the world at other times.⁸¹ This leniency was not accidental. Examples of extreme state censorship of print media, such as the Qin "Burning of the Books" in the fourth century B.C., were certainly known to Yoshimune and his advisors, who regularly looked to China for inspiration and justification of their reform measures. Yoshimune continued to enjoy great power over publishers and authors by not pronouncing too clearly the state's position on the publication of inappropriate materials. By purposefully designing ambiguity into the letter of the law and making the publishing guild responsible for enforcing the law, Yoshimune could keep authors and publishers off balance in their fear of retribution from the state.⁸² Once again, structural ambiguities provided the *bakuhatsu taisei* with the flexibility and strength to survive major social changes like the growth of commercial printing in the eighteenth century.

Technically speaking, Muneharu violated several articles of Yoshimune's *shuppan rei*. He mentions Ieyasu by name (Tōshōgu) and freely discusses the genealogy of the Tokugawa in order to assert that all of Ieyasu's descendants received the blessings of his patrimony in equal measure (thereby equating himself and Yoshimune). More important, Muneharu's interpretation of the Confucian notion of benevolent rule represented a major break from the orthodox interpretation, which took the ruler to be a paternal shepherd of his subjects. According to Muneharu, the benevolent ruler must not attempt to control every aspect of the commoner lives, but should express his compassion for his subjects by granting them the economic and moral leeway to use their inherent ingenuity to prosper and to enjoy the fruits of their labor. Yet the laws (*ofure*) of the shogun governing the contents of printed materials were meant specifically for the publishing guild. They were devised to control the utterances of the commoners, not to formally constrain the writings of the samurai, who were governed by a different set of laws, the *Buke shohatto*. Thus, it is safe to conclude—and the fact that Yoshimune never formally accused Muneharu of any legal violations confirms the notion—that

⁸⁰ Peter F. Kornicki, "Nishiki no Ura: An Instance of Censorship and the Structure of a Sharebon," *Monumenta Nipponica* 32, no. 2 (Summer 1977): 154. Note that the *Ofuregaki kampo shūsei* lists only seventeen articles in its section on "Books and Printing Section."

⁸¹ For discussions of the legendary Qin Burning of the Books between 213 and 206 B.C., see: Mark Edward Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999). Michael Nylan, *The Five "Confucian" Classics* (Yale University Press, 2001), 28-31. For a translation of Sima Qian's record of the Qin emperor, Huangdi's, order to burn the books of the Hundred Schools of Thought, see: Sima Qian, *Records of the Grand Historian: Qin Dynasty*, trans. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 55.

⁸² For a discussion of the effectiveness of Tokugawa censorship laws, see: Henry D. Smith II, "The History of the Book in Edo and Paris," in *Edo and Paris: Urban Life and the State in the Early Modern Era*, ed. James L. McClain, John M. Merriman, and Ugawa Kaoru (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994), 344-346.

Onchi seiyō was not censored based on any technical violation of the shogun's laws. Rather, the subversive political nature of Muneharu's criticism of the shogun and his transgression of acceptable modes of ruler-subject discourse gave Yoshimune no alternative but to prevent his cousin's indiscreet treatise from going to print.

* * * * *

Conclusion

Peter Kornicki notes that lenient censorship laws did not lead to criticism of the state within popular print, which had been the domain of the commoners since its inception in the seventeenth century.⁸³ The *bakuhan taisei* had successfully maintained the separation of subject and state, in part by constricting the flow of information between rulers and subjects. Commoners were largely free to conduct their daily business without great interference from their samurai superiors, so long as they did not attempt to breach the class division between themselves and the samurai, and enter into the political domain. Muneharu's *Onchi seiyō* sought to breach that divide from within the political sphere and to reach out and engage the commoners in a discourse on the definition of benevolent rule via the early modern commercial printing network. Muneharu's *Onchi seiyō* was therefore dangerous on many levels. It criticized the painful effects of the shogun's strident economic reforms, and thereby insinuated that he was a mean ruler who was destined to fall from power. In his place, Muneharu offered himself as a more benevolent—and thus more legitimate—ruler who would foster his subjects through lenient economic and moral reforms that fit more naturally with their innate ingenuity as well as with the accepted customs of the times.

Yet couched within Muneharu's formula for political legitimacy based on the provision of benevolence to his subjects by the ruler was the dangerous potential to extend the logic of meritocracy to the person of the shogun. If Muneharu were a more benevolent—and thus more legitimate—ruler than Yoshimune, might not a new ruler appear one day whose compassion for and service to his subjects was greater even than that of Muneharu? If so, the people might once again "chose" the more benevolent ruler as their lord. If pushed to its logical extreme, Muneharu's "meritocracy of benevolence" threatened to undermine one of the fundamental premises of samurai rule. Finally, this entire episode is made all the more striking because Muneharu, as the lord of Owari domain, was the most elite member of an especially sanctioned and privileged minority of the highest social class in Japan. If the political system "worked" for anyone, it worked for Muneharu. Yet he criticized the shogun for his failure to provide commoners and low-ranking samurai with the kind of benevolence that Muneharu believed they were due. Moreover, he did so in a manner that breached the traditional divide between ruler and subject by threatening to take his message of dissent to the people via print media. These were actions for which Muneharu risked more than mere censorship of his brief manuscript. He could—and eventually did—lose almost every privilege that his birthright had bestowed upon him.

⁸³ Kornicki, *The Book in Japan*, 13.

Although Muneharu was certainly motivated in part by his desire to enjoy the “immoral” pleasures of the Yoshiwara pleasure district that he had come to love in his carefree youth, and although we will never be able to measure the sincerity of his belief in the need for rulers to show their subjects benevolence, Muneharu was no dunce. He fully understood the gravity of his utterances and the ramifications of making his criticisms public. We must, therefore, conclude that the production and printing of *Onchi seiyō* was part of a broader attempt by Muneharu to challenge his cousin for the right to rule as shogun.

Chapter 5

Traces of a Dream: The Inconsistencies of Muneharu's Benevolent Rule

The structural ambiguities of the Tokugawa political system provided it with the flexibility and durability required to survive nearly three centuries of social, political, and economic challenges before capitulating to the pressures of the modern, international political order following the arrival of Commodore Perry in 1854. This dissertation argues that, lacking a constitutional articulation of political rights or responsibilities, the undefined role of the shogun remained one of the greatest structural ambiguities of the *bakuhatsu taisei* until the fall of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1868. Its chapters also demonstrate that birthright and benevolence were two major fault lines along which the ambiguity of shogunal authority could be challenged. Chapter 2 exposed the zeal with which the shogun, his supporters, and his biographers worked to conceal any evidence of those ambiguities in the official record of the shogunate—an indication of the potential threat they posed. Chapter 3 looked more closely at the specific fault lines of pedigree, power, and painful economic reforms that allowed Tokugawa Muneharu to challenge the authority of the shogun, Tokugawa Yoshimune, after Muneharu became daimyo of Owari domain in 1730. Chapter 4 examined Muneharu's twenty-one article treatise, *Onchi seiyō*, in order to understand the way in which he framed his critique of Yoshimune as a ruler who failed to provide his subjects with benevolence and thus lacked legitimacy as shogun.

This final chapter demonstrates the ultimate resiliency of the Tokugawa political system through its examination of Yoshimune's resolution of the crisis precipitated by Muneharu: he did nothing. Yoshimune first attempted to induce Muneharu to join him as an ally. When Muneharu failed to conduct himself in a manner befitting his status and role as a daimyo, Yoshimune chastised him. Yet Muneharu remained defiant, and after he granted a Kyoto book seller permission to publish *Onchi seiyō*, Yoshimune was forced to silence his cousin by censoring the publication of his treatise. But, for the following six years, Muneharu was permitted to govern Owari according to his theories of benevolent rule by relaxing social and economic policies, and by allowing entertainment districts to flourish in his castle town of Nagoya. The rapid growth and prosperity that Nagoya experienced initially seemed to confirm the ideas Muneharu had outlined in *Onchi seiyō*. However, logical inconsistencies within Muneharu's formulation of benevolent rule made it an unsustainable means of administering the affairs of his domain for very long. Having depleted domain coffers, antagonized household retainers, and failed to translate the affection of his subjects into a viable economic or political basis for rule, Muneharu fell easily from power following a coup orchestrated by domain elders in conjunction with Yoshimune.

The ease with which Muneharu fell from power reveals both the durability of the Tokugawa political system and the incongruent—and ultimately hollow—quality of Muneharu's formula of rule. Yoshimune was fortunate that Muneharu's ideas lacked substance; for the shogun had to do little more than wait for the illusory world that Muneharu had created in Nagoya to fade like a dream. Had Muneharu succeeded in establishing a more vigorous system

of rule in Owari—one with a credible political, economic, and (even) military structure—Yoshimune might have had to move more decisively against his cousin. As it stood, Yoshimune found it unnecessary to do more than silence Muneharu and allow him to reap the “rewards” of his lenient rulership in Owari. The Tokugawa political system—even with its many structural ambiguities—was certainly robust enough to withstand the threat that Muneharu posed. Which is to say that it was very robust, indeed; for Muneharu’s challenge to Yoshimune—even with its many logical inconsistencies—was certainly credible enough to warrant his erasure from Tokugawa political discourse.

Perhaps the greatest logical inconsistency of Muneharu’s formula of benevolent rule was the conflict that existed between his own pride of pedigree, which was born of his fundamental faith in the notion of rule by status, and his attempt to make benevolence for the people the ultimate expression of political legitimacy in order to challenge the authority of Yoshimune as shogun. These conflicting premises of rulership were irreconcilable in practice. No matter how honorable and ingenious he believed commoners to be, so long as Muneharu held on to the idea that samurai ruled by virtue of their superior status, he could not push his challenge to Yoshimune to its logical ends and establish a true “meritocracy of benevolence” in Owari. Conversely, by paying homage to commoners, by allowing them to enjoy prosperity and pleasure within the borders of Owari, and by placing his retainers in service to their every need, Muneharu was undercutting the support of his most important constituency, his samurai retainers. This was no ambiguity; it was an untenable inconsistency that would eventually undermine the viability of Muneharu’s formula of rulership in Owari. Because of this, Yoshimune had to do little more than wait and trust in the proven durability of the *bakuhan taisei* to cut in his favor.

* * * * *

Inducement

Edo is a place where the various daimyo mingle, and [therefore] the *gosanke* must behave as the shogun does. Why do you believe that you are any different?

Envoy from Tokugawa Yoshimune to Tokugawa Muneharu, 1732

Prior to 1732, Yoshimune made several overtures of good will to Muneharu in an attempt to induce his cousin to cooperate with him and govern his domain in a manner that conformed to the laws and customs of the *bakuhan taisei*. In 1716, Yoshimune awarded Muneharu with his first courtly rank and bureaucratic office when he made Muneharu Chief Tax Steward (*Kazue no kami*) at the level of Junior Fifth Rank, Lower Grade. Three years later, the shogun promoted Muneharu to Junior Fourth Rank, Lower Grade, and in 1729, he carved out a minor domain in the northern province of Mutsu specifically for Muneharu’s benefit—just as the fifth shogun, Tsunayoshi, had done for Yoshimune some thirty years earlier.¹ With this

¹ Kuroita Katsumi, *Tokugawa jikki*, vol. 8. 505. Yanagawa domain had a putative annual yield of 30,000 *koku*. Muneharu never visited the domain.

award came a promotion to the office of Chamberlain (*jijyū*). One year later, when Muneharu unexpectedly inherited the lordship of Owari domain, Yoshimune promoted him to Junior Third Rank, made him Provisional Middle Captain of the Guards on the Right (*Ukon'e no gon chūjō*), and awarded him the office of Councilor (*sangi*).² At his first private audience with Yoshimune after becoming daimyo, Muneharu was given permission to use the character “*mune*” from the shogun’s name, and received an heirloom sword branded “*enju kunisuke*” (Long life in service to the realm).

Yoshimune had clearly hoped that Muneharu would assist him in governing the realm in line with the shogun’s Kyōhō era reforms. However, Muneharu resisted Yoshimune’s efforts to induce the Owari lord to behave in a manner befitting his status as a member of the *gosanke*; unable to garner the support of his cousin through the conferral of rank and title, Yoshimune discreetly admonished Muneharu for his unbecoming behavior in 1732. Even after he had chastised Muneharu and censored publication of his critical treatise, *Onchi seiyō*, Yoshimune continued to bestow offices on Muneharu, promoting him to Provisional Middle Councilor (*Gon chūnagon*) in 1733. Yet despite the shogun’s many efforts to mollify the young lord of Owari, Muneharu persisted in challenging his cousin’s authority by refusing to conform to the shogun’s standards of behavior. Instead, Muneharu chose to behave and rule in a manner that challenged Yoshimune’s shogunal authority by projecting an image of himself as an independent and ostentatious ruler, by relaxing economic and moral restrictions on his subjects, and by flouting the shogun’s sumptuary laws and frugality ordinances within the borders of Owari domain.

For nearly a decade, Muneharu ruled Owari according to his unorthodox policies while the shogun appeared unable to do anything to stop him. In part, this was due to the undefined nature of shogunal authority over the daimyo. Yoshimune had appealed to Muneharu to behave as other daimyo when in Edo because the non-constitutional Tokugawa polity had never articulated any specific code of rights and responsibilities of the shogun and daimyo with respect to each other. The *Laws Governing Military Houses (Buke shohatto)* provided only the loosest framework of regulations governing the behavior of daimyo lords, and it said nothing about the origin, nature, or limits of shogunal authority over them. Tokugawa politics were as much about the correct performance of duties, obligations, rites, and ceremonies as they were about the negotiation, promulgation, and enforcement of laws, policies, edicts, and ordinances. When Yoshimune did finally punish Muneharu for his misconduct, there was never any accusation that he had violated any specific shogunal law or edict. Instead, Yoshimune removed Muneharu from office based on vague charges of incompetence, malfeasance, and poor character; in other words, Muneharu had failed to perform as daimyo in the manner expected by the shogun.

Even without rigid legal parameters and definitions of political authority within the *bakuhan taisei*, rulers, their subordinates, and their subjects all understood how to behave, how to perform, and how to work within that political system. This dissertation argues that this lack of legal clarity constituted a form of structural ambiguity that gave the *bakuhan taisei* the flexibility and strength to survive for 265 years. Yet these ambiguities were also vulnerabilities, and Tokugawa Muneharu not only understood how to behave as a ruler, he also understood

² *Ibid.*, 8:547.

that refusing to behave as expected constituted a challenge to the shogun's authority over him. The altercation between Yoshimune and Muneharu, which consisted of Muneharu's defiance of the shogun, Yoshimune's chastisement of his cousin, the Owari lord's defense of his actions, and the shogun's eventual removal of Muneharu from office, reveals the fault lines within the *bakuhan taisei* that allowed rulers to negotiate its contours through their political conflicts. Yoshimune's resolution of the political crisis caused by Muneharu ultimately reveals the resiliency of the Tokugawa political system when faced with a substantial threat such as Muneharu and his theory of benevolent rule.

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The Accusations

While you are free to go on pleasure jaunts and the like in your own domain, Edo is a place where the various daimyo mingle, and [therefore] the *gosanke* must behave as the shogun does. Why do you believe that you are any different? On the fifth day of this month, you invited townspeople into the Owari mansion in celebration of your heir's first Boy's Festival, yet you have not officially presented Mangorō [to the shogun]. Moreover, you thoughtlessly flew the banner of the Great Avatar (Ieyasu) before base townspeople, thereby defiling it. You fail to uphold all proclamations [made] in accordance with the [will of the] shogun that must be followed. These include frugality measures that have been ordered, and it is more than a year [since you became daimyo]. It is said that samurai throughout the realm are aware of this.³

On the twenty-fifth day of the fifth month of 1732, the Chief Clerk of the Page Bureau (*koshōgumi bangashira*), Takikawa Harima no kami Motonaga, and the Inspector (*metsuke*), Ishiko Shōkuro Masatomo, visited the Edo mansion of Owari domain as a secret shogunal mission (*misshi*) bearing a letter addressed to Tokugawa Muneharu from the shogun. The letter was brief, and asked Muneharu to respond to three accusations: first, that he dallied in Edo when he was supposed to be attending to affairs in Owari; second, that he had allowed commoners into the grounds of his Edo mansion in order to view a banner presented to the founder of the Owari house by Tokugawa Ieyasu; and finally, that he had failed to uphold the sumptuary laws established by the shogun.⁴

³ Abe Naosuke, *Bihan seiki*, 1:340. Although official records are no longer extant, sources including Abe's *Bihan seiki* and *Kyōhō bishū jōshidome* corroborate the details of this episode. The *Bihan seiki* is an early Meiji period history of Owari domain by Abe Naosuke (1837-1908).

⁴ Although Donald Shively holds that the bakufu was not too concerned about enforcing *ken'yaku rei* with respect to daimyo, Muneharu's case shows that sumptuary laws were available to the shogun to use as a basis for censuring even the most elite samurai. Indeed, Yoshimune appears to have attached higher than normal expectations for members of the *gosanke* to set a positive example for others. See: Shively, "Sumptuary Regulation and Status in Early Tokugawa Japan," 150.

Yoshimune's first accusation against Muneharu was that the daimyo had overstayed his tour of duty in the shogun's capital, and that he was selfishly enjoying the pleasures of Edo when he was meant to be in Nagoya taking care of the administrative affairs of his domain. "While you are free to go on pleasure jaunts and the like in your own domain," Yoshimune told his cousin, "Edo is a place where the various daimyo mingle, and [therefore] the *gosanke* must behave as the shogun does. Why do you believe that you are any different?" This accusation points to the often-neglected inverse implications of the alternate attendance (*sankin kōtai*) system: a daimyo had no business in Edo when he was not serving the shogun.⁵ When considering the implications of the *sankin kōtai* policy, historians often focus on the fact that it was meant to control the daimyo by bringing them to Edo and forcing them to wait upon the needs of the shogun.⁶ Not only did alternate attendance ritualize a complex and cogent socio-economic hierarchy, it also crippled the daimyo financially by forcing them to furnish lavish Edo mansions, costly military retinues, and obligatory tributary gifts—all in accordance with their rank and title.

Yoshimune's accusation, however, is a powerful reminder that the shogun's authority not only brought daimyo to Edo, but it dispatched them to their castle towns as well. Especially during the tenure of Yoshimune, whose many strict sumptuary laws sought to curtail extravagance among the samurai, Edo was not intended to be a place of pleasure and amusement (although that was often the case).⁷ Officially, for the political elite, Edo was the administrative headquarters of the shogun's government; they were there to staff its offices and maintain its smooth operation.⁸ Otherwise, daimyo had no business being in Edo, and it was their duty to manage their domains from their own castle towns. For Muneharu to linger in Edo was a violation of bakufu law as prescribed by the *Buke shohatto*, and his actions bordered on insubordination.

Yoshimune's second allegation charged Muneharu with transgressing accepted status boundaries by allowing commoners into the Owari mansion in Edo—a space reserved for the

⁵ Beginning in 1635, the bakufu routinized attendance on the shogun, demanding that daimyo spend six months of each year in Edo. The bakufu required daimyo proceed to and from Edo accompanied by retinues of sizes befitting their rank. Wives and children were required to live (held hostage) in the Edo mansions of daimyo, which the bakufu also required daimyo to construct in accordance with their rank. All of this required an enormous economic outlay. It is generally believed that the policy was implemented in order to strengthen bakufu control over the daimyo by weakening them economically. See: Toshio George Tsukahira, *Feudal Control in Tokugawa Japan* (Cambridge, Mass.: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1966). Recent scholarship, however, suggests that daimyo also found real benefits in the system. Jennifer Amyx, "Sankin kōtai: Institutionalized Trust as the Foundation of Economic Development in the Tokugawa Era" Stanford: Stanford Asia/Pacific Research Center, 1997.

⁶ For example, see: John Whitney Hall, *Japan from Prehistory to Modern Times*, 1st ed. (New York: Delacorte Press, 1970), 169; Kenneth B Pyle, *The Making of Modern Japan*, 2nd ed. (Lexington, Mass: D.C. Heath, 1996), 14; Totman, *Early Modern Japan*, 108.

⁷ Muneharu was a fine example of this. Like the wives, daughters, and younger sons of many daimyo, Muneharu had grown up in Edo with both time and money to spend in the tea houses and kabuki theaters of the Yoshiwara entertainment district. Although daimyo were made to travel back and forth between Edo and their provincial castle towns, their wives and children were required to remain in Edo, virtual hostages to the Tokugawa, and collateral against rebellion by the daimyo.

⁸ The second article of the *Buke shohatto* issued by Yoshimune in 1717 requires daimyo to spend a portion of each year in Edo for the specific purpose of serving the shogun. See: Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke, *Ofuregaki kampō shūsei*, 12.

official business of the state. “On the fifth day of this month, you invited townspeople into the Owari mansion in celebration of your heir’s first Boy’s Festival . . . Moreover, you thoughtlessly flew the banner of the Great Avatar (Ieyasu) before base townspeople, thereby defiling it.” Muneharu had risked defamation of the Tokugawa clan’s direct and unique connection to the divine Tokugawa Ieyasu, as symbolized by the banner he had presented to the Owari house. Did Yoshimune believe that commoners could defile a banner that Ieyasu had presented to the Owari house simply by gazing upon it? Likely not. The significance of Muneharu’s actions lay in his breach of spatial and class norms. The power of the banner lay ultimately in the ability of the Tokugawa to deny access to it; to bring commoners into such close proximity of those symbols of Tokugawa authority was to risk denuding them of their mystique. Yoshimune wanted Muneharu to act according to acceptable modes of conduct, which included maintaining the status boundaries between rulers and their subjects.

Of the three, Yoshimune’s final accusation that Muneharu had failed to obey the shogun’s frugality laws was the most concrete example of any legal violation on the part of Muneharu. Yet the accusation does not mention any code of law, such as the *Buke shohatto*, that Muneharu violated. The *Buke shohatto* was the most explicit, statutory expression of shogunal authority over the daimyo. First promulgated by Ieyasu in 1615, the thirteen brief articles constituted a general code of conduct, outlining basic responsibilities and prohibitions for the daimyo. They functioned primarily as a means of sapping daimyo of their ability to challenge the supremacy of the Tokugawa rather than as an articulation of the powers vested in any component of the *bakuhatsu taisei*. The *Buke shohatto* sought to prevent powerful daimyo from engaging potentially seditious behavior, such as building alliances through marriage, fortifying military strongholds, or involving themselves in the affairs of neighboring domains.

Had he wished, Yoshimune could have charged Muneharu with violating nearly half of the articles of the *Buke shohatto*. For example, Muneharu pursued the arts of poetry and dance, not those of war; he attended drinking parties in both Edo and Nagoya; he allowed merchants, artisans, and entertainers to move to Nagoya from all over Japan and set up their shops, trades, and venues; he did not conduct his visit to the capital in accordance with regulations set forth by the shogun; and he did not—by any means—lead a simple and frugal life. Muneharu’s colorful taste in clothing, his fondness for the Yoshiwara pleasure quarters and the kabuki theater, and the relaxed atmosphere in which he entertained guests and retainers at the Owari mansion were all at odds with the frugality that Yoshimune demanded of the daimyo.⁹ Not only had every version of the *Buke shohatto*, including Yoshimune’s 1717 reiteration, enjoined daimyo to lead lives of moderation, but Yoshimune had further issued frugality ordinances (*ken’yaku rei*) on eight occasions by the time he chastised Muneharu in 1732.¹⁰

⁹ Yoshimune is known for taking only two meals each day consisting of soup and a variety of vegetables (*ichijū sansai*). Although he loved the flavor of saké, he would determine the amount to be consumed before imbibing, and never drank to excess. His clothes were made from simple cottons rather than fine silks. Muneharu, for his part, relaxed the curfew for samurai at the Edo mansion immediately after his promotion to daimyo.

¹⁰ For all eight versions of the *Buke shohatto*, see: Takayanagi Shinzō and Ishii Ryōsuke, *Ofuregaki kampō shūsei*, 1-13. Yoshimune issued his first set of frugality ordinances in the tenth month of 1716, just five months after coming to power as shogun. See: *Ibid.*, 560. The *Ofuregaki kampō shūsei* records *ken’yaku rei* for the years 1716, 1721, 1722, 1724, 1729, 1730, 1731, 1732, 1733, 1735, 1743.

Yoshimune was not concerned about Muneharu's violation of the letter of the law; he was concerned about his behavior as a daimyo and as a member of the Tokugawa clan. At this point, Muneharu was less of a threat than he was an embarrassing reminder to all of the limits of shogunal authority. The charges laid against Muneharu in 1732 were thus minor enough that Muneharu could alleviate the tension between himself and his cousin by rectifying his behavior and conforming to the will of the shogun. When faced with Yoshimune's charges, Muneharu initially acquiesced, and is reported to have humbly replied to the shogun's representatives, "Hereafter, I shall strictly obey [the shogun's will]."¹¹ The Owari lord had been reminded of his place in the hierarchy of the *bakuhan taisei*, and the matter appeared to have been settled to the satisfaction of the shogun.

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The Rebuttal

Once Takikawa and Ishiko had taken their leave, however, Muneharu crafted a letter to the shogun defending his actions based on his conception of benevolent rulership, the *bakuhan taisei*, and his place within it. Together with his polemic treatise, *Onchi seiyō*, which he had composed just the year before and which was about to go to print, Muneharu's reply to the shogun's accusations reveals the bases upon which he would challenge the political authority of his cousin throughout his eight-year tenure as daimyo of Owari. In his letter, Muneharu asserted the parity of his own house with that of the shogunal line (*sōke*), he decried the notion that he might behave differently in Edo than in Nagoya as the height of hypocrisy toward his subjects, he refuted any perception that Ieyasu's image had suffered defilement by commoners, and he asserted that his consumption of luxuries actually aided his subjects by providing them with much-needed income. Critically, he never denied the veracity of the shogun's accusations. Muneharu was guilty as charged and he knew it. At issue were the fundamental principles of the *bakuhan taisei* that allowed Yoshimune to chastise him in the first place.

Muneharu rejected the status superiority that Yoshimune enjoyed over him, he made the people the basis of political legitimacy, he offered up his own model of economic and moral leniency in place of Yoshimune's stringent Kyōhō era (1716-35) reforms, and most dangerous of all, he did all of this in full view of the people, thereby transgressing the status boundaries that protected samurai authority over the other classes. Muneharu's response challenged the shogun's right to chastise him for his unorthodox behavior, and announced that the young lord of Owari had no intention of behaving in a manner that legitimized Yoshimune's right to rule as shogun.

Before responding to each of the shogun's three accusations, Muneharu began his reply with a broad challenge to Yoshimune's right to chastise him based on an unorthodox definition of the *gosanke* collateral houses. Contrary to the popular understanding of the Owari, Kii, and Mito houses, Muneharu asserted that Ieyasu had originally established the shogunal, Owari, and Kii houses as three collaterals, and thereby implied that these "original" *gosanke* enjoyed

¹¹ Abe Naosuke, *Bihan seiki*, 1:340.

equal status.¹² This assertion not only challenged Yoshimune's right to chastise Muneharu, but it was also a thinly-veiled reminder that the Owari house held a legitimate claim to the title of shogun.

Social change is like the edge of a sword. The dull instruments of our day cannot match the blades of old. That which we now refer to as the three houses of the realm (*tenka sanke*) is different from in the past. Long ago, the shogunal, Owari, and Kii houses were established as the *sanke* in accordance with the genius of the Great Avatar (Tokugawa Ieyasu) and were like the three powers of heaven, earth, and man. Although Echizen (Fukui) may be called a kindred house (*chakke*), it does not rank among the *sanke*.¹³ They are thus considered clansmen (*kamon*). Thus, aside from the two houses of Owari and Kii, people [formerly] spoke of the realm (*tenka*); they did not speak of the bakufu (*kōgi*). They spoke of [their lord's] orders (*go-i*); they did not speak of shogunal edicts (*jō-i*). They spoke of replying (*hentō*) [to their lords]; they did not speak of responding to the shogun (*o-uke*). However, in recent generations, this is no longer limited to our two houses. From clansmen to the lords of entire provinces (*kunimochi daimyo*), and from the various *fudai* lords to houses of unknown rank, everyone throughout the realm [now] responds (*o-uke*) to shogunal envoys (*jōshi*).¹⁴

Muneharu was deeply concerned with the status hierarchy among the great lords, and he pointed to several ways in which the language used in correspondence between the shogunate and the daimyo had changed to reflect subtle shifts in that hierarchy. Terms such as *kōgi*, *jō-i*, and *o-uke*, which were once reserved for use by the three collateral houses, now belonged to the argot of houses whose pedigrees were unknown. The Owari and Kii houses, he claimed, had lost the privileged status with which Ieyasu had invested them, and this represented a deterioration of the social order from the time of the Great Avatar. His implication was that Yoshimune, as an adoptive heir, could not command the same elite stature as shogun that Ieyasu had once enjoyed. He boldly contended that the Owari and Kii houses were coeval with the *sōke* branch of the Tokugawa clan, and thereby challenged the shogun's right to chastise him. Muneharu further compared the relationship of the *gosanke* houses to one another in normative Confucian terms by likening the *sōke*, Owari, and Kii houses to heaven, earth, and man respectively.

Finally, the comparison of society to a sword would likely have stung the shogun, who had previously attempted to cement their relationship with the gift of an heirloom blade. Modern blades, Muneharu suggested, were not made to the standards of classical weapons. Similarly, contemporary society was forged of a different metal than that of previous

¹² Even the Confucian scholar and shogunal advisor, Arai Hakuseki, had understood the *gosanke* to consist of the Owari, Kii, and Mito houses, and advised the sixth shogun, Tokugawa Ienobu, on his deathbed that Ieyasu had established them to provide the main shogunal line (*sōke*) with male heirs should it come to an end. See: Arai Hakuseki, "Oritaku shiba no ki," in *Taion ki, Oritaku shiba no ki, Rantō kotohajime*, ed. Matsumura Akira and Odaka Toshio, *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 95 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1964), 133-450.

¹³ Fukui domain was governed by the Matsudaira clan descended from Yūki Hideyasu, second son of Ieyasu.

¹⁴ Abe Naosuke, *Bihan seiki*, 1:340-41.

generations. Thus, no matter how much one worked to shape modern blades and modern society like those of old, one would only meet with failure. Despite his efforts, the shogun's many Kyōhō era reforms were failing in their mission to restore society to its former glory. As he argued in *Onchi seiyō*, the laws of the realm should match the changing customs of the day.

Having antagonized the shogun with thinly-veiled insults and allusions to his own genealogical superiority, Muneharu responded to each of Yoshimune three accusations in a manner that further displayed his sense of self-righteousness and his contempt for Yoshimune's shogunal authority.

The first accusation against Muneharu reveals something of his conception of himself and his place within the *bakuhan taisei* vis-à-vis the shogun. "Why do you believe that you are any different?" demanded Yoshimune. It is impossible to know the inner thoughts or beliefs of even the most articulate historical figures. However, Muneharu's actions as daimyo (his blatant disregard for sumptuary edicts, his unorthodox governance of Owari domain, and his lingering in Edo to enjoy the pleasures of the Yoshiwara district) all suggest that he did, in fact, believe that he was different from other daimyo and thus above the shogun's law. Chapter 2 argues that the origins of Muneharu's discontent lay, in part, in his sense of pride in his high *gosanke* pedigree—pride that was sharpened by the knowledge that his older brother, Tsugutomo, had been passed over for the title of shogun. Muneharu's sense of righteousness was further bolstered by his adamant belief that he was acting and ruling in a manner that was more benevolent for the people than was the shogun.

The first item of your accusation is the article concerning pleasure jaunts and the like. To begin with, I cannot accept your opinion that because there are many daimyo in Edo one must behave as the shogun does with respect to outings. . . . [Furthermore,] I have only treated my domain with the greatest reverence; regardless of whether I am in Edo or in my domain, I do not entertain myself while [my] people suffer and toil. Finally, people are two-faced by nature and slander [me]. It is despicable to cause one's subjects to suffer by behaving poorly when in one's domain, and acting properly [only] when in Edo.¹⁵

Time and again, Muneharu justified his unorthodox behavior in terms of the good his rulership was doing the people. In this instance, Muneharu claimed to be serving his subjects through his non-duplicity. There were many rulers, Muneharu alleged, who were models of propriety and diligence while living under the watchful eye of the shogun in Edo, but who behaved poorly when back in their domains, thereby bringing great suffering on their subjects. Because of their feigned righteousness, their libelous accusations against Muneharu appeared plausible to the shogun; yet Muneharu assured the shogun that he would never behave in such an immoral fashion. Regardless of the veracity of Muneharu's claim that he had been slandered, the manner in which he frames any question of the ruler's behavior in terms of its effect on the people of his domain is noteworthy. This perspective defined Muneharu's conception of rulership, and is a refrain found throughout the sources pertaining to him.

¹⁵ Ibid., 1:304.

Muneharu's professed concern for the common people likely arose during his youth, when he traveled along the streets of Edo availing himself of the many pleasures that the shogun's capital had to offer. This experience provided Muneharu with ample opportunities to witness the living conditions of the townspeople and low-ranking samurai, which he claimed were "beyond description."¹⁶ Even as daimyo of Owari, Muneharu continued to move among the commoners as he had done in his youth, and he came into contact with them on any number of occasions.¹⁷ His familiarity with those below his station was a threat not only to the shogun, but to the entire social apparatus that underwrote the elite status of the samurai and their monopoly on political power.¹⁸ In response to the shogun's accusation that impure commoners had defiled Ieyasu's banner, Muneharu argued,

With regard to the banner of the Great Avatar (Gongen-sama), . . . why are the unclean persecuted? In this land of the gods, the base and mean are not despised. The compassion of the divine lord (Ieyasu) is just like this. For more than a hundred years, the divine virtue of Ieyasu has blessed the people of the realm (*banmin*) and it is the divine will [of Ieyasu] that they should revere his banner. When the emperor views a noh performance at the Seiryōden palace, men and women of the capital gather [in the *shirasu* (an open area in front of noh stage)], and although there are impure people among them, no one complains.¹⁹

Muneharu accused his cousin of hypocrisy. The shogun only cared about transgressions of status when the Tokugawa were involved, and when such transgressions threatened his own authority. Moreover, it was the will of Ieyasu that the people of Japan receive his benevolence. Therefore, contact between the divine and the base should not be prohibited. Yet Muneharu's defense of his actions reveals the logical inconsistency that lay at the heart of his own challenge to Yoshimune.

On the one hand, he was acutely aware of status differences, and believed that his superior pedigree entitled him to rule as shogun instead of Yoshimune, who had been born into a junior *gosanke* house. He therefore pointed to the status of the Emperor as evidence that the symbol of Ieyasu need not be shielded from the impurities of the common people. (If *even* the exalted Emperor could come into contact with commoners, then so could his subordinate, the shogun.) On the other hand, Muneharu also contended that political legitimacy was derived not

¹⁶ Naramoto Tatsuya, *Kinsei seidō ron*, 38:166.

¹⁷ Various versions of *Yume no ato* indicate that Muneharu lodged in the homes of wealthy commoners when on tours around Owari domain. In 1732, Muneharu visited the mansion of a *konando* page, where he observed a Kyogen performance. See: Haraguchi Torao and Higa Shunchō, *Nihon shomin seikatsu shiryō shūsei*, 15:810; Nagoya Shishi Henshū linkai, ed., (*Shinshū*) *Nagoya shishi*, vol. 3 (Nagoya: Nagoya-shi, 1999), 276.

¹⁸ The *Nagoya shi-shi* points out that Muneharu's argument transgresses established bakufu mourning codes, which attach levels of purity to individual rank. The codes held that one was not to sully one's superiors. By associating the highest divinity in the eyes of the bakufu, Tokugawa Ieyasu, with the untouchables, Muneharu was defaming the Avatar and questioning the moral underpinnings of Tokugawa rule. Also, by subordinating the Avatar to the Emperor (who bequeathed the rank of Dai gongen upon the spirit of Ieyasu), Muneharu is attempting to check shogunal authority. See: Nagoya Shishi Henshū linkai, (*Shinshū*) *Nagoya shishi*, 3:260-63.

¹⁹ Abe Naosuke, *Bihan seiki*, 1:341.

from status but from the benevolence a ruler showed his subjects. Muneharu thus felt no problem transgressing status boundaries and coming into contact with his subjects. This logical inconsistency between birthright and benevolence ultimately undermined Muneharu's ability to challenge his cousin for the title of shogun.

In response to Yoshimune's accusation that he defied shogunal laws, including the *ken'yaku rei*, which were a cornerstone of the shogun's economic policies, Muneharu replied that there was a difference between true and false economy. The former, he argued, aided commoners by providing them with a much-needed source of income, while the latter did them injury by limiting the circulation of currency in the economy. There was no doubt in Muneharu's mind as to which type of economy he practiced.

It is not the case that I have not been frugal. As you are surely aware, frugality (*ken'yaku*) began with the [Confucian] sages precisely because [the people] could not eat. The frugality of those above . . . pacifies the hearts of the people, insures they are never without rice, and truly relieves poverty in society. This is why it is said that sage rulers (*shōshu*) treasure frugality. However, I am not a sage, and thus am unable to force people [to be frugal]. I can only be moderate myself. Whenever I meet someone of high or low status these days, it has become like an empty salutation or shibboleth [to speak of frugality]. To tell the truth, just hearing it, I cannot hide my feelings and must admit that I hate it. This is certainly why people say that I am not frugal. . . . The fact that great and minor lords (*taishōmyō*) do their subjects great harm by piling up debt year after year is proof that they are not truly frugal. In contrast, although I endeavor to be splendid [in my appearance] and it is said that I have eccentric taste, it cannot be denied that I have no debts. The splendor of those above is thus an asset to those below. Because I do not promulgate an abundance of legal statutes, there are few criminals [in Owari]. The debts of my predecessors are fully reconciled, and our domain has taken on no new loans. Townspeople pay no gift money (*chōkin*) and the tax on farmers is light. Despite this, we have no need to use paper scrip. What appears to others to be extravagance is in fact [true] frugality. Such is my intention. However, this theory does not suit the [popular thinking of our] times . . .²⁰

Muneharu claimed that he was misunderstood and that his brand of benevolent frugality, which appeared to others as extravagance and waste, actually followed the model of the ancient sages and alleviated the hardship and hunger of those below. Proof of this could be found in the sound financial practices of Owari domain. In contrast, other daimyo were forced to increase taxes on villagers, to extract special "gift moneys" from wealthy merchants who did business in their domains, and to issue increasingly worthless paper specie.

Muneharu spoke of other daimyo, but his meaning was clear: in some form or another, Yoshimune was guilty of all of these practices. His fixed rice tax (*jōmen hō*) had increased the amount that villages had to pay in annual rice tax (*nengu*) to record levels; he used the licensing

²⁰ Ibid., 1:341-42.

of guilds to extract taxes from merchants in the urban centers of Edo, Osaka, and Kyoto; he imposed an unprecedented levy (*agemai no sei*) on the daimyo in exchange for reductions in their *sankin kōtai* responsibilities; and in 1736, he debased the value of bakufu currency in order to alleviate problems associated with the constrained monetary supply that his earlier economic policies had created. Yoshimune surely understood Muneharu's suggestion that the shogun's frugality measures were injurious to his subjects, that he therefore lacked the benevolence of the ancient sages, and that he was ruling improperly. In short, Yoshimune's economic policies were evidence to Muneharu that the shogun did not possess the legitimate right to rule.

Muneharu asserted that his brand of benevolent frugality imposed none of these burdens on his subjects because "the splendor of those above is an asset to those below." Throughout his tenure as daimyo of Owari, Muneharu encouraged consumption by the domain and among his retainers as a means of fueling the economy. He understood the way in which lenient economic policies and increased consumption could fuel demand and thereby create wealth. However, he failed to simultaneously institute policies (i.e., taxes) that would have allowed the state to avail itself of a portion of this new wealth and offset the pattern of consumption that he had undertaken. This lack of a solid economic basis for his brand of benevolent rule is evidence of the uncoordinated—and ultimately hollow—nature of Muneharu's reforms, and was one of the primary reasons that Yoshimune had to do so little to remove Muneharu as a threat.

Thus, by the time he was removed from office on charges of maladministration of his domain and causing his subjects economic hardship, Muneharu had proven himself to be duplicitous. He had inherited a domain fisc that enjoyed a surplus of both cash and crops in 1731, but by 1739 Owari was in debt to the tune of 74,607 *ryō* of gold and 34,779 *koku* of rice thanks to his profligate spending habits.²¹ In the years following Muneharu's removal, Owari elders extracted nearly 20,000 *ryō* in forced loans from villagers, an unprecedented action for the wealthiest of the *gosanke* houses.²²

When Yoshimune dispatched his secret envoy to call on Muneharu, the shogun had meant for his accusations to reprimand—not punish—the Owari lord. Yoshimune had initially sought an ally in his cousin, and in 1732 he offered him another opportunity to rectify his behavior in a manner expected of him as a daimyo and as a member of the *gosanke*. However, Muneharu's reply indicated that he had no intention of conforming to the shogun's code of conduct. He denied the validity of Yoshimune's accusations and contended that he had done nothing to merit chastisement by the shogun. He asserted that his behavior while in Edo did no harm to his subjects. He defended his transgression of status boundaries by denying that contact with base commoners defiled the symbol of Ieyasu. And he argued that his spendthrift ways were a form of true economy, for they aided those below.

Muneharu understood the implications of every utterance he made. He understood the power of his cousin and the risk he was taking in challenging Yoshimune's authority as shogun. His words were not empty; his threat was not feigned. He governed according to the ideals he set forth in *Onchi seiyō*, and for eight years he provided his subjects with benevolent rule

²¹ Hayashi Tōichi, ed., *Kinsei Nagoya kyōgen emaki no sekai* (Osaka: Seibundō, 2007), 3-4.

²² Nagoya Shishi Henshū linkai, (*Shinshū*) *Nagoya shishi*, 3:266-67.

through lenient economic and social reforms. It is therefore impossible to dismiss Muneharu, his unorthodox theories of benevolent governance, or the threat that they posed to the shogun and the *bakuhau taisei* as inconsequential to the shape of Tokugawa politics. The rivalry between Muneharu and Yoshimune sheds light on the ways in which structural ambiguities of the *bakuhau taisei* could be exploited for political gain and how the shogun worked to resolve the crisis precipitated by Muneharu's insubordination. Their battle over the fault lines of benevolence and birthright constituted a form of political discourse that brought subtle yet significant changes to the political system and thereby allowed it to survive well into the nineteenth century.

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The Cultural Flourishing of Nagoya

In 1731, when Muneharu entered Owari domain for the first time in his official capacity as daimyo, he brought with him copies of a brief manuscript that he had composed in order to inform his retainers of their new lord's ideas on the nature of benevolent rule. Between the time he distributed copies of *Onchi seiyō* and the time of his altercation with the shogun, copies of Muneharu's treatise had made their way to Kyoto and other parts of Japan, where they met with enthusiastic audiences. The reception of Muneharu's ideas was popular enough that a Kyoto book seller obtained permission to run an initial printing of *Onchi seiyō* in 1732, just as Muneharu's confrontation with the shogun was coming to a head. Just one month after Muneharu had so boldly rebuffed Yoshimune's admonition of the Owari lord, the shogun ordered the wood blocks of *Onchi seiyō* confiscated and burned. However, the shogun took no further action against Muneharu, and this ended the altercation between the two cousins for the time being. Despite having been reprimanded and censored by the shogun, Muneharu seemed to have scored a major victory over the shogun in 1732.

Muneharu thus remained undaunted in his effort to challenge Yoshimune's political authority. Returning to Owari the following year, he set about implementing social and economic reforms that realized the spirit of *Onchi seiyō*, that blatantly defied bakufu law, and that exposed the limits of shogunal authority. Because of Muneharu's wealth and status, there was little that the shogun could do to prevent his cousin from carrying forward his plan for benevolent rule within the borders of his own domain. From the time Muneharu entered Owari in 1731 until Yoshimune was able to remove him from office at the beginning of 1739, the prosperity and dynamism of Nagoya stood as a visible challenge to Yoshimune's Kyōhō era policies, and were as much a threat to the shogun's legitimacy as was Muneharu's charismatic performance as lord of his domain.

Lord Muneharu entered Nagoya on the twelfth day of the fourth month [of 1731]. He wore a light gold headpiece, and two members of his retinue held a tortoiseshell umbrella shaped like a round rice cracker (*senbei*) above his head in the manner of a Chinese parasol. His kimono was black, as was his footwear, and

he rode on a horse. Each person in his entourage was also dressed in a peculiar manner. His pages (*koshō*) did not have their hair tied up.²³

Compared to Yoshimune's arrival in Kii domain some two decades earlier (when he had punished retainers who greeted him dressed in formal attire), Muneharu's entrance into Nagoya was truly ostentatious. It also reflected the difference between the rulers' approaches to governance and economic policy.²⁴ Whereas Yoshimune, like shoguns before him, remained an invisible ruler hidden behind the walls of Edo castle, the lord of Owari wanted his subjects to see him. While the shogun's conservative economic policies imposed frugality on his subjects in order to restore the health of bakufu coffers, Muneharu emptied his domain fisc in order to encourage the growth of merchant houses and entertainment districts in Nagoya and stimulate the domain economy. The flamboyance with which he performed as daimyo announced in no uncertain terms that a new ruler and a new era had arrived in Nagoya.

Whenever he went to temples and shrines to pray, Muneharu had a white ox saddled and bridled, and typically wore scarlet robes, but sometimes varied his costume. He always wore a headpiece, and carried a Chinese parasol and a tobacco pipe five *shaku* (feet) long with him. He rode an ox whenever he went to pray at temples—even at the Zen monastery, Teikōji. He was always coming and going [from the castle], and when in Nagoya, lanterns were hung at crossroads and on houses . . . and there were many novelties [to be seen] throughout the town. In general, when he was in the domain—in various places along the roads—many things were erected and lanterns lit in the evenings. It was beautiful, and people gathered to gaze [upon the spectacle].²⁵

Although Muneharu refused to perform as a daimyo in the manner Yoshimune wished, he constantly sought out opportunities to perform before his subjects as ruler of his domain. He sought to awe his subjects by associating himself with the trappings of the nobility. Wearing robes of yellow (a color reserved for the Chinese emperor) and riding a white ox (a beast reserved for the Japanese nobility) through the streets of Nagoya sent a powerful signal to his subjects that their lord possessed the pedigree and power to flout the will of the shogun and to establish a rich and bountiful reign within the borders of Owari domain. This visibility carried his message of benevolent rule far beyond the borders of Owari.

At the height of Muneharu's unorthodox rule of Owari, a kabuki theater in Kyoto produced a play entitled *Keisei tsuma koizakura* (*Love Blossoms for the Courtesan and the Master*) that took as one of its protagonists a character based on the flamboyant Muneharu. Although no image of the actual Muneharu survives today, a wood block illustration of the play depicts a figure precisely as Muneharu is described in *Yume no ato*.²⁶ The actor wears luxurious robes and a broad-brimmed hat, carries a long tobacco pipe, and rides astride an ox. The

²³ Miyamoto Tsuneichi, Haraguchi Torao, and Higa Shunchō, "Yume no ato," 805.

²⁴ *Nanki Tokugawa-shi* vol. 1, 532.

²⁵ Miyamoto Tsuneichi, Haraguchi Torao, and Higa Shunchō, "Yume no ato," 805.

²⁶ For an online image of the manuscript, see: "Keisei tsumakoi zakura," n.d., http://archive.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kosho/chi13/chi13_01700/chi13_01700.html.

production of a play based on Muneharu and the survival of this image both indicate the notoriety that he had come to enjoy—not only within his own domain, but also throughout Japan. Muneharu’s audacious performances sent a signal to Yoshimune that he would not conform to the shogun’s laws; it sent a signal to his subjects that the old ways of moral and economic restrictions imposed by the daimyo lord were gone; and it sent a signal to people throughout Japan that Muneharu’s economic and moral leniency could produce wealth and prosperity for his subjects in Owari.

While other domains struggled under the weight of mounting debt and worsening economic conditions, Owari drew attention to itself as a unique example of prosperity thanks to the lenient policies of its lord. Such visibility increased the power of Muneharu’s message and attracted large numbers of merchants, artisans, and entertainers to Nagoya in search of profits. Although the population of Nagoya had fluctuated somewhat through the 1720s, it never deviated far from an average of fifty-five thousand. However, census (*aratame chō*) records indicate that by 1750, Nagoya’s population had reached over seventy thousand residents, a thirty percent increase that it maintained through the end of the Tokugawa period. Thanks to the attractive economic conditions that Muneharu’s lenient laws created, Nagoya became the largest urban center in Japan, after the “big three” cities of Edo, Osaka, and Kyoto—a position it continues to enjoy today.

After making his audacious debut in Nagoya, Muneharu set about the business of eliminating the old order and establishing his own mode of benevolent rulership in Owari. Two of his first commands were to tear down the many copies of Tokugawa house laws plastered on the walls of Nagoya castle, and to remove the notice boards (*kōsatsu*) that his brother had erected outside of Nagoya’s minor pleasure district forbidding samurai from attending the handful of kabuki performances that were permitted each year. Muneharu also restored the rites and ceremonies of the Tokugawa house to the formality and grandeur that they had enjoyed prior to Tsugutomo.²⁷ In particular, he restored several annual celebrations and traditional festivals that Tsugutomo had eliminated in order to reduce domain expenses, including the annual festival of the dead (*obon matsuri*), which Muneharu encouraged his subjects to celebrate in a manner not seen in many years.²⁸

Muneharu demonstrated his commitment to his ideology of leniency when his infant daughter died on the fifteenth day of the seventh month of 1731. Initially, the people of Owari observed a traditional period of mourning during which they refrained from any form of celebration. However, Muneharu took the unprecedented step of ordering the festival to resume from the twenty-fourth day of the month. Townspeople hung lanterns and decorations along the major avenues of Nagoya and continued on with their celebrations. Later, each neighborhood competed in a dancing contest that filled the streets with men, women, and children parading before their new lord. Afterward, Muneharu rewarded neighborhoods for their efforts with prizes of gold and silver.²⁹

From this time onward, the names of famous actors from Kyoto, Osaka, and Edo could be found on the marquees of kabuki theaters that began to spring up in new entertainment

²⁷ Miyamoto Tsuneichi, Haraguchi Torao, and Higa Shunchō, “Yume no ato,” 805.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 806.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

districts that Muneharu permitted to thrive around Nagoya castle. As the creator of *Kyōgen emaki* depicted in his detailed scroll painting, masters of the *shamisen*, *shakuhachi*, *fue* (flute), and other arts also began offering locals the opportunity to improve their social graces through the study of popular forms of art. Sumo tournaments attracted people from throughout the domain, and *Yume no ato* even records the names of the wrestlers that appeared on the 1732 roster (*bansuke*). The text also provides a map of the three entertainment districts of Nishikōji, Fujimiwara, and Kazuramachi, identifying dozens of theaters, tea houses, brothels in each neighborhood. The physical growth of the entertainment districts was the most visible change in Owari since Muneharu had become daimyo. “Compared to spring of last year,” noted the author of *Yume no ato* in 1732, “everywhere is prosperous and bustling.”³⁰

The demand for entertainment was so great, in fact, that number of kabuki plays performed in Nagoya each year skyrocketed from just five to well over one hundred. More than fifty venues for kabuki, *jōruri*, *bungobushi*, and other forms of entertainment (including licensed and unlicensed brothels) were established in order to accommodate this demand. By 1733, kabuki playhouses in the district of Fujimiwara were even giving performances in the evenings. Large merchant houses from the capital established branches in Nagoya, making many goods available in Owari for the first time and driving out older, local merchants (*ton'ya*), who had traditionally relied on the favor of the Tokugawa to secure their profits.³¹ The rapid growth of entertainment venues, tea houses, brothels, and shops in Nagoya soon expanded the pleasure districts of Nishikōji, Fujimiwara, and Kazuramachi. The streets of Nagoya bustled both day and night, and a triumphant Muneharu rode through his fantastic world of entertainment and commerce in an open-roofed *kago* so that his subjects might gaze upon their lord.³² He had succeeded in creating a cultural capital that could begin to rival that of the shogun.

Throughout town, palanquins (*kago*) come and go both day and night. At night, lanterns are hung from the front of the yoke (in the manner of the *kago* used around the Yoshiwara and Shinagawa districts in Edo). The *kago* of the pleasure districts (*yūjomachi*) have indigo-dyed runners hanging from their baseboards and cost one *monme* and five *bu*, regardless of the distance.³³

The popularity that Muneharu enjoyed and the affection that his subjects felt toward him were documented by the author of *Yūjo nōatsu*, a eulogy to life in Nagoya under Muneharu. The *kanji* characters in the title of the text (遊女濃安都) merit attention, for they conceal within them a second reading, *Yume no ato*, which was the actual title of the text. The false reading was an attempt to mask the author's intentions from bakufu censors who were suspicious of politically sensitive publications. Informed readers and those sympathetic to Muneharu and his vision for a utopian life of labor balanced with leisure in Owari would have seen through the ruse and recognized the text's true title, “Traces of a Dream.” *Yume no ato* is an important archival resource not only because it is one of the few surviving documents that

³⁰ Ibid., 810.

³¹ Ibid., 806-807.

³² Ibid., 811.

³³ Ibid.

provides an account of life in Nagoya under Muneharu, the coup that removed him from power, and the subsequent social and economic retrenchment by domain elders, but also because it does so in a manner sympathetic to Muneharu and from the vantage point of someone who was close to the Owari lord.³⁴

Yume no ato survives in over sixty versions, many using different *kanji* characters to phoneticize its title. The Japanese scholar, Yasuda Bunkichi, divides the many versions of *Yume no ato* into five categories. Texts in first group, which includes the copy held by National Diet Library, are notable for the degree to which they focus on Muneharu and his activities in Nagoya and Edo. Texts in the second group focus on the pleasure districts of Nagoya (in particular the districts of Nishikōji, Fujimiwara, and Kazuramachi), which Muneharu allowed to grow and prosper, and which he visited on occasion. The majority of the copies of *Yume no ato* belong to these two categories. Texts in the other three categories combine elements of the first two categories, include documents that are contained (in part or in whole) in any of the first three categories, or contain documents that are not found in any of the first three categories. Despite the number and variety of texts, consistencies between the different versions corroborate their contents, and scholars therefore generally consider the text to be a reliable historical document.³⁵

Authorship of the text is unknown, as is the date of its composition. Yasuda points out that texts in the first category suggest that the author was close to Muneharu, and that he had regular access to his lord—to the degree that he could produce a detailed, chronological record of Muneharu’s comings and goings in Nagoya. On the other hand, texts in the second group suggest that the author of *Yume no ato* was well-versed in kabuki theater and other forms of entertainment offered in the pleasure quarters. It is worth noting that these two possibilities are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and that regardless of the author’s position within the domain administration, his assessment of life under Muneharu was overwhelmingly positive.

Young and old, male and female, high and low alike exclaimed, “Birth into this delightful world is the blessing of a former life. Has the Bodhisattva returned to this world? Thank you, thank you!” they all cried, showing respect for his lordship, and praising his rule. His heel did not oppress, and the domain was at peace. They greeted the New Year with prayers for budding profits.³⁶

The *Kyōgen emaki* scroll painting corroborates *Yume no ato* through its visual depiction of the growth that Nagoya experienced under Muneharu. The exact date the scroll was produced is unknown, and the title indicates that the painting depicts Nagoya during both the Kyōhō and Genbun eras (1716-41), making accurate dating difficult. Nevertheless, several elements of the painting and its accoutrements indicate that it depicts Nagoya during the rule of Muneharu, and that it was produced at about the same time. First, a brief text found inside

³⁴ Because he was sentenced to lifetime house arrest by Yoshimune for his unorthodox rule of Owari, later generations considered Muneharu a criminal, and many records of his administration were destroyed in an attempt to rid the domain of the stain his brief tenure left on the *gosanke* house.

³⁵ Miyamoto Tsuneichi, Haraguchi Torao, and Higa Shunchō, “*Yume no ato*,” 804.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 810.

the lid of the box used to store *Kyōgen emaki* describes Nagoya in a nostalgic manner similar to the panegyric tone of *Yume no ato*. It is thus possible that the creator of *Kyōgen emaki* was a contemporary of the author of *Yume no ato* or that he had access to a copy of the text. In addition, the last third of the scroll is dominated by illustrations of the entertainment districts of Nishikōji, Fujimiwara, and Kazuramachi, which Muneharu had encouraged to expand well beyond their traditional borders. In 1736, Fujimiwara and Kazuramachi were razed by fire, indicating that *Kyōgen emaki* was likely produced before this date, or that the artist had visited Nagoya prior to their destruction. These facts suggest that *Kyōgen emaki* captures the social atmosphere and economic conditions (if not the exact geographical layout) of Nagoya during the rule of Tokugawa Muneharu. Finally, the keen observer will note that the only other indicator of time in the painting may be deduced by reading the entire scroll from beginning to end. Pink and white plum blossoms found on the right of the scroll give way to autumn hues and pampas grasses on the left, suggesting a progression of seasons across the scroll that reflect the nostalgia the painter felt for the growth, flourishing, and demise of the prosperous city lifestyle depicted in *Kyōgen emaki* and *Yume no ato*.

Like the author of *Yume no ato*, the creator of *Kyōgen emaki* is unknown. Given the positive light in which both texts depict life in Nagoya under Muneharu, who eventually became an enemy of the state, their creators likely wished to remain anonymous. A handful of Owari retainers are known to have painted scenes of Nagoya through the end of the Tokugawa period; however, a close examination of the buildings, human figures, and natural objects in the scroll does not provide enough information to narrow authorship to an individual or even a particular school of painting. While portraits of famous places (*meisho zue*) were very popular during the Tokugawa period, depictions of urban places were typically limited to Edo, Osaka, and Kyoto. It was rare for a painter to illustrate Nagoya, which suggests that there was something special about Muneharu's capital at this moment in history that the creator of *Kyōgen emaki* found worth chronicling.³⁷

The painting portrays the main thoroughfare (*honmachi dōri*) through Nagoya, which runs along a north-south axis to the main gate of Nagoya castle, and which was part of the Tokaido highway linking Edo and the Kyoto-Osaka (*kinai*) region. The buildings in the scroll are not depicted accurately in terms of their physical locations or proximity to each other. However, several historical temples and shrines, including Jinmeiji, Nanatsudera, and Nishi Honganji can be found in the painting. In addition, several famous districts of Nagoya are represented, including the Ōsu market along the avenue leading to Ōsu kannon temple, and the recently-developed Nishikōji, Fujimiwara, and Kazuramachi pleasure districts. More than a dozen kabuki, *jōruri*, and other performance venues are scattered throughout the scroll, many within the precincts of major temples and shrines. Large crowds gather outside the entrance to each theater, and crane their necks to read marquees listing the names of famous actors from Edo, Osaka, and Kyoto. Thus, rather than producing a geographically "accurate" representation of Nagoya, the creator of *Kyōgen emaki* sought to record the lively atmosphere around the physical spaces that distinguished Owari's new economic activity under Muneharu.³⁸

³⁷ Hayashi Tōichi, *Kinsei Nagoya kyōgen emaki no sekai*, 12.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

The human figures and their many activities in *Kyōgen emaki* indicate that the people of Owari had access to a wide variety of goods in the market, and that they enjoyed sufficient prosperity under Muneharu to consume those goods. All manner of shops may be found along the main thoroughfare, including a tobacconist, a kimono retailer, natto and noodle shops, a fireworks shop, and an apothecary. The streets of *Kyōgen emaki* bustle with hundreds of figures moving in all directions on any number of errands. High-ranking samurai ride through town on horseback with retainers in train; courtesans make their way to temples to offer up prayers; fishmongers hurry by with their catch slung over their shoulders; two men perform a lion dance in the middle of the street; a street performer balances an object on his head as he walks on stilts clanging a cymbal; and two samurai retainers minding their master's horse watch as the crowds pass by. Inside the buildings, still more figures busy themselves practicing their dancing, playing the *shamisen*, and singing; gentlemen enjoy a game of *igo*; and prostitutes solicit passersby from the doors to their brothels. Everywhere is a flurry of activity.

These scenes echo the passages of *Yume no ato* in their visual representation of the prosperity and leisure that Muneharu's subjects enjoyed during his rule and suggest that, despite the hardship caused by the shogun's fiscal retrenchment, the standard of living for commoners was slowly improving over the course of the Tokugawa period.³⁹ The creator of *Kyōgen emaki* documented those aspects of life under Muneharu that enlivened Nagoya and made it the largest and most important urban center after Edo, Osaka, and Kyoto. He recognized the economic vibrancy, the influx of people from across Japan, and the rapid growth of the Nishikōji, Fujimiwara, and Kazuramachi pleasure districts (their recent and hasty construction indicated by the light yellow color of their thatched roofs) as concrete manifestations of Muneharu's benevolent rule. His positive depiction of life on the streets of Nagoya—indigents are nowhere to be found—corroborates the sentiment of *Yume no ato*, and together they reflect the popular support and adoration that Muneharu enjoyed among his subjects.

Growth of entertainment districts in Nagoya was made possible through Muneharu's revision of the Owari house laws (*jōjō*) that each generation of daimyo had issued upon coming to power. Having torn the legal statutes of his predecessors from the walls of Nagoya castle, Muneharu drafted original interpretations of domain laws that allowed him to justify the growth of trades that were traditionally considered immoral by Owari leaders, including the theater, tea houses, and even prostitution.

* * * * *

Legal Reasoning and Retrenchment

The original *jōjō* code had been issued by the founder of the Owari Tokugawa clan, Tokugawa Mitsunao (1600-50), in 1634. Mitsunao's laws were very similar in form and function

³⁹ Susan B. Hanley, *Everyday Things in Premodern Japan: The Hidden Legacy of Material Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

to the shogun's *Buke shohatto*.⁴⁰ The twenty articles demonstrate that daimyo of Mitsunao's era remained overwhelmingly concerned with maintaining peace among their samurai retainers who had been engaged in nearly constant warfare until very recently, who suddenly found themselves living in close quarters in their lords' castle towns, and who were uncertain that the Pax Tokugawa would survive the many threats posed by remnants of the Warring States era.⁴¹ Nearly a third of Mitsunao's *jōjō* are thus concerned with the rather quotidian concerns of preventing fires, avoiding brawls and arguments (*kenka kōron*), controlling access to and the use of various weapons, and insisting that samurai obey sumptuary laws appropriate to their rank.⁴²

By contrast, Muneharu's edicts—issued almost exactly one hundred years after Mitsunao's—indicate that by the first half of the eighteenth century the Owari samurai had been thoroughly transformed from battlefield warriors into bureaucratic officials of the state. Muneharu's *jōjō* are concerned with bringing that bureaucratic administration more in line with his personal vision of a benevolent state that would foster his subjects through lenient social and economic laws. Muneharu's laws are a mixture of edicts from previous daimyo, including his immediate predecessors, Tsugutomo (1692-1731) and Yoshimichi (1689-1713), and some key articles that reflect Muneharu's definition of benevolent rule. It was not unusual for later generations of Owari daimyo to incorporate several articles from the codes of their predecessors in their own versions of the *jōjō*.

A close inspection of Muneharu's *jōjō* reveals that they are in many ways very similar to those of Tsugutomo's predecessor, Yoshimichi. In much the same manner that Yoshimune had reversed many of Ienobu's policies and edicts when he became shogun, Muneharu rolled back many domain laws to a point where they had been before Tsugutomo had taken office in 1713.⁴³ Tsugutomo's conservative fiscal and moral policies were very much in line with those of Yoshimune, and had allowed him to fill Owari's coffers with a surplus of gold and grain. Muneharu sapped this surplus wealth in his effort to stimulate the domain economy through increased consumption and demand for goods and services produced by commoners. Muneharu's legal reforms were thus as much a rejection of his elder brother's mode of governance as they were a criticism of the shogun's Kyōhō era reforms. In addition to reinstating some older laws and eliminating others altogether, Muneharu introduced several new laws that were meant to realize his vision of a prosperous domain governed by a benevolent ruler and his officials.

The first article of Muneharu's *jōjō* deviates subtly yet significantly from those of Tsugutomo and Yoshimichi, which read, "The laws of the shogun (*kōgi*) must be strictly upheld

⁴⁰ The third shogun, Tokugawa Iemitsu, would significantly revise the bakufu's *Laws Governing the Military Houses* the following year, in 1635, to include an official mandate that daimyo spend part of every year in Edo attending on the shogun and his government (*sankin kōtai*).

⁴¹ The last supporters of the Toyotomi had been vanquished during the Summer and Winter Campaigns against Osaka castle in 1614 and 1615, and the Christian threat would soon come to a head in the Shimabara rebellion in 1637.

⁴² Ichihashi Taku, ed., *Hōsei hen*, vol. 1, Nagoya sōsho dai sankan 2 (Nagoya: Nagoya-shi Kyōiku linkai, 1960), 37-38.

⁴³ Yoshimune issued the final revision of the *Buke shohatto* in 1722, duplicating almost word-for-word the 1683 version that Tsunayoshi had commissioned and that Arai Hakuseki had revised to the great consternation of bakufu elders.

at all times *as they are issued (ōse idasare no tōri)*.”⁴⁴ Muneharu’s version alters this slightly, stating only that “the laws of the shogun must be strictly upheld.”⁴⁵ Muneharu’s failure to underscore the need to enforce the letter as well as the spirit of shogunal law within the borders of Owari may seem trivial until one reads his second edict. “While the laws of the shogun (*kōgi*) are the standard in all matters, officials must not, of their own accord, prohibit things that are permitted by the *kōgi*.”⁴⁶ Through a semantic slight of hand, Muneharu created a legal loophole that would allow pleasure districts, kabuki theaters, merchant houses, and other trappings of the shogun’s capital to burgeon in Nagoya. By Muneharu’s reasoning, if the shogun permitted these urban amenities to flourish in Edo (even if limited to the walled-off Yoshiwara district), then there was no reason that the lord of Owari had to follow the precedent of his predecessors and outlaw them in Nagoya. Muneharu thus proceeded to relax social constraints on his subjects and allow for the growth of “immoral” trades such as his beloved kabuki theater.

It was not enough for Muneharu to provide his subjects with legal sanction to engage in activities that had formerly been prohibited within Owari. He also had to insure that his own officials did not attempt to enforce former moral standards and legal codes in which they may have had great personal faith. In a reversal of roles, it was the domain samurai rather than their subjects whose behavior now had to be restrained.

Officials and Captains (*monogashira*) must enforce all laws in a considerate (*shinsetsu*) manner. If those who enforce the law do so without consideration, it will be a mistake on the part of officers, and especially inspectors (*metsuke*) must carefully distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil. However, it is a great mistake on the part of officials to investigate only the faults [of suspects].⁴⁷

Muneharu insisted that superior legal status was not a license for samurai to treat commoners as morally inferior, to presume their guilt, or to look only at the faults of those they investigated. His edict reflected his belief, which he had expressed in *Onchi seiyō*, in the basic goodness and morality of commoners: “Even though their backs are bent from dawn to dusk, those who labor in the fields and pass through this world without wealth or concerns can live to a ripe old age because their hearts are tranquil and their bodies are healthy.”⁴⁸ For Muneharu, these qualities were evinced by their natural ingenuity and vitality, and stood in contrast to the torpor of the samurai:

Recently, we can see many youngsters between the ages of sixteen or seventeen and twenty who have poor complexions and lack vitality. The slightest heat or cold bites them. If they overeat even just a bit, their stomachs become upset. They take medicines at the onset of the slightest ailments, and only complain of

⁴⁴ Emphasis added. Ichihashi Taku, *Hōsei hen*, 1:44.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1:47.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 1:48.

⁴⁸ Naramoto Tatsuya, *Kinsei seidō ron*, 38:162.

their bad health. They have come to live like this because of poor upbringing, ill manners, and because they [constantly] take the easy way out [of things]. Because of this, their daily interactions are superficial and their hearts suffer constantly. Therefore, when people are not looking, they begin to slip into extreme debauchery and morbidity, and just when their strength should be blossoming; it is sapped from them in their prime.⁴⁹

Muneharu's positive assessment of the commoners and his economic and moral leniency may have won him the adoration of his subjects, but he failed to translate his benevolence into a sustainable system of rule. This was due to the undeniable fact that, at its core, Muneharu's formula for benevolent rule was little more than a product of his personal objectives to undercut Yoshimune's authority as shogun and to legitimize his desire to enjoy the pleasures of this world. Logical inconsistencies within his formula for rule ultimately prevented Muneharu from developing the necessary political or economic base required to sustain his governance of the domain.

On the one hand, Muneharu was an elitist to the core. He expressed contempt for Yoshimune, who had been elevated to shogun from a junior *gosanke* house, and he never doubted the superiority of his own pedigree. On the other hand, he championed his benevolence for the people as the source of political legitimacy that would ultimately sustain his rule for generations to come. Yet Muneharu believed as firmly in the divide between samurai and their subjects as did Yoshimune. While the logical end of Muneharu's brand of lenient rule was a dangerous "meritocracy of benevolence" that could have threatened the foundations of the *bakuhatsu taisei*, Muneharu never advocated for the end of rule by status in Tokugawa Japan. He always spoke of governing the people from a position above them. This irreconcilable conflict between the rhetoric of benevolence and his pride of pedigree would eventually contribute to Muneharu's fall from power after ruling Owari for just eight years.

The cracks in Muneharu's formula for benevolent rule had begun to show well before Yoshimune removed him from office in 1739. Along with the pleasures and profits of the Yoshiwara trades came many problems. Gambling, alcohol, and prostitution were all causing people to waste time and money in the pleasure districts and impairing their productivity in the fields and in their shops. Muneharu was forced to reprimand his subjects in a directive entitled *Ohanashigaki*.

"People," he explained, "whether old or young, find any form of labor difficult without relief for their restrained spirits."⁵⁰ Muneharu asserted that the need to release one's passions and pursue one's desires was a natural part of the human condition. His intention in making the pleasure districts available to his subjects was to provide them with respite from their hard labor. This, he argued, would improve the Owari economy both by encouraging the circulation of currency and by giving the people incentive to increase their productivity. He did not intend for people to neglect their occupations; nor were samurai to abandon their practice of martial arts. Yet the youth had grown idle and no one made plans for the future. Muneharu urged his

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Nagoya Shishi Henshū linkai, (*Shinshū*) Nagoya shishi, 3:256.

subjects to improve their moral behavior so that the domain might experience economic prosperity long into the future.

If we consider wealth in a manner that does not produce harmful circumstances, and understand that it is precisely like raising crops, then our manners and customs will be appropriate, and our hearts will find [suitable] expression. Understand that what is of primary importance in the long run is that if approved entertainment and pleasure districts are never allowed to decline [morally], our hearts and livelihood will enjoy steadfast prosperity in the future.⁵¹

Although this was the first step toward retrenchment on the part of Muneharu, his admonition to the people of Owari spoke of his continued faith in his unorthodox socio-economic policies. However, paying no heed to their lord's warning, tea houses, brothels, and theaters continued to flourish through 1736, leading the author of *Yume no ato* to comment, "Every day is prosperous and the activity [in the streets] approaches that of the capital."⁵²

Muneharu's policies had begun to take their economic toll on the domain and its officers. Muneharu's efforts to promote the Owari economy through consumption and spending had severely depleted domain coffers. Samurai who depended on the annual tax revenues collected by the domain as their only source of income had fallen deeper and deeper into debt through the pursuit of their "natural desires," and the only people to profit from Muneharu's "benevolent" rule were their social inferiors, the merchants. With debts and resentment mounting among his own ranks, Muneharu gave notice in the third month of 1736 that entertainment districts would be closed due to the excessive idleness of the people. Commoners were ordered back to their household employments and samurai were admonished to practice martial arts and perform their official duties with vigor. However, because of sudden nature of his decision, Muneharu announced that a few establishments would be allowed to remain open.⁵³ This measure proved ineffective, and a second notice the same month declared that all venues that had been established by people from Kyoto, Osaka, and Ise would have to close by middle of fourth month.⁵⁴ Following a fire that destroyed large sections of the Fujimiwara and Kazuramachi pleasure districts on the eighteenth of the fourth month, many moved to other areas of Nagoya where they simply continued conducting their businesses in secret.⁵⁵

By the end of the following year, conditions had deteriorated to a point where Muneharu was obliged to establish an inspector's office in the Hashimachi district of Nagoya, staff it with two *ashigaru* constables and their deputies, dress them in uniforms marked "inspector" (*gin*), and order them to patrol the entertainment districts. This about-face on the part of their benevolent lord "intimidated everyone," and was a stark departure from his earlier policy of distributing uniforms marked benevolence (*jin*) to his palanquin bearers.⁵⁶ Despite his

⁵¹ Miyamoto Tsuneichi, Haraguchi Torao, and Higa Shunchō, "Yume no ato," 807.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 810.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 814-15.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 815.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 815-16.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 815.

radical shift in policy, Muneharu could not reverse the downward trend of either domain finances or people's morals. Owari was deeply in debt, the wedding of his adoptive daughter forced Muneharu to take the unprecedented step of borrowing 4,000 *ryō* of gold from domain villages.⁵⁷ No amount of warning or admonishing could stop courtesans and kabuki troupes from flooding into Nagoya and tempting people to spend their time and money in the brightly-lit pleasure districts. In the eyes of many, Muneharu's unorthodox manner of rule could no longer be tolerated.

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The Coup

Muneharu had been in Edo performing his *sankin kōtai* duties for just over three months on the ninth day of the sixth month of 1738 when the senior elder charged with overseeing affairs in Nagoya (*rusui*) summoned the Owari household retainers to the castle and informed them that they were no longer to enforce the edicts of their lord. All domain laws since Muneharu's accession were nullified, and the statutes of his predecessor, Tsugutomo, were reinstated. There is no record that any retainer voiced objection; the house appeared unified in its act of treason against its lord.⁵⁸ Trapped in Edo until the shogun gave him permission to depart, Muneharu was powerless to reassert his authority over the mutineers. He would have to wait six months until his tour of duty was complete before he could return to Nagoya. By then, it was unlikely that he could have regained power over his unfaithful retainers.

In fact, Muneharu would never even get the chance to try. Three days before he was to finish his tour of duty, the shogun ordered Muneharu held under house arrest in his Edo mansion. Yoshimune charged Muneharu with incompetent governance of his domain, with bankrupting the Owari fisc, and with causing his subjects undo hardship. He removed Muneharu from his office and installed a cousin, Tokugawa Munekatsu (1705-61), as the eighth Owari daimyo. The *Tokugawa Jikki* provides the following account of the episode:

The Owari elders were summoned [to Edo castle because] there was a matter to be transmitted to them. It was that since the time of his inheritance of the Owari fief, lord Muneharu's personal conduct had been inappropriate—something which had been conveyed to him via the house elders (*jukurō*). Moreover, he did not govern his domain adequately, and it was said that his subjects were impoverished. Although there was the matter of an admonition (warning) to the elders by way of Sakon shōgen [Matsudaira] Norisato last year, there was no visible evidence that Muneharu had restrained [his behavior]. Because this made it difficult to conduct affairs of state, Muneharu was confined to the Kōjichō mansion.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 816.

⁵⁹ Kuroita Katsumi, *Tokugawa jikki*, 8:817.

The “admonition” to domain officials via the *rōjū*, Matsudaira Norisato (1723-45), likely refers to a meeting between the senior bakufu elder (*rōju*) and the Owari *tsukegarō*, Takenokoshi Masatoshi, that took place in 1736. There is no record of the purpose or content of their meeting, but historians believe that Yoshimune conveyed his desire to remove Muneharu from power to Owari retainers via Norisato at this moment.⁶⁰ In fact, the shogun could not have carried out his coup against his cousin without the aid of the *tsukegarō* and the support of the Owari housemen. *Tsukegarō* were senior household ministers attached to the *gosanke* by the bakufu in order to monitor the actions of the three houses and report any signs of treason or mismanagement of domain affairs. As such, they represented an important means of information collection for the shogun and the bakufu. His use of Takenokoshi in order to discreetly instigate the coup against Muneharu is an example of how Yoshimune continued to rely on secrecy to assert his authority. In essence, Yoshimune eliminated Muneharu as a contender to his shogunal authority the same way he had eliminated Tsugutomo in 1716. Secret information obtained through established bureaucratic channels allowed Yoshimune to protect his authority over even the most powerful daimyo, such as Muneharu. Conversely, the *tsukegarō* was also an effective means for Owari retainers to feed information to the bakufu, enlist the support of the shogun, and coordinate the removal of Muneharu from within the Owari house.

In fact, the Owari retainers could not have mutinied against their lord without the consent of the shogun. Senior Owari retainers were either unable to confront Muneharu directly, or deemed it more prudent to turn to the bakufu for support. Given Yoshimune’s record of conservative reform, the importance he placed on fiscal responsibility, and the manner in which Muneharu’s policies went against the shogun’s frugality ordinances, Owari retainers were likely certain of enlisting the support of the shogun. Moreover, such a move would effectively distance themselves from Muneharu’s failed economic policies without risking factionalism and strife (*oiesōdō*) within the Owari house. This was likely the greatest fear in the minds of the Owari retainers. Should a factional dispute publicly divide the house, they would all likely pay with their lives. It was therefore in their best interest to present a unified front in conjunction with the shogun. All that remained in 1737 was to provide justification for Muneharu’s removal from office. The difference between the shogun’s charges against Muneharu in 1731 and those for which he ultimately suffered attainder is striking.

Although kind in his demeanor, Muneharu was lax in governing and was reputed to have caused his subjects hardship. Although he was said to be approachable in all matters, in fact he was unforgiving, and his fastidiousness caused people great consternation. After the Middle Councilor, Muneharu, succeeded [his brother] as lord of Owari, his vanity grew worse and his behavior was often capricious. Although the elders often admonished [him] that domain retainers and subjects were suffering, he would not listen.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Ōishi Manabu, *Kisei kanwa ni idonda "meikun": Tokugawa Muneharu no shōgai*, 173-83.

⁶¹ Kuroita Katsumi, *Tokugawa jikki*, 9:209. The *Tokugawa jikki* is divided into volumes organized around the lives of the fifteen Tokugawa shoguns. Each volume is divided into two parts: the *gojikki* (“True Record”) and the *furoku* (Appendices). The former consists of chronological records of the daily events in and around Chiyoda castle, while the latter is closer to a narrative of major events in the life of the shogun and those surrounding him.

The *Tokugawa Jikki* was not concerned with the details of Muneharu's (poor) governance of his domain. Evidence, testimony, and affidavits were unnecessary in the shogun's court. Loose charges of incompetence and mismanagement were sufficient grounds for removal from office. Yet these suspiciously vague accusations were more devastating than the 1731 charges of violating the shogun's sumptuary laws, lingering in Edo, and breeching class divisions through unabashed displays of opulence—none of which had Muneharu denied. What is more, fiscal mismanagement could be found in every corner of every domain throughout the realm; Muneharu was no exception. The vague charges of incompetence and fiscal malfeasance laid against Muneharu in the *Jikki* are at odds with the account of prosperity and pleasure found in *Yume no ato*. Ultimately, the fears of the *bakuhan taisei* are revealed: an eccentric ruler was one thing; an incompetent one, another. But a ruler whose principles of governance cut against the foundations of the accepted political order was potentially lethal and had to be eliminated.

How can we reconcile this assessment of Muneharu and his governance of Owari with that of his portrayal in the *Yume no ato*? As opposed to the *Yume no ato*, which was an anonymous panegyric written by a confidant of Muneharu, the *Tokugawa jikki* was compiled by scholars in the service of the bakufu who sought to reinforce the political legitimacy of a shogun who had become a symbol of good and correct governance. Looking back on the champion of shogunal authority and restorer of the Tokugawa house, the compilers of the *Tokugawa jikki* saw Yoshimune as an enlightened lord, or *meikun*. Accusations against Muneharu of both personal and political failure, then, were likely overdrawn by the compilers of the *Tokugawa jikki* as a reflection of their pro-bakufu biases. It is likely that the complaints of suffering that reached the ears of bakufu officials originated with Owari samurai officials, whose finances were being injured by Muneharu's policies. The suffering that they saw was likely their own. The continued growth of entertainment districts and the constant flow of people into Nagoya, however, stand as real indicators of economic opportunity and growth of an expanding market economy in eighteenth-century Nagoya. There was money to spend and money to be made. Both of these, however, bankrupted the domain's samurai retainers who had lost faith in their lord by 1737.

Following the removal of Muneharu, retainers moved quickly to restore public morals by closing down all of the pleasure districts in Nagoya.

Henceforth, all pleasure districts shall be eliminated. It is ordered that, as was the custom in former times, courtesans and teahouse maids shall be strictly prohibited from conducting business [in Nagoya]. Of course, such destruction will cause hardship, but even though there may be requests from various [people], they will be firmly rejected. [Establishments] must quickly decamp.

There are courtesans who secretly conduct business in teahouses located in the back streets outside sanctioned pleasure districts, where they have been taken in. Because women such as these absolutely must not remain [in Nagoya,] every remnant [of the pleasure districts] must be eliminated. Previously, these actions were postponed because there were daughters and nieces [of Owari

subjects among the courtesans]. It must be made clear to all that such rash behavior [as relocating businesses] is unacceptable. You must understand this and make it known to subordinates that such ambivalent policies will be strictly forbidden.

Regarding the removal of courtesans, the headmen of even houses in the districts of Nishikōji, Fujimiwara, and Kazuramachi [which were formerly spared destruction] must be informed that their establishments must be torn down forthwith. Regarding this item, it must be announced that even though petitions are submitted, they will not be accepted and [the establishments] must be eliminated at once.⁶²

Domain elders understood that closing down the pleasure districts would bring economic hardship to many. However, in their minds, the damage that these businesses caused domain finances by encouraging profligate spending and idleness among both samurai and commoners outweighed any potential financial benefit they might have brought the domain economy. Moreover, in allowing such close fraternization between samurai and commoners in entertainment districts, Muneharu's socioeconomic policies had threatened to destroy the traditional status boundaries that distinguished the ruling samurai elite from their moral inferiors.

In an effort to erase the stain that domain elders believed Muneharu's rule had left on the Owari house, nearly every official record from his tenure as daimyo was destroyed, leaving little more than the anonymous texts of subjects sympathetic to Muneharu to recount the halcyon days of life under their benevolent ruler that had vanished like a dream. After Yoshimune's order to place his cousin under house arrest, all mention of Muneharu disappears from the official record of the bakufu as well. Yoshimune had successfully erased his challenger from Tokugawa political discourse, defended his legitimacy as shogun, and maintained the integrity of the *bakuhān taisei*. Although we cannot know for certain, there are many possible reasons Yoshimune chose to punish Muneharu with house arrest instead of the more severe, yet more honorable, *seppuku* (self-immolation).

First, it should be noted that precedent existed for a shogun to order his kin to commit suicide. In 1579, Tokugawa Ieyasu had ordered his first-born son, Matsudaira Nobuyasu (1559-79), to commit *seppuku* as punishment for his suspected treason against Oda Nobunaga (1534-82). By the eighteenth century, however, the bakufu was more of a bureaucratic than a military apparatus, and its officers wielded more political than military power. Thus, Yoshimune did not need to go to extremes to deal with Muneharu. Moreover, the suicide of a member of the *gosanke* would have been an embarrassment to the bakufu—a stain not only upon the honor of the Owari house, but on the entire Tokugawa clan as well. Finally, Yoshimune had witnessed the bakufu attempt to deal with the now famous *Genroku Akō jiken* of 1703 in which forty-seven *rōnin* murdered the *hatamoto* retainer Kira Yoshinaga (1641-1703) in revenge for the death of their lord, Asano Naganori (1665-1701). Although they were judged to have violated shogunal law and were thus ordered to commit *seppuku*, popular opinion had made heroes of

⁶² Miyamoto Tsuneichi, Haraguchi Torao, and Higa Shunchō, "Yume no ato," 816.

the forty-seven *rōnin*, celebrating their loyalty to their lord in popular *jōruri* (puppet) and kabuki plays. Given Muneharu's reputation among the commoners—not only in Owari, but throughout Japan—Yoshimune did not need to risk making a martyr of his cousin. Muneharu had challenged the shogun with his visibility. By erasing his cousin from Tokugawa political discourse, Yoshimune made Muneharu into a powerful and lasting symbol of the shogun's ultimate authority over the even the most powerful and disruptive elements of the *bakuhan taisei*.

In September of 1739, Muneharu arrived in Nagoya, and was held within the castle precincts until 1754, when he was moved to the more hospitable grounds of the *shimoyashiki* mansion. In 1761, Muneharu was given permission to visit the nearby temple of Kenchūji in order to offer prayers for his parents. He left the Tokugawa estate only once more before his death; in 1763, he offered prayers for his ancestors at Kōshōji temple, where he also took the tonsure. Upon his death the following year, he received the posthumous name in the Buddhist Law, Shōzen-in. At sixty-nine years old, Muneharu had outlived his cousin by over a decade; yet even in death, he remained officially censured—muzzled by a political system that still considered him its enemy. Domain officials covered Muneharu's gravestone with a net of woven steel—a marker of shame that kept his legacy shrouded in silence and secrecy until 1839.

Precisely one century after he had first been detained by the shogun, Muneharu received a posthumous pardon. The net of steel was removed from Muneharu's gravestone for fear that his vengeful spirit might harm the new lord of Owari, Tokugawa Naritaka (1810-45). Both Naritaka and his predecessor, Nariharu (1819-39), were sons of the shogun, Tokugawa Ienari (1773-1841). The frail Nariharu had died at the age of twenty without once visiting Nagoya. His early death may have prompted fears that the angry ghost of Muneharu was bringing injury to the descendents of Yoshimune. However, there was in fact little the *sōke* had to fear from Muneharu or his descendents by the time of his pardon; the Owari Tokugawa house had been co-opted by Yoshimune's descendents since the time of the tenth lord, Tokugawa Naritomo (1793-1850; r. 1800-27), who had been adopted as heir from the Hitotsubashi *gosankyō* house. Following Muneharu's failed attempt to challenge the authority of the shogun and reassert the superiority of the Owari house, the *gosanke* lords would never have another opportunity to seize the title of shogun for themselves. Their power, which had once pretended to rival that of the shoguns, would fade like the traces of a dream across the remainder of the Tokugawa period.

* * * * *

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the altercation that took place between Tokugawa Yoshimune and Tokugawa Muneharu over the course of Muneharu's eight-year tenure as daimyo of Owari domain. It has focused on Muneharu's rebuttal to the shogun's accusations of impropriety while in Edo and his unorthodox rule of Owari as expressions of his challenge to the legitimacy of Yoshimune as shogun. Muneharu's successful defense of his behavior seemed to expose the limits of shogunal authority and provide Muneharu with the independence necessary to rule his domain in a manner that contravened the laws of the shogun and the

customs of the Tokugawa political system. Muneharu used legal loopholes to relax social and moral restrictions on Owari samurai and commoners alike. He abolished strict sumptuary laws and frugality ordinances and allowed his subjects unrestricted access to the pleasures of three burgeoning entertainment districts in Nagoya. Finally, he emptied domain coffers by patronizing those pleasure districts, acquiring luxuries such as exotic clothing and animals, and rewarding his subjects with large gifts of money. All of these actions were meant to challenge Yoshimune's legitimacy as shogun by displaying the true benevolence of Muneharu for his subjects.

Yume no ato and *Kyōgen emaki* testify to the initial prosperity that came with the rapid growth of entertainment districts in Nagoya. The growing wealth of the commoners appeared to be evidence that Muneharu's theory of benevolent rule, which he had outlined in *Onchi seiyō*, was a viable basis of rulership for the sake of his subjects. However, this dissertation contends that Muneharu's theory of benevolent rule suffered from critical inconsistencies that eventually undermined its feasibility as a system of governance. In particular, this chapter has examined the conflict between Muneharu's steadfast belief in the right to rule that his pedigree provided him and his attempt to make benevolence the basis of his political legitimacy. While the former prevented Muneharu from pressing his "meritocracy of benevolence" to its logical end, the latter undercut the support of his most important constituency, his samurai retainers and housemen. This conflict prevented his lenient economic and social policies from developing into a sustainable mode of rulership that could challenge the legitimacy of the shogun or do great damage to the premises of the *bakuhau taisei*.

This chapter also concludes that the ease with which Muneharu fell from power reveals the durability of the Tokugawa political system to withstand the threat that Muneharu's ideas posed. The shogun could rely on that resilience and simply wait for Muneharu's benevolent rulership to reach its logical end. This is not to say that Yoshimune knew all along that Muneharu would fail in his endeavors. He certainly did not, and it initially appeared that Muneharu's lenient economic and social policies might be tenable solutions to the problems facing eighteenth-century Tokugawa society. However, the strength of the *bakuhau taisei*—its durability and pliability across the fault lines created by its structural ambiguities—provided Yoshimune with the leeway he required to observe developments in Owari cautiously and decide on the best means of dealing with the threat posed by Muneharu. Ultimately, Muneharu's personal goals of legitimizing his love of worldly pleasures and delegitimizing Yoshimune's authority as shogun, coupled with the logical inconsistencies of his benevolent rule, led to his downfall at the hands of his own retainers. Yoshimune did not have to exercise the apparatuses of the *bakuhau taisei* in order to remove Muneharu because the apparatuses of the state did their job for him.

The structural ambiguities of the *bakuhau taisei* provided it with the strength and durability to survive Muneharu's challenge to Yoshimune. Vague charges of incompetence and malfeasance worked better as justification for removing Muneharu from office than the invocation of any rigid legal precedents. Secret negotiations between the shogun and the Owari household elders proved to be the most effective means of coordinating the coup that finally restored rule according to the shogun's will in Owari. Even Muneharu's punishment exercised the power of ambiguity within the *bakuhau taisei*. There is no record of the shogun sentencing Muneharu to house arrest "for life" in 1739. He was simply detained in his Edo mansion. After

he was moved to Nagoya, he served year after year of his sentence never knowing for sure if this would be the final one. Fading from his once very visible status as lord of the most powerful Tokugawa collateral house, Muneharu became a figure of ambiguity who was neither alive nor dead, yet who survived as a symbol of the power of the shogun and the endurance of the Tokugawa political system.

Conclusion

Fifteen generations of Tokugawa shoguns ruled Japan for nearly three hundred years. Given their small number and great importance, surprisingly few rigorous academic studies of the Tokugawa shoguns exist in the English-language literature. A handful of Western scholars have attempted to produce serious biographies of the shoguns. Most notably and most recently, Beatrice Bodart-Bailey's *The Dog Shogun: The Personality and Policies of Tokugawa Tsunayoshi* stands out as an exceptional attempt to bring one of the most important shoguns to life for students of Tokugawa political history. Bodart-Bailey's book is the result of her great effort to discover the historical Tsunayoshi (1646-1709) as an individual rather than as the product of the myths that have grown up around him. Bodart-Bailey works to dispel the reputation of Tsunayoshi as an eccentric and a despot by looking closely at those psychological and social factors that influenced his political policies, including his mother's devotion to Buddhism and his own upbringing as the youngest sibling of a shogunal heir who was not expected to inherit his father's patrimony.

Unfortunately, Bodart-Bailey's research is hindered by the same difficulty that most biographers of the shoguns eventually encounter: a lack of reliable primary-source documents. This lacuna forces Bodart-Bailey to construct her psychological history of Tsunayoshi from a wide variety of (sometimes unconventional) sources, including the measurements of Tsunayoshi's mother's cranium.¹ Nevertheless, her research is much more careful and rigorous than some earlier English-language shogunal biographies, such as A. L. Sadler's *The Maker of Modern Japan: The Life of Tokugawa Ieyasu*, which recounts several apocryphal tales of the first Tokugawa shogun—often without distilling fact from fiction. Timon Screech's *Secret Memoirs of the Shoguns: Isaac Titsingh and Japan, 1779-1822* avoids this historical fallacy by self-consciously reprinting popular tales about the shoguns as they were originally brought back to the West from Japan by Dutch traders.² Yet his enlightening study tells us more about the perception of the shoguns than about the shoguns themselves, and cannot be considered a shogunal biography in the strictest sense. Finally, it is telling that of the three English-language shogunal biographies besides Bodart-Bailey's, one (Sadler's) was written prior to the Second World War, and another (Shiba Ryōtarō's *The Last Shogun: The Life of Tokugawa Yoshinobu*) is a work of historical fiction. The third, Conrad Totman's *Tokugawa Ieyasu: Shogun*, is a hybrid text, aimed as much at popular as academic readers³ Simply put, without more and better scholarship, details about the personal motivations and political machinations of this small but important group of historical figures will remain an enigma.

¹ Bodart-Bailey, *The Dog Shogun: The Personality and Policies of Tokugawa Tsunayoshi*, 24-25.

² A. L. Sadler, *The Maker of Modern Japan: The Life of Tokugawa Ieyasu* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1937); Timon Screech, *Secret Memoirs of the Shoguns: Isaac Titsingh and Japan, 1779-1822* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

³ Shiba Ryōtarō, *The Last Shogun: The Life of Tokugawa Yoshinobu*, trans. Juliet Winters Carpenter (New York: Kodansha International, 1998). (Note: author's name given in original Japanese order with surname first.) Conrad D. Totman, *Tokugawa Ieyasu: Shogun* (Tokyo: Heian International, 1983).

Unfortunately, barring the discovery of a treasure house of shogunal records, we will never fully understand the personalities and motivations of most Tokugawa shoguns because so few primary sources, such as personal letters or vermilion-sealed edicts (*shuin*), survive in the historical archive. There are, of course, practical reasons for this lacuna. Regents, chamberlains, and bakufu elders gradually assumed many shogunal responsibilities following the accession of Tokugawa Ietsuna (1641-80) as a child.⁴ Delegation of his authority eliminated the need for him to be personally involved in the administration of the bakufu on a daily basis, and bakufu elders were reluctant to give up their new powers after he was succeeded by Tsunayoshi in 1680. Precedent mutated into policy, and, regrettably for historians, this process of bureaucratization eliminated the paper trail of documents authored by shoguns that might otherwise shed greater light on their private thoughts and personal motivations.

This dissertation argues that shoguns were erased from the historical record not only because of practical reasons, but for the sake of political stability as well. I contend that an invisible shogun was useful for supporters of bakufu interests, for it allowed them to recreate the persona of the shogun in an image that suited their needs. In the case of Yoshimune, for example, bakufu historians could mask vulnerabilities to the political system portended by the end of the main Tokugawa house (*sōke*) by trumpeting Yoshimune's birthright as the principle reason for his selection as shogun. An invisible Yoshimune could also be recast in the official record as an enlightened lord (*meikun*) to be emulated by later generations, despite the fact that his unpopular reforms brought economic hardship to many of his subjects and led to an increase in the number, frequency, and violence of peasant uprisings. Recognizing that the Tokugawa Yoshimune of the official historical record was largely the creation of bakufu historians allows a closer exploration of those structural ambiguities and vulnerabilities that Yoshimune's historical persona was meant to mask. Thus, unlike Bodart-Bailey's attempt to peer through Tsunayoshi's posthumous image as the despotic "Dog Shogun" and uncover the rationale behind his edicts and policies, this dissertation is less concerned with finding the "real" Tokugawa Yoshimune than understanding how the elimination of that real person from the record helped the bakufu survive.

Still, it is no surprise that most shogunal biographies have been written about the life of Tokugawa Ieyasu. Along with his predecessors, Oda Nobunaga (1534-82) and Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-98), Ieyasu accomplished the monumental task of unifying Japan under a single ruler after a century of civil war. Compared to the lacunae of documents related to later shoguns, a much richer archival record of personal letters, correspondences, and edicts written by the three "Unifiers" have allowed biographers of these men to reveal the political and military genius of each. Both Mary Elizabeth Berry and Jeroen Pieter Lamers have been able to analyze the policies and politics of Hideyoshi and Nobunaga, respectively, based on specific proclamations and edicts by these men that can be found in the historical archive.⁵ The reason for such extensive documentation of the unifiers but not the shoguns is that the former were in

⁴ Ietsuna became shogun at the age of ten. He was aided in governing by a regency of six bakufu elders, including his uncle, Hoshina Masayuki (1611-73).

⁵ Berry, *Hideyoshi*; Jeroen Pieter Lamers, *Japonius Tyrannus: The Japanese Warlord, Oda Nobunaga Reconsidered*, *Japonica Neerlandica* 8 (Leiden: Hotei Publishing, 2000). In addition, Adriana Boscaro has produced an English-language translation of several of Hideyoshi's correspondences. See: Adriana Boscaro, *101 Letters of Hideyoshi: The Private Correspondence of Toyotomi Hideyoshi* (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1975).

full control of their own statecraft, whereas a large bureaucracy that was primarily interested in self-preservation had developed around the latter.

Thus, within a century of Hideyoshi's unification of Japan, the Tokugawa shoguns had all but disappeared from the historical record—their authority protected by their invisibility, their invisibility an indication of the authority of their advisors. Even in the case of an active ruler such as Yoshimune, personal documents are extremely rare. *Tokugawa jikki*, the official record of the bakufu, has more entries about the daily business of the state during Yoshimune's tenure than for any other shogun except Iyasu, yet it says almost nothing about his personality or the political motives for his actions and edicts. Still, the thin archival record forces us to rely on official histories such as *Tokugawa jikki* for our knowledge of some of the most important political figures of the Tokugawa period.

The paper trail of primary sources has led most academic biographers away from the Tokugawa shoguns and toward the people who assumed so much of their authority: their advisors, ministers, and chamberlains.⁶ John Whitney Hall and Herman Ooms, for example, have produced biographies of two of the most important political figures of the mid-Tokugawa period: the notoriously corrupt Chief Senior Councillor (*rōjū shuseki*), Tanuma Okitsugu (1719-88), and his successor, Matsudaira Sadanobu (1759-1829), who was the architect of the Kansei (1789-1801) reforms. Additionally, Kate Nakai's *Shogunal Politics: Arai Hakuseki and the Premises of Tokugawa Rule* is particularly relevant to this dissertation. Nakai's book provides a penetrating examination of the intellectual and political efforts of the Confucian scholar, Arai Hakuseki (1657-1725), to consolidate political power in the person of the sixth Tokugawa shogun, Ienobu (1662-1712). Hakuseki's attempt to reformulate the premises of Tokugawa rule threatened many elite hereditary (*fudai*) daimyo who had used their positions within the bakufu to increase their own authority. Hakuseki thus set the stage for the early years of Yoshimune's rule, which were a refutation of the scholar's reforms by the shogun on behalf of those *fudai* lords who helped bring him to power in 1716. Nakai argues that despite the rejection of Hakuseki's reforms, Yoshimune's Kyōhō era reforms carried forward many of the fundamental principles of Hakuseki's bureaucratic and economic policies.

Because so many of the historical figures, events, and issues covered by Nakai overlap with my own research, her work has helped me frame and think through many of my own questions regarding Yoshimune and his role in the survival of the shogunate through the eighteenth century. However, there remains an important difference between the scope of her work and my own. Although Nakai's work elucidates the complex issues at stake for Hakuseki in the debate over the premises of Tokugawa rulership, the question of the shogun's role in defining his own authority remains unanswered at the end of her book. That is, whereas *Shogunal Politics* is a study of the way in which a Confucian advisor to the shogun affected Tokugawa politics, my dissertation examines the capacity of the shogun to define the contours of the *bakuhau taisei* and his own role within it. My research thus complements that of Nakai and brings us closer to an understanding of the capacity of the shogun to guarantee the survival of the bakufu in moments of political crisis.

⁶ Of the thirteen biographies in Albert Craig and Donald Schively's edited volume, *Personality in Japanese History*, only one (Schively's chapter on Tokugawa Tsunayoshi) is devoted to the life of a Tokugawa shogun. See: Albert M. Craig and Donald H. Shively, eds., *Personality in Japanese History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970).

The fact remains, however, that in the case of both the shoguns and their advisors, most historians of early modern Japanese politics have avoided writing biographies altogether. Many find institutional history to be more rewarding. (The archival record is certainly more substantial.) Conrad Totman's *Politics in the Tokugawa Bakufu, 1600-1843*, for example, provides a detailed analysis of the structure of the shogunate and the principles by which it functioned. Totman identifies the "vertical clique," which allied officials from various ranks within the bakufu administration behind specific rulers and their policies, as the primary organizing principle of shogunal politics. He further identifies a constant oscillation of political power between the shogun and his advisors over the course of the Tokugawa period.

Yoshimune, for example, was a strong, independent shogun who came to power as a mature ruler and who carefully controlled the administrative apparatuses of his bakufu. But not all shoguns ruled in this fashion. Prior to and following Yoshimune's tenure as shogun, chamberlains and bakufu elders played more important roles in the politics of the bakufu. As with Ietsuna, the encroachment on shogunal authority sometimes occurred when a child came to power, but not always. Several shoguns—some of whom had no interest in affairs of state, and others who may have been incompetent—purposefully chose to leave the governance of the realm to others. Yoshimune's son and successor, Tokugawa Ieshige (1712-61), for example, suffered from an undetermined chronic illness. (At the time, it was widely believed that he suffered from alcoholism.⁷) Ieshige could only be understood by his Chamberlain, Ōoka Tadimitsu (1709-60), on whom he relied entirely to conduct the affairs of state. Thus, despite the force with which Yoshimune asserted his authority as shogun, his gains against bakufu ministers and chamberlains were not necessarily permanent.

But if Totman's vertical clique tells us how political power was variously organized and negotiated within the bakufu, it does not fully explain the durability of that institution or of the broader Tokugawa political system. This dissertation departs from Totman's structural description of Tokugawa bakufu politics to investigate how one shogun contributed to the durability of the *bakuhatsu taisei* by engaging in political discourse over key points of ambiguity within the political system. Chief among these ambiguities was the role of the shogun in the non-constitutional Tokugawa polity. As Totman's monograph shows, political power was constantly being (re)negotiated between the shogun and his ministers. I contend that this very plasticity allowed the shogunate to survive the many challenges to its premises arising over the course of nearly three centuries—including that of Tokugawa Muneharu.

Whereas Totman's monograph focuses on the internal dynamics of the shogunate, other scholars examine the bakufu as a part of the broader Tokugawa political system and attempt to identify the locus of political authority within that system. The driving question for many of these scholars concerns the balance of power between the central authority of the bakufu and the local autonomy of the domain. Three works in the English-language scholarship are particularly relevant to my own study of Tokugawa Yoshimune and the survival of the shogunate. Philip C. Brown, Mark Ravina, and Luke S. Roberts have all produced important research emphasizing the ability of daimyo to rule their domains independently of shogunal influence. This dissertation argues that such theoretical autonomy was a principle source of Muneharu's discontent, allowing him to challenge the authority of the shogun by ruling his

⁷ Screech, *Secret Memoirs of the Shoguns: Isaac Titsingh and Japan, 1779-1822*, 129.

domain in a manner that contravened the laws of the shogun and the customs of the *bakuhan taisei*.

In *Central Authority and Local Autonomy in the Formation of Early Modern Japan: The Case of Kaga Domain*, Philip C. Brown argues that the cadastral registration (*kenchi*) and field redistribution (*warichi*) policies of Kaga domain are evidence of the autonomy the Maeda daimyo enjoyed under both Toyotomi Hideyoshi and the Tokugawa shoguns, none of whom succeeded in fully centralizing political authority or projecting it to the local administrative level. Maeda land assessment practices followed time-honored traditions that failed to comply with the mandated *kokudaka* system.⁸ Further, the unique method of land redistribution used throughout Kaga domain was created and implemented “from the bottom up” by villagers, not by bureaucratic representatives of the state. Brown’s history of local and regional political institutions reveals that the laws and edicts of the shogun did not always and directly translate into policy and practice at the local level. The rulership of Muneharu would seem to confirm Brown’s conclusion that domains enjoyed real autonomy from the central authority of the shogunate throughout the Tokugawa period.

Mark Ravina and Luke Roberts also contend that daimyo enjoyed a significant degree of autonomy from the central authority of the bakufu. In *Land and Lordship*, Ravina argues that the suzerain authority of lords who governed large, geographically contiguous provinces (*kunimochi daimyo*) was critical to their ability to rule independently of the central Tokugawa state.⁹ According to Ravina, the suzerain authority of a *kunimochi daimyo* provided him with the right and responsibility to secure the profitability of the domain through the use of monopsonies, domain script, and other economic measures. His authority placed merchants and the market in service to the domain government. Likewise, in *Mercantilism in a Japanese Domain: The Merchant Origins of Economic Nationalism in 18th-Century Tosa*, Luke Roberts argues that by the nineteenth century the “duty [of the daimyo and his retainers] had come to be defined as working for the *kokueki* [national prosperity of the domain].”¹⁰

Ravina and Roberts both view the domains of *kunimochi daimyo* as sovereign states within the Tokugawa polity that were largely independent of the central authority of the bakufu. Both scholars also contend that economic conditions forced the daimyo, his retainers, and domain merchants to work together in order to compete in various markets (indigo, cotton, sugar) with other domains and the bakufu. While Ravina focuses on the political authority that daimyo garnered by virtue of their efforts to insure the prosperity of the domain, Roberts argues that the economic loyalties of the domain government and local merchants unified them in a type of “nationalism” focused on the domain. Daimyo and their domain administrations worked to support the growth of local merchants, whose revenues were becoming increasingly important to the prosperity of the domain throughout the eighteenth century.

⁸ *Kokudaka* was the value assigned to both wet and dry farmlands for assessing annual taxes on villages, which were paid in units of *koku* (approximately 180 liters, or 5 US bushels) of rice. The *kokudaka* system was established by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and allowed him to reward his generals, retainers, and allies with lordships of domains according to their loyal service and based on the putative value of one domain relative to another.

⁹ Ravina, *Land and Lordship in Early Modern Japan*, 2-3.

¹⁰ Roberts, *Mercantilism in a Japanese Domain: The Merchant Origins of Economic Nationalism in 18th-Century Tosa*, 174.

It is no coincidence that Roberts and Ravina discover through their studies of the *bakuhān taisei* a political discourse revolving around the same questions of autonomy, legitimacy, and benevolent rule through economic policy that this dissertation reveals in its examination of Muneharu's challenge to Yoshimune. Muneharu's failed attempt to reformulate the basis of political legitimacy through benevolent rule (*jinsei*) on behalf of the people was but one part of a larger and ongoing discourse on the nature of rulership within the non-constitutional Tokugawa polity. Yoshimune's punishment of Muneharu did not erase the concept of *jinsei* from political discourse. It did, however, set limits on the acceptable definition of benevolence within the *bakuhān taisei*. Later daimyo such as Uesugi Yōzan (1751-1822) of Yonezawa domain discovered ways of casting themselves as benevolent rulers that did not challenge the legitimacy of the shogun, violate the fundamental precepts of the Tokugawa political system, or bankrupt their domains as Muneharu had done. By equating loyalty to one's lord with working for the prosperity of the domain, daimyo after Muneharu were able to justify merchant profits without jeopardizing the superior status of samurai rulers.

My observation that benevolent economic policies serving the interests of domain subjects and rulers alike were critical to establishing the lord's political legitimacy corroborates the conclusions of Ravina and Roberts. However, the case of Muneharu also complicates the picture of autonomous daimyo authority that Brown, Roberts, and Ravina describe in their monographs. Muneharu was lord of a large, powerful, and geographically contiguous domain, and he maintained an antagonistic stance toward the shogun by publicly defying his edicts and instituting policies within the borders of Owari that contravened bakufu law. Muneharu would therefore seem to fit the description of an independent daimyo empowered by the authority he derived as lord of a wealthy domain. Even so, as the punishment he received for his transgressions reveals, the shogun retained the ultimate authority to define the limits of daimyo jurisdiction.

Moreover, Muneharu does not neatly fit Ravina's notion of suzerain authority. He may have championed the desire for profit and pleasure as natural to the people, yet he never spoke of their industry benefitting either the Owari house or domain. Nor is there any record of his levying a tax on the growing commerce and entertainments in Nagoya. Muneharu's rhetoric was focused entirely on the legitimacy that the practice of *jinsei* conferred upon the ruler (himself). Rather than placing merchants in the service of the domain (as Uesugi Yōzan and other daimyo would come to do), Muneharu's unorthodox conception of benevolent rule put domain officials—including the daimyo—in the service of commoners. He inverted the traditional status hierarchy for the sake of aggrandizing his own political legitimacy (and multiplying the worldly pleasures he had grown fond of as a youth in Edo). His authority was ultimately undercut by the self-serving nature of his political agenda, and by his failure to secure the financial stability of his most important constituency: his samurai retainers who eventually mutinied against their lord.

My research thus complements the work of Brown, Ravina, and Roberts by demonstrating that while powerful daimyo such as Muneharu could, indeed, challenge the authority of the shogun, there were limits to the autonomy they enjoyed within the Tokugawa political system. A shogun such as Yoshimune could work actively to define those limits by issuing decrees, streamlining legal codes, and reforming the administrative apparatus of the shogunal bureaucracy. Or he could define those limits negatively by censoring, silencing, and

removing those who contravened or threatened the logic of the *bakuhān taisei*. The nature of the Tokugawa polity meant that such limits had to be negotiated through an untidy process of push and pull, contest and confrontation between the center and the periphery. Yet the elasticity of the *bakuhān taisei* that allowed this negotiation to take place also permitted the Tokugawa political system to survive for two hundred sixty-five years. Finally, the censorship and erasure of Muneharu from Tokugawa political discourse reveals the way in which the shogun—as the final arbiter of the limits of political autonomy—aided in the survival of the *bakuhān taisei* by helping to define its contents and contours.

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Following the general trend in the historiography of Tokugawa politics, scholarship specifically related to Tokugawa Yoshimune has also moved away from biography in favor of institutional histories. Rigorous academic studies of Yoshimune have consistently turned to examinations of the institutional, social, and economic aspects of his Kyōhō era reform policies. Chief among these studies is Tsuji Tatsuya's *Kyōhō kaikaku no kenkyū* (Studies of the Kyōhō Reforms, 1963), which was the result of his efforts to produce as historically accurate a portrayal of the eighth shogun as possible.

Prior to Tsuji, the most important and authoritative work on Yoshimune was Tokutomi Sōhō's (1863-1957) *Tokugawa Yoshimune no jidai*, which drew on *Sujinroku*, the work of the Meiji statesman, Katsu Kaishū (1823-99).¹¹ Katsu's text, in turn, was based on the work of even earlier, Edo-period authors. The continued reliance on secondary sources over the course of several generations of Yoshimune scholarship reveals the great potential for slippage of fiction into fact. Ultimately, in attempting to produce a rigorous study of Yoshimune, Tsuji discovered so little reliable data concerning the shogun that he eventually produced his institutional history of Yoshimune's reforms rather than simply reiterating unverifiable anecdotes about the life of the shogun.¹²

Two years after Tsuji published his study, Ōishi Shinzaburō published *Kyōhō kaikaku no keizai seisaku* (Studies of the Economic Policies of the Kyōhō Reforms, 1968). Ōishi Manabu has since followed with *Kyōhō kaikaku no chiiki seisaku* (Studies of the Regional Policies of the Kyōhō Reforms, 1996) and *Kyōhō kaikaku to shakai hen'yō* (The Kyōhō Reforms and Social Change, 2003). And most recently in English, Yu Chang has written a thoughtful dissertation entitled "Identity and Hegemony in Mid-Tokugawa Japan: A Study of the Kyōhō Reforms" (2003). As the titles of these studies reveal, these authors are primarily concerned with the causes, contents, and consequences of Yoshimune's reforms rather than his personality or political motivations. At best, each scholar is able to offer an assessment of the shogun as a ruler based on the effectiveness of his reform policies. None of their studies can be considered a biography of Yoshimune in the strictest sense.

The scholarly works of Tsuji, Ōishi Shinzaburō, Ōishi Manabu, and Chang provide much more cautious assessments of the eighth Tokugawa shogun than do many other studies that

¹¹ Katsu Kaishū, *Sujinroku*, vol. 1, 2 vols., Meiji hyakunenshi sōsho 52 (Tokyo: Hara Shobō, 1968); Tokutomi Ichirō, *Tokugawa Yoshimune jidai*, vol. 21.

¹² Tsuji Tatsuya, *Kyōhō kaikaku no kenkyū*, 1-4.

have either lauded Yoshimune as a uniquely enlightened ruler (*meikun*) whose insightful reforms saved the Tokugawa bakufu from collapsing, or decried him as the defender of the status quo whose economic and moral retrenchment perpetuated an oppressive samurai hegemony. Tsuji's conclusion that Yoshimune and his advisors "tried only to stabilize the form of government that they had inherited and that was, they knew, beginning to totter" perhaps best captures the sentiment shared by these scholars that Yoshimune was neither the hero nor the villain of Tokugawa period politics that less rigorous or more biased studies have made him out to be.¹³ As the institutional histories of Tsuji, Chang, Ōishi, and Ōishi (no relation) reveal, serious biographical study of Yoshimune is inconceivable without the discovery of documents that might shed new light on his personality and political motivations.

* * * * *

While this dissertation takes several important cues from all of the studies mentioned above, it offers a slightly different approach than any of them to its examination of Tokugawa Yoshimune and the survival of the shogunate. This dissertation is not a strict biography of Yoshimune; as I have argued, the archival lacunae preclude such a study. Nor is this dissertation a history of Tokugawa political institutions; a thorough examination of Yoshimune's reform of the Tokugawa bureaucratic system lies beyond its scope. Rather, this dissertation investigates a moment in history when the actions of individuals affected the form and function of Tokugawa political institutions. It does this through a study of the rivalry between two powerful Tokugawa rulers—a rivalry that entered the historical record through their actions and utterances toward one another and their subjects. The five chapters of this dissertation have examined the ways in which Muneharu's challenge to Yoshimune's legitimacy exposed the fault lines along which the Tokugawa political system could flex to meet threats to its viability, as well as the ways in which Yoshimune's response revealed the resiliency of the *bakuhan taisei* in the face of those threats.

Chapter 1 argued that the striking durability of the *bakuhan taisei* merits a closer examination of how the state weathered challenges to its legitimacy across the Tokugawa period. It also introduced the rivalry between Muneharu and Yoshimune as a uniquely visible moment of political confrontation that helps elucidate the shogun's role in guaranteeing the survival of the shogunate.

Chapter 2 examined the events surrounding Yoshimune's selection as shogun, arguing that it was not the smooth, obvious, or natural succession that official histories depict. In fact, all three *gosanke* lords held legitimate claims to the title of shogun in 1716. The end of the main shogunal line of the Tokugawa clan was a genuine moment of crisis for the bakufu, and untidy familial politics played an important role in Yoshimune's selection as shogun. Yoshimune's biographers later lauded him as a model ruler, or *meikun*, in order to obfuscate the crisis, the manner of his selection, and the fact that he had established a new dynasty within the shogunal house. The illusion of continuity was meant to protect Yoshimune and the Tokugawa bakufu from attacks on their legitimacy. For generations, politics had been the sole province of samurai who monopolized political power by right of genealogy. The succession of the Tokugawa shoguns was the ultimate expression of this logic, which required Yoshimune to

¹³ Tsuji Tatsuya, "Politics in the Eighteenth Century," 456.

preserve the illusion of a smooth and natural transfer of power by asserting his birthright as his ultimate claim to the title of shogun. Only when all parties to the *bakuhan taisei* accepted the superiority of Yoshimune's claim could his legitimacy be established. Despite the best efforts of Yoshimune and his biographers to mask those vulnerabilities, not everyone accepted his proclaimed right to rule based on genealogy.

Harboring discontent over the promotion of a junior *gosanke* lord, and convinced that the shogun's Kyōhō era reforms were deleterious to the people of Japan, Tokugawa Muneharu chose to challenge rather than passively accept the legitimacy of his cousin's rule. Chapter 3 outlined the sources of Muneharu's discontent as well as the institutional elements of the *bakuhan taisei* that allowed him to raise his challenge to shogunal authority over the course of his eight-year rule of Owari domain. Muneharu's unique position as the highest ranking member of the *gosanke* provided him with both the pride and the temerity to question the authority of his cousin. Equally important in Muneharu's mind were the negative effects of Yoshimune's Kyōhō era reforms: the revaluation of Tokugawa coins, the shogun's numerous frugality ordinances, and the imposition of higher taxes on villages were just a few of Yoshimune's policies that drastically reduced the circulation of currency and impeded the growth of the Tokugawa market through the 1720s. Muneharu had witnessed the effects of these reforms first-hand while growing up "on the streets" of Edo as the junior son of a powerful daimyo lord. It was during this time that Muneharu formulated many of his unorthodox ideas on the nature of benevolent governance, which he outlined in his polemic treatise, *Onchi seiyō*.

Chapter 4 provided an analysis of Muneharu's *Onchi seiyō* in an effort to reveal the logic of benevolent rulership that underwrote Muneharu's challenge to Yoshimune. Denying Yoshimune's claims to political legitimacy based on birthright, Muneharu subordinated the ruler and his officials to the service of the well-being of commoners. In his view, the primary function of rulers (and the ultimate source of their legitimacy) was ensuring the economic well-being of commoners through lenient social and economic policies. Muneharu defined benevolence as policies that would free his subjects to make the most of their natural ingenuity and drive for profit and pleasure. He tasked domain officials with supporting the work of commoners and sought to provide an outlet for people's natural passions and desires, believing passion would increase productivity by making labor less onerous. Muneharu argued that the ruler (himself) who was best able to foster the well-being of his subjects should be considered the most legitimate, while the ruler (Yoshimune) who showed less concern for the welfare of his subjects was certain to lose his mandate to rule. This argument turned the logic of birthright on its head, threatening to replace it with a "meritocracy of benevolence" that transgressed traditional notions of rule by status.

The threat of Muneharu's utterances was amplified by the fact that he spoke in a vernacular that was easily comprehensible to high and low alike, and based his heterodox ideas of benevolent rule on an orthodox Confucian rhetoric immediately recognizable to all. Having once chastised his cousin discreetly to no avail, Yoshimune was forced to censor Muneharu's treasonous utterances. The shogun ordered the *Onchi seiyō* wood blocks confiscated and destroyed in 1732. Undaunted, Muneharu proceeded to make a spectacle of his rule of Owari domain and to draw attention to his lenient social and economic policies aimed at stimulating the growth of the market in Owari.

Chapter 5 examined Muneharu's eight-year rule of Owari as a continuance of his challenge to Yoshimune. Having been chastised by the shogun, Muneharu returned to Owari where he allowed formerly immoral and illegal entertainments such as kabuki theater, sumo wrestling, and even unlicensed prostitution to flourish. He made himself a conspicuous ruler by purposefully associating himself with the trappings of nobility and attempting to awe his subjects with the magnificence of their unconventional lord who indulged in the many pleasures that Nagoya now offered. *Yume no ato* and *Kyōgen emaki* indicate that Muneharu's benevolent rule was initially welcomed by samurai and commoner alike. However, Muneharu's visibility and accessibility threatened the status boundaries that traditionally separated rulers from their subjects and protected samurai hegemony over other classes. And while Muneharu argued that his lenient social and economic policies were expressions of his concern for his subjects, his spendthrift habits rapidly depleted domain coffers—a move that cost him the support of his samurai retainers who finally mutinied against their lord in a coup orchestrated in conjunction with Yoshimune in 1738.

Chapter 5 argued that Yoshimune was able to remove Muneharu from power because the Owari lord's personal political agenda rendered his theory of benevolent rule untenable in practice, and because of the resiliency of the *bakuhan taisei* to meet and adapt to challenges such as the one Muneharu posed. Muneharu's claim that a ruler's benevolence for his subjects was the basis of his political legitimacy contradicted his simultaneous assertion that the title of shogun should be based on birthright. On the one hand, Muneharu decried the traditional paternalistic mode of rulership as injurious to the natural ingenuity and diligence of commoners. He asserted that the ruler must know the harsh conditions under which his subjects lived (although not in too much detail) and work tirelessly to relieve their suffering. Moreover, he regularly moved among his subjects so that they could gaze upon their lord and receive his munificence. All of these utterances and actions suggested that Muneharu was genuinely attempting to redefine the basis of political legitimacy in a manner that might have produced a "meritocracy of benevolence" had his ideas been carried to their logical ends.

On the other hand, Muneharu was unable to renounce his faith in the value of status conferred by birth. He sincerely believed that his own pedigree was superior to that of Yoshimune, and that by all rights the title of shogun should have fallen to the Owari house in 1716. This logical inconsistency between his faith in the people and his conviction in rule by status prevented Muneharu from developing his theories of benevolent rule into a more viable mode of governance. Muneharu's convictions were ultimately more about challenging Yoshimune for the title of shogun than about offering his subjects or retainers a more benign and prosperous form of rule. Thus, when Yoshimune and the Owari housemen moved against Muneharu, he lacked any base of support that would have allowed him to resist their coup. Muneharu fell easily from power, in part, because his reforms lacked political, economic, or even military substance.

Muneharu also fell easily from power—or, rather, Yoshimune removed his cousin easily from office—because the *bakuhan taisei* and the shogunate retained a resiliency born of their flexibility to handle challenges such as the one posed by Muneharu. Had his challenge been an anomalous incident, Yoshimune's initial chastisement might have resolved the problem quickly and discreetly. However, as the initial support for Muneharu's ideas demonstrates, his challenge to Yoshimune was part of a broader discourse on the nature of rulership in Tokugawa

Japan that had been developing since the late seventeenth century. Muneharu's threat was made more credible because he was engaging an idea that was increasingly central to Tokugawa notions of rulership. The ability of the *bakuhan taisei* to weather Muneharu's challenge indicates its long-term resilience. This durability allowed Yoshimune to move with caution and patience when dealing with Muneharu, and to let his cousin precipitate his own political demise over the course of nearly a decade before delivering the final coup de grace with apparent effortlessness.

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I have argued throughout this dissertation that, contrary to popular perceptions, eighteenth-century Japanese politics were not in the least bit static. The rivalry of Yoshimune and Muneharu demonstrates that the *bakuhan taisei* faced credible threats to its integrity from even the most privileged members of that system. I have also argued that the *bakuhan taisei* survived those threats because of its flexibility, which was born of its non-constitutional structure. This flexibility meant that the political system—rather than remaining rigid, static, and moribund—changed in subtle yet significant ways as a result of challenges such as the one Muneharu raised against his cousin, the shogun. The ability to adapt to the demands of changing social, economic, and political realities is what ultimately maintained the viability of the shogunate and the broader *bakuhan taisei* for nearly three centuries.

Although Yoshimune's victory over Muneharu appeared to uphold the status quo, the Tokugawa polity emerged from their conflict changed. Removing Muneharu from office reconfirmed the authority of the shogun to limit the political autonomy of the daimyo and rejected Muneharu's brand of benevolence as a measure of political legitimacy and as a viable mode of rulership. Silencing Muneharu also resolved any question regarding the legitimacy of Yoshimune's claim to the title of shogun and preserved the illusion of constancy in the succession of the Tokugawa shoguns. Together with his conservative Kyōhō era reforms, Yoshimune's victory over Muneharu gave the luster of stability and stasis to politics in eighteenth-century Japan, and it is therefore no surprise that historians have often viewed this century as the "dead middle" of the Tokugawa period; that is how it was meant to be seen.

Yet a closer examination of Muneharu's challenge to Yoshimune reveals that the contours of the Tokugawa political system were indeed changing to meet the demands of early modern society. Chief among these demands was the need to find solutions to the growing number of social and economic problems facing an unprecedentedly large population of commoner subjects. Muneharu's *Onchi seiyō* reveals that the debate about the nature of rulership and the role of the ruler within the *bakuhan taisei* was no longer exclusively the theoretical province of Confucian intellectuals such as Arai Hakuseki or Ogyū Sorai. By the eighteenth century, rulers were thinking critically not only about who should rule, but how they should rule, and on whose behalf. Benevolence was quickly becoming one of the principle tropes used to discuss the nature of rulership in Tokugawa Japan.

Although the concept of benevolence was an ancient one, its meaning as manifested specifically in terms of policies, proclamations, and principles of rule had never been defined, and remained subject to great debate. Muneharu's challenge to Yoshimune turned on the ambiguity of this definition of benevolence within the Tokugawa polity. Muneharu attempted

to realize a form of benevolent rule that gave his subjects great leeway to produce profit and partake in the pleasures that the growing wealth of Tokugawa society had to offer. Benevolence for Muneharu was manifested in lenient economic and social policies that fostered the wealth and well-being of his subjects. Such benevolence was also Muneharu's professed measure of political legitimacy. In removing Muneharu from office, Yoshimune effectively rejected this definition in favor of a more traditional and paternalistic concept of benevolence, which held that an enlightened ruler (*meikun*) governed his subjects by virtue of the superior knowledge and wisdom his position as ruler provided him.

Yet Muneharu's defeat did not fix the definition of benevolence once and for all. Nor did it extinguish debate over that definition from Tokugawa political discourse. Once the term had entered political discourse, it could not be erased—even if Yoshimune had desired to do so. (Indeed, even Yoshimune projected an image of himself as a benevolent ruler by establishing the *meyasubako* and *yōjōsho*.) Rather, Yoshimune's punishment of Muneharu established important limits to that discourse by clarifying what would *not* constitute benevolent rule within the *bakuhān taisei*. While Muneharu's specific formula of benevolent rule was rejected by the shogun, other rulers—including Yoshimune—discovered ways of defining themselves as wise and benevolent lords (*meikun*) that did not threaten the premises of the *bakuhān taisei*. Nevertheless, Muneharu had accurately identified benevolence as the principle critique of birthright as the source of political legitimacy in early modern Japan. By defining rulers in terms of their posture toward their subjects, benevolence stretched the Tokugawa political system to include the people in the formula of rulership without explicitly offering them any political power or undermining the real authority of their daimyo lords.¹⁴ This shift was critical, for by the seventeenth century, potentially violent peasant uprisings were undoubtedly the greatest source of anxiety for rulers at all levels of the *bakuhān taisei*.

Ultimately, the rivalries between Yoshimune and Muneharu, between premodern and early modern notions of rulership, and between birthright and benevolence reveal the profound changes that Tokugawa society was undergoing in the first half of the eighteenth century. Yoshimune's resolution of those rivalries helped the shogunate survive the challenges of early modernity well into the nineteenth century. Yet resolution did not bring rigidity; the political system retained its plasticity. Indeed, without the flexibility to meet the challenges and changes of early modern society, the *bakuhān taisei* would have been “dead” in the middle of the Tokugawa period.

¹⁴ Luke Roberts notes a similar trend in his study of the petition box in Tosa domain. Roberts, “The Petition Box in Eighteenth-Century Tosa,” 440.

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Appendix A

Onchi seiyō: Essential Wisdom for Benevolent Governance

Prologue

From ancient times, the way of governing the state and pacifying the people has been entirely a matter of benevolence. Although I was born into an aristocratic warrior house, I am the last of countless children. What is more, [despite the fact that] I am dull and lazy in character and weak in learning, I have become a servant of the bakufu without any explanation. On top of this profound blessing, I have unexpectedly received the inheritance of the main branch of our house, and have been given the weighty position of guardian of the domain. Considering deeply [the means of] showing my loyalty to the realm and repaying my great debt to my ancestors, it is nothing other than governing the state peacefully, fostering the people, and insuring that my descendants do not commit improprieties. Therefore, maintaining compassion and sympathy in my heart both day and night, I have written down my thoughts as they are in plain form (the Japanese vernacular) and bestowed this single volume upon various retainers so that all things [might be] upright and pure of heart (without corruption). This [manuscript] shall inform people far and wide of my true will, serve as eternal evidence of my oath, and express my sincere hope that high and low shall be in harmonious accord [with each other].

Kyōhō 16 (1731), Year of the Boar, Mid-Third Month

Councilor, Lord of Owari, Minamoto Muneharu (Seal)

Item: To begin with, one must have a firm mind (will) at all times. However, because one has many responsibilities, it is easy to become negligent and lose [this composure]. From one or two fundamental [principles] emerge a multitude of methods (ideas) [for dealing with any difficulty]. In particular, if those who would be daimyo of major domains do not make [their fundamental ideas] known far and wide, many errors will be made [by their administrations]. For this reason, I have written the characters *ji* (affection) and *nin* (tolerance) on hanging scrolls, and have drawn a sun above the character *ji*. If affection is hidden away in one's heart, it will be of no use. If it is expressed outwardly with the intention to shine into every nook and corner [of the realm], the sun's virtue will be adored. I have drawn the moon above the character *nin*. I have drawn the moon in order to indicate the notion that tolerance is to be kept in one's heart. When the characters for sun (*hi*) and moon (*getsu*) are combined, the result is "enlightenment" (*mei*). Does the *Great Learning* not say, "Illustrate illustrious virtue"? If all things are not made clear, then good and proper reason (*dōri*) cannot be attained. I have instructed that the coats of palanquin-bearers be marked with the character *jin* (benevolence). Thus, by seeing the characters *ji* and *nin* when inside and the character *jin* when outdoors, I plan to ceaselessly bear these [concepts] in mind day and night and practice them without fail.

Item: From ancient times in China and Japan, there have lived countless warriors of fame who surpassed millions in both bravery and ingenuity. However, following their [military] exploits, they were not successful [in governing the realm], and their legacies were utterly swept away. Their descendants did not survive beyond two generations because they did not have compassion (*jinin*) in their hearts, they cultivated their private desires, their luxuries and extravagance were extreme, and they had absolutely no true desire to foster the people. The Shining Avatar of the East (Tokugawa Ieyasu) possessed the virtue of tolerance in his heart. His profound benevolence (*jishi*) reached the lowest orders [of society], and he even forgave his enemies for their crimes [of treason] when they mended their hearts and submitted to his rule. Because he was an enlightened ruler (*meikun*) who put righteousness (*gi*) ahead of even his own needs, each and every last one of his descendants has inherited his honorable virtue, and theirs is an eternal dynasty the likes of which were seldom known even in antiquity. Since governance of the realm passed into the hands of the warrior houses, there has never been a house such as ours that has firmly upheld the laws of the bakufu to the very corners of the realm without even the slightest objection. Surely there is no sentiment that surpasses the saying of the ancients, "The benevolent man has no enemies."

Item: If, by some chance, a mistake is made in domain governance, if this is soon corrected and true principle upheld—thereby eliminating the error—all will be well. However, because it is impossible—no matter how great our regret—to rescind a punishment after making some mistake, many volumes [of law] must be consulted and the utmost caution must be taken in the course of your investigations. For example, if one man among ten million is wrongly punished, this flies in the face of Heaven's principle and is a [source of] great shame to great lords of the highest order (*dai'ichi kunimochi daimyō*). Even though crimes such as cursing one's parents (lacking filial piety), killing one's teacher or superior (*fugi*: immorality), and murder are plain (clear cut, straightforward) enough, one must give great consideration to even these cases. All the more, then, in the many cases of ambiguous crimes one must rack one's brain, consult various people, and devise [a judgment] without blundering. Of course, one must sufficiently investigate the various minor crimes. Regarding those whom you consider to be incorrigible (cannot not mend their characters), you must take even greater care to handle them in such a manner that correct reason (principle) does not falter (i.e., you must not be prejudiced against them from the beginning). It is the height of meanness for even a shred of one's prejudices (likes and dislikes) ever to arise [in your judgment], and the extreme frivolity [this displays] cannot be expressed in words.

Item: When one thinks carefully about the state of the world, when those who might some day be of use are just beginning their careers and have not yet attained the position they desire, they impatiently complain that if only they should be given employment they would of course serve those above and below without fail. However, when they do attain office, they are of a very different mind than before, and are no different than those they once scorned and criticized. Rather, they do nothing but plot the destruction of their former peers because their minds turn only to their base desires. Similarly, although those

above initially show great interest [in governing] and behave discreetly so that the world might call them "wise rulers" (*kenkun*), they later become disinterested, accustomed to governing, and profligate for no reason at all. Although the first Qin emperor unified the realm and his prestige flourished, his extreme pride [led him to] perform innumerable deeds of debauchery, and later—at the height of stupidity—he spent his last years in search of the elixir of life, thereby bringing about his destruction in only a few years. In addition, the careers of Emperor Wu of Han and Emperor Xuanzong of Tang had very different beginnings and endings. In this way, we can see that initial schemes are inevitably destroyed without coming half way to fruition. One must be extremely careful. Is this not the reason the ancients warned, "There is nothing without a beginning, but few things end well."

Item: Learning is, first and foremost, undertaken by reading and listening to the eloquent words of sages and wise men for the purpose of purifying one's mind and behavior, knowing the past and present, developing one's abilities, and expanding one's knowledge. However, it has always been the case that there are those who were far better people before [undertaking any] studies. [Having studied,] they lack any amicable qualities. They promote wickedness, manipulate words and logic in all things, scorn and slander others, and are utterly useless because they are incapable of working with others. Learning, itself, is not evil. Rather, we can see that the problem lies in poor study and bad teaching. Rather than thoughtlessly pursuing this line of learning, one should consult with others and reflect upon one's thoughts one by one, without losing one's innate character or violating reason. Is this not the reason that in ancient times wise men referred to those who simply served their lords and fathers well and were sincere [in their dealings with others] as scholars, even though they could not read? Although it goes without saying that one's mind improves with learning, it is not necessary to study. Especially for those above, compassion and mercy are seen as the most important lessons.

Item: Among the myriad things, there is nothing without utility. For example, as for lumber, pine is used according to its features and cypress is used according to its features. When these materials are used in accordance with their proper uses, they are extremely valuable. However, if cypress is used where pine is called for, or pine is used when cypress is called for, their utility will be lost and they will not be of value. The use of people can be thought of according to the same logic. Specifically, all people possess innate strengths and weaknesses. If, based on one's own judgment or the conclusion of one's superiors, one is assigned an office (task, job) at which one is inept, one's natural abilities will not be apparent. Because one has not thought clearly or one's superior has not studied the matter carefully, one mistakenly thinks that he is of no use, and his entire life will be wasted. Each time this happens, it is a great pity. However, in these instances, such a person must be transferred and given a chance in another post. Of course, if a man is utterly useless in any position, his ineptitude will surely become apparent. Among these men, those of integrity will still have some virtue. However, if he is treacherous and attempts to whitewash his truly evil nature, he will poison others and bring about the ruin of the domain.

Item: Everyone has their likes and dislikes. Beginning with clothes and food, tastes differ. Attempting to make others like what you like or hate what you hate is extremely narrow-minded and must not be done by those above. Still, there are those things that all people love and hate because they emanate from our true minds. In this we are no different. Thus, some things that make one happy make all men happy, and some things that make one sad make all men sad. Should we not all learn what the ancients referred to as "The Way of Sympathy"?

Item: With the myriad laws and edicts increasing annually, the number of violators has naturally increased and enforcement of the laws has now become cumbersome. If this trend continues for several more decades, there will be none who dare not refrain from speaking in a loud voice. Moreover, if conditions do become like this, will officials ever have a moment's rest from handling all of the protocols and official duties? If we first resort to making many laws, the people will lose their ingenuity. They will be cowed and will constantly be looking over their shoulders. They will complain constantly, and there will be nothing to prevent the natural weakening of their loyal hearts. Since this is the case, after carefully considering their contents, there are many laws that hinder the people or are trivial, and that I wish to repeal. When controls are reduced will it not be easier to perform one's duties and defend [the domain]? When the laws are reduced in number, will criminals not become rare, hearts rejoice, and pursuit of the various arts be enjoyed [by all]? In both Japan and China, the constraint of many laws is believed to be a bad thing.

Item: Since controlling expenses is the foundation of ruling one's house, we must all endeavor to this end. Insufficient domain currency impedes all manner of things and leads to extreme poverty. Nevertheless, if one goes against reason and continually cuts corners without thought, your benevolence will become attenuated. Before you know it, you will unwittingly cause malicious and cruel governance to occur, bring great pain and suffering upon the people, and your frugality will instead invite useless expenses. Each of the natural bounties of the mountains and seas, the planted fields, and the multitude of things produced by the labor of the various craftsmen has its own value. If one mistakenly controls these too severely or investigates them too rigorously, their production will decrease and their quality will deteriorate. Things that ought to last several years will need to be replaced many times within a single year. Each time this occurs, expenses will swell greatly. Thus, one must order that investigations be carried out very thoughtfully. For example, be mindful to eliminate both excesses and deficiencies, do away with extravagances that do not profit the people, use one or two basic items in many ways, and do not order the needless replacement of items that are still in use. Although unintentional, misunderstanding [in these matters] will naturally lead to pain and suffering on the part of the people. Thus, the Sage said, "Economy in expenditure, and love for men."

Item: Even though they may be bad, after many long years have passed, [customs] become fixed as if they were laws; like the air we breathe, we hardly notice them at all. Although a

foul odor is unbearable at first, with time we become accustomed to it, and it does not bother us as much as others may think. All things being like this, even when bad things are improved and the ancient laws and customs are revived, they will not be accepted willingly, and will surely be criticized and considered troublesome. For example, although those who selfishly enjoy gluttony, heavy drinking, and debauchery in life will certainly fall from grace and bring ruin to their houses, they believe that there is nothing better in life than this. It is as if they have mistaken the necessities of human life, such as caring of one's physical and mental health, for nothing but terribly restrictive nuisances. No matter how good [a reform may be], it will be criticized based on what people say about it (public opinion). Thus it is believed that if all classes of people (*jō chū ge domo*) are not in harmonious accord [with each other,] it will be difficult to accomplish good deeds.

Item: In both the past and present, we see that neither the vitality nor the blood that people are born with are any different. As in antiquity, these days when a person reaches the age of seventy, he is called an elder. We do not refer to someone in his forties or fifties as an elder. However, recently, we can see many youngsters between the ages of sixteen or seventeen and twenty who have poor complexions and lack vitality. The slightest heat or cold bites them. If they overeat even just a bit, their stomachs become upset. They take medicines at the onset of the slightest ailments, and only complain of their bad health. They have come to live like this because of poor upbringing, ill manners, and because they [constantly] take the easy way out [of things]. Because of this, their daily interactions are superficial and their hearts suffer constantly. Therefore, when people are not looking, they begin to slip into extreme debauchery and morbidity, and just when their strength should be blossoming; it is sapped from them in their prime. Even though their backs are bent from dawn to dusk, those who labor in the fields and pass through this world without wealth or concerns can live to a ripe old age because their hearts are tranquil and their bodies are healthy. When we consider this, it is apparent that despite the fact that one cannot help the ability or intelligence with which one is born, if one simply resolves to labor unflinchingly, he will not suffer in his mind and will be carefree in whatever he does. The simplest attitude to bear in mind is just like when we think, "If one does not experience cold, one cannot know warmth; and when one's stomach is empty, even simple fare is delicious and we feel it nourish our bodies."

Item: When shrines and temples become dilapidated, highways and bridges need repair, or various places fall into decline such that they become difficult to use, after careful consideration of people's requests, permission is granted to hold a *kanjin* noh performance, sumo match, or some other type of [unofficial] event (entertainment) on a particular day. Or, along pilgrimage routes, permission is granted to erect a tea house, *mochi* (sticky rice cake) or tofu shop, or some other suitable place of business in order to stave off the hunger of travelers. Gradually, [these shops] become prosperous; yet just as the commoners begin to make some financial leeway, not only low-class people but also young samurai who live in ignorance and debauchery become excessively drunk and violent, cause injury to others, and quarrel with women and servants until it reaches the level of a riot. It is a great mistake of our day that when this happens, rather than thinking

about punishments for those [guilty] fellows, permission for such events is rashly prohibited, and it remains difficult to do such things again for a long time. First, these reactionary laws are made for those [perpetrators] who have lost their minds. People such as this must be punished to the fullest extent [of the law] after the weight of their offences has been carefully considered. If this is done, all protests will be stopped, [the people] will naturally be placated, and even their customs will improve. Proof of this can be found in those places where high and low alike have historically gathered for performances without incident. Moreover, there have been instances in which [commoners] have aided [samurai] officials to control outlaws and the like who attended [such events]. Sometimes, unexpected things may occur even at official events (ceremonies). Above all else, keep a ready mind and vigilant eyes in all matters.

Item: Ignorance in any matter is an incalculable source of shame among people. This is primarily because people live carefree lives and do not pay attention to things [around them]. For example, after many years of meeting people from other domains; inquiring about the customs, land, mountains, rivers of that place; and learning about the qualities of its local products, people become knowledgeable and wisdom is diffused widely. There are many who travel to Edo, Osaka, or Kyoto numerous times yet, because of their ignorance, do not appreciate anything [these places have to offer.] They are therefore far inferior to (more useless than) those who never travel but simply remain in one place and apply their minds to all things. One who is ignorant of other provinces cannot know the good and bad qualities of his own province. If I meet two men, I will practice the positive example of one, eschew the negative example of the other, and in this manner take both as my teachers. With this attitude, one can gradually become informed [of many things].

Item: One who studies many arts for two or three years in a spotty fashion and soon believes that he has reached a level of skill will become unforgivably arrogant, will slander and scoff others, and will never become proficient at anything. Among those who roughly imitate another's art and laugh at other ways (styles), none have brilliant (inspired, clever) elegance (style). Because seven or eight out of ten [people] simply fail [in their artistic endeavors], one must know when one is unprepared due to inexperience.

Item: When one remonstrates with one's seniors or offers a different opinion to one's father, cousin, nephew, or friend, one must keep in mind their relative ages. From twelve- or thirteen-year-old children to eighteen-, nineteen-, or even thirty-year-old adults, [youths] sometimes get carried away by their zeal and are passionate about many things. However, those who reach the age of fifty or sixty have experienced many things, their tempers are settled, and their ideas are fixed. They are not interested in young people, and when, for example, an original (different) opinion is suddenly suggested—even if it is a good idea—they can only think that it is pointless and [has been offered] without thought. Although they keep up external pretences, they become angry in their hearts, think the suggestion despicable and utterly useless, and finally become violent opponents of the idea. Thus, before you decide to give your opinion to another, remember well your own youth and consider the other's point of view. If your advice is sound, he will think, "That is plausible.

He has truly thought deeply about my situation." Saying this, he will naturally come to a deep understanding [of the matter,] change his mind, correct his error, improve as a person, and soon become one about whom you will have no worries.

Item: Even those of great discretion, no matter how good they are as people, will make one or two errors in their youth. Although many things are believed to be rare, travel and pleasures are believed natural. This has always remained true in Japan and China, and is even truer of those born with an open mind and intelligence. People like this have some mental capacity; they know their vices (weak points) and listen to the opinions of others. They soon rectify their ways and become excellent people. What is more, because they are clever, they can do anything. They perform any job or ceremony they are assigned well, and are a peerless treasure. In short, if one simply reforms one's behavior, then all of one's mistakes become lessons for life. [However,] those who are born without either intelligence or wisdom lack discernment and frivolously waste away their lives without ever changing their ways. They foolishly believe that which is bad to be good. Those with a good eye will soon fathom this.

Item: Whether of high or low status, if one does not have sufficient numbers of people [in one's employment,] it is unsuitable for all [sorts of] things and will only result in misfortune. However, because it is a time for strict economy, [people] make do and endure with a feeling of great restriction. More than ever, [the number of] retainers is being reduced. Illustrious people likewise live in this manner, employing three for the job of five and one for the job of three. When these people put on an auspicious or solemn event or hold a banquet requiring many people, they somehow manage by mobilizing people from different posts. However, in the event of a fire or some such emergency when there is no time to think, no matter how hard you endeavor, you will not succeed because you have too few people [in your service]. Moreover, even if hundreds or thousands [of retainers] are stationed [in Edo] on a regular basis, any number of these will be ill or absent from their post, and it is always the case that when one believes he has twenty or thirty retainers [to choose from], suddenly there are [in fact] only five or ten who can be employed. Nevertheless, many believe it wasteful to maintain excessive numbers [of retainers] on a daily basis for just these reasons. They hope by being prepared on a daily basis—and by being extra alert on days with strong winds—by fortifying storehouses and the like well, and by remaining calm so as not to panic, they can make those on hand fight the flames head on. If a few people are scattered about in many directions and made to do various things such as fighting the flames and manning the [fire-fighting] gear, this will only result in numerous casualties. Even though an item is made of a thousand [ryō of] melted gold, it cannot be exchanged for the life of [even] the lowest person. These kinds of things happen because those above lack discernment and are irresolute.

Item: Whether one commands tens of thousands [of men], a thousand, a hundred, five, three, or a single servant, without firsthand experience one cannot truly understand the conditions of those below and the reasons for their behavior. Nobles [and aristocrats] reside in cool, open places in hot weather; they eat wholesome, palatable food; in cold

weather, they wear warm clothes and have braziers (*hibachi*) in their floor wells (*kotatsu*). They have many layers of bedding and eat warm and delicious food to their heart's content. When they go out, they ride on horses or in a palanquin and employ large retinues of retainers. There is not one thing that they lack. From the middle ranks [of samurai] on down, however, although there are many minor differences among their [particular] situations, it is never their fault that they cannot fulfill their obligations and that they [must] struggle day and night to make ends meet. Lacking even basic necessities such as food and clothing, the plight of the lowest [among them] is beyond description. The immortal words of Minister Guan Zhong of Qi are appropriate: "When [the people] have sufficient clothes and food, then they will know decorum (*reisetsu*)." Thus, if one is ignorant of the condition of those below, no matter how much compassion one possesses, it will be insufficient because one will always have to imagine [their condition] to some degree. Hōjō Ujimasa is an example of one who erred in governance because of his ignorance of various matters [regarding the commoners]. Once, when camped in the field, he saw peasants harvesting barley and ordered, "Prepare some *mugihan* (boiled rice and barley) with that barley!" He was [thus] seen by many to be a fool and ultimately lost his domain. If one does not take great care, this type of thing will become commonplace. On the other hand, knowing the condition of the commoners too well—to the point of knowing the price of goods [in the market]—will only bring them pain and suffering. [The desire for] this [kind of detailed knowledge] is not born of one's true benevolence (*jinin*), but occurs because one is innately very misanthropic and selfish, and because one's pride leads to extremely wicked thoughts.

Item: No one, not only those of high rank, can reach fulfillment without a long life. Because the teachings of the saints and sages have been used reverently for ten million years, because the enlightened lords (*meikun*) Wen and Wu defended their domain and the realm, and because they lay the foundations for eternity, they all enjoyed long and prosperous lives. Because each of the four classes (*shi*, *nō*, *kō*, *shō*) achieves its appropriate purpose (will) and various [martial and other] artists become talented or [even] masters, they diligently accumulate [experience for] many years. If those who now govern suddenly create rules (rites, ceremonies), even though they profit the people or the domain, they will upset the masses, who will reject them and they will not go as planned. Gradually, over the course of many years, when [conditions] become ripe, customs will naturally improve in every corner [of the realm] with ease once and for all, and there will no longer be any need to rely on laws. Quickly reform and repair the sources of people's pain and suffering. As for their lawsuits, petitions, and matters related to their daily concerns, if one does not take care not to dally even while eating, one will only become a hindrance, inconvenience the people greatly, and [be the source of] wasteful expenditure. Long ago, a person fell into a well. The people of his village gathered around the well and debated about what to do. While they were discussing what had been done in the past, the person in the well died and the villagers became laughingstocks. There are many rulers who stubbornly ignore reason in this way.

Item: If reforms are believed to be only good things, great mistakes will certainly be made over and over again. It will produce speculation in even worthless goods, laws will be taken lightly, and the results will surely be imprudent. To say the least, since it is dangerous to only follow one's own discretion [in all matters], one must rely on the wisdom of others and make use of their assistance to judge right and wrong. You must understand that a good child or servant makes anything go smoothly, even for peasants and townsmen.

Item: From those above to those below, [all people] must eschew their private [desires] and, following the laws of heaven (*tenri*), exert themselves day and night without fail. If you slacken for even a moment, impure thoughts will suddenly arise easily in one's mind. Especially, those of high rank must take great care in this. [The responsibility of] governing many districts or domains and commanding tens of thousands of people is a great blessing that we have received from countless generations of our ancestors. Thus, while it goes without saying that one must support those hereditary vassals (servants) whom one has inherited; one must also provide for every man and woman—without discrimination—who has received the patronage of your house over the years. Even when the lord does not discriminate in the least (i.e., he supports all of his servants and retainers), there are instances when a servant must take his or her leave because he or she unintentionally committed a grave error and appears to be disloyal. Although he or she committed the mistake, it is because the lord was not thinking fully that such a situation could not be avoided. However, the mind of one still living in his father's house is not yet mature. One gets carried away and takes umbrage at some action that one mistakenly thinks is directed at oneself. [Consequently,] one holds many baseless grudges and feels the need to seek revenge. This is nothing other than the opinion of one who is uncultivated, and is indescribably shallow-minded. Showing compassion to everyone, equally, and without the slightest regard for their degree of intimacy is the basis of morality and arises from the essential laws of nature. If one realizes this, then one's descendants will inherit this attitude again and again, and will naturally become as eternal as the universe.

Epilogue

I have put down the above articles not with the intention of commanding [others] through strict laws, but only in the hope that people will keep this volume by their side, know my true mind in detail, and—more than reading carefully and appreciatively—they will rectify their hearts and master their actions of their own accord, and thus be of service in governing [the domain.] With this short epilogue, I end this volume.

Appendix B

温知政要

古より、国を治め民を安んずるの道は、仁に止る事也とぞ。我武門貴族の家に生るどいへども、衆子の末席に列り、且生質^{そらん}疎^{あつ}懶にして文学に暗く、何のわきまもなかりし中、幕府祇候の身となり、思恵^{あつ}渥く蒙りしうへ、はからずも嫡家の正統を受^{つらつら}継ぎ、藩扉の重職に備れり。熟思惟するに、天下への忠誠を尽し先祖の厚恩を報ぜん事は、国を治め安くし、臣民を撫育し、子孫をして不義なからしむるより外あるまじ。故に日夜慈悲^{あいれん}愛^{うしなわ}憐の心を失^あず万事廉直にあらんが為、思ふ事を其儘に和字に書つゞけ、一卷の書となして、諸臣に附与す。是、我本意を普く人にも知らし、永く遂行ふべき誓約の証本なるうへ、正に上下和熱一致に有らん事を欲するが^{ために}為^{いう}爾云。

享保十六年辛亥年三月中流

参議尾陽侯 源 宗春 書 ㊦

一、^{それ}夫人たる者、平生心に執守事^{とりまもる}なくては叶はざる事なり。しかし其品多ければ忘れ怠りやすし。一、二字の中より限なき工夫出る物なり。殊に国持たらん者、すへ々まで行渡らずしてはあやまる事多かるべし。故に慈と忍との二字を掛物二幅にこしらへ、慈の字の上には日の丸を画せたり。慈は心のうちにのみ隠れてはその詮更になし。外へあらわれ、すへ々も及び、隅々までも照したき心にて、太陽の徳をしたひての事なり。忍の字の上には月の丸を画せたり。堪忍は心の中にありて、外へあらわれざる時の工夫ゆへ、大陰の形を表せり。日月の二字を合すれば則明の字也。大学の「明明徳」にも叶べきか。万の事明らかになくしては、取まがふ事のみにて、宜^{せいり}く正理に叶ふ様にはおこなはれまじ。駕輿^{がよ}道具の者の衣服には、仁の字を相印^{あいじるし}に申付たり。是、内に居ては慈忍の二字を見、外へ出ては仁の字を見、朝夕何方におゐても暫くも忘れずして執行、勤弁やむまじき為の工夫也。

一、和漢古今ともに、武勇知謀千万人に勝れし名将、其数限りなし。しかるに、功業終に成就せずして滅び失せ、子孫二代とつゞかざるは、慈仁の心なく、私欲さかんにして、自分の榮耀奢りを極め、人民を濟^{すく}ふの本意曾てなかりしゆへ也。東照宮には内に寛仁の御徳そなはらせ給ひ、下々迄も御慈悲深く、御敵となりし者さへ心を改め服すれば其罪を御ゆるしなされ、義の為には御身を忘れさせ給ふ程の明君にて渡らせられしゆへ、御子孫枝葉迄も其御徳行を受つがせられ、千万年かぎりなき御治世は昔王代にもまれにして、天下の政務、武将^{とりおこな}の執行ひ初しより以来、御当家^{ようなる}の様成四方の隅々迄、物いひ少もなく、堅く御大

法を守り、御仁政に服し奉りたる目出度御世はなき事也。「仁者に敵なし」といへる古人の語、尤至極の事なるべし。

一、国政の中に万一あやまりたる事ありても、忽あらため直す時は、本理に叶ひて、其あやまちも消、よろしく成事也。只刑罪の者は、一旦あやまりて後には何程悔ても取かへしのならぬ事なれば、吟味の上何篇も念を入、大事にかくべき事也。たとへば千万人の中に一人あやまり刑しても、天理に背き、第一国持の大なる恥なり。不幸・不義並人を殺せし類ひは、其罪顯然たれども、それさへ随分念を入べし。まして紛はしき罪科数々あるものなれば、何程も心を砕き、誰人にも尋ね問て、仕そこなひなき様に工夫すべし。勿論夫々の小過に至るまで、とくとあたるやうに勘弁すべし。平生よろしからぬと思ひたらむ者は猶更心を用ひ、正理にたがはぬ様にと取あつかふべき事也。常々の好悪微塵にでも萌すは、比興至極、言語に述べられぬ浅ましき事也。

一、世間の様子つら々考へ見るに、何事にも用ひらるべき者、いまだ志を得ざる初の程は、我こそ事を執行ふ役義にも成たらば、上の御為下の為にも万の事滞らず程よく仕て見せんと、心に思ひ口にもいひなどしてもどかしきやうに申せども、其職になるといやな、常々のころとは大にたがひ、始め笑ひ譏りし人とすこしもかはる事なく、還て前々の同輩の害に成事ばかり思慮するやうに成る事かならず有は、皆々私欲卑賤のころから思案かはる也。夫と同じく、上たる者も、初の中は物珍らしく、世間へ賢君とも唱へらるべきと随分つゞしみ行へども、後にはそろ々退屈の心出来て政務も成あひに覚へ、わけもなく取乱す事也。秦の始皇は天下を一統せし程の威光盛んに有しが、奢を極め放埒千万の身持にて、後には愚昧至極に成りて長生不死の薬を求る様に成行、纔の年数の中に亡び、其外漢の武帝、唐の玄宗なども、始めの仕方とは後に大に相違せしとぞ。さあれば、最初の存念工夫も半ばならざる内に、必くじけるものと見ゆる、つゞしみおそるべき事也。故に古の人も「始あらずと云事なし。能終有事すくなし」と戒められしとかや。

一、学問といふ物は、第一聖人賢人の金言妙句を見つ聞つして、心を淳直にし身の行ひをよろしく致し、古今の事に行渡り、才も働き智も広くせんが為なり。しかるに心身のたしなみはわきゑなし、邪智さかんに口かしこくなりて万の事に理屈はり、人を譏りあなどり、上々の不出来者と成り、つき合れもせぬ様にて、学問せざる以前大に増なる者かならず有事也。是学問あしきといふにてはなけれども、習ひ様あしく、教方もよろしからぬゆへに見ゑたり。すれば懋にかやうの筋の学問をせんよりは、生れ付の本心をうしなはず、正理にたがはぬ様にと工夫し、人にも尋ね問、一つ々心と行ひとへうつしたしなむべき事也。夫ゆへ古への賢人も、君父によくつかへ、真実にさへあれば、一文不通にでも大学者也と、申されしとかや。学問も致し、心行ひとにもよろしきは、申にも及ばぬ事なれども、学問せねば叶はぬといふ事にてもあるまじ。特に人の上たる者は、慈悲憐愍第一の学問と見えたり。

一、万の物、何によらず夫々の能あり。先材木にていはゞ、松は松の用あり、檜は檜の用あり、其用々に随て用ゆれば甚重宝になる事なり。松を用ゆべき所へ檜をつかひ、檜をつかふべき場へ松を用ゆれば、其能違ひて役に立ず。人の使ひ様、猶以て同じ理と覚ゆる。其子細は、人々の生れ付に得手不得手有り。自分の眼力、さては頭役たるもの目利にて、何役に成とも申付候時、其者の不得手なる職を致させては、持まへの才能曾て見えず。其時に至り、我眼力の明らかならざるか頭人の吟味くはしからざるかと、自分省察の工夫は外になして、其者役にたゞざるやうに取ちがへ一生捨り者の部に成行事、毎々ある事にて、甚残念なる事也。しかれば其類は又々外の役にうつし用ひ見るべき事なり。何役に用ひてもよろしからざる時にこそ、其者の不才たる儀明らかに知るべき事か。其中に律義一篇の者は其程々の徳あり。誰佞姦にして、生地のおしきうへを色々の物にてぬり隠したる者は、人をも損ひ、国の害に成事甚し。

一、惣じて人には好き嫌ひのあるもの也。衣服食物をはじめ、物ずき夫々にかはるもの也。しかるを我好ことは人にもこのませ、我きらひなる事は人にも嫌はせ候やうに仕なすは、甚狭き事にて、人の上たる者べつしてあるまじき事也。其中うれしき事いやなる事は、本心よりいづる事ゆへ、万人よりてもかはらざるもの也。さあるうへは、我こゝろにうれしき事は人もうれしかるべし、我こゝろにかなしいやなる事は人も同じく其通りなるべしと思ふ事のみたがふ事有まじ。古人の恕の道と申されしも、此心得たるべきか。

一、万の法度号令年々に多くなるに随ひ、おのづから背く者も又多く出来て、弥法令繁煩はしき事に成たり。かくの様子にて数十年を経るならば、後には高声にて咄しする事も遠慮あるやうに成まじきものにてなし。其外一切の作法、諸役所の取扱までも右の通りなれば、あげ句には、夜寝る間もなきやうに成行んか。第一法令多く過れば、人のこゝろいさみなく、せばくいじけ、道のあるくにも跡先を見るやうに成り、常住述懐のみにてくらし、自然と忠義のこゝろもうすく成間敷ものにてなし。さあれば、其品々をとくと考へ、人の難義指支にもなるべき事、瑣細なる類は除き止るやうに仕たきもの也。万の取あつかひすくなければ勤る事も守る事も仕やすく、法度の数減ずれば背く者も稀にして、心も優に、諸芸もはげみたしなむやうに成べきか。和漢ともに、事の多く成り法度の繁はよろしからぬ事とこれ有よし。

一、省略儉約の儀は、家を治るの根本なれば、尤相つとむべき事也。第一、国の用脚不足しては、万事さしつかゆるのみにて、困窮の至極となる。さりながら、正理にたがひてめつたに省略するばかりにては、慈悲のこゝろすく成りて、覚えしらずむごく不仁なる仕方出来して、諸人甚痛みくるしみ、省略かへつて無益費と成事あり。山海に自然と生じ、田畑に蒔植、其外諸職人の手にてこしらへる類、限りなき万物、其程々のあたひあり。余りにきびしく棹を入、ぎんみ過ぎれば、其品々うすく麁相に成て、一度こしらへ二年三年も用ひ

らるべきもの、壹々年の中に幾度も仕替候はねばならぬ様に成り、積り々ては大きな費に成る事、毎々有事也。

さあればとて、吟味すべき程は随分かんがへ申付べし。たゞ過不及なきやうに心を用ひ、人の益にもならぬ奮をはぶき、一つ二つにて済候物を数多くこしらへ、いまだ用ひらるゝ物をむざとあらため申付る類、常住平生の事に勘弁工夫有度事也。不斗心得違ひては、諸人の痛みなげきに成事顕然たり。それゆへに、聖人の詞にも「用を節して人を愛す」とありて、何事もふまへ所のなくて叶はぬ事と見えたり。

一、よろしからぬ事にでも、年数久しく経れば定りたる法の様になりて、目にも耳にも染み付、氣のつかぬもの也。あしき臭気はしばらくもこたへられぬ物なれども、年月馴ては脇にて思ふ程は苦にならぬと見ゆる。一切の事も其通りにて、あしき事を改め、宜しき筋に直りて古来の作法に立もどる類ひの事も、心に服せず色々批判し、めいわく成る様におもふ事も有べし。大食・大酒・淫乱・我儘わがままに任せし者は、身を失ひ家を損ふ第一なれども、これより能事はなきと覚へ、身の養生より初め心行ひのたしなみは人間長久の至極なるを、きて々めいわくきうつなる事と心得たがふと同じ事也。何程能き事にでも、評判の仕様によりて色々に申さるゝ物也。さあれば上中下共、和熟一致になくしては、善行も成し遂とげがたしと思はるゝ事也。

一、昔も今も、人の生れて受得たる所の氣血はさしてかはる事もなきと見ゆる。古へも七十に及びたるものは老人といひ、四十、五十ばかりの者は老人といわず、今とても同じ事也。しかるに近來の十六、七より廿にも成たる若き輩を見るに、多くは顔色も悪く、氣根うすく見へ、寒暑にも一番にあたり、すこし食をくい過れば腹中つかへ、かりそめの事にも薬たけく、口上にも只よはりたる事のみいひてくらす様になりたり。是幼年よりの育てやうわるく、持なしあしくて、はやく楽を仕たがる心出来るゆへ也。かく有ゆへ、平日の所作もつやかざりの様になりて、内心常にくるしく、人の見ぬ所にては還ては還て乱行不養生甚しく、強く盛んになるべき時節を取失ふ事也。農業をつとめ、其外かろき世渡りの者は、朝より暮まで骨を折事甚しけれども、心の中やすきにより、すぐれたる長命の者もでき、どれ々も其身健か也。此所人々能かゝりみ勘かんがへて、生れ付のきやう・不器用、愚鈍・発明は是非に及ばず、唯面々に我勤むべき事をさへ大切に怠らざれば、心のくるしむ事もなく、何方にでも安楽なる事と思ふべし。寒き目に逢ねば暖かなる事をしらず。空腹なる時には平日の食物も各別うまく、身につく様に覚ゆる類、心の持やうの手ぢかき工夫なり。

一、神社仏閣破損し、並ならびに道橋修覆、或は其所々衰微し、難儀に及びたる時、其願ひの品とくと聞届吟味のうへ、様子によりて勸進能・相撲其外少々の見せ物など日をきりて免許し、又は神社参詣の路次などには、諸人飢渴をしのぐが為に、相応の茶底の茶店、餅・豆腐の類売候場所をもゆるし置事也。段々繁昌におもむき、下々の潤ひにもなりかゝり候時分、かならず雑人のみかは、わかき諸侍の無智放埒に任せし者、乱行・酔狂の余り人をそこなひ、婦人・下藹など相手に口論を仕出し、騒動に及ぶ事あれば、其者の罰より、まづ免許せし事を何の勘ちかごろへもなく忽ち停止し、後までも堅くならぬ様に成行事、近比かろ々しき事

也。第一、乱心同前の者に大切成る制禁をこしらへてもらふ様成る物なり。右のたぐひの曲者は、其品の軽重をかながへ急度^{きつと}申付、其者限りに致し置べき事也。かくのごとくなれば、のち々は物いひもやみ、自然とおだやかに、風俗までもよろしく成るもの也。其証拠には、以前より有来りし場所にては、何程貴賤群集しでも申分さして出来ず。其うへ悪党尋ね者などこれ有節は政道の一助にも成る事あり。適には、行義正しくはれなる席にても不慮なる事有物ぞかし。何事も心の用ひ様目の付やう専一也。

一、何事によらず、不案内にては人中にて恥をかく事、あげてかぞへがたし。是第一、万事に気を付ず、うか々とくらすゆへなり。先^{まず}他国の者に付合ては、其国の風俗・土地・山川の事をも尋ね問ひ、其所々に出生する万物の善悪まで心に心を付るやうにすれば、年々物しりになり、知恵も広く行渡る事也。江戸ゑ度々来りても、京・大坂へ上りても、其まゝ不案内にて、物事曾て功者にもならず、何方へも行ずに居て万事に心を用ゆる者より、かへつてはるかに劣りたる者数々也。他国をしらねば我国の善悪も知らぬ物也。三人寄れば師匠の出来るといふも、吾人の仕方のよきを見習ひ、又吾人のよろしからぬを捨れば、両方ともに我為となる事なれば、心の用ひやうにて日を追て案内者となるべし。

一、万の芸能、わづか二、三年の間所まだらに習ひて、もはやよほど能致^{よくいた}すと覚へ、人もゆるさぬに自慢をし、他をそしりあざける類ひ、一生物の上手になる事なし。惣じて人の芸をこなし、他の仕方をわらひ、功者だてをする者に、かしこく香ばしきはなし。十に七、八までは仕そこなひばかりにて、未練未熟の不覚悟者とするべし。

一、上たる入へ^{いさめ}諫を申すにも、又は親・伯父の子や甥に異見をするも、朋友の間にてても、其年齢程々を考ゑて云べき也。十二、三の子どもより、十八、九、三十^{ばかり}計にも成たる者、其時々血気にまかせ色々の物好き有。しかるに五十、六十に及びたる者、我身何事をも経て来り、血気も定り趣向もしづまりたるころにて、若き輩に何のあぢわひもなく、めつたに異見をくはふれば、たとひ能き事を申きかせても、只料簡もなき無理なる事ばかりを申すやうに存じ、表向ばかり従ひたる貌にて、内心には腹を立、おかしき事に思ひて、かつて用ゆる事なく、還て背きさかんに成物也。しかれば、人に異見せんと思はず、先我若き時の事をとくと存じ出し、先きの者へも理を付け、ほどよくいひきかせ、さて々尤千万成事かな、此方の為を大切に思ひての事なりと自然と感得し、心を持かへ^{あやま}過りをあらためて、よき人間と成、もはや何事にも氣遣ひなきやうになる事也。

一、分別工夫ある人にてても如何成善人にてても、若く盛んなる時は一旦、二旦あやまる事ある物なり。万の事を珍らしく覚へ、遊覧好色勿論の事にて、和漢古今同じ事也。中にも豁達に生れつき才智有余の者に猶更ある事也。是等の類は、心の融通より我非分を能しり、人の異見にも付き、^{たちまち}忽本心に立かへりて勝れたる上者に成り、^{あまつき}剽へ心のこなれ諸事の行渡り宜しく、何程の晴なる所作にててもいかなる役義用事にてても夫々に程よくつとめ、^{ちようぼう}重宝至極の人にて、^{ひつきよう}畢竟改めさへすれば只今迄のあやまり皆々学問になる事也。いつまでもう

か々と何の味もなく、改る事もしらずして一生を取失ひ候者は、元来不才不智にして、悪る強き事を能と覚へたる大うつけといふ者にて、是等はすこし目の利たる人も早速見て取事也。

一、大身・小身ともに、人数不足しては万事に付聞も合ず、気のどくなる事のみ也。さりながら、省略専一の時節ゆへ、随分不自由かんにんばかりにてくらす事也。尤召仕等程々よりは減少し、歴々たる人猶以て其通りにて、五人のものは三人に成り、三人の者は一人にて役義をもつとむる様に成たり。其中吉凶又は大饗の折、人の多く入候時は、外の役の者をもそれ々に仕埋させ、彼是とすれば大方に間も合様になる物也。唯火事のせつ、急成折、思慮する間もなき時分、人数すくなくしては何程働きても中々手のとどかぬ事なり。其うへ平生何千何百と積り置ても、病人数多これ有か、又は私用の為に他行する者もありて、ぞんじのほか、三十人三十人有とおもふ所ゑわづか五人十人ならではつかはず事ならぬ様なる儀、かならず有事也。さあればとて其為ばかりに人数の余慶こしらへおく事も、平生は無益のやうに思はるゝなれば、常々の覚悟をよくいたし、風烈しき日は別して用心堅固にし、土蔵等かねてより丈夫に修覆し、あわて騒がぬ様にこゝろゑ、有合候人数は随分火表ゑ立まわり防がせ見るやうに有たきものなり。多からぬ人数を方々ゑわけて、火も防がせ、道具の支配をも致させ、いろ々の事につかひては、何れの方の間も合ず、死傷の者多く出来るより外有まじ。たとひ千金をのべたる物にても、かろき人間一人の命にはかへがたし、是等の類、皆々上たる者の勘弁なく不裁許より起る事也。

一、数万人の支配をする者をはじめ、千人百人乃至五人三人、壹僕召仕輩に至る迄、能々下の情に通達し、万事に行渡り、夫々の所作をも自分に仕て見ずしては叶はざる事也。貴人は、暑き時分は広く涼しき所に住居し、食物も清く口に叶たる物を食し、寒き時は衣服あたゝかに着る上に、火燧にあたり、火鉢をおき、夜具幾重も重ね、美味のあたゝかなるを飽まで食し、他出する時は馬・駕輿に乗、供廻り大勢召連、何に一つ事の欠る品なし。中より以下の者は其品すこし充はかはれども、常々心の外の義理を欠き、昼夜苦心ばかりにてくらし、下々にいたりては、衣服・食物をはじめ、詞に述べられぬ不便の事のみ也。齊の管仲が「衣食足て礼節を知」といへるは、古今の名言なるよし。故に能下のわけをしらずしては、何程慈悲のこゝろありても推量の分にて、中々とどかぬ事なり。

万の仕方存ぜずしては物の申付やうまで相違する子細は、北条氏政の野陣せられし時、百姓共麦を茹て持行を見、「あの麦にておつ付麦飯をこしらへ出せ」と申されし一ヶ条にて、大に人に見おとされ、終には国をも失はれたり。気を付ざれば斯の類不断の事なり。さりながら、下の情に能通じ、物の価までも知る様に成て、還つて下の痛み苦む様に成も有。是等は、元来不仁私欲甚しく、自分の奢を極る邪念より起りて、慈仁の本心より出ざるゆへ也。

一、凡そ人間、貴賤に限らず、命長からずしては何事も成就する事なし。聖賢の教成、千万年の後迄も尊び用ひられ、文武の明君、国天下をたもち、長久の基ひを開き給ふも、皆寿命

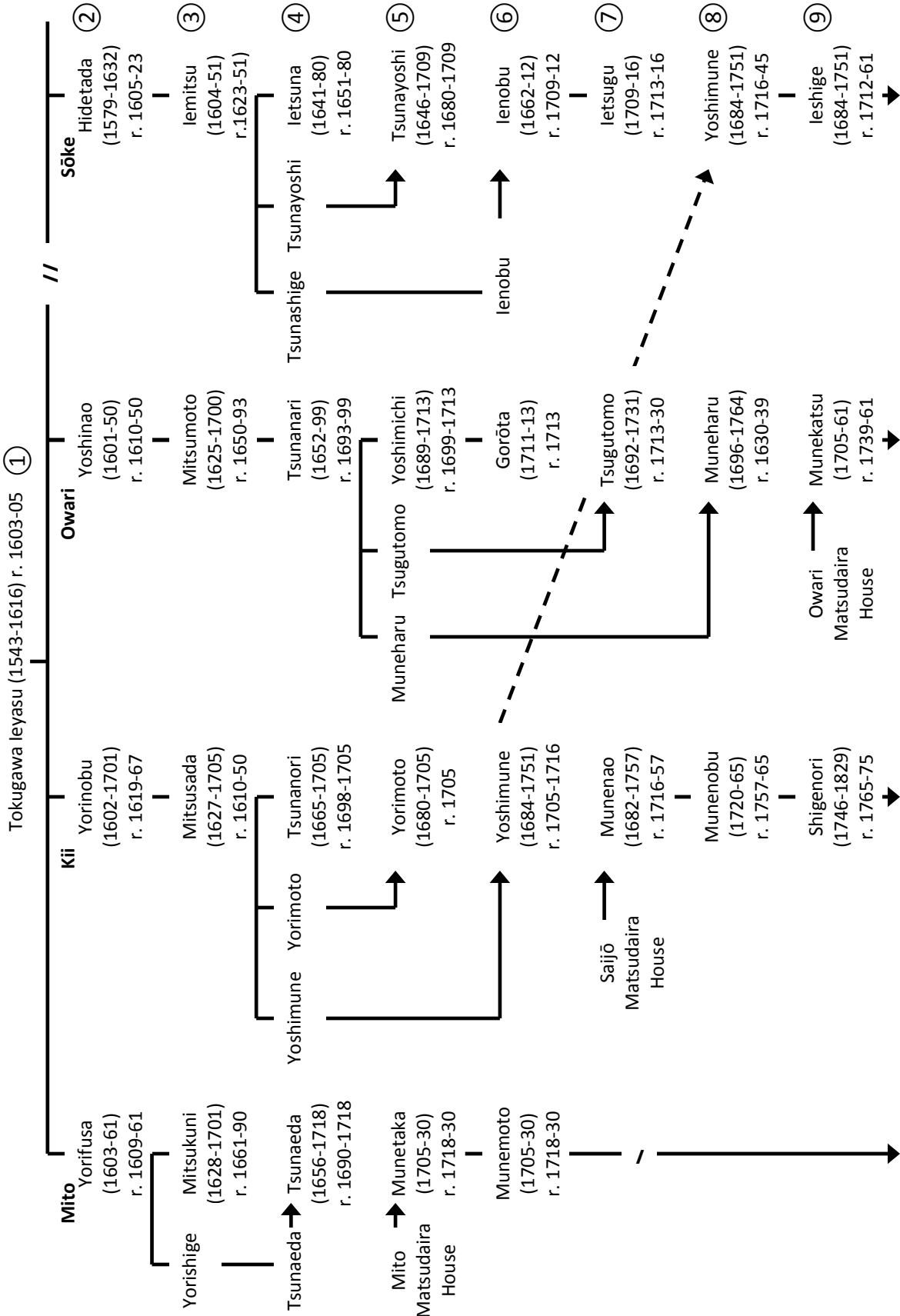
の長きより成しおなせらるゝ事也。土農工商の相応に本意を達し、諸芸者の上手名人になるも、年月久しく積り怠らぬ故也。今日国を治る者、人の為、国の為利益ある事にでも、急にこしらへたる儀は衆人のこゝろさはぎ服せずして、存ずる様にならぬものなり。そろ々と年数かゝりてとくと成し熟すれば、隅からすみ迄滞りなく、自然と風俗までもよろしく、いつ迄も持こたへ、後々は法度の世話なくとも事済様になるべき事なり。人の痛み難儀なる筋は速に改め直し、公事沙汰・願ひ訴訟、並ならびに日用取扱の事は、食をくふ間も遅くせざるやうにと存じ候はずしては、さしつかへのみにて、人の迷惑甚しく、無益の費も出来る事也。前々、井の内糸踏はづしはまりし者有し時、近所の者共井の際へ立集り色々相談し、古例など考ふて居る内に、其者はれふくれて死し、後迄の笑ひ種くさと成しと聞及びたり。理にくらく片意地に覚ゑたる上には、是等のたぐひいか程も有べき事なり。

一、改め直す事能よきとばかり心得ては、又々大なるたがひもかならず出来る事なり。さしたる事もなき品までにおもわく生じ、国法もかろ々しく成り、手厚き事のなきやうにも成行べし。とかく我壱人の思慮分別ばかりにてはあやうき事なれば、諸人の智を執用ひ、理非問答の能き輔佐ほさなくしてはならぬ事なり。百姓・町人ふぜいさへ、善き子有か、能き手代を持たる者の、万事はかの行ゆくにて知るべし。

一、上より下に至るまで、私を捨、天理にかなふやうにと、朝暮わするしばらく間なく工夫すべし。暫もおこたれば邪念忽ち生じやすし。中にも、上たる身のうへに専ら心を付べき事あり。国郡数多領し数万の人を召仕ふ事、先祖より代々限りなき厚恩也。さあれば、譜代相伝の者共めぐみ養ふは申すにも及ばず、其代々々に取立、恩顧を蒙りし輩、男女にかぎらず皆々同じ事也。上のこゝろは毛頭隔なくとも、万端心得たがひて身を引、はからずも不忠不義に似たる輩は、自分々の身より出せる事にて是非に及ばず、但上の存念いまだいたらざる内は、かくの類ひも有まじき物にてなし。しかるに部屋住の時分、思慮とくと熟せず、こゝろまわりて、我への仕方おろそかなると存たがへ、正体もなき事しゆくいを宿意にはさみ、其返報をすべきとおもふたぐひ、是全く匹夫ひつぷの所存にて、言語に述がたき浅ましき心持なるべし。唯々親疎なく平等に憐愍せずしてはかなはざる儀、第一孝行の真実、天理の本意より生ずる事也。我斯のとおりならば、子々孫々も又々右の心を受續て、長久おのづから天地と共にひとしかるべし。

右此一巻書述し所似は、条数を以て急度号令せしむるに非ず、人々常に座右にさし置、具に我本意を知り、いづれも此こゝろ持を失はず、熱読がんみ翫味するの上、自ら心も正しく身も修り、政道の助にもならむ事を欲し、重ねて数語を以て之を後に附するのみ而已。㊦

Appendix C Genealogies of the Tokugawa Sōke and Gosanke



Appendix D Genealogies of the Tokugawa Sōke and Gosankyō

